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A History of Feminist Art History

Remaking a Discipline and Its Institutions

Victoria Horne

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Recognising art's crucial function for reproducing economic and sexual differences, feminist political interventions - alongside a range of 'new' critical perspectives including Marxism, psychoanalysis and poststructuralism - have wrought historic changes upon the production, circulation and consumption of art. This is widely acknowledged in art historical scholarship. However, understanding that 'art history' (as a historically conditioned discipline) is concurrently reproductive of these ideological and material inequalities, feminist scholars have significantly and continually sought to intervene at the point of production – the writing of art's history – to expose its social role and remake the fundamental terms of the discipline. This is a truth less widely acknowledged or, at least, less well-understood within contemporary scholarship.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to examine the discipline of art history in Anglo-American contexts to assess the impact that feminist models of scholarship have had upon its knowledges and practices. This is attained through extensive literature overviews, archival research and, to a lesser extent, email interviews with key contributors to the discourse. Ultimately, this examination endeavours to address the production and regulation of feminist knowledge across a number of expanded (and interconnected) institutional sites. Case studies track the impact of feminist strategies upon the authoring of art history in the classroom, within scholarly professional organisations, academic publishing, the museum sector, and upon art-making itself.

The research evaluates the mutable power structures of the discipline, how feminist interventions have had success in rethinking the limits of institutional knowledge, and how it may be possible to articulate critique under twenty-first-century conditions of institutional complicity and the hegemonic recuperation (or indeed 'disciplining') of radical practices. To date – and despite its prominence within much feminist writing - the importance of art historiography for the feminist political project has not been properly examined; the aim of this thesis is therefore to redress this omission and provide a timely and comprehensive critical reading of feminist knowledge production since around 1970.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History of Art has been composed by myself, is entirely my own work, and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Victoria Horne
17 April 2015

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It was surprising and moving to realise how much inspiration and nourishment the young women artists drew from the discovery of their predecessors. The elucidation of a continuous tradition in which they could see their own lives and work was so valuable to them, on a profoundly personal level, that it changed my idea of the real value of history. I realized what it had probably always meant to men, whose tradition it so clearly and thoroughly traced, and what it could mean to me and to other women.

Paula Harper (1985)

What's feminist about feminist art history?¹

Although they instance only a portion of a much larger field of enquiry, the books stacked upon my desk by chance reveal a significant pattern within their subtitles: *Performing the Subject; Writing the Artist; Differencing the Canon; Questioning the Litany; Entering the Picture*. The insistent linguistic repetition stresses that feminist enquiry is a dynamic process, one that acts upon art history's objects of study (the artist, the canon, the picture) and strives to make anew. Since around 1970, feminist writers have tackled the notoriously conservative discipline of art history,² and by strategically adopting a critical oppositional position from which to write, they have effectively politicised its naturalised narrative structures.³ *A History of Feminist Art History* attempts to make sense of this seismic historiographical project in terms of its impact upon, and within, disciplinary institutional frameworks; including the project's various successes and failures, as well as commenting upon feminism's continuing political imperative for art and society in the twenty-first century.

My examination traces the significant art historical changes wrought by feminist interventions through highly specific case studies; although these are intended to have wider implications. Ultimately, the thesis endeavours to address the effects of feminism upon art history's *production* at various interconnected

¹ The title of this introduction alludes to Martha Gimenez's wonderful, interrogative article, 'What's materialist about materialist feminism?', *Radical Philosophy* 101 (2000): 18 -19. Similar to Gimenez, I share her desire to unsettle or at least prompt a questioning of those burdened terms, 'materialist' and 'feminist'.

² In 1973, Nicos Hadjinicolaou famously criticised art history as 'one of the last outposts of reactionary thought.' *Art History and Class Struggle* (London: Pluto Press, 1973), 4. Later, Nanette Salomon indicatively described the discipline as follows: 'As canons within academic disciplines go, the art historical canon is among the most violent, virulent, and ultimately the most vulnerable.' 'The Art Historical Canon: Sins of Omission,' in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 344-55, 344.

³ The beginning of feminist art history analysis, rather than art production, is usually traced to Linda Nochlin's much-cited article of 1971, 'Why Have There Been No Great Woman Artists?', *Art News* 69. Moreover, I use the term 'adopt' to stress that feminism's oppositionality is only ever imaginary, as art historical writers are always working *within* social relations that produce our understandings about art and artists. There is, therefore, no 'external' neutral space from which to write (although feminist subjects may claim marginality within these relations). This narrative of oppositionality is recurrent throughout feminist art history and must be understood as a myth or strategic tool, rather than indelible truth.

institutional sites. Chapter-by-chapter case studies track the effects of feminist strategies upon the authoring of art history in the classroom, within scholarly professional organisations, via academic publishing, upon museum displays, and through art-making itself. ‘Institutional’, it must be noted, refers not only to the buildings or material sites of the art historical discipline, but also encompasses the discursive, ideological and performative.⁴ To date, and despite its prominence within much feminist writing, the importance of art historiography for the feminist political project has not been properly examined. Or, more accurately, an analysis of what such a historiography could be constituted through, or what it can include, has not been thoroughly attended to. The aim of this thesis is therefore to redress this omission and provide a timely and comprehensive critical reading of feminist knowledge production in art history since around 1970.⁵

A Brief History of Art History

The renewed Euro-American women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s (commonly referred to as women’s liberation or second-wave feminism) had unprecedented effects within both the visual art and academic spheres. Many feminist writers re-presented art’s histories through a radical historiographical project that reflexively interrogated the very bases upon which cultural beliefs about art were founded. However, before addressing the title question of this introduction, it is necessary to consider briefly what the terms ‘art history’, ‘historiography’ and ‘feminism’ signify, and how such frameworks have been reconfigured by critical approaches since the mid-twentieth century. Political philosopher Aviezer Tucker has succinctly pointed out the complicated English-language nomenclature of ‘history’. ‘Even the basic distinction between the events of the past and their representation is difficult to express and comprehend since often the same word, ‘history’, is used to mean both the events of the past and the texts historians write

⁴ See Stephen Melville, ‘On the Institution of Limits’ in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth C Mansfield (London; New York: Routledge, 2007): 145-156.

⁵ During the writing of my thesis this idea began to gain wider prevalence within both feminism and art history. In November 2013, for example, Giovanna Zapperi published an article in which she crucially started ‘to point out art’s significance for feminist historiography’ ‘Women’s Reappearance: Rethinking the Archive in Feminist Art,’ *Feminist Review* 105 (2013): 21-47, 23. In her book *Gender, artWork and the Global Imperative*, Angela Dimitrakaki also deals explicitly with the issues of historiography and historical memory for contemporary, global feminist politics. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

about them.⁶ However, such distinctions between historical ‘reality’ and its textual representation arguably become muddied even further within art history, as the objects of the discipline (conventionally, artworks) continue to be encountered and economically-exchanged contemporaneously and are therefore discursively productive in a way that non-art materials might not be. It is the art object’s insistent contemporaneity that arguably produces such epistemological problems for the historian; the ‘work’ of art occurs upon each encounter and cannot be bound *only* to its situated moment of production.

Extending Tucker’s observation then, it is unclear whether ‘art history’ primarily refers to: (1) an archive of art objects and/or their documentary traces, (2) histories of artists who made the works, usually known through biographical and contextual/period research, (3) the philosophical and theoretical texts that sustain the study of art, such as aesthetics or iconography.⁷ Writing in 1998, Donald Preziosi situates art history as ‘one of a network of interrelated institutions whose overall function has been to fabricate a historical past that could be placed under systematic observation for use in the present.’⁸ In this particular reading we do not need to know precisely what art history refers to as its object of study (this is flexible and evolving), but we must understand that the discipline is conservatively about observation and control of knowledge; thus consolidating the coherent, bourgeois, modern subject in the present.⁹ Throughout this thesis I use the term ‘art history’ to refer to the (never static) disciplinary formation, and ‘art’s history’ to refer to the (never fully comprehensible) lived moment of art’s production. I also use scare quotes, perhaps too freely at times, to indicate the instability of various terms, including this disciplinary formation.

In particular, over the past four decades, both feminist and postmodern enquiries have drawn out the never-fully-clear distinctions between historical ‘reality’ and its literary re-presentation: these secondary texts and analyses are what

⁶ Aviezer Tucker, ed. ‘Introduction,’ *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography* (Chichester; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009): 2.

⁷ The complexities of the term becomes even greater when we consider that, as historiography itself begins to garner wider interest, biographies and analyses of ‘star’ art historian’s lives have started to form a new sub-interest. Alois Riegl particularly springs to mind.

⁸ Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 7.

⁹ Preziosi’s conception of art history, discourse, and power is deeply indebted to the foundational philosophies of Michel Foucault. For an introductory overview to Foucauldian theory see Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (London: Penguin Books, 1991). For more in his approach to historiography specifically see Jan Goldstein, *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford; Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1994).

is usually referred to by the term ‘historiography’ (literally ‘history writing’ in Greek).¹⁰ As art historiographer Dan Karlholm clarifies,

[t]he term art history, of course, refers to a threefold phenomenon: a collective producer (the community, institution, or discipline of art history) produces representations (art history texts, picture compendia, etc.) of what is *allegedly* an actual history of art (or art history) that exists beyond these discursive phenomena.¹¹

Karlholm’s emphasis indicates that art history’s crucial problem arises from its inevitable failure to fully comprehend the moments of art’s production, and the discourse must therefore maintain an illusory (or ‘alleged’) representational truthfulness. *Art and art-making is consequently represented through a discipline of ‘art history’ that obscures its own production and thereby naturalises its very structures.* Intervening at the point of production - the writing of art history - is therefore essential to reconfiguring historical knowledge from a feminist perspective and denaturalising that knowledge’s gendered assumptions. Feminist art history is also not immune to this representational obfuscation and a constant process of self-examination and self-critique is necessary in order to critically assess the circulation of power across feminist knowledges.¹² These art historical accounts and their discursive boundaries form the core research material for my thesis and I focus particularly on their production, and reproduction, across the distinct, yet overlapping, institutional sites of the academy, the museum exhibition, and the artwork. These sites have been chosen, in part, as a response to this passage, written by Griselda Pollock in 1992:

Modernist art theory... privileges the studio as *the* discrete space where art is made, relegating gallery or exhibition, journal or art lecture to a subsidiary role of circulation and consumption, an act of

¹⁰ The relationship between feminism and postmodernism is a complicated one that attracts many different viewpoints. For a historical critique of this alliance please see Craig Owens, ‘The Discourse of Others: Feminism and Postmodernism’ in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Washington: Bay Press, 1983). Indicating an alternative approach, see: *How American Women Artists Invented Postmodernism, 1970-75*. This touring exhibition was curated in 2005 by scholars Judith K Brodsky and Ferris Olin at Rutgers University, New Jersey, and a catalogue was published in 2006.

¹¹ Dan Karlholm, *Art of Illusion: The Representation of Art History in Nineteenth Century Germany and Beyond* (Peter Lang Verlag: Bern, 2006), 12.

¹² Griselda Pollock points to the necessity of this self-examination in her germinal book *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2003).

interpretation of use coming after the singular creative event. Feminist materialist theory suggests that the studio, the gallery, the exhibition catalogue are not separate, but form interdependent moments in the cultural circuit of capitalist production and consumption. They are also overlapping sets within the signifying system which collectively constitutes the discourse of art.¹³

Although this analysis may be less definitive today, in a changed field of contemporary art, I would agree with its fundamental proposal: that the work of feminist art historians is to continually seek out the overlooked moments and spaces within the dominant narrative that structures cultural production (and consumption), and to contest the concepts that exert authority over the discipline at any given time.

The problem of art history's history has rarely been far from the collected academic consciousness; in fact, since especially the 1980s, the question of whether art historians deal primarily with art, or with the earlier texts of art history, has become an endlessly reflexive nightmare.¹⁴ Examinations, including for instance Donald Preziosi's poststructuralist landmark *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (1989), prompted a radical reconsideration of the discipline's powerful function.¹⁵ The diverse approaches to this renewed disciplinary analysis have been anthologised in numerous edited collections, the best of which is Jonathan Harris's *The New Art History: A Critical Reader* (2001).¹⁶ Yet in many cases, these investigations have taken the somewhat diluted form of theoretical overviews, several of which either neglect or consign feminist historiographical intervention to a small section amidst a range of critical approaches under the rubric of art historical 'method'. In the past few years there has been a noticeable resurgence of scholarly interest in historiography (and historicism more generally), yet the most notable

¹³ Griselda Pollock, 'Painting, Feminism, History', in eds. Michele Barrett and Anne Phillips, *Destabilising Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992): 138-176, 146.

¹⁴ Following the upheavals of 1968 and the expansion of art education during that decade, 'the new art histories' of the 1970s and 1980s prompted widespread analysis of the disciplinary methods and approaches used. See Chapter Two for further discussion on this.

¹⁵ Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

¹⁶ Jonathan Harris, *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001). Also see: Eric Fernie (ed.), *Art History and its Methods* (London: Phaidon, 1995). Mark Cheetham et al. eds, *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Steve Edwards, ed. *Art and its Histories: A Reader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff, eds., *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003). Steve Edwards, ed. *Art and its Histories: A Reader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

writers have tended to be conservative in their approach and art historiography remains largely a traditional field that neglects feminism.¹⁷

Simultaneously, within the field of feminist theory, Clare Hemmings has produced a detailed study that examines historical accounts of second-wave feminism and the reiterative narrative structures or ‘stories’ that limit our understanding of this past.¹⁸ The topic of feminism’s own history is certainly gaining greater recognition: the July 2014 issue of the art journal *n.paradoxa* examined ‘Lessons from History’, and in August 2014 a special issue of the interdisciplinary journal *Feminist Theory* was entitled ‘Theorising Feminist Histories, Historicising Feminist Theory’.¹⁹ However, despite a varied range of studies, to date, art history’s historiography and feminist interventions have not been examined together at any significant length and my thesis will therefore contribute meaningfully to a rapidly developing discussion. (It is significant to note that the majority of feminist theory, history and sociology does not acknowledge the existence of feminist art history; as a discipline its significance is simply overlooked by the wider field.)²⁰ One of the key concerns within this thesis, and in my wider research, is how to better understand the theories and methods used to write and remember feminist approaches towards producing art history; optimistically presuming the importance of historical memory for a successful feminist politics of the present, whilst acknowledging Hemmings’ caveat, that ‘knowing how these narratives work does not precipitate their transformation’.²¹ This transformation is necessary for, first, displacing the modernist

¹⁷ The *Journal of Art Historiography* was launched in December 2009 and has thus far published only one article on feminism in an Australian context. See also: Karlholm *The Art of Illusion*, 2009. Margaret Iversen and Stephen Melville, *Writing Art History: Disciplinary Departures* (Chicago; London: Chicago University Press, 2010). Ian Verstegen, *A Realist Theory of Art History* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013). In 2007-10, The Courtauld Institute organised a research network to examine ‘Writing Art History’, from which a special issue of *Art History* book series was later published: Catherine Grant and Patricia Rubin eds., *Creative Writing and Art History* (Chichester; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

¹⁸ Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ Victoria Hesford and Lisa Diedrich eds., special issue, *Feminist Theory* 15.2, 2014. This issue was dedicated to the historian Joan Wallach Scott and, fittingly, attempted to articulate a historical account of feminist theory.

²⁰ The special issue of *Feminist Theory* reference in n.19 actually goes so far as to list the different feminist disciplines that they consider relevant - ‘history, political science, philosophy, law, literature, women’s studies, performance studies’ - significantly neglecting art history, 104.

²¹ Hemmings, 134. Preziosi has also interrogated any reductive notion of ‘remembering’ as wholly positive, he states: ‘[museums] perform the basic historical gesture of *separating out of the present* a specific ‘past’ so as to collect and recompose (to re-member) its displaced and dismembered relics as elements in a *genealogy* of and for the present.’ Although this thesis stresses the importance of

paradigm that art's history is constructed within (more on that later) and, second, because feminism understands this knowledge as a site of *an ongoing* struggle where the social field and social subjects are simultaneously represented and reproduced.

A passing reflection on art's historiography reveals a number of schools of thought, often defined nationally and dominant during particular periods and locations. For example: eighteenth-century Germanic philosophy of aesthetics, upon which the roots of the modern discipline were laid; a Western European tradition, descended from the exemplary writings of Giorgio Vasari that is reliant primarily on biography and connoisseurship; an American approach that dominated the early- to mid-twentieth century and has been generally termed modernist.²² Since the mid-twentieth century, the rise of critical theory (mostly in a French poststructuralist mode rather than related to neo-Marxist Frankfurt School philosophy) has had an interventional response against 'modernist' art narratives that appear to devolve upon formally delineated art movements and the avant-gardist moments that impel such movements along. These critical theories aim to present transparently, and often singularly, invested truths about art's history (Marxism/class, feminism/gender, post-colonialism/race) or refute the possibility of 'objective' historical truth altogether (some applications of poststructuralism, often associated with postmodernism).

What critical theory fundamentally undermined in art historical scholarship is the belief that disciplinary narratives are in any sense natural or inevitable. Instead, art history is understood to be deeply enmeshed within social and economic relations, and therefore contributes to the reproduction of power along various axes including gender, race, sex, and class. 'Critical theory', according to Jae Emerling, 'marked the arrival of the excluded, the riffraff, who were conceived as usurpers bent on undermining tradition and denying any claim to aesthetic or historical truth.'²³ However, as Emerling elucidates, '[c]ritical theory is not external to art history; it is not a second order of discourse of mastery and meaning. The relation between the two is not one of transcendence, but one of immanence.'²⁴ In 1970, therefore, feminism did not abruptly materialise into art historical discourse from elsewhere. As Emerling implies, European feminism's shared genealogy with the discipline of art

memory, it does not purport to offer a seamlessly 're-membered' past for feminism. *In the Aftermath of Art: Ethics, Aesthetics, Politics*, (London; New York: Routledge: 2006), 74.

²² The twentieth century is often also referred to as 'The American Century'.

²³ Jae Emerling, *Theory for Art History* (London; New York: Routledge: 2005), xii.

²⁴ Emerling, xii

history – both emerging out of the liberal project of the Enlightenment – ensured that its ethical politics had been (in Derridean terms) an unacknowledged *parergon* to the discipline, not ‘being a part of it yet without being absolutely extrinsic to it’.²⁵ Women artists, and feminist politics, have always functioned negatively as a framing device for masculinist art and its history: that which it is not.²⁶ Women - both *in* representation and *as* cultural producers - are conceived as what feminist art historians have termed a ‘site of difference’, which enables and maintains the hegemony of masculinist culture. Since the renewal of the feminist political movement around 1970, and the advent of the feminist art and art history movements (primarily in Anglo-American 1970s and 1980s contexts), this frame has been made visible through a self-reflexive critical practice that remade the discipline of art history and its institutions of representation. This thesis aims to explore these critical practices, by initially asking, below: what is particularly ‘feminist’ about feminist art historiography?

Feminism’s Response

Despite feminist art historians’ profound critical engagement with the discursive structures of the discipline, it is difficult to define a singular *feminist* approach since feminism is not fixed as a particular methodology, or even, an activist politics.²⁷ Rather, as the book titles cited in the opening paragraph demonstrate, feminism has been, and continues to be, a strategically adopted political position from which to write. Fundamentally it is possible to state that feminism is concerned with exposing the ideological and socially constituted powers that consistently (re)instate the feminine (and, particularly, female subjects) as inferior. Thereby producing gendered hierarchies throughout every social space - and crucially extending from this, intersectionally, relations of race, class, and sexuality. However, consensus on how

²⁵ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 3.

²⁶ This is an argument first put forward by Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker in their groundbreaking text, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Pandora Press, 1981), in which they reason that women artists have always been present throughout history, but overlooked within art historiography.

²⁷ Over the past decade, which has witnessed a resurgence of mainstream media interest in feminism, there has, it seems, been a general move towards a watered-down conception of feminism as a vaguely political position (often essentialised to contemporary western, middle-class women), rather than as an actively assumed politics. In her hugely successful book of 2012, *How to be a Woman*, Caitlin Moran, exemplifies this vague dilution, stating: ‘(a) Do you have a vagina? (b) Do you want to be in charge of it? If you said yes to both, then congratulations! You’re a feminist.’ (New York: Harper Perennial).

to translate this theoretical understanding into historical practice is hard to reach. Perhaps this disparity is attributable to what Angela Dimitrakaki has recently termed the ‘ideologically divided terrain’ of feminism, a phrase employed on opposition to accepting multiple, possibly parallel ‘feminisms’ that ultimately undermine the prospect of a shared political goal.²⁸ Accepting this description, we must acknowledge that feminism has developed differently and unevenly across various places/times (due most critically to those relations of race, class and sexuality), and it is only by understanding both the impact of these historical developments, and our writing of them in the present, that we can assert the relevance of feminist knowledge for twenty-first century contexts of resistance.

The majority of writers involved in producing feminist art history have emphasised that feminism is not focused on adding to the existing narratives of a discipline that (re)articulates masculinist knowledge and power, but should focus instead on intervening within, and recreating, art historical narratives from a feminist, or even feminine perspective.²⁹ The terminology employed by feminist writers reflects this approach, for example: Lisa Tickner does not refer to ‘feminist art’ but stresses the shifting position of art ‘informed by feminism’; Mary Kelly favours the (Marxian) ‘feminist problematic in art history’; likewise, Griselda Pollock prefers ‘feminist interventions in art history’, in resistance to the more reductive ‘feminist art history’.³⁰ Taking this further, the eminent historian Joan Wallach Scott has correspondingly suggested that feminist historiography must embrace disciplinary ambiguity, becoming ‘a flexible strategic instrument not bound to any orthodoxy’.³¹ Rejecting the ordering logic of any single discipline arguably permits feminism greater political autonomy, rather than seeing its related thought reduced to a methodology.³² Theorist bell hooks reflects this in her deliberately ‘unfixing’ conception of feminism as a *movement*, a constantly shifting and evolving

²⁸ Dimitrakaki, *Gender, art Work and the global imperative*, 4.

²⁹ Here I am thinking particularly of psychoanalytically influenced feminism which works ‘in, of, and from the feminine’. See Griselda Pollock’s extensive output, particularly *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Histories* (London; New York, Routledge, 1999).

³⁰ On queering the current meaning of feminist intervention, see Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry, ‘Towards a Rethinking of Feminist Intervention’ in *Women’s Museum: Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History and Art*, ed. Elke Krasny (Vienna: Locker, 2013).

³¹ Joan Wallach Scott, “Feminism’s History,” *Journal of Women’s History*, 16.2 (2004), 10-29, 28.

³² I would argue, however, that this rejection is not so easy or even necessarily positive. The historical specificity of different disciplines cannot simply be ignored, and a rigorous self-understanding of the tools and methods available is preferable for comprehending various approaches to art and its history.

state of intellectual enquiry.³³ However, the impact of feminism upon art history and visual culture studies has been unprecedented, perhaps due in part to the understanding that identity, and therefore gender, is usually secured visually. Therefore, feminist theory's intersection with the discipline requires further attention, even as the delimited borders of disciplines may themselves fall under scrutiny.³⁴ Moreover, we need to imagine how art's historically determined changes (including, for example, art's increasing departure from a strictly visual paradigm witnessed since 'dematerialisation' in the 1960s to contemporary participatory practices) also call for the constant updating of how feminism intersects with the production of art history.³⁵

The fluid scholarly approaches necessitated by a feminist political perspective provide both stimulation and structural difficulties for the historical project of this thesis. In 2008 art historian Alexandra Kokoli reflected:

Thanks to its constitutive marginality, feminism seems particularly well-suited to the continuous work of self-examination and self-critique; at the same time, however, it makes a particularly slippery subject for historiography, even for the writing of its own (hi)stories, since it is under an *on-going process of redefinition that involves a constant decentring*.³⁶

As this passage implies, a constantly decentred critical approach, brought about by feminism's doubly subversive engagement with both the subjects of history and the conventions of historical writing, is both wonderfully productive and yet obdurately 'slippery'.³⁷ The strategies are mutable and historically evolving; therefore, 'what's

³³ See bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1984).

³⁴ Amelia Jones suggests that 'feminism has long acknowledged that visibility (the conditions of how we see and make meaning of what we see) is one of the key modes by which gender is culturally inscribed in Western culture. Feminism and visual culture, then, deeply inform one another.' 'Introduction' to *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Jones (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 1.

³⁵ Lucy Lippard and John Chandler. "The Dematerialization of Art" in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 46-51. Although the question of the visual is significant, it is not fully engaged by the scope of this thesis, as it relates more to feminist aesthetics rather than historiography.

³⁶ Alexandra Kokoli, 'Fetishism and the Stories of Art', in Kokoli ed., *Feminism Reframed* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008): 206-226, 213. Emphasis added.

³⁷ Patricia Mathews has similarly written: 'Few feminists see their work as definitively redefining and replacing traditional art historical modes. On the contrary, most feminist perspectives call for a process of *continual revision* based not on some final telos of the discipline, but *on the fluid contingencies of contemporary narratives* and the never-ending *potential* for perceiving overlooked sites and voices between, among, or within discourses.' 'The Politics of Feminist Art History', in

“feminist” about feminist art history’ is very difficult to address directly. It could be contested that there is something distinctly *unfeminist* about writing ‘A History of Feminist Art History’, as this might be seen to stabilise and evoke a closure over historical interpretation. Yet my research is aimed at tackling this epistemological challenge. Rather than relying too heavily on poststructuralist conceptions of knowledge as axiomatically unfixed it can be intellectually, and above all politically, useful to try to pin ‘feminist art history’ down. To ask, first, what have its constitutive elements been so far, and, second, exactly what can be expected of it; both what knowledge/power it is in opposition to and what feminist art historians hope it could produce instead. To paraphrase Kathi Weeks: the aim is to comprehend feminist thought in its totality – as it crosses through and between various institutions of art history – which can be thought affirmatively as countering the forces of fragmentation and dispersal that characterise neoliberal structures.³⁸ Although, as Kokoli emphasises this can be a tricky question to approach directly, the case studies in this thesis are intended to obliquely shed light on the matter, unlocking rather than fixing feminist art history.

The paragraphs below draw out particular citations that self-reflexively highlight the writer’s approach to art history, in order to indicate both the variety and congruity between feminist textual practices. This is not intended to provide a conclusive definition of what makes an art history ‘feminist’ but will hopefully begin to illustrate the plurality and breadth of historiographical approaches that are gathered under this term, and provide an introduction to the more detailed chapter analyses. These writers have each taken part in a vast, and ongoing, research project, one aimed at rethinking art historical knowledge, its production and circulation. This has necessitated a rethinking of form and content, and the material of art history has therefore been treated as a fabric to be clutched, unpicked and rewoven into new forms.

Mark Cheetham et al., eds., *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 94-115, 94.

³⁸ Kathi Weeks, ‘Foreword’ to Michèle Barrett, *Women’s Oppression Today: A Marxist/Feminist Encounter*, 3rd edition (Brooklyn; London: Verso, 2014), ix-xix.

Exposing Art History

Michel Foucault's epistemological concept of genealogy, developed in his 1969 text *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, asks not *which* historical tales we tell, but *why* we tell the stories we do. Historian Jan Goldstein explains that Foucault's 'archaeological' method defamiliarises history and makes common stories strange, by seeking to 'find out why, in a field where so much space has been left empty, those particular rare things, and not others, have come to be articulated.'³⁹ From a feminist perspective, the question that arises in relation to art history is why particular groups of (mostly male) artists and artworks – and *not others* – have come to be articulated historically in the form of the canon. Thus, feminist art historians have aimed to expose the processes of mystification that naturalise artists and geniuses as normatively white, male vanguards, usually of a middle-class ideological make-up with a bohemian twist. In 2014 this exposure might be necessarily aimed elsewhere, or elsewhere *also*. In a catalysing statement of 1980, Linda Nochlin expands on feminism's bold exposure of these structures:

Disadvantage may indeed be an excuse; it is not, however, an intellectual position. Rather, using their situation as underdogs and outsiders as a vantage point, women can reveal institutional and intellectual weaknesses in general, and, at the same time that they destroy false consciousness, take part in the creation of institutions in which clear thought and true greatness are challenges open to anyone – man or woman – courageous enough to take the necessary leap into the unknown.⁴⁰

As Nochlin suggests, the position as 'outsider' can allow greater clarity as to why some things, but not others, count as art. This marginality permits the questioning of power and authority, but also raises uncertainty about whether feminism is always limited to a position of critique. Later, in 1988, Lisa Tickner clarified this institutional and intellectual exposure further: 'If the production of meaning is inseparable from the production of power, then feminism (a political ideology addressed to relations of power) and art history (or any discourse productive of knowledge) are more intimately

³⁹ Jan Goldstein, 'Foucault among the Sociologists: The "Disciplines" and the History of the Professions,' *History and Theory*, 23.2 (1984): 170-192, 172.

⁴⁰ Linda Nochlin, *Art and Sexual Politics*, ed. Elizabeth Baker (New York: Colier Books, 1973), 37. Quoted in Lamia Doumato, "The Literature of Woman in Art," *Oxford Art Journal* 3.1 (April 1980): 74-78, 74.

connected than is popularly supposed.⁴¹ *Intervening at the point of production (the writing of art history) is therefore essential in order to remake the relations of power in art's histories; also, recognising the value of this intellectual knowledge, across broader socio-political conditions.* Feminism has, for all intents and purposes, been very successful at reconfiguring historical knowledge to produce new perspectives on art's history, and yet its success as an intervention into fluid power structures has been varied: why, for example, is women's art still valued significantly lower than that of men? Accordingly what work remains to be done in 2014? If we are to carry the legacy of feminist institutional critique forward into the future, where should our analysis now be aimed? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to look back to appreciate feminism's historiographical strategies to date.

The citations below are arranged chronologically and all evidence an interventional approach to art history. It is revealing how each writer individually acknowledges what emerges as a shared desire; to change art history's fundamental structures rather than limitedly arguing for the inclusion of women artists within the established discipline. This disciplinary reflexivity is evidently *essential* (I use that word in full knowledge of its ambiguous position within gender history) to feminist interventions, and sits alongside the rethinking of aesthetics, embodiment and representation. It is also notable that these citations encompass various scholars associated with liberal, socialist, and radical feminist positions, thus this critical reflection is common, although distinctive, throughout the discourse.

Feminist art, for instance, cannot be posed in terms of cultural categories, typologies, or even certain insular forms of textual analysis, precisely because it entails assessment of political interventions, campaigns and commitments, as well as artistic strategies.⁴² (1981)

Rescuing women artists and their works from historical neglect has been an important task. The next steps are more difficult. If we use the methods and standards of conventional art history for the subject of women artists, a subject located at the periphery of the discipline by these very methods and standards, we may repeople the landscape, but we do not draw new maps or change the terrain.⁴³ (1982)

⁴¹ Lisa Tickner, 'Feminism, Art History and Sexual Difference', *Genders*, 3 (Fall 1988): 92-129, 92.

⁴² Mary Kelly, 'Re-viewing Modernist Criticism,' *Screen* 22.3 (1981): 41-52, 58.

⁴³ Deborah Cherry, 'Feminist Interventions: Feminist Imperatives,' Rev. of *Old Mistresses*, ed. Pollock & Parker. *Art History* 5.4 (Dec. 1982): 501-08, 507.

[*Feminism and Art History*] is not about women artists. Feminism has raised other, even more fundamental questions for art history as a humanistic discipline, questions that are now affecting its functioning at all levels and that may ultimately lead to its redefinition. In its broadest terms, we would define the impact of feminism on art history as *an adjustment of historical perspective*.⁴⁴ (1982)

Feminism is not and should not be an approach to art history. Rather, feminism has identified art history as a form of patriarchal culture and has begun to challenge the values and ideas constructed within art history as part of its project of cultural politics.⁴⁵ (1986)

Is adding women to art history the same as producing feminist art history?" Clearly the answer is no.⁴⁶ (1989)

[*The Power of Feminist Art*] underlines the importance of feminism as a politics and not an artworld style or art historical movement.⁴⁷ (1995)

My strategies link primary research and theory at a fundamental level since what I find most fascinating about exploring the art of women are issues of epistemology – what kinds of knowledges are made when women make art and what forms of knowledge am I making in engaging with its presence.⁴⁸ (2000)

[Truly critical feminist texts are not] content to let Art History as an academic subject remain in its present form with the addition of women and artists of colour – indeed, it is demonstrable that Art History has always been able to allow a few women and artists of colour in as tokens, as “magnificent exceptions” or as oddities. Instead, these texts work at the undoing of the structures and ideology of a discipline which, particularly in the twentieth century, has been content to exclude women from its definition of greatness.⁴⁹ (2001)

⁴⁴ Norma Broude & Mary Garrard eds., *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 14.

⁴⁵ Lynda Nead, ‘Feminism, Art History and Cultural Politics’ in *The New Art History*, ed. AL Rees and Frances Borzello (Camden Press, 1986), 120-24.

⁴⁶ Lisa Tickner paraphrasing Griselda Pollock, ‘Art History Differently’, Rev. of *Vision and Difference, New Formations* 7 (Spring 1989): 111-17, 111.

⁴⁷ Katy Deepwell, ‘Review: The Power of Feminism’ *Oxford Art Journal*, 18.2 (1995): 119-122, 121.

⁴⁸ Marsha Meskimmon, ‘Historiography/Feminism/Strategy’ in *n.paradoxa* ed. Katy Deepwell, online issue 12 (March 2000): 29-31, 29.

⁴⁹ Hilary Robinson, ‘Historical and Critical Practices: An Introduction’, in *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Robinson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001): 162-167, 164.

[F]eminist critique has rarely limited itself to the work of feminists or even women but took the whole of culture, with all its patriarchal biases, as its object of analysis and target for change. The very nature of feminist intervention is dynamic and expansive: it either brings on a radical reshuffling of social and semiotic systems on the whole, or it is ineffective.⁵⁰ (2008)

This assortment of quotations, drawn from an Anglophone if international context, illustrates the reflective critical approaches of feminist art historians who do not seek to add women to the existing literature, but instead aim to remake the discipline through thoughtful historiographical practices. Although the addition of women artists to the canon requires an expansion in art historical knowledge it does not necessarily transform its basic status as a naturalised expression of colonial-masculinist power. Thus, the strategic reiteration of a interrogative historiographic strategy is crucial to the epistemological challenge mounted by feminist art history. As a basic tenet, I would argue, this institutionally-critical approach generally provides cohesion across the disparate political ideologies and alliances voiced by feminist art historians. A feminist art history therefore begins from a two-part process: first, researching women's art practices and, second, reconfiguring the discursive means by which art history produces sense of that art.

The spread of citations above suggests that the 1980s was a particularly fecund moment for historiographical *reflection*, as feminism became established within the academy and new ideas were articulated within this institution. Significantly, however, the four decades covered by these citations undermines any belief in a chronologically determined narrative that posits feminism on an evolutionary pathway – in some way, sadly, by suggesting that circumstances have not really changed. Yes, the art world may be inclusive of a wider-range of identified ('marked') subjects, and its artists, curators and historians savvy with a broad range of critical jargon, but the conditions for women both within and outside the art world continue to require radical solutions. How then, as a political intervention, can feminist historiographical strategies continue to offer a creative model of opposition to normative powers within art history?

⁵⁰ Kokoli, 'Introduction', *Feminism Reframed*, 7.

Writing New Histories

Having established the predominant compulsion for feminist historiography – that is: to intervene and expose power within the production of art historical knowledge – in this section I would like to highlight a few examples of such writing. I wish to indicate especially the importance of poststructuralist frameworks for this analysis and production, since writing and ‘text’ held such central positions within this intellectual framework. Given its centrality in feminist thinking, one of the aims of this thesis to look back at largely poststructural conceptions of art history and its writing, and rethink these legacies through the specific demands of the early twenty-first century, when arguments around reintroducing a materialist perspective are proliferating.⁵¹ I briefly discuss some key historiographical frameworks and how these are re-signified through particular texts.

Art history can be understood as a written representation of art’s (past) moments of production, that conventionally arranges swathes of lived histories into recognisable and reiterable narrative tropes such as ‘art movements’.⁵² These histories are, or have been, understood by feminist art historians as being teleological, progressivist, universalist, and mythically situated outside of social, political and economic relations. This master discourse secures its claim to authenticity through particular temporal, geographical and biographical narrative structures that the ‘mistress’ narrative of feminism seeks to disrupt. One of the primary methods of securing art’s meaning within this narrative is through the historiographical method of attribution; or, in other words, legitimation through paternalist reference, rupture and oedipal advancement. Artist and writer Mira Schor attacked this method of historiography in a well-known essay published in 1991, in which she popularised the term ‘patrilineage’ and suggested that: ‘Works by women whose paternity can be established and whose work can safely be assimilated into art discourse are privileged, *and every effort is made to ensure this patrilineage.*’⁵³ Schor suggests that this patrilineal legitimation occurs on two levels: for the woman artist whose work must be authenticated by reference to art historical forbearers and

⁵¹ For further references and discussion on this materialist turn see Chapter Two.

⁵² For more in the postmodern analysis of history writing as narrative please refer to the historian Hayden White, who spearheaded the application of new literary theory to the more traditional discipline of history. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987).

⁵³ Mira Schor, ‘Patrilineage,’ *Art Journal* 50.2 (Summer 1991): 58-63, 58.

for feminist art historians who legitimate their writing by reference to male writers such as Barthes, Derrida, Lacan (famous enough to warrant only a surname). This, according to Schor's argument, occurs in spite of the fact that since at least the 1970s there has existed a comparable *matrilineage* of artists and theorists to whom a methodological heredity could be attributed.

The problem that Schor identified was re-engaged five years later in an essay by Alison Rowley, in which she examines both the critical reception of, and her personal, embodied response to, the work of British painter Jenny Saville. Rowley suggests, firstly, an alternative matrilineal history for the works and, secondly, rejects this authenticating method altogether. Rowley's essay therefore instances a particularly lucid and useful example of intervention within, and deconstruction of, patrilineal narratives. She emphasises the British media's reiterative securing of Saville's paintings as 'made *for* Charles Saatchi and *in* the style of Lucien Freud', while the photographic work of Jo Spence is simultaneously denied matrilineal artistic influence. Here Saville's work 'is a child for British figurative painting (gendered male) with its concomitant devaluation of feminism (the mother).'⁵⁴ However Rowley does not simply attempt to re-inscribe Saville's work within a matrilineal descent from Spence; instead, through a close psychoanalytic reading (drawing upon the theories of Kaja Silverman and Luce Irigaray and so practicing the second level of authorial legitimation identified by Schor) she considers her subjective response to the paintings, alongside works by Helen Frankenthaler and Dorothea Tanning. Thus, the history of these artworks is inscribed differently, responding to her embodied, and therefore complexly identified, consumption of the images (rather than *only* their historical production) and presenting an intricate narrative that admits her own politicised desires and positionality. This approach is, of course, profoundly embedded in an early 1990s postmodern paradigm that privileges identity politics and the consumption of, rather than production of, images. However, the essay examples an important intervention into the narrative structures and devices that secure women artists within art history's conventional frames, thereby permitting the artwork's limited historical meaning. It also offers one particular example of how this history can be written differently.

⁵⁴ Alison Rowley, 'On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville: *rethinking a feminist practice of painting*,' in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: A Feminist Reading*, ed. Griselda Pollock (London; New York: Routledge, 1996): 88-109, 99.

Irit Rogoff offers a further historiographical intervention in the essay ‘Gossip as Testimony’ (1996). Published in the same volume as Rowley’s text, Rogoff explores the intriguing potential of ‘gossip’ to disrupt the scholarly conventions of art historical research, and to offer a seemingly simple yet highly effective tool for interrogating the epistemic boundaries that delineate disciplinary knowledge. Gossip, according to Rogoff, can trouble our understanding of art history’s authoritative realism (i.e. its claim to re-present an objective historic ‘reality’) and make readers aware that what appears as natural, such as art history’s objects and sources, is always a politically informed decision.⁵⁵ The integration of gossip - characterised as feminine, frivolous and highly subjective - troubles art history’s masculine, serious and objective appearance.⁵⁶ By emphasising that which is conventionally extrinsic to art’s historical sites of evidence, Rogoff effectively makes visible the always invested limits of the discourse and refutes the possibility of historical impartiality. This unsettling of art history’s orthodox sources and methods has obvious ramifications that go beyond the base question of gossip, to interrogate whose histories and which objects are included in the discipline. Rogoff’s essay expresses an expansionist approach, by suggesting that one method of undermining art history’s illusory objectivism could be to employ non-conventional sources in scholarly writing. This extends academic developments that had occurred throughout the 1980s, at discursive sites including the art magazine *Block* (1979-89) which contested the object-oriented discipline of art history by insisting upon the inclusion, and cross-referencing, of design histories and cultural theory.⁵⁷ Striving to encompass non-traditional production such as performance, tapestry and weaving, for instance, feminist art history has consistently attempted to unsettle the frameworks delineating ‘high’ cultural production from ‘low’.

⁵⁵ Irit Rogoff, ‘Gossip as Testimony: a postmodern signature,’ in Pollock, *Generations and Geographies*, 57-65. For more on the potential of gossip to trouble a conventional idea of historical evidence, please see Gavin Butt, *Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World, 1948-1963* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ For more on the gendering of the discipline, see: Mary Garrard, ‘Of Men, Women and Art: Some Historical Reflections,’ *Art Journal* 35.4 (Summer 1976): 324-329. Within this vein of thinking, one possible criticism of Rogoff’s argument is that, in elevating gossip through an academic text loaded with poststructuralist language, does she run the risk of *decontaminating* gossip, and lessening its threat by reframing it within the logics of history and theory? The contradiction – of elevating a threatening category of hysterical, feminine knowledge to a scholarly perspective – possibly risks replicating the legitimating strategies criticised by Schor.

⁵⁷ *Block* was published at Middlesex Polytechnic between 1979 to 1989, and is discussed further in Chapter Two.

Rogoff employs the example of Munich's historical avant-garde to illustrate her argument concerning gossip and narrative, in particular the rumours of bohemian love affairs that continuously (re)surface through hearsay: 'Their presence speaks of the investment we have in the imaginary concepts of bohemia as linked to radically innovative artistic gestures and to heroic artistic agents.'⁵⁸ Rogoff's example cleverly highlights the 'way in which we shape narrative through our own desire'.⁵⁹ This realisation forces a self-questioning, an interrogation of historical knowledge and what function art historians desire it to serve. In producing new perspectives, do feminist writers inadvertently carry over previous prejudice or false consciousness? Do they maintain a desire for feminist 'heroines' valiantly opposing and overthrowing the status quo? Or would such stories of feminist opposition simply replicate avant-gardist structures? This self-reflexive questioning can alert researchers to the ever-present risks involved in history writing, particularly how personal (yet, always materially embedded) desires shape research directives.

To return to Rowley's text about Saville's artistic heritage, this article is especially significant for what it *unintentionally* reveals about the writer's motivations. Rowley criticises newspaper journalists for not making matrilineal connections between Saville and the photographer Jo Spence, claiming that this was due to the cultural devaluation of such a relationship in the patrilineally inclined narratives of art history. Yet, the works under discussion were only produced by Spence in 1990, around which time Saville's paintings were also made, and it would therefore have been almost impossible for these matrilineal influences to have been established with such speed. The issue of generation is powerfully raised here, for even if Spence was 36 years older than Saville, their works discussed by Rowley were contemporaneous. Does Rowley's argument therefore imply that the subject matter and approach of Spence belong, ideologically, to a feminist past despite the artworks' production date? Therefore, although I agree with Rowley's broader arguments about art history's legitimising tendencies, it is plausible that the example chosen reveals more about Rowley's personal, if still political, writerly desires to redress this tendency, rather than the historical truth of the situation.

In searching for a maternal precedent to Saville's painting practice, Rowley arguably ended up tracing an artistic influence that may or may not have, in reality,

⁵⁸ Irit Rogoff, 'Gossip as Testimony', *Generations and Geographies*, 62

⁵⁹ Rogoff, 62.

been possible. As Amelia Jones and Hilary Robinson have separately pointed out – in relation to the VALIE EXPORT’s *Aktionhose: GenitalPanik* performance that did not, in fact, happen in 1969 as reported – an analysis of the mythification of this performance, and its consequent retelling within feminist art history, is far more interesting than the debate of whether it did or did not take place. This suspension of the archival impulse is refreshing, for as the writer Carolyn Steedman has wittily pointed out (paraphrasing historian Christine Crosby), often the modern practice of history ‘is just one long exercise in the deep satisfaction of *finding things*.’⁶⁰ The chapters in this thesis relate quite specifically to particular institutional sites, but they could not be described as ‘archival’ in a traditional sense. Many of the materials that I have chosen to work with are pretty well-worn, but I believe they can continue to offer up insights through careful re-readings (the high-profile publications surrounding the US Feminist Art Program, for example). But, if research questions define research outcomes, it is important not to embark upon this enquiry to ‘find things’ from a pre-elected position. As the scholarship discussed below makes clear (written by Dimitrakaki and Nochlin, and so expressed by different feminist ‘generations’ in art history), it is in the *interruption* of desire, the *failure* of both writers to find what they were looking for, that new knowledges and histories could be written.

In an essay originally published in 2000, Dimitrakaki points to exclusions *within feminist narratives* and makes clear that it is in the unpleasant interruption of our narrative desires that the boundaries of the discourse become evident. ‘[I]n Britain in the early 1990s, I never happened to come across the name of a single Greek woman artist, living and working in Greece, in the body of writing called feminist art history.’⁶¹ Significantly, she attributes this omission *not* to a casual dismissal on the part of Anglo-American feminist art history when it came to the feminist histories of European ‘peripheries’ but on the fact that the Greek feminist art scene did not share the concerns of a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-ethnic society such as those of Britain and the USA – where Dimitrakaki was being educated as a feminist art historian. The works produced in a Greek context,

⁶⁰ Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 10.

⁶¹ Angela Dimitrakaki, ‘Researching Culture/s and the Omitted Footnote: Questions on the Practice of Feminist Art History,’ (orig. 2000), reprinted in *Over Here: International Perspectives on Art and Culture*, ed. Jean Fisher et al., (Cambridge Mass.; MIT Press, 2004), 355.

especially between the 1970s and the 1990s, when Anglo-American feminism was redrafting art history's research concerns, would have appeared out of synch with the issues highlighted by Anglo-American feminism (she cites, as an example, the double exclusion of black women artists, of which Greece apparently had none). A significant implication that emerges here is that *both* the Greek and Anglo-American feminist art scenes were equally 'historically produced' and limited in the research programmes they proposed, even if the first played the role of a periphery and the second that of a centre. This relation emerged for reasons that had nothing to do with feminism, but with all that these two positions suggest about power – indeed, the locative power to deliver art histories of international, or even global, validity. Dimitrakaki's initial desire to read a significant national history of feminism, in a site where it was entirely absent, exposes the art historical discipline's limitations and exclusions (even as the discipline was being re-configured through the feminist enquiry). It becomes clear in this example that desires are learned, are produced through very particular socio-historical relations, such as national contexts but more specifically through the educational contexts these shape. They can therefore be unlearned, but only through continual reassessment, exposure and interrogation. Dimitrakaki's analysis therefore indicates that the formulation of research questions and development of scholarly frameworks, however radical, do not operate over and above historical priorities and ideological blindspots. As Marxist geographer David Harvey puts it,

[t]he search for...possibilities is, given the dialectical rules of engagement, contained within, rather than articulated *before* or *after* social practices, including those of research process. It is never, therefore, a matter of choosing between different applications of neutral knowledge, but always an embedded search of possibilities that lies at the heart of dialectical argumentation.⁶²

The embeddedness of academic research is also foregrounded in Nochlin's essay of 1986, which explores Gustave Courbet's painting *L'origine du monde*, and explicates the layers of narrative, mythic desires that compel art historical research. Nochlin's essay begins with a search for the physical painting, before spiralling into a

⁶² David Harvey (orig. 1996). Quoted in Dimitrakaki, 'Researching Culture/s and the Omitted Footnote.' Emphasis added.

psychoanalytically-informed discussion of origin myths, the artist's studio, and the gendered terms in which these narrative constructions are couched. Nochlin subtly concludes by suggesting that her (unfulfilled) search for the original Courbet painting 're-enacts the infinite repetitiveness of desire, the impossible quest for the lost original'.⁶³

In compiling this thesis it is possible that I set out four years ago, hoping to make sense of and explain 'feminist art history' as if it were a defined object of study with a locatable beginning, middle and end. Of course I have discovered that is not possible and, following the example of Dimitrakaki and Nochlin, must instead treat feminist art and art history as *relational*, an endlessly deferred quest for historical truth that can, nevertheless, produce some concrete effects. As this section makes clear, undertaking art historical writing is in itself an always profoundly political endeavour, by selecting a subject and approach and thus relegating to the periphery all other possible choices. The overview below thus attempts to clarify the choices made in writing this particular history.

Feminist Historiographies

This introductory discussion has concentrated upon the methodologically-reflexive approaches of art historians who have self-consciously posed their writing as a feminist intervention within the mainstream narratives of the discipline. (To be clear, throughout this thesis I use the terms 'mainstream', 'conventional', or 'institutionally-dominant' to refer to conservative art historical discourses that are not produced from within an explicitly feminist perspective.⁶⁴ Of course this 'mainstream' work is not itself unitary and varies greatly in political scope and method.) This overview has not been deliberately ahistorical, but it was less complicated, practically, and less limiting, theoretically, to explore a definition of feminist art history writing in general, rather than attempting to locate or delineate particular schools or periods within this historiography. As previously mentioned, Hemmings has carried out this categorising research far more deeply than I could hope to here. In *Why Stories Matter* she effectively problematises the hegemonic

⁶³ Linda Nochlin, 'Courbet's *L'origin du monde*: The Origin without an Original' (1986), reprinted in *Feminism-Art-Theory*, ed. Hilary Robinson: 254-250, 249.

⁶⁴ 'Institutionally dominant' is a term borrowed from Jonathan Harris who uses it in *The New Art History*, 2001.

chronologies underpinning the history of feminist theory; chronologies that create defined temporal periods and impose a false evolutionary narrative from, for example, essentialism to pluralism.⁶⁵ The consolidation of feminism's legacies within historicised narratives is something my thesis aims to challenge, but with greater implicitness than Hemmings' stimulating work, used here as an example. Within the discipline of art history specifically, in 2011 a somewhat reductive paper by Michelle Meagher drew explicitly upon Hemmings' genealogical writing to emphasise the constructed division between essentialism and theory in histories of the US feminist art movement.⁶⁶ It has been mentioned elsewhere that a particular moment around 1990 announced a series of breaks,

between essentialism and post-structuralism; 'second-wave' feminism and postcolonial/women of colour feminism; Anglo-American and French feminisms; national/Western and transnational feminisms; feminist and queer theory etc. etc. – were manufactured as narrative devices in the telling, in the West at least, of a developmental story of feminist theory.⁶⁷

This developmental story, constructed around twenty-five years ago, has been discredited by feminist scholars in a now well-established re-evaluation.⁶⁸ It has, however, been true that historiographical overviews of feminist art history tended to create opposition between 'theoretical' (or postmodern, academic) feminisms and 'activist' (or essentialist) feminisms. Nearly thirty years ago, in 1987, Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews produced a lengthy synopsis of art historical discourse as informed by feminism. Published in *The Art Bulletin*, the flagship publication of the US College Art Association, 'The Feminist Critique of Art History' is arguably the first institutionally condoned essay to address this question.⁶⁹ American art historians Norma Broude and Mary Garrard immediately published a response in the same journal, criticising the earlier article's manufacturing of

⁶⁵ Hemmings, 2011.

⁶⁶ Michelle Meagher, 'Telling Stories About Feminist Art,' *Feminist Theory* 12 (2011): 297-316. Although these publications appear to clash (both in 2011), Meagher in fact draws upon an earlier journal article by Hemmings, published in *Feminist Theory* in 2005: 'Telling Feminist Stories'.

⁶⁷ Hesford and Diedrich, *Feminist Theory*, 15.2 (Aug 2014): 106.

⁶⁸ For more on this re-evaluation see: Amelia Jones, ed. *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist History* (LA; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). Helen Molesworth, 'House Work and Art Work,' *October* 92 (Spring 2000): 71-97. Pollock, *Generations and Geographies*.

⁶⁹ Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews, 'The Feminist Critique of Art History,' *The Art Bulletin* 69.3 (Sept 1987): 326-357.

feminist art history ‘artificially and divisively into two generations.’⁷⁰ This historical narrative, that has continued to exert considerable influence over the years, establishes an initial, US-centric generation (including Broude and Garrard) as less theoretically astute than a subsequent, UK-based generation (including Tickner and Pollock). Historians from both sides of this supposed divide have criticised the article and, in 1996, Pollock contributed an extended deconstruction of the text, focussing upon its neat classifications which, in her view, flatten out lived histories.⁷¹ Despite these criticisms the text remains an extremely important record of feminist art history, particularly due to its publication within the pages of such a prestigious journal.

However, although Gouma-Peterson and Mathews’ article implies that a theoretical feminism is superior to its essentialist precedent, this view is by no means shared by all writers on the subject. This brings us back to the question of what’s *feminist* about feminist art history? In her article of 1991 (mentioned earlier), Schor criticised the highly specialised style of art history writing that was associated with UK feminists in ‘The Feminist Critique’, designating it patrilineal because, ‘legitimation is also established through the invocation...of a particular group of [male] authors’.⁷² Schor carefully suggests that the usefulness of such strategies should not ‘vitiating some discussion on the ambiguities and ironies’ of legitimating feminism by reference to the ‘mega-father’, and she targets Pollock in particular for ‘relying so heavily on a male system to validate female practice’.⁷³ Later, in 2005, Broude and Garrard again refer to Tickner and Pollock to substantiate their claims that feminist art historians who rely upon male theorists (such as Marx, Lacan, Freud) are shying away ‘from women’s real-life experiences’.⁷⁴ Although I empathise with the sentiment behind these claims – especially Schor’s encouragement for women to draw strength from an intellectual sisterhood – I cannot help but understand this invocation of ‘activist feminism’ against ‘largely masculinist

⁷⁰ Broude et al., ‘Discussion: An Exchange on the Feminist Critique of Art History,’ *The Art Bulletin* 71.1 (1989): 124-27, 124.

⁷¹ Pollock, *Generations and Geographies*.

⁷² Schor, 58.

⁷³ Schor, 63.

⁷⁴ Broude and Garrard, *Reclaiming Feminist Agency: Feminist Art History After Postmodernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 2.

postmodernism' as regressively establishing a clear association between women and the material, men and the mind.⁷⁵

Criticising women artists and writers, for referentially securing their work to masculine precedents, engenders a strict binary between the two and essentialises feminism as 'something to do with women'. It also produces a worrying split between 'male theory' and 'female activism'.⁷⁶ Although the word activism has been recuperated by political discourse in the early twenty-first century, it remains critical that we differentiate such potentially affirmative recuperation from the concurrent repression of women's histories.⁷⁷ The two share many elements, not least a rejection or progression beyond postmodernist textual paradigms. For instance, in their impressive anthology *Reclaiming Feminist Agency* (2005), Broude and Garrard argued that 'feminism *after* postmodernism' entailed a 'return to real-world issues'.⁷⁸ Although the authors are striving, as the title of their collection suggests, to reform 'Feminist Agency', their arguments troublingly replicate the gendered mind-body dualism underpinning western philosophical traditions. Thus the anthology points to a distinction that must be carefully maintained: in moving beyond postmodernism (not rejecting its knowledges, but recognising the renewed importance of addressing material conditions) we must resist falling into the trap of male theory versus female experience or activism. This would simply uphold the implication that sober, masculine critique holds the potential to produce serious revolutionary politics, in counterpoint to feminism which is cast as an instinctive, hysterical activism. Recent writings by, for example, theorist Lena Gunnarsson point the way forward for feminist theory to amalgamate new materialist strategies with postmodernism's theoretical legacies (through the framework of critical realism), and feminist art history must find a way to incorporate these arguments without falling back on damaging binaries.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Broude and Garrard, *Reclaiming Feminist Agency*, 4.

⁷⁶ For more on the gendered conditions of Cartesian dualism please see Sherry B Ortner, 'Is Male to Female as Culture is to Nature?' (orig.1972), reprinted in *Feminism-Art-Theory*, ed. Robinson. And Amelia Jones, *Body Art*.

⁷⁷ Naomi Greyser and Margot Weiss, eds., 'Academia and Activism,' special issue, *American Quarterly* 64.4 (Dec 2012).

⁷⁸ Broude and Garrard, *Reclaiming Feminist Agency*, vii.

⁷⁹ Lena Gunnarsson, 'A Defence of the Category "Woman",' *Feminist Theory* 12.1 (2011): 23-37. 'The Naturalistic Turn in Feminist Theory: A Marxist-Realist Contribution,' *Feminist Theory* 14.1 (2013): 3-19.

This division raises a tricky question for my own methodology within this thesis. By attending to historiography so closely (although more broadly conceived as history production) I have been obliged to pay less attention to the history of feminist theory, and the intertwining discourses are perhaps cast into an implicit, but false, distinction.⁸⁰ This introduction has, however, provided a brief opportunity to think through the theory of feminist history writing to a degree. A second question that I have not been able to address in adequate detail is that of art history's striking interdisciplinarity; as a disciplinary formation it appears particularly unstable, even in comparison with other humanities subjects. A fuller analysis of its methodological traditions needs to be attended to, but basically we can appreciate that art historians have borrowed liberally from aesthetics as a branch of philosophy, critical theory, history and the philosophy of historiography, comparative literature and literary criticism; in addition to maintaining hazy disciplinary distinctions with visual culture studies, performance and film studies. Art history is thus a complex amalgam of various methodologies and approaches and, it seems, this (in conjunction with its revered status in bourgeois society) has provided great opportunities for feminist intervention and critique. Hence the rapidly changing focuses of the discipline, especially since the 1970s when it evolved to encompass aspects of cultural studies, visual culture, and curatorial studies.

However, regardless of these questions around disciplinary form, my analysis is addressed to assessing the work that art history does, both ideologically and materially – and, in particular, how feminism has addressed itself to the modernist bases of the discourse, which are understood to support a conservative, bourgeois, masculine subject, and urges a move beyond this. In the conclusions to the thesis I will return to this issue and enquire as to whether these modernist alliances have been disengaged (at least in some contemporary forms of art history's making; bastions of conservative culture inevitably remain) and, if so, to which orthodoxies should feminism be addressing its critique in the 2010s?

⁸⁰ My choice may be even be unconsciously related to cultural theorist Alan Kirby's argument, made in an online essay of 2006, that 'Theory' – which he firmly relates to postmodernist cultural paradigms – has been abandoned by younger scholars, who he identifies as those born after 1985. '[O]ne can go to literary conferences (as I did in July) and sit through a dozen papers which make no mention of Theory, of Derrida, Foucault, Baudrillard. The sense of superannuation, of the impotence and the irrelevance of so much Theory among academics, also bears testimony to the passing of postmodernism.' 'The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond,' *Philosophy Now* 58 (2006), accessed 23 July 2014, at: https://philosophynow.org/issues/58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond.

Thesis Overview

This exploration of historiographical interventions has been admittedly selective, yet it hopefully demonstrates the diversity of approaches employed by writers striving to reconstruct the discipline from a feminist perspective. Because of its flourishing position as a historically-evolving and self-reflexively shifting discourse, feminist art history refutes the closing-down of meaning (through *definitive* illustrations) that ‘A History of...’ usually entails. Instead, my work is intended to provide a highly specific, yet manifestly partial, glimpse into the impact of feminism upon the writing of art history at its most crucial sites of production. The huge amount of potential research material has forced me to implement some clear, and occasionally somewhat arbitrary, boundaries: for example, in choosing to focus on the production of institutional art histories my examination neglects the equally important question of consumption, a question for another project perhaps.⁸¹ This focus on production is nevertheless timely, given the recent resurgence of radical discourse articulating an interrogative elucidation of the production imperative, as it is most crucially relocated from the economy as a sphere of human activity to the construction of subjectivity itself – following especially the global financial crisis of 2008 onwards.⁸² A focus on the political economy of knowledge *production* allows me to examine the specific institutional sites from which this scholarly work has been done, and indicates its inextricability from the unequally divided (along gendered and classed lines) base of production.

The thesis is furthermore limited to an exploration of feminist art history writing across Euro-American contexts although it focuses primarily upon the UK and US. The reasons for this delimitation are twofold. Firstly, as James Elkins has carefully researched and articulated, although art history is in the process of becoming increasingly globalised as an institutional discipline, statistics demonstrate

⁸¹ In her 1994 historical analysis, Karen-Edis Barzman suggests that shifting the focus to consumption rather than production allowed postmodern feminism to leave behind the object-based narratives of art history in favour of an identity-based discourse in which the intersubjective meanings produced when encountering a cultural work gain precedence. ‘Beyond the Canon,’ *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 52.3 (1994): 327-339.

⁸² See in particular Dimitrakaki, *Gender, artWork and the Global Imperative*, and Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Anti-Work Politics and Post-Work Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

it has been historically confined to western national contexts.⁸³ Secondly, the irregular development of the feminist political project across the globe, and particularly how this development intersects with art and art history production, requires a precise examination that cannot be offered here. To account for the myriad feminist developments in art history globally would hinder the fundamental aims of this thesis; but as an incomplete, continuing research project I hope the wider range of feminist locations will be addressed in future.

The thesis is divided into four chapters, each working across a different institutional site, pertaining to: the classroom; the professional association; the museum; finally returning to the site of the artwork itself. Historiography is understood in an expanded sense that exceeds simply *writing* history and takes in the knowledges formed through: the affective relations engendered through pedagogy; academic institutional participation and delimitation; spatial and institutional aspects of exhibition-making; art practice as historically relational labour that is productive of knowledge. Conceiving of historiography in this, less resolutely textual, sense displaces lone scholarly ‘writing’ as the primary mode of art historical knowledge production, thereby mirroring feminism’s historic displacement of the art object as privileged site within art history. As in that instance this shift in focus entails a realignment with practice and process rather than a fixed outcome.

The hegemonic persistence of a disciplinary model enacted through specific institutional sites and institutionalised processes, as Jon Bird described it in an article of 1986, marginalises women as a ‘site of difference’:

In its most pervasive sense then, the Romantic discursive formation is the embeddedness of that discourse within the institutions of art – the selection, training and practice of artists, art teachers, historians and critics (with the attendant operation of processes of exclusion from those activities), the architectural structure of the art college or university including the design of lecture theatres and studios; the use of double-projection, the arrangement of seating, etc.; the design and layout of art galleries and museums, the economic relations of the art market at all levels; the relation between those discourses and the marketing of commodities through the attribution or connotation of artistic/aesthetic values and, ultimately the articulation of all or any of these discourses in (neo-conservative) political discourses of possessive

⁸³ James Elkins, *Is Art History Global?* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007).

individualism, free enterprise, and sexual identity – a trajectory which flows from the visible and discrete to the invisible and fragmentary.⁸⁴

Here, Bird points to a central proposition of my thesis: that the discipline of ‘art history’ (however unstable and shifting) is produced and reproduced through particular institutions, which can include less obvious articulations such as pedagogic relations. These institutions condition the knowledge produced within them and *A History of Feminist Art History* thus seeks to excavate and elaborate how feminist interventions have negotiated these sites, critiqued existing and written new art histories. Moreover, in 2014 an analysis must be addressed to the relationship between this past to the present, asking how this historical intervention can be renewed for contemporary contexts. Echoing Bird’s description, the first three chapters in this thesis attempt a dual consideration of feminism’s interventional impact upon both the concrete conditions of an institutional site and the art historical discourses that are produced there. The fourth does something different by returning to the contested site of the artwork, with its associated logic of individual bohemian creativity, to suggest a theoretical manoeuvre that accounts for art’s production, as labour, within an epistemic community of women art makers.

In their writings, many feminist art historians have rejected the linear tidiness, the illusionist ‘worldview’ purported by cohesive academic texts, and have instead emphasised the partiality and incompleteness of their research. For example, Pollock describes feminist theory as ‘a form of bricolage’.⁸⁵ This word, ‘bricolage’, is also employed by Nochlin to describe her reasons for preferring to publish articles, ‘which reflect more immediately what I think. I am not a narrative person who would think in terms of the grand finale.’⁸⁶ Judy Loeb’s edited book of 1979 already reflects this disjointedness in its title, *Feminist Collage*, wherein she advocates an incomplete and textured sense of history, built up from collaged scraps and fragments.⁸⁷ This is an approach I tend to engage throughout my thesis – whether intentionally, or as a result of my own research process – rather than presenting an overarching theory, narrative or conclusion. The chapters do not necessarily work harmoniously; in fact,

⁸⁴ Jon Bird, ‘Art History and Hegemony,’ (1986/87), reprinted in *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, ed. Bird (London; New York: Routledge, 1996): 68-86, 78.

⁸⁵ Pollock, *Generations and Geographies*, 3.

⁸⁶ Martina Pachmanova, interview with Linda Nochlin, in *Mobile Fidelities: Conversations on Feminism, Visibility and History*, (London: KT Press, 2006), 15-22, 17. Available online as an ebook.

⁸⁷ Judy Loeb, eds., *Feminist Collage: Educating Women in the Visual Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

there may even be antagonisms between both the historical texts presented and my readings of them, due, I think, to feminism's profoundly divided position as an intellectual discourse and as a political approach. It is best therefore to read each chapter as offering an invested and partial glimpse into a historical, institutional articulation of feminist scholarly production – *that begins to express a framework for considering what this moment can offer to feminism today*. As a result of this bricolaged research process, I do not offer an enclosed, summarising 'conclusion' to the thesis; instead I offer a three-part critique addressing feminism's present within popular culture, current scholarship's relationship to its own histories, and briefly gesture towards a possible future for art historiography.

Thesis Structure

Chapter One examines the function of critical pedagogy as a tool for political activism by exploring the histories and theoretical propositions offered by feminist art educators since 1970. Constructing a focussed historical overview, the aim of the chapter is to locate definitions of 'feminist pedagogy' from within art historical discourse and to explore its role in both *deconstructing* and *reconstructing* academic frameworks through critique. One fundamental question that will be considered is whether the greater learning autonomy promoted through liberal feminist pedagogies has been particularly amenable to the neo-liberal reorganising of education over the past forty years. Entangled with this question is the wider issue of whether post-1968 emancipatory pedagogies have been exhausted, and the chapter looks briefly to the strike or refusal as a potential site of re-engagement. The examination ultimately demonstrates that a 'feminist art history' without a prominent pedagogical imperative is politically ineffective and that – thinking again of the strike – feminism must explore the pedagogy of politics rather than relying upon (only) liberal, formal concerns within political pedagogy.

The second chapter seeks to investigate the coincident emergence of feminist art historical discourse and the professional organisation for British scholars, the Association of Art Historians (AAH), founded in 1974. The intersections between feminist art historical knowledge production and the nascent institutionalisation of the discipline provide a fascinating glimpse into British art history during the period

1974 to 1990, when it assumed many of the disciplinary characteristics that continue to define it today. During this period the humanities were fundamentally challenged by the ‘new social histories’ and the reception of these innovative approaches by the AAH raises intriguing questions about the nature of historical knowledge and disciplination. This research makes use of the as-yet-uncatalogued AAH archives at the V&A, early issues of the *Art History* journal, and refers to contemporaneous periodicals, in order to draw comparisons. The conclusions to this chapter elaborate the relation between 1980s and 2010s British art history, asking what lessons we can learn from this fairly recent period of intellectual development.

Chapter Three is divided into two sections, which work together to address the impact of feminist critique upon the art museum. The first section examines explicitly feminist negotiations of the historical survey format from the 1970s to 2000s, to uncover methodologies of exhibition-making that reflexively produce feminist perspectives on art’s historiography. Whether these exhibition strategies challenge or empower the institutions that house them is a theme that bridges the two sections – in other words: do feminist displays simply exhibit politics, do they create political (or politicising) exhibits? The second section thus looks at the example of Tate Britain and two displays of socialist-feminist art practice to demonstrate that the twenty-first-century, capitalist institution is recuperating oppositional critique into its corporate spaces with disquieting ease. Whether feminist organising (as considered in the first section) can challenge this recuperation is briefly considered in the conclusions.

Chapter Four proposes the artwork as a force, alongside the academy and museum, in remaking the discipline and its institutions. This shift in focus is intended to materially ground the process of historical knowledge production, which is too often understood as taking place *after* the pioneering creation of visual art. My argument considers artworks by a variety of artists working throughout the past four decades, and each of the pieces examined examples an instance in which women explicitly rewrite art history, either replotting the stories of art’s great masters or re-inscripting their work within a feminist matrilineage of art. While women’s art has been historically construed as natural, as inseparable from their lives, bodies and *femininity*, appropriating art historical tropes forces the visibility of their art within existing historical frameworks, thus emphasising that their art is the product of *labour*. This labour is part of an industry with distinct histories and, in order to

participate, the artists have had to learn and work through these narratives. The final chapter is shorter than the others, as it does not include the wealth of archival materials that the previous three contain; it is instead closely focussed on detailing a precise theoretical manoeuvre. Most crucially, by encouraging the reader to consider art historical knowledge as processual (a perspective that is repeated throughout the thesis's arguments, although less explicitly), this concluding chapter reflects back upon the previous three and casts new and disruptive meanings upon the research. Shifting from a focus on institutions to instituting process is useful, in so far as it stresses the always transitory nature of these formations and, therefore, their potential for remaking.

A brief note on the referencing throughout: I have included a substantial amount of supporting material in footnotes. This includes references to further reading, additional archival evidence, or substantive points of my own. I chose this method of footnoting in order not to overburden the main narrative of the study, which should, as a result, remain uncluttered and engaging for the reader. Although the research is not arranged in a strict chronology, each chapter loosely emphasises a subsequent period in feminist thought. Therefore, the first chapter engages primarily with a 1970s archive pertaining to education, the second relates to 1980s publishing contexts, the focus on the curatorial in the third chapter is unthinkable without the 'curatorial turn' of the 1990s, and the analysis in my final chapter foregrounds a sense of the present writing of feminist history as an ceaselessly renewed, grounded process that struggles to alter the circumstances in which we currently live.

Feminist Art Pedagogy: Challenging Institutional Structures through the Classroom

Art history is better understood as a medium for the circulation of ideas – and ideology – throughout contemporary Western culture. *The management of this circulation is the real work of a discipline and its institutions.*¹

The academic discipline of art history is a complexly intersecting set of processes, enacted through the scholarly apparatuses of the institution, that establish an organised, and reciprocally organising, disciplinary structure. Arguably even more so than the site of the museum or auction house, the university acts as a crucial centre for the reproduction of art history's ideological structures, as it is at the site of the classroom that new generations of scholars, critics and artists are inculcated into the privileged language of the discipline. Adapting Michel Foucault's foundational theorisation on the subject of power and institutions, the above epigraph from Elizabeth C Mansfield characterises disciplinary structures as bureaucratic and controlling of the scholarly knowledge that is produced and circulated within them.² This paradox remains at the heart of the academic institution: although mutual frameworks are inevitably necessary to produce and sustain legible conversations between scholars and to permit the transfer of knowledge to learning subjects, these structures have the power to simultaneously 'discipline' or limit or politically neutralise this knowledge.

For feminist scholars this paradox has posed particular problems. The new perspectives offered in response to the historic silence surrounding women's art required the legitimating function of the academic institution, whilst simultaneously endeavouring to maintain an immanent feminist critique of its power. Feminism's

¹ Elizabeth C Mansfield ed., 'Introduction,' in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions* (Routledge: London, 2007): 1-9, 1. Emphasis added.

² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (orig. 1975) (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979). See particularly section 3.1 'Docile Bodies,' which explores the establishment of state education as a technology of control, alongside the primary case study of the prison system, 135-169.

relationship to art history is therefore a profoundly ambiguous one and the terms of this strategic engagement require constant and self-reflexive evaluation.

Education and women's lack of access to it (both historically and presently, as '[t]wo-thirds of the 130 million children worldwide who are not in school are girls') is a palpable exercise in power and the control of knowledge.³ It is understood that, in the late nineteenth century, when the modern university and the scholarly discipline of art history were consolidated, this institutional apparatus acted as an instrument of bourgeois and particularly national identity formation.⁴ More than a century later, under globalised systems of political economy and education, art history serves very different purposes; yet, as Jonathan Harris has argued, the discipline remains 'implicated in the production and reproduction of dominant economic, political and cultural values and systems.'⁵ Carol Duncan has more specifically highlighted the function of arts education, with its underlying implication of individual *improvement*, for reproducing an 'ideology of aesthetic elitism'.⁶ It is clear that the liberal humanist and democratic ideals, upon which the Euro-American university system and its discipline of art history are purportedly based, have been challenged since the institutional upheavals of 1968. Understanding these changes and assessing the pedagogical tools available is crucial to sustaining a renewed (although not necessarily 'new') form of feminist teaching in the twenty-first-century academy. Feminism, I will suggest, as a form of institutional critique (although also, to an extent, *institutionalised* critique), is duty-bound to question education's function as a system of reproducing ideology and power by endeavouring towards a radical educational practice.⁷

The general aim of this thesis is to chart the effects of 'feminism' upon the production and regulation of 'art history' (appreciating that both terms are evolving and unstable) across a series of institutional sites. Understanding historiography in an

³ Figures supplied by the United Nations, as of 1997:

<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/women96.htm>. UNICEF also publishes annual statistics on the exact numbers per country.

⁴ Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁵ Jonathan Harris, 'The Chic of the New,' review of misc., *Oxford Art Journal* 10.1 (1987): 116-122, 120.

⁶ Carol Duncan, *The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in Critical Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 139.

⁷ Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artist's Writings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009). Here Alberro argues that feminism can be understood as a specific form of institutional critique: 'feminism and institutional critique...I am linking the two here because I think the dynamic is essentially the same,' 12.

expanded sense that exceeds writing to take in affective social encounters, this chapter in particular focuses on the material space of the classroom or studio; terms that I use somewhat interchangeably throughout.⁸ If feminism can be understood as both a mode of intellectual enquiry and a politics of history or knowledge, the space of the classroom holds particular relevance to its historiography. And yet, this chapter has undoubtedly been the most difficult to articulate in relation to my thesis. This is in large part attributable to its dual modality; the forms of feminist art pedagogy must be analysed to consider their (potential) effects upon the reproduction of art historical knowledge within the academy, and yet many of these programmes (and resulting texts) have themselves become *subjects of art history*, and are therefore subjected to particular ideological framing themselves. Fundamentally my examination considers (1) the history of feminist pedagogy, through concrete institutional examples and (2) the pedagogy of history, or how feminist teachers have endeavoured to use the material of art history in their educational practice.

Feminist pedagogy is not, of course, transcendental or ahistorical and must be researched with due consideration to both its historical context and present potential. The chapter's content therefore consists of three primary, although not even, analyses. First, the research gathers together a range of overlooked journal publications from the 1970s and 1980s in order to sketch an overview of this period and attempt to uncover a concrete history of feminist art programmes. Thereafter I draw out three principal pedagogic methods that feminist educators recurrently discuss in their explicatory texts, suggesting a genealogy for these and exploring their benefits and limits in greater detail. To do this, I concentrate on the writings of feminist artists and art historians, which often recount the material history of specific programmes whilst at the same time articulating their particular pedagogical approach. I have purposely disregarded the vast body of feminist literature available from educational studies, as these texts (barring exceptionally well known theorists such as Paulo Freire and bell hooks) are usually unfamiliar to art historians.⁹ Finally,

⁸ The artist's studio has a very particular mythology in modern art history, where it has been romantically constructed as a private bohemian space for the creative, masculine individual. For more on this history and its contestation after 1945 please see Caroline A Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998). I discuss the studio and its precise history with greater specificity in 'Separatism as Strategy' section, but generally, for simplicity's sake, I use the two words to refer to an educational space in an art college or university.

⁹ In the case of the University of Edinburgh, for example, education texts are housed in a separate library to those of arts and humanities, thereby further perpetuating a strict disciplinary boundary.

I interrogate the usefulness of the liberal, emancipatory education discourse that has dominated western philosophies since 1968 (including the principal historiographies of feminism) for twenty-first century contexts. In conclusively positing a renewed radicalism through pedagogy, I look briefly to the pedagogy inherent within refusal or strike, considering what this might mean for feminist scholars working at present.¹⁰

The analysis throughout this chapter centres on the title question of institutional critique or challenge; although, hopefully without essentialising the academy as ‘bad’ or inherently ‘un-feminist’. This institution is, at the same time, fundamental to the production, legitimation and transference of feminist knowledge – and, as American artist and writer Andrea Fraser is careful to point out, ‘the institution is us’.¹¹ It remains crucial, however, to pause and ask what a teaching practice is for, whom it is for, and how it can best serve a social purpose – or, perhaps more precisely, what social purpose can it serve? At its very base then, feminist pedagogy involves a questioning of power; it is an endeavour to equip students with critical tools to interrogate and reconstruct the world of knowledge by engaging with the histories of emancipatory thought. Therefore, as I argue in the conclusion to this chapter, feminist art history must not become extricated from a pedagogical imperative if it is to maintain both its material and ideological political functions.

Feminist Programmes in the US/UK Academy

Griselda Pollock asked, at a 1990 conference in New York, ‘Can Art History Survive the Impact of Feminism?’¹² Her response then, as she has reiterated since, was a

¹⁰ My focus on the strike is undoubtedly influenced by the re-emergence of a ‘struggle discourse’ during the period of my thesis research and writing. The tuition fees protests in the UK marked the beginning of my doctoral programme and Scotland’s independence referendum referendum marked its conclusion. The powerful, if fairly unconscious, effects of these social conflicts and struggle for national agency can surely be felt in my choice of subject matter here.

¹¹ Andrea Fraser, ‘From the Critique of Institutions to the Institution of Critique,’ In *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists’ Writings*, ed. by Alberro and Stimson, 408-425. I return to Fraser’s article in greater detail in the concluding section.

¹² Paper delivered at the Women’s Caucus for the Arts New York. See Pollock’s online lecture list: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cath/ahrc/people/gp/lectures.html>. She also refers to the paper in *Generations and Geographies*, 18.

resounding 'No'.¹³ This rhetorical exchange firmly establishes the two discourses in an embattled opposition and suggests that a truly feminist art history would no longer resemble the discipline that we now call that name. Evidently, feminism's position within the art college or university is a profoundly conflicted one. The professorial inauguration of Hilary Robinson, in 2013 at the University of Middlesex, was advertised with the statement: 'I am not now, nor have I ever been, an Art Historian.'¹⁴ While Lise Vogel took drastic measures in the early 1970s, recalling that: 'As the women's liberation movement gathered momentum around me, my involvement in its activities seemed increasingly at variance with my life as an art historian... I resigned from my position at Brown [University].'¹⁵ The conflicted conscience of feminism in relation to art history (which Vogel reminds us has profound repercussions for individual women's lives and careers, as well as the institutional effects examined here) requires further unpacking than is possible at this point. But, put simply, it appears that the conservatism and flagrant market-orientation of art history as an academic discipline raise particularly acute inconsistencies for those working under feminist principles. A few years earlier to Pollock's statement Lisa Tickner similarly, but more affirmatively, wrote that 'feminist art history cannot stay art history...yet at the same time feminism cannot leave art history, as there is *still too much to be done*.'¹⁶ But to what work is she referring, and how can these changes be achieved, particularly through the classroom?

In 1966, the first Women's Studies programme opened at San Diego State College.¹⁷ According to Helen Crowley: 'By 1980 over thirty universities in the UK were teaching feminist courses and by the end of the decade women's studies in one form or another was established in most institutions of higher education.'¹⁸ Women's Studies played an important role in fostering a sanctioned academic wing to the Women's Movement, shifting radical identity politics from the site of street-activism

¹³ 'I have argued elsewhere that art history does not survive the impact of feminism.' Pollock, et al., 'Art History and Its Theories,' *The Art Bulletin* 78.1 (March 1996): 6-25, 17.

¹⁴ <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/aboutus/news-events/events/inaugural-lecture-professor-hilary-robinson.aspx>

¹⁵ Lise Vogel, *Woman Questions: Essays for Materialist Feminism* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), 13.

¹⁶ Lisa Tickner, 'Feminism, Art History and Sexual Difference,' *Genders* 3 (Fall 1988): 92-129, 94.

¹⁷ Barbara Ehrlich White, 'A 1974 Perspective: Why Women's Studies in Art and Art History?' *Art Journal* 35.4 (Summer 1976): 340-344, 340.

¹⁸ Helen Crowley, 'Women's Studies: Between a Rock and a Hard Place, Or Just Another Cell in the Beehive?' *Feminist Review* 61 (1999): 131-150, 137.

into the realm of the university.¹⁹ Judging from Crowley's research findings, Women's Studies underwent a remarkable surge in academic popularity, probably due to the new discipline's obvious relevance for a formerly neglected, or even excluded, section of the student populace. As Tickner put it: 'In terms of the art schools, it [feminism] was like a warm knife through butter because they were full of women art students who'd been starved of these kinds of debates.'²⁰ Radical education reforms taking place at Hornsey College of Art in London had continued to sideline emergent politics around race and gender, and a recent study by Tickner points to the continuation of 'endemic sexism' even within this progressive space of institutional resistance.²¹ However, as this overview will evidence, despite intermittent moments of successful intervention (such as the 1980s surge in Women's Studies recorded by Crowley) feminism has maintained a largely fraught and ambiguous relationship with the academy. Feminism's difficulty in maintaining a productive intersection between social activism and academic enquiry emerges time and again as the main root of this conflict.

Linda Nochlin's essay 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' (1971) famously emphasised the violent capacity of the educational academy to exclude women and thereby perpetuate ideologically predetermined notions of artistic greatness. 'The fault', she argued, 'lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our *institutions and our education*.'²² Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock further extended the feminist critique of art history in their 1981 study *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*. They posited that educative restrictions not only limited women artists to particular 'feminine' genres of art (such as embroidery, for example) but that this asymmetrical process was fundamental to the disciplinary construction of a history of art that produced and sustained gendered hierarchies as encountered throughout society. Refusing the apparent objectivism of art history by noting its *historically* ideological

¹⁹ Less positively, Jonathan Harris mentions that 'some older radicals' such as TJ Clark understood the post-1968 period as a 'retreat into academia' for progressive social politics. *The New Art History*, 265.

²⁰ Tickner interviewed by Liz Bruchet for the Association of Art Historians (AAH) 'Oral Histories' project, 2009-11. See Bruchet in bibliography.

²¹ Lisa Tickner, *Hornsey 1968: The Art School Revolution* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2008), 93 & 96. Here Tickner is referring to a report by Paul Wood.

²² Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists' (1971), reprinted in Amelia Jones, *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (Routledge: London & New York, 2003): 229-33, 231. Emphasis added.

construction, the contemporary establishment of art education initiatives *about* women and specifically *for* women was therefore a strong political statement against the normatively masculine world of the academy and art college.

Rather than drawing upon or reworking the structures of conventional art history, or paralleling the art college's move away from modernism towards conceptualism, many of the programmes discussed below emerged within and alongside the formal pedagogic experiments of Women's Studies courses.²³ Indeed, in a 1974 article, Barbara Ehrlich White goes so far as to term feminist art education 'women's studies in art'.²⁴ These early feminist programmes adopted a multidisciplinary approach that blurred the epistemic boundaries between Women's Studies, Art History, Studio Practice and even Therapy, exploring topics beyond the conventional remit of the academy such as sexual assault, childcare, and reproductive rights. Recalling a 1991 course at the University of East London, Fiona Carson suggested that: 'Putting fine art into a Women's Studies context changes the art. It becomes art about life, not art about art'.²⁵ Expanding education to include everyday social relations prompted the creation of a radical pedagogical format that was, perhaps understandably, often short-lived in many of its institutional manifestations.²⁶

The first Feminist Art Program was established by Judy Chicago at Fresno State College in the USA in 1970. Former student Faith Wilding recalled that Fresno State provided an ideal institutional environment for establishing the course, as it already had a reputation as an experimentally liberal college.²⁷ She added: 'Chicago envisioned an art community of women who would implement feminist theories and practices to create work based on their common experiences in society'.²⁸ Following an application from fellow artist and educator Miriam Schapiro, Chicago moved to California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in 1971 and re-established the programme

²³ Tickner refers to Thierry du Duve's essay of 1994, 'When Form Has Become Attitude – And Beyond' as offering the best analysis of this 'anti-academic' alteration in art college education. See *Hornsey 1968*, p.91 n.33.

²⁴ Barbara Ehrlich White, 341.

²⁵ Misc., 'How Does the F-Word Inform Your Teaching?' in 'Girl Power and Education,' special issue of *Make: the magazine of women's art* 77 (1998), 10.

²⁶ Misc., 'How Does the F-Word Inform Your Teaching?' 10.

²⁷ 'Fresno students and faculty had founded an Experimental College which offered courses in Marxist politics, anarchist theory, and Black, Chicano, Armenian and Women's Studies.' Faith Wilding, 'The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts,' in *The Power of Feminist Art*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994): 32-47, 32.

²⁸ Wilding, 'The Feminist Art Programs,' 32.

as a jointly directed endeavour.²⁹ This second incarnation would culminate in the renowned Womanhouse installation in March 1972.³⁰ Although ostensibly the first course of its kind, the Feminist Art Program did not occur in isolation. Across the country on the east coast, for example, Nochlin was concurrently establishing the first explicitly feminist art history seminar at Vassar College (later moving to Stanford), which began in January 1970 under the title: ‘The Image of Women in the 19th and 20th Centuries’.³¹ And in the UK, vast transformations to Higher Education following various government reports in the 1960s led to the establishment of critical, although not necessarily feminist, courses (see Chapter Two).

Many other courses sprang up within Women’s Studies, Art History and Fine Art departments across the US in the 1970s and 1980s, although these have not been as well recorded and historicised as the Feminist Art Program (which really exists as a publishing anomaly in feminist art history, dominating the available literature).³² It is important to note the establishment of such courses in order to indicate more accurately the prevalence of feminist and women’s studies programmes, particularly in comparison to hostile conditions at present. As Vogel has noted, ‘feminist thought gained a special influence in academia during the 1970s’ and articulated ‘intimate links between theory and radical activism’.³³ However, the absence within educational establishments of their own programme histories makes it incredibly difficult to ascertain and track the emergence of feminist theory or activism *inside the classroom*, especially if classes are not labelled as such.³⁴ Thus, much of the

²⁹ The Fresno State Feminist Art Program continued under the leadership of Rita Yokoi until 1973 and, subsequently, Joyce Aiken to 1992. The CalArts Program dissolved after Chicago and Schapiro left, in 1972 and 1975 respectively.

³⁰ Womanhouse exhibition took place at a (now demolished) mansion at 533 Mariposa Street, Los Angeles: 30 January – 28 February 1972. Former students have since created responsive art projects: in 1996, Ulrike Müller organised an expansive project of letters and postcards between the ex-students (now hosted online); and, in 2014, Mira Schor curated, at A.I.R. Gallery New York, ‘A “Womanhouse” or a “Roaming House”? A “Room of One’s Own Today”’.

³¹ ‘The Image of Women in the 19th and 20th Centuries’ or ‘Seminar 364b.’ Linda Nochlin, ‘Starting from Scratch’, in Broude and Garrard, *The Power of Feminist Art*, 130-139.

³² I believe that art history’s canonisation of the Feminist Art Program reflects its continued reverence for the art object, ideally produced through creative struggle. Books and essays therefore tend to focus on the Womanhouse installation/exhibition rather than engaging with the implications of this, and other programme’s pedagogic processes, which are more difficult to address within the conventions of the discipline.

³³ Vogel, *Woman Questions*, 4.

³⁴ Many programmes have in all likelihood been established but not recorded in history. I attempted to locate course outlines from six UK universities, including Edinburgh, but these were not archived. The absence of these ephemera makes it incredibly difficult to ascertain the emergence of feminism inside the classroom, which would have clearly differed from the lengthier processes of publishing.

information in this chapter has been collated from a mere handful of special issue journals and retrospective articles that attempted to construct an emergent history of feminist art pedagogical practices throughout the 1970s-80s. In 1974, Muriel Magenta established a course titled 'Woman Image Now' at Arizona State University (discussed later), where she continues to work today running contemporary courses especially on women, art and technology.³⁵ In 1975 Judy Loeb established a 'Women and Art' course at the Women's Studies department of Eastern Michigan State University.³⁶ The following year both Evelyn Torton Beck and Josephine Withers set up 'Women in the Arts' courses at their respective institutions, The University of Wisconsin and The University of Maryland.³⁷ In 1977, Joan Marter began a Women's Studies class on 'Women in Art' at Douglass College, a women-only college at Rutgers University with a rich history of supporting female artists through such initiatives as the Women Artists Series of exhibitions.³⁸ (Marter continues to teach at Rutgers, where the Institute for Women and Culture and the *Women's Art Journal* are both based.)

Within UK contexts feminism surfaced in a very different and less immediately visible manner, inextricable from disciplinary advancements in Cultural Studies, Marxism, Visual or Film Studies, and the so-called 'new histories of art'. As Robinson has pointed out: 'The huge growth of explicitly feminist courses in the 1970s US could not happen here [UK and Ireland] because of the different educational structure, which was more informal and liberal, and thus less amenable

Mira Schor has emphasised the vital importance of feminists explicitly naming their research as such: 'Perhaps the most important political act I perform is to identify myself publicly as a feminist...But, nearly thirty years after the most recent major feminist art movement, like the love that dare not speak its name, feminism is the ism that dare not speak its name.' Mira Schor, *A Decade of Negative Thinking: Essays on Art, Politics and Daily Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 30.

³⁵ Muriel Magenta, 'Woman Image Now,' in 'Teaching About Woman and the Visual Arts,' ed. Thalia Gouma-Peterson, special issue, *Women's Studies Quarterly* 15.1/2 (1987): 56-7. (Henceforth referred to as *WSQ*, ed. Gouma-Peterson). As part of Magenta's extensive educational practice she has also organised national events (including at the Whitney Museum) and produces documentary films. Please see Magenta's current website:

<http://www.momentum-women-art-technology.com/momentum-motherboard.htm>.

³⁶ Judy Loeb, 'Our Women Artist/Teachers Need Our Help: On Changing Language, Finding Cultural Heritage, and Building Self-Image,' in ed. Betty Acuff, special issue *Art Education* 28.7 (1975): 9-11, 10.

³⁷ Evelyn Torton Beck and Josephine Withers, 'Women in Art: Two Approaches to Teaching,' in *WSQ*, ed. Gouma-Peterson, 45-50.

³⁸ Joan Marter, 'Strategies for Women in Art,' in *WSQ*, ed. Gouma-Peterson: 51-53. Marter recalls that the Women Artists Series began as an exhibition in the alternative spaces of the library lobby and around the information desks and that, as such, it was an invaluable space for disseminating knowledge to the library users.

to intervention, than the American system.’³⁹ However, throughout the 1970s feminism began to rapidly increase in educational prominence, often taking the form of independent collectives and reading groups rather than dedicated programmes of study. As a student in 1973, Pollock invited Nochlin to speak at the Courtauld Institute, about which she claims: ‘It was the first feminist lecture given there, the first time women artists were named and considered seriously.’⁴⁰ Feminism subsequently became part of a broader critical imperative at progressive institutions such as Middlesex Polytechnic and the University of Leeds’ Social History of Art Department (est. 1978), where an alliance emerged with left political theory.⁴¹ The Open University (OU) had been famously established under the directive of the Labour government in 1969 and it pioneered distance and part-time learning in the UK. In 1977 the OU established its ‘Art and Environment’ programme, which included an innovative module unit entitled ‘The Great Divide: The sexual division of labour, or “is it art”?’ The programme quickly gained notoriety thanks to media reports of ‘strange activities at summer schools’ and accusations of a ‘Marxist bias’, although it is largely unknown now.⁴²

Unlike their American counterparts, who found greater immediate acceptance in the academy during the 1970s, much early feminist arts organising in the UK was extra-institutional.⁴³ For instance, The Women’s Art History Collective was organised by Denise Cale, Pat Kahn, Tina Keane, Parker, Pollock, Alene Straussberg, Tickner, and Anne de Winter. This diverse group was composed of artists, art historians and critics, and grew out of a shared desire to ‘explore the relationship between contemporary women artists and the special problems they face, as well as the overall cultural role and position of women and creativity’.⁴⁴ The

³⁹ Hilary Robinson, ‘The Women’s Movement in Art Education,’ in ‘Women’s Art Education Supplement’, *Circa 90* (1999): 7.

⁴⁰ Pollock, *Generations and Geographies*, 11.

⁴¹ UK feminism’s intersections with Marxism will be more fully explored in Chapter Two.

⁴² Apparently the notoriety arose following the publication of these accusations in the Times Higher Education Supplement. For more details see the OU website history:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/historyofou/story/early-curriculum>

⁴³ Evidence of this archival absence became clear through my research, and the US programmes, particularly those on the west-coast, have been much more recognised by academic institutional histories. Parker and Pollock’s *Framing Feminism* offers the best account of extra-institutional feminist organising in the UK. The Open University course unit ‘The Great Divide’ has not been mentioned in any art historical literature but I encountered it through an archive-based installation by the artist Olivia Plender, *Rise Early, Be Industrious* (CCA: Glasgow, 2012).

⁴⁴ Margaret Harrison, ‘Art Herstory’, *MaMa: women artists together* (pub. by the MaMa Collective, Birmingham), 1.1 (1977). I explore this history of collectivism in a text co-authored with Amy Tobin, ‘An Unfinished Revolution in Art Historiography, or How to Write a Feminist Art Historiography,’

Women Artists Slide Library (WASL) was established in London in 1976, beginning as an artist's initiative collecting examples of women's artwork, and it opened its collection to the public in 1982.⁴⁵ Also that year, the WASL organised a 'Women and Art Education' conference in Battersea Arts Centre, where the activist group Women Art's Change (WAC) was established independently and continued to organise various events throughout the 1980s. The editorial for the first issue of UK journal *FAN: Feminist Art News* (1979) indicates the pedagogic orientation of feminism at this time: 'We chose the Art Education system as it relates to women for our first issue, because we believe that it is a basically oppressive institution...A systematic denigration and exclusion of female artistic ability is practiced at all levels of education.'⁴⁶ Collating presentations and workshop discussions from the Women and Art Education conference, the journal published a second special issue on the topic in 1983.⁴⁷ Here the editor revealingly suggests that the four years since the first issue had been a vibrant period for feminist educators, noting 'the increased organisation of women students nationally and the pressure they are bringing to bear, within the art schools, for change'.⁴⁸

Despite this pressure, the longer-term institutional impact of such grassroots organising is contestable. The accusations raised in the first issue of *FAN* were echoed five years later in an essay by Pollock, within which she desecrates the *enduring* persistence of a masculinist art school model in the UK.⁴⁹ Pollock strove to challenge this pervasive model of art education with her own pedagogical practice and, in 1992, established 'Feminism and the Visual Arts' (MAFEM), a Master's programme at the University of Leeds that unfortunately closed in 2003. It seems conclusive from this overview, therefore, that the impact of feminism upon education has been uneven at best. Moments of success and productive engagement with the

Feminist Review 107 (2014): 75-83. Tobin's PhD thesis explores in greater detail transatlantic collaboration between US and UK feminist group, 'Working Together, Working Apart: Feminism, Art and Collaboration in Britain and America (1974-1981).' PhD thesis, The University of York.

⁴⁵ The collection is now archived at Goldsmiths, London: <http://www.gold.ac.uk/make/>.

⁴⁶ Anon., 'Editorial,' in 'Education,' special issue, *FAN: Feminist Artist News* 1 (1980).

⁴⁷ Workshops held included: 'Educated for What?', 'Female Aesthetics', 'Reclaiming Art History', 'Women's Space', 'Sexual Harassment', "'Real Freedom" – Women's Liberation and Socialism', in 'Women and Education 2,' special issue, *FAN: Feminist Artist News* 10 (1983): 3.

⁴⁸ *FAN* 10 (1983): 2. The 'News and Events' listed at the back of the journal attest to this vibrancy. In the tenth issue alone the education-related events include: 'Challenging Sexism in Education' (exhibition by the Women's Education Group), 'Women and Art Education' (manifesto or resolution put together by Pam Skelton for women to put through their trade unions), 'Research into the Education and Employment of Women in Art Colleges' (research assistant advert).

⁴⁹ Griselda Pollock, 'Art, Art School, Culture: Individualism after the Death of the Artist,' (orig.1985) in *The Block Reader in Visual Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996): 50-67.

university are legible within this history, but their persistence certainly cannot be taken for granted. Having started to indicate feminism's uneven emergence across US and UK institutions in the 1970s and 1980s, in the sections below I examine three pedagogic models that recur across the literature.

Separatism as Strategy⁵⁰

Separatism is a term used to indicate the (usually temporary) separation of a group of individuals from a larger social group, determined by the shared terms of their oppression, usually along an axis of identity. The primary pedagogic function of separatism lies in its ability to *make visible* the power inequity or inequities inherent in social structures, in this instance particularly with regard to gender disparity (although latterly, through intersectional feminist advancements, also striving to encompass race, sexuality, and class).⁵¹ Feminism understands the classroom as a disciplining space in which individuals rehearse the social order and 'learn their place' within sexual and socio-economic relations. Strategic separatism has thus been used by feminist educators to acknowledge that the classroom, as metonym for the wider academy, operates as a site of power. Separatist education also maintains the promise of a second function – challenging or subverting the hegemonic power of dominant social ideologies – although I want to explore in greater detail below whether that promise is fulfilled. Reflecting the central aim of this thesis, the following examination is intended to concurrently shed light upon how separatism, as an educational tool, can be seen to produce particular forms of knowledge.

Feminist pedagogy complements and draws upon a variety of sources, both methodological and philosophical. In particular, feminists may share affinity with the emancipatory values espoused by Brazilian educator Paulo Friere. Others, for

⁵⁰ I have purposely reiterated Estelle Freedman's article of the same title, in which she examines 'Female Institution Building' during the period of 1870-1930, in order to emphasise that female separatism (as a socio-political strategy) has a rich history far prior to the coalescence of a highly visible feminist political and art movement in the late 1960s. *Feminist Studies*, 5.3 (Autumn 1979): 512-529.

⁵¹ For example, reflecting the increased acknowledgment of trans and queer-identified individuals by feminist organisations, the art project MFK: Malmö Free University for Women changed their admission policy from 'Open to anyone who identifies as a woman' to 'For and by persons who now or at some point identify as a woman.' *Do The Right Thing!: A Handbook by MFK*, 2011, 33-34. The group have also experimented with organising along lines of class and race, and use the concept of intersectionality, as it 'highlights privileges and activates power relations' along multiple axes of identity, 38.

example, utilise poststructuralist theories (which posit education as a discursive apparatus for ideological reproduction and control),⁵² or Marxist theories (which similarly posit education as a state apparatus for the reproduction of the labour force).⁵³ All these models, however, tend to share an understanding of education as basically reproductive of power and therefore inequality. Feminist separatist art teaching, as politicised female-only education, specifically seeks to avoid reproducing the ideological structures that secure hegemonic masculinity by classing women's art and culture as secondary.⁵⁴ It has been suggested that an oppositional feminist pedagogy rests 'upon visions of social transformation, concern for oppression, consciousness-raising and historical change', but how has separatism contributed to this struggle?⁵⁵

The co-organisers of a recent separatist extra-institutional art initiative in Sweden, The Malmö Free University for Women (2006-11), describe strategic separatism as a paradox: 'to organise as women to jointly counteract being defined as women by patriarchy.'⁵⁶ This succinct description underlines the fact that all markers of identity are formed by negation, in contrast to an 'other' that it is not: in this case, the masculine.⁵⁷ By organising along gender lines, separatist spaces politicise this dialectic, and provisionally neutralise its effect upon participants, who are then (as the argument goes) free to learn in a temporary space, outside a targeted form of oppression. This somewhat idealistic perspective quickly wavers under further analysis - although that should not negate its importance as a provisional tactic. For, as the educational theorist Georgia C Collins argued in 1978, 'women's experience is, after all, at the same time more universal and more individually unique than that area of it governed by gender.'⁵⁸ Deliberately privileging one of the multiple threads

⁵² For more on education as a tool of discipline see Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, and Karen Jones and Kevin Williamson, 'The Birth of the Schoolroom,' *Ideology and Consciousness*, 6 (1976): 59-110.

⁵³ Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (London: Verso Books, 2014).

⁵⁴ Having said this, there are clear differences between an explicitly feminist organisation and that which is for women only. For instance, single-sex education dominated UK further and higher education institutions until the mid-twentieth century, yet because these spaces did not politicise, draw attention to, or actively perform their separatism, it is disputable whether they can be included in this argument. Arguably they are women-only, rather than feminist, spaces, and as such are not relevant.

⁵⁵ Linnea Dietrich and Diane Smith-Hurd, 'Feminist Approaches to the Survey,' *Art Journal* 54.3 (1995): 44-47, 44.

⁵⁶ *MFK*, 32.

⁵⁷ Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which is Not One* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

⁵⁸ Georgia C Collins, 'Reflections on the Head of Medusa,' *Studies in Art Education* 19.2 (1978): 10-18, 17.

that constitute an individual's identity, the somewhat crude categorising approach promulgated by separatism can therefore only ever be tactical and temporary, enacting what philosopher Gayatri Spivak famously termed a 'strategic essentialism'.⁵⁹

Research carried out in the early 1970s showed that women artists were already deeply discriminated against by an education system that refused them parity with their male counterparts at both student and professional levels (not to mention symbolically *within* art history, of course).⁶⁰ And in 1973 an extensive analysis of art colleges and universities in the USA characterised gender discrimination with the damning phrase: 'the higher the fewer'.⁶¹ The creation of gender separatist spaces for the education of women artists and art historians was therefore a logical counterpoint to the data collated by such analyses. If women had historically been and continued to be educated differently to men, then separatism underlined and politically instantiated this difference. Institutionally however it was, and remains, immensely difficult to implement such schemes within the mixed-sex academy – a development that was itself an outcome of twentieth-century feminist struggles, but also a possibility created by capitalism's need for an expanded labour force that could be of use to an increasingly service-oriented marketplace.⁶² Within the academy, studio art and art history courses are often dominated by women, who make up a reported 62% of all creative arts places in the UK (this is not the same as separatism, of course).⁶³ Yet the results of this gender dominance are not borne out by a more 'feminist'

This statement, indicating the complexity of singular identity markers, precedes the development of 'intersectionality' or the inclusion of race debates in the 1980s, proving that such simple progressive narratives can never do justice to the historical complexities of feminism.

⁵⁹ See, Donna Landry and Gerald MacClean, eds., *The Spivak Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁶⁰ This statistical analysis mostly took place in the US, where affirmative action emerged more strongly against the Civil Rights Movement. See for instance: Georgia C Collins and Renee Sandell, *Women, Art and Education* (Reston: National Art Education Association, 1984).

⁶¹ Barbara Erlich White and Leon S White, for the Women's Caucus of the US College Art Association. Available online: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED074901.pdf>. [Accessed 1 June 2014].

⁶² Angela McRobbie has referred to this as 'gender mainstreaming,' and suggests that: 'women and younger women in particular produce added value by virtue of their particular skills and competencies which are now, in the age of the service sector, more in demand than in the past.' This move towards the incorporation of women within a mixed-sex university system can therefore be understood as a 'technocratic-managerial strategy' 155. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (LA; London: SAGE, 2009), 154-5.

⁶³ The *Higher Education Statistics Agency* report that in the 2010/11 academic year, 35,905 out of a total 58,205 'Creative Arts and Design' students were female, or 62% to 38% male. http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2601&Itemid=161. For more on the gendering of art history as a discipline, including its impact on public funding, please see Mary Garrard, "'Of Men, Women and Art": Some Historical Reflections,' *Art Journal* 35.4 (Summer 1976): 324-329.

structuring of the academy. The assimilation of young women students within the university (particularly as the academy's role as a provider of labour power in a late capitalist global economy became consolidated), has been understood by cultural theorist Angela McRobbie as indicating the incorporation and professionalisation of *some* women, both at the expense of other individual women and of a collective feminist struggle. Separatist or autonomous organisations have, however, had greater historical success in extra-institutional, alternative spaces such as cooperative galleries, slide libraries, community buildings and alternative publishing ventures.⁶⁴

Advertising a class as feminist, or related to women's (art) history, has the familiar (if exasperating) outcome of typically limiting the audience to women.⁶⁵ This scenario is not restricted to the past. As recently as October 2012, it was reported that a mass walkout of male students had taken place at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, in response to an International Relations lecture on the topic of gender constructionism.⁶⁶ If students will not attend lectures, how can feminism in the academy resist becoming self-contained? A basic enquiry around how feminist art history and politics arise in the classrooms of teachers who do not identify as feminist (if it does at all) needs to be elaborated.⁶⁷ The investigation must attend to whether the reinforcement of epistemic boundaries between feminist and 'non-feminist' knowledges and spaces serves to contain political education. One issue that emerges here is whether feminist pedagogy is better served by autonomous teaching spaces, or by a more furtive form of mainstream incorporation.

Writing in 1980, Lucy Lippard located the problem, stating that 'so far, the audience for feminist art has been, with a few exceptions, limited to the converted.'⁶⁸ Eight years later Mary Kelly added that 'the critique of patriarchy is still one made by women. I think that one of the most exciting prospects for the future is a critique

⁶⁴ Such examples include: New York Feminist Art Institute, Womanspace (L.A.), Woman's Building (LA), A.I.R. Gallery, Franklin Furnace (NYC), Women Artists Slide Library (London), Women's Art History Collective (London).

⁶⁵ This has certainly been borne out in my own teaching at The University of Edinburgh and within gallery environments.

⁶⁶ Annie Newman, 'St. Andrews: Sexist, Racist, Elitist?,' 31 October 2012.

<http://stand.tab.co.uk/2012/10/31/newselitist-sexist-and-racist-are-we/>. [Accessed 1 June 2014]

⁶⁷ Maria do Mar Pereira has theorised the status of feminist scholarship in the academy, demonstrating how boundaries are demarcated around feminist theory (through humour, for example) allowing non-feminist scholars to legitimate a highly selective engagement with feminist knowledge, whilst negating its more epistemologically radical elements. 'Feminist theory is proper knowledge, but...'
Feminist Theory 13.3 (Dec. 2012): 283-303.

⁶⁸ Lucy R. Lippard, 'Some Propaganda for Propaganda,' (1980) in *Visibly Female* ed. Robinson: 184-94, 187.

of patriarchy by men.’⁶⁹ Lippard and Kelly emphasise the ongoing importance of debating whether men can also be feminists rather than simply ‘allies’ of this struggle. Understanding feminism as a comprehensive, political worldview suggests that it should not be essentialised by restricting access to biological women, although this too continues to be a contentious issue. In 2012 the RadFem conference in London came under attack for restricting attendance to ‘women born women living as women.’⁷⁰ The argument devolved upon whether the exclusion of trans-women was discriminatory, with critics suggesting that ‘the only person who can define a woman’s identity is herself’.⁷¹ It is, without doubt, extremely problematic to reduce the category ‘woman’ to a biologically essentialist definition. However, the vitriolic tone of the debate (which took place primarily online) is interesting here, as it indicates a continued and impassioned engagement with the politics and ethics of separatist organising within feminism. Thus, as a political statement that requires the excluded to confront his or her personal alienation, perhaps separatism’s use as a strategy should not be overlooked. Following Lippard and Kelly however, this strategy could only ever be provisional, as feminism (particularly feminist pedagogy) should be seeking to expand its audiences rather than limiting them.

The Feminist Art Program: A Separatist Experiment

The Feminist Art Program remains one of the few examples of a gender separatist, explicitly feminist, academic and practice-based arts programme for the education of women artists. The initiative is even more unusual when we consider that it took place within the formal structures of two academic institutions. The Program has been well historicised by its participants (if sometimes theorised a little naively) and, in more recent years, the re-evaluation of its history has begun.⁷² Due to its

⁶⁹ Mary Kelly and Terence Maloon, ‘M.Kelly Interviewed by T. Malloon,’ in *Visibly Female*, ed. Robinson: 72-80, 79.

⁷⁰ RadFem, ‘Women Together For Liberation,’ conference, London: 14-15 July, 2012. It should be noted that radical feminism has a long history of opposing the rights of transgendered people to be included in the feminist movement. See in particular Gloria Steinem, Germaine Greer and Sheila Jeffreys.

⁷¹ ‘NUS Women’s Campaign Statement on RadFem 2012,’ accessed 13 July 2013, <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk>.

⁷² In 2009, State University Fresno hosted an exhibition and symposium entitled *A Studio of Their Own?* See: <http://www.astudiooftheirown.org/>. In 2012, Jill Fields edited an extensive collection, *Entering the Picture: Judy Chicago, The Fresno Feminist Art Program and the Collective Vision of Women Artists* (London; New York: Routledge, 2012). Judy Chicago has published a new book on

uncommonly well-recorded histories, I want to focus on the FAP as a case study through which to explore the advantages and challenges of negotiating a separatist feminist art pedagogy within the institution. The subject may be slightly well-worn but I do not think that it is near exhaustion; besides, is it hardly discussed that extensively *outside* of feminist art history and its usefulness for contemporary pedagogy has not been explored. The separatist experiments at Fresno and CalArts have been crucial in establishing an, at times romanticised precedent, to which subsequent feminist education programmes can refer.⁷³ However, the problems and conflicts encountered by Chicago and Schapiro in establishing a women's space within the academic institution have not been fully acknowledged within these narratives.⁷⁴ Thus, this analysis will point to broader concerns raised in the title of this chapter, with regards to feminist art pedagogy, the institution and separatism.

A 1973 report by the US College Art Association showed that, 'although 43% of earned doctorates in the field go to women, only 22% of the studio and art history positions are held by women, and only 9% of these women are full professors.'⁷⁵ As Linda Bastion writes, in regards to hiring and promotion 'such figures are highly suggestive of discriminatory practices'.⁷⁶ The founders of early feminist art programmes challenged this diminishment of female representation within the higher echelons of the academy, paralleling the scholarly challenge to art history's masculine biases. Wilding later confirmed that for participants at the FAP, '[s]eeing authority and power vested in a woman was a central part of our education.'⁷⁷ It is crucial for young artists and historians to see other women (and/or black artists, for example) represented in art systems, selling work or holding positions of power in the academy. Therefore, on this most fundamental level, feminist teachers such as Chicago and Schapiro filled the representational void in

her pedagogic theory: *Institutional Time: A Critique of Studio Art Education* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2014).

⁷³ Participant Mira Schor has emphasised this importance of legacy within feminist art history, stating: 'Although the CalArts Feminist Art Program and other early separatist feminist programs could be as psychologically wrenching for many of the participants as they were challenging and empowering, they did provide basic and enduring models of women supporting women.' *A Decade of Negative Thinking*, 30.

⁷⁴ Two articles in particular address the difficulty of collaborative organising and the conflicts that arose in the FAP. Paula Harper, 'The First Feminist Art Program: A View from the 1980s,' *Signs* 10.4 (Summer 1985): 762-781. Laura Meyer and Faith Wilding, 'Collaboration and Conflict in the Fresno Feminist Art Program: An Experiment in Feminist Pedagogy,' *n.paradoxa* 26 (Feminist Pedagogies) (July 2010): 40-51.

⁷⁵ Linda Bastion, 'Women as Artists and Teachers,' *Art Education* 28.7 (Nov 1975): 12-15, 12.

⁷⁶ Bastion, 12.

⁷⁷ Wilding, 'The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts,' 35.

universities. It is easy to condemn representational politics for failing to adequately address underlying structural inequities, but Wilding's recollection reminds us that this visibility has powerful effects and we should not take it for granted, even in 2014.

Although the Feminist Art Program took place within the broader structures of Fresno State and CalArts, the classes were deliberately held off-campus, physically disconnected from the established collegiate spaces. This separatism was symbolic of a structural rupturing and, according to Wilding, 'Chicago insisted that the women's art class be held off-campus in an *autonomous space* so that a *radical break* could be made with the curriculum and structures of the patriarchal institution.'⁷⁸ This radical break appeared to manifest itself initially in the rejection of an ordered, timetabled working-day, as students found themselves no longer confined to the institution's usual curricular expectations (discussed further in the following section). According to the directors, renting and renovating a building for the Womanhouse installation forced the students 'to work harder than they ever had before'.⁷⁹ And Wilding positively recalls how '[w]orking off-campus dissolved the normal academic time and space boundaries'.⁸⁰ From the current vantage point of 2014, such fluidity clearly presages the demands of neoliberal employment structures, which continue to subsume ever greater amounts of previously autonomous social spaces and relations under the productivity demands of capital. Yet, within the specificities of its historical moment, staging the educational intervention in a domestic environment might be more productively understood as interrogative of the home/work distinction that structured (especially middle-class) women's lives. In the early 1970s the politicisation of women's domestic work as an undervalued form of reproductive labour was firmly underway through schemes including Wages for Housework, both in Western Europe and the US.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Wilding, 'The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts,' 34. Emphasis added.

⁷⁹ Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, *Womanhouse* catalogue essay, Los Angeles, 1972, unpaginated.

⁸⁰ Wilding 'The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts,' 34. Michel Foucault describes the timetable as an external imposition of order. It is through this educational technology that 'time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.' Theorised as such it is clear that the rejection of an ordered timetable was a radical gesture by the FAP at that moment. That neoliberalism has since dissolved any regular patterns of life/work organisation requires further attention in relation to the usefulness of feminist pedagogy. *Discipline and Punish*, 1979, 152.

⁸¹ The International Wages for Housework campaign was founded by Selma James, Maria Dellacosta and Silva Federici in Italy in 1972. In 1973 an American branch was established in Brooklyn, New York.

For instance, existing as an amalgam of the academic and domestic, it is no coincidence that the Womanhouse project encouraged many of the participants to name the restrictions in their home lives.⁸² In a video interview, FAP participant Arlene Raven explicitly links the temporal structuring of ‘making three meals a day’ and ‘keeping up with the laundry’ - a domestic regulation of her time that she could no longer maintain having clearly comprehended them for the first time - to her awakening as a lesbian.⁸³ Education in this institutional context is broadened, through the establishment of a separatist space, to include learning to work and live differently and to experience time in a less (domestically) structured, but ultimately more (politically) productive way – even if this time-management dispersal could not avoid recuperation. Raven’s lesbianism further points to the institutional role of the heteronormative nuclear family model within capitalist economies. As theorist Judith Halberstam has written, ‘[q]ueer uses of time and space develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction.’ Following Foucault she suggests that conceiving of queer as a ‘way of life’ rather than a ‘way of having sex’ would allow ‘the potentiality of a life unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance and child rearing.’⁸⁴ Raven’s oppositional deconstruction of the political economies of the family, with its apotheosis of feminine domesticity, was therefore one consequence of the separatist experiment.

Of course, separatist structures can themselves risk becoming monolithic if the organisers and participants fail to reflect upon the enactment of power within that space. In 1972 Jo Freeman published her celebrated essay ‘The Tyranny of Structurelessness’. In it she challenged the naïve institutional opposition that she perceived in her feminist contemporaries’ writings and suggested that ‘contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a “structureless” group’.⁸⁵ The feminist organisation must be continuously re-examined and its workings made explicit, so as to avoid replicating the covert power inequities it sets out to challenge. Participants have correspondingly suggested that this ‘tyranny’ emerged as a

⁸² This is discussed indirectly in a recent documentary charting the women’s art movement in 1970s and 1980s America. Lynn Hershman-Leeson, *WAR: Women Art Revolution!* (New York: Zeitgeist Films, 2010).

⁸³ Interviewed in *Women Art Revolution!*

⁸⁴ Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* (London; New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1-2.

⁸⁵ Jo Freeman’s essay, ‘The Tyranny of Structurelessness,’ was first published in *The Second Wave: A Magazine of New Feminism* (Boston, 1972). It has since been reprinted many times and is widely available online.

problem in the FAP. Paula Harper recalls that, although they attempted ‘the elimination of traditional hierarchies of authority, [i]n practice, however, the strong personalities and leadership of Chicago and Schapiro guided the program.’⁸⁶ Laura Meyer and Wilding add that ‘the collaborative structure of the Fresno FAP was far from harmoniously democratic.’⁸⁷ Chicago apparently ‘demanded recognition of her ultimate authority’, as evidenced by the compulsory interviews prior to admission to the course, and ‘power struggles also emerged among the students’ as they vied for Chicago’s attention.⁸⁸ Extending Freeman’s logic, it appears that these conflicts arose because of a failure in accounting for the complex forms that authority takes. In a 1982 interview, for example, Schapiro stated that ‘[h]elping the young women escape their own previous education was the first problem to be met.’⁸⁹ The notion of escape is an intriguing one, as it suggests the possibility of freedom and autonomy *from* something; however, according to Freeman, it is only ever possible to escape one matrix of power for another one. If there can be no escape from power (and at the core of education there is an inescapable relation of subjection between teacher and student), one contribution offered by separatism is, at the very least, to critically strive towards making these structures visible and knowable, and therefore contestable.

Was the Feminist Art Program able to challenge the hegemonic structures of the institution(s) that housed it from within its isolated location? Many artists and historians have recounted that it is much easier to establish independent feminist classes than to reconceive the terms of the mainstream pathways.⁹⁰ This suggests that, although feminist separatism has had important and influential effects within feminist history and upon individuals, it may not have an *interventional impact* on the wider academic institution. Ultimately the occupation of a peripheral space no

⁸⁶ Harper, 774.

⁸⁷ Meyer and Wilding, 41.

⁸⁸ Meyer and Wilding, 41.

⁸⁹ Harper, 764.

⁹⁰ Christine Havice has suggested that it is much easier to introduce specialised advanced courses, rather than bring a feminist perspective to the foundational art history modules: ‘The continuing process of modification has been far more complex than was the design of the advanced course.’ ‘The Art History Survey Transfigured,’ in *WSQ*, ed. Gouma-Peterson: 17-20, 20. Annie Shaver-Crandell supports this view: ‘But I see the greatest value of this ongoing exploration of imagery of women in what can be carried over into the way I teach the students I see in the greatest numbers and at the most formative point in their educations, those in the general college population fulfilling an obligatory core requirement with my department’s core course, an introduction to art history and art appreciation called “Art Principles”.’ ‘Women Perceived: On Teaching the Imagery of Women in Art,’ in *WSQ*: 54-55, 55.

longer fulfilled Chicago's requirements, as: 'The values of the programme conflicted with those of the institution that housed it. She concluded that "had CalArts been willing to equalise its administration, its courses, its teaching staff and its student body, the Feminist Art Program as I conceived of it could have continued to operate within its walls".'⁹¹ The history of this initiative thus underlines feminism's always conflicted relation to the institutions of art education, to which it is usually situated as an addendum.

While the college and art institutions that have on occasion hosted our feminist programmes have appeared to be congenial settings for those efforts, the programs have instead acted as foreign bodies in the organism of the university, and as any foreign body in an organism, have resulted in infection, fever, and ultimate rejection.⁹²

Raven's vivid employment of disease as metaphor cleverly implicates the corporeal (that which is implicitly feminine and excluded from the intellectual ivory tower), indicates the inherent violence of this struggle, and optimistically points to the possibility of recurrence or relapse. It is no surprise that both directors of the Feminist Art Program subsequently became instrumental in establishing further autonomous spaces for the education of women artists: Chicago founded The Women's Building in Los Angeles (1973-1991) with Raven and Sheila de Bretteville, and Schapiro was involved in establishing the New York Feminist Art Institute (1979-1990). An implicit critique of prevailing educational structures was thus continually articulated through the provision of alternative pedagogic models in these extra-institutional initiatives.

As mentioned earlier, it has been argued that gender separatism cannot stand up as a useable theory for a comprehensively intersectional, or queer, feminism that aims to recognise the multivalent character of identity.⁹³ In a 2012 newspaper interview, Chicago implies that she now supports this perspective. 'We assumed all women were our friends and all men were our enemies. That was a completely erroneous assumption. It has to do with values, not gender. Some of the best

⁹¹ J.Chicago *Through the Flower* (1975) quoted in Catherine Elwes, 'A Recent View,' *Feminist Artist News* 1 (Winter 1980): 5-7, 6.

⁹² Arlene Raven, 'Feminist Education,' in *Feminist Collage: Educating Women in the Visual Arts*, ed. July Loeb (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979): 254-259, 258.

⁹³ This is clearly discussed in a specially edited issue of the feminist journal *Signs*. Jennifer Doyle and Amelia Jones, ed., 'New Feminist Theories of Visual Culture,' special issue *Signs* 31.3 (Spring 2006).

feminists are men. Gender is part of a larger structure of oppression and injustice.’⁹⁴ Chicago is unmistakably attempting to articulate a more inclusive form of feminism, one that is respectful of individual differences between its members. However, her argument problematically privileges an assumable, and correspondingly renounceable, set of ‘values’ over a fundamental gender struggle that one has no choice in – men *can* therefore be feminists because they participate in this daily reproduction of sexual difference.

However, although gender may be only one element of our socially and psychically constructed identities, perhaps feminism should not be too quick to abandon the potential of autonomous, separatist education spaces. Particularly if examples such as the St Andrews’ lecture walkout are indicative of a continued, widespread devaluation of feminist knowledge.⁹⁵ We should at the very least remain attentive to separatism’s rich history within feminist pedagogy and consider its interventional capacity. (This returns us to the notion of ‘values’ again, for although the academic institution may appear to embrace feminist values, it is doubtful that this is matched by concrete progress.) An article written in 1979 by Estelle Freedman serves as cautionary lesson for historical memory. She acknowledges the crucial contribution made by ‘feminist institution building’ for women organising collectively in the late nineteenth century to achieve suffrage, and argues that separatist female spaces offered greater political agency to their users and were therefore more effective than efforts to create space within existing institutional structures. Critically for this discussion, she thus accounts for the prevalent decline in feminist organising during the 1920s (after many countries awarded women suffrage):

When women tried to assimilate into male-dominated institutions, without securing feminist social, economic, or political bases, they lost the momentum and the networks which had made the suffrage movement possible. *Women gave up many of the strengths of the female sphere without gaining equally from the man’s world they had entered.*⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Rachel Cooke, ‘The Art of Judy Chicago,’ interview in the *UK Observer*, Sunday 4th November 2012. Accessed online 6 Nov 2012: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/nov/04/judy-chicago-art-feminism-britain>.

⁹⁵ Recent research by Maria do Mar Pereira certainly corroborates this (see n.161).

⁹⁶ Freedman (1979): 524. Emphasis added.

This issue demands continued attention; not least whether the assimilation of feminism within the academy serves, in the words of Rosi Braidotti, to ‘increase differences in status, access and entitlement among women’, thereby diminishing opportunities for political collectivism.⁹⁷ According to the historical precedent uncovered by Freedman, feminist politics must exist securely and separately before acceding to inclusion in a suitably revolutionised or transformed institution. It is certainly possible to see echoes of this situation in the ‘bad girls’ and ‘post-feminist’ phenomena of the 1990s.⁹⁸ This rhetoric was underpinned, as McRobbie has demonstrated, by vast structural changes in education and labour, as young women’s aspirations were reshaped towards becoming ‘top girls’ in a competitive marketplace.⁹⁹ Masking continued inequality behind the greater inclusion of female students and apparent market equality, these adjustments are similar to those highlighted by Freedman. Thus, the pedagogy of separatism might quite crudely, but effectively, allow us to re-open gender politics and articulate an examination of powers that have once again become barely visible. Self-declaring one’s group feminist (whether gender-separatist or not), directly politicises education and situates participants on a historical continuum. Rather than establishing feminism and feminist art history as an enclosed, extraordinary moment of distant activism, this self-identification allows history to resurface collectively in the present. This implies a notion of feminist community that echoes across time and, rather than focussing primarily on *gender separatism*, a focus on political affiliation permits this century-long history to emerge as a pedagogical tool. The naming and making visible of particularised spaces of learning was, and could still be, crucial for the functioning of political education.

Personal, Political, or Academic?

Throughout the past four decades, feminist interventions within education have utilised particular pedagogic forms (e.g. separatism) and content (e.g. personal,

⁹⁷ Rosi Braidotti quoted in McRobbie, 159.

⁹⁸ For more on postfeminism see: Amelia Jones, ‘Postfeminism, Feminist Pleasures and Embodied Theories of Art’ (orig. 1993), in *The Art of Art History*, ed. Donald Preziosi: 383-395. And Laura Cottingham, ‘How Many “Bad” Feminists Does It Take to Change the Lightbulb?’ in *Seeing Through the Seventies: Essays on Feminism and Art* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 87-116.

⁹⁹ McRobbie, *Aftermath of Feminism*.

common knowledge), to challenge the institutional reproduction of art and art history's dominant ideologies. Such practices aim to scrutinise and unravel the disciplinary boundaries that (re)secure hegemonic knowledge. Weaving together aspects of the personal, political and academic – whilst simultaneously making evident that any such divisions are arbitrary and externally imposed – feminist pedagogy probes the ideological production of such divisions and the imbalanced social order they maintain. In the 1970s in particular, articulating and sharing personal experience permitted recognition of the systematic nature of women's oppression and, thus, awareness that personal problems were also very often political. (As developed throughout this section, feminist 'politics' does not only refer to the public, state and institutional forms of governance that this term often implies, but expands its meaning to encompass the politics of the personal, sexual and everyday.)

In particular art history teaching has faced censure for its adherence to the authoritative format of the historical survey. The powerful resilience of this pedagogy (and its related epistemology of the canon) is vividly demonstrated by the survey's ability to subsume oppositional narratives, including feminism, within its folds. Today, for instance, the academy continues to reject the fundamental *politics* of feminism even as it appears to embrace feminist art *history* as a past concern, an aesthetics, or a minor requirement of survey-based teaching. In 1995 *Art Journal* published a special issue on 'Rethinking the Art History Survey', within which Mark Miller Graham argued that the canon defines the art historical field, sets its boundaries, and invests its discursive space with authority. The survey, he suggests, is fundamentally a map of the canon; instilling within students the faith that learning this, allegedly neutral, range of facts will mark them as competent in the field of art history. However, as Graham points out, this process of acculturation is primarily driven towards equipping students with the tools to navigate the 'semiotic streams of dominant culture', both within and without the academy – it is a *disciplining* process, with ramifications far beyond 'art history'.¹⁰⁰

Graham's claim is supported by Carol Duncan's recollection of her university education in early 1960s America. She writes that her later acquaintance with class and gender politics forced her to reflect and ask: 'In the process of "mastering" [the

¹⁰⁰ Mark Miller Graham, 'The Future of Art History and the Undoing of the Survey,' in 'Rethinking the Art History Survey,' special issue *Art Journal* 54.3 (1995): 30-34, 31.

discipline of art history], how much of the attitudes and expectations of these professionals had I absorbed without thinking?’¹⁰¹ Exposing the fictitious neutrality of scholarly knowledge was a cultural paradigm shift of the mid- to late-twentieth century that of course exceeded feminism. However, as Duncan implies, women and other so-called ‘minority’ subjects, who had been excluded from the discourses of dominant academic culture, had a particular social investment in this reflection and exposure. But, at what cost does *mastery* emerge? Refusing the exaltation of an absolute education that the survey implies, in 1987 Moira Roth boldly encouraged teachers to ‘ditch some baggage’ when constructing their courses.¹⁰² This encouragement stands as a good reminder that the ‘proper’ knowledges of art and art history are only ever provisional, and that one of feminism’s tasks is to produce different ways of thinking and teaching in the excavated spaces of the discipline.

Blurring distinctions between creating and learning, between formal and informal knowledges, the collective production of knowledge engendered through feminist pedagogy often arises from the basic question of the ‘feminine’ in society and its culture, and simultaneously interrogates and celebrates what this term might mean. In 1979, Collins suggested that feminist art ‘no longer avoids reflecting on the sexual identity of the female artist; indeed, it has become a conscious effort to explore and express that identity and the social, psychological, and bodily experience of being female.’¹⁰³ The gendered exploration that Collins located in women’s art-making was carried over into educational spaces through feminist pedagogy, both in relation to studio and art history classes. Instantiating the renowned 1960s slogan, ‘the personal is political’, these pedagogic processes (including, for example, consciousness-raising) emphasised the shift from individual experience to collective understanding through knowledge *sharing*.¹⁰⁴ The prominence conferred to the feminine and the intimate, by opening up the academic ivory tower to students’

¹⁰¹ Martina Pachmanova, interview with Carol Duncan, in *Mobile Fidelities: Conversations on Feminism, Visibility and History*, (London: KT Press, 2006), 124-36, 125.

¹⁰² Moira Roth, ‘Teaching Art History from a Feminist Perspective,’ in *WSQ*, ed. Gouma-Peterson, 21-4, 23. Similarly, Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe and Malin Hedlin Hayden beseeched Stockholm’s Moderna Museet to ‘Give up the Goat’ – referring to Robert Rauschenberg’s *Monogram* (1955) – in order to make space for new artworks and histories in their exhibition space. ‘A Serious Suggestion: Give Up the Goat,’ in *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 66-83.

¹⁰³ Georgia C Collins, ‘Women and Art: The Problem of Status,’ *Studies in Art Education* 21.1 (1979): 57-64, 58.

¹⁰⁴ For more information on consciousness-raising please see: ‘WEB, Consciousness-Raising Rules’ (1972) in H. Robinson ed. 2001: 85-7.

personal experiences, emphasised that the classroom and any knowledge or cultural products (including art) generated there were always already political and emanated from the same non-neutral social space as gender and power.

At the CalArts Feminist Art Program classes were offered in four separate areas, distinct from traditional forms of art training. Chicago led performance classes, Schapiro taught painting, Wilding led journal-writing and consciousness-raising groups, and Paula Harper directed a research seminar into the history of (only) women artists.¹⁰⁵ These innovative models of knowledge and art production were inextricable from the new political content forged within feminism. Techniques for sharing experiential knowledge were understood equally as aesthetic actions, and included performative consciousness-raising acts, exploring women's traditional craft methods, and the infamous development of female imagery or cunt art.¹⁰⁶ Schapiro explained that '[n]either Judy Chicago nor I believe that the simple goal of an art education is to reach sophisticated art making.'¹⁰⁷ The programme leaders instead encouraged art-making that focussed on content, standing as a direct challenge to the formalism, and associated presumption of art's social autonomy, that had reached its apotheosis in the preceding two decades.¹⁰⁸ The dissolution of form in favour of personal content was understood to have repercussions beyond the classroom. This teaching practice reflects a firm belief that breaking down the formal boundaries both *between and beyond* humanist disciplines – challenging the knowledge formations that had supported the modern university establishment and its ideal masculine, bourgeois subject – would have critical ramifications throughout society.

¹⁰⁵ Art History featured at Fresno through a slide-collecting endeavour, but it was not formally added to the course until Paula Harper joined the teaching staff at CalArts. In a 2010 documentary, *WAR: Women Art Revolution!*, Chicago explained that the Program studied *only* women artists as, in her view, enough time had been spent studying men. See Hershman-Lesson, *WAR!*.

¹⁰⁶ Meyer and Wilding state this clearly, although in retrospect: 'Pedagogy and art making were inextricably intertwined. Research, self-examination, and discussion fed the art making process, and making art was a means of producing and sharing knowledge.' *n.paradoxa*, 49.

¹⁰⁷ Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, 'A Feminist Art Program,' *Art Journal* 31.1 (Fall 1971): 48-9, 49. Programme participant Rachel Youdelman has criticised the FAP organisers for this idealist approach to art teaching, ironically stating: 'They never taught us about "career strategies" at CalArts.' Personal letter to Ulrike Müller for the art project <re.tracing> (1996), which collated and presented former CalArts students' memories of the FAP. Available online: <http://www.encore.at/retracing/index2.html>. Accessed 23 August 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Although this break is undoubtedly over-emphasised, the narrative is repeated by Chicago et al., in Hershman-Lesson's documentary *WAR!*. Chicago had in fact trained as a minimalist painter and exhibited in the renowned *Primary Structures* exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York 1966.

The artificial boundaries between academic, curatorial, literary and visual art production have been consistently challenged by feminist pedagogy. Encouraging greater trans-disciplinarity, feminism seeks to transgress the limitations established by those forces art historian Aby Warburg evocatively termed the ‘border police’.¹⁰⁹ For instance, Pollock’s MAFEM programme at Leeds University disregarded these borders with a broad assessment process wherein ‘[o]utcomes included art works and exhibitions as well as theses.’¹¹⁰ A comparative disintegration is apparent in art’s post-1990s turn to social engagement and pedagogic, interactive frameworks, wherein learning, art-making, curating, and participation are blurrily merged *within an institutional framework*.¹¹¹ However, as Helena Reckitt has argued, the expansive precedent established by feminism has not been sufficiently acknowledged by contemporary art’s relational and participatory turn.¹¹² The formal fluidity of these structures palely imitates feminism’s radical pedagogic gesture, which at its very root seeks to establish an irrevocable politicisation of students’ lived experiences. It thus remains necessary for educators to reflect on their teaching practices and to continuously reiterate the questions: *what is art education for, whom does it serve, and how can its knowledge be politically active rather than merely recitative?*

Analysing art’s content alongside its formal qualities, the context of its production and reception, and addressing what Collins terms the social ‘experience of being female’, many feminist educators have used students’ personal knowledge as a basis from which to build political consciousness. Thus the self-portrait, as simultaneously a personal and social document, emerges across the literature as a significant critical tool for such analyses.¹¹³ Evelyn Torton-Beck recalls her studio classes throughout the 1970s and 1980s, within which she and her students explored the identity-politics of race, sexuality, age, ethnicity and disability: ‘One of the ways

¹⁰⁹ For more on Warburg’s interdisciplinary academic approach see Preziosi ed., ‘Chapter 4: Anthropology and/as Art History,’ *The Art of Art History*, 152-53 & 162-88.

¹¹⁰ Griselda Pollock, ‘Open, Closed and Opening: Reflections on Feminist Pedagogy in a UK University,’ *n.paradoxa* 26 (Feminist Pedagogies) (2010): 20-28.

¹¹¹ For more on the participatory turn in contemporary art please see Claire Bishop, ed., *Participation: Documents of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press and Whitechapel Gallery, 2006).

¹¹² Helena Reckitt, ‘Forgotten Relations: Feminist Artists and Relational Aesthetics,’ in *Politics in a Glass Case*, ed. Dimitrakaki & Perry, 131-156.

¹¹³ For more on the significance of self-representation to women artists throughout the twentieth century see Marsha Meskimmon, *The Art of Reflection: Women Artist’s Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Scarlet Press, 1996). For an indication of wider discourse around feminist self-authoring, during the 1970s-80s, please see Hélène Cixous, ‘The Laugh of the Medusa,’ *Signs* 1.4 (Summer 1976): 875-893.

I explore these questions is to ask the students to create two self-images – one at the beginning and again at the end of the semester.’¹¹⁴ Though this process of self-imaging, Torton-Beck encouraged her students to explore their perceptions of the self, which were expected to evolve through the education process as their political consciousnesses were ‘raised’. Annie Shaver-Crandell employed a comparable textual technique with her art history class at Harlem’s City University, where she invited students to describe ‘in essay form an imaginary portrait of her- or himself, as the student might look if portrayed by the artist of the student’s choice.’¹¹⁵ At the Open University, a section of ‘The Great Divide’ unit explored the conditioning effects of ‘Image and Self-Image’, with the programme leaders stating: ‘It is important to understand [social norms’] manipulation as images if we are to understand our self-images and how they restrict or extend our potential.’¹¹⁶ Pollock utilised this method again in the 1990s in the MAFEM programme where she asked students to write a personal narrative, a process that, in her words, ‘enabled the union of theory and practice.’¹¹⁷

The recurrent pedagogic method of self-analysis, assessment and representation situates the student’s socio-historically constituted identity, and their negotiation of these identifying markers, at the centre of the learning process. This method thereby pushes back the boundaries of formal academic knowledge, traditionally conceived as disinterested and objective, to include a subjective feminist politics of the self. Bringing the student forward in the learning and writing process, feminist art teaching seeks to encourage the transformation of art history from an enclosed body of formal knowledge to be accessed and reiterated, to a pliable, mercurial mass that responds to the individual and contemporary politics. The organisers of The Open University’s ‘Great Divide’ art course accordingly emphasise investedness over neutrality, stating: ‘None of the authors is “neutral” about her concern over the position of women in society, or as artists in society, and there is no reason to hide this personal concern under a supposedly “academic” tone. Your reactions to the unit could well be your major project within it.’¹¹⁸ These

¹¹⁴ Evelyn Torton-Beck, in *WSQ*, ed. Gouma-Peterson, 46.

¹¹⁵ Shaver-Crandell, *WSQ* ed. Gouma-Peterson, 55.

¹¹⁶ OU Booklet: 7.

¹¹⁷ Griselda Pollock, ‘Open, Closed and Opening: Reflections on Feminist Pedagogy in a UK University,’ *n.paradoxa* 26 (Feminist Pedagogies) (2010): 20-28, 24.

¹¹⁸ The Collective (misc.), ‘Unit 6: The Great Divide: The Sexual Division of Labour or “Is It Art?”’ (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1976), 6.

examples reflect Vogel's description of the inseparable bond between 'activism and analysis' at the heart of feminist knowledge.¹¹⁹ *Thus the feminist intervention into academic knowledge is realised both through, and as, pedagogy.* In other words, beyond the development of teaching methodologies that might be more 'feminist', the emancipatory pedagogy of feminism nonetheless emerges in its incitement to resist normative knowledge structures.

The artist/historian Pen Dalton has, however, broadly critiqued what she perceives to be an individualist approach endemic to feminist pedagogy. In an article of 2006, evaluating 'feminist methods in art education' (FMAE), she suggests that educators rely upon 'a notion of an individual that resorts to a humanist construct of a pre-existing, active and knowing agent who develops and becomes liberated through the creative processes of art.'¹²⁰ Dalton is correct to highlight the necessity for feminism to remain critical and self-reflexive if it is to avoid slipping into a humanist understanding of 'Art' as fundamentally enlightening and improving of 'the self'. As Jones has argued extensively, this romantic ideal of creativity rests upon a myth of the coherent and knowable individual and is foundational to the exclusion of particular subjects (including women) from modernist histories of art.¹²¹

However, I perceive a contradiction at the core of this argument. Dalton's criticisms rest upon an understanding of 'FMAE' as static methodologies rather than a series of theoretical opportunities that *intervene within* conservative pedagogical models. Her argument remains plausible only as long as art is regarded as transcendently distinct from more modest lived experience (as that which can offer an emancipatory force to everyday life) rather than as a material *process* through which social agency is negotiated and, in fact, produced. It is not that art necessarily offers an autonomous space to negotiate the politics of subjectivity, but that its privileged register allows it to be harnessed productively within political education. Feminist pedagogy in fact refutes Dalton's claim, by engendering art education within a framework of crumbling distinctions rather than maintaining the academic institution's designated divisions between art, life, and education. It thereby focuses

¹¹⁹ Vogel, *Woman Questions*, 12.

¹²⁰ Pen Dalton, 'Feminist Methodologies in Art Education,' *n.paradoxa* 17 (Journeys) (2006): 72-6, 74.

¹²¹ See Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

learning around creative processes that encourage the disintegration of what Dalton highlights as the problematic (humanist) construction of 'Art'.

Examples of feminism's vital challenge to the borders delineating scholarly or artistic knowledges are numerous within the historical literature. In a lengthy article recounting the Feminist Art Program, Harper succinctly highlights the function of the informal and intimate for opening up the ideologies of art history to interrogation: 'the student's interest in lipstick [Camille Grey's *Lipstick Bathroom* in Womanhouse] was shown to be not trivial or merely personal but linked with a long and complex history of human experience...'¹²² Thus the personal and seemingly inconsequential is again utilised as a consciousness-raising tool to establish links with history and produce art installation as research.¹²³ Similarly, Monica Mayer, a participant of the Feminist Studio Workshop in 1978 (at the Women's Building, LA) later worked with Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz on the Ariadne Project. Their collaborative project sought to raise awareness of, and counter violence against, women. Mayer recounts that through this experience she 'was beginning to see political and educational processes as art.'¹²⁴ Amalgamating art with political activism, feminist sexual politics, and education, the Ariadne Project - as remembered by Mayer - therefore exemplifies feminist pedagogy's subversion of humanist definitions of art rather than, as Dalton suggests, reiterating them.

Ultimately then, feminist pedagogy seeks to expand art and art history's disciplinary boundaries, through a self-reflexive consideration of academia's gendered content and the introduction of politicised, personal perspectives. But, now that the survey format has largely been rejected, and an expanded educational field exists, what is the fundamental aim for feminist teaching within the discipline? In a 1985 article, Pollock defines an effective art education as a seditious and critical engagement with social structures. 'This should be one of the jobs of art education, to produce for its students a usable knowledge of the social and of culture's complex relations to the structures of economic, social and political power and to the production of meaning.'¹²⁵ Pollock thus defines art education as that which should

¹²² Harper (1985), 766.

¹²³ Dr Jill Burke runs a comparable project at the School of History of Art in University of Edinburgh, where a feminist research project entitled 'Making Up the Renaissance' has been established: <http://sites.ace.ed.ac.uk/renaissancecosmetics/>.

¹²⁴ Monica Mayer, 'Art and Feminism: From Loving Education to Education Through Osmosis,' *n.paradoxa* 26 (Feminist Pedagogies) (2010): 5-16, 8.

¹²⁵ Pollock, 'Art, Art School, Culture,' in the *Block Reader*, 65.

encourage active, critical thinking in its students. This aspiration is ostensibly under threat from the unabated neoliberalisation of tertiary education across the globe, under which the lines between education, training and entrepreneurialism are increasingly blurred. Critical educators in art history must be particularly concerned with the encroaching instrumentalisation of the discipline, which is perhaps most evident in the rise of the unpaid gallery internship as a requirement or option within these studies. Governmental pressure on art history to strengthen industry links, through the provision of free (unwaged) labour, not only maintains the art sector as a ‘capitalist market economy’ but also undermines the *credibility* of progressive, politically-minded art histories – including feminist art history – as anything but ineffectual discourse and as incapable of achieving change in the ‘real’ world.¹²⁶ Yet feminist art historians’ collective opposition to this discrediting of their politics is hard to find. Such opposition is far more visible in critical contexts that utilise a Marxist conceptual apparatus, with educational theorist Henry Giroux having emphatically argued that ‘education must not be confused with training’, if knowledge is to maintain its potential for critique and resistance to corporate culture rather than function merely as a form of ‘venture capital’.¹²⁷

As the above overview demonstrates, feminist art education has pushed at the parameters of disciplinary knowledge and, through this epistemological negotiation of the frame, endeavoured to produce politicised subjects willing to confront culture’s complex relations of power. Commenting in 1991, the art education theorist Renee Sandell summarises feminism’s aims: ‘Teaching feminist theory involved teaching the basic skills for comprehending knowledge: how to read, analyse and think about ideas.’¹²⁸ Almost ten years earlier Dale Spender had put it even more clearly in *FAN: Feminist Art News*: ‘I want to suggest that human beings act on the information that’s available to them. When they possess different information they act differently.’¹²⁹ These comments are constructive to understanding feminist

¹²⁶ ‘I say a capitalist market economy and not the art market because, as both Hal Foster and Miwon Kwon have asserted, the forms that art has been assuming for some time now, alongside changes in the museum and related display cultures (e.g. biennials), locate art increasingly in a wider *network* of markets (e.g. the market catering for art tourism *and* the art market).’ Angela Dimitrakaki, ‘Gendering the Multitude,’ in *Women, the Arts and Globalization: Eccentric Experience*, ed. Marsha Meskimmon and Dorothy Rowe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 16.

¹²⁷ Henry Giroux, ‘Neoliberalisation and the Vocationalisation of Higher Education,’ accessed 22 February 2012 at, http://www.henrygiroux.com/online_articles/vocalization.htm.

¹²⁸ Renee Sandell, ‘The Liberating Relevance of Feminist Pedagogy,’ *Studies in Art Education* 32.3 (1991): 178-87, 180.

¹²⁹ Dale Spender, *FAN: Feminist Art News* 10 ‘Woman and Art Education 2’ (1983): 5.

pedagogy's primary aim of offering its students critical tools with which to navigate and contest dominant, oppressive forms of knowledge. And yet, to return to Pollock's definition above, attention to the production of meaning must be matched by a consideration of economic, social and political bases. Feminist education has mounted an excellent gender critique but a critique of the economy - and particularly the role of education and the academic institution in reproducing economic inequality – is, as Giroux highlights, urgently required.

Becoming Collaborators

Collaboration recurs as a key feature of feminist art pedagogy. It recognises that all knowledge is collective, as everything we know has filtered to us through others, and that all knowledge is provisional because it is based upon a continual negotiation between individuals within a conversational community. Collaborative classrooms lend apposite structural support to the fluid, multidisciplinary knowledge that feminism produces in the academy. These working patterns also crucially undermine what Caroline Jones has termed the 'romance of the studio', that is the modern art historical model of the individual genius, struggling solitarily on (normatively) *his* creative work.¹³⁰ As Linnea Dietrich and Diane Smith Hurd argue, in an appropriately collaborative article of 1995:

It is not enough to deconstruct the modern tradition on the level of theory without a renewal of educational practice...Our primary goal is to empower students and to have them *become collaborators in their own learning and not mere receptacles for data.*¹³¹

Dietrich and Hurd emphasise the inextricability of theory and practice (or form and content), suggesting that feminist teaching must actively produce a critical student body through a pedagogy based in collaborative praxis. Earlier, in 1978, Marxist artist and writer Alan Sekula had employed the often-used metaphor of the educational 'factory' (as reproducing the labour force) and criticised academic institutions for reducing their students 'to the status of passive listeners, rather than active subjects

¹³⁰ See in particular Caroline Jones, Chapter 1: 'The Romance of the Studio and the Abstract Expressionist Sublime,' in *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar Artist* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹³¹ Dietrich and Hurd, 'Approaches to the Survey,' 44. Emphasis added.

of knowledge.’¹³² The development of emancipatory pedagogies after 1968 was extensive throughout the humanities and active learning engagement, with its presumed challenged to this ‘factory-like’ reduction, formed a central contention of many of these theories. The staid, unilinear process of knowledge transfer that Dietrich, Hurd, and Sekula claim characterises classical academic practices is challenged by feminist pedagogies, which aim to open the classroom to a dialogic ontology of learning through participation and collaboration. The centrality of shared communication and the dialectical exchange of knowledge is frequently referred to across four decades of feminist art education literature. In 1987, Joan Marter recalled that ‘a dynamic, participatory approach is more stimulating to students than the usual slide lecture’ and, in 2010, Monica Mayer argued that ‘the best way of learning is, in fact, by teaching.’¹³³

In and of itself collaboration is not an unconditional instrument of institutional critique (this method of working dominates the sciences, for example); however, as a response to the historically constituted structure of arts education, feminists have framed their collaborative working methods as oppositional to individualist ideology. The question, however, crucially remains as to why more feminist artists and art historians, educated through these programmes and working in the art world, do not extend the collaborative experiment further. Novelist Jeanette Winterson hints at a possible answer in her 2011 memoir, in which she recalls her 1970s working-class upbringing and auto-didactic consciousness-raising:

I dreamed of escape – but what is terrible about industrialisation is that it makes escape necessary. *In a system that generates masses, individualism is the only way out.* But then what happens to community – to society?¹³⁴

As Winterson suggests, individuals who find a way to (economic) success often do so at the expense of broader community. But is this not inevitable given what Duncan has termed the ‘mutually supportive relationship between establishment humanism [in the academy] and the larger social order’?¹³⁵ As long as the cult of the

¹³² Alan Sekula, ‘School is a Factory,’ (1978-80) in *Education: Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Felicity Allen (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press and Whitechapel Gallery, 2011), 115-18, 116.

¹³³ Marter, *WSQ*, ed. Gouma-Peterson, 51. Mayer, ‘Art and Feminism,’ 5.

¹³⁴ Jeanette Winterson, *Why Be Happy When You Could be Normal?* (New York: Grove Press, 2011), 17. Emphasis added.

¹³⁵ Duncan, *The Aesthetics of Power*, 140.

individual maintains sovereignty within the professional art world (including its institutions of display, circulation and transaction), collaborative practices may carve out a space for existence but they will not radically alter the terms of this system.¹³⁶ This has had an obvious impact upon the material practices of artists who require participation in the market in order to earn a living wage; especially conventionally excluded artist-subjects (including women), for whom conformation has been a hard-won battle. However, by engaging their students in a self-reflexive collaborative pedagogy, feminist teachers underline and draw attention to the performative, socialising effects of the classroom, thereby enacting (theoretically, at least) a model of resistance to the dominant social order beyond the academy. The material and economic effects of this resistance within the professional art world beyond the classroom remain to be assessed, although as Winterson suggests, a reversion to individualism remains the easiest option. As the configuration of academic work transforms ever-closer toward the collaborative ideal articulated through second-wave feminist pedagogy – as evidenced by increased funding for collective institutional projects, for example – the question that educators will have to address is how an imposed collaboration from above differs to teamwork from below, if indeed it does.

The rich history of feminist collaborations includes such renowned pairings as Chicago and Schapiro, Norma Broude and Mary D Garrard, Rozsika Parker and Pollock, among many others.¹³⁷ Within the classroom, however, the Feminist Art Program evidences one of the most successful examples of negotiating a collaborative feminist pedagogy within the academic institution. Wilding has emphasised the importance of the students' proximity in the off-site separatist space, declaring that '[t]his organic process of becoming collaborators in a space of our own was one of the secrets of the Program's astonishing success.'¹³⁸ Wilding phrase reiterates Dietrich and Hurd's phrasing above; to *become collaborators* suggests a

¹³⁶ Of course the Renaissance studio system famously produced many collaborative works but these were usually attributed, through historical convention, to a leading individual. Similarly, Chicago's *The Dinner Party* provides a well-known example of a collaborative work, problematically exhibited under the artist's name. See Chapter Three for further discussion.

¹³⁷ Chicago and Schapiro organised the Feminist Art Program at CalArts in 1971. Broude and Garrard have co-edited a number of large feminist anthologies: *Feminism and Art Theory* (1982), *The Expanding Discourse* (1992), *The Power of Feminist Art* (1994), and *Reclaiming Feminist Agency* (2005). Parker and Pollock co-authored *Old Mistresses* (1981) and co-edited *Framing Feminism* (1987).

¹³⁸ Wilding, with Meyer, *n.paradoxa*, 44.

fluid process of learning through unlearning (particularly individualist competitive structures), a creative act of remaking. This stands in stark opposition to Sekula's description of institutionalised students as staid 'receptacles' for knowledge. In traditional teaching practices the enlightened lecturer (often literally enlightened by a projector) transmits information out into the darkened lecture theatre filled with silent individuals, whereas Wilding describes their animated consciousness-raising sessions, and art-making, as 'a means of producing and sharing knowledge'.¹³⁹ Around the same time (c.1973) in the UK, the Women's Art History Collective also experimented with 'presenting our material collaboratively as a group', thereby extending the feminist aim of countering 'typical forms of individualism' into extra-institutional art historical teaching.¹⁴⁰ These writings evince a transatlantic awareness of the potential power that collaborative forms of pedagogy offered for undermining the drive towards individualism that our classrooms, particularly those for the arts, often (re)produce.

The act of becoming collaborators relies upon a relationship of greater equality than that normally permitted in the academy. Or, at the very least, an acknowledgement of the power inequity present between teacher and student that usually results in the subjection of the learner. Schapiro recalls the painting classes she led at the Feminist Art Program, claiming: 'There was no unnecessary emphasis on my status as a teacher... The democratisation process was immediate and extraordinary.'¹⁴¹ Schapiro's collaborative engagement with her fellow staff and students allows the 'range of teaching [to] be broadened to include friendship, mentorship, and sisterhood.'¹⁴² These terms speak of familiarity and informality in contrast to the official hierarchy proscribed by the academy. The institution secures the generational divide that feminist education seeks to counteract, by fixing its teachers and students within a particular dialectic of power, extending the modernist avant-garde desire (rooted in the Oedipal urge) to valiantly oppose and overthrow one's forbearers. This urge denies an intergenerational cooperation that builds

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, 49.

¹⁴⁰ Pollock, 'Open, Closed and Opening,' 22.

¹⁴¹ Schapiro, WSQ, 1987, 28. Despite Schapiro's claims, there have been many comments from participants retrospectively criticising the absolute authority of the leaders during the programme. In 1985, Harper suggested that the directors attempted 'the elimination of traditional hierarchies of authority. In practice, however, the strong personalities and leadership of Chicago and Schapiro guided the program.' 'The First Feminist Art Program,' 774. Ulrike Müller's 1996 art project <*re.tracing*> collates numerous retrospective assessments, many negative, from participants.

¹⁴² Schapiro, qtd in Harper (1985), 765.

collaboratively and successively rather than continuing to focus upon narratives of rupture and novelty. The organisers of a 2006-11 collaborative art project, the Malmö Free University for Women (MFK), have evocatively suggested: ‘As feminists we have learned from the experiences of our movement.’¹⁴³ With this the organisers declare their affiliation to a historical ‘movement’ and implicitly advocate a collective, intergenerational knowledge sharing both between past and present, and between teachers and students.

The Open University provides another historical example, as the 1977 ‘Great Divide’ course was conceived and taught collaboratively under a process of feminist peer-review: ‘It was written collectively – each section by a different woman – and rewritten after comments and criticism by other members of the collective.’¹⁴⁴ The organisers extended collaboration beyond their immediate peers by acknowledging the historical precedence of US-based educational programmes, which – like the MFK - form an experiential backdrop: ‘One of the most striking experiments in feminist art teaching/learning was Project *Womanhouse*, in California in 1972.’ Furthering collective knowledge transfer, the course programme booklet ‘reprint[ed] an article on this’ for students.¹⁴⁵ Despite the brief success of such initiatives, however, the institution insistently thwarts attempts to work collaboratively with time-pressured teaching contracts that are structured by individually contributed hours rather than collectively taught ventures. As Patricia Mathews has remarked: ‘Token feminists, a commonplace in art departments and art journals, are expected to “do” feminism, as though it were only another “method”, rather than ‘a world view, a politics which informs all inquiry.’¹⁴⁶ Mathews’ reflection points to the limiting effects of institutional segregation that thwart efforts to implement collaborative feminist research and teaching beyond individual classes. This issue of tokenism may also illuminate the faltering reproduction of feminist programmes within the academy.

A largely overlooked example of a successful, institutionally situated, feminist educational initiative can be found at Arizona State University. ‘Women-Image-Now’ ran from 1974 to 1987 and, although greatly underrepresented in

¹⁴³ MFK, 27.

¹⁴⁴ The Great Divide, Open University, 6

¹⁴⁵ The Great Divide, Open University, 68.

¹⁴⁶ Patricia Mathews, ‘The Politics of Feminist Art History,’ in *The Subjects of Art History*, ed. Cheetham, Holly, Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 94-115.

feminist art history, provides an example of an unusually successful *long-term* feminist institutional intervention.¹⁴⁷ The initiative was established by artist and educator Muriel Magenta in 1974 and consisted of approximately five hundred participants across different disciplines including theatre, dance, art, women's studies, and art history. This group of students, both under- and post-graduate, arranged guest lectures from a range of feminist artists and critics, as well as establishing a high-profile annual exhibition of student works. In conjunction with this extra-curricular organising, a course option ('Women's View of Art') was established in 1977 for the academic study of art history, and was open to students from a range of disciplines. Similar to the deconstructive academic evaluation practices discussed above, assessment for this module was accepted in a variety of media including choreography, visual arts, music and writing. The third aspect of Woman-Image-Now consisted of a published journal circulating interviews, articles, and reproduced art works. The academic, activist, exhibitory and publishing aspects of the initiative expand the formal institution's customary parameters, and its success was entirely dependent on the collaborative work between staff and students, women and men, university and wider community. The initiative is an exemplar of feminist pedagogy, blurring disciplinary boundaries, distinctions between media, learning through experience, and enabling a collaborative working structure. Magenta continues to teach at Arizona, where she is currently running a seminar for under- and post-graduates entitled 'Women/Art/Technology' (2010-14).¹⁴⁸

Despite the assumed benefits to working and learning collaboratively, it is not always straightforward in practice and it would be remiss to avoid addressing some of the schisms that have emerged within the history of feminist art education. According to Tickner, the Women's Art History Collective began running a public evening class in the early 1970s, encouraged by their agreement that women's art history should not solely be 'an academic thing'.¹⁴⁹ However, debates arose, as 'there was a whole thing about the politics of how women could share knowledge with other women in a way that didn't claim authority...it's very, very difficult.'¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ I repeat the details of this programme in such detail because of its neglected place in feminist art history, at least in comparison to other initiatives, especially those on the west-coast. Muriel Magenta, 'Woman Image Now: Arizona State University,' *Women's Studies Quarterly* 15.1-2 (1987): 56-57.

¹⁴⁸ Magenta, personal email to author 5 June 2014. More details of her current initiative can be found online www.momentum-women-art-technology.com, as can her other programmes.

¹⁴⁹ Tickner, interviewed by Bruchet for the AAH.

¹⁵⁰ Tickner, interviewed by Bruchet for the AAH.

Disagreements broke out over this question of authority, as some members of the collective suggested that an over-emphasis on *how* to share knowledge collaboratively and non-authoritatively was detracting from *what* was being shared. That Tickner recalled this dispute in an interview, some thirty years later, suggests that these antagonisms continue to produce engaged reflection and their irresolution can in fact be critically and intellectually productive. However, at times such disagreements inevitably led to ruptures. Subsequent to an extremely dynamic two-year period at CalArts, Chicago and Schapiro eventually stopped working together, ostensibly due to an ideological disagreement regarding the limits to gender separatism.¹⁵¹ Although the Program participants have agreed that ‘the sense of community was strongest’ when working in a separatist space, this isolated collaboration came at a cost to other relationships (particularly, they have noted, with men) and Wilding has commented: ‘I’m only now beginning to realise how much it cost.’¹⁵² These costs related to her private life and relationships – not dissimilar to Raven’s raised consciousness, discussed earlier – which she could not continue without profound alterations. Wilding is ultimately positive, however, noting that ‘we wouldn’t have made the gains without that drastic, radical dislocation of the status quo.’¹⁵³

Beyond these specific incidences of disagreement and rupture, feminist art historians have - since the very inception of the discourse – articulated broader contestations to any ideal image of ‘singular’ sisterhood. The conflict between collective equality and individual heterogeneity has been difficult to resolve, but feminist educators have at least attempted to remain attentive to the significance of (often classed, raced, sexed) differences among their cohort. Implementing an intersectional politics collaboratively within the academic institution remains challenging, as the axes of power do not fall singularly along gender boundaries. Vogel recalls her ‘horror and embarrassment’ as a Junior Fellow at Harvard in 1964, where Black women ‘took care of all domestic tasks’.¹⁵⁴ However, despite sensing a ‘convergence of class, race and gender subordination’ before the women’s movement exploded in public visibility, the social change intuited by Vogel was

¹⁵¹ Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975).

¹⁵² Wilding quoted in Harper (1985), 778.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Vogel, *Woman Questions*, 11.

slow to evolve. (And is continuing to evolve slowly in the twenty-first century, when action against the outsourcing and underpayment of support staff is sporadic if not scarcely existent.¹⁵⁵) Later, in 1986, artist Chila Burman highlighted the sustained, inferior situation for black women within British art institutions, and asserted the *lack of collaboration* between white and black feminists as a primary reason for this prevalent exclusion.

Art history is an academic subject, studied in patriarchal institutions, and white middle-class women have used their advantageous class position to gain access to these institutions by applying pressure to them in a way that actually furthers the exclusion of black artists in general.¹⁵⁶

The dialectic between escape and subordination returns us to Winterson's earlier recollection of how she seized (economic and creative) success at the expense of the working-class community she grew up in. But perhaps this is a problem related to the rhetoric of identity politics and whether a focus on individual differences and representational equality directs attention away from the attainment of altered structural justice. Burman stated that, in 1986, there were 'no full-time lecturing posts at art colleges and universities filled by Blackwomen in the entire country', which clearly posed serious limits to the institutional visibility of black feminist critique and the reconstruction of the discipline along these critical considerations.¹⁵⁷ While masculinity may be the unmarked term to femininity, Burman suggests that an additional tier of oppression mirrors this *within* feminism – thereby, as she argues, furthering exclusion. While art by white women may be understood as a 'homogenous expression of femininity... In this system of knowledge, Blackwomen artists, quite simply, do not exist.'¹⁵⁸ According to Burman, white women claimed both institutional and historical representation, but only at the expense of a broader collaborative sisterhood, therefore structural inequalities were maintained and, in fact, extended.

¹⁵⁵ In July 2013, for example, outsourced cleaning staff and supporters attempted to demonstrate against poor working conditions and employment rights at UCL's Senate House, when police were brought in to forcibly end the protest. That this issue of employment is not more widely addressed, or even visible, suggests that Vogel's recollection is not only a *historical* problem. Jack Grove, 'SOAS Cleaners Protest Over Work Rights,' *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 7 July 2013.

¹⁵⁶ Chila Burman, 'There Have Always Been Blackwomen Artists,' (1986), in *Visibly Female*, ed. Robinson: 195-199, 196.

¹⁵⁷ Burman, 'There Have Always Been Blackwomen Artists,' 197.

¹⁵⁸ Burman, 'There Have Always Been Blackwomen Artists,' 195-6.

In an earlier article, polemically entitled ‘Teaching the Rich’ (1973), Duncan suggested that class relations within art history and its institutions had been woefully under-discussed. Reaching a parallel conclusion to that of Burman, she posits that art education serves a method of cultural and social reproduction that replicates economic disparity *among* young women (who constituted the vast majority of Duncan’s students), and therefore a truly collaborative feminist art history would need to engage with its internal inequalities.¹⁵⁹ These divisions and differences have provoked significant difficulties for feminist art collaboration both in theory and in practice; however, the very reason that Pollock, Duncan, Robinson, Vogel and Burman condemn the disciplines of art and art history (for their virulent classism, racism and sexism) are exactly the same reasons for which – as Tickner suggests – feminism cannot leave art history. Art history provides a textbook example of how hegemonic ideology is reproduced, and masked as universal judgement, consequently rendering the discipline a valuable site for feminist educators to expose social power through their pedagogic practices.

Is Feminist Art Pedagogy (Only) History?

As the next chapter will demonstrate, feminist interventions have had immeasurable impact upon the academic apparatuses that support the discipline of art history, including conferences, journals and other instituted forms of knowledge production and transfer. However, despite these visible and fundamental changes to the discipline and its representations of art’s history, it remains necessary to interrogate the still supplemental position of feminism within the classroom. I would like to suggest that one contribution to feminism’s marginal position is the disengagement of feminist *art history* from feminist *art pedagogy*. This has resulted in the (institutional) establishment of a purely historical, or even theoretical, feminist project that is certain to remain detached from the material experiences of a contemporary student body and consequently excluded from the processes of shaping an oppositional political landscape.

As ‘life-long’ learning opportunities disperse throughout the cultural sphere, the contemporary art world (and particularly the curatorial field) has undergone a

¹⁵⁹ Please also see: Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction’, in *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change*, ed. Richard K. Brown (London: Tavistock, 1973), 71-112.

much commented upon ‘educational turn’.¹⁶⁰ (An educational turn that, it must be noted, has largely ignored feminism until very recently.¹⁶¹) At the same time, since around the mid-2000s, it has been widely acknowledged that art institutions across Euro-American contexts began paying unprecedented attention to the histories of feminist art.¹⁶² Subsequent to this noted succession of high-profile exhibitions and publications, since around 2009, greater attention has been directed towards the significance of education and unorthodox spaces of learning within feminist art histories.¹⁶³ Prior to this surge of diverse critical interest, the last major publication to significantly contend with the pedagogical-engagement of feminist art history was Norma Broude and Mary Garrard’s anthology *The Power of Feminist Art*, published in 1994.¹⁶⁴ The wealth of scholarly and curatorial research into - albeit a mostly very specific, localised strand of American - alternative education initiatives in art history, evidences feminism’s more visible status in art discourse over the past few years.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ ‘Salon Discussion: “You Talkin’ to Me?” Why art is turning to education.’ The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 14 July 2008.

¹⁶¹ This omission has begun to be redressed by feminist art historians. For instance, Hilary Robinson in discussion with Felicity Allen at Whitechapel Gallery London: ‘How Does Radical Education Relate to Feminist Curatorial Practices?’, 8 May 2013. And ‘Art School: Another History,’ discussion event featuring Amy Tobin, Lisa Tickner, and Catherine Elwes at David Roberts Art Foundation, London, 6 May 2014.

¹⁶² This point has been addressed adequately elsewhere, for a list of relevant exhibitions and publications please see: Amelia Jones ‘1970/2007: The Return of Feminism,’ *X-tra Contemporary Art Quarterly* 10.4 (2008). Accessed online, 22 December 2011, http://www.x-traonline.org/past_articles.php?articleID=184.

¹⁶³ In 2009 California State University Fresno (previously Fresno State College) hosted an exhibition history of the foundational Feminist Art Program titled *A Studio of Their Own*, Phebe Conley Gallery, California, 26 August – 9 October 2009. In 2010, arts journal *n.paradoxa* examined contemporary feminist pedagogies across the globe, as well as re-examining second-wave histories: *n.paradoxa* vol. 26, July 2010. In 2010, Lynn Hershman Leeson’s long-awaited documentary film *WAR! Women Art Revolution!* was released, alongside an extensive online archive, especially highlighting the crucial role of experimental pedagogy in producing this fertile moment of art and knowledge production. The exhibition *Doin’ It in Public* ran for six months and documented the often overlooked pedagogical experiments at The Woman’s Building; an extensive series of events and the publication of a two-volume catalogue extended the exhibition’s historical visibility: Ben Maltz Gallery, Los Angeles, 1 October 2011 – 26 February 2012. On a slightly smaller scale, in January 2012, a collective of artists and art historians in Nabaska ran the commemorative community project *Womanhouse v4.0*, in order to mark the forty-year anniversary of the Feminist Art Program’s landmark installation: *Womanhouse v4.0*, <http://unlwomanhouse.blogspot.co.uk/>, Accessed 26 June 2012. In 2012, Jill Fields edited a collection of historical essays re-evaluating the history of The Feminist Art Program at Fresno and addressing the development of later collaborative initiatives among staff and students associated with the FAP: *Entering the Picture*, 2012.

¹⁶⁴ Broude and Garrard, *The Power of Feminist Art*, 1994.

¹⁶⁵ This increase in interest and, possibly, affiliation, is in direct contrast to the late 1990s when various art historians suggested feminism was *démodé* for their younger generations of students. Katy Deepwell, ‘Students and Feminisms,’ *n.paradoxa* 10 (June 1999): 10-16. See also Mira Schor, ed. ‘Contemporary Feminism: Art Practice, Theory, Activism – an Intergenerational Perspective,’ *Art Journal* 58.4 (Winter 1999): 8-29.

The intrepid self-publicising efforts of Chicago, and many of the FAP participants, can be credited with ensuring its prominent place within the annals of contemporary art history. In reference to a special issue of *Everywoman* magazine, which the group collectively edited, Chicago explained that within the context of the women's liberation movement: 'I realized that I could actually begin to put out all this information I had about my own struggle, my own perceptions, and I also understood that the structure as it existed in the art world and the world as a whole had no provisions for that kind of information.'¹⁶⁶ This sentiment relates to that of a 1968 art college demonstrator, who optimistically wrote, 'we knew we could beat them [the university authorities] to the history because they weren't going to write a book.'¹⁶⁷ Together, these remarks evince an awareness that in this turbulent and utopian moment, the young scholars struggling for educational revolution were fully aware that they were also contesting for a revolution in history; one written 'from below' and therefore illuminating their momentary acts of resistance against the authorities of art and art history instruction. The historiography of the FAP demonstrates, however, that the relationship between feminist action and feminist history is a delicate one to maintain.

In May 1971, the special issue of the feminist magazine *Everywoman* was collaboratively published, stating: 'This issue was done completely by a woman's collective in Fresno – Miss Chicago and the California Girls'. The course leader of the Feminist Design Program at CalArts, Sheila de Bretteville, also designed the tabloid-style layout.¹⁶⁸ In autumn 1971, excerpts from this magazine edition were reprinted in the mainstream *Art Journal*, thereby introducing the programme to a wider art audience, and another original article by Schapiro followed in the journal in spring 1972.¹⁶⁹ In March 1972, a special issue of *Time Magazine* entitled 'The American Woman' included a review describing the installation *Womanhouse*, thus bringing it to the attention of a much larger, national audience.¹⁷⁰ Two autobiographical books, published by Chicago, later explained in detail her

¹⁶⁶ Chicago quoted in Gail Levin, 'Becoming Judy Chicago,' in *Entering the Picture*, ed. Jill Fields: 25-45, 37.

¹⁶⁷ David Page, quoted in Tickner, *Hornsey 1968*, 102.

¹⁶⁸ Misc., *Everywoman* 2.18 (7 May 1971), 1.

¹⁶⁹ Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, 'A Feminist Art Program,' *Art Journal* 31.1 (Fall 1971), 48-9. Chicago and Schapiro responded to a letter criticising the article in 'Cool it Sister,' *Art Journal* 31.3 (Spring 1972): 366. Miriam Schapiro, 'The Education of Woman as Artists: Project *Womanhouse*,' *Art Journal* 31.3 (Spring 1972): 268-70.

¹⁷⁰ Anon., 'Bad Dream House,' *Time Magazine*, 99.12 (20 March 1972): 84.

pedagogical philosophy and the institutional pressures she had to contend with as both a teacher and an artist.¹⁷¹ Retrospective articles recounting the achievements of the programme continued to crop up throughout the late 1970s and, less frequently in the 1980s, although minor references arise in art education journals (therefore in the pedagogical rather than art historical press).¹⁷² As mentioned, a significant shift takes place in 1994, when Broude and Garrard published their anthological tome, *The Power of Feminist Art*.¹⁷³ This re-contextualisation drifts from specialist feminist journals, to more mainstream magazines and general press, and finally a scholarly historical book, thereby mirroring more broadly feminism's integration within the academy over this same period.

The latent historiographic problem I wish to draw out from this publishing overview is that, as the Feminist Art Program becomes an 'event' in art history, it correspondingly risks losing its efficacy as a practiced pedagogical philosophy. Historiography evidences how the feminist pedagogy rehearsed, lived, and learned through the initiative became increasingly consolidated within an established narrative; one that students are as likely to encounter as distant history in a textbook or aestheticised in an exhibition, rather than through pedagogic praxis. The romanticisation of an enclosed historic moment might prevent connections being drawn, or feminism's denaturalising critique of knowledge being replicated successfully in the present, but ultimately it is the job of the historian and teacher to illuminate such links.

In a 2008 article for *Mute Magazine*, British Marxist philosopher Stewart Martin proposed that the associated dispersals of the factory (labour) and the academy (education) into society have led to 'a crisis of ideas of emancipatory education'.¹⁷⁴ Akin to other theorists, he draws connections between self-directed, collaborative, flexible learning patterns and those similarly demanded by (often immaterial) wage labour: 'In short, the autonomy aspired to by emancipatory education has turned out

¹⁷¹ Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (1975) and *Beyond the Flower: The Autobiography of a Feminist Artist* (New York: Viking, 1997). In 2014 a third instalment was published, but due to time constraints I have not been able to consult the book. Chicago, *Institutional Time*.

¹⁷² For example, in articles by feminist education theorists including Georgia C Collins, Renee Sandell, and Phil Goodall. Harper, 'The First Feminist Art Program: A View from the 1980s', *Signs* 10.4 (Summer 1985), 762-781. Offers a more critical reading of the achievements of FAP.

¹⁷³ Broude and Garrard, 1994

¹⁷⁴ Stewart Martin, 'Pedagogy of Human Capital,' *Mute Magazine* 2 (2008): unpaginated.

to involve points of indifference to the autonomy required of new capitalist work.¹⁷⁵ Thus a dual problem arises for feminism: first, it has increasingly become part of art's history rather than present, and second, neoliberal institutions have accommodated its associated emancipatory pedagogies. However, like other writers associated with art's 'educational turn', Martin fails to take into account the specificities of feminist education's history.¹⁷⁶ For, if (as he suggests) we face a situation that 'cannot be theoretically resolved', common sense would suggest that practical tactics are required. In the 1970s, the strategies developed within feminist pedagogy offered a material engagement with students' lives and the academy's knowledges that surpassed the presentation mode of classical education. This was founded in praxis, not theory. Feminism is not, however, tied to these tactics, which were pursued at a specific moment and social context in Western feminism's history and which must be renewed with due consideration to contemporary socio-political conflicts.

In a particular historical moment (emerging in the early 1970s) the tactics of feminist pedagogy were effective in producing new forms of art and art historical knowledge, and educating new generations of artists and scholars into feminist politics. If some of the forms of these pedagogies have been institutionally recouped under a neoliberal hegemony (which, crucially, reproduces and benefits from gender hierarchies), this does not mean that they could not *become* effective again through a similar reflexive break. In reiterating the Marxist critique of ideology available since the nineteenth century, cultural theorist Mark Fisher argued in 2009 that 'emancipatory politics must always destroy the appearance of a "natural order", must reveal what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be a mere contingency, just as it must make what was previously deemed impossible seem attainable.'¹⁷⁷ Some feminist art historians of the first generation, such as Pollock, also drew on the same critique of ideology in their early writings, referring to theorists including Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci and Bertolt Brecht.¹⁷⁸ It once seemed, not too long ago, impossible that women could train and work successfully as artists or head academic

¹⁷⁵ Pen Dalton similarly, but less rigorously, argued: 'Rather than being in opposition to the power relations of capitalism, I suggest that feminine pedagogies seem to be the best educational practices to accommodate the changing needs of the developed economies, and global systems of power.' 'Feminist Methodologies', 74.

¹⁷⁶ E.g. Steven Henry Madoff, *Art School: Propositions for the 21st Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

¹⁷⁷ Fisher, (2009), p.17.

¹⁷⁸ See for instance: Pollock, 'Vision, Voice and Power,' in *Vision and Difference*.

departments; yet, this is a reality that feminist struggle has forced into being.¹⁷⁹ A feminist pedagogic praxis is not solely about training artists and art historians (i.e. it does not have a quantifiable outcome); it is about producing radical knowledge about the social field. Therefore, it remains crucial, as Fisher suggests, to renew critical thinking and actively destroy what seems unchangeable - but how can this pedagogy emerge in the twenty-first century academic institution, with its increasingly business-like organisation?

In 2010, Pollock lamented the breakdown of the radical reconstruction promised by feminist scholarship in the academy, and enquires: 'Is the feminist intervention in education over in Britain?'¹⁸⁰ As evidence she cites the 'abolition' (her loaded term) of the MAFEM programme in 2003 and, four years later, the termination of the only remaining Women's Studies undergraduate course in the UK. Most galling, Pollock suggests, was the silence with which these acts were met: 'The only dedicated graduate programme in art, art history and fine art with feminism in its title, taught in the UK, simply disappeared without a single voice raised amongst my colleagues in its defence.'¹⁸¹ There are three conceivable, overlapping explanations for this silence: first, that feminist scholars, reliant upon the institution for their wages, lacked the power to speak up in Pollock's defence; second, that feminism has been effectively naturalised as an ideology within art history education and, therefore, appeared to no longer require defending; third, the prevalent signification of feminism as a form of *individual* empowerment had eroded the prospect of *collectivised* resistance.

Mayer supports the second interpretation, reporting that her students tend to hold the opinion that feminism has obtained its goals and is therefore no longer pertinent to contemporary contexts. 'The problem with this', she elucidates, is that without a feminist perspective 'it is more difficult for them to realise when sexism is occurring.'¹⁸² Mayer's account from the classroom also corresponds with

¹⁷⁹ For instance, prominent feminist researchers who have been awarded professorships in the UK include: Lisa Tickner, Deborah Cherry, Gill Perry, Griselda Pollock, Hilary Robinson, Laura Mulvey, Sonia Boyce, Katy Deepwell. There is a slight contradiction here: although I'm arguing that feminism positively forced these changes, as McRobbie and Martin suggest, vaster economic changes underpinning the globalisation of capital may have actually encouraged women's participation, rather than having simply benefited from the changes wrought by feminism. This is a debate I cannot hope to resolve here. See Hester Eisenstein and Nancy Fraser for further reading on the subject.

¹⁸⁰ Pollock, 'Open, Closed and Opening,' 21.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁸² Mayer, 'Art and Feminism,' 14.

McRobbie's theory of 'Top Girls', whom she views as the primary targets of neoliberal policies that simultaneously expand and rely upon young women's high academic achievements, resultant labour participation, and global mobility. McRobbie compellingly links the expansion of the university sector (particularly after the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 that saw UK polytechnics reconceived as universities) to the coincident displacement of feminist politics: 'In singling out young women for special attention, New Labour and other governments *seem to be fulfilling* some of the hopes of earlier generations of feminists, while in fact they are encouraging female activity as a new form of social mobility.'¹⁸³

This failure, in both structural reproduction (at institutional level) and ideological reproduction (the students' perspectives), must be addressed - feminism cannot, as I suggest above, become (only) history. Roxane Permar elucidates the reasons for feminism's previous success as:

Feminist strategies were effective in the 1970s and early 1980s *because they grew from a politicised perspective and had clearly defined aims and objectives*. Art education proved a fertile territory for realising productive change. The educational institutions provided – and still do – professional opportunities as well as the potential to educate whole communities of artists about ideas and issues directly affecting women's position in art.¹⁸⁴

As Permar argues, feminist art strategies developed as praxis within and through the politicised space of the classroom, they were not recouped into them as static knowledge. If this was the case then, what are the issues facing feminist – and, indeed, all oppositional – forms of education today? How can pedagogies of 'art' or 'feminism' answer - or even pose – the necessary questions required to provide a fresh, 'fertile territory' within the academy? In the early 1970s, for example, one of the prominent hurdles facing women artists was 'inclusion', both in educational and professional establishments of art. Feminism (with moderate success) addressed its critique to these gendered systems of exclusion, exploring the potential of (1) separatism, (2) personal and interdisciplinary knowledges, and (3) collaboration, to enact a politically pedagogic approach to art history knowledge production. In the early years of the 2010s, faced with what Giroux has termed the 'vocationalisation'

¹⁸³ McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism*, 75. Emphasis added.

¹⁸⁴ Roxane Permar, 'Fragile Territories: Women and Power in Art Education,' *Make: The Magazine of Women's Art* 77 (1998): 6. Emphasis added.

of arts education, and the commercialisation of the British university system where any person can gain access provided they pay (or accrue financial debt), the ground has significantly shifted. If the blindspot of feminist art history writing has been the conditions of its own production (by scholars working within the capitalist academy), perhaps new pedagogic tactics need to be explored. If, as McRobbie elucidates, emancipatory education was re-aligned with neoliberal goals in the 1990s, I would optimistically suggest that feminism today is re-emerging out of the collective opposition to this larger system.

The University Is a Factory: Strike! Occupy!

The above words were slung across a banner at the University of Middlesex in summer 2010, when students and staff occupied the Mansion House Library in protest against the enforced closure of the Philosophy Department (which included a respected visual culture and aesthetics component).¹⁸⁵ The twelve-day sit-in precipitated widespread occupations and protests staged in response to alterations in the UK Higher Education Budget - confirmed towards the end of 2010 and comprising, for example, decreased humanities funding and vastly increased tuition fees.¹⁸⁶ Although the occupation ended under the threat of a court injunction - and, nationally, the student protests were violently suppressed - as the theorist Moacir Gadotti has argued: 'As far as education is concerned, no strike can be a failure.'¹⁸⁷ Four decades earlier in 1968, at Hornsey College of Art, students had similarly staged a six-week occupation of the college; as a wave of protests infamously spread across the UK and Europe.¹⁸⁸ A contributing force behind the protest was, coincidentally, the impending assimilation of Hornsey College within the new Middlesex Polytechnic (later University of Middlesex); thus, moments of rupture and

¹⁸⁵ For more on this occupation please see: Misc. 'Dossier on Universities', *Radical Philosophy*, no.162, July/Aug 2010: 38-47.

¹⁸⁶ 'On 10 October 2010, the Browne Review recommended the raising of the tuition cap from approximately £3,000 to £9,000. On 20 October, the Comprehensive Spending Review was announced, which had the outcome of cutting 80 percent of funding for teaching in the arts, social sciences and humanities within higher education.' Kirsten Forkert, 'Some Reflections on Student Protest, Anti-Cuts Activism and Artistic and Intellectual Autonomy', in *Work Work Work: A Reader in Art and Labour*, ed. Cecilia Widenheim (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 153-172.

¹⁸⁷ Gadotti, *Pedagogy of Praxis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 91.

¹⁸⁸ Hornsey College of Art was established in 1880, until its amalgamation with the new Middlesex Polytechnic in 1973 (itself a contributing factor to the 1968 protests), and the institution's renaming in 1992 as University of Middlesex. For more see Lisa Tickner, *Hornsey 1968: The Art School Revolution*, London: Francis Lincoln, 2008.

renewal are already becoming apparent within this particular institutional history. Tony Nairn, one of the lecturers fired for taking part in Hornsey protest, wrote at the time - and his comments bear relation to Gadotti's thirty years later:

[T]he real — and quite indestructible — achievement of the Hornsey coup is precisely this: everyone knows that the clock can never really be turned back, to the remote era of 10 days ago. Even if the old system was re-installed, it would never work in the same old way, in the light of the new consciousness which has been created.¹⁸⁹

Both protests, in 1968 and 2010, failed in their immediate aims, but as Nairn and Gadotti suggest, the pedagogic function of the strike, or protest, or sit-in, cannot be overlooked.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps as Martin suggests above, the emancipatory pedagogies that resultantly emerged from the autonomous impulses of 1968 have been exhausted. But, in the wake of post-2010 disruptions, rejections and refusals, could a further renewal of politicised pedagogic practice be expected? In other words, the socio-historically constituted pedagogies of feminism in the 1970s, 1980s, and even the 1990s as the women's movement waned, had profound effect. But in the mid-2010s, as feminism too often exists as one (historical) methodology among many, could the consciousness-raising effects of 'the strike' provoke further renewals of feminist education practice? There are subtle intimations that this may be the case: for instance, under the directorship of Hilary Robinson, Middlesex has established a 'Feminist Practice and Theory Research Culture';¹⁹¹ Goldsmiths has also instituted a thriving 'Centre for Feminist Research'.¹⁹² These two recent, London-centred examples, hint at the possibility that a rejuvenation of feminist research and pedagogy is underway, emphasising that, arguably, much has changed even in the four years since Pollock lamented the breakdown of feminism in the academy in *n.paradoxa*.

Simultaneously, however, the competitive conditions generated by neoliberal institutional structures has propelled a wave of extra-institutional, often free of charge, community-led education platforms. The afore-mentioned collective art

¹⁸⁹ Tony Nairn: 1968, excerpts reprinted in *The New Statesman*. Available online: <http://www.newstatesman.com/society/2008/05/hornsey-college-1968-art>. [Accessed 10 June 2014]

¹⁹⁰ The pedagogic praxis was recognised in the brilliant title of a 1969 documentary about Hornsey College of Art, made by John Goldschmidt for Granada Television: *Our Live Experiment is Worth More Than 3000 Textbooks*.

¹⁹¹ At the time of writing a symposium 'CREATE/feminisms' had been organised in July 214 and a publication is forthcoming, along with further events planned.

¹⁹² For instance, the Centre organizes bi-monthly research seminars at Goldsmiths.

project, The Malmö Free University for Women, was established precisely in response to these transformations: ‘As artists we were tired of being expected to passively reflect society. We wanted to make art and we wanted to make political change.’¹⁹³ The artists, Johanna Gustavsson and Lisa Nyberg, chose to self-finance the project independently, having realised that they would ‘have to make too many compromises in order to get funding’.¹⁹⁴ This project - which synthesises the feminist pedagogic strategies of collaboration, separatism, and the deconstruction of academic and non-academic knowledge – exemplifies the refusal to participate, to opt out of the academic institution, whilst understanding that ‘art’ offers a socially privileged space to do so.¹⁹⁵

However, feminism cannot be served solely by such extra-institutional platforms. As discussed above, the academic institution is required for both basic and complex needs: the living wage of scholars, the legitimation of feminist knowledge (which carries an interventional potential), the reproduction of this knowledge, and its archiving or historicising function. Therefore refusal - whether overtly, through striking; or covertly, in establishing extra-institutional platforms - is not always a straightforward alternative.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, as Andrea Fraser argues, it is necessary here to remain wary of reproducing a romantic conception of the revolutionary outsider:

[T]he institution is us. Every time we speak of the "institution" as other than "us" we disavow our role in the creation and perpetuation of its conditions. We avoid responsibility for, or action against, the everyday complicities, compromises, and censorship... which are driven by our own interests in the field and the benefits we derive from it.¹⁹⁷

By participating in the ideological spaces of art and art history, scholars – according to Fraser – are already contributing to the reproduction of this knowledge and its

¹⁹³ MKF, *Do the Right Thing*, p.6.

¹⁹⁴ MKF, *Do the Right Thing*, p.22.

¹⁹⁵ Gustavsson and Nyberg articulate this in detail in a self-published handbook available online, in Swedish and English. *Do the Right Thing*.

¹⁹⁶ The difficulties provoked by the strike in relation to care are raised by Silvia Federici (*Wages Against Housework*, 1975), and discussed more recently by artist collective Claire Fontaine in relation to the ‘Human Strike’. *Human Strike Has Already Begun and Other Writings* (London: Mute and Post-Media Lab, 2013).

¹⁹⁷ Andrea Fraser, ‘From Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique’, in *Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2*, ed. John C Welchman (Zurich, 2006), 133. It should be noted, however, that what Fraser terms ‘benefits’ are in fact the necessary elements of our reproduction, principally a living wage and income.

institutions and it is they who must take responsibility for this change. This extends the Foucauldian argument that any revolution or transformation must first start from changes within ourselves. By emphasising the individual and collective consciousness-raising struggle within the classroom, feminist pedagogies also conform to this standpoint. The question of whether feminist pedagogy has had an interventional effect upon the academic institution (and its official knowledges) is difficult to ascertain or prove; however, these tactics have almost certainly had individual success upon a certain number of people whose political consciousnesses have been 'raised'. Pollock lamentably highlights the drawback of this individual burden:

I know that when I retire, the subject area, the field, the possibility of even this degree of casual specialisation, will disappear [from Leeds] and the water will wash over this space for feminist experiments in the study of feminist thought, art and history.¹⁹⁸

Thus, perhaps structural inequities cannot be resolved *once and for all* by the theoretical and practical tactics proffered through feminist education; or, at least, not in the short term. But, like the inherent pedagogy of the strike, this education can have incipient effects that require greater foresight to perceive. Feminist classrooms allow the passing on of knowledge and of politics, the inculcation of new generations to fundamental and far-reaching ideas, in its best iterations offering an expanded worldview to both teachers and learners. As bell hooks writes, '[t]he classroom remains the most radical spaces of possibility in the academy,' and, therefore, should feminist pedagogy re-engage a broader critique of the institutions that house it, a future optimism is imaginable.¹⁹⁹ Stemming from this (perhaps slightly idealist) illustration, it is therefore not impossible to maintain the wild hope that feminism will continue to have critical effects upon the writing, management and circulation of knowledge within art historical institutions – and eventually even transform them for good.

¹⁹⁸ Pollock, *n.paradoxa*, 2010: 21.

¹⁹⁹ bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 12.

‘Our project is not to add to art history...but to change it.’¹ The emergence of feminist discourse and The Association of Art Historians, 1974-1990

This chapter seeks to investigate the coincident emergence of feminist art historical discourse and the professional organisation for British scholars, the Association of Art Historians (AAH). The AAH was founded in 1974 by an all-male steering party and began organising national conferences in 1975, with an affiliated journal following in 1978. The intersections between feminist knowledge production and the nascent institutionalisation of the discipline provide a fascinating glimpse of British art history during the period 1974 to 1990, when it assumed many of the disciplinary characteristics that continue to define it today. The AAH instances a revealing institutional case study in relation to feminism, as it was established during an intellectually productive period in which the humanities were fundamentally challenged by the ‘new’ social histories.² The historical exclusion of women from the academy is significant to note here, as it paralleled their exclusion from art historical representation; thus, participation can itself be understood as a challenging or interventional endeavour.³ Women’s academic involvement and consequent investigations into their historical absence required new theories, methodologies and ways of thinking about and writing history. Feminist intellectual enquiry therefore ascended, entwined with the expanded participation of women in art and academia, but not reducible to it. The establishment of a feminist counterculture within British art and art history, in the 1970s and 1980s, has been carefully recorded in a number of texts, including Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock’s epochal edited anthology

¹ Deborah Cherry (Dec. 1982), 507. Please note that for ease of referencing I have included a list of all *Art History* articles consulted at the immediate end of this chapter, rather than in the overall thesis bibliography. Therefore articles will be only briefly footnoted by author name, date, and page reference.

² For more on this see Jonathan Harris, *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction*, where he discusses the relative merits of art history’s prefixes since 1968: new, critical, radical, and social. The first recorded use of the phrase was a 1982 conference at Middlesex Polytechnic, entitled ‘The New Art History?’. This is discussed in *The New Art History*, ed. Rees and Borzello.

³ As Simone de Beauvoir famously wrote in 1949: ‘Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth. *The Second Sex*, trans. HM Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1972), 161.

Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985.⁴ In contrast to the semi-autonomous endeavours chronicled in *Framing Feminism*, however, the AAH is a recognisably conservative organisation formed to create cohesion within the rapidly expanding art historical discipline.⁵ How the AAH and its publishing corollary *Art History* were shaped by the conflicting forces of traditionalism and emergent feminist politics therefore presents a fascinating institutional perspective on the historiography of feminism during this period.⁶ Chapter One explored feminist pedagogy and knowledge sharing through educational initiatives within the university. This chapter comparatively considers knowledge production and sharing between researchers, and examines how the establishment of professional academic frameworks conditions the possibilities of research by simultaneously enabling and delimiting the production of disciplinary knowledge.

In a 1974 announcement, *The Burlington Magazine* reported that, 'at an inaugural meeting in Birmingham in March this year an Association of Art Historians was formed with a regular constitution.'⁷ The details of this formation, minutiae of board meetings, correspondence and the advisory board's changing membership are limitedly available at the Victoria & Albert archives at Blythe House in London. During 2009 to 2011, Liz Bruchet amassed retrospective accounts of the *Association's* formative period, interviewing sixteen board members and contributors and thereby creating an extensive oral archive recalling its establishment. Bruchet's large research undertaking has been invaluable for my conclusions in this chapter,

⁴ My research is adding to an already vibrant field of historical enquiry that includes Margaret Harrison, 'Notes on Feminist Art in Britain 1970-77,' *Studio International* 193 (1977): 212-220; Hilary Robinson ed., *Visibly Female: Feminism and Art* (London: Camden Press, 1987); and more recent contributions such as Kathy Battista, *Renegotiating the Body: Feminist Art in 1970s London* (London; New York: IB Tauris, 2013).

⁵ In a 1991 review, Jonathan Harris corroborates this view of the AAH, referring to its 'self-appointed role as the regulator and overseer of mainstream academic art historical discourse'. 'Art History,' *Years Work Cultural and Critical Theory*, 1.1. (1991): 137-175, 171.

⁶ I am using the term 'traditional' while understanding that the term is fundamentally meaningless except in a binary relation to 'radical' or 'innovative'. In the nineteenth century, for instance, a modern discipline of art history was rationally evoked against the 'traditional' controlling frameworks of aristocracy and religion; Wofflin, Riegl, and later Panofsky were innovators of this modern art history. The 'new art histories' of the 1970-80s responded to these traditions in turn - although feminism, for arguably the first time in historiography, challenged the fundamentally androcentric conditions of *all historical knowledge*.

Please note that many feminist histories have focussed upon the historical successes of feminist scholars in establishing and managing alternative sites: see *Framing Feminism* (1987) for a thorough record of feminist organising during this period. My examination therefore offers an alternative perspective on this history by examining the broader disciplinary picture through a dominant institutional site.

⁷ Anon., 'Editorial,' *The Burlington Magazine*, 116.861 (Dec. 1974): 711.

despite a necessary scepticism when encountering retrospective accounts.⁸ In spite of this surplus of previously under-researched materials, I have endeavoured not to slip into a narrative account of this history, a who-did-what-and-when; nor construct a heroic narrative of feminist intellectual triumph over a conservative field of scholarship.⁹

Instead, I offer here an account of art history within the British academic system and how feminism emerged as a legitimate research concern at the same time that the professional AAH organisation was in the process of being established. Thereafter I chronicle a selection of papers presented at the annual AAH conferences or published, as articles or reviews, in the journal *Art History*; examining in detail the explicitly feminist methodologies and theories that shaped the journal's discourse. From this explication I identify key trends and omissions - in both subject matter and approach - thereby demonstrating the particular feminist discourse that emerged around the site of the AAH and, inferring more widely, the rapidly professionalising discipline of art history at this time. Rather than mining the AAH archives and charting institutional details to stitch an empiricist narrative, I concentrate on the discourses that emerge and are promoted through this regulatory, or 'disciplining', site.

Timeframe: Feminism circa 1980s

The timeframe of this analysis from 1974 to 1990 may seem slightly arbitrary, however it has been selected for good reason. The start date is self-explanatory, as the AAH was established in 1974. From the late 1960s to 1980s, as will be explored in further detail below, structural changes underpinning the education and publishing sectors facilitated a rapid expansion of academic art history, and at the same time feminist knowledge production arose as a form of scholarly-research-as-activism. It seems apparent, therefore, that the ascendancy of contemporary feminist politics at

⁸ The archives are available online: <http://www.aah.org.uk/projects/oral-history/more-about-aah-oral-histories>. Unedited recordings are accessible by appointment in the V&A archives at Blythe House, London. All future references in this chapter can be found in the bibliography under 'Bruchet, Liz'.

⁹ In 2013 a publication was published to celebrate the centenary of the College Art Association. Although fascinating in many ways, the text's focus on statistics and precise details provides an excellent institutional history while failing to account for more subtle epistemological shifts. In particular, taken as a whole the essays present a problematic narrative of progress and improvement as the CAA and, generally art history, become increasingly inclusive. Susan Ball, ed., *The Hand, the Eye, the Mind: 100 Years of the College Art Association* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013).

this time ought to have had an impact upon institutional formations such as the AAH, during this period of disciplinary consolidation. By the 1990s art history and visual culture studies were established in universities across the UK as modern disciplines incorporating ‘new critical theories’, and by focusing on this particular timeframe my analysis aims to shed light upon contradictory developments within the discipline. The increasingly business-like logic of UK Higher Education facilities, intertwined with the contributions of ‘new’ political perspectives, worked concurrently and not necessarily compliantly towards this expanded field of humanities scholarship.

For the purposes of this thesis the dual consideration primarily consists of: how did feminist writers affect art historiography in the period being considered and how does a closer examination of this writing challenge preconceived wisdom about this period today? (I would add an adjunct, conclusive consideration: how does an improved comprehension of the changes brought about *historically*, allow us to better understand and address the position in which feminist discourse has found itself today?) In a lecture delivered in 2011, Katy Deepwell put forth the argument that historical accounts of the second-wave feminist art movement had ‘eclipsed’ the complexities of 1980s debates and histories.¹⁰ As examples she cites the large-scale 2007 museum exhibitions, *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* and *Global Feminisms*, which bracket this decade by limiting their scope to the 1970s and 1990s respectively.¹¹ Thus, these decades (from 1970 to 2000) are implicitly understood as unspoken, but already characterised, moments in the progression narrative that constructs ‘us, now’ as enlightened subjects at the end of this expanding accumulation of knowledge. This is lucidly articulated by Clare Hemmings:

These shifts are broadly conceived of as corresponding to the decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s respectively, and to a move from liberal, socialist and radical feminist thought to postmodern gender theory. A shift from the naïve, essentialist seventies, through the black feminist critiques and “sex wars” of the eighties, and into the “difference” nineties and beyond, charts

¹⁰ Katy Deepwell, ‘Feminist Art Seminars: *Eclipsing the Eighties*’ (Lecture, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 18 May 2011). Accessed online, 12 January 2013: <http://www.ica.org.uk/35405/Videos-from-the-Archive/Feminist-Art-Seminars-nparadoxalICA-Katy-Deepwell.html>.

¹¹ Connie Butler, curator, *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007). Linda Nochlin and Maura Reilly, co-curators, *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 2007).

the story as one of *progress* beyond falsely boundaried categories and identities.¹²

Hemmings deftly acknowledges the limitations of such narrative constructs, which produce cohesion and sequential development by way of a largely flattened and temporally delineated sense of the past. If Deepwell is correct about the obfuscation of the 1980s (and I think she is), perhaps it is because of the decade's narrative messiness, its refusal to conform to the established plotline, that it is rendered invisible and neglected or even mystified.¹³ In feminist histories, Hemmings points out, the 1980s are (mis)represented as a period of theoretical proliferation as the previously neglected voices of black, lesbian, and colonial women break into the discourse. Of course, this myth of plurality depends upon the converse depiction of the 1970s as flat, essentialist and monocultural.¹⁴ There were profound ideological rifts underpinning the feminist knowledge production in the 1980s and distinctive institutions or discursive sites supported diverse approaches (the vast discrepancies between the journals *Art History*, *Block*, or *Third Text* for example).¹⁵ Although it may be comforting to imagine that feminist thought suddenly expanded to include a diversity of subjects – and that consequentially we must now, in the 2010s, be engaging with an even more inclusive discourse – the truth is inevitably far more complex. There is no definitive feminist art history at any time. As the examination

¹² Clare Hemmings, 'Telling Feminist Stories', *Feminist Theory* 6.2 (2005), 115-139: 116.

¹³ Academic scholarship is, of course, not immune to the complex influence of trends so it is also possible that we are only able now to readdress the legacies of the 1980s. In the 1990s, much feminist research by such theorists as Amelia Jones, Peggy Phelan and Rebecca Schneider revisited 1970s art practices, especially those centred on performance and the body. Perhaps after excavating this decade - and in response to the rise of right-wing politics that mirror 1980s rhetoric - further research questions and focuses have superseded this in dominance.

¹⁴ *Woman Questions: Essays for a Materialist Feminism* (London: Pluto Press, 1995): 100-10. Lise Vogel directly challenged developmental myths in her chapter 'Telling Tales: Historians of Our Own Lives.' 'Cleaning up the 1970s,' in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, eds. Michael Newman and Jon Bird (London: Reaction Books Ltd., 1999), 107-122. Here, Helen Molesworth argues that accounts of the 1970s and 1980s are unnecessarily antagonistic, and she instead produces a nuanced understanding of conceptualism across both decades, by comparatively reading 1980s artworks against 1970s practices that are usually deemed essentialist. 'Telling Stories About Feminist Art', *Feminist Theory* 12.3 (2011): 297-316. This more recent article by Michelle Meagher (drawing on Hemmings' theoretical work) also addresses the generational disjuncture that history has produced between 1970s and 1980s feminist thought.

¹⁵ It became highly fashionable in the 1990s to refer to feminisms in the plural; for example, the reader *Feminisms* edited by Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires (Oxford: OUP, 1998). However, to my mind there is only a single-issue feminism, seeking to fundamentally address gender imbalance, although it may consist of many ideological divisions and differing methodologies. Angela Dimitrakaki summarises this as: 'The bottom line is that we must recognise feminism as an *ideologically divided terrain*, one connected with broader material socio-economic divisions.' *Gender, artWork and the Global Imperative*, 3.

below demonstrates, institutions such as the AAH and *Art History* provided particular conditions of possibility for intense theoretical (feminist) exploration, simultaneously, and somewhat inevitably, implementing tangential exclusions; particularly in this instance a discussion regarding race.

Against an environment of intensifying conservative politics, 1974 to 1990 was a productive period for feminist culture in Britain. A wealth of arts activities attest to this, including the establishment in 1979 of the still-extant journal *Feminist Review*, the founding of a vital organising hub in the *Women Artists' Slide Library* in Battersea in 1982, and a number of significant exhibitions, particularly at the ICA in London.¹⁶ The question remains as to whether such explicitly feminist spaces remained peripheral when compared to the audiences conjured by outwardly 'neutral', or apolitical art historical sites. In an essay of 1995 Frances Borzello correspondingly excavated the history of feminist publishing in the 1980s, to ask whether such anti-orthodox, partisan discourses were simply 'preaching to the converted'?¹⁷ This may indeed be the case, although I do not want to reiterate the debates concerning separatism versus assimilation here (see Chapter One). However, if feminism's goal is to educate possibly ambivalent readers, while providing an analysis of art history that could redefine the boundaries of the discipline, it is *necessary* to engage with non-feminist discursive sites, to work upon and intervene within the cultural hegemony. Art, as one mode of cultural production, is widely understood to be reproductive of the existing social order and art history is thus a crucial constituent of this hegemonic reproduction. The AAH is not exempt from art history's cultural and legitimising function; it was and continues to be (regardless of how peripheral its influence may appear) an exclusionary academic space that allows access to educated users that have mastered the necessary language.¹⁸ The following

¹⁶ Perhaps tellingly, feminist discourse has flourished within the interdisciplinary journal *Feminist Review*, while more specific art and art history publications closed. Exhibitions during this period included: Feminist Postal Event, *Portrait of the Artists as a Housewife*, at ICA London, 1977; Hayward Annual, 1978, which was politicised in the wake of feminist protests the year before (see Chapter Three); *Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists*, curated by Lucy Lippard at the ICA London, 1980; *The Subversive Stitch* curated by Pennina Barnett at Cornerhouse, Manchester, 1986; *Women's Images of Men*, and *About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by Women Artists*, both exhibited at the ICA in 1980; *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality*, at ICA, London, 1985.

¹⁷ Frances Borzello, 'Preaching to the Converted? Feminist Art Publishing in the 1980s,' in *New Feminist Art Criticism: Critical Strategies*, ed. Katy Deepwell (New York; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 20-24.

¹⁸ 'Admittedly Art History is not an influential discipline... We should not, however, under-estimate the effective significance of its definitions of art and artist to bourgeois ideology.' Griselda Pollock,

examination of the nascent AAH thereby explores this issue by asking how feminism emerges in an institutionally non-feminist space. Does it, in this chapter title's terms, *add to* or *change* the terms of the discipline? This examination thus offers an alternative view of feminist art historiography by focusing upon its mainstream disciplinary intersections. The discussion presents a highly selective view of British art history and its development, specifically in relation to feminist politics. My interests lie primarily in investigating how the social order is represented and reproduced by a new art historical organisation, and what effects feminist writers had upon the production of art history during this period.

The defence sketched above begins to clarify why feminist historiography of the late 1970s and 1980s requires greater attention, particularly the art historical and institutional perspectives prioritised in my analysis; however, it fails to account for why the discussion ends abruptly in 1990. On a basic level the tertiary education system underwent further structural changes that would affect my analysis (of course these shifts are continuous and have changed again since): 'The Further and Higher Education Act' of 1992 saw polytechnics merge with or transform into universities; increasing globalisation encouraged an influx of overseas students; the domestic student populace expanded under 'New Labour' initiatives; and in 1998 tuition fees were introduced, profoundly altering the terms of education into those of commercial exchange.¹⁹ These developments would require a separate analysis that lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

There was, moreover, a widely acknowledged change in public support for feminism in the early 1990s; this is a complex issue to which the analysis below will contribute further understanding. In 1992, for instance, Griselda Pollock established her MAFEM course at the University of Leeds, and she identified this institutional support as evidence that feminism 'was clearly a recognised, developing, relevant and important dimension of the expanding study of art's many histories'.²⁰ Yet only

'Vision, Voice and Power,' (1982) reprinted in *Vision and Difference*, 29. Although art history may seem somewhat marginal, here Pollock gestures towards its significant ideological function within capitalism.

¹⁹ 'Postscript on the Societies of Control,' *October* 59 (1992): 3-7. Here, Giles Deleuze offers a compelling account of these ceaseless structural changes, developing Foucault's focus from social discipline to control. He argues that we are in a state a 'generalised crisis', evidenced in his view by a continual chain of administrative reform, as 'the societies of control' replace the 'disciplinary societies'.

²⁰ Griselda Pollock, 'Open, Closed and Opening,' *n.paradoxa* 26 (July 2010): 20-28: 20. See Chapter One for a more extensive discussion of Pollock's teaching practices.

one year earlier, Susan Faludi's infamous book located a 'backlash' to feminism that, she argued, had been growing throughout the 1980s. It was also in the early 1990s 'post-feminist' discourse ascended throughout the art world.²¹ However this picture is further complicated if we consider that, as early as 1987, Ann Cullis convened a workshop at the AAH Annual Conference entitled 'Working in a *Post-Feminist World?*'²² Looking back to 1982, feminism had been at the cutting edge of a 'new art history' or commanding a 'discipline in crisis', depending on one's perspective.²³ *This suggests that in the space of little under a decade, around the 1980s, feminism had shifted from 'new' to 'post'.*²⁴ Improved understanding of this shift could be crucial for ensuring that the current commitment to – or even, perhaps, *renewed* engagement with – feminist politics and intellectual enquiries are sustained well into the future.

Professionalising the Discipline: Art History in post-WWII Britain

In 1932 The Courtauld Institute was founded in London, where it remained the primary centre for art historical study in the UK for a few decades (although The Warburg Institute was also accessible after moving to London in 1934). Under the influential recommendations of the 1963 Robbins Report, Higher Education underwent sudden expansion; and, following the publication of a number of further Reports between 1960 and 1970, named after their respective coordinators Coldstream and Summerson, debates arose regarding the segregation of art history and studio practice in colleges and universities, with 'complementary' academic

²¹ Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Crown, 1991). See also, Amelia Jones, 'Postfeminism, Feminist Pleasures and Embodied Theories of Art' (orig. 1993), in *The Art of Art History*, ed. Donald Preziosi: 383-395. And Laura Cottingham, 'How Many "Bad" Feminists Does It Take to Change the Lightbulb?' in *Seeing Through the Seventies: Essays on Feminism and Art* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 87-116.

²² Ann Cullis, 'Working in a Post-Feminist World?', noted in *Bulletin* no. 28 of the Association of Art Historians (July 1987): 15. (Emphasis added).

²³ At Middlesex Polytechnic in 1982, Jon Bird organised a conference exploring 'The New Art History?'. That same year a special issue of *Art Journal* was published by the College Art Association: 'The Crisis in the Discipline,' ed. H. Zerner, *Art Journal* 42.2 (Winter 1982). Both prominently feature feminist contributions.

²⁴ A statement by Linda Nochlin in 1988 confirms my inference. In the introduction to *Women, Art, and Power: and Other Essays* she worries that feminist art history appears to now be 'safely ensconced in the bosom of one of the most conservative of the intellectual disciplines,' (New York: Harper Row, 1988: xi). Various factors contributed to this shift and although this chapter focuses on the ideological and discursive, material changes within the job market cannot be entirely ignored. The expansion of Higher Education led to much higher numbers of female lecturers, who were especially encouraged to apply for jobs in the early 1990s.

units becoming increasingly compulsory for fine art and design students. The combination of these numerous developments contributed to new departments opening across the country, in both the old 'red brick' universities and the newer polytechnics.²⁵ It is perhaps unsurprising, given the rapid expansion of the discipline, that greater formalisation of the art historical field was required, as the US College Art Association had formed in 1913 under similar demands.²⁶ Elizabeth Mansfield elucidates: 'Holmes Smith [the incipient president of the CAA] and other proponents of professionalization sought to give art history the disciplinary character of established academic fields: well-defined disciplinary boundaries, pedagogical standards, research guidelines, and peer review prior to publication or professional advancement.'²⁷

This standardisation of the field fabricated a professional quality to what was, and continues to be, an enormously diverse field of scholarship. As Samuel Weber developed in a treatise of 1989, disciplinary structures are profoundly paradoxical; they enable conversation but, at the same time, function to delimit and exclude illegitimate knowledge that could threaten the discipline's integrity.²⁸ In 1970s Britain, art historians were engaged in a twofold, yet complexly intra-supportive, struggle towards structural professionalisation *and* intellectual diversification.²⁹ Looking towards the field in North America, British art historians from both camps took influence from its more developed, collegiate structures. Tellingly, this is

²⁵ Rees & Borzello, *The New Art History* (1986: 6-7) mentions these changes in greater detail. For a detailed analysis of these educational Reports please see Malcolm Quinn, 'The Pedagogy of Capital: Art History and Art School Knowledge' in Matthew Potter (ed.) *The Concept of the 'Master' in Art Education in Britain and Ireland, 1770 to the Present*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013: 215-231. Lisa Tickner extensively discusses the impact of these Reports on art college and design education in *Hornsey 1968*.

²⁶ In 1913 Holmes Smith justified the establishment of the CAA thusly: 'The number of institutions giving instruction in the history of art [in the US] is approximately one-fourth of the total of those in which the liberal arts are taught for a period of four years... That there are not more institutions which give such instruction is, doubtless, due partly to the fact that there no commonly-accepted view even among art teachers as to *what, how* and *when* art shall be taught in undergraduate and graduate courses. College authorities naturally hesitate to extend their already widely-spread resources over new fields whose boundaries and nature are still undetermined.' Quoted in Mansfield ed., *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 141.

²⁷ Mansfield ed., *Making Art History*, 142.

²⁸ Samuel Weber, *Institution and Interpretation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

²⁹ For example, the *Block* editorial attempted to challenge 'bourgeois' art history's demarcation of high and low culture by encompassing design histories and new cultural studies approaches. And, at the same time, feminist writers seriously challenged the traditional focus of art history. This drive towards dissolving conventional boundaries appears oppositional to the professionalising impetus behind the AAH, for example. And yet, both are intimately connected to transformations in Higher Education during this period; particularly the expansion to new formal sites ('polytechnics'), relaxation of entry to new learning subjects, and the new objects and methods demanded by these.

mentioned in recollections from both the editorial collective of the radical journal *Block*, and the steering committee for the more moderate AAH.³⁰ For instance, John White had recently returned from a stint teaching in the US and his experiences were to have a lasting influence upon the formation of AAH. Alan Bowness recalls the two discussing the structure of the US College Art Association: ‘It gave people an opportunity to meet one another and I think we thought at that time that it would be a good idea to have something similar, because there was nothing like it.’³¹

The influence of North American university structures and professional organisations upon UK art history post-1968 indicates a decisive transferral of authority within the discipline. During the late nineteenth and early half of the twentieth century, a Germanic approach dominated; due also to the important contribution of German exiles such as Fritz Saxl, who brought the Warburg Institute to London. Yet, in the latter half of the twentieth century a shift is perceptible as the Civil and Women’s Rights Movements initiated in the US, and their related academic discourses, began to remake the terms of art historical study along the lines of radical social inquiry, latterly devolving upon (raced, gendered) identity politics. It is obvious from the recollections of Bowness (and Jon Bird in relation to *Block*) that British art history owed a debt of influence to the more professionalised structures found in North American journals and organisations. As the Mansfield quotation above suggests, the AAH can be understood as a significant outcome of the regulative, organising impulse demanded by disciplinisation.

While the organisers of the AAH looked to the US for inspiration in systematising and organising as art historians, other scholars were simultaneously attempting to question the very bases of art historical scholarship and the asymmetrical relations of power inherent within the discipline (not that these two positions were necessarily antithetical, of course). Griselda Pollock has written about her own academic training as a student of the Courtauld in the early 1970s, noting her surprise when encountering a Suzanne Valadon work for the first time: ‘The shock, not only of my academically condoned ignorance of women as artists, but of the impossibility, *within the existing framework of art history* of imagining women

³⁰ ‘Block was inspired by a sabbatical awareness of the close relation between research, teaching and publishing in American colleges.’ Bird, ‘Introduction,’ *Block Reader*, xi. AL Rees and Frances Borzello make this comparison also, between *Block* as a ‘radical forum for historians’ and the more ‘prestigious Association of Art Historians,’ *The New Art History*, .3.

³¹ Alan Bowness interviewed by Liz Bruchet, accessed 14 February 2013.

as artists, led me to invite Linda Nochlin to speak at the Courtauld in 1973.³² This anecdote incisively clarifies the state of the discipline in 1973, a time when women artists were not simply ignored, but were *unimaginable*. Pollock, alongside colleagues including her future writing partner Rozsika Parker, established the Women's Art History Collective (1972-75) at the Courtauld. And the research group, as the quotation above suggests, were foundational in researching towards a new feminist perspective *within* art history.³³ Lisa Tickner, another member of the Collective, recalls that the AAH was a useful space to 'meet other art historians, from polytechnics, universities and museums' but it was 'too distant' for 'day-to-day support'; while the Women's Art History Collective, on the other hand, was 'obviously a context of more focussed feminist inquiry.'³⁴

Parallel augmentations in art historical breadth were taking place at institutions across the United Kingdom: at Leeds University, for example, under the guidance of TJ Clark, the Marxist-influenced 'Social History of Art MA' was established in 1975. Different sites also became synonymous with prominent publications: *Art History* was published from a London base in 1978,³⁵ that same year *Oxford Art Journal* was inaugurated at Oxford,³⁶ and in 1979 a further perspective was offered with the launch of *Block* at Middlesex Polytechnic. These coincidental publishing ventures ran the gamut from (broadly speaking) historicist, or locally focused, to critically and socially motivated; showcasing the diversity of art history being produced at this dynamic moment. This brief snapshot corroborates Pollock's recollection that, during the late 1970s and 1980s: 'Art History expanded in Britain in a climate which momentarily fostered an alliance between that fledgling discipline and cultural and critical theory which often cohabited within the same individual'.³⁷ Certainly this was a vibrant period in the history of art history that requires greater analysis; the question that emerges here is how a greater

³² Griselda Pollock, *Generations and Geographies* (1996), 11. Emphasis added.

³³ The group disbanded in 1975, yet Parker and Pollock continued to work together and credit *Old Mistresses* (1981) as an outcome of the group's research.

³⁴ Lisa Tickner, personal email to author 29 April 2014. Pollock has also stated that the AAH does not function to 'support' feminist researchers, although it has generally been hospitable, personal email to author, 30 April 2014.

³⁵ The London-centricity of the AAH and *Art History* is apparent in the timetabling of the annual conferences, which took place bi-annually in London and elsewhere across the UK and Ireland.

³⁶ The preface to issue one plainly stated this fact: 'The one consistent feature of the Journal is its "Oxfordness".' 'Editorial,' *Oxford Art Journal* 1.1 (April 1978): 2. The second preface added: 'The "Oxford" Section, which we intend always to retain as an essential part of the journal is a forum for...contributions of local interest.' 'Editorial,' *Oxford Art Journal* 1.2 (April 1979): 2.

³⁷ Pollock, *Generations and Geographies*, 22.

understanding of the era's intellectual achievements offers relevance to contemporary scholarly contexts, particularly as the humanities undergo further transformations as a postponed result of changes within Higher Education during the late 1970s to 1980s. How can that momentary 'alliance' that Pollock points to be rehabilitated in light of twenty-first century demands?

The Politics of Participation

In a detailed essay entitled 'Governance and Diversity', Judith K Brodsky, Mary D Garrard and Ferris Olin analyse the representation of women as board members of the US College Art Association. The 1960s and 1970s were, according to the report, 'an era of caucuses representing radical intellectual ideas and underrepresented groups'; and, in 1970, '[f]or the first time the issue of how few women were on the board was brought before the CAA.'³⁸ Their essay traces developments in gender and racial parity resulting from the semi-autonomous organisation of political caucuses, however, its writers conclude 'that the board remained essentially conservative. It continued to serve the traditional art historical community, making some concessions to the demands from underserved membership.'³⁹ Thus, the politics of participation is cast as an unmistakably fraught issue for feminist researchers, a constant negotiation between (often concessionary) inclusion and (an ambiguous) marginality. However, a sixty-one year gap distinguishes the establishment of the CAA and AAH. And even between 1970, when Linda Nochlin highlighted the issue of women's meagre representation at a CAA board meeting, and 1978, when *Art History* was founded, countless social transformations had occurred. These cultural vicissitudes are evident in John Onian's opening editorial statement, in which he carefully establishes his vision for the journal in opposition to a conservative conception of art history as an obdurately historical or apolitical discipline. *Art History* will, he suggests, 'particularly encourage writers who show how a study of works of art can help us to understand more about our physiological and psychological make-up, [and] our response to political, social and economic

³⁸ Judith K Brodsky, Mary D Garrard, and Ferris Olin, 'Governance and Diversity,' in *The Eye, the Hand, the Mind* ed., Susan Ball, 193-224, 196 & 200.

³⁹ 'Governance and Diversity,' 201.

pressures.⁴⁰ The recently formed AAH and its associated journal were therefore presented as receptive to new social scholarship and encouraged feminist contributions.

Historically, institutional participation is a conflicted enterprise, with its concomitant threat of complicity and referred exclusion. Audre Lorde alluded to this in 1984 when she famously quipped: ‘The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.’⁴¹ In a more recent interview reflecting on her education in the 1960s, Carol Duncan has comparably bemoaned the regulating process of gaining disciplinary legitimacy suggesting that, in the process of ‘mastering’ the language of academic art history, its powerful biases may be internalised.⁴² Both Lorde and Duncan indicate the frustration of institutional participation for (black) feminist scholars, particularly the challenge of maintaining a critical voice whilst exploiting dominant paradigms. I would suggest that feminist participation in the annual AAH conferences, and publication in *Art History*, helped to legitimate and establish feminist art historical intervention as a significant constituent of UK art history, fundamental to the achievement of a comprehensive education in the discipline. Deborah Cherry has corroboratively suggested that ‘placing work across different spaces/readerships was important in extending and expanding feminist art histories.’⁴³ However, whether this participation limited the construction of new, or at least altered, paradigms is another question.

In 1979, Corinne Robins published research concerning the rise and fall of small-scale, women-led art publications, including *Feminist Art Journal* (edited by Cindy Nemser 1972-77). Pat Mainardi, a founding co-editor of the journal for three issues until 1973, explains that the success of feminist art historical intervention may have paradoxically led to the journal’s demise:

When we began there was no way to get articles in print that raised the issues those articles did. It was difficult to reproduce the work of women in magazines, and the other journals wouldn’t even see or accept art history articles about women. One of the things that the *Feminist Art Journal* and *Womenart* did was to force major magazines

⁴⁰ John Onians, ‘Editorial,’ *Art History* 1.1: v-vi.

⁴¹ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY; Crossing Press, 1984), 110-14.

⁴² See Duncan, quoted on p.57.

⁴³ Deborah Cherry, personal email to author 2 May 2014.

to recognise women artists' existence. Thus, in a certain sense, by 1977 we had been co-opted by success.⁴⁴

Mainardi's anecdote situates feminist discourse on the margins of art historical scholarship in the early 1970s, yet by the end of the decade the achievement of mainstream recognition had simultaneously eradicated the autonomous space that made the publication possible. Writing about CAA's flagship publication in the 1980s, Craig Houser argues that the establishment of 'other specialised periodicals...represented new trends in scholarship – sometimes called the “new art histories” – which were thought to be less readily acceptable within the pages of the more mature *Art Bulletin*.’⁴⁵ Houser therefore articulates a divergent perspective, in which the dominant journal understands smaller, specialised publications as drawing submissions away from the principal institutional site. Regardless of which analysis is historically 'correct', both writers articulate a conception of the discipline as constellating around a dominant (evolving) centre, with recalcitrant voices oscillating on the peripheries. Parker and Pollock corroboratively suggest that feminist historiography necessarily requires recognition by central institutions: 'The dearth of writing about feminist art and the fact that much that exists appeared in fringe or ephemeral publications has rendered feminist work invisible.'⁴⁶ These citations suggest that the politics of participation always devolve upon a balance of recognition versus complicity. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of discourse, art historian Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe writes that art history is a site of struggle between 'the *centripetal* forces of the official, centralizing discourse, and the *centrifugal* forces of unofficial, decentralizing discourses.'⁴⁷ Despite decades of deconstructive theoretical practices aimed at challenging the ubiquitous conception of authority's centres and margins, the countercultural lore of such narratives is difficult to break away from. Yet, the history of feminism's emergence within 'official' art histories suggests that this system is far too complex to be conceived in this binary manner.

⁴⁴ Pat Mainardi quoted in Corinne Robins, 'The Women's Art Magazines,' (orig. 1979) in *Feminism-Art-Theory*, ed. Hilary Robinson, 199-207: 199.

⁴⁵ Craig Houser, 'The Changing Face of Scholarly Publishing: CAA's Publications Program,' in *The Eye, the Hand, the Mind*, ed. Susan Ball: 47-87, 63.

⁴⁶ Parker and Pollock, 'Preface', *Framing Feminism*, xv. This collection helpfully collated many of the ephemeral texts related to art and the women's movement into a larger, more easily accessed publication and was reprinted in 1992.

⁴⁷ Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe, 'Centripetal and Heteroglot Feminisms' in *Feminisms is Still Our Name: Seven Essays on Historiography and Curatorial Practice*, ed. Malin Hedlin Hayden and Skrubbe (Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 85-103, 86. Original emphasis.

An appropriate sensitivity to the complexities of institutions (as always discursive and ideological) and feminist participation (as not always from ‘outside’) is demanded; this is one challenge that this chapter hopes to contribute to the legacy of 1980s feminist art historiography in Britain.

Considering the above suggestions by Duncan and Mainardi alongside one another allows us to interrogate the fraught intersections between feminism, professionalisation, audience and access. Readerships for specialised feminist journals will differ from those drawn by professional scholarly publications, and often too will the writing style. As Duncan notes above, one has to particularly ‘master’ the language of academia; correspondingly Borzello has criticised feminist scholars for what she perceives as a deliberate linguistic obfuscation:

Language is another barrier which prevents feminist art criticism reaching a wider audience. Much feminist art writing comes from academics and is couched in a language which many who are interested in the topic of women and art find opaque. Feminist book reviews in the journal *Art History* are like reading a foreign language, the language of academia, to be precise... The issue here is not whether it is true that complex ideas demand a complex vocabulary, but whether the use of this language hinders outsiders’ access to ideas they might find exciting.⁴⁸

Feminist participation in professional spheres is therefore burdened by attendant difficulties, with regards to the basic inclusivity demanded of feminist organising vis-à-vis the potentially duplicitous alienation of non-professional readers. Feminists who are also art historians have found themselves torn between two positions, partially assimilated within the academy’s hierarchy whilst understanding that an activist, pedagogic feminism must refuse the total discrediting of the (subjective, personal) knowledge of ‘non-professionals’.⁴⁹ The academic conference is an essential site of this negotiation. The AAH charges an annual membership fee and speakers at its conferences are required to pay a high participation fee; on a fundamental level these economic factors impede access to those without an

⁴⁸ Borzello, in *New Feminist Art Criticism*, 21.

⁴⁹ As a discipline, UK art history has only relatively recently shed its amateurish façade and, perhaps for this reason, it remains necessary for scholars to adamantly assert their *differencing* professionalism. Feminism understands the line between legitimate and non-legitimate knowledges to be a division based upon power and control, and that is the reason for making efforts towards inclusivity.

institution's financial support – often women.⁵⁰ At the 1986 annual conference in Brighton an adjunct 'Feminism and Art History Workshop' was organised.⁵¹ Tickets were made available separately for this event or included within the full conference fee, and the organisers provided a free crèche for attendees.⁵² Although the workshop temporarily provided a structurally distinct, childcare-friendly and accessible space to discuss feminist art history, the issue of preservation arises, as the event was never organised again at an AAH conference.

In interviews with Cherry, Pollock, and Tickner, all three recollect that the AAH conferences provided significant networking opportunities between feminist researchers. As an academic working in a polytechnic institute, Tickner stresses that the annual meetings were a space to meet with other art historians from universities and museums. Cherry and Pollock actually met at the AAH Glasgow conference in 1976 and 'began our collaboration on [Elizabeth] Sidall on discovering our mutual interest'.⁵³ Their partnership was crucially forged against the overtly hostile atmosphere of the early conferences, where Pollock recalls 'men standing at the back and noisily asking: where does this woman come from? Who let her in?'⁵⁴ The organisation of a parallel 'Feminism and Art History Workshop' a decade later suggests that this antagonism persisted into the 1980s and points to a continued need for semi-autonomous political spaces.

⁵⁰ It has increasingly been noticed that women dominate a 'growing base of part-time and adjunct faculty, a "second-tier"...of academia.' Therefore, it is more likely that precariously employed women academics will struggle to meet the high conference, travel and professional fees that facilitate peer-networking and knowledge-sharing. For more on this see: Mary Ann Mason, 'In the Ivory Tower Men Only', *Slate Magazine*, 13 April 2013. Accessed 15 July 2013, at: http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2013/06/female_academics_pay_a_heavy_baby_penalty.html.

⁵¹ The three-hour workshop ran on Sunday 6th April 1986 and included talks by (in speaking order): Linda Nochlin, Kathy Adler and Tamar Garb, Tag Gronberg, Margaret Iversen, Claire Pajaczkowska, Lynn Walker, Anthea Callen, Bridget Elliot and Lynda Nead, Gudrun Schubert. Details taken from an unpublished workshop poster in the V&A archives, Blythe House. Accessed November 2012. There is an online mp3 of a tape recording made at this event (www.marysialewandowska.com/waa/detail.php?id=4917) under the 'Women's Audio Archive'. The recording is quite difficult to hear at times but the discussants debate the usefulness of having a women-only space in the conference, which heightens my interest as to why the feminist panel only took place this once. Accessed 24 July 2013.

⁵² Although it is practically unimaginable in 2014, the AAH did attempt to provide childcare services during other conferences in the 1980s. In preparation for the 1987 conference in London, for example, the AAH wrote: 'We are hoping to offer a free crèche near to the Victoria and Albert Museum, but whether we are able to do so partly depends on the response from members... If there is insufficient response we will have to cancel it.' *Bulletin* 26 (Nov 1986) p.1.

⁵³ Pollock, email 30 April 2014.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

In 1990, Val Walsh narrated her experience of attending two different conferences in Glasgow and London, drawing out the implications of professionalisation for feminist scholars. The article contrasts a *feminine*, interactive, disorganised event with a *masculine* scholastic, formal counterpart. This somewhat trite comparison is questionable; however, Walsh's article is most useful for its querying of the unspoken rules and silently learned behaviours that pervade these professional spaces, and that are all too easily forgotten by those embraced within. She writes:

White women academics, especially those working in the art world, run the risk of being *compromised by the dominant ethos of professionalism*, unless we explicitly problematise it, make it visible, and actively work to dismantle it through our research and teaching. The process simultaneously makes visible and confronts this professionalism as institutionalised masculinity...⁵⁵

Walsh's analytic account thus underlines the capricious process of professional legitimisation, which draws lines around and imposes a hierarchy upon individuals' knowledge. Furthermore, it is implied by Walsh's feminist theorising that these lines are always fundamentally related to the individual body's classed, raced, and gendered particularities. A key 1980s debate that arises in Walsh's analysis centres upon the accusation that a group of highly educated, white women (benefitting from feminism's creation of new opportunities) can claim a position in the discourse at the expense of other, particularly, black women.⁵⁶ This issue was central to a 1988 debate between Pollock and artist Lubaina Himid, staged at the ICA, in which Himid highlighted the racial limitations of the history anthologised in *Framing Feminism*.⁵⁷ In a subsequent dispute with Clare Rendell, stemming from the questions raised at

⁵⁵ Val Walsh, 'Art Conferences: Pacification or Politics?' (orig. 1991) in *Feminism-Art-Theory*, ed. Robinson, 71. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶ Lucy Lippard wrote about a similar phenomenon in *Block*, suggesting that some women artists were 'riding the women's movement to commercial success and getting off there'. 'Hot Potatoes,' *Block* 4 (1981).

⁵⁷ ICA London 21 January 1988. This debate is available to listen to online at the Women's Audio Archive: <http://www.marysialewandowska.com/waa/detail.php?id=4909>. Accessed 24 July 2013. For more details on this debate, as it evolved through a journal discussion between Clare Rendell and Pollock, please see Griselda Pollock, 'Framing Feminism' *Women Artists' Slide Library Journal* 26 (1988), pp.22-23. Himid's painting *Between the Two My Heart was Balanced*, was used to illustrate the second edition of *Framing Feminism* in 1991. Alexandra Kokoli discusses this decision in relation to feminism's race relations in 'Fetishism and the Stories of Art', in *Feminism Reframed: Reflections on Art and Difference*, ed. Kokoli (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008): 206-226.

the ICA and therefore tied up with the notion of institutional participation and unacknowledged white privilege, Pollock responded to further accusations in writing. She argued (and I agree) that androcentric social contexts demand feminist theorisation, that theory needs to be pushed forward rather than dwelling on or reiterating 1970s advancements, and that articulate and specialised language is necessary ‘to speak and name the world, to give meaning, to make knowledge power’.⁵⁸ The language used may be, at times, arcane but it is necessary as a tool to understand women’s socio-cultural marginalisation. Pollock also denies that her writings fail to adequately account for race, claiming that Rendell was establishing a false dichotomy between “the ordering impulse of a white art historian” and the position of a practising black artist’.⁵⁹

Participation in academic discourses is thus understood in terms of deferred exclusion and it remains necessary to question systemic marginalisation, particularly *within* feminism itself. However, the generation of theory is undoubtedly necessary for understanding systems of knowledge and power, thus providing tools to mount interventions upon dominant spaces. Pollock powerfully articulates this in her response: ‘I know why I write as I do: it is a political act of contesting the power invested in institutions of knowledge and demanding a space for women to redefine the world.’⁶⁰ Participation is therefore cast as ‘not an option’; engagement and negotiation with the dominant centres of art history production is a necessary political act.

The Body Politic: A Publishing Furore

Interviewed in 2011, Lisa Tickner addressed the riven politics of participation, helpfully suggesting that women in the 1970s and 1980s were split between concurrent intellectual alliances to ‘feminism’ and ‘art history’:

⁵⁸ Griselda Pollock, ‘Framing Feminism’ (1988), in *Feminism-Art-Theory* ed. Robinson, 207-16, 210. This is a broader concern in the 1980s, but Pollock’s article is important in that she thoughtfully responds to such criticisms of her own work (as arcane and exclusionary) and situates them within a social context that demands such theorisation. Theory is thereby understood as tool to assist women to understand and oppose their historical neglect.

⁵⁹ Pollock, ‘Framing Feminism,’ 209.

⁶⁰ Pollock, ‘Framing Feminism,’ 210.

I first became involved in the Women's Art History Collective and therefore, with a group of women who also had these interests and what Feminism might be able to contribute to Art History or how it might change Art History or anyway, how one was going to juggle these two different things – one of which was a kind of *political* take on the world and on culture and one of which was an *academic* discipline, you know, were we going to – as I remember it – were we going to kind of split our identities between these two things or were we going to *bring them into some kind of conversation*.⁶¹

The passage makes clear the disjunction between feminist politics and art history, formations that had to be brought together by the pioneering research of young academics, such as Tickner and her colleagues in the Women's Art History Collective. Published in the second issue of *Art History*, Tickner's 'The Body Politic: Female Sexuality and Women Artists since 1970' instantiates this dialogue between academic art history and contemporary feminist politics, which were no longer presumed to be extraneous to the discipline and its objects of study.⁶² In 'The Body Politic', Tickner negotiates her coterminous allegiances to both art history and feminism, thereby breaking the disciplinary boundary that negates feminist knowledge and the particularities of embodied female experience.⁶³ The heavily illustrated article refers to a range of canonical precedents across painting and sculpture (Duccio, Bellini, Titian) to suggest that 'despite her ubiquitous presence, woman as such is largely absent from art.'⁶⁴ And, drawing upon psychoanalytic theories such as those popularly propounded in the media and film theory journal *Screen*,⁶⁵ Tickner adds: 'We are dealing with the sign "woman", emptied of its original content and refilled with masculine anxieties and desires.'⁶⁶

For women artists working in the twentieth-century amidst the critical denaturalisation and politicisation of the humanities, a major question was how, 'against this inherited framework, women are to construct new meanings which can also be understood.'⁶⁷ *This was, of course, equally as true for the critics and*

⁶¹ Tickner interviewed by Liz Bruchet, 2011. Accessed 14 February 2013.

⁶² Lisa Tickner, 1978: 236-251.

⁶³ Helen C Chapman explores this issue further in 'Becoming Academics, Challenging the Disciplinarians', in *Breaking the Discipline*, p.35-58.

⁶⁴ Tickner, 1978: 242.

⁶⁵ Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' *Screen* 16.3 (1975) is famously one of the earliest published theories on the topic of feminism, psychoanalysis and the gaze.

⁶⁶ Tickner, 1978: 247

⁶⁷ Tickner, 1978: 239

historians who were charged with making sense of feminism's new art. Tickner refers to various artists' oeuvres in order to demonstrate how women utilise, subvert and manipulate their own imagery, to take control over their own visual representation.⁶⁸ The article included reproductions of many contemporary works, including Judy Chicago's *Red Flag* photograph of 1971, which shows the artist removing a bloody tampon; Lynda Benglis' notorious *Artforum* advertisement from 1974, photographically depicting the artist oiled up and naked, clutching a large dildo; Betty Dodson's vividly naturalistic images of vulvas which she drew in extended series; and Sylvia Sleigh's remarkable paintings of nude men, posed in a conventionally 'feminine' manner. By analysing the pictorial representation of women through canonical artworks and situating feminist visual practices in response to this 'inherited framework', Tickner's article merges art historical traditions with new analytic paradigms and fulfils her goal of *bringing both discourses into conversation with one another*.

Tickner first presented her research at a panel on 'Erotic Art' at the third Annual Conference of the AAH held in London, March 1977. Tickner has suggested that the ideas for the paper developed out of her pedagogic encounters as a lecturer at Middlesex Polytechnic (see Chapter One for the importance of pedagogy for feminist researchers) and, in the original conference abstract, she referentially suggests that the paper 'took as a text Linda Nochlin's contention that "the growing power of women in the politics of both sex and art is bound to revolutionise the area of erotic representation".'⁶⁹ The incipient editor of *Art History*, John Onians, has retrospectively described his early editorial policy as 'risky' and 'hot'. He adds: 'I just always wanted people to take more risks, be stronger, be more assertive.'⁷⁰ Onians was clearly attempting to shape a particular identity for the new journal and he therefore selected 'The Body Politic' for publication in the second issue, presumably believing that it would push the boundaries of the dominant discourse, but possibly without foreseeing that it would cause such animated controversy within the art historical community.⁷¹ In 2014, Tickner confirmed this in an email, writing

⁶⁸ This 're-visioning' process is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

⁶⁹ Tickner speaking in the AAH Oral Archives Project. The full abstract for Tickner's paper can be found in the *Bulletin of the Assoc. of Art Historians* 3 (Oct 1977), unpaginated.

⁷⁰ John Onians, interviewed by Liz Bruchet, 2011. Accessed 14 February 2013.

⁷¹ In his first editorial, Onians carefully establishes his vision of *Art History* as a non-exclusionary space, supportive of innovative critical approaches (including feminism). 'All too soon in a journal's life...some apparent convergence in the character of its contents will start to restrict the range of

that, ‘I think he was pleased to have something controversial and 20th century.’⁷² It is all too easy to forget, particularly from the vantage point of 2014, how scandalous early feminist writings and images could be for audiences loyal to the conventional disciplinary discourse. Indeed, John Shearman, one of the original members of the editorial board, resigned in protest over the article (according to Onians, he ‘took offence at the imagery’) and it was eventually pushed back to the second issue.⁷³ The furore over its publication has, in conjunction with its continued critical relevance, ensured that ‘The Body Politic’ has remained in academic discussion as part of a canon of renowned (feminist) essays. Initially the article received urgent attention from other feminist researchers, such as Lamia Duomato who cited it in an extensive bibliographic essay published in *Oxford Art Journal* two years later.⁷⁴ It has also been referenced in numerous books and the text itself has been reprinted in Rosemary Betterton’s anthology *Looking On* and Parker and Pollock’s *Framing Feminism*, both published in 1987.⁷⁵

The reproduction of feminist art, with its often threateningly visible bodies, is generally tolerated if confined to marginal or specialist arts journals; for example *Spare Rib*, *Block*, or *Feminist Art News*. Sites where, in Borzello’s words, feminist writers are usually ‘preaching to the converted’.⁷⁶ However, once these reproductions and their analyses slip into the dominant discourse, the chief source of offence seems to arise from soliciting readers to read these art practices as ‘high art’. ‘The Body Politic’, for example, outrageously situates vaginal imagery in relation to established Renaissance ‘masterpieces’. Following the publication of the first volume of *Art History*, arts magazine *Apollo* issued an editorial review of the ‘warmly welcomed’

articles it attracts...It is thus a prime responsibility of *Art History* to provide the subject with more room for growth, and this means that in the exploration of new fields for research no materials, no tools, no method and no new language will be excluded.’ ‘Editorial’, *Art History* 1.1 (March 1978), v-vi, v.

⁷² Tickner, personal email to author, 29 April 2014.

⁷³ John Onians, interviewed by Liz Bruchet, 2011. Tickner has also suggested that ‘the row they had was about the Lynda Benglis image’.

⁷⁴ Lamia Duomato, ‘The Literature of Woman in Art,’ *Oxford Art Journal* 3.1 (April 1980): 74-77.

⁷⁵ I have found the article referenced in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (2003: p.246 n.45); *The Female Nude* (1991: p.65 n.62); *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Post-Feminism* (2006: p.311); *Erotic Ambiguities* (2000: multiple); *The Ends of Performance* (1998: 288); *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction* contains an extensive discussion (2003: 44-46); I am sure there are many more. Article reprinted in Betterton (ed.), *Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts* (London and New York: Pandora Press), 1987: 235-253. Also in Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism*, 1987: 263-272 – here it is reprinted with the surrounding correspondence with *Apollo* and *Art Monthly*. In the process of completing this thesis all articles have now been digitised, which is certain to ensure a wider readership and access for older articles.

⁷⁶ Borzello, ‘Preching to the Converted,’ 1994.

new quarterly journal.⁷⁷ After a brief consideration of other articles deemed ‘admirable’ or even ‘unfamiliar’, the editor launches an attack upon Tickner’s article which he describes as a ‘novelty’. The review is startlingly peculiar, referring to Dr Tickner diminutively as ‘Miss Lisa’ and making prurient comments about both her and the female artists under discussion. As Jonathan Harris has pointed out, the article ‘will stand well as an example of the values and perspectives of contemporary “institutionally dominant art history”’.⁷⁸ Harris additionally highlights the editor’s deprecation of ‘The Body Politic’ as a mode of art history production that ‘simply isn’t to be taken seriously intellectually’.⁷⁹ Indeed, the editor uses (supposed) humour to delineate an artificial epistemic boundary between proper and improper art historical knowledge, by suggesting that Tickner’s article ‘makes a change for hard pressed students as they plough through some of the more highbrow stuff’.⁸⁰ Sociologist Maria do Mar Pereira has theorised this method of ‘epistemic splitting’ in non-feminist scholarship, defining it as a method of insidiously disavowing the ‘extreme’ edges of feminist discourse through laughter and mocking.⁸¹ Tickner tacitly identifies this in her response to the *Apollo* article (published in *Art Monthly* after the *Apollo* editors failed to respond to her correspondence), where she accuses the reviewer of adopting a ‘patronising facetiousness’ instead of engaging in ‘head-on conflict’. She explains: ‘This is sneakier: it ridicules from a position of presumed urbanity whilst avoiding the main issues.’⁸² As discussed above, access and participation is always political; as a technology of the discipline, scholarly journals are able to shape the emergent feminist discourse (to a degree) by selectively choosing which writings to publish, to censor, or to epistemically disavow – as evidenced by *Apollo*’s refusal to engage with Tickner’s response.

The reception history of ‘The Body Politic’ clarifies the problematic conjunction of feminism and the institutionally dominant art history (to borrow

⁷⁷ Anon., ‘Editorial: Is there a Doctor in the House?’, *Apollo: the magazine of the arts* (Oct 1978), 222-223. Sections of the editorial and Tickner’s response are reprinted in Parker & Pollock’s anthology *Framing Feminism* (1987).

⁷⁸ Jonathan Harris, *The New Art History*, 45.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 45.

⁸⁰ *Apollo*, 222.

⁸¹ Maria do Mar Pereira, ‘Feminist theory is proper knowledge, but...’ *Feminist Theory* 13.3 (Dec. 2012): 283-303. Pereira focuses on the effects of this behaviour within university classrooms, however it seems equally pertinent to peer-to-peer publishing.

⁸² Tickner, ‘Attitudes to Women Artists’ (correspondence section), *Art Monthly* 23 (1979), 22-23, 23. When *Apollo* refused to publish the response she sent it to *Art Monthly* and it has since been reprinted in *Framing Feminism* (1987).

Harris's phrase), which is normally unwelcoming of such flagrant political critique. In the sections below I attempt to pull out the dominant models of feminist art history writing that recur in the articles published in *Art History* and the papers presented at the Association of Art Historians Annual Conferences. Many are innovative in critical approach, and yet 'The Body Politic' differs from other published articles in its contemporaneity, which is one of the reasons I have chosen to discuss it separately. As far as I have found, no other article written from within a feminist perspective and considering the practices of contemporary artists is published in *Art History* until Amelia Jones's 1994 article 'Dis/playing the Phallus: Male Artists Perform Their Masculinities'.⁸³ The latter article reprinted the notorious Lynda Benglis' advertisement that had provoked controversy sixteen years earlier, as well as its diptych counterpart by Robert Morris, presenting the artist in a sadomasochistic outfit; it also included multiple images of Bob Flanagan nailing his penis to a stool. 'There was', according to Jones, 'no resistance at all to publishing "Dis/playing" [and] no complaints that I know of either'.⁸⁴ (Marcia Pointon, editor of the journal from 1993 to 1997, has divergently recalled that the publishers initially refused to print the issue on grounds of obscenity. However, it appears this minor opposition was contained to the printing and not the art historical community more widely.⁸⁵) The disparity in both editorial and public responses to the article indicates an evolution in attitudes toward feminist body art over this sixteen-year period, although it also raises intriguing questions about the institutionalisation of feminist art and art history. Is Jones's article permitted into the discourse because she frames her arguments in relation to male artists' works, rather than female (therefore focussing phallic rather than cunt body art)? Had the works under discussion, primarily made in the 1970s, shifted from contemporaneity to history in the period between publications, thereby diminishing their shock value? Or, had feminist intervention created an art historical culture permissive to the articulation of 'other' perspectives, and accommodating of feminist and body-related imagery? Less optimistically, feminist art history may have already become an acceptable, unthreatening art historical methodology.

⁸³ Amelia Jones, 'Dis/playing the phallus: male artists perform their masculinities', *Art History* 17.4 (1994): 546-584.

⁸⁴ Amelia Jones, personal email to author, 7 June 2013.

⁸⁵ AAH Oral Archives interview. Accessed 14 February 2013.

Theories and Methodologies: Feminist Discourse Emerges in *Art History*

As discussed directly above, 'The Body Politic' is the only text to explicitly address contemporary feminist art production that was published within the pages of *Art History* between 1978 and 1990.⁸⁶ In fact, the dominant trend to emerge from my reading of this twelve-year period is the emphasis that scholars place upon the Victorian and Edwardian eras as a developing object of feminist study. The research papers presented during this time at the AAH annual conferences demonstrate an analogous tendency towards this period. The first feminist paper addresses women in Victorian art, followed by presentations on Gwen John, the Victorian family, John Ruskin, Victorian female sexuality, Auguste Renoir, and the images circulated around women's suffrage campaigning.⁸⁷ Discussion of contemporary artists and politics began, however, to emerge in feminist papers from around 1983-4, suggesting a shift in feminist (and indeed, wider, art historical) research at this time.⁸⁸ (Art history's shift to 'the present tense' has been explored in greater detail by both Janet Kraynak and Dan Karlholm, and it is arguable that the 1980s set the agenda for the discipline's escalating contemporary focus and, resultantly, British art history's global status in the twenty-first century.)⁸⁹ What emerges most strongly from this institutional review, however, is an overwhelming concern with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art history and social relations, rather than

⁸⁶ When exactly 'contemporary art' is supposed to have started is, of course, up for debate. As Dan Karlholm has pointed out art history textbooks vary between 1945, post-WWII and the 1960s; his article 'Surveying Contemporary Art: Post-War, Postmodern, and Then What?' charts these issues in detail. *Art History* 32.4 (Sept. 2009): 712-733. In this instance I am referring to explicitly feminist art practices from c.1970 onwards.

⁸⁷ Griselda Pollock presented 'Women in Victorian Art' at the 2nd annual conference in London, revealingly alongside another paper entitled 'How did the artist earn *his* living?' 22-23 March 1975. Amy Taubman, 'The Notebooks of Gwen John', 4th annual conference: Cardiff, 1978. Pamela Nunn, 'The Victorian Family: Art and Life – the City', 5th annual conference: London, 30 March – 6 April 1979. Pamela Nunn, 'Ruskin's Patronage of Women Artists', 7th annual conference: London, 3-6 April 1981. Lynda Nead, 'Alfred Elmore's *On the Brink*', 7th annual conference: London, 3-6 April 1981. Kathleen Adler, 'Renoir's Treatment of Rural Types', 8th annual conference: Manchester, 26-29 March 1982. Lisa Tickner, 'Suffrage Iconography', annual conference: London, 1983.

⁸⁸ For example: in 1983 a Methodology Panel Discussion was introduced to the conference, and both Tickner and Pollock were invited but unable to attend (AAH archive letters). Margaret Iversen recounts that the session 'ended in heated recriminations that one could hardly call a debate', 'The Avant-Gardian Angels', *Art History* 6.4 (Dec. 1983): p.496. Afterwards, in Edinburgh in 1984, Iversen convened a panel of 'Innovative Methods' which included Abigail Solomon-Godeau's discussion of photography and Annette Kuhn discussing film noir and sexuality. At the 1989 conference at Tate London, Barbara Kruger was invited to present the plenary speech, evidencing an acceptance of women artists, if not necessarily of feminist discourse.

⁸⁹ Janet Kraynak, 'Art History's Present Tense' in Mansfield (ed). *Making Art History*. Karlholm, *Art History* essay.

contemporaneously produced artworks. The book review section, which was added to the journal in 1981, correspondingly provided a powerful outlet for the contemporary political debates that were less prominent within the articles (discussed further below). However, directing feminist critique upon the art of the past did not wholly exempt scholarship from sexist dismissals; as Kathleen Adler recalls, a speaker ‘at a recent [c.1985] Renoir symposium in London equated discussion of Renoir within the frameworks of feminist or Marxist discourse as akin to “playing the violin with a spanner”.’⁹⁰

The discipline of Art History is, unlike the comparable English Literature for example, defined in its very title as *historical*.⁹¹ Simultaneous to the formation of the journal *Art History*, the long-running *Burlington Magazine* published an editorial questioning art history’s escalating contemporary focus and suggesting that ‘[t]he training of art historians and their particular methods are not always conducive to an examination of rapid change’. One reason given for this possible weakness is the art historian’s inability to account for ‘the spilling over of established genres and formats into other disciplines’.⁹² This citation suggests the risk (or, paradoxically, the allure) of disciplinary disintegration that is at stake in such a conception of the contemporary in art history. (*Block’s* approach to design histories or cultural studies methodologies is elucidatory in relation to this disintegration and resultant policing of boundaries). It is evident therefore that time and its passing has been used by authorities of the discipline to validate its objects of study. Andrew Causey, an executive member of the AAH from 1974 to 1977, significantly recalls that the study of modern art (after c.1900) was only beginning to gain acceptability at established institutions such as the Courtauld during the 1960s, and it was difficult to carry out postgraduate research in this field due to a lack of available publications – although he adds that it was a quickly expanding field.⁹³ It is therefore not entirely surprising that feminist art historians felt obligated to confine their interventional writings to

⁹⁰ Kathleen Adler, (Sept. 1985): 374-80, 375.

⁹¹ Although, the word ‘history’ in fact has its etymological origins in the Greek *historia*, which suggests knowledge gained through enquiry rather than any temporal definition. Onians also raises this argument in an early editorial: ‘...to point out the disparity between the conventional modern notion of history as “the narration of past events” and the original meaning of the Greek *historia* with its emphasis on an “enquiry” rather than “record” and its inclusion of “present as well as past events”.’ ‘Art history, *kunstgeschichte* and *historia*’, *Art History* 1.2: 131-33.

⁹² ‘Editorial: Contemporary Art and The Burlington Magazine’, *The Burlington Magazine* 122.928 (Jul. 1980): 463.

⁹³ Andrew Causey interviewed by Liz Bruchet in 2011. Accessed 14 February 2013.

more established areas of critical study; indeed, the *Apollo* response to ‘The Body Politic’ demonstrates how threatening an art history *both* contemporary and political could be. A second explanation for this concentration of articles could, however, be far more mundane, as commercial concerns also shape academic output (whether consciously or not) and books will only be published in a receptive marketplace. As Borzello suggests, ‘[o]ne reason that there have been several books on the female Impressionists and the women in the Pre-Raphaelite circle is that they have proved to sell.’⁹⁴

The preponderance of research published on this period demands further theoretical attention in order to explicate feminist scholars’ abundant preoccupation; one that was particularly evident within the dominant art historical contexts of the AAH, as articles in *Block*, for example, did not follow this historical inclination. The 1980s experienced an encroaching division between historical and contemporary art scholarship (although both often produced by the same scholar), as the traditional emphases of the discipline, and their ideological motivations, were ethically interrogated. In more recent years, however, the historian Judith M Bennett has decried twenty-first-century feminism’s failure to attend to women’s histories prior to the nineteenth century.⁹⁵ Throughout her career Pollock has particularly emphasised the links between modernism’s cultural ascendancy and the negation of women as cultural producers; correspondingly, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide apposite case studies for her analyses of modernism’s formative moments and the resultant occlusion of women.⁹⁶ Cherry offers further justification for this concentration of research in a review written in 1981, suggesting that ‘[t]his period of our history can, I believe, teach us the dangers of reviving competitive capitalism, unemancipated womanhood, and expansionist empire in the later twentieth century, when our position in world politics is declining, our home

⁹⁴ Borzello, 23. It is also important to note that the Pre-Raphaelites (for example) were still considered a radical field of academic study; in 1980, *The Burlington Magazine* editor wrote: ‘Sixty years ago it would have been inconceivable, unpardonable even, to have devoted an issue [of the journal] to the Pre-Raphaelites, as was to happen in 1973 (although not without a blush on the editorial cheek). ‘Editorial: Contemporary Art and The Burlington Magazine’, *The Burlington Magazine* 122.928 (Jul. 1980): 463. This evidences how our views on what counts as radical/conventional are always in flux.

⁹⁵ Judith M. Bennett, ‘Who’s Afraid of the Distant Past?’ in *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

⁹⁶ As example of this institutionally dominant discourse: *Burlington Magazine*’s July 1980 special issue on ‘Twentieth Century Art’ featured three pieces on Picasso and articles on Brancusi, R B Kitaj, and Matisse. There is a clear sense that modern art was fundamentally tied to a masculine, European avant-garde. See also Carol Duncan’s essay ‘Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth Century Vanguard Painting’ *Artforum* 12 (Dec 1973), reprinted in Broude and Garrard (1982).

economy is collapsing and the pound rather than the worker is strong.’⁹⁷ In other words, nineteenth-century Britain underwent crucial changes to the economic and legal systems governing gender and class, and there are good reasons to see the battles of second-wave feminism as rooted in this system. To appropriate Jane Rendall’s phrase from her pioneering study of 1985, the nineteenth century offers ‘the origins of modern feminism’.⁹⁸ Although this epoch may have offered the origins, as Angela Dimitrakaki has posited, one of the most crucial differences between the ‘first’ and ‘second-wave’ of feminist organising in the UK was the respective occlusion or foregrounding of class relations within each ‘movement’ and, as my analysis below makes clear, questions relating to class were central to the 1970s/80s wave of feminist art historical knowledge production.⁹⁹

The curator and theorist Simon Sheikh has argued that the period after 1989 was ‘characterised by the lack of any overarching project of social justice and redistribution: in other words, the lack of any discernable horizon.’¹⁰⁰ Attentiveness to class divisions within feminism declined as efforts were redirected toward understanding the complexities of identity politics and subjectivity. Since the globally significant crisis of 2008, however, this ‘horizon’ has re-emerged, and questions of class and economy as well as debates around the possibility of academia-as-activism have rematerialised.¹⁰¹ Within art history this shift is perceptible in the renewed attention to materialist or realist ontologies that have exceeded postmodernism’s dominant model of text-centred hermeneutics.¹⁰² The Marxist-inflected discourses arising within *Art History* during the period 1978-1990 therefore bear particular relevance to the humanities as they exist at present, as writers negotiate the institutional legacies of that decade.

⁹⁷ Cherry 1981: 335.

⁹⁸ Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780 – 1860* (London: Macmillan, 1985). Many thanks to Lara Perry for recommending this book and for generously sharing her knowledge on nineteenth-century feminist studies with me.

⁹⁹ Dimitrakaki, ‘Women, Feminism and the Visual Arts in Britain,’ *Gender, Geographies, Representation* (unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Reading, 2001): 68-105, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Simon Sheikh, “Vectors of the Possible: Art between Spaces of Experience and Horizons of Expectation,” in *On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, ed. Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh, and Jill Winder (Utrecht: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, 2011), 158.

¹⁰¹ For more on this turn to the ‘economic subject’ in feminist art, please see Angela Dimitrakaki’s *Gender, ArtWork and the Global Imperative: A Materialist-Feminist Analysis*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013. And Lloyd, Dimitrakaki (eds.), *ECONOMY*, forthcoming. For further details on ‘Academia and Activism’ see the published forum in *American Studies Quarterly* 64.4 (Dec 2012): 787-849.

¹⁰² Ian Verstegen, *A Realist Theory of History of Art*, London; New York: Routledge, 2013. And Dimitrakaki *ibid*,

Beyond a general focus on issues of gender and class (as two components contributing towards social identity and its representation), what specific models of feminist art writing emerge in this reading of *Art History*? The foremost critical issue to emerge is the relation between a materialist feminist approach and a developing emphasis on poststructuralist analysis. This relationship must be attended to more closely as it evidences a surprising tendency - that *Art History* was keenly supportive of a critical, materialist methodology - and will be returned to in the chapter's conclusions.

The articles below have been selected from a larger pool of feminist writing published in *Art History*, in order to indicate the breadth of feminist research at this time. This is not a precise selection by any means; I selected examples that appeared to indicate trends and employ a feminist language. I have suggested four (overlapping) critical objectives within which to frame this enquiry: i) rethinking male genius, ii) constructing femininity, iii) queer femininity, and iv) women in art history. A closer examination of the selected articles will expand these particular trends and debates and, above all, expose the focus that writers directed towards the material conditions from which artistic representations arise and the strong social relation between class and gender, which is generally understood to be reciprocally sustaining.

(I) Rethinking Male Genius

The two articles discussed in this section offer a *renewing* of the processes of art history (as a written discipline) by utilising innovative methodologies, asking new questions of canonical modern artists and their artworks, and thereby explicitly rejecting institutionally-dominant knowledges usually focussed on connoisseurial, iconographic or biographic contexts. Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock co-authored a 1980 article that meticulously unpacks the narrative assumptions embedded within the signifier 'Post-Impressionism', especially the cultural myths surrounding bourgeois male genius and creativity. Eunice Lipton's article, also published in 1980, explores Edgar Degas' series of working-women and similarly examines the ideological signification of the 'laundress' in late nineteenth-century Paris.¹⁰³ Orton

¹⁰³ There were other articles to consider, but due to space restraints I have decided to focus only on the strongest examples. Articles by Carol Zemel (1987) and Judy Sund (1988) each offer a re-reading of Vincent Van Gogh's portraiture.

and Pollock fundamentally ask, and it is a historically-reflexive question that any of these writers could have posed: ‘How can we go about reclaiming these works for history? What kinds of practices do we, as historians of art practice, need to engage with in order to produce history instead of myth, knowledge instead of cliché and tautology?’¹⁰⁴

The authors proceed to question the efficacy of employing delineated ‘movements’ to categorise art’s history, arguing that such narratives secure a teleological progression that obscures the myriad conditions of art’s production. Employing Post-Impressionism as a case study, Orton and Pollock challenge the prevailing mythology that constructs late nineteenth-century Brittany as a romantically regressive (‘primitive’) idyll for the touristic pleasures of metropolitan male painters. By interrogating the role performed by Brittany, as a signifier of particular traditions in modern art narratives, the article incisively undermines these tropes and invites readers to question the veracity of historical representation more widely. Moreover, despite a focus on representation and its effects, Orton and Pollock repeatedly call for a materially grounded practice, which ‘acknowledge[s] that the world exists outside our representations’.¹⁰⁵ This materialist perspective on our relation to the external world is markedly different from the postmodernist viewpoints that were gaining academic currency elsewhere, in the US journal *October*, for example.¹⁰⁶

Lipton’s article similarly explores the gap between representation and reality; specifically the discrepancies between the gendered and classed social conditions of nineteenth-century Paris, illustrations of this period within painting, and art history’s narrative construction of the period as significant in the development of modern art. Lipton analyses Degas’ paintings of laundresses, carefully grounding them in ‘the social and cultural conditions’ of their production; arguing for a reconsideration of Degas’ images as remarkably progressive in their attitude towards women, particularly working-class women, at a time when ‘middle-class ideology emphasise[d] the sexuality of working-class women [and]... rationalised [their] exploitation.’¹⁰⁷ In contrast to paintings by his contemporaries, which more-often-

¹⁰⁴ Orton & Pollock (1980): 317.

¹⁰⁵ Orton and Pollock (1980): 317.

¹⁰⁶ *October* was established by Rosalind Krauss in 1976, and *Art History* published Margaret Iversen’s review of the new journal in 1983 (see issue 6.4).

¹⁰⁷ Lipton (1980): 295 & 303.

than-not eschewed the depiction of hard work in favour of a hazily sexualised atmosphere, in Lipton's view, Degas brings his viewers 'face-to-face with the boredom and alienation inherent in such labour'.¹⁰⁸ The article explicates the socio-economic conditions that structured women's experience of laundering work and which surface through the paintings (for example, the high instances of alcoholism). By thinking these instances through the Marxist concept of ideology, the writer locates and explains the discrepancy between art historical representation and the material conditions of late nineteenth-century Paris; history, recorded by middle-class men, is revealed as replicating and extending these (always classed) gender differences.¹⁰⁹

Both of these articles reconsider and reconceive the inherited cultural myths that produce impressions of male painters and their canonical works, and in doing so they *implicitly argue for the importance that art historiography has for a successful feminist politics of the present*. Furthermore, the writers stress their belief in a locatable, if elusive, historical reality that is obscured by myth-making representational practices at both pictorial and narrative levels. By deconstructing art history's dominant narratives, both articles simultaneously work to expose the material reality conditioning artistic production at the time and the historical representations that occlude this reality.

(II) Constructing Femininity

The articles discussed above reconsider canonical male artists' depictions of the working-class, women, and regional communities of France, emphasising the representational effects of ideology in the production, reception and historicisation of these artworks. Although the construction of femininity surfaces in this discussion, the articles considered in this second subsection explicitly examine this production of gendered meanings through the culturally loaded figures of the mother, prostitute and suffragette.¹¹⁰ In an article of 1982 (originally presented at the 1981 AAH conference), Lynda Nead helpfully reminds readers that, during the Victorian period,

¹⁰⁸ Lipton (1980): 279 & 308.

¹⁰⁹ Lipton (1980): 302.

¹¹⁰ Again, I have excised pertinent articles due to word restrictions. Margaret Maynard's article, 'A Dream of Fair Women' (1989), explores how portraits of wealthy women in the Victorian period deliberately drew upon eighteenth-century image conventions of 'fair women' in order to evoke a (nostalgic and imagined) aura of refined femininity that was being threatened by Victorian anxieties regarding social change and the dissolution of gender differences.

art could be ‘seen to have a moral function – its purpose was didactic’, thus a ‘picture had to uphold the bourgeois standards of morality, it had to re-produce the dominant beliefs and attitudes, and it had to serve the “correct”, prescribed moral purpose.’¹¹¹ The picture to which Nead particularly refers is Alfred Elmore’s *On the Brink*, first exhibited at London’s Royal Academy in 1865. Elmore’s painting depicts the moment that a young woman, sitting outside a gambling hall after chancing her money away, is approached by a shadowy male figure through an open window; this is supposedly the decisive moment at which she rests ‘on the brink’ of seduction.

Nead argues that Elmore’s painting must be understood as part of a regulating discourse of the period that proscribed femininity and sexuality, and she supports this reading with contemporaneous depictions of ‘seduced women’ from newspaper and literary reports. Nead carefully explicates the bourgeois Victorian discourses that produced a relational conception of the masculine and feminine, and the supposedly divergent sexualities of men and women.¹¹² For the purposes of this discussion, the article explores the complex relationship between visual (artistic) representation and the construction of (ideological) femininity, suggesting that: ‘The picture is thus received as “truth”, as “fact”, and is then offered back as *evidence* for the reality of the seduction-betrayal-prostitution-suicide cycle.’¹¹³ Elmore’s painting, therefore, in conjunction with contemporary fictions about middle-class women and the perils of seduction, reciprocally reinforces a restrictive conception of femininity that feminist art historians, Nead implies, must challenge at *both* a material and representational level.

In 1986 Robyn Cooper offered a comparable close reading of Millais’ painting *The Rescue* (1885), situating it within the historical conditions of its production, analysing the subject matter within Victorian gender ideologies, and exploring how the formal arrangement of the painting instantiates these. In Millais’ painting, Cooper argues, ‘the mother is literally the “angel in the house”’, composed in polarised distinction to the heightened masculinity of the fireman; however, her dangerous feminine sexuality mirrors the fire in that, ‘unless properly safeguarded’

¹¹¹ Nead (1982): 315.

¹¹² For example she suggests that: ‘Since women were believed to be devoid of sexual passion the move to prostitution had to be an involuntary one; furthermore, because of the sexual passivity of the female, seduction was solely considered a male act.’ (1982): .311.

¹¹³ Nead (1982): 319

she too ‘could be the moral cause of [the home’s] destruction’.¹¹⁴ The articles by Nead and Cooper crucially highlight the importance of narrative painting in both producing and reinforcing nineteenth-century ideals of femininity, and the ‘dangerous’ effects of women’s transgression. Although this deconstructive reading of sexuality and gendered imagery has relevance to a 1980s audience, situating the case studies in an earlier period – legitimated by temporal and thus ‘objective’ distance – allows this message to surface more seditiously than in Tickner’s publicly denounced appraisal of contemporary art.

Katrina Rolley’s fascinating article, published in 1990, also analyses the construction of femininity but specifically its flagrant political manipulation in the imagery produced by and about the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU).¹¹⁵ Rolley explores how physical manifestations of *femininity* relate to political visibility and approval. Her observations regarding the, by turns heightening or moderating, influence of fashion, and the relationship between the perceived ‘threat’ of feminism and an adherence to gendered codes of conduct, remains remarkably relevant to contemporary politics. Especially pertinent is the continually renewed attempt to disassociate feminist women from socially prescribed femininity via the coercive imposition of masculinised imagery and language.¹¹⁶ The 1970s slogan ‘our bodies our choice’; 1980s ‘sex wars’ around feminism, pornography and censorship; Ariel Levy’s 2005 denouncement of ‘raunch feminism’ in a postfeminist era; these debates extend the problems that Rolley locates in Victorian media representations of the suffragettes. It is only in the closing paragraph of the article, however, that Rolley explicitly links her historical case study to contemporary feminist issues, amusingly stating that: ‘an understanding of the problems the fashionable ideal presented for the suffragettes helps to explain why, over seventy years later, it remains impossible to find a feminist alternative to fashionable dress.’¹¹⁷

Like the other articles discussed in this section, the issues raised are obliquely relevant to 1980s contexts, in which feminine ideals continued to circulate and proscribe the acceptable limits of women’s behaviours; however, Rolley is the only

¹¹⁴ Cooper (1986): 480 & 478

¹¹⁵ Rolley (1990)

¹¹⁶ Christina Sharff’s recent analysis of how the insidious stereotype of the unfeminine, lesbian, man-hating feminist is used to stoke young women’s fears and dissuade their allegiance to feminism proves that this rhetoric is continuing to thrive into the 2010s. *Repudiating Feminism: Young Women in a Neoliberal World*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.

¹¹⁷ Rolley (1990): 60.

writer to even momentarily make the link explicit. As I have previously mentioned, the passing of time serves to legitimate art historical study, but it also confers an illusory objectivism upon the writer. If we understand the contemporary (art criticism) as emotional and invested, whereas the past (art history) is reserved and academic, gender coding becomes apparent in these divergent critical positions.¹¹⁸ Thus, feminist intellectuals – who were already often forced to defend their scholarship against sexist criticisms – arguably left contemporary connections implied in their writings, choosing instead to investigate political issues through historical, disciplinary ‘valid’ case studies.

(III) Queer Femininity

These articles, published in 1981 and 1987, offer profiles of two Victorian women and offer analyses that are remarkable for presaging queer feminist strategies by a number of years.¹¹⁹ Exploring the lives of Rosa Bonheur and Hannah Cullwick, the authors’ archival exposures of their subject’s masquerading, performative choice of dress and queer social relations are surprising in focus, shifting attention to the complex performance of sexuality and gender by the women in question.

However, Albert Boime’s article on Bonheur underlines the problem of using feminist methodologies without decisively rethinking the heteronormative, androcentric foundations upon which art historical narratives are founded, and Bonheur rarely emerges from his article as anything more than a curiosity.¹²⁰ Boime explores the artist’s accomplished animal paintings in great detail, at times problematically reading her work through a psycho-biographical lens to assume that Bonheur’s ‘preference for animals over humans is amply demonstrated in her art’.¹²¹ By scrutinising the subject matter of these paintings, Boime presents further tenuous deductions, suggesting that through the depiction of ‘certain species – oxen, mules, lions – whose sex roles are exceptional’ [Bonheur] ‘could openly express sex reversal...they were fundamental expressions of her earthly existence and the means

¹¹⁸ Mary Garrard’s 1976 article ‘Of Men, Women, and Art’ is still an excellent deconstruction of art history’s obsessional need to assert itself as a masculine, serious discipline. *Art Journal* 35.4 (Summer 1976): 324-29.

¹¹⁹ Although it’s impossible to tie down to a date, Judith Butler’s 1990 text *Gender Trouble* could be assumed as one of the first academic articulations of a queer feminist theory, although the term ‘Queer Theory’ is believed to have been coined by Theresa de Lauretis, also around that time.

¹²⁰ After writing this chapter I discovered that Jonathan Harris also discusses this article in *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction* and is similarly critical of its efforts to address the queer position of its subject.

¹²¹ Boime (1981): 395.

by which she worked through the social problems that plagued her in a Victorian world'.¹²² Comments such as this demonstrate the profound problems that arise when attempting to interpret art - a complex cultural product informed by myriad social and economic bases - through its creator's biography; especially for women or queer artists whose output is often tied to their perceived 'differences'. On a more positive note, however, the author's foregrounding of Bonheur's queer lifestyle in his study of her life and letters is significant for celebrating the subject of (apparent) lesbian sexuality in the conventional context of art history (and *Art History*).

In contrast to Boime's article, which endeavours to utilise new theories without radically altering the biographical-historical framework, Heather Dawkins offers a deeply theoretical and nuanced reading of 'The Diaries and Photographs of Hannah Cullwick' (1987). Within the publishing context of *Art History* the article is exceptionally poststructuralist and employs a rigorous vocabulary to account for the textual production of 'Hannah Cullwick', as a subject formed by and accessible through historical representation. Dawkins expands: 'the sense of her as a historical person is an effect of the texts. Hannah Cullwick is produced in the reading of the archive.'¹²³ The article stresses Cullwick's ambivalent (queer) positioning in relation to both class and gender, a position that was always performative and prone to slippages: 'when I'm with M [Arthur Munby]...have to remember I'm in disguise as a lady'.¹²⁴ The complex article develops many points around the classed constructions of masculinity and femininity as profoundly tied to activity and leisure, also pointing to the eroticisation that could arise from toying with these fetishistic constructions (particularly in relation to dirt, cleaning and Cullwick's 'unfeminine' muscles). Furthermore, Dawkins' article pushes at the boundaries of art history and opens into a broad cultural field, in which an archive of a housemaid's diary entries and a collection of personal photographs become 'texts' subject to historical analysis, thereby expanding the discipline's conventional objects of study.

Although contemporaneous arts journals such as *Screen* were publishing articles in a poststructuralist vein, as mentioned, Dawkins approach was usual within the pages of *Art History* and points to the theoretical direction that feminist art history would develop further in the early 1990s. In addition, although explicit

¹²² Boime (1981): 399.

¹²³ Dawkins (1987): 155.

¹²⁴ Dawkins (1987): 158. Cullwick's situation as a strong, working-class maid disassociates her from the ideals of femininity, which were only available to a bourgeois, leisured lady.

discussion of sexuality (both lesbian and queer) was taking place across feminist publishing contexts the topic rarely, if ever, surfaces in the context of *Art History* beyond these two articles.¹²⁵ Despite queer theory's attachment to poststructuralist thought – in *A Genealogy of Queer Theory* William B Turner goes so far as to suggest 'poststructuralism is queer' – this analysis of Victorian queer femininity has recently resurfaced in contemporary critiques of capitalism and gender relations.¹²⁶ In a 13-minute film 'Normal Work', produced by Renate Lorenz and Pauline Boudry in 2001, a series of vignettes re-stage Cullwick's various performances as maid, lady or S&M-styled slave. A voice off-camera continuously interjects and, while performing, 'Cullwick' speaks of his other jobs that he must do to financially support himself. Although ostensibly concerned with a Victorian archive, the video thus draws out broader issues around sexuality and waged labour; a clear case of how feminist knowledge can be remobilised according to the demands of specific historical moments.

(IV) Women in Art History

This selection of articles explores women's role as cultural producers (art historians and artists) who have been excluded by or misrepresented in art history. First presented as an AAH conference paper, Pamela Nunn's article of 1978 recovers the history of the mid-nineteenth-century painter Henrietta Ward and primarily focuses on the, at times limiting, effects that the artist's femininity had upon her education and career. At the beginning of her article Nunn confrontationally states: 'The Victorian artist, one might think, has been studied at length...but what, in short, of the female Victorian artist? *She* has been studied at virtually no length at all.'¹²⁷ Countering this silence, the article consequently inventories the restrictions of a Victorian art education that offered 'no life classes for women', and the limited access to professional opportunities (Ward struggled for years to gain access to the Royal Academy, for instance).¹²⁸ However, Nunn refuses to dwell upon these limitations and instead focuses upon the positive effects that Ward's femininity (as a

¹²⁵ For example, *Signs* published 'The Lesbian Issue' 9.4 (Summer 1984), and *Feminist Review* published a special issue on 'Sexuality' 11 (Summer 1982).

¹²⁶ William B Turner, *A Genealogy of Queer Theory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 22.

¹²⁷ Nunn (1978): 293.

¹²⁸ Nunn (1978): 298. Famously, no other woman was elected to the rank of Academician until 1936, when Dame Laura Knight was granted membership, 299.

socially constructed position) produced upon her painting and patronage. As a married mother, for example, Ward ‘put the resources which the domestic situation does offer to professional use: she became known for her pictures of children, especially in a home setting’.¹²⁹ In this manner Nunn carefully deconstructs associations between women artists and the domestic, exposing the artist’s choice in subject matter to arise out of historical necessity due to social restrictions, rather than being natural or inherent to womanhood. Nunn’s article also examines nineteenth-century newspapers and journals to present a surprisingly enlightened perspective on women artists and Ward, she argues, ‘was one mid-Victorian woman painter who did manage to attain some status in her own time, of which history has, however, robbed her.’¹³⁰ Although well-received at the time, the intervening decades of modernist art history systematically erased Victorian women such as Ward from the records; Nunn therefore suggests the feminist recovery of ‘lost’ women artists is not one of simple reintegration, but must address the limitations of women’s institutional access (defined here as education, exhibition and patronage) to fully comprehend the ideologies supporting this historical erasure.

Adele Holcomb’s article on ‘Anna Jameson: The First Professional English Art Historian’, published in 1983, similarly recovers the figure of Jameson and elucidates her career as an art historian during the Victorian period. This slight, but significant, article suggests that Jameson was ‘[t]he first writer to *define herself* as a specialist on Victorian art in England’.¹³¹ Holcomb’s article constitutes a bibliographic recovery of the art historian, providing an overview of her publishing and reception histories, before asking: ‘A final question I would like to consider has to do with the ways in which Jameson’s career and her thinking about art were affected by the fact of being a woman.’¹³² The increasing professionalisation of art history towards the end of the nineteenth century functioned to negate the scholarship of ‘amateurs’, and extending this imposition of authority, according to Holcomb, historians in the twentieth century ‘tend to decry [Jameson’s] lack of footnotes’.¹³³ As a glimpse into the shifting, but always gendered, parameters that

¹²⁹ Nunn (1978): 295.

¹³⁰ Nunn (1978): 306-07.

¹³¹ Holcomb (1983): 175. See the earlier article, Clara Thomas, ‘Anna Jameson: Art Historian and Critic’, *Woman’s Art Journal* 1.1 (Spring Summer 1980): 20-22.

¹³² Holcomb (1983): 183.

¹³³ Holcomb (1983): 182.

define ‘good’ or ‘bad’ art historical scholarship, Jameson provides a significant case study for apprehending disciplinary authorities.

A 1986 essay by Hilary Taylor explores the gendered framework of art education at The Slade during 1895 to 1899, and considers its impact upon the expectations of and opportunities for women artists *in relation* to those of their male colleagues. Taylor explores both the educational and professional limitations for middle-class women artists and argues that common (mis)conceptions about gender become almost self-determining. The association of maleness with ‘fierceness and arrogance’ relegated femininity outside of the ideal ‘modern artist’, thus ‘a feminine temperament could not be compatible with an artistic one.’¹³⁴ Taylor’s examination carefully emphasises femininity as a site of difference to which the romantic ideal of the male artist is relationally established.

When read together, this is a theme running comprehensively throughout these articles. The analyses encompass the institutional limitations for women artists in art schools, studio spaces, exhibitions and publishing opportunities and, eventually, representation in historical narratives. All of these sites have concretely restricted access to women artists, but – these writers argue – the insidious replication of gendered mythologies, which render ‘femininity’ incompatible with artistic greatness, carries greater long-term significance for the maintenance of bourgeois sexual differentiation and political economies in relation to art. There is a concerted effort to *not* facilely reduce femininity to an obstacle that must be overcome, but to understand the production of sexual difference (on both material and representation levels) in all of its complexity.

The articles excerpted above indicate the particular modes of feminist art historical discourse that emerged within the institutional space of *Art History* during this period. This presentation is not intended to be symptomatic of feminist discourse more generally, as different sites supported diverse articulations of feminist theory and politics. However, as *the* publishing corollary of the professional organisation for British scholars, during this period of disciplinary consolidation, how the editors chose to define ‘art history’ and what they chose to express it with, is historically significant for understanding the legacies of feminist intervention.

¹³⁴ Taylor (1986): 243.

Contemporary Politics: Art History Acquires a Book Review Section

In a short essay published in 1986, Stephen Bann asks why British art historians are so fearful of being tainted by the term ‘critic’ and suggests that the discipline is limited by paying too little attention to contemporary work.¹³⁵ Publishing in the same edited volume, Dawn Ades similarly criticises ‘British Art History’s obsession with chronology and history (as that which has passed), not recent or contemporary.’¹³⁶ The reviews section of *Art History*, which was added to the journal in 1981, established a space for the articulation of increasingly contemporary and overtly political (both small and big ‘p’) arguments, which led to one historian christening it a forum for ‘seething phillipic’.¹³⁷ The orthodoxies governing art historical scholarship evinced less authority in the reviews and many of the appraisals were collaboratively penned, concretely enacting the feminist impulse towards collective knowledge production that opposes an individualist conception of the lone scholar (and referentially, the artist).¹³⁸ The *contemporaneousness* of the reviews is striking and often authors link their reviews of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century art to extant debates around gender, class and race; perhaps implying the transhistorical effects of patriarchy. Suzanne Kappeler’s polemical review, for example, of a book examining classical depictions of rape in painting history, stands as a sharp illustration of 1980s feminist discourse around female sexuality, power and representation, often termed the ‘sex wars’.¹³⁹ The reviews can be understood especially as a form of academia-as-activism and many make explicit reference to current British politics, through references to Margaret Thatcher’s party policies, for example. Paradoxically,

¹³⁵ Stephen Bann, ‘How Revolutionary is the New Art History?’, in Rees and Borzello *The New Art History* (1986), 22.

¹³⁶ Dawn Ades, ‘Reviewing Art History’, in Rees and Borzello *The New Art History* (1986), 11.

¹³⁷ Jonathan Harris, ‘Art History’, *Year’s Work Critical and Cultural Theory*, 1.1 (1991): 137-175, 171. The lengthy discursive review, often constituting a self-reflexive commentary on the state of the discipline, appears to be waning again. This is perhaps attributable to the establishment of the Research Excellence Framework (previously the Research Assessment Exercise), which seeks to systematise research outputs and reward university departments based on a points-system. Because book reviews do not carry much weight in this points-system, it is a disincentive for researchers to dedicate the time necessary to writing and publishing them.

¹³⁸ In particular, Deborah Cherry collaborated multiple times with Griselda Pollock and Jane Beckett; Annie Coombes co-wrote reviews with Jane Lloyd and Steve Edwards.

¹³⁹ Suzanne Kappeler (1988): 118-123. This text is granted classic status by its reprinting in Robinson’s 2001 anthology *Feminism-Art-Theory*. For more on the ‘sex wars’ see writers including Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin, and Gayle Rubin.

although feminists argued for the disintegration of media-based hierarchies, the very opposite emerges in the journal's published writings; Cheryl Buckley's review of *A Woman's Touch* (1989), for instance, is one of very few to engage with design history.

The AAH conferences featured greater material in the research area of design than *Art History*, presumably because the Association membership includes many artists, curators and educators, in addition to the art historians who more likely submitted journal essays.¹⁴⁰ Neither were more 'radical' journals exempt from implementing exclusions based on media hierarchies during this period. As Dan Graham has recalled, his article on new wave rock music and the feminine was rejected by *Screen* in 1981, apparently for committing the error of amalgamating psychoanalytic theory with popular music culture.¹⁴¹

Perusing these reviews, what is most striking (and potentially dispiriting) is the continued relevance of so many arguments and debates to feminism in 2014. Annie E Coombes and Steve Edwards' 1989 essay 'Site Unseen' reviews four books investigating the ideological function of image-making in colonialist regimes. The authors' brief exposition regarding women, visibility and Islam has never been more relevant than in today's fraught globalised contexts.¹⁴² Coombes and Edwards compellingly engage both postcolonial and feminist theories, hypothesising the effects of representation upon othered subjects. The inclusion of this review, alongside another by Coombes, serves to negatively highlight the absence of critical discussion around race and nationality in the journal.¹⁴³ Postcolonial discourse is practically non-existent in *Art History* at this time.¹⁴⁴

Writers appeared to take advantage of the greater freedom offered by the review format to reflect on the general state of the discipline, occasionally offering pre-emptive defences of their preferred methodological approach or scholarly

¹⁴⁰ Cheryl Buckley, 'Designed by Women', Rev. of *A Woman's Touch* by Isabelle Anscombe. *Art History* 9.3 (Sept 1989): 400-403.

¹⁴¹ 'New Wave Rock and the Feminine' (published in various forms 1980-84). At a 13th July 2013 talk at of Manchester International Festival, Graham revealed that the article was initially rejected by Laura Mulvey and the board of *Screen* editors because of its lowbrow subject matter. Although only an anecdote, the implication for feminist history of this period is fascinating – which other submitted writings went unpublished as a result of exploring the 'wrong' subject?

¹⁴² Annie Coombes and Steve Edwards (Dec 1989): 510-516, 515.

¹⁴³ Annie Coombes and Jill Lloyd (Dec 1986): 540-45. The pair criticise the exhibition organisers for adopting an depoliticised approach to questions of race, nation gender and authority.

¹⁴⁴ Rasheed Araeen established *Third Text* in 1987, in response to this critical neglect and institutionalised racism in UK academia. *Feminist Review* and *Block* also published many articles intersecting feminist and postcolonial perspectives.

principles. Coombes and Edwards' review thus reflects another theoretical debate that has decisive contemporary relevance. Discussing Malek Alloula's now-renowned text, *The Colonial Harem*, the authors attribute a failure in the book to:

...the general failure of psychoanalysis (Alloula's chosen paradigm) to articulate the multifarious and ambivalent manner in which colonial relations reproduce themselves at different moments in specific ways. To collapse this complexity into a generalised thesis of power and domination is to fall precisely into the trap so often laid at the door of "vulgar" historical materialism.¹⁴⁵

With this veiled deliberation the authors defend their preferred paradigm, historical materialism, against the threat of psychoanalysis; a debate that has arisen repeatedly throughout this discursive examination and is indicative of a broader negotiation between materialist and poststructuralist conceptions of history. In a review of Pollock's *Vision and Difference* anthology, Jo Anna Isaak reaffirms that 'feminism is committed, epistemologically to realism.'¹⁴⁶ Lessons can perhaps be gleaned from this earlier period in feminist discourse. Since the early 2000s, an insistence upon a feminist realist epistemology has recurred and the resulting tensions between realist and constructionist feminist theories therefore find precedence in this 1980s moment - not as an evolutionary historical continuum but as a disjunctive moment of re-engagement or renewal.¹⁴⁷

As a space for self-reflexive, disciplinary assessments the reviews proffer great insight into period beliefs about feminist knowledge production and its interventional possibilities. In 1982 Deborah Cherry took the opportunity, in a review of *Old Mistresses*, to reflect upon the fundamental epistemological effects of feminist intellectual enquiry, arguing that 'the construction of a radical, a feminist history of art' has 'challenged the politics of knowledge, questioned what is knowable/sayable, and contested history.'¹⁴⁸ The paragraphs below examine more closely six reviews authored by the prolific Cherry, four of which were written collaboratively. The earliest of these, published in 1981, stridently situates the text within the specificities

¹⁴⁵ Coombes and Edwards (1989): 512.

¹⁴⁶ Isaak (1989): 365.

¹⁴⁷ Please see: Lena Gunnarsson, 'A Defence of the Category "Women"', *Feminist Theory* 12.1 (2011): 23-27; Samantha Frost, 'The Implications of the New Materialisms for Feminist Epistemology' in HE Grasswick (ed.) *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science: Power in Knowledge*, London; New York: Springer, 2011: pp.69-83.

¹⁴⁸ Cherry (1982): 501.

of its historical moment, first by criticising Margaret Thatcher's *laissez-faire* policies, and second, by announcing: 'I am writing on the third day of the Brixton riots; it is perhaps this that makes me reflect.'¹⁴⁹ Although the tone of *Art History* was, during this early period, predominantly aligned with broadly left-wing perspectives, the journal was not beyond mocking the overly-earnest efforts of social art historians, as an acerbic 1983 review by Stanley Mitchell attests to.¹⁵⁰

In a subsequent review in 1982, Cherry suggests that feminism's structural awareness is indebted to Marx's viewpoint that 'the knowledge validated by a particular society is not neutral but constructed in the interests of the dominant class.'¹⁵¹ This points to one of the strongest trends to emerge within these reviews: their reliance upon Marxian language and historical materialist analyses (not, of course, the same as one another), but crucially refigured through the lens of feminist critique and therefore asking fundamental questions about gender and sexuality.¹⁵² For instance, co-writing in 1988 with Jane Beckett, the authors state with regards to the monograph format, '[t]hese commodities are structural to the consumption of artists as individuals transcending historical time and place.'¹⁵³ They criticise the texts under review for failing to analyse the historical conditions that generate the gendered production and reception of art, as well as for narratively reducing Gwen John's artistic output to a triumvirate of male influences. The language employed is again profoundly materialist (commodities, consumption) and demonstrates how young feminist scholars of the 1980s, schooled in the New Left era, successfully merged materialist analyses with questions of gender politics.¹⁵⁴

In a later collaboration between Beckett and Cherry, the pair review Lisa Tickner's distinguished analysis of suffrage imagery, *The Spectacle of Women*,

¹⁴⁹ Cherry (1981): 335

¹⁵⁰ Writing about the retreat into academia after the on-street activism of 1968 Mitchell cuttingly writes: 'What explains this sudden retreat? ... Whatever it was, jobs were secure and *behoved the erstwhile revolutionaries to rechristen their activity "theoretical practice"*.' 6.4 (Dec 1983): 499-500. Emphasis Added.

¹⁵¹ Cherry (1982): 502.

¹⁵² In a 1984 review Pollock confirms this, making clear that a superficially radical art history without feminism was moot: 'These publications bear witness to a shadowy presence of that which has been called the social history of art. Terms such as class, the bourgeoisie, ideology are trailed across their pages, usually dressing up entirely unchanged perspectives and practices of art history, stylistic history, iconography, compendia and the monograph. *The striking absence, however, is of issues of gender and sexuality.*' 'Revising or Revisiting Realism?', (Sept 1984): 359-366, 366.

¹⁵³ Cherry and Beckett (1988): 456.

¹⁵⁴ This holds true across almost all of the reviews Cherry contributed to; a 1984 review co-authored with Pollock states that the true historical value of Pre-Raphaelitism 'is in what it reveals about the *altering conditions of artistic production and consumption in the later nineteenth century...*' 485. Emphasis Added.

adding somewhat cursorily to their materialist feminism the issue of race relations: ‘to date the participation of Black women in the women’s suffrage campaigns is little known and substantially under-researched.’¹⁵⁵ This is a deeply under-represented area of scholarly research in *Art History* during this period and, as attested to by the vibrant Black Feminist Arts Movement in 1980s Britain, is not due to a lack of materials.¹⁵⁶ (Although again this points to a disciplinary division between historical and contemporary art.) Once more, at the risk of being repetitive, the article emphasises women’s political agitation in the struggle for suffrage as a crucial legacy for second-wave feminism. Rather than a radical break with the past, 1980s feminism is conceived as a renewal of this historic moment: ‘In the current discourse of post-feminism and return to libertarian individualism the reclamation of a particular historical moment when women worked collectively to shift and negotiate the social codes and political debates about femininity is particularly significant.’¹⁵⁷

A review of the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition at Tate Gallery in 1984, co-authored with Pollock, is remarkable for its conspicuous relevance to contemporary contexts.¹⁵⁸ The lengthy review initially queries the political economy sustaining such large-scale exhibition practices, concluding that the dubious financier Pearson ‘exemplif[ies] the practice of legitimating corporate capital by cultural patronage.’¹⁵⁹ This foreshadows twenty-first century art’s simultaneous critique and enmeshment within sponsorship culture; epitomised by Tate’s BP sponsorship, which was established in 1990 and will run until at least 2017, despite widespread censure.¹⁶⁰ (This is discussed in greater detail in part two of the next chapter).

Multiple contributions from Cherry, Pollock and Tickner attest to their strong analytic voices within the pages of *Art History*, but the journal simultaneously

¹⁵⁵ Cherry and Beckett (1989): 122

¹⁵⁶ Some of this history is recorded in *Framing Feminism* (1987). However, Alexandra Kokoli’s 2008 essay ‘Feminism and the Stories of Feminist Art’ discusses the anthology, particularly its cover image, and its conflicted relation to Black Feminism, *Feminism Reframed* (ed. Kokoli, 2008). For contemporary assessments of the Black Feminist Art Movement please see Sutapa Biswas, ‘The Presence of Black Women’, *Art Monthly* 11 (1989), and a special issue of *Feminist Art News* ‘Black Women’s Creativity’ 2.8 (1988)

¹⁵⁷ Beckett and Cherry (1989): 122.

¹⁵⁸ Cherry and Pollock co-authored a second article about the Pre-Raphaelites and Elizabeth Siddall in *Art History* 7.2 (June 1984): 206-227; however, as the article is well-known for being republished in Pollock’s *Vision and Difference* collection I have chosen not to discuss it here.

¹⁵⁹ Cherry and Pollock (1984): 481.

¹⁶⁰ There are a preponderance of texts dealing with issues of sponsorship, two of the most accessible and well-known are Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), and Gregory Shollette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* (New York: Pluto Press, 2011).

acknowledged a range of other critical approaches within feminist discourse. Wendy Leeks' review from 1985, for example, dismantles Norman Bryson's assumptions about gender, sexuality and artistic potency in French Romantic painting.¹⁶¹ Leeks utilises feminist re-readings of psychoanalysis to interrogate the book's reductive 'clash of titans' narrative and disruptively rethinks the conventional oedipal myth as a mother-son relationship. Patricia Simons also highlights the impact of psychoanalysis within feminist art discourse, by incisively focussing on questions around the body, desire, and narrative in her exhibition review published in 1987.¹⁶² Lynda Nead in particular contributed a large number of articles, reviews and conference papers to the AAH during this period, and her research is unique in its keen focus on analysing the regulative image production and historiography of women's sexuality, primarily in the originating period of Victorian Britain.¹⁶³ The emergence of psychoanalysis as a prevailing tendency within feminism is not therefore entirely clear from a reading of *Art History* during this period. Renowned names from these decades (such as Juliet Mitchell, Jane Gallop, Julia Kristeva, Elizabeth Grosz, and Jacqueline Rose) are not present and, without a doubt, a materialist-feminist approach continues to dominate *Art History* until the end of the 1980s.

It is surprising to note that, after the prolific 1980s, Cherry, Nead, Pollock and Tickner did *not* publish any articles in *Art History* during the 1990s. However, as Pollock notes in a recent interview, 'career patterns change' and journals 'tend to serve emerging scholars except in certain conditions when specific articles are solicited as parts of special issues.'¹⁶⁴ This suggests that by the 1990s, an established generation of feminist scholars were more comfortably ensconced within the British academic establishment and could therefore focus on lengthier projects.¹⁶⁵ Tickner also mentions that, 'I think the emphasis shifted more towards visual culture for

¹⁶¹ Wendy Leeks, (1985).

¹⁶² Patricia Simons (Dec. 1987): 541-49.

¹⁶³ Lynda Nead contributed: 'Seduction, Prostitution, Suicide: *On The Brink* by Alfred Elmore', *Art History* 5.3 (Sept 1982): 308-322. 'An Iconography of Misogyny', Rev. of *Idols of Perversity* by B. Dijkstra. *Art History* 11.2 (1988): 283-86. 'Representation, sexuality and the female nude', Rev. of *Tell me, Pretty Maiden* by R. Pearsall; *Sex, Politics and Society* by J. Weeks, *Art History* 6.2 (June 1983): 227 – 235.

¹⁶⁴ Pollock, personal email to author, 30 April 2014.

¹⁶⁵ This is corroborated by Tickner in a personal email to author 29 April 2014. As she highlights, in the early 1990s she co-organised three *Block* conferences at Tate and co-edited the four publications that emerged from them (under the series 'Re-Visions: Critical Studies in the Theory and History of Art'), large projects which understandably 'took a lot of time'.

some of us.’¹⁶⁶ The development of visual culture studies and its relationship to art history during the 1990s is a fascinating issue that requires further analysis in relation to both feminist politics (in the historical formation of these disciplines) and in relation to disciplinary self-understandings of both ‘art’ and ‘feminism’. Yet tentatively, feminist art historians’ turn to visual culture implies that if art history were, after all, determined to remain art *history*, feminists could – and today still could – relocate their intellectual originality to other contexts. However, the splintering of intellectual work among and between disciplines, as a reactionary feature of capitalist education, must be factored into this analysis.

Conclusions: Changing the Discipline

The discussion in this chapter has been somewhat diverse: touching upon the development of art history in twentieth-century Britain, the emergence of feminist discourse within the Association of Art Historians (together with the difficult politico-ethical questions raised by that participation), and an analysis of the methodologies and approaches associated with feminist thought within the pages of *Art History*. What conclusions can be tentatively drawn from this analysis, particularly in relation to feminism’s own historiography?

First, I think it is important to acknowledge that the growth of feminist discourse was evidently supported by the AAH, where it was part of the concurrent rise of ‘new art histories’ in British academic culture. Although originally emerging in extra-institutional pedagogic spaces (examined more closely in Chapter One) ‘feminist art history’ did not occur in isolation from the dominant organisations of the discipline. Participation in the AAH helped to institute feminism as an important critical element in the developing field; here, ‘institution’ might be better conceived not as a material or even stable site but as relating to a social or epistemic formation. Thinking in this sense permits a fuller understanding of the feminist critique, which engages the institutionally dominant art history (revealing it to be androcentrically aligned) in order to alter the bases of *all* historical, cultural and ostensibly ‘objective’ (that is position-less) knowledge. The discourse that emerged here was, crucially, not limited to a discussion or valorisation of ‘women artists’, women’s or feminist

¹⁶⁶ Tickner, personal email.

exhibitions and so on; instead, scholarship engaged with the conventional knowledge of art history, radically taking it apart and rethinking its boundaries, while asking fundamental questions about *what art history is for and what implicit ideological function it serves in its current form*.

The feminist research instituted and made publicly available through the AAH was successful in rethinking the terms of *both* the ‘conventional’ scholarly paradigm and the ‘radical’ or ‘critical’ approach associated with Marxist logic; both of which, prior to feminist intervention, precluded adequate acknowledgement of gendered relations of power. This diverged from the American CAA where, as Garrard’s recollections make clear, the divisions between feminism and Marxism were much greater. In April 1978, the ‘Caucus for Marxism and Art’ had 300 members, whereas the ‘Caucus for Women and Art’ had 2,500 members (note, however, that it is not ‘Feminism and Art’).¹⁶⁷ In Garrard’s account there is no allusion to any crossover between the two caucuses, nor is any scholarly alliance mentioned. Perhaps UK feminism’s (wavering) allegiance to the structural analyses favoured by Marxism delayed, to an extent, the identity-focused politics of anti-racism and queer discourses that evolved more strongly in US contexts during this decade. Studies of nineteenth-century feminist struggles and materialist analyses of history dominated the discourse in *Art History*, although latterly poststructuralist and queer perspectives begin to slowly emerge. By the early 1990s, however, the surge of methodological and theoretical innovation at this site stalled. In 1991, for instance, Harris theatrically suggested that the *Art History* reviews section, a ‘hotbed of marginal neo-Marxist, neo-feminist and neo-poststructuralist seething philippic during the early- and mid-1980s, has been tamed’.¹⁶⁸ In a later text he argues that this was due to the rise of ‘identity politics’, which ‘flourished at the expense of a “classist” Marxism that could not survive either politically or philosophically’.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Warren Carter, Barnaby Haran and Frederic J Schwartz, eds., *Renew Marxist Art History* (London: Art Books Publishing, 2013), 19. Carter writes in the introduction to the volume that this Caucus grew out of a 1976 CAA conference session organised by Otto Karl Werckmeister, TJ Clark, and David Kunzle. Artists including Martha Rosler and Alan Sekula participated in its sessions, alongside art historians including Carol Duncan and Linda Nochlin, but ‘it nevertheless failed to generate enough interest to produce its own journal, and it folded in 1980.’ The participation of Duncan and Nochlin suggests that there was in fact, in contradiction to Garrard’s account, at least a limited crossover of interest.

¹⁶⁸ Jonathan Harris, ‘Art History,’ *Year’s Work Critical and Cultural Theory*, 1.1 (1991): 137-175, 171.

¹⁶⁹ Harris, *The New Art History*, 285.

The growing tension that Harris points to is similarly noted by the literary and cultural theorist Michèle Barrett, in a revised introduction to *Women's Oppression Today* (1980). Writing in the 1988 edition, Barrett reflects on the changes that had taken place within feminist theory over that eight-year period:

[Patriarchy, reproduction and ideology] ...none of them survive intact a serious consideration of race and racism... In addition, the overall situation is conditioned by the fact that the general area of ideology, culture and subjectivity has proved a far more fertile ground for new work around issues of ethnic difference and racism than has been the case with the traditional economic and social concerns of social thought and the academic social sciences. This is principally because existing theories of social structure, already taxed by attempting to think about the inter-relation of class and gender, have been quite unable to integrate a third axis of systemic inequality into their conceptual maps. Theoretical perspectives using the more flexible vocabulary of subjectivity and discourse have made it possible to explore these issues without being constrained by the need to assign ranks in what is effectively a zero-sum game of structural determination.¹⁷⁰

Regardless of whether or not what Barrett argues is accurate, her reflections usefully contribute to a clearer historical awareness of how British feminism was thinking its *own* development at this time; when a disjunction between conventional Marxian analysis, understood to inadequately theorise the subject's raced, sexed, and gendered specificities, and the possibilities offered by newer postmodernist explorations, concretely emerged. (Obviously not all feminist writings followed this broadly sketched trajectory, indeed as Gen Doy demonstrated in her 1998 book *Materializing Art History*, Marxist conceptions of culture are far more valuable than is often acknowledged by 'postmodern' perspectives – and, in all likelihood, vice versa.) Nancy Fraser has also focussed on the transformation of feminism around 1990, arguing that the decision to reposition the discourse in relation to 'identity politics, aimed more at valorising cultural difference rather than economic equality' was detrimental to the *possibility* of both material and economic achievements by the feminist movement.¹⁷¹ Fraser suggests that the alliance of feminist politics and

¹⁷⁰ Michèle Barrett, *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist-Feminist Encounter* (London: Verso, 1980; 2nd edition 1988), x.

¹⁷¹ Nancy Fraser, 'Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two Dimensional Approach to Gender Injustice,' in *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books, 2013), 4.

‘culture’, as a space in which women demanded increased recognition and wider representation, came to dominate the issues of economy and distribution that are fundamental to materialist feminism.

Jones has also highlighted this moment of transformation but draws alternative conclusions. Emphasising the troubling obfuscation of race within mainstream feminist discourse in the UK during the 1980s (and this extends the legitimisation/exclusion debate highlighted in ‘The Politics of Participation’ above), Jones argues that the dominant scholarly work of Pollock, Laura Mulvey and Mary Kelly ‘was effective in legitimating feminist art and art theory as “serious” and rigorously articulated.’¹⁷² However, in counterpoint, she understands this writing as ‘also narrow and becom[ing] somewhat prescriptive’.¹⁷³ Jones contends that this was largely due to the failure of leading feminist art historians to acknowledge the contribution that black and queer artists made to British culture, a situation that was to become more deeply entrenched with the rise of the postfeminist, the YBAs and ‘Bad Girls’ trends of the 1990s that further negated the work of black feminist artists. The reading of *Art History* in this chapter certainly supports Jones’s appraisal; indeed the failure to account for race is the key criticism that can be levelled at the scholarship under review. It is illuminating to note the comparative diversity of artists included in the first issue of *Third Text* (1987), for example, which encompassed articles on the intersection of race and gender in Nancy Spero’s work, a conversation with Sonia Boyce, an examination of Brazilian artist Lygia Clark’s output, and an article by Mona Hatoum. It is evident therefore that *Third Text* was embracing a much broader spectrum of art; however, this is almost certainly a result of publishing writings on contemporary art rather than the more resolutely historical work being carried out by *Art History*. (Although contributable to the historical format of the journal, this certainly does not excuse the glaring omission.)

Earlier in this chapter I cited Clare Hemmings in order to challenge the notion of a teleological advancement in feminist theory in which successive waves of critical theorising build upon and advance from the essentialist 1970s to an inclusive and pluralistic 1990s. How a younger generation of scholars (for whom this period *is*

¹⁷² Jones, ‘An “Other” History: Feminist Art in Britain Since 1970,’ in *Contemporary Art in the United Kingdom*, ed. John Slyce (London: Black Dog Books, forthcoming), 178. As I have mentioned in the thesis introduction, in 1991 Mira Schor also criticised these writers for their reliance on canonical (and therefore legitimising) male theorists.

¹⁷³ Jones, ‘An “Other” History,’ 178.

history) situate contemporary politics in relation to the ‘second-wave’ moment, and continue to historicise it, raises critical questions. If we reject the notion of continuous advancement, as per Hemmings, it is possible to conceive of disparate moments of engagement and resonance.

To reiterate Beckett and Cherry’s review article, in which they look back to the nineteenth century with the aim of engaging that moment of political dissent, ‘in the current discourse...the reclamation of a particular historical moment in which women worked collectively to shift and negotiate the social codes and political debates about femininity is particularly significant’. This is not to suggest an anachronistic or ahistorical understanding of feminist politics but to emphasise that this period (the 1980s) offers critical lessons to feminism in the 2010s, as, once again, a negotiation between questions of culture and economy is being seriously attempted by (some) feminist scholars. In 2014, engagements with materiality, realism and even Marxism are resurfacing within feminism, but crucially without wanting to lose the perspective offered by poststructuralist theories of the subject and especially identity politics. This is particularly important to acknowledge when Marxist art historians continue to marginalise or indeed refute the contribution of feminist scholars to radical thinking in the discipline.¹⁷⁴ The debates uncovered in the pages of *Art History* thus offer a historical archive to draw upon and assist in current theoretical impasses, while grasping feminism’s intersections with the AAH allows questions to surface around participation and abstention, inclusion and exclusion, intervention and assimilation, and, perhaps most crucially, the continuation of feminist critique within the discipline.

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¹⁷⁴ The anthology *Renew Marxist Art History* published in 2013 is exemplary in this respect, failing to include more than one feminist contribution and describing Pollock’s ‘feminist historical materialism’ as ‘not actually any form of Marxism at all’. 22.

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The Museum: Feminist Exhibitions and Exhibiting Feminism

The emergence of feminist museum exhibitions in the 1970s was clearly linked with the success of the women's art movement (whose artists collectively organised shows in 'alternative' spaces) and the increasing impact of feminism upon academic art history (particularly in relation to scholar-curators who used the exhibition as a space for conducting research). Since the early 1990s, however, the increased absorption of art associated with the feminist movement by museums has coincided with a massive expansion of those same institutions.¹ Whether such coincidence has permitted feminism's recuperation within the pliant folds of the museum in an age of 'neoliberal crisis', or feminism was fundamentally amenable from the outset, is still open to debate.²

The subtitle to this chapter addresses the form/content conundrum at the heart of the feminist critique of museum practice: is it the particular design of an exhibition that renders it feminist, or is it the inclusion of particular artworks? Can there in fact ever be a politically feminist exhibition in the unreconstructed space of the contemporary museum? That is to say, despite vast transformations across the global terrain of contemporary culture, the conservative art museum and its chief exhibition format (the historical survey) are, in general, remarkably unchanged.³ Owing to the seeming obduracy of the format, Part 1 of this chapter examines a selection of large-scale historical survey exhibitions, from the 1970s to 2000s, which

¹ Arguably, it takes time for the museum institution to 'catch up' with the work being made by living artists and so this institutional visibility is always somewhat delayed. Although Helen Molesworth has offered a more sinister reading of this delay: 'The pervasive sexism in museums is evidenced by how slow museums of modern and contemporary art were to acquire feminist art of the 1970s.' 'Art Work House Work,' *October*, 499.

² For more on recent debates charting feminism's location within an altered global economy, and its possible complicity with neoliberal forms of capitalism, please consult the following. Nancy Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*. Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books, 2013. Hester Eisenstein, *Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2009).

³ As Simon Sheikh writes: 'this format has proven extremely adaptable to changes in the public sphere from the bourgeois model of enlightenment to the current culture, or even entertainment industry.' 'Constitutive Effects: The Techniques of the Curator,' in *Curating Subjects*, ed. Paul O'Neill (London: Open Editions, 2007): 174-85, 52.

are explicitly affiliated with a feminist position. Considering the museum a social space productive of art historical knowledge, this analysis asks whether a feminist exhibition practice can enact a critical, self-reflexive methodology that amounts to an ‘unwriting’ of art’s institutional history.⁴ The second section shifts focus away from feminist exhibition practices, onto the twenty-first-century museum’s reframing of feminist political histories within the conservative (corporate) spaces of Tate Britain.

As the writer Paul O’Neill has suggested, the rapid expansion of discourse around ‘the curatorial’ can be explained, at least in part, by the increase in postgraduate programmes, which required an academic field to both study and teach.⁵ A new, fashionable figure in the artworld, the globally networked curator arose within this specific and recent context. The discussion below therefore endeavours not to employ the framework of ‘the curatorial’ anachronistically in relation to exhibitions staged prior to this, preferring to talk about ‘exhibition organisers’. The hasty production of a wealth of knowledge around this topic has directly impacted upon the research included in this chapter, which was first written in 2011 and has altered significantly as a result of the changing scholarly terrain.⁶ Feminist art historians have been active participants in this expanding scholarly field and have focussed on the political issues raised through collaboration *with* mainstream institutions, and the effects of these compromises on the art histories being articulated *through* such exhibitions.

International, yet Anglophone, feminist arts journal *n.paradoxa* marked the beginnings of this improved engagement in 2006, with a co-edited special issue on ‘Curatorial Strategies’.⁷ Earlier, however, in 2000 at a panel organised the CAA Annual Conference, curator Renee Baert presciently remarked that ‘feminist curatorial practice – its processes and its outcomes – needs to be understood as *itself* an object for art historiography’.⁸ Griselda Pollock also addressed the theory of curating, and specifically its task of structuring viewing relations, in an experimental

⁴ ‘The production of work on women artists requires the unwriting of patriarchal structures of art history.’ Hilary Robinson (2001)

⁵ Paul O’Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge MA; London: MIT Press, 2012).

⁶ One indication that there has been an increased scholarly engagement with the curatorial was the launch of Intellect’s *Journal of Curatorial Studies* in February 2012.

⁷ ‘Curatorial Strategies’, *n.paradoxa*, Vol. 18, July 2006. This issue was guest co-edited by curator Renee Baert alongside Katy Deepwell.

⁸ Renee Baert, ‘Historiography/Feminisms/Strategies’, CAA Conference, New York: 26 February 2000. Reprinted in *n.paradoxa* online issue 12, March 2000.

book from 2007 entitled *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum*.⁹ In 2008, Amelia Jones heralded the unprecedented intensification of survey exhibitions about feminist art in a lengthy article for American journal *X-tra: Contemporary Art Quarterly*.¹⁰ That same year, in her essay ‘Women Artists, Feminism and the Museum: Beyond the Blockbuster Retrospective’, UK-based art historian Joanne Heath criticised monographic museum exhibitions for re-securing women artists within the normative creative mythologies of art history.¹¹ And, in Sweden, Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe and Malin Hedlin Hayden organised the conference ‘Feminisms, Historiographies and Curatorial Practice’, out of which an edited volume was amassed in 2010.¹² From 2010 to 2012, a collaborative network instigated at the University of Brighton (but inspired by the Stockholm conference), and extending internationally across Europe and North America, researched feminist curating and produced an edited book and a lengthy roundtable journal discussion in 2013.¹³ The topic of feminist exhibitions and curating has also surfaced at the large professional conferences organised by the US College Art Association and the UK Association of Art Historians. In February 2013 in New York, Hilary Robinson convened ‘Feminism Meets the Big Exhibition: 2005 Onwards’ and, in April 2014 in London, Alexandra Kokoli and Joanne Heath organised the panel ‘Recollecting Forward: Feminist Futures in Art Practice, Theory and History’, which included a number of papers focussed on feminist exhibition making.¹⁴

This brief (and highly selective) outline of the discourse has been necessarily confined to academic texts and conferences, thus ignoring the wealth of material published in exhibition catalogues and the broader field of curatorial theory. This is partly due to limited space in this chapter, and attributable to the main thrust of my

⁹ Griselda Pollock, *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive*, Routledge, 2007.

¹⁰ Amelia Jones, ‘The Return of Feminism Art 1970/2007’, *X-tra: Contemporary Art Quarterly*, 10.4 (Summer 2008).

¹¹ Heath, ‘Women Artists, Feminism and the Museum: Beyond the Blockbuster Retrospective’ in Alexandra Kokoli (ed) *Feminism Reframed: Reflections on Art and Difference* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle, 2008), 20-40.

¹² The conference was held at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, February 2008. Skrubbe and Hayden edited *Feminisms is Still Our Name: Seven Essays on Curatorial Practices*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle, 2010.

¹³ The research network organised under the title ‘Transnational Perspectives on Women’s Art, Feminism and Curating’. The book was co-edited by Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry, *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013). Dimitrakaki et al., ‘Constant Redistribution: A Roundtable on Feminism, Art and the Curatorial Field,’ *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 2.2 (June 2013): 218-241.

¹⁴ Robinson latterly published an article relating to this panel. Robinson, ‘Feminism Meets the Big Exhibition: Museum Survey Shows Since 2005’, *Anglo-Saxonica*, 3.6 (2013): 129-151.

thesis which aims to consider the museum in relation to art history rather than curatorial theory, or even spatial or visual analyses. This is a necessary yet artificial division, as ‘art history’ does not exist beyond these sites and increasingly the lines between the various discourses are blurred. Focussing on the exhibition as a mode of feminist historiography, however, allows me to shift focus from the politics of *representation* (as manifested in museum displays) to a political interpretation of *knowledge production* (as it takes place via the museum’s temporary exhibition form).

A number of extensive anthologies have been published on the topic, including Bruce Ferguson, Reesa Greenberg and Sandy Nairn’s *Thinking about Exhibitions* (1996), and Claire Farago and Donald Preziosi’s *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (2004). These compendia form an archive of resources that reconceive the museum as a social organisation, saturated by the politics of identity and the relations of power that sustain its canons. Thinking museums and exhibitions discursively, these anthologies point to a dominant trend across two decades of museological study: a postmodern emphasis on the institution’s historical effects and the exhibition’s construction as fiction. Since the early 2000s, however, humanities scholarship has increasingly attempted to recognise a ‘new materialism’ in arts research while remaining mindful of erstwhile social constructionism.¹⁵ It is scarcely deniable that the museum is the ultimate bastion of material culture in an increasingly immaterial world – at least according to the view obtained from the ‘post-industrial’ West. Thus it is likely that the growth of research on the curatorial and museological is to some extent related to this ‘material turn’.

For feminism, there are further immediate and crucial motives for analysing the museum institution and its structures. The increased precarity in museum employment - from temporarily contracted curators at the top, to unpaid interns at the bottom - carries additional weight for women workers given the skewed gender representation within art-world employment.¹⁶ Katy Deepwell has highlighted the

¹⁵ Indicatively: Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin (eds.), *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2012. Barbara Bolt and Estelle Barrett (eds.) *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a New Materialism in the Arts*, London; New York: IB Tauris, 2012. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (eds.), *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

¹⁶ The working structures of the art world have been analysed in detail by texts including Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter*. Protestors have also begun drawing attention to the criminal labour practices of large museums in non-western countries, primarily the UEA. In February 2014, protestors targeted the NYC Guggenheim over reports of slave labour in Abu Dhabi:

feminisation of the curatorial role as key to its denigration as ‘keeper’ rather than ‘producer’ of culture; she also stresses that although women hold the majority of curating jobs, the top museum professions are still balanced in favour of men.¹⁷ Therefore, while this chapter primarily examines exhibitions and their historical effect, it is important to bear this context in mind. Perhaps an impassable confrontation between feminist art (always politically motivated) and the museum institution (its cultures of display and employment models) will always be inevitable, at least under the historical and contemporary political economies of capitalism.

Part I. Feminist Exhibitions: Reframing Art History

Exhibitions and Public Consciousness

The modern European notion of the museum was established in line with Enlightenment desires towards knowing and controlling the external world. During the nineteenth century the formalised museum site coalesced around these ideals and was, therefore, focussed upon the collection, cataloguing and preservation of works.¹⁸ However, over the past half-century museums have increasingly turned from these primary, and largely private, functions towards the provision of a public service that combines education, entertainment and increasingly commerce. This shift of focus onto a public audience has arguably facilitated a convergence upon the continuous and consistently novel production of temporary exhibitions.¹⁹ Therefore this chapter focuses upon the historical survey exhibition, possibly the most conservative yet popularly repeated curatorial format. The historical survey exhibition purports to offer its audience a glimpse into a significant art movement, or age of (often national) art, and finds analogy with the solo survey which provides an insight into the ‘life and mind’ of an individual genius.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/24/guggenheim-protest-new-york-abu-dhabi-labor_n_4843947.html. Accessed 28 April 2014.

¹⁷ Katy Deepwell, ‘Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices Since the 1970s’, in *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, ed. Janet Marstine (Maldon; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006):64-84, 65-6.

¹⁸ For more details on the museum space and its development please see Claire Farago and Donald Preziosi, *Grasping the World* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

¹⁹ Changes in the funding of museums have played a key role in this shift. As charitable institutions receiving government funding and tax breaks, the museum has to continuously prove its educational status and that it is reaching a wide-ranging audience.

Richard E Spear traces the history of the ‘blockbuster’ temporary exhibition to 1967 ‘when Thomas Hoving was appointed director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and instituted widely influential policies designed to draw upon, and create, broad-based public interests, which were tapped through sophisticated marketing techniques.’²⁰ Spear’s suggestion, that public interest is not only responded to but *created* through such large temporary exhibitions, is an intriguing one for feminism; both in relation to the unacknowledged histories of women’s art practice (at least before 1970) and for its continued political pedagogical imperative today. The temporary exhibition can therefore be understood to offer a valuable site for both rewriting the dominant scripts of institutional art history and producing new audiences for feminist art. (Of course, the museum’s value in this regard does not come without substantial disadvantages, which will be duly explored.) Significantly, as Simon Sheikh has argued, the art exhibition does more than simply *create* its audiences through clever marketing (as per Spear); that is, it can compel or ‘constitute’ a different public consciousness:

An exhibition must imagine a public in order to produce it, and to produce a world around it – a horizon. So, if we are satisfied with the world we have now, we should continue to make exhibitions as always, and repeat the formats and circulations. If, on the other hand, we are not happy with the world we are in, both in terms of the art world and in a broader geopolitical sense, we will have to produce other subjectivities and other imaginaries.²¹

It is this conception of the exhibition - as a critical site for reconceiving relations of power, articulating new knowledge, and producing new public imaginaries – that is of utmost significance to feminist curatorial interventions. The temporary exhibition is a complex site where the agency of curator, historian, critic and viewer become entangled in the production of art history (as well as the concurrent production of art’s cultural and economic value).²² Yet, it is in this complex space that the largest numbers of viewers experience and interact with art. As Deepwell has notably demonstrated, ‘(f)eminist art exhibitions have been hugely popular with museum audiences (which usually are dominated by women), often bringing new kinds of

²⁰ Richard E Spear, “Editorial”, *The Art Bulletin*, 68:3 (Sept. 1986), pp.358-9, 358

²¹ Simon Sheikh, ‘Constitutive Effects: *The Techniques of the Curator*’ (orig. 2007), in Zoya Kocur (ed). *Global Visual Cultures: An Anthology*, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011: 48-56, 54.

²² The economic value of an artist’s work will for example rise after a successful, high-profile exhibition.

audiences to galleries; and have frequently broken the box-office records of museums where they have been organized.²³ This popularity thus provides two crucial opportunities: (1) for feminist art to become part of ‘art history’ within the audience’s consciousness; (2) for feminism to produce a political horizon within public consciousness in a broader sense.

The Museum and Institutional Critique

The contradiction at the heart of (a now institutionalised) institutional critique is whether art attached to a political goal benefits from its engagement with the museum, or whether it is merely servicing the economies of a museum industry rather than delivering on an original radical promise. Has feminism, as an art movement emerging against urgent social demands in the early 1970s, had a transformative effect on the museum institution, or is the capitalist museum just too efficient at neutralising dissent? If, however, we accept that the museum is an important institutional site for the management of public consciousness, this always-compromised engagement remains imperative.

The collection and exhibition of women’s art practices within the museum was extremely limited in the years prior to the Women’s Movement and the related Women’s Art Movement. In 1970, Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL), and the Ad Hoc Committee of Women Artists picketed the Whitney Museum of American Art biennial in New York City, protesting the low percentage of women artists represented in the exhibition.²⁴ Similarly, in London in 1975, artists protested outside the ‘Condition of Sculpture’ exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, which included only four women out of a total thirty-six artists displayed. These protest strategies targeted statistical underrepresentation and aimed towards gaining visibility for women artist’s cultural production (recognising that historical visibility is inextricably reflective of, and constitutive of, power relations). However, as the example of the Hayward Annual exhibition in London demonstrates, the insidiousness of institutional sexism continually threatens to be reasserted. In 1977 the Hayward

²³ Katy Deepwell, ‘Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices Since the 1970s’, 80.

²⁴ For more details please see Hilary Robinson’s detailed anthology *Art-Feminism Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) which includes the details and leaflets from this protest.

Annual exhibited works by thirty-four men and three women artists; following extensive protests within the arts community and complaints filed via the British arts council, the 1978 Annual was organised by a group of women artists and showed the work of seven men and sixteen women.²⁵ As Griselda Pollock argued at the time, media response to this exhibition was designed to (covertly) diminish the threat of feminist politics by focussing negatively upon the perceived ‘femininity’ of the displayed work and, resultantly, the subsequent exhibition of 1980 had reverted to the *status quo*: comprising artworks by 32 men and 2 women.²⁶ In 2014, debate around gender representation continues; it was reported in July by *The Independent* newspaper that the Keeper of the Royal Academy had called for quotas to ensure women’s cultural visibility, given that they comprise only one-fifth of the current 125 Royal Academicians.²⁷

Most notoriously perhaps, the performances and posters produced by the activist-feminist art group The Guerrilla Girls (est. 1985, USA) have consistently challenged the inequitable policies of major art museums across Europe and America. For instance, in 1986, the group performed at a panel in New York City and played a tape humorously stating:

I’m a Guerrilla Girl and I’m not at all incensed that the Museum of Modern Art showed only 13 women out of the 169 artists in their international survey of painting and sculpture show or that the Carnegie International [Pittsburgh] had only 4 out of 42. I know these figures occurred only by chance. There was no sexism, conscious or unconscious, at work.²⁸

As these examples demonstrate, feminist protests have tended to target high-profile temporary exhibitions rather than museum collections (although not exclusively, as

²⁵ Lucy Lippard’s catalogue essay for the 1978 Hayward Annual has been reprinted in a contemporary book, the first volume to significantly address the history of feminist exhibition practice. In *Politics in a Glass Case*.

²⁶ Griselda Pollock, “Feminism, Femininity, and the Hayward Annual Exhibition”, *Feminist Review* 2 (1979): 33-55, 35. Pollock’s well-known article cleverly deconstructs the gendered ideological factors at play in the press reception of a temporary exhibition.

²⁷ Nick Clark, ‘Should Galleries Display More Art by Women?’ interview with Eileen Grey in *The Independent*, 7 July 2014. Available online: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/should-galleries-display-more-art-by-women-9590503.html>. [Accessed 7 July 2014.]

²⁸ Josephine Withers, “The Guerrilla Girls”, *Feminist Studies*, 14:2 (Summer 1988), pp.284-300, 286.

the Guerrilla Girls famously illustrate).²⁹ It is reasonable to assume that this is the case because the temporary exhibition is a productive site where the work of living artists becomes part of art's economic circuits and histories, and where the most media attention can be generated by protesting. However, it is also undeniable that the artistic critique directed against museums (as bastions of conservative culture), was swiftly accommodated by those very institutions. The Guerrilla Girls' agit-prop posters are now, for example, featured in the collections of many major museums that they criticised. If this inclusion, alongside the example of the Hayward Annual, demonstrates that critiques and quotas are difficult to sustain in the long run, the issue becomes more complicated.

Andrea Fraser helpfully suggests that critical agents need to shift their thinking from a 'critique of institutions to an institution of critique'. Rather than starting from a falsely oppositional location 'outside' the museum, it needs to be admitted that '[e]very time we speak the "institution" as other than "us", we disavow our role in the creation and perpetuation of its conditions'.³⁰ Creating critical institutions through reflexive, thoughtful engagement (although always bound to fail in some regard) will, Fraser argues, establish an '*institution of critique*'. This perspective is crucial for appreciating why feminists continue to engage with the site of the museum and permits a critical understanding of this engagement. If we accept responsibility for the creation and perpetuation of the institution, rejecting it becomes an impossibility; and, as a major site where art historical knowledge and public consciousness is produced and managed, feminist individuals must engage in a self-reflexive exhibition practice that acknowledges and challenges (even while it may be unable, at present, to *alter*) its regulative outcomes. If, as previously argued, exhibitions have a key role in establishing the terms of art history within public consciousness, there is a crucial need for the increased theorisation of the exhibition site within feminist discourse; especially if we are to resolve the struggle between the need of feminist artists for increased rights and representation *right now* in

²⁹ The Guerrilla Girls produce posters with statistics about museum collections, the first one in 1989 stated that less than 5% of the artists hanging the Modern and Contemporary Sections of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art were women, but 85% of the nudes were female. In the fall of 2004 we went back and recounted. SURPRISE. Not much had changed. In fact, there were a few less women artists than fifteen years before!' Accessed online: <www.guerrillagirls.com> Accessed 1st Sept 2011.

³⁰ Andrea Fraser, 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique', *Artforum* 44.1 (Sept 2005): 278-86. Available online at occupymuseums.org, unpaginated.

established art-world structures, and a long-term political desire to overhaul these structures.

How does a Feminist Exhibition ‘Look’?

In a large compilation published by New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 2010, art historian and curator Helen Molesworth honestly reveals: ‘I feel fairly confident that I know how to write an essay as a feminist, less sure I know how to install art as one.’³¹ Her admission points to a friction between theory and practice, the difficulty of translating abstract ideas into the material logic of the exhibition space. This also returns us to the entanglement of exhibition form and content with which this chapter opened, implicitly extending the question to include a comparison with art history writing. What does a feminist exhibition practice expressly contribute to art history that cannot be done elsewhere; what is specific about this knowledge; how does it achieve these ends?

Although feminist art now forms a manifest narrative (at times problematically another ‘-ism’) within late-twentieth-century museological art history, the politics and methods of a feminist exhibition practice have remained, until very recently, strangely under-theorised. Heath starts to indicate a feminist installation strategy as follows:

This notion of a feminist curatorial practice that is in and of itself a form of speculative research departs from the straightforward model of “celebratory curatorship” [S. Deuchar] exemplified by the blockbuster retrospective. It instead acknowledges that, in the unique spatio-temporal disposition of the art exhibition – in the sequencing and distribution of particular works of art, in their hanging and positioning, and, perhaps most crucially, in the encounter between the viewer and these artworks – new kinds of connections and questions can emerge.³²

Heath’s description aptly summarises the differences between exhibiting feminist art within conventional curatorial models (which will, however, retain the possibility of

³¹ Helen Molesworth, ‘How To Install Art as a Feminist’, in *Modern Women: Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art*, eds. Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz (NY: Museum of Modern Art, 2010): 498-513, 499.

³² Joanna Heath, “Women Artists, Feminism and the Museum: Beyond the Blockbuster Retrospective”, in Alexandra Kokoli (ed.) *Feminism Reframed* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholar Publishing: 2006) pp.20-40, 34.

feminist transformation, owing to audience agency and the work's power over the power of display) and exhibition practices which act as open-ended research and seek to prompt new ways of thinking about art history. There is, she suggests, a fundamental antagonism between the commercial aims of the 'blockbuster' exhibition and feminist curating, which aims towards an improved understanding of art's history and a politically relevant pedagogical effect. Although I agree with Heath in principle, one wonders what is inherently 'feminist' about arranging works in one or other manner; should we, for example, adhere to the poststructuralist principle that a politically useful feminist exhibition practice necessarily destabilises existing 'truth' narratives, rather than instantiating another 'fixing' account of art's history? At their most basic, debates centre upon the consideration: how should a feminist exhibition practice 'look' in terms of its hang, and how should it 'look' at the art of which it is comprised?

The sections below examine three exhibition models based on the historical survey, that have prominently contributed to the articulation of 'feminist art history' in the museum. The first two, *Women Artists 1550-1950* (1976) and *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* (1996), were originally mounted in Los Angeles; this provides a fairly poignant geographical frame, as the city forms an important hub in Anglo-American histories of feminist art. The third section considers the 'feminist revival' of 2007, with reference primarily to *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* and *elles@centrepompidou*. The chosen exhibitions critically reflect upon the instituting effects of museum curation, enacting specific, historically contingent models for rethinking and constructing new feminist narratives about (primarily women's) art history. In other words: they foreground historiography and knowledge production as a curatorial imperative. Although Heath highlights the spatio-temporality of the exhibition hang as critical, this is irreproducible in the pages of the catalogue - the primary mode of engagement for an exhibition's secondary audience - and therefore, it is impossible for me to comment directly on the success of this in my analysis below. Instead, the three exhibitions chart particular curatorial logics, from scholarly curating as archival research and excavation, through a format that uses one artwork to pivot historical investigation, to the rise of the professional curator and the large-scale institutional recuperation of feminism as an art-world 'movement'.

Women Artists: Rendering Visible Feminist Scholarship

In 1976 *Women Artists 1550-1950* was the first feminist exhibition to attempt a survey of such considerable scope, bringing together an extensive range of women's artworks from disparate temporal and geographical spaces, assembling them within a socio-historical framework.³³ The exhibition's scholarly tone is attributable to the academic background of its co-organisers, Ann Sutherland-Harris and Linda Nochlin, both of whom worked primarily as art historians within universities. As is well known, Nochlin established the first academic course to address art history through a feminist perspective at Vassar College, New York State in January 1970.³⁴ In a famous article aptly titled 'Starting from Scratch', Nochlin describes the exploratory process that she and her students undertook, suggesting that the academic research group 'were both inventors and explorers', excavating the historical archives in search of overlooked women artists whilst imagining new approaches through which to analyse art both made *by* women and the representation *of* women within visual art.³⁵ This description is equally applicable to *Women Artists 1550-1950*, an exhibition project in which Harris and Nochlin researched, contextualised and presented a previously neglected history of women's art-making practices. The exhibition was divided according to the organisers' area of expertise, and encompassed 158 works by 58 artists; Harris oversaw the period up to 1800 and Nochlin from 1800 to 1950.

Harris and Nochlin employed a conventional historical survey exhibition format to frame centuries of women's art practices chronologically, staging the works in relation to the socio-historical contexts of their production. The organisers attributed their motivation to a dual desire: first, to make the neglected cultural production of women visible in modern art history; second, to understand more clearly the changing historical conditions that fashioned and limited women's art-

³³ *Women Artists 1550-1950* was initially exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, before touring to Pittsburgh, Brooklyn, and New York (1976-1977). Ann Sutherland-Harris curated the period 1550-1800, and Linda Nochlin curated 1800-1950; both sections encompassed art produced in Europe and North America.

³⁴ For more information see Chapter One.

³⁵ "Starting From Scratch", *The Power of Feminist Art*, ed. Broude and Garrard (New York: Harry N Abrams, 1994), 132.

making opportunities.³⁶ Drawing extensively upon the work of feminist historians, in the accompanying catalogue essay Harris and Nochlin point to an entanglement of social, economic, religious and educational factors, in order to demonstrate that women's art practices have always been delimited by the dogmatic governance of their lives. Harris contends: 'The exhibition should prove, if this is still necessary, that women have always had great potential in the visual arts and that their contribution has grown as barriers to their training and careers have slowly declined.'³⁷ This remark situates the exhibition within the grand project of liberal feminism as far back as the Enlightenment, conceiving of history as a progressive drift towards greater emancipation for its human subjects.

The historiographical project is indicative of broader revisionist strategies within the humanities during this period. However, six years later Pollock criticised the organisers for projecting a false conception of transhistorical womanhood onto their artist-subjects, assuming a shared, gendered consciousness that transcends historical specificities.³⁸ (This is arguably a fundamental problem with the large-scale survey exhibition form itself.) More problematic, she reasoned, was the exhibition's insistence upon biography and the overcoming of institutional 'obstacles' by heroic individual artists. Pollock expanded on her critique:

Sutherland Harris wants to demonstrate that there have been women artists, to prove that they can be discussed in exactly the same formalist or iconographic terms used for men's work in mainstream art history and then hopes that this will provide the passport for women's assimilation into existing histories of art. So women artists are to be *integrated* into present ways of understanding the history of art; their work will not be permitted to *transform* our conception of art, of history or the modes of art historical research and explanation.³⁹

³⁶ 'Our intention in assembling these works...is to make more widely known the achievements of some fine artists whose neglect can be in part attributable to their sex and learn more about why and how women artists first emerged as rare exceptions in the sixteenth century and gradually became more numerous until they were a largely accepted part of the cultural scene.' "Preface", in *Women Artists 1550-1950* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1976) p.11.

³⁷ Harris, *Ibid*, p.43.

³⁸ This gap is important to note and could be presumed to be longer in reality, as an exhibition of this scope takes many years to organise. What might have seemed an urgent recovery project in the early 1970s could, by the early 1980s, already have appeared quite dated.

³⁹ Pollock, 'Vision, Voice and Power' (1982), in *Vision and Difference*, 51. Emphasis added.

Pollock's criticisms thus rest upon the, now well-trodden, opposition between integration within and transformation of art history.⁴⁰ As she has argued throughout her career, it is the production of gender as a differencing structure within both social relations and art history that needs to be examined; not individual artists' lives or formal qualities of the artwork. However, although *Women Artists* is criticised here for its restricted narrative, the organisers' critical awareness of exhibition form, curatorial limitations and effects of the institutional frame have never been fully acknowledged within the historiography of feminist thought.

The exhibition may at first appear to project a fully contained history of art; however, Harris and Nochlin consistently undermine the seamlessness of its structure by calling attention to the apparatuses delineating their selections. (It is important to add here that although this self-reflexivity is apparent in the catalogue, it is not clear how the exhibition itself is able to physically convey this.) Harris emphasises the limiting effect that the material archive has upon the writing of art's history: 'They are not the first women artists recorded in documents, nor the first for whom any works of art have survived [Re: Hemessen and Anguissola], but the amount of evidence available for other women prior to the sixteenth century is scant and thus hard to evaluate.'⁴¹ The remark hints at the tenuousness of historiographical practice by indicating the vast absences that the curators are unable to access and re-present in their exhibition; yet, her perspective does not fully disengage the curatorial narrative from a past 'reality' as later poststructuralist approaches would attempt to do.⁴² Further practical concerns are highlighted: for example, the delicate nature of pastels which have provided a significant medium for women artists to work in.⁴³ The difficulty of acquiring these pastel works for exhibition thus exposes the

⁴⁰ Marsha Meskimmon criticises feminist art historians for maintaining a harmful 'dualist paradigm' between primary, archival research and reflexive engagement with art history itself. 'That is, by pitting new primary research against theoretical reconceptions of existing material, we reinforce the "catch-22" of women's art – either we add their names to the canon and do not question its standards of judgement or we harness all of our most skilful thinking to rework the canonical tradition itself, thereby reinforcing it by default.' 'Historiography/Feminisms/Strategies', CAA Conference, New York: 26 February 2000. Reprinted in *n.paradoxa* online issue 12, March 2000.

⁴¹ Harris, "Preface", *Ibid*, p.12

⁴² Hayden White's historiographical approach is exemplary of this shift toward history-as-narrative, stating in 1987, for example: [Historical] events are not real because they occurred but because, first, they were remembered and, second, they are capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 20

⁴³ Several artists (particularly in the eighteenth century) worked in pastel 'a medium which is notoriously fragile... No responsible owner will lend pastels to an exhibition; thus these artists could not be represented here.' "Introduction", *Women Artists*, p.38.

contingency of the art history being articulated by *Women Artists* and Harris and Nochlin are honest enough to admit that ‘the selection of works is far from that originally envisaged’.⁴⁴

Further limitations related to the size of artworks. Large paintings by Rosa Bonheur, for example, had to be passed over in favour of smaller works, as ‘sheer size made it impractical to show these prime examples of their authors in a travelling exhibition.’⁴⁵ Continuing their reflexive analysis, Harris and Nochlin worried that this practical restriction would serve to reinforce the widely-held belief that ‘small scale characterises the work of women painters’.⁴⁶ This obligatory curatorial selection therefore serves to concretely reinforce the conventional, abstract notions about women’s art practices that the organisers were trying to dismantle. The catalogue preface and introductory essays are indispensable in drawing attention to the organisers’ (often mandated) choices in compiling the exhibition, thereby underlining the conditionality of museum art histories with their reliance upon the material object and its attendant conservational and practical considerations.

The historiography of women’s art constructed by the exhibition retains a teleological frame, as it suggests women’s practices progress as their access to education and social freedom improves. It is arguable that *Women Artists* did not adequately explain the historical limitations for women practicing art in different regions and periods, instead offering a somewhat compressed narrative composed of obstacles and exemplary achievements (although in many ways it *is also true* that material conditions for a large number of women *have* improved over this time). Yet Harris and Nochlin simultaneously complicate any notion of a singular, coherent history by emphasising the inclusion of an artist such as Marie Ellenrieder, who they describe as both ‘known’ and ‘unknown’ in national (German) art history and international (global) art history respectively.⁴⁷ Demonstrating acute awareness of competing national narratives, this exhibition strategy emphasises the contingent nature of art historical knowledge which is shown to be always situated and projected from a specific space and time.

⁴⁴ Harris & Nochlin, “Preface” 11-12, 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 11.

⁴⁷ Nochlin remarks: ‘Ellenrieder is an interesting case of the artist who is both “known” and “unknown” at the same time: known, that is, to art lovers in Karlsruhe and Constance, yet virtually unknown elsewhere.’ “Introduction”, 13.

It might appear slightly strange that *Women Artists: 1550-1950* discontinues at the post-war moment when women began to garner increasing social rights and the women's art movement subsequently gained momentum. However, Harris and Nochlin stress that the exhibition was intended to be historical, as the 'issues raised by the art of the past are in many ways different from those raised by the present and demand a different approach.'⁴⁸ When the Brooklyn Museum hosted the exhibition during October and November 1977 a companion exhibition, curated by artist Joan Semmel and titled *Contemporary Women: Consciousness and Content*, was concurrently displayed. Although the exhibitions function together – Harris and Nochlin even suggest that their project could 'provide an exhilarating sense of expanded perspective for contemporary women artists'⁴⁹ – the temporal division retained by these displays was rapidly becoming outdated within art history as it drifted towards what Janet Kraynak terms its 'present tense'.⁵⁰ The division between past and present is rigidly maintained by the institutional frameworks: the historical show *Women Artists* is curated by two art historians who maintain academic distance from the subject, whereas *Contemporary Women* emphasises the subjective nature of feminist practice and is curated by an artist.

Contemporary Women exhibited artwork produced during the 1970s and focused on four thematic strategies in feminist art practice, in contrast to *Women Artists*, which arranged works in a linear chronological format.⁵¹ The organisation of this exhibition indicates the future development of feminist art history, which could be accused of having replaced a canon of significant artists/artworks with a comparable canon of themes or subjects (such as 'the body'). Considered together the exhibitions reveal that, in 1976, contemporary art practice was not yet a subject in 'art history', rather it was a matter for artists and critics to contend with. Yet, in later feminist exhibition practices, focus shifts significantly onto art of the late twentieth century. Historian Judith Bennett has pointed out that this 'shift towards the present has not yet occasioned much self-reflection among historians', and feminist researchers are still working out how to organise across time periods.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 12.

⁴⁹ Harris and Nochlin, Preface, p.12.

⁵⁰ Kraynak, 'The Present Tense of Art History', in *Making Art History*, ed. Mansfield (2007): 83-101.

⁵¹ Semmel describes the four contemporary themes as: 'sexual imagery', 'autobiography and self-image', 'the celebration of devalued subject matter and media', and 'nature forms'. Brooklyn Museum Archives are available online at: <www.brooklynmuseum.org> [Accessed 20 August 2011] It is interesting to note how similar themes have become dominant in feminist art history, creating a canon of sorts within the field.

Bennett even suggests that it weakens the production of feminist histories and theories by segregating researchers within demarcated areas.⁵² Taking a further step, one might infer that as art history spread out spatially to become inclusive of greater numbers of geographically defined subjects, it simultaneously became shallower in relation to temporality.⁵³ To what extent feminist history writing has experienced such a trend remains a moot point but also warrants further research.

Women Artists differs dramatically from the other exhibitions discussed in this section, for it is an exhibition of *women's* and not *feminist* art. Yet, whether the exhibition itself can be considered feminist is the question at stake. Utilising a fairly conventional framework, but inflected with social art historical interpretation, Harris and Nochlin's project was revolutionary and arguably served to legitimise women's art in art history by deploying established academic tools with which to frame and defend the work. *Women Artists 1550-1950* was the first and last exhibition to attempt to narrate such a historical sweep in relation to women's art practices. This was due in large part to the rapid academic turn to poststructuralist theory, which relegated the 'grand narratives' advanced by the historical survey somewhat obsolete as a curatorial tool for feminism. However, if art history writing relies on access to its objects of study via exhibitions and archives, the circulation of women's art encouraged by endeavours like *Women Artists* are instantly significant in terms of this representation. Most importantly, as this analysis has demonstrated, Harris and Nochlin did not present their exhibition as indelible truth but consistently worked to undermine the apparatus that might produce it as such. The very premise of the exhibition – that women have been significant, if overlooked, producers of western culture – was a profoundly radical statement about the museum institution and its exclusionary powers.

***Sexual Politics*: Contesting 'Second-Wave' Legacies**

The second exhibition to be examined also took place in Los Angeles, at UCLA's Hammer Museum in 1996 (unlike *Women Artists*, it did not travel). Both exhibitions are understood here as a site of art historical research, of knowledge production and

⁵² Judith Bennett, *History Matters*, 2006, 33.

⁵³ The curatorial premise of *Global Feminisms* (Brooklyn: 2007) can be understood to corroborate this claim, as it aims to move beyond western narratives of feminist art and is confined to 1990 onwards.

of pedagogic potential. Note that this examination does not attempt to account for the phenomenological aspects of moving around an exhibition space, nor the pleasures engendered by affective viewing relations, although further study of these are undoubtedly still necessary. Instead, by focussing upon exhibitions that foreground *historiography*, and which are only accessed through their published traces (primarily the catalogue), this chapter understands its objects of analysis (exhibitions) metaphorically as ‘critical essay[s]’.⁵⁴ If distinctions can be drawn between curatorial processes, exhibition histories and art history – as three different modes of piecing together knowledge – the relation of these models to feminist politics requires further unpacking. This huge undertaking is not the goal here. However, this comparative analysis does aim to shed light on why certain forms of feminist exhibition making have come to the fore at different times, and how these specific exhibition methodologies have contributed a new perspective to existing art historical narratives.

A Decade of Women’s Performance Art was an influential exhibition of 1980 held in an alternative, collaborative art space in New Orleans and co-curated by Mary Jane Jacob, Lucy Lippard and Moira Roth.⁵⁵ The project (comprising both the exhibition and a substantial text, published later in 1983) is described by Roth as an active process of historicisation; the venture was Roth’s shrewd response to her discovery that ‘neither a chronology nor a bibliography of materials existed’ in relation to feminist performance art.⁵⁶ The exhibition was thus the first to create a history for women’s (feminist) performance practices in the US, and it significantly posits a trajectory out of 1960s social-protest movements, rather than legitimising the work by reference to art historical precedents.⁵⁷ Although the exhibition situates women’s performance art against the women’s liberation movement, Roth also calls for further research to embed the art within academic scholarship by elaborating on its relationship to the performance histories of dance, Dada actions, dandyism and so on.

⁵⁴ Angela Dimitrakaki refers to Amelia Jones’s *Sexual Politics* exhibition as assuming ‘the structure of a critical essay’. *Politics in a Glass Case*. 93.

⁵⁵ *A Decade of Women’s Performance Art* at the Contemporary Arts Centre, New Orleans, 1980.

⁵⁶ Moira Roth, “Preface”, *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America 1970-1980, A Sourcebook* (Los Angeles: Astro Arts, 1983): 8-9, 8.

⁵⁷ Roth describes the exhibition and catalogue as: ‘the first extended account of women’s performance art in the 1970s and the contexts from which it emerged: the women’s movements and the political upheavals of the 1960s.’ *Ibid*, 8.

The three groupings employed by *A Decade of Women's Performance Art* – 'sexuality', 'goddess culture', '(auto)biography and identity' – have been strongly prevalent in feminist discourse and certainly appear to have influenced the structuring of Jones's exhibition *Sexual Politics* held in 1996.⁵⁸ The sixteen years separating the two exhibitions witnessed a number of relevant developments, predominantly the cumulative distinction established between 'essentialist' feminist strategies and their more sophisticated 'theoretical' counterparts (discussed shortly).

Moreover, after a decade of so-called cultural *Backlash*⁵⁹ against feminism, in the two-year period from 1994 to 1996, museum exhibitions of feminist art underwent a surge in popularity: a coincidental, but unrelated, series of *Bad Girls* exhibitions in Glasgow, London, New York and Los Angeles,⁶⁰ *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Nineties* held in New York,⁶¹ and, in the same year as *Sexual Politics*, the highly regarded *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of and from the Feminine*.⁶² I have chosen to look at *Sexual Politics* over *Inside the Visible*, because its logic of engagement with 1970s feminist art is prescient of, and putatively contributed to, the dominance of this mode of thinking about feminist art of the US second-wave. *Inside the Visible* does, however, offer a feminist model for negotiating temporality that is impossible to pass over without comment: by cyclically pausing upon and illuminating historical 'moments' (in the 1940s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s), Catherine de Zegher's curatorial framework seeks to disrupt the linear time of art history. Drawing upon Julia Kristeva's influential essay 'Women's Time' (1979), the project utilises psychoanalytic theory to accentuate thematic relations and moments of concurrence

⁵⁸ Although these frameworks for women's embodied art practices were not initially conceived by Roth et al and existed during the 1970s, the curators were the first to present this version of history through a curatorial practice.

⁵⁹ Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, 1991.

⁶⁰ In 1994, different *Bad Girls* exhibitions were displayed at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Wright Art Gallery, Los Angeles. These exhibitions attracted much criticism for their (arguably) demeaning curatorial framework: please see Laura Cottingham, "How many 'bad' feminists does it take to change a lightbulb?" in *Seeing Through the Seventies*.

⁶¹ *Sense and Sensibility* was curated by Lynn Zelevansky and exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1994). The exhibition sought to create a continuum between, what the curator Lynn Zelevansky understood as the marginalisation of women artists in art historical narratives of minimalism and practices in the 1990s. Yet it was not unanimously well-received and critic Ronald Jones suggests that it added little new information to art history, as it 'retreads the well-worn art history lesson that many significant women artists were overlooked as minimalism took shape.' 'History Makers,' *Frieze Magazine*, Issue 18 (Sept-Oct 1994).

⁶² *Inside the Visible: an elliptical traverse of 20th century art in, of, and from the feminine*: curated by Catherine de Zegher at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston, 1996.

between historically disparate art practices.⁶³ This ahistorical, yet theoretically astute and thoughtful, exhibition differs dramatically from those under discussion here, although its importance for feminist art history should not be overlooked.⁶⁴

In 1974 Judy Chicago (b.1939) began creating the iconic installation *The Dinner Party*, employing a team of assistants and volunteers to support its production.⁶⁵ The monumental artwork consisted of many elements, central to which was a triangular table set with thirty-nine table runners and dinner plates in reference to thirty-nine women who had been omitted from official historical records. Chicago's work was exhibited to divided reviews in 1979 and, following a subsequent popular tour of North America, the work was held in storage until Henry T Hopkins, director of the UCLA Hammer Art Museum, retrieved it for the exhibition in 1996.⁶⁶ Like *Women Artists: 1550-1950, Sexual Politics* was organised by a guest art historian, Amelia Jones, rather than a museum professional, which again, may have contributed to its scholarly tone. The exhibition included 155 works, made since 1960, by 55 artists, and the title's allusion to Kate Millet's epochal 1970 text *Sexual Politics* establishes Jones's deep admiration for second-wave feminist history. The title also demonstrates the exhibition's emphasis upon historiography ('The Dinner Party in feminist art history') which thoughtfully extends the original revisionist premise of Chicago's artwork to include the recent history of art and feminism. 'Related to the question of female experience is the goal of *rewriting history*'; thus, Jones's exhibition struggled to rethink the divided legacies of second-wave feminism, like Chicago's installation had endeavoured to disrupt conventional histories of western culture.⁶⁷

Critics of Jones's exhibition model have focussed on the problematic centrality of Chicago's installation, as the point around which the other pieces were pivoted. And although the exhibition rationale (namely, the artworks included and

⁶³ Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time,' in *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). 201-24.

⁶⁴ For a more detailed introduction to *Inside the Visible* see Katy Deepwell, 'Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices Since the 1970s', in Janet Marstine (ed). *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, Maldon; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006: 64-84.

⁶⁵ Chicago has been criticised for not adequately acknowledging the work that these women contributed to *The Dinner Party*, but Jones carefully disagrees with this assessment on the grounds that 'Chicago never claimed the kind of democratic process that her critics accuse her of betraying'. *Politics in a Glass Case*, 95

⁶⁶ The installation now forms the sole collection of the Elizabeth A Sackler Centre for Feminist Art in The Brooklyn Museum.

⁶⁷ Amelia Jones ed., *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Art History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 33.

the interpretative texts) was to interrogate the privileged position of *The Dinner Party* in feminist art history, instating it as the title work out of which the project emerges acts to *dialectically reinforce* the challenged position. Jones has herself admitted this in subsequent interviews.⁶⁸ This interrogation – of feminist art history’s own consolidation – has become increasingly urgent in the intervening years, especially as *The Dinner Party* was gifted to the Brooklyn Museum in 2002 and became the showpiece of its Center for Feminist Art in 2007.⁶⁹

It is suggested in the catalogue that, due to its public popularity, *The Dinner Party* was often held up as the sole exemplar of feminist art practice in art historical survey texts, offering a particularly focussed (or narrow) perspective to a non-specialist audience.⁷⁰ *Sexual Politics* aimed to challenge this reductive and partial recuperation of feminist art within institutionally dominant contexts, by retrieving Chicago’s artwork from a transcendental ‘vacuum’ and re-embedding it within the specific conditions of its production in order to emphasise its location within an extensive network of feminist practices.⁷¹ This effort would concurrently, Jones reasoned, permit the exhibition to untangle debates *within* feminist discourse. In a retrospective 2010 interview, she elaborates:

I also wanted to look critically at the tendency within the discourses of feminist art history and criticism (particularly within its British poststructuralist feminist varieties, inflected by a Marxist point of view) to dismiss works such as “The Dinner Party” in one stroke as “essentialist”.⁷²

The complex entanglement of femininity, kitsch, populism and frivolity - always in opposition to the serious and masculine - is at stake in this encounter with the artwork in art history. Molesworth would similarly contest this construction of *The Dinner Party* in an essay of 2000, in which she draws out the work’s latent parallels with the rarefied conceptual art of Mary Kelly.⁷³ Both Jones and Molesworth

⁶⁸ Jones has also propagated this view, in 2007 she reassessed the exhibition stating: ‘I underestimated the extent to which The Dinner Party would be viewed not just as a conceptual pivot but the privileged work in the show [...] It was a deeply flawed premise from the beginning.’ “History Makers” *Frieze Magazine*.

⁶⁹ Although this may appear to concretely mark feminist art’s assimilation within the artworld’s major institutions, it is telling that the work was in fact donated, as is so much of women’s art.

⁷⁰ *Sexual Politics*, p.24 n.4.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.24.

⁷² Jones, *Politics in a Glass Case*, 94.

⁷³ Helen Molesworth, ‘House Work and Art Work’, *October* 92 (Spring 2000), 71-97.

endeavour to undermine the logic of progression, from essentialism to theory, and geographical division, between the US and UK, that underpins the historical narration of feminist discourse as it advances through the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, although *Sexual Politics* is respectful of its ‘second-wave’ feminist inheritance (in fact, it is positively positioned towards that history by its very title), the exhibition simultaneously seeks to interrogate the regulative function of feminist art history’s received wisdoms. This marks a major difference from *Women Artists: 1550-1950*; in 1976 Harris and Nochlin could position themselves against a normative, ‘masculinist’ art history, but in the mid-1990s feminism had been established as a critical discourse and was thus perpetuating its *own* exclusions and regulative conventions.

Although centred upon *The Dinner Party*, *Sexual Politics* was arranged into three primary sections, with multiple sub-groupings. The most pertinent for this discussion is ‘Rewriting History – Herstory’, which included the subheadings ‘Women, Nature, Goddess’, ‘Alternative Histories, Alternative Authorities’, and ‘Diversity/Universalism: Multiplying ‘Female Experience’.⁷⁴ The curatorial decision to group these works together underlines their effect as a politicised intervention in art historiography, rather than returning to the reductive debates about essentialism that these artworks often provoke. The subject of the ‘goddess’ is significantly retrieved from the transcendental narratives of female spirituality or ecological affinity and grounded in its historical context, as a disruptive (‘othered’) force in institutional art histories.⁷⁵ Moreover, the artworks included in the section “Diversity/Universalism”, act significantly to disrupt the singular narrative of white, middle-class feminism by insisting upon the inclusion of queer and racialised subjects within art history. This focus upon race and sexuality exposes a further crucial development in feminist theory since *Women Artists: 1550-1950*, as it shows the influence of 1980s postcolonial critique and 1990s queer theories, as they intersect with feminism. At this point in history, feminist discourse opens up to these influences and, although it has been debated whether this theoretical complexity undermines the coalitional impact of singular womanhood, feminism becomes more nuanced in its discussions of difference.

⁷⁴ Jones, *Sexual Politics*, 260-61.

⁷⁵ For more information on the figure of the goddess in the women’s movement, please see Elinor Gadon, *The Once and Future Goddess: A Symbol for Our Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989).

The foregrounding of art history, and in particular how the *historiographical* framing of an artwork affects its potential to signify in the present, demanded a large number of interpretive texts within the exhibition space. Critic Christopher Knight lambasts Jones for this strategy, suggesting that ‘Sexual Politics isn’t really about art at all. Instead, it is a history of contemporary feminist theory. Works of art have been deployed as mere illustrations...’⁷⁶ Knight’s absurdly conservative position seeks to re-secure ‘Art’ as inherently superior to other cultural products and to re-establish the myth of transcendental creativity that, ironically, Jones has spent her career attempting to dismantle. However, his criticism does perhaps point to one significant factor in feminist exhibition making: because no work of art exists in a critical vacuum, ‘above’ the grounded space of the exhibition, it always requires supportive text. The balance that needs to be struck is between didactically interpreting the works for the audience, and providing adequate contextual information to support an informed critical, and not a falsely disengaged aesthetic, judgement.⁷⁷ In 1976, Robert M Isherwood had made a similar criticism of *Women Artists*, stating that, ‘[b]oth authors are perhaps too occupied with problems women faced in attempting to crack a male-dominated society, and not enough with the broader historical framework in which they worked.’⁷⁸ It is quite revealing that both critics suggest the curators are *too* preoccupied by feminist politics to organise a legitimately objective art historical exhibition. Exactly twenty years apart and employing very different approaches to curating, the criticism prompted by the two exhibitions exposed how external forces continued to covertly regulate feminist art historical knowledge.

2007: The Year of Feminism?

Since around 2005, a number of high-profile curatorial projects have, alongside numerous conferences and art publications, signalled an apparent revival of interest into the histories of feminist art. In 2007, the journal *Grey Room* published a roundtable discussion in which contributors labelled it the ‘year of feminism’.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Christopher Knight, “More Feast Than Famine”, *LA Times*, 2 May 1996, <Accessed Online 10 Sept 2011>

⁷⁷ Donald Preziosi argues that Knight is simply engaging in ‘patriarchal double-speak’, *LA Times*, 13 May 1996, <Accessed Online 10 Sept 2011>

⁷⁸ Robert M Isherwood, “Untitled”, *The American Historical Review*, 82:5 (Dec. 1977), pp.1215-16, 1216.

⁷⁹ Rosalyn Deutsche et al., ‘Feminist Time: A Conversation,’ *Grey Room* 31 (2008): 32-67.

Writing one year later, Amelia Jones additionally claimed that ‘feminism has returned with a vengeance to the art world’.⁸⁰ This high-profile return has been frequently discussed in the intervening years, with an inventory of prestigious survey exhibitions acting as shorthand to indicate some sort of institutional change, or at least institutional *recognition*, for the history of what is increasingly becoming known as ‘Feminist Art’ (i.e. as another marketable ‘-ism’ to add to the museum of modern art’s catalogue of twentieth century movements). *Wack: Art and the Feminism Revolution* (2007); *elles@centrepompidou* (2007-09); *Global Feminisms* (2007); *Rebelle: Art and Feminism* (2009); *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang: 45 Years of Art and Feminism* (2007); *Gender Battle* (2009); *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe* (2010).⁸¹ By listing the shows in this manner I do not intend to imply that they are analogous to one another, rather that the exhibitions are insistently recited together as evidence of an art-world turn. However, as suggested in the chapter introduction, a layered confluence of alterations within art history – especially the growth of the museum sector, the expansion of curatorial studies, and the ‘materialist turn’ – have acted to produce this effect and it is increasingly apparent that the revival of feminism (as a politics) has been somewhat overstated.⁸²

A celebration of 1970s activist politics bubbles up throughout contemporary culture, a tendency Jones argues is driven by the optimistic attempt to re-engage ‘a loosely defined movement that we at least fantasize as offering the most effective institutional and visual strategies in countering... nefarious structures of power’.⁸³ It is not, however, entirely straightforward for younger artists, writers and curators to extend the political efficacy they perceive in second-wave histories, and consequently feminism risks devolving into a common-sense ideology when institutions de-contextualise and reframe its past. And, in the museum this

⁸⁰ Amelia Jones, ‘1970/2007: The Return of Feminist Art’, *X-tra*.

⁸¹ *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007. *elles@centrepompidou*, Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, 2007-09. *Global Feminisms*, New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 2007. *Rebelle: Art and Feminism 1969-2009*, Arnham: MMKA, 2009. *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang: 45 Years of Art and Feminism*, Bilbao: Fine Arts Museum, 2007. *Gender Battle*, Santiago: Galician Centre for Contemporary Art, 2009. *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*, Vienna: Museum of Modern Art (MUMOK), 2009.

⁸² I am certainly not the only art historian to suggest this; the essays cited here by Jones, Dimitrakaki and Robinson all state as much.

⁸³ Jones, ‘1970/2007: The Return of Feminist Art’.

remembrance particularly risks becoming a mere aestheticisation of politics. To return to Jones, she continues, in a revised version of her article published in 2010:

After years of studied neglect ... From 2005-2008, a range of events and exhibitions addressing the history and present of feminist art have occurred in venues across Europe and America and countless articles in the popular and art press...have been published. (Jones footnotes a list of examples).⁸⁴

Compare this with a comment, written by Mira Schor in 1999, in an edited dialogue published by *Art Journal*:

...it is fitting that, thirty years after the inception of the Women's Liberation Movement and the Feminist Art Movement, a number of panels, forums and symposia have focussed on the history, relevance, and fate of feminism. (She then lists a number of such events in 1997-98).⁸⁵

Or, consider these alongside Helen Molesworth's statement published in *October* in 2000, but looking back to the early 1990s:

The much noted eclecticism of 1990s art practice appears to have been countered only by a steady fascination with and *revival* of art from the 1970s. This interest, shared by artists, critics, historians and curators generated numerous exhibitions and publications dedicated to feminist work of the period'. (Molesworth footnotes a list of examples from early to mid-1990s).⁸⁶

Comparing these citations reveals a repetitive drive towards the re-engagement of a (possibly exaggerated) political past, and the rhetoric of return echoes across feminist art history's texts. As early as 1983, as discussed above, *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America* looked back to and catalogued art of the 1970s. And, writing in 1987, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock stated that their edited collection of texts in *Framing Feminism* 'might constitute the necessary

⁸⁴ In *Feminisms is Still Our Name*, 11

⁸⁵ Mira Schor ed., 'Contemporary Feminism: Art Practice, Theory and Activism – An Intergenerational Perspective', *Art Journal*, 58.4 (Winter 1999): 8-29, 8.

⁸⁶ Helen Molesworth, 'House Work and Art Work', *October* Vol. 95 (Spring 2000): 71-97, 71. Emphasis added.

framework for the “repossession” of the feminist arts of the 1970s’.⁸⁷ Therefore, I would suggest that the feminist revival of recent years is not as dramatic as it may first appear, given that scholars for the past three decades have excessively recorded similar resurgences or repossessions. More hopefully, however, the well-publicised exhibitions of 2007 produced extensive, thoughtful catalogue essays, increased the ratio of women’s art in major museum collections, and produced an audience freshly conscious of feminist art and its history. The immediate concern that arises, to my mind, is whether the insistent rhetoric of return and its attendant (necessarily limited) inclusion of feminist art’s practices, functions to simultaneously disguise the failure of oppositional politics to avoid recuperation within the institutions they sought to critique. (See section two for further discussion on the theme of recuperation.)

WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution was exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2007. Similar to *Sexual Politics*, the curator Connie Butler purposely constructed a title that would situate the exhibition in relation to 1970s activist precedents.⁸⁸ It is also notable that, of the three exhibitions mainly under discussion, *WACK!* is the only one to be organised by a professional curator. The exhibition focuses on the period 1965 to 1980 and, as the language in the title implies, this moment is held up as one of rebellion and origin; extending, in a slightly troubling way, modernist art history’s obsession with the revolutionary artist-outsider to feminist historiography.

The limitations of the exhibition framework have been discussed widely in feminist literature: Jones refers to the ‘latter variety of (kind of/pseudo) feminist curating’,⁸⁹ and Robinson criticises Butler for ‘her interest in feminist art as the product of internal art world events, rather than as a commitment to feminist thought and action as a broader political position’.⁹⁰ I will, therefore, not examine the curatorial structure in too much detail here, but consider the exhibition’s historiographical consequences in relation to the previous examples.

Butler has commented in interview that she hoped the exhibition would function as a ‘process of opening up’ [this period], of ‘bringing it back and re-

⁸⁷ *Framing Feminism*, xv.

⁸⁸ Curator Connie Butler states in the catalogue that the title indirectly refers to the Women’s Action Coalition (WAC), Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), Women’s Caucus for Art (WCA), and Women, Students, Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL). *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 15.

⁸⁹ Jones, *Politics in a Glass Case*, p.96.

⁹⁰ Hilary Robinson, ‘Feminism Meets the Big Exhibition,’ 135.

contextualising it'.⁹¹ However, in many ways the exhibition functioned in direct opposition to this desire, by relegating feminism to a very particular, and predictable, historic moment. A poster advertising the exhibition featured a black and white film still, lifted from the 1975 video *Nightcleaners*, in which a group of workers campaigning for unionisation gather round a banner stating 'Women Unite for Women's Liberation'.⁹² This poster, combined with the language of the exhibition title, arguably seals feminism within a distant second-wave past, cut off from contemporary concerns. Although this particular moment of intersection between feminist and socialist-labour politics is an important one that is often neglected in contemporary representations of feminism, it is doubtful whether this poster does anything to reignite the debate in the present. Instead the image is re-presented without adequate attention to historical context, reframed within the corporatized leisure activity of the blockbuster museum visit, a depoliticised version of collective social protest as image of romantic disobedience.⁹³

This ahistoricism is understandable in the marketing imagery, but the exhibition itself also failed to provide any wall-texts or supporting information beyond the basic labelling of artworks: representing an impressive 119 artists. The inclusion of Martha Rosler's *Harem* (1972), which was also used on the catalogue cover, could have been employed to re-open debates around the display and regulation of women's bodies in the media. Consisting of cut-outs from *Playboy* magazines, collaged so that they violently cram the page, *Harem* runs the decided risk of being re-appropriated by chauvinist desire; without interpretative context this result seems almost inevitable.⁹⁴ Employing a more critical historical approach in exhibiting the collage would have readdressed significant 1980s debates, notably from Pollock and Mary Kelly, about the impossibility of finding adequate distancing

⁹¹ Butler in discussion with Amelia Jones, "History Makers", *Frieze Magazine*

⁹² Berwick Street Film Collective, *Nightcleaners* (1972-75), 16mm, 90mins.

⁹³ Please also see Michelle Moravec, "In the Name of Love: Feminist Art, the Women's Movement and History", in *Doin' it in Public: Feminism and Art at the Women's Building*, ed. Meg Linton et al., (LA: Ben Malz Gallery, 2011). Moravec addresses collaborative labour politics and their erasure from 'mainstream' art histories.

⁹⁴ Indeed, at the Sackler Centre Brooklyn in December 2010, an exhibition titled "Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists" showed the Rosler piece at the end of the exhibition. Looking at the visitor-book afterwards, some of the comments related to this piece and one particularly stated: 'great show, it was like being in a porn exhibition'. The choice of *Harem* for the catalogue cover has been debated elsewhere, including Richard Meyer's supportive article "Feminism Uncovered" in *Artforum* (Summer 2007) pp.211-12.

devices to disrupt the powerful ‘male gaze’.⁹⁵ In a strange twist of fate, the foreword contributed by MoCA’s Director acknowledges the support of the Hugh M Hefner Foundation (who owns *Playboy*) in mounting the exhibition.⁹⁶ This example evidences the challenge posed to feminist history when feminist art shifts into the contemporary museum institution and its culture of sponsorship that has become necessary for maintaining temporary exhibitions. The economic support of the Hefner Foundation effaces years of radical opposition to such organisations and media, implicitly inviting the public to consider the rewriting of feminist history as a process that hardly need involve awareness of the contemporary world and notably its gendered economies.⁹⁷

WACK! was the most widely discussed of the 2007 ‘feminist’ survey exhibitions; in all likelihood because of Butler’s daring, yet unanimously criticised, attempt to address this sensitive history through a profoundly contested, anti-historical curatorial format. Taking a different approach, the most ambitious survey in terms of scope, *elles@centrepompidou*, saw the entire contemporary collection of the Parisian museum rehung with works by 343 women artists for two years. Similar to *Women Artists: 1550-1950* almost thirty years earlier, *elles* has been criticised for essentialising a category of art ‘by women’, rather than probing and deconstructing that category as a continuing site of difference in art history.⁹⁸ Yet Jones has praised the exhibition’s curator for managing to be ‘covertly critical of institutional collecting practices while showcasing some fantastic feminist work.’⁹⁹ There is a strong argument to be made that collections-based campaigns, such as *elles* and also *The Second Museum of Our Wishes* at Stockholm’s Moderna Museet, serve a fundamental art historical purpose in strengthening the institutional representation of women artists. However, it has been revealed that following both of these exhibitions, the majority of artworks went back into storage and so the campaigns

⁹⁵ Please see Mary Kelly and Paul Smith, ‘No Essential Femininity’ (1982) in Preziosi (ed). *The Art of Art History*, 370-382: 372. And Pollock, ‘Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity’.

⁹⁶ *Wack!*, 8.

⁹⁷ Historian Elizabeth Fraterrgio has researched the effect of *Playboy* on consolidating post-war social liberalism in America, in *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). The widespread and usually obscured cultural effects of this form of private exhibition funding are carefully dissected in Cherry and Pollock’s discussion of Pearson and Co., which I address in Part 2 of this chapter.

⁹⁸ Robinson, *AngloSaxonica*, 146-147. Skrubbe and Hedlin, *Politics in a Glass Case*, p.70-72.

⁹⁹ Jones, *Politics in a Glass Case*, p.100.

failed to *sustain* change in the museum's conventional presentation of art's history: the so-called feminist revolution was reduced to a temporary rebellion.¹⁰⁰

Elles huge success is attested to by the fact the exhibition was extended by a year as a result of its audience popularity. However, the superficial triumph of the 2007 feminist survey exhibitions across Europe and North America more ominously implies that feminist institutional critique has *succeeded* in remaking the museum along more equitable lines. This, combined with *WACK*'s historical framing, which serves to delineate feminism in a temporal past (1965 to 1980), authorises a feeling of distance. Curator Bettina Steinbrugge suggests that this critical distance is a key shift in the 'cooling out' of feminist politics and argues: 'The discussions on gender and feminism have been institutionalised as part of what a society teaches, and this is connected to the good feeling that someone somewhere is dealing with the issue.'¹⁰¹ Steinbrugge's comment illuminates the paradox that, although feminist art has attracted an unprecedentedly large audience through the staging of blockbuster exhibitions, there has not yet been a reactivation of feminist politics to match this.

Considering Feminism and the Historical Survey Exhibition

What does the above examination tell us about the relationship of feminist politics to the historical survey exhibition? Most significantly perhaps, that the 'cooling out' of politics is inextricably linked to the ontological construction of the 'survey' itself. As an ocular allegory it produces a viewer who is removed, distanced, and controlling.¹⁰² Thus the question for a large-scale feminist survey exhibition is how

¹⁰⁰ Camille Morineau, curator of *elles* has commented informally on this shift. At the 'Civil Partnerships?' conference at Tate Modern on 19 May 2012, Maura Reilly discussed the ramifications of this in her paper. Recordings available online at: www.tate.org.uk. Moreover, Skrubbe and Hedlin have written extensively on *The Second Museum of Our Wishes*, in which funds were raised for the acquisition of 24 artworks and yet many were simply kept in storage, *Journal of Curatorial Studies* roundtable, 235. In 2000, Molesworth similarly noted that: 'Much feminist art in permanent collections...rarely, if ever, graces the walls.' 'House Work Art Work', 499.

¹⁰¹ Bettina Steinbrugge, in *Cooling Out: On The Paradox of Feminism*, (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2008) 10. *Cooling Out* was a tripartite exhibition held in Basel, Luneburg and Cork in 2006, which aimed to counter what the curators understood as a generational shift away from feminist politics. Emphasis added.

¹⁰² Donald Preziosi has pointed out that western art history relies on ocular metaphors to describe our relation to historical knowledge, problematically implying that *we* (the viewers) can *know* with some level of certainty that being represented (i.e. a past time, or an artist-subject). Although I agree with him, in this instance I utilise such terms intentionally, because in the 1970s representational visibility was a primary concern for feminism and undoubtedly informed this exhibition. For more information see *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science*, 1989. Within feminist thought, the privileging of vision has been linked to a critique of gendered dualism, for instance Luce Irigaray

to establish viewer investment, particularly in an increasingly commercial museum space that constructs the audience's visit in terms of 'leisure' or 'entertainment'. Exhibiting large quantities of artwork allows little opportunity to engage the audience deeply and so the question of how to tell the history of feminist art, without making feminist politics a distanced object of the past, becomes imperative.

Richard E Spear has carefully distinguished between 'the intellectually vacuous blockbuster' and the 'large exhibition with a critical purpose'.¹⁰³ This division suggests a potential criticality, yet nonetheless how can such a distinction be assessed? In simple terms of size perhaps; although the 2007 feminist 'blockbusters' attracted a significant audience, they continue to fall significantly below visitor figures for more established art historical subjects. Compare *WACK's* 102,044 visitors, to a concurrent exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci's *Annunciation* at Tokyo's *National Museum* that attracted 704,420.¹⁰⁴ We must continue to believe it possible to mount a critical and thoughtful exhibition within the museum, one that is productive of new art historical knowledge and (potentially) public consciousness; this is, however, less likely the bigger the institutional apparatus, given that an individual curator (or curatorial team) has increasingly less control over vital aspects of the vast exhibition-making process.

The viewings figures obliquely allude to a further problem, the finality of the exhibition form itself. Once those visitors have left and the show has closed, it is impossible to return to that site. Instead, the exhibition thrives (or possibly fades) as an archival remnant through catalogues, websites, reviews and academic citations.¹⁰⁵ These traces demand much greater academic theorisation than they have attracted to date, but *could* offer a potential site for feminism, beyond the institution, in which to enact its essential historiographical project (this has arguably already begun, as my

writes: 'More than the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters. It sets at a distance, maintains the distance. In our culture, the predominance of the look over smell, taste, touch, hearing, has brought about an impoverishment of bodily relations.... The moment the look dominates, the body loses its materiality.' Interview, in *Les Femmes, le Pornographie, et l'Eroticism*, eds. Marie-Francoise Hans and Gilles Lapouge (Paris: Seuil, 1978), 493.

¹⁰³ Spear (1986), 358. Spear's editorial sparked a debate with two curators who responded in Vol.69 No.2. It is an interesting discussion about curation and the blockbuster and how differently it can be perceived.

¹⁰⁴ Both exhibitions ran for the same three-month period. Figures taken from *The Art Newspaper* no.189, March 2008.

¹⁰⁵ An exhibition's limited published traces can also serve to shut it out of art history. For instance, the exhibition *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang: 45 Years of Feminism and Art* has been roundly applauded as one of the most successful queer-feminist curatorial attempts of recent years, but the unavailability of the catalogue in the UK has precluded my discussion of it here.

above analysis of these archives attests to). It is difficult for art historians to assess exhibition histories beyond their textual traces, and to harmonise with this the discipline requires better archives and more precise language to understand the exhibition space. In particular, the virtual space of the Internet creates an opportunity for feminist curators to record their processes of researching and exhibiting, sourcing funding, collating technical information and installation photographs or videos. This open source of information might provide future researchers with an alternative to the closed historical text of the catalogue. This is of critical importance given the neoliberal museum's constant search for 'the new', which renders the past exhibition - including 2007's feminism surveys - closed, box ticked and completed.

The exhibitions addressed here utilise the survey form to knowingly construct particular histories for women's (and latterly feminist) art practice. There are, in fact, few points of similarity between the exhibitions' frameworks disregarding that they all include only women artists. *Women Artists: 1550-1950* retains an almost modernist approach to constructing a teleological survey of radical artists overcoming adversity; *Sexual Politics* disrupts the existing historical narratives that establish a dominant perspective on *The Dinner Party* as essentialist; and *WACK!* and *elles* aim to move the histories of feminism into the collections and blockbuster-exhibitions of the twenty-first-century museum institution, with the invariable compromises this shift entails. The main criticism of the woman-only show in 1976 was that it reproduced modernist, avant-garde narratives of creative heroism; by 2007 the criticisms devolved upon how to judge 'woman' as a historical category. In fact, these examples and the critical discourses arising from them, suggest that the feminist exhibition organiser is always setting herself up for failure. Indeed Lara Perry has spoken of the 'excessive demands' made upon a feminist exhibition project and asks if feminist critics ask too much of these endeavours.¹⁰⁶ Rather than interpreting them as closed sites, perhaps the most productive method is to understand the feminist exhibition as a 'critical essay', provisionally intervening in museological art history discourses and offering alternative readings.

As Harris wrote in 1976, of the decision to mount a survey of women artists: 'This exhibition will be a success if it helps to remove once and for all the

¹⁰⁶ Lara Perry, presentation at 'Writing/Making/Curating Feminist Art Histories,' conference at The University of Edinburgh, 27-28 March 2013.

justification for any future exhibitions with this theme.¹⁰⁷ Harris's prophecy has not yet come to fruition, and perhaps women's art can never be entirely comfortable in a museum institution that inevitably instantiates the gendered inequities of the social ground it is based upon – and which, crucially, the feminist curatorial framework is produced in opposition to.

Part II. Exhibiting Feminism: Cha(lle)nging Tate

The second section of this chapter shifts focus from feminist exhibition strategies to museum exhibitions of art that has been associated with (socialist-) feminist activism. Crucially, this section addresses the question of whether political art has been assimilated within the twenty-first century museum as a reformative act of inclusion, rather than asserting a total revolution of the institution's structures and cultural knowledge. Considering historiography critically, an inquiry must be urgently addressed to whether the conservative art historical structures of the museum are unable to accommodate this work with consideration to its full political potential. Relating back to the 'cooling out' of politics that this chapter previously deliberated, how can a display of *historical* feminist artwork produce an audience consciousness that does not slip into a detachment from past social movements? Or, as the editors of the 2013 collection *Politics in a Glass Case* put it: 'what happens to political projects when they become showcased, or even encased, in normative space such as the museum...has feminism's preservation in the museum also neutralised its politics?'¹⁰⁸

In a review of Tate Liverpool's 2013 exhibition *Art Turning Left: How Values Changed Making 1789-2013*, writer Dave Beech began to assess the usefulness of the exhibition format for presenting the complex histories of left-wing politics and their intersections with art practice.¹⁰⁹ Art historians have, on the whole, been sceptical about the promise of conventional curatorial methods to represent political histories. If, as Jonathan Harris has suggested, 'both Feminism and Marxism raise the question of extra-academic interests and values' (in other words they engage with political issues extrinsic to the conventional institutional boundaries of

¹⁰⁷ Harris, *Women Artists 1550-1950*, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Dimitrakaki and Perry, *Politics in a Glass Case*, p.1.

¹⁰⁹ Dave Beech, 'A blockbuster for the Left,' *Radical Philosophy* 184 (March 2014): 65-68.

the university or museum), then recouping these artworks has profound consequences for the meanings produced in the exhibition space.¹¹⁰ Recently, museums have appeared increasingly eager to align themselves with the subversively ‘extra-academic’, adopting what Julian Stallabrass terms a ‘corporate rhetoric of non-conformity’.¹¹¹ *Art Turning Left* marks a decisive example of such alignment and, correspondingly, Beech concluded that ‘critique only makes its way into [the exhibition] through its content rather than its curatorial method.’¹¹² A strikingly similar allegation of political evacuation has been levelled at the curatorial frameworks of exhibitions surveying feminist art history. Writing about *WACK!*, for instance, Robinson voiced concern that an ‘incorporative approach’ will leave the status quo fundamentally unchanged; while Jones has expressed concern ‘about *what kinds* of feminist art are being marketed and what kinds are being left out.’¹¹³ The conservative showcasing of political artwork, with its aura of edgy dissent, might serve to enhance the institution’s reputation whilst simultaneously disguising the failure of oppositional politics to avoid recuperation within the unchanged institutions they sought to critique and revolutionise.

‘Selling Meanings’: Tate’s Corporate Sponsorship and Socialist Feminism

Presented concurrently with *Art Turning Left* at Tate Liverpool, Tate Britain’s BP Spotlight spaces hosted two smaller exhibitions: *Sylvia Pankhurst* and *Women and Work*. Situated adjacent to the primary circuit of the museum’s recently unveiled ‘walk’ through 500 years of British art, BP Spotlights comprise ‘a series of regularly changing collection displays which... offer more depth on specific artists or themes or highlight new research.’¹¹⁴ In *Sylvia Pankhurst*, attention is focussed upon the

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Harris, ‘Review: Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History*,’ *British Journal of Aesthetics* 30.4 (1990): 384-86, 385-6.

¹¹¹ Julian Stallabrass, ‘Partying,’ Rev. of *Art, Money, Parties: New Institutions in the Political Economy of Art* by J. Harris, *Art Monthly* 286 (May 2005): 1-4.

¹¹² Beech, 67.

¹¹³ Hilary Robinson, ‘Feminism Meets the Big Exhibition: Museum Survey Shows Since 2005’, *Anglo-Saxonica* 3.6 (2013), 129-151: 135. Amelia Jones, ‘The Return of Feminism(s) and the Visual Arts’, in Skrubbe and Hayden (eds.) *Feminisms is Still Our Name: Seven Essays on Historiography and Curatorial Practice*, 11-56: 14.

¹¹⁴ <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibitionseries/bp-spotlights>. I should also point out that these are not strictly ‘collection displays’, as Pankhurst’s work was on loan from others institutions.

famed political campaigner's often overlooked art practice, while the neighbouring exhibition displays the collaboratively produced 1975 artwork, *Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour*. Instantiating a firm interest in the 'specific theme' of women and labour, the foremost concern to arise is: why is Tate showing this art now in 2014? The imperative of situating the works within the (past) socio-economic conditions of their production, whilst reflecting on the (present) contexts of their display, can generate unsettling questions for the always renewed relationship between feminism and the art institution. Thus the powerful dissonance between these artworks and their display in Tate Britain provides a *heightened* illustration of ongoing debates about the role of institutions and exhibition practices in consolidating art's history in the twenty-first century. The role of formerly 'marginal' art histories in this process (here, of feminism), invites reflection upon such histories' relation to the institutions that they empower through participation.

The 1980s were a period of rapid expansion for Tate, as it opened new museum sites across the UK and turned increasingly to private investment (a shift that has been further enforced in the intervening years by a continuous withdrawal of public funding). In a review for *Art History* in 1984, Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock authored a searing indictment of The Tate Gallery's huge survey exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite artwork.¹¹⁵ Cherry and Pollock condemned the museum's relationship with financier Pearson, indicting this 'practice of legitimating corporate capital by cultural patronage'. Moreover they carefully connect corporate investment to the ideologically conservative framing of Pre-Raphaelite work in the exhibition, asserting that '[t]he necessity of analysing the culture of nineteenth-century British bourgeoisie in terms other than wistful celebration or nostalgic indulgence has become even more urgent as the cost of "Victorian Values" grows daily.'¹¹⁶ They therefore imply that the contribution of cultural practices, including art, towards sustaining social and political orthodoxies must be attended to within the museum space. A space that cannot be allowed to become merely an 'exhibition' cabinet. (As discussed in the section above, *how* exactly to achieve this aim has formed a decades-long debate within feminism, and beyond.)

¹¹⁵ Prior to 2000 Tate Britain was known as The Tate Gallery.

¹¹⁶ Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, 'Patriarchal Power and the Pre-Raphaelites', *Art History* 7.4 (Dec 1984), 480-195: 481 & 482.

From September 2012 to January 2013 Tate Britain mounted a similarly large-scale survey exhibition under the title, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*. The extensive catalogue included a number of references to Cherry and Pollock's writings and the exhibition itself included works by women artists Rosa Brett, Julia Margaret Cameron and Elizabeth Siddall, which had been largely excluded by the 1984 show. However, it is evident that the slightly expanded framework did not radically alter the terrain upon which an exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite art functions. While this period in the nineteenth century could function to strategically open questions around gender, imperialism, and capitalism, instead the exhibition copy celebrates 'rebellion', 'beauty', 'grandeur' and so a tone of wistful celebration dominates once more.¹¹⁷ It may seem that a Pre-Raphaelite art exhibition is not of great immediate political importance, but the public consciousness engendered via cultural experiences (including the exhibition) is both subtle and powerful. The arguments made by Pollock in 1984 are strikingly relevant thirty years later. She asked: '[w]hat are the resonances of Victorian romantic painting celebrated in terms of creative geniuses painting beautiful passive women within contemporary British culture in the mid-1980s?'¹¹⁸ She suggested that we should not see these exhibitions of high cultural practices as distant or irrelevant, but 'intimately connected to the conservative ideologies of the present.'¹¹⁹ I briefly mention the recent exhibition of 2013 in order to emphasise that political work, and especially the political work of feminism, cannot be done once and for all but requires duration, repetition and adjustment in order to address the changing and unchanging conditions of art history and its institutions. Given that 5.3 million

¹¹⁷ For instance, one indication of how meaningfully the museum has engaged with feminist critique is to be found on the exhibition's extensive website. The Modern Muses section is presented thus: 'Three modern muses, Karen Elson, Daisy Lowe and Laura Bailey visit Tate Britain to meet the women at the heart of the Pre-Raphaelite movement's most celebrated paintings.' Three soft-focus videos show the fashion models walking around empty Tate galleries, briefly discussing the works. Linda Nochlin delivered a lecture alongside the exhibition entitled 'Objects of Desire: Representations of Sexuality in Victorian Art', which sounds wonderful but this information is not particularly visible on the website and there are no further details or a recording of the lecture. It is evident that the inclusion of a few references has not altered the fundamental terrain upon which the blockbuster art exhibition is situated, and women continue to exist in these situations for what Laura Mulvey famously termed their 'to-be-looked-at-ness'. See: www.tate.org.uk.

¹¹⁸ Pollock, 'Art, Art School, Individualism', in *Block Reader*, 52.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 53

people visited Tate in 2012, feminist art historians are still engaged, as Pollock suggested in 1982, ‘in a contest for an ideologically strategic terrain’.¹²⁰

The unchanging and, in fact, hastening incursion of corporate finance within semi-public cultural institutions has of course received much attention since Cherry and Pollock’s 1984 review. The controversy surrounding Tate’s sponsorship deal with BP (previously British Petroleum) has been especially argued over since its commencement in 1990, but it requires a brief mention here. London arts group Platform reported in 2012 that Tate ‘once again faced criticism for taking money from a company now known as the third most responsible for climate change in the world, as well as causing much local environmental damage and human rights abuses.’¹²¹ Almost exactly mirroring Cherry and Pollock’s comment from thirty years earlier, they added: ‘Campaigners assert that by taking money from BP the Tate is contributing significantly to the company’s “social licence to operate”’.¹²² However, beyond merely legitimating corporate operations, again as Cherry and Pollock pointed out, cultural sponsorship practices ‘*also sell meanings*’.¹²³

To return to the Pre-Raphaelites for a brief moment: in 1961 the Jeremy Maas gallery organised the first large-scale commercial exhibition of PRB work and it has been credited with instigating a rise in both popularity and value for the artworks. However, the Pre-Raphaelites continued to be so unfashionable that *The Burlington Magazine* claimed it was ‘not without a blush on the editorial cheek’ that they devoted a special issue to the group in 1973.¹²⁴ The artworks were therefore relatively inexpensive and unfixed within an established historiography, thus the PRB offered a new research area into which the museum could expand and the works be presented as signifying an early avant-garde moment in British art history.

A similar analysis could be levelled at the recent assimilation of art associated with the feminist movement, as artworks that are comparably inexpensive, culturally overlooked and therefore available to the museum with little economic or archival baggage (and, as mentioned, with the added romantic allure of ‘non-conformity’). It is crucial to understand that the recent museological turn to the extra-

¹²⁰ <http://www.tate.org.uk/about/press-office/press-releases/tate-modern-attracts-record-53-million-visitors-2012>. Griselda Pollock, ‘Vision, Voice, Power’ in *Vision and Difference*, 32.

¹²¹ <http://platformlondon.org/2013/12/10/tate-members-agm-dominated-again-by-bp-sponsorship-controversy/>.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Cherry and Pollock, 481.

¹²⁴ ‘Editorial: Contemporary Art and The Burlington Magazine’, *The Burlington Magazine* 122.928 (Jul. 1980): 463.

institutional art histories informed by (socialist-) feminism does not simply reflect pre-existing formations. Instead, as Robinson argues, exhibitions of this work are actively contributing towards ‘determining an Art Historical category of “Feminist Art” or “Art by Women”’.¹²⁵ The *visible* corporate branding of Tate is not discountable from the curatorial frame and the meanings and histories produced within this space are thereby inescapably affected by the jarring inclusion of BP company slogans within Tate Britain. As Cherry and Pollock warned in 1984, corporate sponsorship is a significant part of the complex production of historical meanings and cannot simply be ignored, or relegated as extrinsic to the ‘real’ subject of the exhibition.

Therefore, let us concede to this well-known schema: the branded context has an effect upon the exhibition of and reception of art, yet art’s autonomous function allows it to *potentially* achieve some affective outcome that can supersede the reductive power of its display context. It is therefore impossible to account for every latent effect within the exhibition, and alliances among works may dynamically arise in the organising and sequencing of works in a display space; as Heath has pointed out, it is in curatorial practices that ‘new kinds of connections and questions can emerge’.¹²⁶ However, in spite of this possibility, cynicism or at the very least wariness must be the assumed approach when considering these exhibition making practices. In the displays discussed below, the notable clash between the political intentions of the subjects (Pankhurst; Kelly, Harrison, Hunt) and the mediation of the host institution (Tate and BP), between the feminist intent to expand the boundaries of art into the socio-economic arena and the museum-gallery’s homogenising effects, represent irresolvable *opposing* interests. This is the key issue addressed in the examination below: whether the inclusion of feminist art histories in (corporate) conservative spaces rewrites the terms of those histories.

¹²⁵ Robinson, 134.

¹²⁶ Joanne Heath, “Women Artists, Feminism and the Museum: Beyond the Blockbuster Retrospective”, in Alexandra Kokoli (ed.) *Feminism Reframed* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge Scholar Publishing: 2006): 20-40, 34.

Sylvia Pankhurst

The Pankhurst exhibition was curated by Emma Chambers in collaboration with the artist collective The Emily Davison Lodge.¹²⁷ A letter from the collective to Tate Britain is included in the exhibition, beseeching the museum to consider the importance of collecting Pankhurst's work and 'promoting her significance to the nation'. As is well known, Sylvia was born to the political Pankhurst family and, alongside her mother and sister, agitated for women's suffrage. However, unlike Emmeline and Christabel, she left the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1913 to set up the East London Federation of Suffragettes, which later became the Workers' Socialist Federation. This title-change reflects Pankhurst's expansive political approach, which during this period encompassed worker's rights and anti-imperialist struggles. However, as the Emily Davison Lodge points out, she was also a talented artist who received scholarships to study and produced a range of visual materials for the WSPU. The BP Spotlight exhibition contains examples of her designs, alongside a 1907 series of drawings and paintings made on a tour of factory towns across Northern England and Scotland. These images of coal workers, boot makers and cotton mill labourers were originally produced as illustrations for a lengthy critical article entitled 'Women Workers of England', published in *London Magazine* in November 1908. The illustrations also accompanied a series of shorter essays published in *Votes for Women* magazine between 1908 and 1911.

A concerted effort was made, through the inclusion of comprehensive information panels, to communicate these contextual details to the audience; to emphasise the original function of Pankhurst's images as illustrative evidence and visual decoration for her reports on gendered wage discrepancy and poor working conditions. To this end, a facsimile of the 'Women Workers' article is also included in the display. However, the conventional organisation of the exhibition secures an idealist narrative in which the artist-function 'Sylvia Pankhurst' is established at the beginning of the display with a large-scale studio photograph. The privileged space of the studio functions to frame the painter as exceptional genius, positioned

¹²⁷ The Emily Davison Lodge comprises of Olivia Plender and Hester Reeves. The artists are not unaware of the contradictions within the exhibition. In a personal email to the author on 19 April 2014 Reeves wrote: 'It is a perverse - but sadly a not surprising paradox - situation that BP Oil sponsor one of this country's major art institutions but I do not think that has an effect on the meanings of the art works on display. Not that Olivia or I sat comfortably with the fact, but we felt getting SP and the issues her work raises out into the public far outweighed the issue of BP's sponsorship of the institution.' Personal email to author.

particularly above and beyond her working-class subjects, whose daily lives she translates for an educated, metropolitan audience. In this instance, the invocation of ‘art’ retrieves Pankhurst’s socialist activism *only* for institutional art history. Moreover, this romantic hierarchy is reinforced by the circumstances surrounding the exhibition, as the inclusion of her work was initially prompted at the request of an artists’ collective.

Within a conventional art history, Pankhurst’s artworks could be structured in a narrative that takes in nineteenth-century social realism and even Edgar Degas’ renowned laundress paintings. Feminist art historians have for many years addressed the slippery class positions represented within Degas’ works and yet, such formal connections risks reducing Pankhurst’s social commentary to aesthetic prettiness.¹²⁸ If we accept that the exhibition form functions to mask and naturalise its particular construction, then unless the audience has a prior knowledge of the artwork’s historical moment of production, it can be difficult to perceive the economic and sexual divisions upon which such representations are based. Class and gender are instead reduced to aesthetic scenery, hazily constructed backdrops rather than contested political categories - *categories that are, in fact, contested by a critically informed reading of those very artworks*. As Lisa Tickner elucidates: ‘It is not that the details are not historical (the names, dates, pedigrees), rather that in its conventional formulations art history fails to provide a mode of inquiry into the social production of cultural meanings, meanings articulated in distinctively visual configurations.’¹²⁹

In spite of these ‘conventional formulations’ of display, it is arguable that the inclusion of Pankhurst’s artwork at Tate Britain has basic structural benefits within the museum.¹³⁰ The Emily Davison Lodge campaign has positively influenced a major British institution to acknowledge the history of a significant woman artist and activist (and a significant moment in the history of British feminism). This has explicit pedagogic implications given the large audience numbers at Tate. However, these material effects (at the level of inclusion) do not *necessarily* translate into ideological effects. As curator/writer Dieter Roelstraete has argued, we are living ‘at

¹²⁸ Art historians including Eunice Lipton and Ruth Iskin.

¹²⁹ Tickner (1988) in *Feminism-Art-Theory*, ed. Robinson: 252-53

¹³⁰ This is certainly the belief of the artists involved: ‘We wanted Sylvia Pankhurst’s work to be given that sort of seal of approval and national attention since so far it has been omitted from every book looking at the relationship between art and politics.’ Personal email to author.

a time when there seems to be such great longing, precisely among young artists... for the lethargic, anaesthetizing comfort of the museum.’ Roelstraete recognises a connection between: ‘on the one hand, the reluctance to theorize the present moment in art (let alone its future), and, on the other, the massive amounts of art made today concerned with “yesterday”; our inability to either “think” or simply imagine the future seems structurally linked with the enthusiasm shared by so many artists for digging up various obscure odds and ends...’¹³¹ According to this argument, the indulgently nostalgic, archival strategies of contemporary artists fail to have critical or even utopian effects in the present; beyond, in this instance, the material inclusion of Pankhurst’s work in the exhibition space at Tate Britain. The question that we run up against time-and-time-again is whether this homogenizing nostalgia is an inevitable outcome of the exhibition form.¹³²

As an aside, an interesting comparison can be drawn with a later exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London, *Suffragettes: Deeds Not Words* (July 2014 – May 2015). Again, like the Pankhurst narrative at Tate Britain, *Suffragettes* is a fascinating display documenting the history of rudimentary surveillance technologies, as undertaken by (primarily London) art museums, to defend against political attacks upon artworks. One of the women represented is Mary Wood who, in 1914, attacked John Singer Sargeant’s portrait of Henry James in the Royal Academy. In a statement made after the incident Wood articulated her motivation, ‘to show the public that they have no security for their property nor their art treasures until women are given political freedom.’¹³³ Revealingly, both Wood and the *Times* newspaper report of the attack mention the painting’s high exchange-value: in the first instance as motivation and, in the second, as condemnation of the act. Thus, the *gendered* social and economic circumstances that led to the suffragette’s action are clear from a reading of the historical documents. However, as with Tate Britain and Pankhurst, the museum’s commemoration of this event simultaneously serves to historicise its underlying (and still relevant) political themes. Wider issues about women, representation, property and political economy are scarcely even gestured

¹³¹ Dieter Roelstraete, ‘After the Historiographic Turn: Current Findings,’ *e-flux journal* 6 (May 2009). Accessed 20 October 2013.

¹³² An article by Angela Dimitrakaki begins to think through the problem of the exhibition form, primarily in relation to biennials: ‘Art, Globalisation and the Exhibition Form’, *Third Text* 26.3 (2012): 305-19.

¹³³ Materials included in the exhibition display: *Suffragettes: Deeds Not Words*, National Portrait Gallery, London.

towards, as the remaining floors of the museum retain the status quo around gender, power and nation.¹³⁴

Women and Work

Curated by Katherine Stout and (again) Emma Chambers, the BP Spotlight display contains selections from *Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour*. This conceptual project was produced collaboratively by Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly between 1973 and 1975 and documents the division of labour at a metal box factory in Bermondsey, South London. Comprising statistics, interviews, and photographic evidence, the archive particularly draws attention to the disparate pay and promotional opportunities between men and women at the factory, and how these were affected by the 1970 Equal Pay Act. Unlike Pankhurst's illustrations, made over a century ago – the political context of which is almost suppressed in their formal accordance with modern ideals of art and its aesthetics – the adjacent exhibition is starkly non-visual. The archival documents present a pseudo-sociological study of the factory and thus provoke doubt about what counts as art and why; what counts as work and why. As Michèle Barrett has reminded us: 'Art is seen as the antithesis of work. It is mythologized as an oasis of creativity in the desert of alienated mass-production capitalism. It is idealized as the inspired product of a few gifted and privileged people.'¹³⁵ The museum display of this archive, produced from the seemingly *un-artistic* space of the factory, could therefore destabilise this division. Paradoxically, however, in speaking these objects as 'art', the museum arguably institutes them as such and thus determines, to an extent, audience interaction, interpretation and potential outcomes.

The documents comprise videos demonstrating the daily processes of the factory, photographs of the repetitive tasks, and tallies of the men and women employed in each job. The project is, dare I say, fairly dull; as one photocopied booklet on 'management theory on productivity' attests to. However, is this not the point? The items record the dull and monotonous work of the factory and refuse the aesthetic conceits of art. Unlike later relational or dialogical gallery 'experiences' –

¹³⁴ For a detailed institutional analysis of the National Portrait Gallery please see Lara Perry, *Art's Beauties: Women and the National Portrait Gallery, 1856-1900* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006).

¹³⁵ M. Barrett in *Feminist-Art-Theory*, ed. Robinson, 309.

epitomised perhaps in Tate Modern's staging of Carston Höller's *Test Side* slides in the Turbine Hall – *Women and Work* does not seek to entertain; instead, it starkly (re)presents the workers' daily experiences for its audience.¹³⁶

What, however, is the effect of resituating this work in the refined environs of Tate Britain thirty years later? In the original exhibition, the collective stressed the importance of location, stating that the 'Bermondsey area of Southwark has been the center of workshop industries employing large numbers of women for over a century. 3 crucial periods: handicrafts prior to WWI, mechanisation of the 1930s, and post-WWII automation.'¹³⁷ Thus the rationale of the art project is embedded within local industry contexts and is inextricable from the social history of the area; prompting particular concerns when it is relocated into the atemporal space of Tate Britain. This is not, however, to suggest that artwork cannot 'speak' in different contexts and locations. *Who's Holding the Baby*, made by The Hackney Flashers in 1978, shares many similarities with *Women and Work*: made by a feminist collective, utilising a photographic documentary style, presenting written information, data and imagery on large boards, addressing a UK-wide social problem relating to women and labour (in this instance, the lack of state-provided childcare). Purchased by Madrid's Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in 2010, the piece is on permanent display as part of the 'Feminismo' room, with twice daily public tours discussing the contribution of feminist artists to mid-twentieth-century art practice. I am not suggesting that this display is flawless, rather that an effort is being made by Madrid's national museum for modern art to create a permanent and significant space for feminist art histories - and, even more unusually, the socialist-feminist activism of groups such as the Hackney Flashers. However, such an approach to feminism's engagement with women's labour is a highly notable exception.

To return to Britain, after being banned from the metal box factory in 1975, the artists exhibited their project in the nearby South London Art Gallery and Rosalind Delmar's assessment is equally pertinent here: 'it is the fact that the photographs, interviews, tables and charts are contained in a particular mode within the gallery that makes them into "art".'¹³⁸ It is difficult to assess how close the

¹³⁶ Carston Höller, *Test Site* (London: Tate Modern, Oct. 2006 – April 2007).

¹³⁷ Harrison, Hunt and Kelly, in *Social Process/Collaborative Action, 1970-1975*, ed. Judith Mastai (Vancouver: Charles H Scott Gallery, 1997), 80.

¹³⁸ Rosalind Delmar, 'Women and Work,' (orig. 1975), in *Framing Feminism*, ed. Parker and Pollock, 201.

curatorial set up at Tate is to the original show, but Delmar mentions the ‘amplified sound’ of the videos, ‘the sounds of the factory, the whirring, booming and clanging of the machines’. These sounds (which, according to Delmar, suggest ‘the flesh and blood of the process’) are notably absent from the Tate Spotlight display, reinforcing the sterile gallery atmosphere and negating the original attempt to produce an immersive aural disquiet that mimics the worker’s daily environment.

Reviews from the period report that the archive would, after an immediate tour of Trades Council spaces, be housed in Manchester’s Museum of Labour History. However, in 1996, curator Judith Mastai reported that the museum had no knowledge of the artwork and she had discovered that it was in fact being stored in Kay Hunt’s attic.¹³⁹ Having been recovered by Mastai and shown in Vancouver in 1997, part of it reappeared in 2000 in the Whitechapel show *Live in Your Head: Concept and Experiment in Britain, 1965-1975*. Formally related to the documentary practice of Mary Kelly’s *Post-Partum Document* (1973-79), which she was working on at the same time, it is in relation to Kelly’s pioneering practice that the piece has so far been largely discussed. Tate’s curation does, therefore, mark a decisive shift in understanding *Women and Work* and, in its acquisition, the museum could be understood as providing an important archiving and preservation function. The history of the project’s display is anything but straightforward; in shifting from factory, trade hall, through domestic storage to the museum, the piece’s character changes significantly and the impact of this evolving framework must be made visible to the audience, *if its historical, political and artistic meanings are to be preserved along with its physical materials*.

Women and Work collects and presents a wealth of information about gender, hourly wages, promotional opportunities and the daily routines of workers. Diary-style entries chart the working-day of employees, often women, who had to balance domestic duties with evening factory shifts. These objects imply the inextricability (especially for women) between the politics of employment and the sexual division of labour in the family home. The politicising or ‘consciousness-raising’ effects that these materials may have had upon a contemporaneous audience viewing them in a 1970s union hall can be difficult to imagine, or remember, in 2014. However, given the much commented upon ‘feminisation of labour’, which has seen an increasingly

¹³⁹ For example, in September 1975 W&W was shown by Hackney Trades Council and, in November, Brighton Trades Council arranged a display at Brighton Polytechnic. Mastai, *ibid*, p.11.

service-oriented economy re-align itself to shift patterns, the connections are there to be drawn. I still believe, however, that the aesthetics of the display render it difficult for a younger generation in de-industrialised Britain to reconstruct the economic and sexual relations that conditioned these workers' lives. It is a working day and domestic routine that demands further clarification and, displayed as discrete art objects on the wall, this work fails to have the pedagogic, or consciousness-raising impact they were striving for in its original setting. In 1975, Delmar praised the exhibition for its candid refusal to dictate meaning, stating that its 'aura is one of a deliberate understatement, an invitation to discovery rather than an overt declaration of findings.' However, she also adds that 'there is still the sense that its informational style is insufficiently backed by explanatory [sic] guidance – the material, unfortunately doesn't "speak for itself".'¹⁴⁰ This is an oversight that, with the additional occlusion of forty years, the Tate curation does not adequately address.

Gender, Labour, Nostalgia

Considered together then, the two exhibitions *begin* to tell a story about women, labour and the failure of structural changes (including, respectively, obtaining the Vote and the Equal Pay Act) to drastically alter inequitable conditions of life and work. In this history, collective action and subsequent alterations to the organisation of labour are *repeatedly* met by the reassertion and renewed control of capital - thereby necessitating a regeneration of critique and analysis. But, the narrative stops short and the implications are not drawn out; in fact, as I have argued, the very conditions of display in Tate Britain close down the opportunity to read these archives as anything more than historical curiosities. The artworks included in these BP Spotlight spaces are separated by over half a century, yet they indicate the transhistorical principle (under patriarchy or capitalism) that women always do worse. (Other feminist artists including *The Waitresses*, Andrea Fraser and Tanja Ostojic continue to explore this inequity as the familiar background of conservative or progressive politics.) The failure of the *Sylvia Pankhurst* and *Women and Work* displays illustrates the well-worn argument that it is inadequate for art's institutions to acknowledge previously neglected practices by simply subsuming them within an

¹⁴⁰ Delmar, 'Women and Work,' in *Framing Feminism*, 201.

established structure. This is of crucial importance at a time when the discourse surrounding women's work is so comparatively limited (although escalating in prominence), and when liberal feminism has, in the words of Nancy Fraser, 'become capitalism's handmaiden'.¹⁴¹

As long ago as 1997, Diane Coole presciently condemned feminism's nostalgic regression to an idealised 'second-wave' past and theorised the situation as follows:

Of course women still occupy worse-paid jobs under worse conditions, but the complexities of our location within an economy that is both pre- and post-modern; the growth of a substantial underclass, of which women represent a significant proportion; the effects of information technology on the home/work distinction that has underpinned capitalism thus far, as well as our own public/private opposition; the simultaneous collapse of the family and a renewed support for so-called family values...these are all structural changes calling for new analysis.¹⁴²

The art produced by Sylvia Pankhurst and the Women and Work collective offered reasonable and thoughtful critiques of the situation as it existed at their respective historical moment. But, following Coole's suggestions, does feminist art history not urgently require new information, new theorising and new practices? Or, as this chapter examination has suggested, can a return to critical writings (such as Cherry and Pollock's) provide a model of relating to feminism's past that refutes nostalgia – or historicisation – and recognises the unchanging conditions of dominant culture? To paraphrase Cherry and Pollock again: *an analysis must be addressed to the historical conditions of the present discourse on these artworks and the ways in which the institutional representation of women's art practices is implicated in current processes of domination and social control.*

The curation and exhibition of artworks must be one mode of research, one method of indicating the direction of new paradigms, rather than offering a fixed display of art's historical moments. One possible strategy for opening discussion is to disrupt the celebratory museum frame by prompting critical questions about these works and their effect. For example, bearing in mind these works were originally produced for non-museum sites, does the exhibitory frame risk situating a middle-class artistic subject as ethnographer, visiting working-class factory sites to collect

¹⁴¹ *The Guardian*, 14 October 2013:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/14/feminism-capitalist-handmaiden-neoliberal>.

¹⁴² Diane Coole, 'Feminism without Nostalgia', *Radical Philosophy* 83 (May/June 1997): 17-24, 21.

information and bring it back to the gallery? The museum too easily reconstructs these objects as autonomous ‘art’, distinct from the real world ‘out there’. Therefore, although the inclusion of this material may produce an expanded understanding of ‘art’, it nonetheless does nothing to trouble the category itself – and, of course, understanding why art might be (or has been) a more privileged form of work than boot or box-making is fundamental to this struggle. The cultural baggage that occludes and mystifies the historically distant labour depicted in the artwork is not challenged by the Tate displays. Instead, nostalgia works to *secure* these moments as remote and obscure. Separating these moments out, therefore, the displays enact a politics of information rather than knowledge, ideals rather than ideas.

Recuperating Political (Art) History

Tate Britain acquired *Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour* in 2001. The circumstances of the acquisition are unclear (i.e. if it was donated or bought), but the work has languished uncatalogued in their archives until now, viewable only upon request. As the Emily Davison Lodge highlight, Pankhurst had been similarly neglected by art institutions, with her artwork generally included in British history contexts and therefore not recognised as ‘artwork’ but a form of social history. As with any exhibition of historical works, it is imperative that we question *why* these artworks have been displayed now and *what* ideological work their display is doing.

Arguably, at a time when Tate’s reliance upon corporate sponsorship is more visible than ever, subsequent to the unveiling of its BP-sponsored Walk Through Art display, it is unsurprising that the museum would attempt to adopt the *impression* of inclusivity (and potential self-critique) that such exhibitions imply. However, the temporary inclusion of these artworks does nothing to trouble the Tate’s general function. Correspondingly, in a 2013 essay entitled ‘A Good Time to Be a Woman?’, Lara Perry questions Tate Modern’s commitment to feminism, although she admits that they have demonstrated admirable efforts to include more (feminist) art by women.¹⁴³ Perry notes that the modern branch of the museum has a tendency to

¹⁴³ Lara Perry writes that the 2000 opening of Tate Modern ‘affirmed the star status of some women artists’ and ‘although women artists were still numerically underrepresented, [some] were increasingly

return to a formal analysis to mask the social and political logic of such art: ‘the objects – their medium, their form, their semiotic and material references – are interpreted for the visitor; but their histories, purposes and polemics are sidelined.’¹⁴⁴ I concur with Perry that this commitment should be applauded (especially the effort made by the Emily Davidson Lodge) but, as this chapter demonstrates, a continued critique of the museum is required in contemporary art writing if feminist histories are to be defended from manifest instrumentalisation by political and corporate interests.

Art historian TJ Demos has suggested that the inclusion of ‘alternative’ art history could have disruptive effects, stating that: ‘There is not one, simple Tate effect, since the Tate embodies contradiction, multiplicity, paradox’.¹⁴⁵ He adds that there are diverse platforms within the institution, running simultaneously with varying levels of autonomy: ‘Therefore ... the challenge is to see both logics at work, even locked in an ongoing struggle’.¹⁴⁶ While Demos inflects this suggestion with hope, for subversion or critique, this fluidity can be considered to be much less benign. Or, at the very least, this struggle cannot be assumed and the artworks can certainly not express this for themselves. Writing about the rebranding of Tate in 1998, Julian Stallabrass quotes from the consultancy report, and the language is strikingly similar: ‘With help from Wolff Olins, Tate reinvented the idea of a gallery – from a single, institutional museum, with a single, institutional view, to a branded collection of experiences, sharing an attitude but offering many different ways of seeing.’¹⁴⁷ This multiplicity presents a slipperiness against criticism. By offering ‘many diverse platforms’ the large museum institution can portray itself as inclusive while paradoxically silencing dissent. Rather than offering ‘many different ways of seeing’, the conventional exhibition form functions as a regression to the mean, bringing every object – however disparate or convoluted its history – under *one way of seeing*, under the grand rubric of ‘art’.

The inclusion of these works within a BP Spotlight display offers a heightened example through which feminist art historians can re-open the

visible in that world.’ ‘A Good Time to Be a Woman? Women Artists, Feminism and Tate Modern,’ in *Politics in a Glass Case*, 31-47, 31.

¹⁴⁴ Lara Perry, ‘A Good Time to Be a Woman?’ 37.

¹⁴⁵ TJ Demos, ‘The Tate Effect,’ in *Where is Art Contemporary? The Global World*, ed. Hans Belting et al. (Karlsruhe: ZKM, 2009): 78-87, 78.

¹⁴⁶ TJ Demos, 84

¹⁴⁷ Julian Stallabrass, ‘The Branding of the Museum,’ *Art History* 37.1 (Feb 2014): 148-65, 150.

Institutional Critique file. In 2014 it is not enough to have a discrete space dedicated to ‘feminist’ or ‘socialist’ art histories (whatever those categories might mean); it is out of the question to overlook the hypervisibility of BP slogans within the exhibition space and expect the works to maintain a critical function. It is impossible to ignore the exhibition hang and its securing of the artwork as a privileged mode of production by an author-genius; nor can we discount the distancing effects of nostalgia that disconnect political struggles from contemporary relevance. It is not, as Demos seems to suggest, always possible nor even probable to have multiple pockets of potentially subversive meanings hidden within the fabric of the multivalent institution. To hold onto this is to maintain a singular belief in feminism’s freedom and autonomy, whilst ignoring its more disconcerting collusion and sustaining function within the contemporary art museum.

A significant moment of institutional dissonance is provided by these two exhibitions, one which forces us to rethink feminism’s cultural alliances and strategies. Crucially, both of these art archives were borne out of specific socialist-feminist struggles in the twentieth-century. Tate Britain’s conservative curatorial framing of them within the BP-sponsored spaces of their exhibition hall fundamentally serves to make a mockery of these struggles, to signal their presumed *historical* failure and mark a cynical recuperation by the very capitalist forces they set out to oppose.

A Future Feminist Critique?

When I started researching this thesis in 2010, the reverberations of 2007, ‘the year of feminism’, could still be felt within a feminist art sphere that continued to buzz with possibility and optimism. In 2014 the mood has become increasingly muted. This was indicated by an April Fools’ Day announcement by *Artslant* that New York’s MoMA would be hosting an all-women hang.¹⁴⁸ Signalling a tone of outright cynicism, it is evident that even now, after forty years of intervention, it remains implausible – in fact a fool’s joke – that this bastion of modern art would so frankly redress its disregard of women’s art. Correspondingly, Morineau, the curator of *elles@centrepompidou* has lamented the lack of long-term transformations wrought

¹⁴⁸ On 1st April 2014, the website *Artslant* circulated a press release stating that MoMA would show only women artists during 2015.

by her extensive rehang, particularly as the majority of artworks went straight back into museum storage.¹⁴⁹ The impervious platforms of the contemporary art market have even prompted a return to the once seemingly outdated models of institutional critique popularised by the *Guerrilla Girls*. In 2014, Los Angeles-based artist Michol Nebron organised an extensive *Gallery Tally* of North American commercial galleries and museums, once again exposing the enormously skewed representation of both women artists and artists of colour.

However, in relaying these stories I do not mean to imply that the only available response is despair. Rather, by pointing to (in Part I) the imaginative attempts of feminist exhibition organisers to construct critically reflective displays that are productive of new historical perspectives, and highlighting (in Part II) the ongoing resistance against feminist art's corporatisation and assimilation, I hope to have indicated the richness and diversity of the feminist critique of the museum. While this analysis can only offer a foundation to this relatively new area of study, future histories of feminism will undoubtedly elucidate further the affective and spatial experiences of the gallery and, crucially, the effects of these encounters upon historiography.

¹⁴⁹ Maura Reilly reminds us that, after *elles* was dismantled, only 10% of the modern and contemporary art collection comprised of women artists; the rest went back into storage. Reilly, keynote presentation at *Civil Partnerships? Queer and Feminist Curating*, Tate Modern, 19 May 2012.

Making Art History: The Woman Artist as Historiographer

In 1973 Linda Nochlin wrote that, '[t]hose who have no country have no language. Women have no imagery available – no accepted public language to hand – with which to express their particular viewpoint.'¹ Her statement points to an urgent impulse underlying feminist cultural investigation throughout the past four decades. That is, how can the contributions of women be recognised within a historically-conditioned discipline of art history that is beholden to a universal, *paternal* subject (that of socially-organised patriarchy, originating explicitly in 'the rule of the father', rather than of men) to the exclusion or marginalisation of feminised, and particularly female, subjects? Nochlin's geographical declaration appropriately discloses the exilic condition of the woman artist who cannot be 'at home' in this modern art history. To date ample evidence has been uncovered to suggest that women artists have generally been denied access to *both* the narratives of art history and to requisite artistic training; thus, this limitation surfaces on both a subjective (discursive) and an objective (material) level. How then have women artists - according to Nochlin rendered publicly speechless by the discipline's paternalist paradigm - participated in the institutional spaces of art and its history, beyond acting as a site of difference to the masculine norm? Might we beneficially reconceive of (some) women's art-making as an assertion of historical agency, specifically by way of a determinedly feminist reading that posits it as an intervention within the *instituting* processes of art?

Expanding on the above introductory provocation, this chapter argues that is through the creation of particular historical and visual languages that women artists have attempted to speak to and potentially unsettle the paradigm of art history. Rather than producing entirely *new* languages (an epistemic impossibility), the artworks considered in this examination distinctively enact a mode of reworking, quoting, pastiching, revisioning and thereby *reinvesting* the paternalistic structures of the

¹ Linda Nochlin, 'Eroticism and Female Imagery in Nineteenth-Century Art,' in *Women as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art*, ed. Hess and Nochlin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 11. Quoted in Lisa Tickner, 'The Body Politic: Female Sexuality and Women Artists since 1970,' *Art History* 1.2 (June 1978): 236-251.

discipline with altered, determinedly political, meanings. Although these terms are strongly associated with postmodernist tropes, in which postmodernism is understood to imply a post-political fatigue with totalising metanarratives, my explicitly *feminist* analysis will suggest that women artists have negotiated such strategies in relation to political critique and knowledge production. As such, these tropes can be reconfigured to retain a critical edge beyond the exhaustion of postmodernism by the late-1990s (or, if not exhaustion, at least the attempted expression of other possible paradigms: *altermodernism*, *pseudo-modernism*, *metamodernism*, *post-postmodernism* etc.).²

In a study of 2003 Marsha Meskimmon argued that, '[t]o recognise the historical intervention made by women's art means taking art's address to history seriously, expanding our relationship to material and visual practices as configurations of historical knowledge'.³ Taking up Meskimmon's challenge, this chapter asks what kinds of historical knowledge can be read through an artist's material practice. Rather than casting art-making and history-writing into a conventional distinction, my discussion strives to take seriously art's potential for thinking art history differently, specifically in relation to women's agency as labouring subjects of that history. In line with the aims of this thesis the term historiography is expanded, to include both the *work* that women's art does towards articulating specific histories, and the *labour* that goes into this production but which is effaced within conventional narratives of modern art history. In considering art's historiographical function, I seek to consider women's artistic practices as an assertive negotiation productive of new historical perspectives on gender and art-making, labour, power, institutional access, and disciplinary knowledge.

As its title suggests, in addition to arguing for a 'remaking' of disciplinary knowledge, this thesis has endeavoured to explore the (albeit uneven and evolving) consolidation of art history through its associated institutions. The museum and university are fairly straightforward in this regard: disciplinary institutions that emerged out of the European Enlightenment project, gaining an increasing public function during the Industrial Revolution. In Foucauldian terms these possess clear

² See for instance, Nicholas Bourriaud, ed., *Altermodern* (London: Tate Publishing, 2009). Alan Kirby, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2011). Jeffrey T Nealon, *Post-Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

³ Meskimmon, Marsha, *Women Making Art: History, Subjectivity, Aesthetics* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 14.

similarities with the state organisations highlighted in *Discipline and Punish* (the school, prison and hospital) in that these sites and the discourses supporting them act to limit and control social subjects, their knowledge and behaviours.⁴ It is widely acknowledged within feminist and, broadly-speaking, poststructuralist thought that such organisations ‘institute’ power in specific forms that benefit an ideal bourgeois European male subject. Thinking art-making in relation to institutions is a slightly trickier but considerably useful enterprise.

If we accept Stephen Melville’s description of the ‘processual dimension of the word institution’, we will hear more clearly the way in which art history belongs to and is enacted through a field of *instituting acts*, rather than having pre-existing institutions imposed upon it from without.⁵ The artwork therefore emerges as an institution, or better yet an instituting process, similar to a textbook or exhibition, as all ‘institute’ and reproduce disciplinary (and thus disciplining) knowledges.⁶ Configuring art-making as a historiographical practice, in the words of David Green and Peter Seddon, ‘implies an emphasis upon the manner in which historical representations are actively produced, worked upon, given shape and form in the act of their representation, forged in and through visual language’.⁷ In piecing together and producing new historiographic knowledge, the artwork emerges as an instituting process burdened by implicit rules and regulations (powers) that must be negotiated by its maker. Thinking of art-making in this manner allows it to be grounded in its historical conditions of production and, crucially, permits its configuration as a site of explicit resistance to dominant knowledge. Of course, the artwork can also reproduce existing knowledge that largely affirms dominant ideologies. The artwork is not inherently a site of subversion, in fact it usually is not (no matter that avant-garde mythologies may frame it as such), but it can become such a site in the context of broader radical change, or even through critical encounters and readings.

Within the immediate concerns of this chapter, configuring art-making as an instituting process challenges the mystifying conception of the artwork as a form of

⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 1979.

⁵ Stephen Melville, ‘On the institution of limits’, in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth C Mansfield (London and New York: Routledge, 2007): 145-156, 146.

⁶ Melville raises the comparison with instruction books also, and quotes the OED: ‘*Institute*... to set up, establish, found, appoint, ordain, begin, arrange, order, teach.’ 145.

⁷ ‘Introduction’ in David Green and Peter Seddon eds., *History Painting Reassessed: The Representation of History in Contemporary Art* (New York and Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000): 1-17, 15.

unique self-expression. Instead it is cast as one mode of production, subject to the accumulated weight of formal and ideological precedent (i.e. art's history). Within the broader concerns of the thesis, however, this theoretical manoeuvre is not distinct from the previous chapters. 'Art history' comes into being through a range of reciprocally instituting spaces and processes – including here: the university/teaching, professional association/publishing, museum/exhibiting and artwork/making – which must be understood in terms of shifting politics and power. In 1966 the sociologist Mary Douglas famously argued that, 'all margins are dangerous... Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins.'⁸ Thus, a shift onto the processual *necessarily* facilitates attention upon the margins and transitional states that Douglas locates as precarious and latently subversive. As is argued throughout this chapter, the labouring body of the artist functions as a kind of 'margin' for bourgeois art history; a transitional state that must be resolved into a fixed outcome of either the hermetic art object or the transcendental artist trope. The range of artworks observed here, at least in my offered reading, purposively fail to resolve themselves in this manner.

A book of 2006 by Dan Karlholm has perhaps provided an unconscious influence upon the reconfiguration attempted in this chapter. In his excavation of the discipline's roots in 1840s Germany he wrote: 'I underline the double meaning of the root *graphein* in historiography; in order to emphasize the writing but also the drawing of (art) history. At issue here is the understanding of art history as both a verbal and a visual (often combined) formation of signs.' Analysing the earliest survey volumes, Karlholm highlights the relationship between text and image and even reads images as productive and shaping of art historical knowledge. Although employing vastly different frameworks (for instance, his book fails to acknowledge feminist or much other political scholarship) we both focus on the artwork as a way to make sense of art historical thought, rather than arriving at it late through theory or writing (although also not privileging the artwork as 'original' site of meaning). The historiographical artworks under analysis here enact this 'drawing' in two senses: the revisionist work draws art's history into the present by explicit quotation within fabric of the piece, and concurrently draws new meanings upon the landscape of historical scholarship. If historiography is understood in its most basic terms to indicate the way

⁸ Mary Douglas, 'External Boundaries' (orig. 1966) in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2003): 373-375, 374.

history is pieced together, these revisionist strategies stitch together the materials of art history into new forms.

The Anxiety of Influence and Other Tales

A number of writers have addressed the subject of cultural influence, and attempted to make sense of creative quotation and innovation. It is, therefore, necessary to briefly acknowledge here these theories and outline their limitations. In 1973 the literary theorist Harold Bloom published his widely significant book *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*.⁹ Resolutely modernist, Bloom posited that the best poets engage in an oedipal struggle with their authorial precursors and through an act of ‘creative misreading’ can swerve away from the original text into innovative new territories. The arguments put forth throughout this chapter may superficially share some of Bloom’s formal preoccupations but, as I will return to, the feminist critique of oedipal succession serves to undercut this unending ‘anxious’ revisionism, as does the very presence of women within this system of paternal legitimation.

Norman Bryson’s *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* was published eleven years after Bloom’s study and continued to address an analysis to the creative inheritance of male artists, specifically in the context of eighteenth-century France.¹⁰ Extending Bloom’s psychoanalytic terminology, Bryson writes of the painful belatedness of artistic production, of the subject always coming late into the language of history: ‘I paint; but to communicate to my viewer what it is I see, I must paint in the visual language that is already spoken.’¹¹ Again, while Bryson’s book may offer useful tools for thinking through paternal artistic legacies, women artists cannot inhabit equivalent positions in relation to art history and must therefore conceive of different approaches. In ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (1988), philosopher Gayatri Spivak offers a clue to understanding this restriction, as she maintains that the logic of colonialism permits the colonised to gain representation only through the

⁹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

¹⁰ Norman Bryson, *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Mary Sheriff has reconsidered Bryson’s theories in relation to a woman artist of the same period. *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), see pp.39-71, ‘The Mother’s Imagination and the Father’s Tradition’.

¹¹ Norman Bryson, 1974, p.81.

language of the coloniser.¹² Therefore, if in art history women have had no language of their own and have generally been constructed as silent, sexualised objects of the male artist's gaze, how can women artists negotiate the traditions of the discipline? In Bryson's terms the artist must become a speaking subject in the language of art history and, in Spivak's, the colonised must negotiate the extant language of the coloniser.

The discussion below consequently begins to articulate a framework for understanding women's art-making within a feminist logic of re-making, a process through which the feminised subject gains legitimacy by reinscribing the signs and imagery (the visual 'language') of the dominant group, in this instance art's great masters. Simply put: my argument attempts to account for women's art practices as historiographical intervention, a coming into historical subjectivity by neglected subjects. Or, as Seddon and Green put it, 'in terms of art practice, the word historiography is useful precisely because it inevitably brings with it a self-consciousness as regards the modes and methods of the discipline that is being engaged... we might say that if history is both the writing of history and, at the same time, a part of the history of writing, then the imaging of history cannot be separated from the history of images.'¹³

The strategy of quotation has, however, been largely dominated by postmodernist theoretical models that also fail to account for the gendered specificity of an artist's relation to history. In a series of essays throughout the 1980s, cultural theorist Fredric Jameson demarcated what he understood as 'pastiche', definitively stating that it is, 'like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language, but it is a *neutral practice of such mimicry*... Pastiche is blank parody.'¹⁴ In keeping with postmodernism's tendency to oppose historical linearity, Jameson negatively casts pastiche as 'the imprisonment of the past', a backward-looking mode of temporal death or stagnation.¹⁵ However, as

¹² For more on Spivak's theory of the subaltern please see Landry and McClean, eds. *The Spivak Reader*, particularly Chapter 8: Subaltern Studies, 208-236.

¹³ Seddon and Green, 15-16.

¹⁴ Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism and the Consumer Society' (1983), *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (London: Verso Books, 1998), 1-20, 5. Emphasis added. In all fairness, Jameson does argue that pastiche lacks the satirical (i.e. political) impulse that motivates parody, so there is a distinction to be drawn here between his definitions of the two. However, if pastiche is the only mode of cultural production available to artists in the postmodern age (as Jameson argues), I will employ this concept as the basis for my argument.

¹⁵ Jameson, 7.

this chapter strives to articulate, for the women artists under discussion their pastiching (or in my terms, re-making) practices are anything but neutral or blank. ‘In a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible’, according to Jameson, ‘all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum.’ Again, as female subjects working in Anglophone art contexts, the artists discussed throughout this chapter have not had access to these voices, these masks that Jameson writes of and so, in assuming such masks, they attempt to wrest representational control and produce a historical voice. (Later in the chapter I discuss literary theorist Linda Hutcheon, who engaged in debate with Jameson throughout the 1980s, and whose opposing interpretation of postmodern cultural appropriation can more accurately account for feminism’s political motivation.)

Mieke Bal’s *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (1999), offers a sensitive theoretical account of how the past is reshaped through the knowledge of the present, and materially instantiated through artistic quotation practices.¹⁶ Her conception of a ‘preposterous’ dialogue between past and present, in which fragments of art’s history re-emerge in later artworks and consequently produce new perspectives on the past, provides the most useful foundation upon which to build my argument.¹⁷ Within Bal’s logic, the effect of these new pieces is to propose an alternative approach to temporality and the symbolic (oedipal) succession of art history, by recognising that influence is not a unilinear process but a dialogue. This would mean that quotation is not mere repetition, but that it produces new perspectives on the past in order that we might change the world in which we currently live. Adopting a similar theoretical position allows me to reject the modernist anxiety of influence, or even the postmodernist relativism of pastiche, in favour of recognising the criticality of the present, *my present*, in always rethinking the meanings produced by artworks. (It is no coincidence that in the early 2010s I am thinking about these artworks in relation to materiality and labour, for example.) This is not to suggest that an artwork’s conditions of production are not profoundly

¹⁶ Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999).

¹⁷ Although I came across the essay too late to factor it into my argument here, Frances Stacey’s analysis of *détournement*, in thinking through the relationship of women to the Situationist International, offers an intriguing opportunity to expand my argument in terms of gender, playful subversion and appropriative visual strategies. ‘The Situation of Women,’ in *Renew Marxist Art History*, ed. Carter et al. (London: Art Books Publishing, 2013), 420-445.

significant – they are – but too often the historical context is naively assumed to provide another illusionary map or window onto the ‘truth’ of the object. For the purposes of this chapter I instead offer an argument for reading a particular tactic across women’s art practices over a forty year period, striving to extend Bal’s perspective on historical quotation and its effects. In its most simple terms this examination adopts Bal’s belief that an artwork or image can articulate something new, or unexpected – in this instance, *about* art history and the place of women within it.

Writing in 1982, the film theorist Annette Kuhn asked: ‘Is the feminism of a piece of work there because of the attributes of the author (cultural interventions by women), because of certain attributes of the work itself (feminist cultural interventions), or because of the way it is “read”?’¹⁸ In prioritising my feminist reading of these artworks I bear Kuhn’s question in mind, acknowledging that this is only one approach to configuring the pieces within history. I hope, also, to avoid essentialising the trope of re-making as indelibly linked to the gender of the artist, proposing instead that the tactic is contingent on the conditions of the modern art historical discipline itself and could, therefore, be exceeded in future.

‘Turning’ to History After 2000

The above overview explicates a number of prevailing models for understanding influence, reference and progression in late-twentieth-century art theory and in particular emphasises the persistent failure of both modernist and postmodernist theorists to acknowledge the gendered specificity of this historical relation. Since the turn of the new century, however, issues of historical inheritance, return and even re-enactment have preoccupied the contemporary art world with fascinating obstinacy, and a large number of artists have delved into the (art) historical archives for material.¹⁹ In 2001, for instance, Jeremy Deller organised a prominent re-enactment of the 1984 miner’s strike for the *Battle of Orgreave*. In 2005, Sharon Hayes produced the series *In the Near Future*, which appropriated slogans from 1970s social

¹⁸ Annette Kuhn (orig. 1982), quoted in Katy Deepwell, ‘Bad Girls? Feminist Identity Politics in the 1990s,’ in *Other than Identity: The Subject, Politics and Art*, ed. Juliet Steyn (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 152-165, 157.

¹⁹ It is probably no coincidence that Green and Seddon’s edited book *History Painting Reassessed* was published in 2000, as contemporary artists turned increasingly to history as subject.

protests and re-articulated them throughout the public spaces of New York City. Mary Kelly made *Love Songs* in 2007, a project that explored the relationship between her younger students and the protest history of the 'second-wave' women's movement. In *A Few Howls Again* (2008-09), Silvia Kolbowski revisited the legacy of the notorious German militant Ulrike Meinof, reanimating her figure through an unsettling stop-motion technique. Re-enactment has also surfaced, most significantly, as a spectacular strategy in performance art. That this is in service to the global museum sector and its growing demand for uncharted art historical terrains into which to expand is scarcely deniable. I am thinking particularly of Marina Abramovic's *Seven Easy Pieces* at the Guggenheim in 2005 and *The Artist is Present* at MoMA in 2010, which was significantly the ninth most well attended art exhibition globally that year.²⁰ These examples are only an indication of a much wider trend within contemporary art practice.

A number of scholars have ably addressed the effects of this historical inclination in contemporary art. Rebecca Schneider has theorised the 'temporal drag' of protest re-enactment and the political potential that seeps through the unstable cracks of the re-performed action.²¹ Amelia Jones has repeatedly called attention to the impossibility of both the body-in-performance and the documentary traces of this body to achieve 'authentic presence'.²² Contrarily, Catherine Elwes has argued against Jones to suggest that liveness or 'presence' carries a radical potential that cannot be reduced to documentation.²³ A number of anthologies and catalogues have also been published, adopting a wide-range of approaches to the topic of re-enactment: e.g. *Life Once More: Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary Art* (2005); *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History* (2012); *Re.Act Feminism: A Performing Archive* (2014).²⁴ Re-performance is certainly a crucial strategy that requires

²⁰ 'Exhibition and Museum Attendance Figures 2010,' in *The Art Newspaper* 223 (April 2011): 23-30, 23.

²¹ Rebecca Schneider, 'Protest Now and Again,' *TDR: The Drama Review* 54.2 (Summer 2010): 7-11. Schneider's concept of 'temporal drag' is borrowed from the queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman.

²² Amelia Jones, 'Presence in Absentia: Experiencing Performance and Documentation,' *Art Journal* 56.4 (Winter 1997): 11-18. 'The Live in Art History: A Paradox,' in *Performance Studies*, ed. Tracy C Davis (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 151-165. "'The Artist is Present': Artistic Re-enactments and the Impossibility of Presence,' *TDR: The Drama Review* 55.1 (Spring 2011): 16-45.

²³ Catherine Elwes, 'On Performance, Performativity, Women Artists and Their Critics,' *Third Text* 18.2 (2004): 193-97.

²⁴ Jennifer Allen and Sven Lütticken, eds., *Life Once More: Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary Art* (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 2005). Adrian Heathfield and Amelia Jones, eds., *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History* (Bristol; Chicago: Intellect, 2012). Bettina Knaup and Beatrice Ellen

sustained theorisation to comprehend its effects upon art historical time and the writing of history; however, performance and its traces require a different ontological framework to that which I am establishing here. To clarify: this chapter examines women artists' strategies for adopting and adapting visual motifs from the archives of art history, arguing that this constitutes a mode of visual research and historiography. Historiography is understood here in an expanded sense and the art practices under discussion are understood to reflect upon the limited methods of 'art history' to produce knowledge, whilst simultaneously recognising its potential for remaking. Moreover – and crucially – while re-enactment may be understood as a 'turn' or trend in contemporary art, I contend that the practice of quotation in women's artwork has formed a constitutive function in a feminist art historical research project investigating and destabilising the epistemic parameters of disciplinary knowledge.²⁵

In a satirical essay published in *Mousse Magazine* in 2012, Lars Bang Larsen lampooned the hysterical and obsessional restlessness of contemporary art's myriad 'turns' over recent years.²⁶ Yet this notion of turning continues to hold considerable sway over contemporary art scholarship and, as such, continues to require critical attention. Curator/philosopher Dieter Roelstraete articulated his theory of the 'historiographic turn' in contemporary art in two articles published in the influential online art journal *e-flux* during 2009. He describes this trend as:

apparent in the obsession with archiving, forgetfulness, memoirs and memorials, nostalgia, oblivion, re-enactment, remembrance, reminiscence, retrospection – in short, with the *past* – that seems to drive much of the work done by some of the best (and most highly regarded) artists active today...²⁷

Stammer, eds., *Re.Act Feminism: A Performing Archive* (London: Live Art Development Agency, 2014).

²⁵ Katy Deepwell has started to make a similar argument: 'Women – real historical subjects grounded in time and place – have always had to negotiate the spectre of "woman", in her numerous incarnations as muse, Madonna and object of sexual desire, and woman artists have done so since the sixteenth century "in painting". The overwhelming presence of "woman" in the Western tradition of academic historical and allegorical paintings overshadows the "history" of the actual restrictions upon women artists in the practice of the genre of "history painting" defined as the highest genre in the Academies of Europe since the eighteenth century.' 'Women, subject and objects and the end of history (painting)', in Green and Seddon (2000), 134.

²⁶ Lars Bang Larsen, 'Turn! Turn! Turn!' *Mousse Magazine* 35 (October 2012). <http://moussemagazine.it/articolo.mm?id=879>.

²⁷ Dieter Roelstraete, 'After the Historiographic Turn: Current Findings', *e-flux journal* 6 (May 2009). <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/after-the-historiographic-turn-current-findings/>. See also: 'The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art', *e-flux journal* 4 (March 2009). <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/the-way-of-the-shovel-on-the-archaeological-imaginary-in-art/>.

Two years earlier, art historian Jan Verwoert presaged Roelstraete's article with the online essay 'Living with Ghosts', in which he contrasts 1980s and 2000s appropriative art strategies, declaring somewhat modestly that: '[t]o practice and discuss appropriation in the present moment means something different than it did before'.²⁸ Both writers draw not dissimilar conclusions about the ambivalent effect that pluralistic histories appear to exercise upon cultural production in the twenty-first century, although Roelstraete in particular disapprovingly concludes: 'the one tragic flaw that clearly cripples the purported critical claims and impact of the current "historiographic turn" in art: its inability to grasp or even look at the present, much less to *excavate the future*.'

These prominent articles contribute to an expanding field of literature around this significant subject in contemporary art, yet there is a sizeable failure on the part of both writers to take into account the importance of (art) history, including especially its legacies of exclusion, for canonically or economically marginalised artistic subjects.²⁹ That is to say: women may have secured improved recognition as 'artists' but they continue to earn significantly less than their male counterparts and additionally make up the vast majority of underpaid (or often unpaid) precarious workers in the art sector (it is no coincidence that Madeleine Schwartz has described interns as the new housewives).³⁰ As Katy Deepwell has argued: 'Instead of being depicted as objects, regarded as an embodiment of a (male) subjectivity, women artists ever more confident in their work are *still not presented as full-fledged subjects as artists, as subjects-in-history*, subjects regarded as possessing a full sense of agency, albeit working in (over)determined circumstances.'³¹ In 1981, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock famously recognised, 'it is only in the twentieth century that women artists have been systematically effaced from the history of art', yet this erasure was both swift and clandestine. Roelstraete's conclusive comment therefore

flux.com/journal/the-way-of-the-shovel-on-the-archeological-imaginary-in-art/. Accessed 20 October 2013.

²⁸ Jan Verwoert, 'Living with Ghosts: From Appropriation to Invocation in Contemporary Art', *Art and Research* 1.2 (Summer 2007). <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/pdfs/verwoert.pdf>. Accessed 20 October 2013.

²⁹ Hal Foster, 'An Archival Impulse', *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 3-22. Mark Godfrey, 'The Artist as Historian' *October* 120 (Spring 2007): 140-172.

³⁰ Madeleine Schwartz, 'Opportunity Costs,' *Dissent: A Quarterly of Politics and Culture* (Winter 2013). <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/opportunity-costs-the-true-price-of-internships>. Accessed 20 October 2013.

³¹ Deepwell, in Green and Seddon, 134.

fails moreover to comprehend how crucial the politics of memory are to a contemporary feminist movement that remains all too aware of the persistent risk posed by historical elision.³²

Verwoert differentiates the ‘dead commodity fetish’ of postmodern 1980s appropriative strategies from the post-1989 move towards appropriation as the ‘invocation of something that lives through time.’ The article compellingly contrasts a contemporary vision of history as moving fluidly through temporal registers, rather than as something static to be seized and possessed; yet, to extend Verwoert’s reasoning, in order to relinquish one’s hold on an object, it must be possessed in the first place. Until fairly recently women artists have had to fight for legitimacy as cultural producers, faced with a historical canon that negated their very existence as such, *by seizing, possessing and reinscribing* the signs of art’s great masters - not by letting go or relinquishing their hold to a temporal fluidity. The historical break that Verwoert locates at 1989 is, of course, unquestionable, but he correspondingly fails to note the transhistoricity of ‘patrilineage’ in modern art history (as identified by Mira Schor), which both pre- and post-dates this significant juncture, and therefore structures the relation between (women) artists and art history more or less continuously over the past century.³³ To quote Verwoert: in the 1980s, to ‘appropriate the fetishes of material culture, then, is like looting empty shops on the eve of destruction. It’s the final party before doomsday.’ This universalist perspective, in which everyone has equal access to and equivalent desires toward destroying the symbols of a profligate society in stagnation, refuses the particularities of an artist’s encounter with and relation to cultural production and its historical legacies. To be even more precise, this destructive resignation exists in direct opposition to the feminist utopian dream of remaking culture and society that I locate within women’s revisionist artworks.

The examination below seeks to consider what specifically happens when artists’ preoccupation with looking back, retrieval, appropriation, archival impulse, historiographic turn – whatever one wishes to term it – is considered specifically in relation to feminist politics and knowledge production. Although this argument is not necessarily limited to women artists, the examples below do not include any men.

³² Parker and Pollock, *Old Mistresses*, p.xxix.

³³ Verwoert has written elsewhere on the importance of historical legacies and narratives specifically for the woman artist Michaela Melian: ‘Past, Present and Future’ *Frieze* 105 (March 2007), but he does not fully engage with feminist thought. Schor, ‘Patrilineage’.

This is not to suggest that there is some ineffable femininity (gender) or even feminism (politics) encompassed by women's art practices; but, if women have been situated discursively beyond the canon and its designation of recognised artists, and materially outside the circuits of education, labour, and display, their relationship to art history will also be very different. I would contend that women artists working since the 1970s who have wanted to create a space for participation in the discourses of contemporary culture have had to simultaneously become historians of their own practice. This research and reflection is not, therefore, as advocates of the 'turn' imply, new, fleeting or fashionable; instead it can be considered a fundamental visual contribution to the historical enquiries of the feminist art *and art history* movement.³⁴

During the years that I have been researching my thesis feminist scholars have begun addressing historiographic concerns with greater regularity. Philosopher Victoria Browne has recently theorised the role of 'untimely resurfacings' in feminist political history, suggesting that the challenge 'is to build an alternative model of historical time and change [which can] position and value repetition as generative and productive'.³⁵ Moving away from linear, teleological accounts of historical change would, she writes, 'enable us to enact feminist repetitions without an inevitable sense of despair or frustration, and to harness the productive and subversive power of historical re-surfacings'.³⁶ Browne's is a thoughtful perspective on the temporal politics of repetition and quotation that I hope to share here. More immediately relevant: in an article published in *Feminist Review* in 2013, Giovanna Zapperi similarly 'underlined the political importance of creative reworkings of the past', highlighting art projects by Zoe Leonard and Cheryl Dunne, Renee Green, and Andrea Geyer as 'investigations into the formation of historical knowledge'.³⁷ The research collected in this chapter adjacently explores this visual research project, expanding analysis away from the imagined, exaggerated and fictitious tales that preoccupy Zapperi – still working, it seems, within a poststructuralist model concerned primarily with narrative – and shifting focus onto art-making as a site of

³⁴ I specifically employ this expression to reflect an argument made by Angela Dimitrakaki that states the feminist art movement should perhaps be renamed, 'since art history played a major role in the movement's claims and direction'. Dimitrakaki, *Gender, art Work and the global imperative*, 2.

³⁵ Victoria Browne, 'Backlash, Repetition, Untimeliness: The Temporal Dynamics of Feminist Politics', *Hypatia* 28.4 (Fall 2013): 905-920, 906.

³⁶ Browne, 911.

³⁷ Giovanna Zapperi. 'Women's Reappearance: Rethinking the Archive in Feminist Art,' *Feminist Review* 105 (2013): 21-47.

concealed (historiographical) labour. Thus, this examination contributes to an expanding field of scholarship about feminist knowledge production and provides further theorisation and contextualisation of an under-acknowledged, yet prevalent strategy within women's art practice.

Re-Making Modernist Legacies

In the words of the celebrated American poet and essayist Adrienne Rich: 'Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for women *more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival*.'³⁸ Rich succinctly illustrates the feminist impulse to invade the languages and structures of paternalistic artistic canons, 'not to pass on a tradition, but to break its hold over us'.³⁹ This enthusiastic acknowledgment (albeit written in 1972) of re-visioning as 'more than a chapter in cultural history' marks a stark contrast to contemporary art writers' conceptions of the fashionable, yet inevitably transitory, historiographic turn. Rich's essay makes clear that, for women poets, excluded from both the practical institutions of literature and, just as crucially, the cultural narrative that constructs men as creators, pilfering the raw materials of this history and re-making them within a feminist imaginary is a vital critical strategy. The artists considered below employ a comparable tactic, working through responses to an antecedent artist's oeuvre. In particular, the works examined here respond to the legacies of modernist painting and the art historical narratives that construct vanguard (formal) innovation as a principle sign of artistic greatness. Given that this myth is so often entwined with the depiction of the female nude, it is no coincidence feminist art historians have highlighted women's secondary, sexualised role within these narratives as models, lovers and muses to the creative male artists – woman as image, rather than image-maker.⁴⁰

The disruption, or reversal, of what Laura Mulvey termed in 1975 the 'male gaze' provides a theoretical foundation for making sense of feminist re-visioned

³⁸ Adrienne Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision,' *College English* 34.1 (October 1972): 18-30, 18. Emphasis added.

³⁹ Rich, 19.

⁴⁰ Marsha Meskimmon discusses this in *The Art of Reflection: Women Artists Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century*. See also Griselda Pollock, 'Feminism, Art, Painting' in *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*, ed. Barrett and Phillips (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992). And Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1992).

works, particularly those from the 1970s to 1980s. If, within art history and visual culture more widely, *woman* has traditionally been distinguished for her fetishised ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ at the expense of *women’s* individuated complexities, over the past four decades artists associated with feminist, queer and postcolonial approaches have sought to challenge this framework.⁴¹ The artworks below evidence a range of disruptive strategies including Brechtian distancing, the reversal of the gendered gaze, parody, and the non-representation of the female body as a deconstructive imperative. These visual tactics have, however, been identified and discussed in detail elsewhere; I want to shift the focus and examine how these artworks respond to, circulate within and expand the knowledge structures of art history through the practice of re-making recognisable canonical tropes. As will be developed below, this tendency cannot be explained as post-historical appropriation, as free-floating ‘signs’ from art’s history extracted at will. Nor can it *only* be understood within the visual logic of the gaze, or via the phenomenological effects of gender, sexuality and performance, as feminist scholarship has largely done to date. By conceiving of these artists as labouring bodies, by thinking art and art history materially, my insistently feminist reading understands women’s art-making practices as a form of historiographical labour. Within this feminist logic, women or those identified with the feminine are in an ideal position to carry out this materialist work, not least because they have been so strongly associated with the negatively corporeal and immanent.

A series of brief overviews indicates the artist’s work(s) in question. At the risk of establishing an ahistorical – or worse, *essentialist* – framework, the historical contexts in which each artist was working is only briefly alluded to. Although the variety of these contexts can be illuminating (and in fact supports my argument that feminist re-making constitutes a trope across women’s art practice in different times and places), the specific conditions of the art-making process is less important here than thinking the artwork as a conceptual framing device. A device, specifically, that self-reflexively indicates its own status as a meaning-making object *only within* western art historical narratives, and which therefore interrogates the function of art historical discourses to create and maintain an illusory fabrication of truthfulness

⁴¹ Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ (1975), in Jones *Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, 47-8. Mulvey’s concept of the male gaze has been contested and expanded upon in the intervening years, see: Judith Halberstam, ‘The Transgender Look’ (2005) and bell hooks, ‘The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators’ (1992), both reprinted in Jones.

while in fact perpetrating particular ideologies. In a sense these artworks function within the logic of what Bal terms ‘theoretical objects’; that is, an object that contains within it the information required for the viewer to think about and posit the object in relation to history and/or theory.⁴² As examined below, these artworks, or theoretical objects, reflexively produce their own historical effects.

Sylvia Sleigh (b. Wales, 1916-2010) provides probably the best-known example of art historical re-making. In a series of paintings including *Philip Golub Reclining* (1971) and *At the Turkish Baths* (1976), Sleigh reverses the male/artist, female/model dichotomy that conventionally structures nude portraiture in modern art history. In *Philip Golub Reclining*, Sleigh acutely emphasises this inversion by depicting herself reflected in a mirror, actively engaged in the act of painting the reclining male model. In this respect, the portrait also recalls the long history of female painters who have strategically depicted themselves as active creators.⁴³ Sleigh’s witty portraits play on these historically gendered constructions by openly posing Philip Golub in the style of Diego Velazquez’s *Venus at her Toilette* (1647-51) and mimicking the languorous odalisques of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres’ *At the Turkish Baths* (1862).⁴⁴



Figure 1. Sylvia Sleigh, *Phillip Golub Reclining*, 1971.



Figure 2. Diego Velazquez, *Venus at her Toilette*, 1647-51.

⁴² Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*, 5. The term originates from Hubert Damisch.

⁴³ Mary D Garrard’s 1980 essay on ‘Artemisia Gentileschi’s Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting’ remains one of the preeminent analyses of this creative strategy, *The Art Bulletin* 62.1 (March 1980): 97-112. Pre-twentieth century painters who have also depicted themselves in this manner famously include: Artemisia Gentileschi, Sofonisba Anguissola, Judith Leyster, Louise Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun.

⁴⁴ In further contrast to Ingres’ anonymous female ‘types’, Sleigh’s portraits recognisably depict her contemporaries and friends. For instance *At the Turkish Baths* includes portraits of John Perreault, Scott Burton, Carter Radcliff, Lawrence Alloway, and Paul Rosano.



Figure 3. Sylvia Sleigh, *At The Turkish Baths*, 1976.



Figure 4. J.A.D. Ingres, *At The Turkish Baths*, 1862.



Figure 5. Hannah Wilke, *I OBJECT, Memoirs of a Sugar Giver*, 1977.



Figure 6. Marcel Duchamp, *Étant Donnés*, 1946-66.



Figure 7. Hannah Wilke, *Through the Large Glass*, 10-minute 16mm video, 1976.



Figure 8. Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, 1915-23.

Hannah Wilke (b. New York City, 1940-1993) also adopted a re-visioning approach, in a series of 1970s pieces that irreverently manipulate the legacies of Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp is a particularly significant figure in twentieth-century avant-garde history, and is often referred to paternally as ‘the father of conceptual art’.⁴⁵ In 1973, Wilke staged a performance in which she dressed in an androgynous white suit from fedora to wingtips and enacted a discomfiting striptease behind the glass-work *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (1923). During a second performance she played chess naked in front of the work. In a later intervention, Wilke challenged Duchamp’s voyeuristic and intensely unsettling installation *Étant Donnés* (1946-66), by producing two book-sleeve-styled photographs of her own naked body, brazenly exposed, rather than Duchamp’s sneakily peaked glance. The title of this work declares somewhat ambiguously, ‘I Object’, presumably voicing a protestation against art history’s enforced objection of woman as ‘I, Object’. The uncertain stress of this phrase reflects a more general concern: could Wilke, by insinuating her naked, but live and authored body into art historical frameworks, disrupt the erotic construction of woman-as-object in visual histories?

It is significant to note that both Sleigh and Wilke were making these pieces in 1970s New York City, against the context of an active and increasingly powerful women’s art movement. In a study of 2009 Julia Bryan-Wilson charted this vibrant political moment, arguing that a brief accord was attempted between the twin demands of creative labour and waged employment by identifying the artist as ‘art worker’.⁴⁶ Bryan-Wilson writes that ‘[a]rt and activism, in other words, were rehearsed – or *practiced* – through each other, although artists who identified themselves as art workers found that identity increasingly conflicted.’⁴⁷ Sleigh and Wilke may not have formally identified with the Art Workers’ Coalition, or similar, yet it is against this intellectual, activist milieu that their revisionist strategies can be comprehended. It was a period in which new definitions of creative labour were being negotiated. For instance, issues surrounding the recognition of artistic labour as work and the rehearsal, as Bryan-Wilson terms it, of aesthetics and politics through one another were prevailing. It is notable that Sleigh produced two large-scale group

⁴⁵ Particularly by Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

⁴⁶ Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2009).

⁴⁷ Bryan-Wilson, 10. Original emphasis.

portraits of the women's collectives at A.I.R. Gallery (1974) and SoHo20 (1977), thereby revising Johann Zoffany's professionalising gesture of 1772 that infamously relegated its female subjects to wall-mounted objects.⁴⁸

By foregrounding art historical quotations in their works both Sleight and Wilke expose art making as *gendered* labour. And yet, neither artist was secure in this labour and her adopted strategy can be read as melancholic in its failure. Feminist scholarship at the time largely dismissed painting as strategy, and prominent critics censured Wilke for her 'regressive feminine narcissism'.⁴⁹ Thus an art historical ambivalence emerges around these works. As Amelia Jones has argued, a preference for Brechtian distancing strategies became almost hegemonic in feminist art history and the seductive tactics employed by Wilke were beyond the comprehension of this critical framework.⁵⁰ This powerful argument extends to adjacently encompass Sleight, whose banal, almost kitsch, paintings are so formally disparate from the cooler, scripto-visual or deconstructive practices favoured by the dominant scholarly tendency. However, a further meaning emerges by reading these pieces in correspondence with a variety of women's art practices from the 1970s to 2000s; as this examination reveals, it is the artworks' very kitsch humour, their mundane materiality that accentuates the object's art-historical self-reflexivity and renders them historiographically productive. These artists may not be able to more than momentarily recast the profoundly gendered terms of their chosen profession, but the artworks they have produced are capable of self-reflexively commenting on their own status within avant-garde art history, mocking paternalist forebears and producing alternative, feminist historiographical knowledge.

⁴⁸ Johann Zoffany, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1772. For more on women's cooperatives see Meredith Brown's award-winning graduate essay of 2012: "'The Enemies of Women's Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed': A.I.R. Gallery's Role in the American Feminist Art Movement," *Smithsonian Archives of America Art Graduate Essay Prize*, 2012. Accessed 12 February 2013.

⁴⁹ Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, Uni. Of Minnesota, 1998, 171. For more on the history of feminist thought in relation to painting see Katy Deepwell, 'Paint Stripping' (1994), reprinted in *Feminism-Art-Theory*, ed. Hilary Robinson, 388-391.

⁵⁰ Jones, *Body Art*, 171-76.



Figure 9. Kate Davis, *Who is a Woman Now?*, 1998.

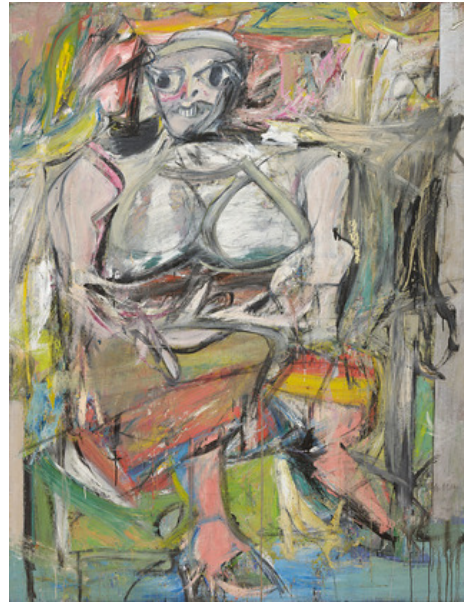


Figure 10. Willem de Kooning, *Woman I*, 1950-51.

If Sleight and Wilke made their work against an active feminist (art) movement in 1970s and 1980s New York, as a much younger women working in the UK in the 2000s, Kate Davis (b. New Zealand, 1977) has had to articulate her artistic practice unsupported by a broader ‘movement’.⁵¹ However, similar to the revisionist strategies of her forebears, Davis negotiates her art-making in relation to the archives of paternal, avant-garde art history (and also, as I discuss further down, the legacies of the feminist second-wave). In 2008, she produced the first of a series of works responding to canonical legacies of the twentieth-century avant-garde; *Who is a Woman Now?* reacts to and extends Willem de Kooning’s notoriously misogynist *Woman* paintings of 1950-52. Art historian Carol Duncan has criticised de Kooning’s paintings for representing their female subjects as ‘vulgar, sexual [and] dangerous’,⁵² and although consensus on these works may be less resolute in recent years, the

⁵¹ ‘To answer your question, yes I most definitely am an artist and feminist. My experience as an artist (who has been predominantly based in Glasgow and continue to be so) is that I don’t feel I have been part of a ‘feminist movement’ in Scotland but I have felt totally supported, and often inspired, by its art community (through institutions, writers, curators, funding bodies and crucially other artists) and beyond, to pursue my own practice and its relationship to feminist writings, thinking and making.’ Kate Davis, personal email to author, 2 April 2014.

⁵² Carol Duncan, ‘Virility and Domination’ in *Feminism and Art History*, ed. Broude and Garrard, 293-313.

images continue to exert a divisive anxiety upon feminist scholarship.⁵³ Davis utilises cheap postcard reproductions of de Kooning's *Woman*, tenderly folding and pushing the cards into shape, so that they assume a sculptural, physical quality, in juxtaposition to the flat, violent paintwork of the original canvases. She then redraws the folded postcards in stark pencil works that contrast dark and light planes, permitting only glimpses of the de Kooning women. This is not to say that these drawings do not also evince anger or frustration at the past; the artist's representation of ragged, torn edges and hastily un-crumpled postcards simultaneously points to the anxiety provoked by her rage.

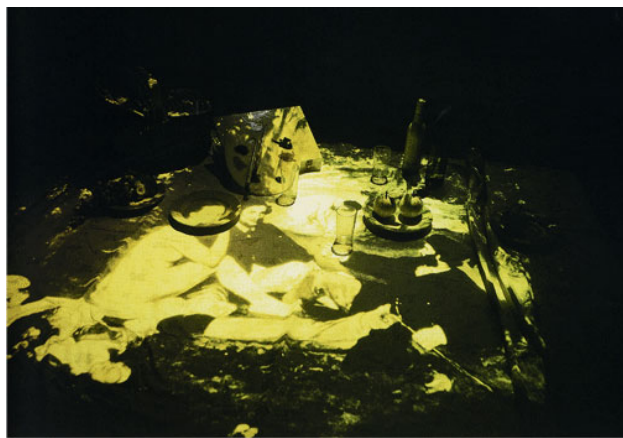


Figure 11. Ana Vieira, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1976.



Figure 12. Edouard Manet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863.

⁵³ Fiona Barber, 'The politics of feminist spectatorship and the disruptive body: de Kooning's *Woman I* reconsidered' (1999), in *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*, ed. Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 119-128.

In a palimpsestic series from 2009 entitled *Disgrace*, Davis develops her process by refocusing her attention on Amadeo Modigliani's drawings of nude female models, made throughout the earliest decades of the twentieth century. Tearing pages from a 1972 exhibition catalogue of his work, Davis begins by tracing the outline of her hand upon the pages, before expanding this line to encompass her entire body. The pencil marks build up upon the pages, blurring the distinction between Modigliani's and Davis's lines, her body complicating and protectively instantiating itself between the viewer and the exposed model. (In this manner the work recalls the dis-identificatory practices of Wilke, corporeally disrupting Duchamp's *Large Glass*.) Through these deceptively minor acts, Davis's drawing returns to art history's female models a sense of corporeality that unsettles the flattening historical legacies of art's patriarchal heroes.

Davis's strategy is elucidated by a comparison with that of Ana Vieira (b. Coimbra, 1940), a Portuguese artist who restaged Edouard Manet's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) in a literalised gallery installation of 1977.⁵⁴ In Vieira's re-making of the canonical artwork, picnic paraphernalia litters the gallery floor and Manet's painting is projected onto the illusory white space of a picnic blanket; the viewer is enticed to awkwardly step *into* the scene, but of course she cannot. The work is suspended uncomfortably between two- and three-dimensionality, the painter's palette and brushes piled conspicuously in one corner to remind viewers of the falseness of the material. It is the awkward materiality of both Vieira's and Davis's works that ontologically disrupts the ocular power of the alluded paintings and, therefore, the modernist art traditions that construct viewing relations in which the naked female body is presented for the spectator's authoritative gaze. Tellingly, in Vieira's 1977 installation, the nude model's head is projected onto a white plate, thereby satirically exposing the façade of art history that serves women's naked bodies up to the viewer's delectation.

⁵⁴ Researchers have suggested that Portugal did not experience a collective feminist art movement as such. For instance, on 4 July 2014 the University of Portsmouth organised the conference 'Situating Women's Liberation / Historicizing a Movement'. It included the paper 'Situating Portuguese feminist art: Why has there been no feminist art movement in Portugal?', by Maria Luísa Coelho and Márcia Olivera University of Reading/ CeHuM, Braga, Portugal.) Although of course, in the early 1970s, the country witnessed an anti-colonialist revolutionary coup. Therefore Vieira was ostensibly making her work within activist contexts, and visible workers' struggles, but not supported by the institutional interventions of an explicit feminist or women's movement.

Of course, oppression occurs across various axes at any given time and is not reducible only to gender. Although (predominantly) white female artists may have struggled to reconceive western painting traditions in which they have been constructed as nude ‘sight’ for viewers’ consumption, Lisa Gail Collins has demonstrated the parallel complexity for African-American female artists who have been excluded from this representation almost entirely.⁵⁵ Lacking an official ‘art history’ to respond to, Collins has instead demonstrated how African-American women artists working in the 1980s critically engaged with the visual materials of nineteenth-century colonialism. Artists including Carrie Mae Weems and Lorna Simpson are shown to have confronted the pseudo-scientific cataloguing of black bodies under colonialism within a renewed photographic practice that re-makes these harmful legacies. Although this revisionist tendency contains parallels to that under discussion here, the different status of the black female body in western visual culture has created a distinctive relation to art history for contemporary artists; one that is acutely captured by Collins’ book and does not require further explication here.

I would like to return to Meskimmon’s suggestion at the beginning of this chapter, in which she posits that understanding women’s art means ‘expanding our relationship to material and visual practices as configurations of historical knowledge’. It is my contention that the artists under analysis here engage with the canon of art history as artistic material in its own right, treating its knowledge as object, and reworking this as one would remodel clay or stitch fabric. Simultaneously, the remade fragment, or ‘quotation’, draws explicit attention to the artwork as a configuration of historical knowledge. Considering the profoundly gendered terms of mind/body dualism embedded throughout western culture, the insistent materiality of these objects - which *instantiate* historical knowledge production - is crucial. Returning to Roelstraete’s conception of the historiographic turn, he claims that,

art and archaeology also share a profound understanding – and one might say that they are on account of this almost “naturally” inclined to a *Marxist epistemology* – of the primacy of the *material* in all culture, the overwhelming importance of mere “matter” and

⁵⁵ Lisa Gail Collins, *The Art of History: African American Women Artists Engage the Past*, New Brunswick; New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2002. Lorraine O’Grady’s essay of 1992/1994 is considered exemplary in exploring this issue of black women’s representational exclusion, offering a reading of Manet’s *Olympia* that focuses on the overlooked figure of Laure. ‘Olympia’s Maid’ reprinted in Jones 2003.

“stuff” in any attempt to grasp and truly read the cluttered fabric of the world.⁵⁶

Consequently, in her revisionist drawings of de Kooning and Modigliani nudes, Davis utilises cheap postcards and torn catalogue reproductions. This is not the distant ‘high art’ of art history but the mere stuff of museum gift shops, the commercial detritus that audiences most frequently encounter. Vieira’s installation extends the surface of the painted picnic into the space of the gallery and, no longer flat and unobtrusive, this new work markedly takes up space, requiring viewers to physically move around it. Wilke’s naked chess game amusingly contrasts a refined intellectual pursuit – one that is strongly associated with the characterisation of Duchamp as a cerebral artist – against her undressed female body. The performance thus emphasises the polluting force of feminine corporeal immanence upon the transcendental myths of art history. There are countless more examples of this materialist remaking strategy, none more horrifying than Orlan’s surgical remodelling of her physical body in the image of art’s great beauties.⁵⁷ This tendency towards re-making art historical tropes emphasises the extent to which power is coextensive with discursive structures, but simultaneously recognises that all knowledge arises from a corporeal base, and these objects therefore require us to rethink the gendered mind/body dualism of western cultural histories.

By tracing modern art history from its eighteenth-century roots, Jones has repeatedly argued that the discipline’s aura of rationality, disinterestedness, and of truthfulness is founded within the patriarchal subject’s desire to disavow his corporeal immanence. In particular Jones has read Wilke’s performative posing strategies as *exaggeratedly* drawing the viewer’s desiring ‘masculine’ gaze, thus imploding art history’s false sense of disinterested criticism. To this I would adjacently emphasise artistic re-making as foregrounding the materiality of culture, excessively exposing art history as a construction - a disciplinary constellation of institutions with their own histories and exclusions - and thus its powerful illusory nature.⁵⁸ Metaphysical dualism casts thinking and making in opposition. The apparently rational scholarly

⁵⁶ Roelstraete, ‘After the Historiographic Turn.’ Original emphasis.

⁵⁷ *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* (1990-present). Sarah Wilson discusses Orlan’s use of art history in her art-making in ‘L’Histoire d’O, Sacred and Profane,’ in *Orlan: This is My Body: This is My Software* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 1996), 8-17.

⁵⁸ ‘The dismissal of Wilke as simply narcissistic veils a resistance within art critical systems toward acknowledging the ways in which the artist’s body *means* within the circuits of art production and reception...[Such a dismissal] ignores the ways in which narcissism can work, psychically and socially... to expose the classical mind/body duality still embedded in structures of artmaking and interpretation.’ Jones, *Body Art*, 176.

processes of reflecting, assessing and writing are privileged over the embodied, material processes of making or doing. Consequently the insistent materiality of these art practices resist the logic of transcendence; they cannot be recouped to a mythical space above and beyond the discourses and institutions in which the pieces circulate. Instead the immanence of women's art making proudly declares its existence within a materially grounded art history, reconfiguring, and articulating new perspectives on its bounded knowledges. Moreover, by refocusing attention on the processual and material (to reiterate an earlier point), this reading also serves to emphasise visual practices as instituting acts, by reflexively stressing the manner in which they contribute to, arrange, and reproduce – often exclusionary - art historical thought.

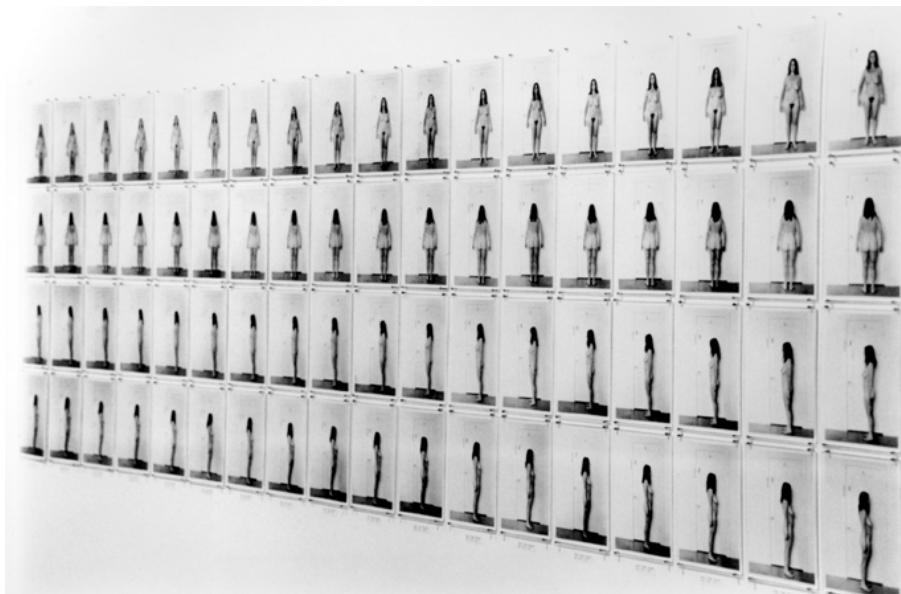


Figure 13. Eleanor Antin, *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture*, 1972.

The Artist as Worker

In 1987 Hutcheon pronounced that the *langue* of a discipline is in some ways ‘no different to that of ordinary language: no single individual can alter it at his or her own will; it embodies certain culturally accepted values and meanings; it has to be *learned in some detail by users before it can be employed effectively*.⁵⁹ With particular regards to art, the necessary learning and labour required to become

⁵⁹ Linda Hutcheon. ‘The Politics of Postmodernism: Parody and History’, *Cultural Critique* 5 (Winter 1986-87): 179-207, 183. Emphasis added.

educated into the *langue* (the structures that implicitly govern behaviour or speech), is habitually masked behind myths of creativity and its essential innateness. The artworks examined in this chapter foreground and re-contextualise visual references that have been extracted from within art's history and, through this strategy of underlining and drawing attention to the reframed motifs, these artists emphasise that their *art making is labour*. This tendency functions in conjunction with my previous argument for, as Roelstraete argues, it is within a materialist logic that we can begin to understand art irrepressibly as work: 'hard and dirty work, certain to remind us of our bodily involvement *in* the world'.

In an article of 2004, Shelley King examines the mythological tale of the Corinthian maid. According to folklore this young woman traced the outline of her departing lover's shadow upon a wall, and her father subsequently cast the sketch into a clay bust. King suggests that this art origin myth distinguishes 'private feminine mimetic and derivative artistry' from 'a public masculine creative artistic genius'.⁶⁰ Through a strategy of (often humorous) historical quotation, women artists exaggeratedly explode this assumptive association between femininity and imitation rather than origination. Appropriating motifs from art history's canon openly mocks the insidious 2000-year-old narrative that King demonstrates is fundamental to western conceptions of art. If the myth of heroic masculine genius is predicated on the inverse feminine derivation, the implosion of this legacy exposes art's production within (albeit changing) socio-economic conditions which permit and exclude access not dependent only, or even primarily, upon giftedness, but upon a range of identifying elements. Drawing attention to the (hidden) labour inherent in making art emphasises that culture is not produced in a vacuum, but that all knowledge is inherited and expanded upon rather than fantastically or oedipally usurped.

Writing in 1995, Sleigh makes it clear that the institutional exclusion of women from the educational spaces of art was a crucial impetus behind her paintings:

It has always been difficult for women to do creative work or indeed have any profession that endows prestige in our chauvinist patriarchal society. It was particularly difficult for ambitious women painters who wished to paint the most highly regarded subjects – history pictures. This was because it was impossible for them to do drawings

⁶⁰ Shelley King, 'Amelia Opie's "The Maid of Corinth" and the Origins of Art,' *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 37.4 (Summer 2004): 629-651, 630.

and paintings from nude models, female or male, so that figure compositions would be most difficult for them.⁶¹

Quoting canonical artworks implicitly points to this legacy of institutional and educational exclusion, particularly with respect to the legacies of European Enlightenment ideals of ‘history painting’.⁶² Thus, the form of Sleigh’s paintings reflexively calls attention to the fact that it ‘has always been difficult’ for women to do this work, and even harder to achieve recognition for it. Sleigh’s tactic must be read against the context of 1970s feminism that directed critique at the historical, and persistent, institutional exclusion of female subjects. Working in New York City around the same time as Sleigh, Eleanor Antin’s *Carving* (1971), articulates through its very form a comparable critique of art historical exclusions. By embarking on a strict diet to literally ‘sculpt’ her body into shape, Antin mocks the process by which sculptors are trained to carve away at the rock’s surface to reveal the socially desired form within. The gendered sculptural process of dieting is inversely emphasised by the piece’s playful subtitle, *A Traditional Sculpture*; thus acknowledging the entwinement of virility and masculinity that dominates cultural fantasies around the sculpting process. These artworks, by Sleigh and Antin, identify exclusionary institutional practices and ideologies and, by adopting and reinventing conventional techniques, reflect the practice back upon itself. Both reflexively expose women’s exclusion from the privileged sites of artistic training and thus demonstrate that creative work and access to it is always regulated by material factors in the world, and does not take place in the autonomous or transcendental spaces imagined by modern art history.

It is by self-reflexively foregrounding the art historical element that these art objects emphasise women artists’ historically tenuous relation to art and its institutions, as well as pointing to the problematic construction of ‘woman’ through art history’s representations. Re-staging historical imagery allows these artists to foreground the heretofore-denied accumulation of cultural capital that is necessary for participation in the markets of art’s circulation, display and history.⁶³ This exposure of the processes of cultural accumulation denaturalises the myth of the autonomous

⁶¹ Sleigh, statement on the Brooklyn Museum website, 1995. Accessed 20 October 2013. http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/feminist_art_base/gallery/sylviasleigh.php.

⁶² See Green and Seddon for more on contemporary responses to history painting.

⁶³ For more on cultural capital see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

creative producer, reliant upon ideal and unpredictable moments of inspiration. Emphasising instead both art as labour and, concurrently, indicating women's historic exclusion from these gendered spaces of labour, it is no coincidence that throughout the 1970s women struggled with the question of 'work', both in relation to art and the home, as the two spaces have been particularly indivisible for women.⁶⁴ Just as feminine reproductive labour has been constructed as natural, in opposition to masculine productive waged labour (see the Wages for Housework campaign), so too has women's artistic labour been almost irrevocably tied to their homes, bodies and femininity, in opposition to male artists' public works.⁶⁵ How can women make their artwork visible in a social contract that denies them access, and, understanding 'visibility' as a possibly failed tactic, how can this strategy be made to reflect upon (or even change) women's positions within the process of production more generally? Although this strategy is strongly associated with 1970s discourses around art and labour, younger artists including Kate Davis extend such questions into the twenty-first century. Davis's reinventions of de Kooning and Modigliani paintings quietly indicate her anger at an art history that continues to reify its avant-garde heroes, selling posters and postcards of naked female bodies, and consequently failing to fully acknowledge the labour of women artists which would require the remaking of the discipline itself.

⁶⁴ This conflation of artistic practice and the non-professional space of the home can be found in women's practices since at least the nineteenth century, famously in the domestic subject matter of Impressionist painters such as Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot. This trend continued though, if not in subject matter, then in the practicalities of working; Lee Krasner's studio space was famously a spare bedroom of her home (while Jackson Pollock used a large outdoor barn on the property) and Miriam Schapiro has written of feeling uncomfortable that her makeshift studio was on display to guests in the dining room of her home. Referenced in Thalia Gouma-Peterson, 1997 (see note:??). The 'Wages for Housework' campaign was formed in Italy in 1972.

⁶⁵ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press Limited, 1984).



Figure 14. Tanja Ostojic, *Black Square on White*, 2001.

A closer examination of an interdisciplinary work by Tanja Ostojic (b. 1972, Yugoslavia) will tease out the intersections of creativity, gender and labour in relation to a globalised art world post-2000.⁶⁶ Produced as part of a longer series entitled ‘Strategies of Success’ (2001-03), in *I’ll Be Your Angel* Ostojic accompanied the mega-curator Harald Szeemann to the Venice Biennial, where she sycophantically escorted and waited on him for the duration of his stay.⁶⁷ Clothed in *haute couture* Christian Lacroix outfits, Ostojic was exaggeratedly preened and compliant, her chilling submissiveness functioning paradoxically to undermine her outwardly compliant appearance. The performance also masked a secondary aspect of the work. *Black Square on White* consisted of Ostojic shaving her pubic hair into an approximation of Kazimir Malevich’s 1917 painting *Black Square*, and was initially

⁶⁶ Suzana Milevska has argued that the work is difficult to be defined ‘performance, installation, or any other medium’. While she is probably quite right, I use performance here for shorthand. ‘Power Play: The Spectacle of Invisible,’ Part of the curatorial project *Aggression, Auto-Aggression, Accident?* Accessed 23 June 2014. at: <http://new.heimat.de/home/suicide/artists/tanja/power.htm>.

⁶⁷ Other performances that took place as part of this series included ‘Sofa for Curator’ (2002), in which Ostojic took a bubble bath with the curator Bertolomeo Petromarchi and critic Ludovico Pratesi, and washed the feet of Stevan Vuković. And ‘Vacation with Curator’ (2003), for which Ostojic went on holiday with the Albanian curator Edi Muka and paid paparazzi to photograph them together on the beach.

shown to no one except the escorted Szeemann.⁶⁸ Unlike Davis, who references western art history's avant-garde heroes, Ostojic chose to remake the work of Russian early-Soviet modernism. There is much to be said on the triangulation between Malevich, Ostojic and Szeemann, yet I do not want to privilege an exotic revolutionary connection here. Regardless of its history, Malevich's work still hangs on the walls of the Guggenheim, MOMA, and Tate, where his formal aesthetic achievement (as a forerunner of modernism) is privileged over any broader political revolutionary promise. Consequently, *Black Square on White* can be considered alongside the other works discussed, within a feminist logic of remaking or reinventing the symbols of paternalist art history.

Similar to the other works discussed, *Black Square on White* can be understood within a feminist logic of re-visioning. The work engages a trope from art history's canon and, in doing so, evinces an awareness of this narrative's neglect of women as cultural producers by forcibly (and wittily) refusing to conceal the sex of the artist. Furthermore, after the performance, Ostojic's carefully shaped public hair was photographed and circulated as a vaguely abstract formal composition. Upon first glance it is nearly impossible to discern the exact subject of the photograph, and like the suppressed record of women's work within art history, the 'true picture' only emerges upon further study. However, in addition to this formal and reflexive effect (wherein an artwork is produced in order to specifically explore its circuits of meaning-making) Ostojic's performance indicates the additional layers of immaterial, affective labour that must be undertaken in order to secure access to the art market and art history in the twenty-first century. Ostojic's cringe-inducing display of subservience to the authoritative male curator – whose decisions have critical effects upon the artists he chooses or disregards – indicates the usually hidden, relational and social 'work' that must be done in order to 'be on the scene'. This labour includes

⁶⁸ In 2005, Gregor Schneider produced a subsequent homage to Malevich's *Black Square* in *Cube Hamburg 2007*. (The discrepancy in dates is attributable to the fact that Schneider's work was refused by various venues, due to its politically contentious themes regarding Islam, and was not publicly shown until 2007.

[Schneider's work consisted of a large black cube building built in Hamburg, intended to recall the Great Mosque in Mecca and thus publicly raise issues concerning cultural and religious divisions. Ostojic's feminist intervention, played out upon the intimate spaces of her own body and shown – initially at least – to only one spectator, marks a sharply humorous, stereotypically gendered, contrast to this latter monumental adaptation.](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/15/arts/design/15magi.html?_r=0&adxnnl=1&pagewanted=all&adxnlnx=1378483498-dscjGrXHeEAwS222YfbyTg.)

negotiating the always gendered and classed power dynamics of flirting, friendship, networking, and the like.

To return to Wilke's performances, about which Jones writes: 'Precisely because of its very seductiveness (its refusal to "distance" the viewer into a state of critical awareness), Wilke's work operates *within* the frame of aesthetic judgment to highlight its internal contradiction (its claim of disinterestedness).'⁶⁹ Ostojic enacts a similar procedure of overidentification, hyperbolically performing her meek compliance and openly soliciting the art world's criticism for 'getting ahead' via duplicitous, even sleazy methods. The key difference is that Ostojic's overblown seductiveness works not (only) on the level of individual subjectivity and critical judgement, but in keen relation to art's labour markets and its veiled networks of success.⁷⁰ *I'll Be Your Angel/Black Square on White* encapsulates the multiple threads contended, so far, throughout this chapter: Ostojic appropriates and remakes a canonical, modernist painting, situating her work within an art historical narrative; she enacts an unsettling performance that draws attention upon both the concealed 'Malevich' and the similarly masked gendered conditions of artistic labour, both material and immaterial; finally, the performance in its entire *Curator Series* sequence demonstrates that the decision about what counts as art and who counts as an artist is a fundamentally exclusionary gesture that re-secures (gendered) power.

⁶⁹ Jones, *Body Art*, 174.

⁷⁰ Angela Dimitrakaki has theorised this shift within Ostojic's work in particular as the move from the body and performance, to life or biopolitical art. 'Labour, Ethics, Sex and Capital: On Biopolitical Production in Contemporary Art,' *n.paradoxa* 28 (July 2011): 5-15.

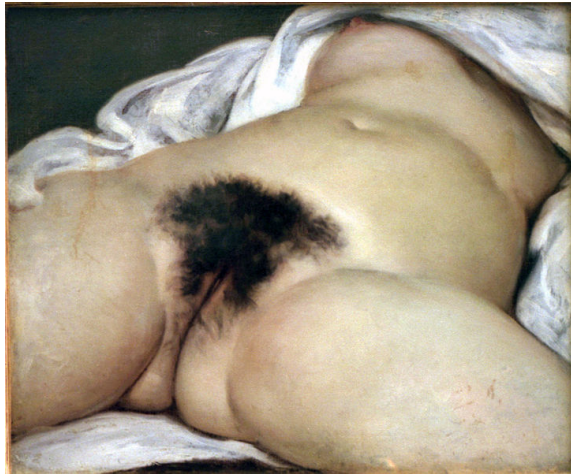


Figure 15. Gustave Courbet, *L'Origin du Monde*, 1866



Figure 16. Orlan, *Origin of War*, 1989.

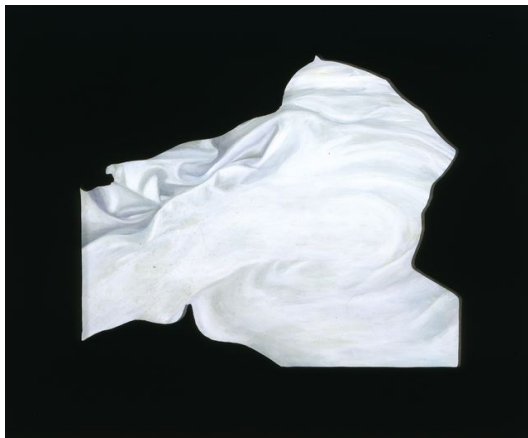


Figure 17. Sophie Matisse, *Be Back in 5 Minutes*, 1997.



Figure 18. Tanja Ostojic, *EU Panties, or After Courbet?*, 2004.

The (Male) Artist as Origin

As I have argued, the artworks considered in this chapter stage a re-making process that fundamentally reflects on the artists' historically-delimited position (as labourers) in art's history, and through the production of self-reflexive (in so far as that they evince awareness of their own status as meaning-making objects *only within* the circuits of art's history) art objects or even performances, are able to secure access and participate in that history. Within Bal's terms these are 'theoretical objects', in that their critique is bound within the form of the work, but gesture beyond that to reflect upon the exclusionary structures of both art's labour circuits and consequent historiography. Their artistic labour can be considered a form of feminist historiography in the sense that it creatively engages with and expands upon art history's knowledges in order to advance the position of women within them. Here I

would like to return to the discussion of artistic inheritance and oedipal succession with which this chapter began, particularly in relation to the infamous painting *L'origin du monde* (1866).

Courbet's painting notoriously portrays the abbreviated torso of a nameless female figure, focussing almost entirely upon her exposed genitalia. According to Jones, Courbet's painting encourages a conflation of 'great ideological consequences – that of the hallowed notion of the female body as the site of human generation, the ultimate "origin" of life and meaning, with artistic creation.' This conflation 'by extension, poses Courbet (the male artist) himself as "origin of the world".⁷¹ Unsurprisingly then, given its intimate female subject matter and metaphorical usurpation of feminine (pro)creativity, a number of contemporary women artists have revisited the painting in order to tease out multiple implications. In the context of this argument, the complexities around origin stories, artistic inheritance and patrimony are especially evident. The avant-garde figure of Gustave Courbet is an especially significant one in the recent historiography of art, forming as he does the basis for TJ Clark's influential 'social art history' writings of the early 1970s.⁷² Thus, by engaging with Courbet's painting, women artists (perhaps unconsciously) engage with the 'father' source both in the abstract or metaphorical sense articulated by Jones and in the more predictable sense of an art historical author-function.

In 1989, the French artist Orlan (b. 1947, Loire) re-imagined *L'Origin* with a startling photograph of male genitals entitled *The Origin of War*. The work extends Julia Kristeva's conflation of masculine historical temporality with that of nation, war and politics and slyly alludes to art history's destructive obsession with militaristic metaphors of artistic vanguardism.⁷³ In 1997, Sophie Matisse (b. 1965, Boston) presented a strikingly distinct adaptation of Courbet's work, as part of her series *Be Back in 5 Minutes*.⁷⁴ Matisse's strategy differs from the others discussed here, as (at first glance) she eschews a brazen confrontation with the precedent work, instead choosing to veil the nude body with a painted white cloth. This *pointed erasure* of the

⁷¹ Amelia Jones, 'Meaning, Identity, Embodiment' in *Art and Thought*, p.71.

⁷² TJ Clark references. Art historians have criticised Clark over the years, for example, Keith Moxey argued that his social history of art retained the notion of 'immanent aesthetic value.' *New Left Review* 22.4 (1991). Griselda Pollock has also challenged Clark for his inattention to gender relations. 'Vision, Voice, and Power,' in *Vision and Difference*.

⁷³ Kristeva, 'Women's Time'.

⁷⁴ Matisse's series also included allusions to Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Diego Velasquez's *Las Meninas*, Edgar Degas' *Absinthe Drinker*, Johannes Vermeer's *Lady with a Water Pitcher*. Each re-visioning confronts the art historical model by removing the figures and revealing an absence.

female figure examples an alternative strategy, one which implies no representation of women can be free from phallic privilege (as fetishised object of male gaze) therefore women artists must negotiate these legacies through a tactic of refusal.⁷⁵ In 2004, Ostojic once again responded to the painting, producing a poster colloquially known as *EU Panties*. The work deliberately plays upon the association of the author-function 'Courbet' with nineteenth-century class struggles, and extends this artistic legacy through Ostojic's own preoccupation with contemporary crises around nationality, gender and migration. Poignantly, whilst Courbet's *L'Origin* hung in Paris's Musee D'Orsay and billboards across Europe freely displayed semi-clad models, Ostojic's poster of her own pants-clad torso was deemed pornographic and forcibly removed from billboards in Vienna.⁷⁶

If narrative constructions of avant-garde art production have relied upon generational successions of attachment and rupture, the ostensibly simple act of re-visioning marks a *refusal* to needlessly innovate, reject and advance and thereby counters the paradigmatic modern belief in infinite expansion and progress. The generational politics are complicated further when we acknowledge that the institutionalisation of father-son dissent as creatively *productive*, is predicated on the converse myth of mother-daughter conflict as *hysterical*. Consequently, for women artists, their relation to the past and their artistic predecessors is continually damaged in either instance. The conflicted position in which many practicing artists find themselves is acutely realised in this posthumous review of Sleight's career. Largely positive in tone, the reviewer cannot however move beyond the language of avant-garde production:

Despite Sleight's invested, and often now underappreciated, feminist activism, and her infamous male nudes, her work has none of the

⁷⁵ It is important to note that, although this chapter focusses on women's adaptation of canonical tropes and therefore tends to focus on the disruptive intervention of the female artist's body, this strategy has been extensively debated within feminism. During the 1980s, in particular, artists such as Mary Kelly advocated the removal of the female body from art as she felt it could not escape the representational burden heaped upon it within western visual culture. 'Most women artists who have presented themselves in some way, visibly, in the work have been unable to find the kind of distancing devices which would cut across the predominant representations of women as object of the look...' Kelly and Paul Smith, 'No Essential Femininity' (1982) in Preziosi (ed.) *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1998: 370-382.

⁷⁶ Contemporary feminist engagement with Courbet's infamous painting continues. On 29 May 2014 Deborah de Robertis challenged the consecration of Courbet's painting, safely ensconced behind barriers in the Louvre, by hitching up her dress and flagrantly exposing her own genitalia in front of the work. This performance also recalls VALIE EXPORT's 1968 *GenitalPanik* action in a Munich cinema. <http://news.artnet.com/art-world/artist-enacts-emorigin-of-the-worldem-at-musee-dorsay-and-yes-that-means-what-you-think-35011>. Accessed 5 August 2014.

tension, strange pressure or alien opacity that we associate with the radical, the political, the ‘new’. And in spite of her famous and stirring group portraits of her fellow feminist art cooperative members (*SOHO 20 Group Portrait*, 1974, and *A.I.R. Group Portrait*, 1977–8), the lovingly intimate and painstakingly topical paintings are familiar, serious, affectionate, inoffensive, no threat at all.⁷⁷

The association of artistic innovation with a formally radical, new and ‘threatening’ aesthetic is firmly secured by the review. Sleight’s work fundamentally rejects this conception of art making and alternatively foregrounds the collaborative, pedagogic, and inherited legacies that are necessary for producing work that can be understood as ‘art’. However, in failing to conform to the accepted narrative (not that she could, as feminist art historians have shown, most women are incapable, except as ‘exceptional’ cases, of fitting within this story) Sleight’s work is cast in wistfully gendered and nostalgic terms. The question for women artists then becomes how to negotiate their relation to history, without recourse to avant-gardist rupture whilst also avoiding categorisation as safely conservative and ‘femininely’ inoffensive.

In response to their ambivalent critical position in the history of art, many of the artists under discussion have articulated an iconoclastic uncertainty. In 1989, for example, Hannah Wilke wrote: ‘History is a dialectical process. To honour Duchamp is to oppose him’.⁷⁸ Kate Davis employs a similar rhetoric in claiming to be ‘seduced by the quality and character of [Modigliani’s] pencil drawing’, while simultaneously desiring to refract it through a ‘feminist lens’.⁷⁹ The seductive power of art history’s renowned subjects cannot be elided; women artists do not work above and beyond the educational and economic structures of the artworld any more than their male counterparts (although their greater precarity may offer *some* critical distance).

If these works are not facilely nostalgic, nor are they heedlessly innovative (Fredric Jameson, despite himself, cannot help but reiterate the drive towards ‘stylistic innovation’ so beloved of vanguard narratives). Feminist revisionary practices are, in fact, closer to Linda Hutcheon’s postmodern theories, which she has honed through discussions of adaptation, irony and (the focus here) parody. In contrast to Jameson’s

⁷⁷ Quinn Latimer, ‘A Step Out of Time’, *Frieze* (pub. 7 March 2013). http://www.frieze.com/issue/print_article/a-step-out-of-time/ [Accessed 1 February 2014]

⁷⁸ Wilke, Excerpts from *I Object: Memoirs of a Sugargiver*, published in *Hannah Wilke: a Retrospective*, University of Missouri Press, pp?

⁷⁹ Any quotes from Kate Davis are all excerpted from an unrecorded lecture given by Kate Davis at Edinburgh College of Art on 11th October 2013.

conception of pastiche as ‘random stylistic allusion’, Hutcheon conceives of parody as indelibly political.⁸⁰ Although parody could be understood as a ‘seemingly introverted formalism’ (and, indeed, this is true of this chapter’s examples, which focus upon formal derivations within the fabric of the works), Hutcheon argues that this ‘paradoxically brings about a direct confrontation with the problem of the relation of the aesthetic to a world of significance external to itself, to a discursive world of socially defined meaning systems (past and present) – *in other words, to ideology and history.*’⁸¹ Hence, visual artworks are understood as materially constituted within a web of institutional and ideological meaning-making practices. It is within these practices that feminist artists assert their voices and, through the creation of ‘re-visited’ artworks, are able to speak to an already extant system or language.

Summarily then, Hutcheon proceeds to suggest that ‘parody marks both continuity and change, both authority and transgression’.⁸² I suggest that this affectionate irreverence towards the paternal figures of art history is crucial to feminist re-configurations of the canon, as it merges filial desire and critique without customary recourse to avant-gardist rupture or rejection. Art historian Tamara Trodd discusses this tension in the work of Tacita Dean, who has made multiple films representing older, male artists including *Mario Merz* (2002) and *Edwin Parker* (2011). The feminist problematic that Trodd locates is at the fascinating intersection between artistic inheritance and a ‘desire for usurpation’ that requires a powerful process of ‘homage-yet-erasure’, and Dean contributes a key to understanding this conflict, by reference to: ‘the unwritten portion between the first two Theban plays, where Oedipus’s sister/daughters lead their blinded brother/father through the wilderness to Colonus; so reversing the usual direction of parental guidance’.⁸³ This narrative suggests an alternative to the oedipal successions so long associated with vanguard advancement within the arts and emphasises instead a (still necessarily *critical*) trans-generational attachment and negotiation. Dean’s negotiation of the Oedipal myth returns us to Tickner’s 2002 article and offers an alternative path for women artists to generate new perspectives on art historiography and cautious intergenerational bonds beyond the realms of the hysterical or rebellious daughter.

⁸⁰ Jameson, ‘Postmodernism of the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism’, 1984: 65.

⁸¹ Linda Hutcheon, ‘The Politics of Postmodernism: Parody and History’, *Cultural Critique* 5 (Winter 1986-87): 179-207, 179-180.

⁸² Hutcheon (1986-87): 204.

⁸³ Tamara Trodd, paper presented at the Henry Moore Institute (Leeds: September 2011).

Conclusions: Re-Citing Feminism

Although my examination has focussed primarily upon women artists' negotiation of patronymic heritage, I would like to conclude this chapter by acknowledging corresponding efforts to create a matrilineal connection. It could be suggested that 'to re-make' is to break off, possess, and reframe a visual fragment from art history to make it anew in the present. To 're-cite', by contrast, means to summon, or call, to set in motion, and it is in this fluid sense that younger women artists respond to, play with, and extend the legacies of their feminist forebears, rather than ambivalently or even antagonistically confronting the same. Pragmatically it is conceivable that, if during the 1970s the first large-scale collections of feminist artists began to re-vision the art historical canon from a marginal interventional perspective, since (at least) the 1990s women artists have been able to trace clear matrilineal connections across new feminist narratives (or even, as Zapperi suggested in a recent article, explore the potential of imagined narratives).

In 1929, Virginia Woolf articulated the importance of procuring a maternal artistic heritage and becoming subjects of an elected history: 'We think back through our mothers if we are women.'⁸⁴ Punning on the word 'collage', Miriam Schapiro's *femmage* pieces enact this thinking process, quite literally stitching women's art history into the fabric of the artwork. In 'Mary Cassatt and Me' (1976), for instance, Schapiro patchworked a reproduction of Mary Cassatt's painting *Mother Reading Le Figaro* (1878) within a series of handcrafted squares. As Thalia Gouma-Peterson argues, such works express 'her search for female ancestry within art history' and, through them, Schapiro 'established a maternal genealogy.'⁸⁵ Schapiro's intergenerational collaborations have also included Berthe Morisot and Frida Kahlo, as well as a series specifically engaged with Russian modernist painters such as Sonia Delauney. Other women artists have foregrounded specific geopolitical contexts in their recitational works – such as Tania Bruguera restaging the performances of fellow Cuban artist Ana Mendieta – but these requires greater elucidation than I can provide here.

Davis's film of 2010, *What Have We Got To Do With a Room of One's Own?*, explores the concept of matrilineal heritage on a number of levels and perhaps

⁸⁴ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, (Oxford, OUP: 1998), 99.

⁸⁵ Thalia Gouma-Peterson, 'Miriam Schapiro: An Act of Becoming,' *American Art* 11.1 (1997): 10-45, 28.

provides a key to understanding the artistic relations to historical moments of feminist creation. The work was initially conceived as part of a 2010 project, *The Long Loch*, produced in collaboration with the influential feminist artist Faith Wilding. Davis appropriately met Wilding as a result of a recitative artwork that echoed one of the older artist's epochal performances: *Waiting in 1972, What About 2007?* Davis's 2010 film takes as a title provocation Woolf's famous essay of 1929, thereby establishing a second matrilineal artistic figure alongside Wilding; ultimately, however, the film is a black and white exploration of the artist's real-life mother's house. Davis's film asks the spectator to imagine what role these maternal registers might have in relation to feminist politics today, and to consider how these 'mothers' experiences and battles have contributed towards the contemporary moment: 'what have we got to do' to extend these legacies? The film provides a clue to understanding Davis's recitative actions as an act of drawing the past into the present, enquiring what we can do to extend or relocate the historical project of feminism in the 2010s. Working across various maternal platforms, Davis's film acknowledges that she is a daughter born of feminist struggles that changed the landscape of contemporary art production, and that a vital responsibility of this inheritance is the working out of political affiliation and expansion.

I have suggested that women artists' visual historiographic tactics enact a useful, or at least thought-provoking, relationship to art history. Jones has also read encouraging signs within contemporary strategies of feminist 'return', suggesting that they indicate the possibility of re-engaging prior utopias, or the revolutionary spirit, of the late 1960s and early 1970s women's movement.⁸⁶ Roelstraete, on the other hand, considers the 'historiographic turn' in art to be melancholic and stubbornly regressive, refusing to look towards the future.⁸⁷ However, if we recognise the importance of history writing (whether textual or visual) as adopting an ethical position in relation to knowledge, or a working out of political affiliation, the processes explored in this chapter are neither inherently positive or negative. Instead, the model of woman artist as historiographer allows us to understand the process of coming into the circumscribed modern legacies of the discipline and attempting carving out a space for survival, with the varied levels of attainment and compromise that these unstable practices must comprise.

⁸⁶ See p.157, .83.

⁸⁷ See p.190, n.18.

The Politics of Feminist Historiography

At the televised Emmy awards show in August 2014, the pop singer Beyoncé performed on screen to over 15 million viewers, silhouetted by a towering lightbox emblazoned with a single word: FEMINIST.¹ Each day numerous media outlets peddle the debates and ‘lifestyle’ of twenty-first-century womanhood, which is often assumed to be coterminous with feminist visions of empowerment.² However, does this unprecedented level of media representation signal the recognition of four decades’ worth of social demands, or is it a merely a banal recuperation of language? What does it mean to call oneself ‘feminist’ in 2014? As I have insisted throughout this thesis, contemporary political struggle is inexorably burdened by its own recent past; both the histories that we tell about the movement’s previous moments and the ideological assumptions that precede this telling.³ In this conclusion, therefore, I want to seriously consider the importance of critical historiography for sculpting the terrain upon which current political subjectivities and resistance can emerge.

A key contribution of this thesis has been to rethink which institutions and instituting processes historiography could be elaborated through, expressly considering how art historical knowledge is produced in overlooked spaces and social relations. In tracing feminism’s radical expansion of art historical frameworks to encompass classroom relations, professionalisation and conference politics, spatial and corporate structures of the museum, and the reproductive qualities of art practice itself, my thesis did not *only* aspire to remember and record this essential reorganisation of knowledge production. Rather, my research endeavoured to emphasise how feminist subjectivity *emerges* in the excavation and articulation of such knowledge and, as such, attempted to situate (myself and) contemporary

¹ The website of American business magazine Forbes reported that the Emmys were watched by an average figure of 15.59 million viewers. See: www.forbes.com.

² Here I am thinking of *The Guardian*, *New Statesman* and a wealth of blogs and websites. For example, in 2007 the popular feminist blogs *Jezebel*, *Feministing* and *the F-word* were all established, and, in response to the consumerist feminism pedalled by many of these sites, *The Feminist Times* was briefly established in the UK in 2013-14, adopting the pointed slogan ‘Life – Not Lifestyle’.

³ I use ‘we’ in this instance, not to reductively signal a shared geographical or temporal location, but to point towards shared political goals.

feminism in relation to the still unfolding effects of the historical ‘second-wave’. Yet mine is not the only investigation to attempt this operation, therefore it is necessary to position *A History of Feminist Art History* within a larger, revitalised field of study that seeks to explore the politics of feminist historiography.

Although the urge to auto-critique is nothing new within feminist investigation,⁴ over the past few years a sufficient number of publications have emerged to suggest that feminism is undergoing a significant intellectual development, as scholars seek to return to, reassess, and potentially even revise the dominant narratives that have shaped the logic of feminism’s *own* history. As early as 2008, a roundtable conversation published in the journal *Grey Room* sensitively explicated the limitations of generational thinking in relation to the organisation of feminist art in museum exhibitions.⁵ In 2011 Clare Hemmings reminded scholars of the ethico-political stakes involved in resisting the replication of hegemonic historical models, while the historian Joan Wallach Scott and art historian Catherine Grant attempted to rethink temporal relations through the frameworks of ‘fantasy echo’ and ‘fans of feminism’ respectively.⁶ Most recently (2014) Victoria Browne asked how feminism might narrate and evolve beyond its own past without closing down the ‘unfinished possibilities of feminisms from earlier times’.⁷ Although this is by no means an exhaustive list, it suggests the intensity of this proposed historiographic turn in that such studies cut across the disciplinary formations of (at least) philosophy, history, art history and gender theory.

Collectively, these studies express the basic recognition that historians of feminism must strive to avoid replicating, in the words of Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘the same patterns of thought and action that excluded, distorted, muted or erased

⁴ Analysis of narratives *within* Euro-American feminist discourse can be traced to at least 1979/1981, when Julia Kristeva’s famous essay, ‘Women’s Time,’ was published/translated into English. In *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). 201-24.

⁵ Rosalyn Deutsche et al., ‘Feminist Time: A Conversation,’ *Grey Room* 31 (2008): 32-67, 55-59. I am not suggesting that examinations of temporality and generation did not occur before this date, particularly around the turn of the century when events including ‘Women Artists at the Millennium’ took place at Princeton University. Rather, I am suggesting there has been a renewed intensity to these debates, with the issue of historiography assuming a central role.

⁶ Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminism*, (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2011). Joan Wallach Scott, *The Fantasy of Feminist History*, (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2011). Catherine Grant, ‘Fans of Feminism: Rewriting Histories of Second-Wave Feminism in Contemporary Art,’ *Oxford Art Journal* 34.2 (2011): 265-286.

⁷ Victoria Browne, *Feminism, Time and Non-Linear History* (New York: Palgrave, 2014), 1.

women from the master narratives of history in the first place.’⁸ However, it remains unclear as to *why* this particular mode of analysis has gained special prominence in the years following the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008. Thus, what follows is an attempt to provide, in Althusserian terms, a symptomatic reading of the recent historiographic turn.⁹

First of all, it is clear to me that the current trend towards reflective historiographical critique bears an unmistakable correspondence with materialist art historical excavations of the 1980s, which were almost hegemonically displaced after 1989. Following this (somewhat overdetermined) date of course history ‘ended’, feminism won a tentative position in an expanding UK university system, as did visual culture studies and queer studies, and (usually psychoanalytic) analyses of visual representation dominated throughout the 1990s.¹⁰ I am thinking here of the similarities between, for instance, Griselda Pollock’s ‘Vision Voice and Power’ (1982), Lisa Tickner’s ‘Feminism, Art History and Sexual Difference’ (1988), and more recent work by Michelle Meagher (2011), Angela Dimitrakaki (2013), and Hilary Robinson (2015) – all of which principally investigate the production of art historical knowledge as invariably reproducing bourgeois, gendered epistemologies.¹¹ It was not, and is not, for geographical or generational reasons that a philosophical approach to history-writing surfaced at such points, but is profoundly related to political landscapes that become clearer when considering points of resemblance between the two periods. Feminist scholar Lynne Segal has recalled,

⁸ Susan Stanford Friedman, ‘Making History: Reflections on Feminism, Narrative and Desire,’ in Diane Elam and Robyn Wiegman ed. *Feminism Beside Itself* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 12.

⁹ To read symptomatically is, in general terms, to analyse a text for unconscious and/or ideological meanings. For more see Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971).

¹⁰ This is not to say that psychoanalysis has not offered much of use to feminism, but I agree with Michèle Barrett’s description of the ‘methodological individualism of psychoanalysis’ and that its tendency towards ahistoricism loses much needed specificity for grounded analysis. See ‘Chapter 6: Women’s Oppression and the “Family,”’ in *Women’s Oppression Today: A Marxist/Feminist Encounter*, 3rd edition (Brooklyn; London: Verso, 2014), p.198.

¹¹ Griselda Pollock, ‘Vision, Voice and Power’ (orig. 1982) in *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art* (London & New York: Routledge, 1988). Lisa Tickner, ‘Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference,’ *Genders* 3 (Fall 1988): 92-129. Michelle Meagher, ‘Telling Stories About Feminist Art,’ *Feminist Theory* 12 (2011): 297-316. Angela Dimitrakaki, *Gender, ArtWork and the Global Imperative* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2013), see pp. 25-70. Hilary Robinson, *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology 1968-2014*, 2nd edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), see pp.129-216.

the frustration and defeats of a second term of Conservative rule (1983-87), which targeted and weakened precisely those nooks and crannies in local government, resource centres and collective spaces that feminists (and other radicals) had managed to enter, [and which] gradually exhausted not only the political hopes, but even the dreams of many.¹²

The similarity between that moment and our current ‘age of austerity’ hardly needs explicating here, but I want to suggest, tentatively, that feminism’s historiographical trend might be related to this correlation in political climate.¹³ The question of why historiographical reflexivity might be linked to resistance against right-wing ideology is not exactly clear, but merely beginning to trace this link insists upon the political dimension of history writing. Moreover, it would then be no coincidence that my thesis examination returned time and again to a socialist-inflected approach that was particularly strong in 1980s feminism in the West. The circumstances of that decade, when global political economies underwent vast liberal restructuring, and the socially progressive utopianism of 1968 became consolidated under the ‘new art histories’ rubric, continues to exert strong pressures upon the organisation of the academy and its knowledges today.

Therefore, rather than understanding feminist art history as a progressively evolving critique of dominant culture (in which increasingly sophisticated analysis supersedes the previous), resistance must be reconfigured as emerging differently and unevenly out of every present ‘in relation both to the changing horizon of a potential future and to the forces and events that shape its terms of possibility.’¹⁴ This fluid ordering of time would allow researchers to draw connections between the politics of historical work at different moments, learning from prior successes and failures. As Angela Dimitrakaki optimistically frames the project in her book of 2013, rather than considering the period following 2008 as the *conclusion* of a feminist-postmodernist paradigm: ‘I ended up feeling that I had been researching and trying to give discursive shape to a *beginning* (the emergence of a feminist anti-

¹² Lynne Segal, ‘Generations of Feminism’, *Radical Philosophy* 93 (May/June 1997): 6-16, 10.

¹³ At the time of submitting this thesis a General Election was a few weeks away, with a second term of Conservative coalition looking very likely.

¹⁴ Kathi Weeks, ‘Foreword’, *Women’s Oppression Today: A Marxist Feminist Encounter* 3rd edition, Michele Barrett (Brooklyn; London: Verso, 2014), ix-xix, xi.

capitalist paradigm in art).¹⁵ According to my suggestion, perhaps this could be better characterised as a *re*-beginning, picking up a loose thread once again?

It has been suggested elsewhere that contemporary art's 'historiographic turn' could be considered a nostalgic outcome compelled by the powerlessness of collective politics in the present moment.¹⁶ Such a nostalgic operation is an understandable response if one accepts that twenty-first-century feminism has been reductively repackaged as an individualised, *classed* model of achievement.¹⁷ Ultimately, however, the enquiry devolves upon how past, present and future are related, overlap, intertwine, and crucially how people - including art historians - *now* understand contemporary politics in relation to (a historically formed representation of) feminism's past. How can younger generations construct evolving feminist politics against the legacy of a feminist movement that is increasingly historicised, museologised, and temporally consolidated?

My suggestion is that the distancing and repudiation tactics of the depoliticised 'new feminisms' are explicitly counteracted by the historical turn in feminist scholarship, which insists upon the *politics* of remembering and writing (art) histories.¹⁸ This thinking prompted me to revisit TJ Clark's foundational essay 'On the Conditions of Artistic Creation' (1974) in which he asks: 'why should art history's problems matter? On what grounds could I ask anyone to take them seriously?'¹⁹ Clark famously argued that art history had become a dreary professional literature in service to the art market, and that, in order to revive the heroic roots of the discipline, scholars needed to refocus attention upon the significant ideological grounds of artistic production and reception. His essay was intended to serve as a reminder 'of what art history once was' in the late nineteenth

¹⁵ Dimitrakaki, *Gender, artWork and the Global Imperative: A Materialist-Feminist Critique*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 247.

¹⁶ Dieter Roelstraete, 'The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art,' *E-flux journal* 4 (March 2009).

¹⁷ Angela McRobbie argues that, under the competitive conditions generated by a neoliberal marketplace, feminism is reduced to the individual objectives of self-improvement, achievement and consumerism. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (LA; London: SAGE, 2009).

¹⁸ Cultural theorist Christina Scharff has demonstrated the individualising rhetoric of the 'new feminisms' in which younger men and women engage in a 'fierce repudiation' of second-wave histories. *Repudiating Feminism: Young Women in a Neoliberal World* (Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2012), 108.

¹⁹ TJ Clark, 'The Conditions of Artistic Creation', *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 May 1974: 561-62. Of course, Clark also dismisses feminist analysis in this article by describing it as one 'variety' of art history, alongside formalist, Freudian and so on: 'For diversification, read disintegration' (561). However, this does not mean that he does not provide other, useful suggestions about the character of art history as a discipline.

century, when it could be considered equal alongside ‘real’ history.²⁰ Clark’s observations seemed profoundly encouraging to my deliberation here, as I attempted to consider how feminist art history is connected to a global and transnational feminist field, and how better understanding and recording the achievements of the previous four decades could assist in preparing a terrain of knowledge for collective organising.

An essay by Matthew Garrett picks up a similar line of reasoning to Clark four decades later, in an issue of *American Quarterly* dedicated to activism in academia. He argues that, ‘intellectual opposition to capitalism is largely produced within an academic environment that obscures or neutralizes connections between the conditions of academic work and the conditions *tout court*.’²¹ Thus, the politics of academic work *must* be connected to broader political struggles beyond the university, but without - as Garrett warns - perpetuating a romantic conception of ‘real politics’.²² The basic connections proposed by feminist art history bear repeating here: culture is not separate from politics, art cannot be protected from gender distinctions structuring social relations at large, and intellectual labour on art history remains profoundly connected to ‘real’ feminist resistance concerning geopolitics as a whole. (This is not to deny, however, that some institutions may bear greater power than others in this struggle.) Thus, feminist art history cannot risk becoming cloistered or, as Pollock warns, restricted to a women’s special interest movement aimed only towards augmenting women artists’ meagre representation in art’s historical and economic markets.²³

One of the primary tasks that this thesis aimed to accomplish was the illumination, however partial, of the breathtakingly imaginative and intellectually complex responses produced by feminist art historians in reaction to institutionalised inequality. Thoughtful critique did not arise within a vacuum; it was the product of widespread social agitation (the women’s movement), collective pedagogical organisation (e.g. reading groups and slide libraries), and engagement with other strategies of critique (including those elaborated by Marxism and postcolonialism).

²⁰ Clark, 561.

²¹ Matthew Garrett, ‘The Romance of Real Politics’, *American Quarterly* 64.4 (Dec. 2012): 795-98, 795.

²² See discussion in the thesis introduction concerning feminism and activism.

²³ Pollock argues that dominant art history is maintained by segregating feminist analysis as that which “‘those feminists’” occupy themselves’. ‘Whither Feminist Art History?’, *The Art Bulletin* 96.1 (2014): 9-23, 19.

Acknowledging the importance of ‘connections’ leads me to conclude that an effective feminist art history must confront a dual task today: first, to continue re-evaluating dominant forms of historical knowledge, reproducing its belief in a legitimate historiographical alternative; second, to maintain an uncompromising address against the regulating function of the academic institution and its conservative management of knowledge and labour, particularly in its increasingly explicit business-orientation.

If historiography is, in Deborah Cherry’s words, ‘the way that history is or has been constituted’, then an analysis directed at that level is demanded by these enquiries so as to extend rather than historicise feminist legacies.²⁴ As I have implicitly argued throughout this thesis, a more generative approach to historiography would take in usually occluded relations or instituting acts that are also productive of historical knowledge alongside writing. Although it is useful to consider feminism at various historical moments, by tactically thinking historiography in an active present tense – of strategy, of doing – this body of knowledge is transformed into a repository for today’s political challenges. As I have argued in this conclusion, scholars are continuing to emphasise the entwined epistemological and political dimensions of historiographical research. This is significant because, to paraphrase Paula Harper, the processes of researching, writing and teaching the history of feminist art can open our eyes to the real value of history.²⁵

²⁴ Deborah Cherry, paper presented at the panel ‘Historiography/Feminism/Strategy’ at the College Art Association Conference, 26th February 2000, New York. Reprinted in *n.paradoxa* online issue no.12 (2000).

²⁵ Paula Harper, ‘The First Feminist Art Program: A View from the 1980s,’ *Signs* 10.4 (Summer 1985): 762-781, 775. This thesis opened with the epigraph:

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