

A carnival of feminist cultural activism
3-5 March 2011, York UK

Please read these abstracts, and print out or make a note of your favourites. Abstracts will be on display at the carnival for you to peruse again.

LIST OF ABSTRACTS/SUMMARIES OF PRESENTATIONS

Abstracts are listed in alphabetical order of family name or, if appropriate where a group is presenting, under that name.

Thursday Workshop details: <http://tinyurl.com/fcaworkshops>

Full Programme for all three days: www.feminist-cultural-activism.net

Abdullah, Angham. Iraqi Women Write War

This paper focuses on contemporary Iraqi women's fictions of war, focusing on significant novels about the Gulf war in the 1990s. I assess how the authors of these works represent the trauma of war and suggest that in writing war, these Iraqi women challenge attempts to marginalize women as outside of the war experience. This paper sheds light on the ways Iraqi novelists are testifying to the devastation and the agony they have witnessed over the three decades of war and bloodshed, and the paper explores the relationship between testimony and fiction. The women characters of these novels are depicted as being overwhelmed by a sense of loss and frustration. They face two types of death: the moral death represented in their long moments of waiting and the physical death of those whom they love. By means of the cries of despair they utter they give voice to the hidden trauma of all Iraqis who have suffered for three decades from war and destruction.

Biography: *I was born in Mosul, Iraq in 1965 I hold a BA in Translation from the University of Mosul (1986) and an MA in English Literature/Modern Novel from the same University (1992), where I also worked for three years in the field of translation and teaching. In 1994 I left Iraq with my husband because of war and sanctions, but returned in 2007 to a post as lecturer of modern fiction at the University of Dohuk. It was here that through teaching, I discovered the necessity of unearthing the powerful fiction Iraqi women were writing about their lives under war and oppression. In 2009 began my PhD on this topic at the Centre for Women Studies, University of York.*

Applin, Jo. Not Working

What does it mean for an artist to 'work', or to 'not work'? What kind of labour is involved in the task of making a work of art? This paper analyses the various ways in which women artists engaged, challenged, reorganized and even refused the idea of work in the 1960s, at a time prior to the establishment of a formalized feminist politics to which to subscribe, and certainly before the idea of the 'woman artist' carried much weight either institutionally or critically. I do not take as given the fact that as women artists they should automatically be studied in isolation. On the contrary, by situating my study in the art world of 1960s New York, arguably the centre of the artistic avant-garde at that time, I will tackle head on the *problems* of incorporation and inclusion and the implications of this for a feminist art history. I will consider the working environment of a number of women artists and the various ways and means through which they forged, negotiated or even *refused* a subject position—and a voice—for themselves within the avant-garde artistic community.

Biography: *Jo Applin is Lecturer in modern and contemporary art in the History of Art Department at the University of York. She is currently writing a book on Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's 1965 installation Infinity Mirror Room--Phalli's Field and beginning work on a new research project titled 'Not Working' which focuses on the work of a number of women artists working in New York City in the 1950s and 1960s.*

Athelstan, Alexa. In the Spotlight: Queer Femininities and the Carnavalesque Embodiment of Feminist Cultural Activism

Femininity, especially when embodied by a biologically born female, has traditionally been constructed as the ultimate sign of normative gender identity, within both feminist and queer theory. It has been linked to passivity, consumerism, false consciousness and an apolitical, often even an anti feminist or anti queer, position. However, within recent writings by queer and feminist theorists we see the emergence of an alternative, or queer, form of femininity that is imbued with a feminist consciousness, agency and power, as well as a hard hitting political stance, a sassy gendered aesthetic and ironic sense of humour. Drawing on various visual cultural examples of queer femininity, this paper will trouble the assumption that femininity is synonymous with a normatively gendered and apolitical subject, by analysing how queer feminine subjects perform their feminine gender identity in a way that embodies a form of queer and feminist cultural activism. The examples that this paper will draw on include: punk cabaret musician Amanda Palmer, Jennifer Miller the famous bearded lady, Circus Amok, Radical Cheerleaders, transgender performance artist and activist Jet Moon, as well as a book of photography and ethnography by Ulrika Dahl and Del La Grace Volcano, *Femmes of Power* (2008). Using Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque and Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity this paper will explore how queerly feminine subjects mobilise the carnivalesque spectacle of their hyperbolic and parodic performances of femininity as a mode of cultural activism that calls attention to various feminist political issues, whilst effectively critiquing normative notions of femininity. Thus, this paper will explore the intersection between queer feminine aesthetics and activist feminist politics, in order to posit the existence of a specifically queer feminine way of doing feminist cultural activism.

Biography: *I am a PhD student at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, Leeds University. My research project focuses on analysing the gendered aesthetic and politics of queerly feminine subjects, as well as exploring the intersection between power and femininity.*

Aune, Kristin and Redfern, Catherine: activism and the new feminist movement

Since the start of the new millennium in the UK, an array of new feminist activities – national networks, issue-specific campaigns, local groups, festivals, magazines and blogs – have been formed by a new constituency of mostly younger women and men. Cultural activism is central to this new feminist movement, with popular culture singled out as one of several key areas requiring feminist intervention. Drawing on research conducted for the book *Reclaiming the F Word: The New Feminist Movement*, including a survey of nearly 1,300 feminists, we will explore the contours of cultural activism in the contemporary British feminist movement. We will discuss attitudes to cultural activism and explore the variety of forms of activism people are engaging with. We will illustrate this with examples from videos, new magazines, feminist art (e.g. banners and zines) and online activism (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs and webzines).

Biography: *Catherine Redfern is founder of The F Word website. Now almost ten years old, the site is recognised as influential in speaking a revived interest in feminism among younger women and men. Kristin*

Aune is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Derby, where she teaches courses on feminism, gender and religion. Her publications include Women and Religion in the West (co-edited with S. Sharma & G. Vincett, Ashgate, 2008). Catherine and Kristin are the authors of Reclaiming the F Word: The New Feminist Movement (Zed Books, 2010). They were recently named by the Guardian as two of 'the next famous five feminists'.

Bailey, Catherine. Creative Nonfictional Drama as Third-Wave Feminist Narrative

This paper considers the ways in which realist and creative-nonfictional theatre contribute significantly to the advancement of third-wave feminism. My central suggestion is that staged drama has profound, untapped potential to subvert patriarchal norms by articulating a new narrative of gender egalitarianism and feminine empowerment in a way that is both honest/urgent and poetic/artistic, and is therefore doubly impactful. For far too long, women and men alike have suffered under the narrative of patriarchy, which is not only based on political inclinations, but a pervasive narrative based on deeply imbedded mythological, symbolic, historical, and cultural “truths” that posit aggression and male-dominance as natural and just. In recent decades, feminists have made a concentrated and considerable effort to secure personal and political rights for women, but have arguably not yet broadcasted an alternative cultural mythology to patriarchy – a sort of “matriarchy,” as it were – that is compelling and convincing enough to catalyze a sort of emotional, perceptual (and artistic?) revolution at the grassroots level, ushering in the new paradigm we so urgently need. I would like to suggest that theatre has the power to serve not only as a Habermasian forum for feminism’s reflection on and articulation of its fundamental narrative, but also as a mode of expressing the possibilities of its vision to a truly global audience. I will further discuss how this platform can, perhaps most influentially, stage creative nonfictional drama that is sourced from actual interviews with the marginalized and subaltern, lending a powerful voice to their situations and personal narratives, raising consciousness of their dilemmas, and blending the personal with the political, the local with the ideological. This artful framing of reality impacts us in a way that mass media or even documentary cannot, appealing both to our temporal concerns and our transcendental imaginations, and therefore more effectively summoning us to activism. Drawing from the work of playwrights Eve Ensler, Lynn Nottage, Lisa Loomer, and Caryl Churchill, mythologists Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Joseph Campbell, and Northrop Frye, and psychologists Dan McAdams and Laurence Kirmayer, I will aim to illustrate the possibilities of theatrical storytelling as a means to feminist manifesto, action, and sustainable, progressive change.

Biography: Catherine Elizabeth Bailey is a writer, artist, and activist from Seattle, USA. She is currently pursuing a Master’s Degree in English and a Graduate Certificate in Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Rochester, NY. She has collaborated with nonprofits in several countries that focus on women’s rights, independent media, and the arts.

Barrett, Louise. Tallulah: sexual identity and drama

Louise Barrett will offer a workshop and make a presentation about the work she does with TALLULAH theatre in the South West of England. Louise founded Tallulah Theatre in May of this year. The group was created with the clear aim – to offer women who identify as Lesbian, Bisexual, transgender or questioning a creative opportunity to: ‘Explore and challenge notions of sexuality – whether it be personally or in a wider cultural context through drama and performing arts’ The weekly workshops offer content that is focused upon issues surrounding sexuality and identity and are explored via drama, song and movement. The group also works towards a performance at some point each year ensuring that we celebrate and ‘come out’ to a wider audience – holding to the notion that being proud of our lives and ourselves and demonstrating this

through performance, creates a pathway for others in isolation to follow and grow in confidence to. The group varies in age from 19 to 59. Some women travel for over an hour to get to the group each Thursday. This June the group were awarded their first Arts Council grant to ensure that the group can continue for another year and also pay for travel expenses to the performances in February.

Biography: Louise Barrett is the founder (2003) and director of Pretty Good Girl Dance Theatre (www.prettygoodgirl.com) and has written, choreographed and performed in 4 full-length dance theatre productions which each took in between 40 and 85 tour dates. Louise is now working on No Fear - looking at women of courage through history. Her aim is to make work that appeals to and is accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of rural or social isolation. For the last 2 years she has been dancer in residence for North Somerset working on inclusive delivery with the Dance Action Project. This year Louise founded TALLULAH Theatre – a community theatre provision in Bristol, for women who identify as Lesbian, bisexual and transgender. The group will be performing their first show (Reading RubyFruit) at the new OUTSET LGBT theatre festival in Taunton as part of the LGBT history month and at the SISTERSHOW exhibition taking place at the Centre Space art gallery Bristol. Louise is also project coordinator for OUTSET – taking place in February at the Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton, this is Somerset's first LGBT theatre festival.

Behbahani, Leyli. Campaigning for Consciousness: Street Theatre in Tehran

I wish to present a few forms of artistic feminist activism that have been employed by Iranian feminists and women's rights activists in Iran and the Iranian diaspora(s) since 2006. Throughout fieldwork in 2008 (Tehran) and 2010 (Los Angeles), I had the chance to learn about some of the most effective artistic strategies used by the Iran-led feminist initiatives, such as the well-known One Million Signatures Campaign for Equality. The Campaign's goal is to collect a million signatures from Iranians in order to demand a change to the gender discriminatory laws in Iran through the kind of bottom-up pressure and grassroots involvement that will be gained by raising gender consciousness. Mingling arts and feminist activism has been at heart of innovative methods to raise consciousness around discriminatory laws and customs, and varies from mock real-situation street performances in Tehran to multimedia exhibitions in Los Angeles. I will illustrate some of these methods by referring to data gathered through in depth interviews with activists. This paper will be accompanied by pictures and/or short videos.

Biography: I was born in Tehran in 1978, and left Iran for Italy in 2001. My background is in Architecture (Iran) and International Communications (Italy), and I did a masters degree in Gender Studies at SOAS. I am currently a Ph.D. student, researching Iranian feminisms, and only recently returned from fieldwork. I have been an activist since 2009.

Bennett, Jen. Dolly the Carnival Pin-ata

Dolly is mother to us all. She is muted and limbless; her physical state illustrating the socio-historical state of the female in patriarchal society. Dolly is pinned with messages, some positive and some negative. These messages address different issues that women have with their engendered social roles. The messages fall into categories: in the home, relationships, physicality, motherhood, age, careers. The overarching umbrella term for all of these is 'womanhood'. Read Dolly's body. When you have found a message that resonates with you, remove the pin and ribbon. In this way you are undressing Dolly of her labels and taking the thorns out of her sides. Tie the ribbon around your wrist. Which ribbon will you choose? Are you honest enough (with yourself) to pick out the message that is really appropriate to your situation? Are you brave enough to wear

the ribbon for all to see, or will it be hidden under a sleeve? If you do hide it, is it because you are ashamed or because you think it is nobody else's business? Will you pick as inoffensive a text as possible to avoid embarrassment and questions from others? Will this act of self-portraiture be blunt or fictionalised? Wear the ribbon until it becomes so naturally worn that it falls off. Use your ribbon bracelet as a tangible mnemonic device, raising your consciousness every time you look at it. If you choose a positive message, use the ribbon as a comfort. If you select a negative label, use the ribbon as a prompt and a reminder that there is an issue in your life that you need to address. There is an implicit challenge; if you are wearing a negative ribbon, can you change your situation before the bracelet falls off? This starts off as a bit of fun, looking through pretty carnival-coloured ribbons, but it quickly becomes a vehicle for self-portraiture and self-diagnosis. If you choose a negative label, you will also need to self-prescribe a remedy and action it. The wearing of bracelets has steadily evolved throughout time in all cultures, appearing in various pertinent incarnations, including: binds, handcuffs, friendship bracelets, copper healing bracelets. The ribbon bracelets follow the symbolisms of innumerable cultural traditions. Today, rubber charity bracelets and ribbon pins are used to show solidarity with a cause on the part of the wearer. Dolly's carnival colours have meaning; at first it is aesthetic, but these colours carry psychological, political and emotional meanings that vary from culture to culture. Ribbons are a symbol of sovereign or judicial power, and designate the power to bind and to be set free. Wearing the ribbon bracelet is a form of non-verbal communication, both with the outer world and the inner self. Remove Dolly's jewellery, her costume, and label yourself. Then take this as far as you can.

Biography: *Jenny Elliott-Bennett BA Hons, MA, PGCE PCET. Research interests: Feminisms, Travel Writing, Island and Sea Literature, Animal Characters in Society/Culture/Art and Anthropomorphism. For the past decade I have been working as a freelance writer, producing academic, education and commercial copy that has been published in five countries. I have also been teaching in the UK, Europe and America (EFL, England and Englishness, and English Literature), up to and including Level 6.*

Burge, Amy. Resisting Romance? Feminist Engagements with Mills & Boon Romance Novels

Feminist critics were amongst the first to significantly engage with romance novels and continue to lead the scholarly field. However criticism has tended to veer between dismissal and condemnation of the genre and interpreting romance texts as entirely positive. Whether you consider romance novels to be 'titillating mush' (188), as Greer does, or share Krentz' view that 'they celebrate female power, intuition, and a female worldview that affirms life and expresses hope for the future' (8) or, perhaps, Radway's view that romance novels can be potentially resistant in their provision of pleasurable escapism, it is difficult to deny their enormous popularity.¹ Mills & Boon claim to sell one book every three seconds in the UK, and publish novels in 26 different languages in 109 worldwide countries.² This workshop will build on and explore critical reading in romance by offering the chance to engage in resistant reading and critical rewriting of a romance novel. Each participant will receive a page from a Mills & Boon novel and an envelope containing each word from the page on separate slips of paper. During the workshop we will consider our personal reactions to popular romance (as activist, as scholars, as readers) and rearrange these words into our own writing, whether it be resistant, celebratory, reflective or purposeful. After the workshop we will share our work (anonymously if preferred) with other conference participants. You will also be able to keep the novel as a memento of the workshop. This workshop is not intended to attack romance novels or readers, but offers the opportunity to engage in a practical way with popular romance writing and to reflect on feminist scholarly critiquing and resistant reading of romance over the years.

¹ Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (London: Paladin, 1971); Jayne Ann Krentz (ed.), "Introduction", *Dangerous Man and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

² Mills & Boon, "Interesting Facts", *Mills & Boon.co.uk* <<http://www.millsandboon.co.uk/facts.asp>>, accessed 26 Oct 2010.

Biography: Amy Burge is a third year PhD student at the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. Her work examines the intersections between medieval and modern literature and her PhD study focuses on Middle English romance and Mills & Boon popular romance.

Chalklin, Vikki. Shared Narratives/Collective Selves: Queer Performance as a Community of Affect

This proposal proffers an interactive cabaret/live art inflected performance piece that explores the innovative and radical modes of subjectivity that appear to become possible within queer performance contexts. Drawing from the practices of auto- and performance-ethnography I am engaged in as part of my doctoral research on queer performance clubs in London (namely Bird Club, Wotever and Duckie), this piece will consider how these spaces appear to enable certain modalities of 'self' that are simultaneously individual and communal through the performance of personal narratives translated into shared, collective stories. By drawing on common experiences of trauma, exclusion and violence and blurring the distinctions of self/other, performer/audience and truth/fiction, these performances enact personal narratives in a way that destabilises the notion of the singular subject whilst constructing a coherent and liveable sense of 'self'. Individual experiences and memories are made universal through the trashy and frivolous modes of burlesque, comedy and drag, interspersed with radical hard-hitting politics, and personal pain dissipates like laughter through the audience as it is affectively passed from one body to another. In this queer space where belonging is performatively produced, narratives, memories and histories are affectively transmitted between bodies to enable a site of intersubjective formation of a community that is more than a collection of singular, bounded individuals. Rather than simply discuss this phenomena in the abstract, this proposal aspires to engage the audience directly in the intersubjective practices of which it speaks by staging a performance that blends my own, my research participant-protagonists, and the audience's experiences and subjective positioning to create a moment of collective relational being through the act of spectatorship.

Biographer: Vikki Chalklin is a queer performer, activist and researcher based at Goldsmiths, University of London and an associate researcher with the AHRC research project Performance Matters. Her current work is located at the intersection of body theory and performance studies, investigating notions of performativity, embodiment, affect and intercorporeality.

Chamberlain, Prudence. Can feminism change the world, and how?

Since moving to London I have become interested in street art, which seems to be dominated by men and their drawings of pin-up girls. Investigating this further, I started to explore 'tags' throughout the city, including annotations on posters, advertisements and toilet walls to gauge the multiple ways in which women are presented, by both genders. In response to this, I have started to write a series of poems, combining performance and slam elements, with more traditional free verse, that interrogates the ways in which femininity is defined, annotated and rewritten within London. These influences are then synthesized into a performance poem, which allows for a more engaging and rhythmic way of conveying ideas. The necessity of humour ensures that the form avoids sanctimony or fervent militancy. I use the poetics of

flippancy and disruption to open up spaces in which the audience is able to consider women's place within the city, in addition to the contradictions inherent within our gender and its presentation. I also consider female role models, most recently Katie Price and Barbie, to debate the way in which younger girls are conditioned to see women. Due to the widespread distribution of 'girly' magazines, criticizing weight loss and gain, page 3 girls and Nuts and Zoo on prominent display in newsagents, it is almost impossible to separate femininity from the female figures in the public eye. By removing these women from their normal context and placing them in feminist scenarios, I attempt to interrogate the ways in which society has encouraged celebrities to embody certain images. If the aesthetic of a city can be changed through annotation of the architecture with street art, surely the message it conveys can be changed through critiquing and debate. If the presentation of women can be defined by the media and graffiti, then surely it can be disseminated and destroyed through performing poetry.

Biography: I recently completed a BA in English and Drama and am currently doing an MA in Poetic Practice. I have read at POLYply, a series of events where practitioners respond to the work of other artists, and have started to perform slam poetry at a few minor events around London.

<http://girlsavendingmachine.wordpress.com>

Chester, Gail. Off your computers and into the streets: feminist activism and the new media

As 2011 is the 200th anniversary of the first Luddite uprisings, this session will be dedicated to their spirit. They were not, as patriarchal capitalism would have us believe, opposed to all technology, but only to "Machinery hurtful to Commonality". Likewise, I am not opposed to all new media, and acknowledge that there are many situations in which its judicious use can be helpful. However, I would suggest that an over-reliance on electronic media as the primary mode of feminist communication could leave too many women feeling isolated and fragmented, rather than feeling empowered to get together with others. We must be aware that new media and its attendant technologies have been developed to turn us all into isolated units of consumption, and make us forget the human power of collective action and interaction. Although the reach of paper-based media is apparently more limited, it is paradoxical that the relative slowness of its transmission may, in fact, encourage collectivity and active engagement with the material, because of, for example, the deliberate choice required on the part of the recipient to receive it, and the personal interaction needed to deliver each one -- if not between each individual author and individual reader, then at least between the intermediaries in the reception chain: the producers, political groups, sellers, and many others. After a period during which feminist media has been overwhelmingly digital, there seems to be an increasing recognition that re-embracing older technologies is a necessary accompaniment to developing a renewed and inclusive mass movement, and so I will illustrate my presentation with examples of recent print-based feminist media, and will compare this recent material with feminist self-publishing in the 1970s and 80s.

Biography: Gail Chester has been continuously involved with radical feminist activism since 1970 and with feminist publishing nearly as long. She has co-edited several feminist anthologies and even published an academic article about it (WSIF, 25/2, 2002). She attempts to finish her PhD in Book History and self-publish her first collection of "poetry" while the rest of her life keeps intervening.

Collins, Zoe. Confidence magic

This is a collection of fictional promotional material and activities to engage people in a discussion around the 'perfect vagina'. It draws on current news articles about vaginal surgery and uses catwalk music and

labels to make a tongue in cheek critique about the notion of a designer vagina. It consists of interactive performance with visitors leading onto a scheduled video screening and workshop. Participants will be gathered for the video and workshop throughout the day by means of a sign up sheet. A saleswoman from *Remould Plasticine Surgery* will approach visitors, engaging in conversation with them about possible issues surrounding their body. If the visitor shows any signs of insecurity, they have the freedom to move on at any point. They will be given a business card and the option to sign up for a free taster session from *Remould Plasticine Surgery*. The information session will comprise of a 5 minute video displaying *Remould's* latest range of designer vaginas. It then allows participants to design their own 'perfect' vagina using plasticine, sequins and vogue magazines. They are invited to browse photographs of 'perfect vagina's' from previous *Remould* taster days. The session is rounded up by a discussion around the topics and themes that have arisen from the workshop. It will include information about the rising trend of designer vaginas in the UK from newspapers and articles and ask participants to comment and feedback from the workshop. All genders welcome.

Biography: *Zoë Collins uses multimedia work, which combines DIY craft with film and discussion, her aim is to actively involve and engage participants. Zoë's final year at Dartington College of Arts greatly influenced her work, particularly volunteering at the Feminist Archive North and engaging in contemporary feminist issues.*

Cooper, Charlotte. Fightin' Dirty With The Chubsters

The Chubsters is a fat queer girl gang comprising over 100 aggressive members across several continents. You don't have to be fat, queer, a girl, remotely tough or bad-tempered to join, it's an inclusive project, and all about attitude. I use the format of a girl gang to create and invite a variety of interventions that reflect an idealised world where fat people have power, where freakhood is capital, and where nobody messes with us. The Chubsters blurs the boundaries between fantasy and reality in fat activism. In the face of crushing fatphobic oppression, The Chubsters harnesses the power of activist imagination and playfulness within an otherwise restrictive social context. It heartily endorses the pleasures of refusing to be nice and ladylike.

During the final plenary I will:

- Show the short film: Chubsters (Cooper, 2009)
- Introduce The Chubsters
- Facilitate small group activities generating ideas for: fighting dirty, acting mean
- The Chubster Strut, doing wrong, being a gang girl, etc.
- Towards the end of the workshop there will be a jumping-in session for participants who would like to join the gang.

More information: www.chubstergang.com

Biography: *Charlotte 'The Beefer' Cooper's background is in DIY, zines, and queer journalism. She published Fat and Proud: The Politics of Size (1998) and Cherry (2002). She performs in The 123s and Homosexual Death Drive, blogs on fat at www.obesitytimebomb.blogspot.com and sex at www.kinkzine.blogspot.com. She is a Government of Ireland PhD scholar at the University of Limerick.*

Corbett Ashby, Emma. Radical feminist dialogue in auto-ethnographic film: exploring the power of feminist film making for self actualisation, survival and subversive disruption! - Presentation and film making workshop

This workshop is designed in three parts. It is partly a presentation on radical feminist auto-ethnographic film makers, followed by a discussion (part 2) on how we as feminists can similarly use film as a tool in our own lives to realise and express our potential, in terms of our ideas, our identities and our politics. What possibilities does film hold for the radical telling of our stories? The third phase is about practical film making.

Presentation (delegates may attend this without rest of workshop, but need to book, preferably before the Carnival (see website details). The presentation showcases some brilliant feminist film makers who don't get much exposure due to the challenging and non-conformist nature of their work. Undeterred by the male dominated world of film, more and more women are making films and pushing at the celluloid ceiling to actualise their ambitions. Still more are picking up cameras to tell their stories and try out their creative ideas. This presentation looks at the power of feminist film making to go beyond ratings and 'commercial viability' to become a radical tool for re-visioning our world and ourselves. Featuring the work of veteran and contemporary film makers Chantal Akerman, Gwen Haworth, Birgit Hein, Sadie Benning, Breda Beban and others, we examine the radical feminist potential of women who have turned the lens on themselves to tell powerful narratives that challenge the status quo and fearlessly return the gaze. Themes explored include ageing and sexuality, queer coming out, cultural and political identity, motherhood, gender transition, dealing with death, fantasy escapism and more! As well as examining the content and different approaches of the featured film makers, I will also discuss technique and style. For details of the practical workshop, see <http://tinyurl.com/fcathursday> and book before the Carnival begins (limited availability).

Biography: Emma Corbett Ashby is a Finnish-English activist, writer, producer/director, performer and all-round creative type. She is from London originally and spent more than 10 years in the north of England before relocating to Berlin in 2009. She studied Art and Film at a post graduate level and has been involved in a number of creative projects, mostly in film and theatre. Her most recent project has been her first stage play, Exiles, (co-produced with director El Earthbourne) which premiered at the International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival in 2010. Currently Emma is working on a brand new documentary about fat performance artists as well as being an MA candidate in Visual Anthropology at the Freie University in Berlin. She is also involved in community based activism around mental health, body image and partner abuse.

Damali Amiri, Mehdi. The Educational Role of Women in Teaching: Redefinition or remodification

After the Islamic revolution in Iran, it was forbidden for men to teach in girls' schools and for women to teach in boys' schools. This religion-based approach was exactly to limit the opposite sexes 'interaction' in schools to prevent sexual abnormalities. There appeared, however, some conflicts in teaching affairs especially in elementary schools for 6 to 11 year-old students who were in close memory of mother at home, needing loving attention. The strict behaviour of men in treating children caused the children not to show much motivation in their school subjects and academic failure rose dramatically in boys' schools. The government schools could not attract little children who came from kindergarten with women tutors as they felt they lost the motherhood love and attention. On the other hand, lack of academic potentiality in women to teach some basic courses in high schools such as mathematics and physics drove the girls to participate in private classes in which men teachers taught. The emerged confusion and paradox along with the protests of feminist activists forced the authorities to modify the rules and to simplify the presence of opposite sexes in schools, especially in elementary schools. The outcomes of such decision making improved the situation in some regions but not all. This paper examines the psychological grounds of women's exclusion from boys' schools and the cultural reasons of failure in some regions even if their teachers were chosen from women.

Biography: *I am a Master of Linguistics and Theology specialising in sociolinguistics and ideological powers. I am currently reaching Sociolinguistics and Ideological Interpretation of Religious books.*

Djana, Deena. Negotiating Gender Roles: Jordanian Women and the Politics of the Cultural Public Sphere

This paper presents findings from an empirical study that looked at audience participation and enactment in a number of interactive theatre performances held across Jordan in the run up to the 2007 parliamentary elections. The study notes how Jordanian women 'negotiated' their gender roles largely by attempting to anchor the change they seek within their own histories and cultures, by referring to popular or religious fables that encouraged a reinterpretation of current practice. This process of subjective negotiation is then an attempt to hack dominant narratives and their exclusivist tendencies, to disrupt the status quo, and make claims and demands that posit different 'imagined' realities. However, this is not done through advocating the adoption of 'other' realities where exclusion seems less pronounced (at least on the surface), but rather, is a process intimately related to the 'space' of the women within their homes, families, communities, and ultimately city, country and region. This symbolic act of 'negotiating change' represents a means of understanding how ideological contestation occurs within Jordanian society. It also highlights the capacity of the cultural public sphere to act as a medium of reinvention of the symbolic as a means of opposing culturally repressive understandings, which is constitutive to a political act.

Biography: *Deena Dajani is a post-doctoral researcher at The Open University working on the OECUMENE project 'Citizenship after Orientalism'. She recently completed her PhD entitled 'Between the Mediated and the Performed: an empirical contribution to understanding Arabic public spheres', and a keen interest in how publics are formed and citizenship enacted in the Arab world, particularly Jordan. She is particularly interested in how citizens negotiate their gender roles in the cultural public sphere and the ways in which the symbolic is constitutive to political acts.*

Dornhuber deBellesiles, Lilith C. The Girl Who Fanned Feminist Fires: How the 'Millennium Series' provokes feminism

Steig Larsson's 'Millennium Trilogy' has been the focus of intense feminist debate. Critics point to misogynist themes, while defenders exonerate the self-identified feminist author due to his righteous, magnetic heroine, Lisbeth Salander. The heated dispute over Larsson's books' feminist value need not detract from any feminist work the books perform, nor from how the text informs feminist discourse. This paper will critique the arguments for and against labelling the trilogy as a feminist text, and will demonstrate how denounced elements could ultimately serve a feminist purpose. For example, the graphic, fetishized rape scenes have been censured with claims that gratuitous violence titillates the audience under the cover of rhetorically feminist themes. However, the audience's emotional engagement with the narrative may instead focus on the violence's injustice, adopting the feminist perspective. Similarly, framing Salander as an outcast who is seen engaging with society only in a victim-avenger cycle, may also validate alternative identities, rejecting constraints of traditional social involvement. Do Larsson's un-feminist themes cause audiences to question biases? This paper will also consider how the series inspires feminism, independent of feminist labels. Through politicizing violence against women, among other themes, the books highlight feminist topics, enforcing a feminist 'agenda.' Further, the works spark feminist thought: the 'Millennium Trilogy' debate helps refocus definitions of feminism at a time when the 'F-Word' is being co-opted by anti-feminist factions. The books also motivate open discussions about defining a feminist work, the role of authorial intent, and how an audience uses texts. Finally, the paper argues that the series galvanizes

feminist action. The heroic female protagonist motivated by justice encourages activism, while the books' condemnation of society's inherent sexism is a further mandate compelling the reader to fight inequality. Biography: *Lilith C. Dornhuber deBellesiles is currently completing a postgraduate degree in Philosophy at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, with specific interest in the field of feminist philosophy and aesthetics. She graduated from Smith College in Philosophy and German Studies, and held a research Fulbright Fellowship at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany.*

Downes, Julia and Teal Triggs. Panel

Researching DIY Feminist Cultures: Fragilities, crisis/conflict and ethical responsibilities

Although recognition of the role of culture (music, art, film, fanzines) within feminism has increased in recent years (e.g. Cvetkovich 2003; Enke 2007; Reger 2007; Harris 2008) there has been relatively little discussion of the practical, personal and ethical challenges in producing and publishing research on DIY feminist cultural worlds. This panel draws together individuals who have inhabited different positions in relation to the DIY worlds they have researched/are researching to discuss the role of conflict in DIY cultures, the problems of inhabiting an activist/academic divide and whether crisis and conflict is essential for the effective transformation and movement of feminism. It is hoped that the experiences of the panellists will lead onto a wider discussion of ethics and challenges of doing research within/on/outside DIY feminist cultures.

Julia Downes: This paper draws on PhD research upon DIY queer feminist music worlds to argue for an expansion of nostalgic and romantic accounts of DIY feminist culture. Warnings encountered in oral history research on riot grrrl in the UK and US - from Allison Wolfe's explanation of how riot grrrl 'ate itself', Kathleen Hanna's notion of 'horizontal oppression' to Mimi Thi Nguyen's insipid 'bad feeling' - are unpacked in relation to lived experiences of contemporary DIY feminist cultural activism in Britain. This paper highlights an absence of strategies to productively deal with moments of inevitable crisis (e.g. sexism, homophobia, racism, classism, capital) within fragile DIY worlds. Drawing on ethnography and academic work on feminist social movements and organisations this paper considers how the acknowledgment of the complexities, dynamics and limitations of DIY fragilities is crucial for the survival of DIY feminist cultural worlds in history, everyday life and the future.

Teal Triggs: This paper will draw upon the work of feminist design historians (Buckley 1986, Scotford 2000, Attfield 2000) in order to reappraise the role that self-publishing print platforms have played in the construction of a feminist history. Mainstream magazines have been the conventional frame through which feminist and 'feminine' identities have been constructed and critiqued. However, it may be argued that DIY publications (e.g. fanzines and broadsheets) generated 'below critical radar' provide an equally rich resource for shaping a history/critique through both content and mode of production. Ultimately the graphic object becomes the vehicle through which subject/object relationships may be explored (Attfield 2000).

Biographies: *Julia Downes recently finished her PhD at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the University of Leeds and has published populist and academic texts on DIY feminist music cultures. She has been involved in Manifesta, Ladyfest Leeds and Ladies Rock. Julia currently works for Independent Domestic Abuse Services in York and plays drums in Vile Vile Creatures.*

Teal Triggs is Professor of Graphic Design, Course Director of MA Design Writing Criticism, and co-Director, Information Environments, at the London College of Communication. As a graphic design historian, she has written extensively for the international design press and authored several books on design including most recently Fanzines (Thames & Hudson).

Drnovsek Zorko, Spela. Border Transgressions: the Art Activism of Tanja Ostojić

The Serbian artist Tanja Ostojić has caused significant controversy by situating her body, and the bodies of other migrant women, in the very centre of European immigration. Her largely performative *Crossing Borders* series, which saw Ostojić "Looking for a Husband with an EU Passport", conducting an "Illegal

Border Crossing” into the Schengen area, and “Waiting for a Visa” in Vienna alongside other disappointed hopefuls, memorably culminated in the so-called ‘panties scandal’, when the artist’s public billboard satirising women’s representation in the immigration debate was removed from Austria’s program for the celebration of its 2005 EU presidency. Crucially, Ostojić’s work does not function only in the framework of bounded, situationist, performative happenings, but often drags out for prolonged periods of realistic time that do not lend themselves to an easily digestible viewing experience. She does not inscribe art on or with her body, but through it; her direct engagement in making her embodiment public is a powerfully feminist gesture not because she self-identifies as a representative or spokesperson for migrant women, but because she always recognises and acknowledges the highly personal, even selfish impetuses behind her projects. In undertaking the task of marrying a German man and commenting on the ‘checking the sheets’ immigration policies that place women’s sexualities at the forefront of foreign politics, as well as by organising language classes and an online service exchange network for fellow immigrants, she cuts through the gap between artist and subject that persists in much of contemporary art. By focusing on the minutiae of lived experience, and by highlighting how these daily repetitions are shaped and come to shape discourses on nationality and gender, Tanja Ostojić approaches her art from an almost anthropological perspective with a clearly activist agenda. And yet, we could also ask: do we, and if so, how and why (and should we?) value art practices with explicitly political aspirations as somehow more significant than activist efforts that do not engage politics through the discourse of art?

Biography: Špela Drnovšek Zorko is a freelance translator and a postgraduate student at the Anthropology Department at Goldsmiths, with an interest in cultural representations of gender and the borders of activist politics. Originally from Slovenia, she has previously studied in the Netherlands and has lived in Australia and Ireland. She is supported by a grant from the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund.

Duffy, Linda. Mapping the Women’s Art Library Collection

The Women’s Art Library started life in the late 1970s as a grassroots feminist artists’ organisation. It grew out of the 1970s Women’s Art Movement the roots of which were in the Women’s Liberation Movement. The Library’s purpose was to raise the profile of contemporary women artists amongst gallerists, curators and art educators, as well as amongst women artists. It continued this work until the early 2000s when it lost its core funding. It is now an archive in Goldsmith’s College Library’s Special Collections. The Women’s Art Library is significant both for its history and for the archive that is the organisation’s legacy. The story of the Women’s Art Library is one that intertwines art, lives and the organisation. The archive holds within it documentation of much women’s and feminist artwork; work that visually evidences changes in women’s and feminist thought, priorities and lives from the 1970s onwards. It is also about women’s lives as artists connected by networks, sometimes as feminists active in the women’s movement, and as women in the broader social world. It is the history of the Women’s Art Library as part of the Women’s Art Movement; an influential movement that opened up opportunities for younger generations of women artists and, arguably, is now influencing curating and, in turn, acquisitions in art institutions. Through a selection of images and related aspects of women artists’ life histories, some of that story will be presented.

Biography: Linda Duffy is a postgraduate student in the History department at Goldsmiths College, London. She is also a practising artist creating mappings and installations responding to points of intersection between people, places and organisations, over time.

Edwards, Jason. Materialising Mortality: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's Patchwork Pieces.

To date, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick is best known as the author of a series of quickly paradigmatic queer- and literary-theoretical texts. But Sedgwick was also a passionate, significant and promiscuous artist in a range of media, ranging from fibre art through altered books to time-lapse film. Exploring a range of Sedgwick's patchwork pieces and collaged books, in the context of her studio-home, this paper examines some of the ways in which Sedgwick sought to materialise her experiences as a person living with metastatic cancer. | Biography: *Jason Edwards is a Reader in Art History at the University of York. He is the author of the Routledge Critical Thinkers volume on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and is currently at work on a new volume on Sedgwick's work as an artist on fibre and paper.*

Ely, Liz. Liztopia: Stand up comedy, feminist activism and daft metaphors

Stand up comedy has the power to inspire, provoke and galvanise radicals whilst offering light relief from the toil of activism. It also has the power to reassert the status quo, to oppress and actively stifle progressive action and thought. Comedy has a history of misogyny, and feminism is often presented as inherently humourless. The role of the comedian who identifies as progressive, radical or revolutionary is a difficult one; being conscious of your place within the social system, challenging the status quo whilst not oppressing the less privileged and trying to be funny at the same time can feel a bit like trying to do heavy construction work with hands made out of frozen peas. My hope is that my performance lies firmly in the former camp: as an ardent socialist feminist taking up stand up platforms is an integral part of my activism. With more and more women getting involved in both feminism and comedy, the role of comedy in cultural feminist activism is ripe for exploration. My stand up show explores gender in marketing, cuts and the current economic climate and ideology surrounding abortion rights and much more.

Biography: *I am based in Edinburgh where I work as a youth worker, though I grew up in Castleford West Yorkshire. I perform stand up and blog in my spare time. My weaknesses are laziness and blue cheese. For more information, including reviews and photos you can check out <http://liztopia.wordpress.com/>*

Farkas, Zita. For and Beyond Art: Art as a Form of Activism and Art for Activism's Sake Reflections on the work of Marina Abramovic, Kriszta Nagy, Suzanna Lacy and Kriszta Bódis

In my presentation I discuss the relationship between art and activism from two perspectives. I consider how art can be a form of activism in itself by reflecting on some of the works of Marina Abramovic and Kriszta Nagy. Another kind of connection between art and activism can be discerned in the work of Suzanne Lacy and Kriszta Bódis who integrate their art forms – performances and documentary films - in larger community projects in order to help the subjects of their art work such as prostitutes, battered women or discriminated minorities. Abramovic's performances 'Art Must Be Beautiful' (1975) and 'Role Exchange' (1975) reflect upon the role and value of art and the position of the artist. They speak out against norms of beauty that destroy art and suffocate the artist, particularly the woman artist. Kriszta Nagy's painting 'The Woman's Only Chance is to be the Male's Sexual Toy' is a harsh critique of the Hungarian artistic scene in which women artists are subjected to sexist exploitation. Similarly to Abramovic and Nagy, Suzanne Lacy and Kriszta Bódis engage with cultural and social issues in their art. However, their artistic engagements extend to community projects that aim to help those communities and raise consciences.

These artists present different forms of artistic/art activism. In their art works they 'transform ideas or revelations into matter'. The main question I address in my presentation is how art and activism are intertwined in their work and how they make those revelations actually matter.

Biography: *Zita Farkas completed her PhD on the reception of Jeanette Winteson's work at The University of York. At the moment she works as an independent scholar. She contributed to the Encyclopedia of Contemporary Writers and Their Work (New York: Facts on File, 2010) and The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Women in Today's World (London: Sage Publications). She has several articles under consideration such as 'The Double Bind of Visibility: Representations of Alternative Sexualities on the Romanian Screen (in Dilemmas of Visibility: Post-Socialist Sexualities) and 'Literary Reception and the Writer's Sexual Identity' (in Identity and Form in 20th and 21st Century Literature). Her research interests include contemporary British/women's fiction, lesbian-feminist and queer literary theory, reception theory, conceptualising the 'author' and contemporary Romanian cinema.*

Femjoy. Zines as Academic Spaces: A Workshop on Collaborative Art and Authorship

In answer to the call, "Can feminist art change the world?", this workshop will reflect on the experiences of a group of new researchers and their use of zine-making to help them negotiate the world of academia. The Feminist and Gender Studies Reading Group at in the University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science, affectionately known as 'FemJoy', began producing a series of zines about academic life, feminist research in practice, notions of gender, and a variety of other day-to-day musings. In this workshop, we would share our experiences of zine-making and hope to create an impromptu zine based on the reflections of the workshop participants. In this process, we intend to engage with questions about the role of art and alternative forms of publishing in the spheres of academia, particularly as a way for new researchers to carve a space for themselves within existing institutional structures. Given the group's explicit feminist focus and interest in gender, the production of the zine is inextricably linked with our reflections on 'feminist research'. In turn, the zine-making has provided us with a vehicle to talk about our work, to experiment with new knowledge and to wrestle our demons (in whatever form they might take). We hope a workshop of this kind might provide a space for others to share their stories of 'feminist research' and participate in an alternative form of authorship and art-making. What's more, we hope the production of impromptu zine might reflect the experiences of the conference-goers at what promises to be highly stimulating and very fun event.

Femjoy Participants: *Hannah Zagel, Hilary Cornish, Aoife McKenna, C.Stocks-Rankin, Kathleen Ward, Joanna Wiseman, Maddie Breeze and the Feminist and Gender Studies Reading Group*

FitzGerald, Fiona. African Women Potters

The questions that will be posed in the discussion will be around the role that potters play in traditional Kenyan society, why women not men were given the craft to develop, how and why this has changed in colonial and post colonial Kenya, and how ceramics may evolve as the traditional use of ceramics is eroded. Are there any artist potters now? What do they do? Are they part of an inquiry into a non Western modern model of art? As a prompt for discussion the practice of the traditional women potters at Jomvu will be described, then demonstrated and participants will be encouraged to try their hands at the techniques used and to use this to inform the debate. I will juxtapose their traditions with the work of male craftsmen in the tourist industry and with the work of a contemporary woman artist, Miriam Syowia Kyambi. Through looking at Magdalene Odundo I will raise the issue of African Diaspora artists and their identity.

The final question will be focused on what we women in the West, who do not have this particular powerful tradition, can learn from their practice as we explore our identity as creators.

Biography. *Fiona FitzGerald was born in Kenya in 1957 and spent her childhood there. After secondary school and university in England she returned to lecture in Art History at Nairobi University. She researched Kenyan architecture, focusing on the 20 th. Century. She also explored two Kenyan cultures, the Lamu / Swahili one and the Asian one. She moved to Mombasa, living in a Swahili style house in a Majengo Guraya, one of the early colonial slums, teaching Art. After 20 years she has come to England, where she is practicing as a potter.*

Griffin, Gabriele. 'Righteous Anger? The Affective Orders of Feminist Cultural Activism'

This paper explores how affective orders operate on and in feminist activism, and what their effects are. Analysing a range of activist interventions, it argues that feminist cultural activism is generated by emotions, mobilizes affect in its conceptualization of interventions and creates affective responses in its audiences. It further suggests that such affectivity runs counter to the prevailing norms of public political discourse which also mobilizes affectivity but tends to disavow this, thereby frequently relegating feminist (cultural) activism to marginal spaces.

Biography: *Gabriele Griffin is Professor of Women's Studies in the Centre for Women's Studies, York. Her research interests include contemporary women's cultural production, and she has written widely on women's theatre, particularly Black and South Asian women's theatre.*

Groeneveld, Elizabeth. Text and Textile: Crafting Queer Feminism in Toronto, Ontario

This paper examines the ways in which urban spaces are refigured through queer feminist craft practices, such as yarn bombing and knitted protest banners, historically contextualizing these practices within the longer history of feminist craft. Despite the ways in which queer feminist crafting is frequently figured as "new," I will argue in fact contemporary feminist craft resonates with much longer histories of creative feminist political engagement. The paper is focalized through a case study of the intersection of text and textile in the work of Allyson Mitchell, a Toronto-based "maximalist artist," whose crocheted banner that read "Deep Lez" and "Pride is not a Pyramid Scheme" figured prominently in an alternative dyke march held in Toronto in the summer of 2010. The march, Take Back the Dyke, called attention to a cluster of related problems and concerns within Toronto's queer community, including Pride Toronto's banning of the group Queers Against Israeli Apartheid from marching in the official parade, the displacement of the Black LGBTTIQQ party, and the fallout from the G20 summit held in the city. According to Mitchell, "Deep Lez was coined to acknowledge the urgent need to develop inclusive libratory feminisms while examining the strategic benefits of maintaining some components of a radical lesbian theory and practice." I will argue that Deep Lez takes lesbian radical histories and refashions them for contemporary queer, urban dyke contexts, in ways that have broader implications for how feminist politics might be conceptualized.

Biography: *Elizabeth Groeneveld teaches English and Women's Studies at the University of Guelph. She is currently working on a book entitled Making Public Cultures: Feminist Periodicals on the Cusp of the Digital Age. Her work has been published in the Journal of Gender Studies and the Canadian Review of American Studies.*

Guinness, Lizzie. Can dancing be revolutionary? Queer Feminist Club Nights in the UK

Over the past decade, a range of self-styled 'queer feminist' club nights have emerged across the UK, providing safe, fun and politicised spaces for people of all genders and all persuasions to strut their stuff and dance their socks off. This paper reflects on the cultural significance of these nights, in particular how

creating fun is a feminist act, the impact of these nights on individuals and communities and the role that club nights can play in highlighting feminist ideals and principles. As one club night's manifesto states, "We want a place where pleasure, politics and music mingle in one space, where voices of dissent lie over beats, synchronised dance routines and alcoholic drinks." The paper will focus specifically on Suck My Left One, a monthly club night held in Leeds, Yorkshire between 2005 -2009 by the former queer feminist collective Manifesta. I will draw on my observations and experiences along with that of others who ran and/or attended the night along with celebrating the visual and aural culture of the night. I intend to discuss the legacy of Suck My Left One in Leeds and the continuing important role that these kind of nights play in the lives of my friends and fellow feminists. I hope to show that dancing can indeed be revolutionary!

Biography: Lizzie is a former student of the Centre for Women's Studies - where feminism changed her life. She has previously researched female travel writers and is particularly interested in the dynamics between identity, culture and space. Since leaving CWS, Lizzie has been involved in DIY queer feminist activity including organising Ladyfest Leeds 2007 and as an active member of Manifesta. Living in London since 2008, Lizzie has sadly had far too little time for feminist fun due to working full time in local government.

Irving, Fox, Should Feminists wear Lipstick?

'Beauty, to me, is about being comfortable in your own skin. That, or a kick-ass red lipstick.' Gwyneth Paltrow, American Actress b.1972

Lipstick Feminism, a response to the radicalised feminist movements of earlier decades, aims to unite the warring identities of 'feminine' and 'feminist'. But is it possible to embrace the accepted social signifiers of femininity – from wearing make-up to pole-dancing and stripping - while remaining true to the principles of Feminism? And how does the lipstick fit into all this? The artist will use the object of the lipstick to get girls and women to think and talk about feminism, gender, sexuality, their bodies and self-image. The work will consist of a series of photographic portraits of women and bodies of text created by the participants, as each woman will be invited to write around 50 words in response to the working title. The exhibition will also confront the viewer with a challenge to respond to the issues raised. A single portrait will consist of a mirror featuring a single lipstick kiss print; thus inviting the viewer to question their own sense of gender and sexual identity and to become part of the collection. A chair will be placed in front of the piece to offer the viewer some intimacy within the open space while they challenge their understanding of women. The viewer will be invited to write and submit 50 words in response to the working title.

Biography: Fox Irving (born Dawn Irving, 1979) is an English artist, who lives and works in Brighton/London. Her work explores issues of identity, self hood and discovery and the interplay between them, and her pieces commonly form a conversation within which information is simultaneously disclosed and withheld. A questioning tone is at the forefront of the art, which is created in – and creates – an uncertain space where facts and boundaries are constantly shifting.

Johnson, Clare. Female Agency and Affective Tyranny in Tracey Emin's *Why I Never Became a Dancer* (1995)

In this paper I will present a reading of Tracey Emin's short film *Why I Never Became a Dancer* (1995) in the context of post-feminist media culture. The film is a story about the desire to access a different sexual and material economy via the transformation of class identity, sexuality and embodied pleasure. Here I will explore its affective power and resonance for feminist politics, in particular its call to an earlier moment of feminist art production. The film explores and plays with the differences between the 1970s and 1990s. It

asserts the personal as resolutely political as if in defiance of the rhetoric of post-feminism that emerged in the mid-1990s and continues to exert its pernicious influence. Much has been written about post-feminism from the point of view of feminist cultural studies, but this is rarely used as a critical vocabulary within art criticism, despite the permeable boundary between art and popular culture evidenced by so much contemporary practice. Drawing on feminist critiques of post-feminism (eg. Williamson, 2003; McRobbie, 2008; Negra 2009) I will argue that in contrast to the prevalence of insidious post-feminist strategies such as retro-sexism, domestic retreatism, the construction of the imagined feminist and the undoing of feminist consciousness, Emin's film offers a vital antidote in the form of a triumphant story of escape from the humiliations of adolescent sexuality. As a half Turkish-Cypriot, childless woman who displays active desire and agency, Emin's persona is at odds with the ideal female subjectivity (white, affluent and conversant in consumer culture) of post-feminist rhetoric. Through an exploration of the details of Emin's film (for example, the renegotiation of meanings within disco music) I will argue that the narration of personal memory can be a powerful response to post-feminist media contexts.

Biography: Clare Johnson is a Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture at the University of the West of England. Her research interests include feminist art history and visual culture. Currently Clare is working on a book provisionally titled Gendering Time: Feminist Art and the Politics of Femininity to be published by Palgrave Macmillan.

Kempson, Michelle. Doing *Arxivism*: Studying the Creative Activism of Feminist Zines

Zines are defined as independent, not-for-profit publications that are produced without the influence of professional editing or publishing. Feminist zines, in-particular, represent the uncensored opinions and artwork of contemporary feminists and serve as an outlet for the political and social critique of female oppression. They reconstruct social critiques of sexism and expand the boundaries of feminist activism. This paper focuses on 25 interviews I conducted with zine creators in the UK as part of my doctoral research. My participants feel strongly that the zines they create represent a form of creative activism that allows them to express, in words and images, the various feminisms they ascribe to. Zines are not an obvious form of activism. However my research has shown that the thriving community of zine creators, who are distributing their artwork and articles throughout underground feminist, queer and punk communities in the UK today, represent a form of radical grassroots activism. I will also refer to some of the artwork found in feminist zines that aims to challenge traditional notions of gender identity and femininity, and discuss how art presented in this form has the potential to challenge traditional notions of activism and feminist identity.

Biography: Michelle is a PhD student in the Sociology department at Warwick University. Her research looks at the feminist zine community in the UK today, combining discussions with zine creators and a qualitative content analysis of 80 feminist zines. She has an interest in the intersections between art, grassroots activism and feminism and wrote for feminist and queer zines before beginning her doctoral research.

Kennedy-Macfoy, Madeleine. 'Struggling to be recognised as belonging to the fauna of Norway': On Being Black Norwegian Women

In Norway, the subjects of 'race' and ethnicity have gained much ground in the media, in politics and in academic research over the last twenty to twenty-five years. This can be partly attributed to the arrival, since the late 1960s, of migrants from different parts of Africa, the South Asian sub-continent, Eastern

Europe, South America and Turkey. One key effect of the increased migration to Norway of ‘visibly different’ migrants has been that their presence in the country is almost always represented as ‘problematic’ or ‘challenging’ within political and public opinion discourses; it has also engendered a great deal of polarized debate within academic circles. At the start of the twenty-first century, however, the issue is no longer just about newly arrived immigrants, but also about their Norwegian-born children. These ‘other’ Norwegians are people for whom Norway, and the Nordic region more broadly, is *home*, but whose right to belong is constantly questioned, rejected or dismissed because of their apparent or perceived ‘difference’. Founded in 1999, *Queendom* is the first performing arts collective of its kind in Norway, in that it was founded by and is made up of a group of women who identify as ‘black Norwegian women’. The group’s members are independent journalists, professional actors, singers and song writers, who have grown up in Norway. Using their personal experiences of being perceived as ‘different’, ‘other’, marginal, and not fully Norwegian as their creative fodder, *Queendom* engage in a unique and successful type of political activism through their artistic performances. This paper discusses the experiences of three of the group’s members, who have been struggling to be perceived as ‘belonging to the fauna of Norway’. Their experiences show that some emerging constructions of difference in Norway are gendered and racialised, and form the basis for current struggles over who can, or should be, considered and accepted as *truly* Norwegian.

Biography: I am currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Gender Studies, University of Oslo, Norway. My research investigates minority women’s citizenship qua activism and organisational participation in Brussels, London and Oslo. My research interests include: comparative studies on diaspora, citizenship, national identity and youth in Europe; the intersections of gender, ‘race’, ethnicity and class in the lives of minority women in Europe; postcolonialism and development; and transnational feminism.

Kent, Holly M. ‘I Feel Like My Blog Is My Voice, In a World Where I Am Too Often Silent’: Women’s Grassroots Pop Culture Blogging in the Early Twenty-First Century United States

With the rise of new social media forms such as Twitter and Facebook, some cultural commentators have been quick to proclaim “the death of the blog.” After all, in an era in which individuals can communicate instantly in short bursts of fewer than 140 characters, or “micro-blog” at such image-heavy sites as Tumblr.com, what place do traditional blogs have? The answer within the feminist blogosphere seems to be: a very important place, indeed. The continued (indeed, even the *growing*) success of such popular feminist blogs such as *Feministing* and *Jezebel* defies the gloomy predictions of those who see both blogging (and feminism) as being in decline. In my paper, I consider one specific facet of the feminist blogosphere: feminists who create and run their own blogs about the intersections between feminism and pop culture. Living in a society in which mainstream cultural productions continue to focus on men and their creative achievements, and to be infused with sexist, racist, and heterosexist ideas, female pop culture bloggers can (I contend) be important oppositional voices within an often oppressive dominant culture. My paper will be rooted in oral interviews conducted with feminist pop culture bloggers who tackle topics as varied as contemporary literary culture, the plays of William Shakespeare, and mainstream American film and television in their blogs. In my interviews, I will explore with these bloggers what motivated them to create their blogs, how gender has shaped their experiences as bloggers (in terms of harassment and negative feedback, their blogs’ capacity to create online feminist communities, etc.), and what role they feel that their creative work and cultural criticism plays within mainstream American culture. In my paper, I will also draw on my own work as a feminist pop culture blogger, discussing my experiences creating and running my own blog, *Back on Carrie’s Stoop*, about the feminist and sexual politics of the popular *Sex and the City* series.

Biography: *Holly M. Kent has a PhD in History from Lehigh University. She teaches women's and gender studies courses at The College of New Jersey, serves as chief co-editor of thirdspace: a journal of feminist theory and culture, and blogs about the feminist politics of Sex and the City on her blog, Back on Carrie's Stoop.*

Knies, Emily. Hip Hop: A Conscious Identity

Feminist art *can* change the world. Be it through paint, dance, music, or other cultural works, artwork from a feminist point of view can affect the way people view their society and cope with their problems. Hip hop music is one such tool used worldwide to address oppression and other sociopolitical issues. I seek to investigate the ways in which Danish artists, with special attention to those of foreign descent, use hip-hop music as a political tool to fight the oppression and marginalization they face as outsiders in Danish society. Hip hop tackles many of the social problems encountered by its musicians' communities and can be a form of protest. In the decades since gaining prominence in the United States in the 1970s, hip hop has become a seminal part of worldwide culture and has been embraced by people of all races, classes, and nationalities. But how do these artists utilize this musical genre to create and/or implement social and political change? What exactly does hip hop represent for these individuals? What is their message? This paper discusses the origins of hip hop in the United States and its function as an outlet for American ethnic minorities—particularly African Americans—to express their discontent with their place in society. This will serve as the departure point for an analysis of Danish hip-hop artists of color and their stories. The paper will underscore the importance of the “hip hop nation” as a cross-cultural and transnational mode of expression. More importantly, the paper will explore the use of hip hop by these artists, who feel like outsiders in their own country, and voice the problems of immigrants in Denmark. The theories cited will examine ideas of ethnicity and identity, the “us and them” dichotomy, and the hip-hop nation as an imagined community within Denmark.

Biography: *Emily Knies is an out-and-proud feminist currently living in Seattle, Washington. She is a recent graduate from the University of Washington, with degrees in Women Studies and Political Science. Her fiery personality comes through in both her dedication to activism and women's rights, as well as her curly red hair.*

Lashings of Ginger Beer

Lashings of Ginger Beer is a Radical Queer Feminist Burlesque Collective. Our mission is to promote a more inclusive society, using performance art to represent diverse identities and perspectives, and to challenge and subvert problematic assumptions embedded in popular culture. Our show examines the politics of gender and sexuality through song, dance and comedy. Returning to the politically-charged roots of burlesque, we aim to entertain and challenge audiences in equal measure. Our show is a variety show in every sense of the word, bringing together acts which are diverse in both form and content, and reflecting the diversity of the perspectives we represent. Acts include a version of Cole Porter's “You're the Top” celebrating consensual BDSM, a Gok Wan parody examining the pressures the beauty industry places upon women, a song about fat acceptance, short sketches highlighting the limiting roles of female characters in sci fi and fantasy, stand up comedy discussing trans experiences, and a dance exploring self-objectification. Continuity is provided by an MC who draws out the links between these themes.

Magerl, Albina. 'Force to Be Reckoned With': reclaiming the power of women victims of violence and a reflection on 'My Vagina was My Village' by Eve Ensler.

With the presentation and performance I would intend to reflect on Bosnian women victims of war and my personal experiences with the women from my home country. "Force to be reckoned with" is the monologue which I have written as a response to My Vagina was My Village by Eve Ensler. It represents a new manifesto for reclaiming the power of women and abandoning victimhood. "Force To Be Reckoned With" was born from anguish, desperation and struggle to provide a platform for women to reclaim their place in history and construct a new language, which enables the emergence of truth.

Biography: I currently work as an associate lecturer on the FDA and BA creating Theatre course for Teesside University. I am also creative director of Theatre of Exile, a feminist /political experimental theatre company and a member of Proactive Partnerships.

Maltby, Joanne. Negative Affect from a Networked Audience: The Impact of the Commenter in the Feminist Blogosphere

The blog can be argued to be an ideal media form for feminists. Blogging sits easily within the trajectory of feminist DIY publication, but unlike previous media formats, blogs can be cost-free to publish (once online access has been established) and freely disseminated, without regard for number of copies, distance, or time. Moreover, the fundamentally dialogic nature of blogs renders them entirely consistent with feminist political commitments: unless commenting has been disabled, the audience can interact directly and publicly with the blogger, minimising the distance between author and audience present in traditional media; the use of links enable the blogger both to direct her audience to the source of an argument, permitting the foregrounding of personal accounts rather than co-opting stories, and to network with other feminist bloggers and other bloggers or sites of interest; and the low access threshold means that anyone can publish her ideas and be read by whoever is interested. However, this dialogic nature also provides the opportunity for those opposed to feminism to engage directly with the individual feminist on a scale and to a degree which had not previously been possible with other media formats. In this paper, I will explore the negative affect directed towards feminists in the feminist blogosphere, from the angry illogical rants to the frighteningly real death threats, and consider how feminist bloggers respond to such negative affect. If blogs are one of the best sites for people to learn about and engage with feminist thought, what impact does targeted negative affect have on the expression of feminism online, and thus on what people can learn online about feminism? What affective work do feminist bloggers engage in to manage the consequences of such negative affect? Using this example of the feminist blogosphere, I ask, what does negative affect do to feminism?

Biography: Joanne Maltby is in the third year of her PhD research at the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. Her research explores Third Wave feminism and feminist blogging.

Marrs, Stella. Looking for Feminism Now

This presentation is of video art works by women. The works are formal experimentation in the medium of video which focus on the female body. These studies of space/time of female form inscribe a female gaze. These video landscapes enact deliberate multiplicities as the baseline, offering an alternative universe of plurality as norm. The artists' identities are fluid and deterritorialize borders. The articulation of multiplicity as norm in these art works offers *carnival* ubiquitous examples and perhaps even a consciousness raising suggestion of the ever-present latent female voice as multitude.

Biography: *Stella Marrs is an artist who works in a range of media to reinterpret female archetype images in public space. She has been an invited speaker to MIT, California College of the Arts, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a conference titled: Feminist Dialectic and Art Institutions, in Toronto, Canada. In 2008, she completed an MFA in Visual Studies through the University at Buffalo in New York, focusing on New Media and Feminist Studies.*

Martyn, Rosa. Shackles in Silk?: Women, embroidery and power.

Mary Wollstonecraft once described embroidery as ‘shackles in silk’, which I’m going to explore in this workshop by teaching another, more secret side of embroidery. Embroidery may well have been ‘women’s work’, but it gave those women a little world to inhabit in which they could explore themselves and rebel in a way that the men folk who governed them were blind to, and has therefore been largely written out of history. It is easy to write embroidery off as yet another device with which the patriarchy held women down, but look a bit closer, delve a bit deeper and the truth of women fighting the patriarchy throughout herstory with the help of embroidery, shines through. I will begin with a talk on the history of women and embroidery. I will then display my own work – to introduce myself properly to participants, so they can see where I am coming from. The stitched part of the workshop will be a women-only creative community, stitching freely to build bonds and share their own experiences between them. The fabric will be a large blanket, spread across the floor and each participant will be given a needle and thick woolen thread and encouraged to use large, long running stitches to create lines across the fabric, so that each line made by each participant connects eventually into a large web, evoking women’s power through sisterhood, support and community. The workshop centers around participation and thought: stitch is secondary. Small scraps of fabric and fabric pens will also be provided should women wish to add words, such as their names or other pearls of wisdom. (Women and men are welcome to the first part of this session; the second ‘stitching’ part is for those who self-define as women).

Biography: *I study for a degree in Hand Embroidery at the Royal School of Needlework, and in my spare time am an active member of The London Craftivist Collective. I am a vocal feminist, and I frequently create pro-woman embroideries, both at the RSN and out. I hope to go into community arts eventually and am currently creating a series of portraits of positive female role models. Personal blog: <http://mylittlestitches.wordpress.com>; The London Craftivist Collective: <http://www.craftivist-collective.com>*

McPhee, Nancy Anne. North American Textile and Textile Art: Material and method

This will serve as an overview of North American contemporary conceptual textile art. There is currently in North America a divide between contemporary conceptual artists who are self-described Textile Artists and installation or sculpture artists who used textiles as a major element of their work. This division often seems to correlate to the specific histories or herstories being related to in the work, the emphasis on feminine handicraft or replacement bodies, etc. For instance Luanne Martineau makes large, messy hand-needle felted objects that describe the smoking body and relate to Modernist artwork, and Mindy Yan Miller’s neatly stacked piles of used clothes reference Holocaust or homeless shelter beds. Suzen Green is actively engaged with knitting communities and the notion of handicraft in her self-portraiture and

references to home. The major themes will be: The Absent Body, The Body as Decorative Furniture, Feminine Handicraft, Text/textile, Integrated Tech, Costumed Performance, Herstories.

Biography: *I am a textile artist based in and an MFA candidate at Concordia University. I have recently exhibited my work at Fibreworks 2010 a national biennial juried competition in Cambridge, Ontario, and in a solo exhibition at FOFA Gallery in Montréal. My work revolves around issues of gender, the ocean, and the beauty of the monstrous body*

Mitra, Payoshni *The Bold and the Beautiful* (2007, 15 minutes)

Dr Payoshni Mitra will be at City Screen for a Q&A session after the film screening.

In this short documentary, filmed in the slums of Ekbalpore in Kolkata, India, girl boxers speak on various issues – about their identities as boxers, coming out of ‘purdah’, their idea of Islam, responding to questions about the body, about menstruation, pregnancy and motherhood, about several barriers in sport.

Mortimer, Roz. *Invisible* (2006, 63minutes).

We think of the arctic as a pristine wilderness, and when scientists went to collect breast milk from Inuit mothers, they were expecting to find the purest milk anywhere on earth. But the levels went off the scale. The milk of the Inuit mothers was loaded with chemicals which had migrated from the south and built up in their traditional food...the seal, whale and bear meat the Inuit people had been eating for centuries was slowly poisoning them. Today, scientists cannot find a single woman anywhere in the world who does not have these chemicals in her breast milk. In this beautiful and thought-provoking film, artist and film maker Roz Mortimer leads us on a hypnotic journey to the High Arctic. Using historical texts, medieval maps and contemporary first person accounts, Mortimer explores the traditional relationship Inuit have to the earth and gently challenges our Western relationship to science and knowledge. This poetic and visually stunning film weaves epic scenes of contemporary Inuit life with startling throatsinging performances and staged tableaux vivants set within the frozen Arctic landscape. INVISIBLE is driven by a unique musical score including free-voik from Sami musician Wimme Saari, live and operatic throatsinging from Inuit artist Tanya Tagaq and an exquisite theremin composition from Michael Kosmides. Featuring the award winning environmental scientist Theo Colborn; the chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference Sheila Watt-Cloutier; and Inuit mothers who offer emotionally charged testimonies; this provocative film resists the conventions of science documentaries and questions how we live in the world today. Filmed entirely on Baffin Island, Nunavut, in the communities of Iqaluit and Qikiqtarjuaq.

Biography: *Roz Mortimer is an artist and film maker. <http://www.wonder-dog.co.uk/index.html>*

O'Connor, Aisling. *Feminist film as cultural memory in post-Franco Spain: Digging in Their Heels* (2007) by Amanda Castro

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s Spain witnessed a proliferation of cultural productions based on the Civil War and Franco dictatorship. Consequently, this era is referred to as that of the memory boom. Left-wing memory is ‘recovered’ in literature and film but, until recently, it has been primarily recounted from the basis of male-centred experience. Furthermore, in the vast majority of productions where women characters are centralised, the complexities of their struggles appear in acceptable tropes and images. With a theoretical framework informed by Memory Studies, Cultural Studies and Feminist Criticism, this paper conducts a close reading of one women-centred feminist text, *Digging in Their Heels* (2007) by Amanda Castro, in which the silencing or mis-representation of women is subverted. *Digging in Their Heels* is a short

film that highlights the role women played during the Asturian miners' strikes and protests of the early 1960s. Based directly on one survivor's testimony and historical documentation, the film underscores the important role that women played in the anti-Franco resistance and depicts the brutal tortures and suffering they endured as a result of their political commitment. Moving beyond textual analysis, this study then examines whether or not feminist productions can indeed influence cultural memory, exploring the significance of art/representation in contemporary Spanish society. The paper concludes that *Digging in Their Heels* and other such feminist productions reassert women's position in history and remove women from the margins of the historical memory debate ongoing in Spain today.

Biography: Aisling is a doctoral researcher on the Advanced Scholars Programme at the University of Limerick, Ireland. Her thesis is an amalgamation of her two research interests: feminist theory and Hispanism. She is a board member of 'Sibeal' - the Irish Postgraduate Feminist and Gender Studies Network. Her long-term goal is continue to contribute to and promote scholarship in the area of Spanish feminist art.

Okemuo, Gloria. Feminist Expressions:

'S/He is not your friend who demands your silence' – Alice Walker

Feminist Expressions is a poetry reading session of 5 poems thematically concerned with women's lived experiences across times, cultures and social strata. In an attempt to show how feminist poetry – a form of feminist art can change the world, I will present and read five of my poems including "once she lived: a *she-male*", "Who You Are", "The Girl Wife", "Oppression and Expression", "Soul Rape" and "Sextuple Vulnerabilities". The objectives of the session are: a) to use poetry as a medium to discuss the transcultural nature of women's subjugation and vulnerability; b) to demonstrate the availability of poetry as a free tool for women's empowerment; c) to recommend the embrace and promotion of feminist poetry as a means of challenging the politically untrue images of women; and d) to celebrate our feminism and celebrate feminist poetry as a means of dialogue with society.

Short descriptions of poems: "Sextuple Vulnerabilities" is a poem that discusses the challenges and many vulnerabilities of being a woman, an African woman, and an African woman migrant. It discusses domestic and structural subjugations. "Once she lived a *she-male*" is a chronicle of a young girl's discussion with her grandmother on the latter's deathbed. It shows that women's subjugation is undifferentiated across cultures and times and can be challenged regardless of place and time. "The Girl Wife" is a brief expose of how dreams are buried alive in early marriages. "Soul Rape" chronicles the weeping heart of a woman in a domestic setting. "Oppression and Expression" simply cites "expression" as the right response to oppression, while "Who you are" is a celebration of our individual feminisms.

Biography: Gloria Okemuo is a poet, a newly qualified barrister and PhD student at the University of Birmingham. In 2005, her poem "Once she lived: a She-male" was read at a U.S. Consulate event to commemorate Black Women's History Month. Her "Song of Hope" was recently published in The Poetry Church.

Paper Women- Per/re/forming Women

Paper Women was born in Bristol. We were tired of seeing white men of stone and bronze commanding the streets with horses and guns. Deceased royalty and nude Muses were the only sculpted women on show. If our city's structure refuses to perform women's bodies, if history and greatness remains carved as *masculine*, how can *other* bodies, denied presentation as *great* and good, figure our identity with that city, that *his-*

story? We started a blog and activism campaign to perform the absent bodies of Bristol's past. We want to challenge history as preserved the permanence of bronze. Through setting up a blog and walking the streets we want the bodies silenced from history to get involved in the performance of history and creative, and the re-formation of identity. This was difficult; however much we paper women tried to origami ourselves away from what the archive of stone told us we should be (white, heterosexual, middle-class, caring, wealthy) *historical* women repeated that tradition. Eroding the solidity of stone sculpture and history, by performing paper bodies, because paper questions why history is presented as fixed. Paper can be taken down, defaced, ignored, re-cycled, rots... At the carnival there'll be a stall in the Market Place where we can display our women; re-make our women, re-per-form their absence through collective creativity—engaging with the memories of women on the day through an interactive memory board, as well as with the makings, writings, drawings, of Paper Women. Coming to York will give us the place to perform Paper Women beyond Bristol, engaging in creative activism within York: with a *Ms*-shaped map re-placing absent women, and actions on the streets; creating the space where art, activism, history, tradition, politics meet and blur the space to let paper shout for louder for herself.

Biography: *Victoria Armitage took her powerful voice and passion to the bright lights of London and is now a charity campaigner and activist; Kate Nichols lectures at the University of York and is interested in the production and consumption of 19th century bodies and in getting young women into feminism; Heather Swinsco is an ex-Sheffield Fem and current active member of Bristol's feminist scene and all round right-on woman; Alex Wardrop is trying to write her PhD at the University of Bristol and gets annoyed with only reading words of dead men. Paper Women began with our exhaustion of seeing the same bodies repeated in Bristol's sculpture; of never seeing 'our' bodies celebrated, so we thought we'd play with Paper!*

Perkins, Suzanne. Getting up steam and making a loud noise in feminist publishing.

From its foundation in 1978 until I left in 1991, I was designer then art director at The Women's Press, an all women feminist book publisher producing both hardbacks and quality paperbacks. I was responsible for creating and maintaining all visual aspects of the company, from covers and jackets to catalogues, exhibitions and point-of-sale. Authors included Alice Walker, Nawal el Saadawi, Toni Cade Bambara, Malorie Blackman, Gilda O'Neil, Andrea Dworkin, Dale Spender, Gillian Slovo and Ellen Kuzwayo. The aim was always professionalism with feminist integrity, impact and wit. I will talk about how I became involved in the company and show a wide variety of covers and jackets as a slideshow, and also posters, books, catalogues etc. Topics will include: How was impact achieved? How were costs kept to a minimum? What happened when an author hated the cover?

Biography: *After training in fine art at Worthing and specialising in illustration at Brighton (and reading Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex and pennies dropping), I married young in a very short skirt (as everyone did) and had 3 formative years in Vietnam-era USA. Back home, I fell into publishing as a picture researcher, and was taught the ropes of book design on the job. Needing some proper training, I took a postgrad in Advanced Typography at the then London College of Printing, and have earned my living slaving over the drawing board, then the mac, ever since. I now run freelance design business and lecture at the University of the Creative Arts in Surrey.*

POTENTIA: Encounters at the Grotesque Carnival

We present POTENTIA. A magazine that offers knowledge without pretense to academics and non-academics through visuals and statements – *Énoncé* – to establish what we find meaningful. Rather than

representing a singular Feminism, we work through a feminist framework as we combine our experience from philosophy, art, literature, communication and media, sociology, politics and everyday life. *Scientia potentia est*, ('For knowledge itself is power') is what we are taking to new heights. We interpret the theme of *Carnival* as a social institution where people are organized and defy socio-economic and political organization. Connecting this with the *grotesque realism* as a degraded figure of unruly biological and social exchange, POTENTIA is as diverse as we are, grown from academic knowledge, feminist activism and art, working together without any exclusion. Not only is POTENTIA extremely ambitious, but it is also unique; design far beyond any academic journal, a new transversal approach, and critical analysis with a smirk. It's the autonomous potential of scholars who don't need binary categories in order to think, the passion of artists who dream up their own carnival, and feminists who don't have to choose between philosophy and politics.

Biography: Adinda Veltrop is a gender scholar at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, specializing in media literacy and critical theory. She has a diverse background in communication and journalism, media design and works as an intern at ATGENDER, the European association for gender research.

Nikki Dekker is a literature scholar at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, and is pursuing her minor in Gender Studies at Utrecht University. She has a strong affinity with the creative arts, such as poetry, photography and creative writing. On her blog nikkidekker.com she writes about culture critique, popular media and the various experiences of feminism.

Femke van Hilten is a Language and Culture Studies scholar at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, specializing in literature and the Middle Ages. She runs her own company, Hats 'n' Dreads, where she designs her own accessories, burlesque items and arranges photo shoots and styling for artists.

Maartje de Man is a fashion designer and stylist from the Netherlands, who studied at the University of Southampton and worked as an intern for Bas Kusters, internationally renowned fashion icon. She presented her collections Proud to be Fout and Imaginary Escape at the Alternative Fashion Week in London and the "Fish and Chips Twice Please?!" exhibition in Vienna.

Price, Matt. Feminism in Pin-up Artwork

Through my work with roller derby leagues, I often produce artwork featuring very strong and empowered female characters as the central focus. The aim with my artwork is not to produce traditional "pin-up girl", such as the doe-eyed work of the 1950s "Golden Age of Pin-up" (Elvgren et. al.) but to try and capture the no-nonsense strength of character that I admire in the women who provide me with inspiration. Another source of inspiration is the horror, sci-fi and noir genres of film and literature. In these I find such character types as the "final girl" or the "femme-fatale" to be good models to base work upon as again they have the strength and attitudes which I try to bring across in my own pieces. At the Carnival of Feminist Cultural Activism I will display some pieces of artwork and some of the promotional posters which I have worked on, such as those for local roller derby bouts. These will range from traditional paint-on-canvas pieces to computer-based prints. I aim to portray empowered women in my work, and would like to spark discussion on the portrayal of women within my work, specifically focusing on the role of sexuality and strength in depictions of the characters.

Biography: I am a 23 year old artist based in Leeds, Yorkshire. I mainly work on the production of promotional material for DIY events. I am heavily involved in my local roller derby league, the Leeds Roller Dolls, as a referee.

Price-Owen, Anne. 'In my Intimate Image: investigating the work of Wales' Women Artists'

This paper is based on an enquiry into women artists currently practising in Wales. The research has been ongoing for the past three years and is almost completed. Over the course of the investigations some interesting discoveries have been made - or perhaps confirmed! Arguably, the most significant of these is that the art-craft debate, which has been raging for centuries, can finally be put to rest. Owing to the persistence of women to interrogate their own histories, many of them (sometimes unconsciously), embrace a craft aesthetic despite working in the fields of fine art. This is evidenced in the artforms as well as the artworks which they present in the public domain. This survey takes account of women's personal circumstances, both collectively and as individuals, in relation to the issues they raise through their art. The methods, materials, processes and techniques with which they engage are assessed in tandem with their approaches, and direction taken, in developing and progressing their careers as visual artists. Obstacles and impediments that they have experienced whilst working to fulfil their ambitions are also explored, thus demonstrating the perseverance and determination of the women concerned. The discussion focuses on the work of twelve female artists who, if not pioneers, are certainly champions in the particular disciplines they practise. All other practitioners, many of which are mentioned, can be comfortably accommodated within the dozen visual art platforms identified, and some cross-referencing necessarily occurs. Moreover, Wales as a place where creativity is encouraged and enhanced is also considered in this overview on the country's women artists.

Biography: Dr Anne Price-Owen is a senior lecturer in Art & Design, Swansea Metropolitan University. She is currently completing research for a comprehensive publication on Wales' women artists. Having published widely on artists practising in Wales, including Wales's representative at the 2011 Venice Biennale, Tim Davies, she is also concerned with Welsh poets. She is especially interested in the synergy between image and text, and is an authority on the poet-painter David Jones (1895-1974), having inaugurated The David Jones Society in 1996.

Ruiz, Polyanna: The Women's Peace Movement, the *Greenham Factor* and the Articulation of Polyvocal Dissent.

The Women's Movement rejected leaders, hierarchies and bureaucracies on the grounds that such systems were part of the dominant structures they sought to overcome refusal of the traditional organisational forms led to the creation of a rhizomatically organised movement which was loosely held together by a complex collection of perpetually shifting interconnections. This paper will examine the relationship between the Women's Movements experiments with organisational form and their production of alternative media spaces and argue that the construction of such spaces contributes to the creation of a public sphere in which a multiplicity of dissenting positions can be heard. This argument will be supported by an analysis of an issue of the *Greenham Factor*. The *Greenham Factor* is a newssheet which was collectively produced by the Women's Peace Movement in the 1980s. It will explore the ways in which the *Greenham Factors* use of experimental organisational structures led to the creation of communicative forms which adopted deliberately rhizomatic linkages. It will argue that it foregrounded the personal and political diversity of its members by carefully, rather than recklessly, placing each voice on an entirely equal footing and suggest that *Greenham Factor's* refusal to prioritise or rank contributions forces the reader to actively navigate their way through a purposefully fragmented and ever-shifting text. This paper will conclude by suggesting that these experimental communication forms foreshadow many of the qualities now commonly associated with computer mediated communication forms. This paper will therefore challenge the view that contemporary new social movements' ability to maintain a plethora of differently ordered political positions is rooted in

their use of computer mediated communicative technologies and suggest that such articulations of polyvocal dissent were pioneered through the pages of feminist texts such as the *Greenham Factor*.

Biography: Pollyanna Ruiz is an Associate Tutor in the department of Media, Music and Film at the University of Sussex. Her work focuses on the organisational systems which structure alternative and mainstream public spheres and examines the ways in which very differently orientated protest clusters communicate across political difference.

Ryan, Sarah. Playing the boys at their own game: An exploration of women breaking into male-stream gaming

The aim of this paper is to explore to what extent female 'gamers', who do not self-identify as feminist, are undertaking feminist action by playing in the male-dominated arena of PC and console gaming; an activity where players can play alone, with friends, or compete online in different geographical locations in different genres of games. The paper comes out of my current master's research which examines narratives of gaming experiences related by women who play computer games and interact with other gamers online. I conducted 6 semi-structured interviews (face to face and via email) with women in the UK and USA who play mainly First Person Shooters (FPS) and Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGS) on both PCs and consoles. I was drawn to this research as a gamer myself, and by the lack of feminist academic work in this field. While gaming is one of the most popular forms of cultural entertainment (32% of the UK population, Interactive Software Federation of Europe [ISFE] 2010), women players are mostly found in the 'casual' market of online, Nintendo's Wii and Facebook games. Consequently, those women who do play more 'hardcore' action games are playing within a male-dominated environment, and I am interested in how they voluntarily inhabit and negotiate this often hostile environment in order to gain satisfaction and pleasure. My preliminary findings suggest that my respondents are aware of gender inequalities in gaming and do engage in what could be seen as feminist activism in response to it. By offering a detailed analysis of their strategies of resistance, I suggest that wider popular discourses of feminism have an effect beyond self-conscious feminist activity, and that the definitions of feminist activism' might need to be extended.

Biography: I am studying for an MA part-time in Women's Studies at the University of York and writing my dissertation on women and video games. I recently started gaming again as part of my research and have spent a lot of my free time trying to complete Final Fantasy XIII.

Rydzik, Agnieszka. Dynamising post-2004 female migrants: the application of arts based Action Research in exploring the experiences of Eastern European women in the UK

In this paper I will discuss the application of arts based Action Research in exploring the experiences of Bristol-based Eastern European female migrants. I will also address the implications and practicalities of grassroots activism in migration research. This is based on a community exhibition I recently organised with the participation of eight female migrants. The event took place in Bristol on the 16-17th October 2010. It addressed the issues of sexualised and stereotyped UK media portrayals of Eastern European women; it explored female migrants' lived experiences; it presented their dynamic, evolving identities and a different face of Eastern European migration. It gave them an opportunity to reflect, react and interact. All but two women were non-artists, for the majority it was their first ever exhibition and their first creative project. Over two days more than 200 people came to this community exhibition and entered discussions with migrants. Visitors left comments such as: 'moving and inspirational', 'thought provoking' and 'a real educational experience'. This multimedia exhibition was a part of my PhD research project and constituted the first phase of fieldwork. It was the result of a series of discussions, interviews and meetings exploring

the experiences and perceptions of being a migrant woman in the UK and working in the hospitality sector. It applied the action research methodology aiming to actively engage, bring positive change and empower this often marginalised minority group via art based action research. It also aimed to open up dialogue with local communities and raise consciousness about issues affecting Eastern European women. I will present images from the actual exhibition throughout.

Biography: I am a PhD candidate at the UWIC's Welsh Centre for Tourism Research. My research explores the impacts of media representations of Eastern European female migrants on their employment experiences in the UK hospitality sector. My research interests include media and innovative research methods in social sciences, critical tourism studies, social justice and mobilities.

Sanchez, Becky and Corinna Tomrley. Bad Art Workshop: 'Can't art? Won't art!'

This workshop is not about crafting versus art or even what makes good or bad art but instead is a practical event designed to encourage participants to create works of art without the fear of being judged not good enough. The workshop is open to everyone. Our aim is to break down gendered ideas about crafting and 'low art'. We will explore creativity as activism; extend the joy and discoveries of this work into other areas of life; and help lessen fear to overcome feelings of 'I can't do that'. We will encourage the fun-side and communal silliness of activism – an element that is important to all forms of activism. Not being afraid of judgment or failure will help overcome boundaries and restrictions that often hold people back. The first half will comprise a series of snappy exercises designed to inspire and remove inhibitions. Attendees will be encouraged to use many of the materials and techniques we introduce. The second half of the workshop will be a 'free-style' crafting session where people can build on techniques they have discovered and/or work on projects and ideas that they have brought with them.

Sign up before the carnival starts (limited numbers); further details on <http://tinyurl.com/fca-thursday>

Biography: Becky Sanchez is an art historian and Corinna Tomrley is a pop culture scholar. Where it may seem that their academic disciplines place them on opposite sides of the high culture/low culture scale, they share a strikingly similar aesthetic love for trash and 'bad' art. Their own adventures in crafting and bad art without fear make them the ideal facilitators of this unusual workshop. Their crafting hero is gem-sweater curator Leslie Hall.

Savage, Bill: More Crackers Please

On August 29th 2010, Bethnal Green Library in London's East End played host to More Crackers Please, a benefit in aid of the Ladyfest Ten feminist arts festival. Co-ordinated by the organisers behind the Unskinny Bop club-night, the event featured the first European screening of US feminist electro-punk band Le Tigre's tour documentary film alongside a Le Tigre karaoke booth in which participants were filmed performing the band's song 'Keep On Livin'". I constructed a backdrop for the karaoke booth, and it is this that I exhibit at the CFCA. The More Crackers Please backdrop is a visual archive of feminist/queer/DIY cultural activism in London and beyond over the last decade. It includes photocopied fliers, zines, festival programmes, badges and records made by a loose community of activist-producers and a selection of inspirational texts, records and other cultural artefacts.

This Is Your Time This Is Your Life

Feminist art has already changed the worlds of those who create and participate in the many types of cultural activism represented in the backdrop. This activism has been central to the construction of communities which make alternative and marginal ways of living possible. However, this work is often not

recognised as feminist activism and is written out of both feminist and cultural histories. Therefore it is imperative to publicly record both its existence and importance. To this end, I intend to produce a zine as a documentary accompaniment to the backdrop exhibit. I hope to get contributions from the activists/artists whose work is depicted as well as from the wider community in order to record people's own accounts of their involvement in cultural activism. I will speak about the backdrop and zine-project at the CFCA.

Biography: I am an academic and activist based in London. I have been involved in many feminist/queer/DIY projects including Ladyfest London 2002 and Unskinny Bop and have also produced numerous zines including The Pamzine and Big Bums. In my spare time I teach Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Westminster.

Sharif, Azad. The Spirit of Revolt in Kurdish Women Poetry

This paper deals with the spirit of revolt that emerged in modern Kurdish women poetry. It consists of three parts. The first part briefly sheds light on the oppression that has been practiced against Kurdish women throughout history. This is mainly due to the tribal mentality that exists in the Kurdish society and the patriarchal system of the previous ages. The second part is about the new rebellious voices that began to appear in the last quarter of the 20th century. The prominent ones are: Shireen Kemal, Nazand Begikhani, Kezhal Ahmed, and Choman Hardi. Each voice represents rebellion against one aspect of women's oppression. Hence, the Kurdish women started to express their deep feelings and asked for their rights as human beings. The third part sums up the factors that created the new rebellious voices among the Kurdish poetesses.

Biography: Azad Sharif is a scholar from Iraqi Kurdistan. He is the author and translator of more than 20 books and 300 articles in the field of literature and knowledge. He has been working for a long time on an original study about Kurdish Women's Poetry, part of which he presents here.

Souffrant, Kantara. Performing the Haitian Diasporic Imaginary: Queering *Haitiennité* Post January 12th 2010

Second and third-generation Haitian women having been *queering* the performance arena for years, playing with notions of authenticity, citizenship, gender representation, sexuality, performance and performativity within visual and stage culture. Our experiences as members of the Haitian Diaspora are complex and art (broadly defined) is a strategy for mediating our sense of "Haitian identity" as non-island born Haitian peoples, and critiquing dominant narratives on the "authentic" Haitian-body. My scholarship over the past several years has been an investigation of the strategies at work and play in the art of women of Haitian ancestry, yet, currently, I am consumed and moved by the *overwhelming* influence that the January 12th earthquake has had on our art practices. How has this moment, what I understand as the proverbial "reset button" altered our art practices and engagements with(in) a broader Haitian Diaspora? What tactics are being formulated to continue our necessary critiques and reconstitutions of *Haitiennité* (Haitianness)? How, in this moment of collective vulnerability, hope, and the profound transformation do we understand our work as *Haitian women artists* to be *functioning*? What negotiations (if any) are we making in an effort to rebuild a country that was until January 12th only conceptually understood as our "homeland"? Through a critical examination of my own work as a performance artist and by citing the work of second/third generation Haitian artists of the Diaspora, I hope to *begin* a discussion that illuminates the role of performance in the creation of new narratives within our Haitian community. I rely heavily on cultural and trauma studies to enter this discussion, using the works of scholars such as Gina Ulysse, Jana Evans

Braziel, Sandra Richards, Dwight Conquergood, Diana Taylor, Dori Laub, and Cathy Caruth to forward my experience of witnessing/producing. My paper does not claim to answer all of these questions at length or in full. What I offer is a survey, my own experience of witnessing both as an artist-scholar and as a contemporary of Haitian women artists in the *process* of creating post-earthquake.

Biography: *Kantara Souffrant is a first generation Haitian-American interested in interrogating what that means. A PhD student in Performance Studies at Northwestern University she is researching the performance of "Haitianness" within the Haitian Diaspora as seen in visual culture and on the stage and received her MA from New York University.*

Spencer Mills, Ella. Working Towards Transnational Feminisms in Contemporary 'Global Feminist' Exhibitions'

This paper focuses on two United States examples of the recent influx of self-styled 'global feminist' fine art exhibitions in North America and Western Europe, to illustrate inherent problems with the relatively new idea of 'transnational feminism'. Looking closely at the introductory exhibition texts of *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, and *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art*, what legacies of feminisms do the catalogues leave behind? Do the texts betray the curatorial intention? Are hierarchies of race, culture, class, sex and gender present in the catalogue - but not in the art? I propose these exhibitions unwittingly re-present Euro-American centre/other hierarchies with double edged notions of inclusion, acceptance and equality, to the point of inflected colonial adventure and ethnography in their curatorial search to present 'international' female and feminist artists together in the 'western' art world. An interventionist feminist transnationalism involves a kind of self-reflexivity yet to be realised. To work towards this, I propose employing existing feminist strategies, drawing on Spivak's theoretical framework of International Post-Colonial Feminism and self-reflexivity, and using Barkley Brown's concept of 'Pivoting The Centre'. These concepts are fundamental in exposing our 'nonracist' ideals as merely empathy at best, sympathy at worst. Their feminist strategies of teaching, curating, theorising and writing are crucial to the project of an inclusive, yet not comparative, transnational feminism and genuinely international feminist politics which destabilise prejudices and stereotypes of culture and nation.

Biography: *My research involves the 'Black Arts Movement' in 1980s Britain, focusing on the particular negotiations, interventions and subsequent invisibilities of women within that period. I am interested in the timely interconnections of feminism, migration and diaspora during the 1980s. I try to be an interdisciplinary scholar, interested in spanning feminism, cultural studies, sociology, history and art. I hold Bachelor Degrees in English Literature (University of East Anglia), Fine Art and Art History (University of Plymouth), and a Masters and current PhD research in History of Art from the University of Leeds.*

Tate, Sue. A Heritage of Our Own: Towards a more just and fulfilled culture

According to the French philosopher, Luce Irigaray women are 'unrealised' and men 'unblossomed' (cut off from relationality) in our current 'monosubjective' male culture. She argues, therefore, for the necessity of promoting a female subjectivity if we are 'to reach a more just and fulfilled culture'. Not to put too fine a point on it, "Working for the liberation or construction of a female subjectivity and a culture of two subjects, we are really working towards the liberation of humanity itself, towards another time of our becoming as humans".¹ This is surely truly avant garde work, appropriate to fine art. Hilary Robinson, in *Reading Art Reading Irigaray*, finds in Irigaray's writing two necessary tools to bring to the task: the development of an appropriate syntax and the establishment of woman-to-woman genealogies, 'that create the possible space for a 'becoming' as women'.² In this paper I would like to celebrate the woman-to-woman genealogy that has emerged in the critical mass of work made by women in the 20th century, and the success of feminist art historians and curators in ensuring that it is visible and available to a current generation: a heritage of our

own. Elles@pompidou, where the 20th century collection was re-hung using *only* work by women, will be one case in point as will my work, as an art historian, helping to restore women Pop artists to visibility. I'll also explore some recent art practice, made by a current generation of women artists, that is in dialogue with 20th century women's art work and promote the importance, for feminism, of a collaboration between art historical, curatorial and contemporary arts practice. As Griselda Pollock has pointed out: 'the vitality of a feminist analysis in art and culture [is] in its doubled movement as historical retrospect and a constant | projection of feminism as a poesis to come, a becoming, for which we have in the last thirty years barely made a start'.³

¹ Luce Irigaray *Key Writings* 2004, ed Luce Irigaray. Continuum, p.xv

² Robinson 2006 *Reading Art Reading Irigaray* I.B. Taurus, p.151

³ Pollock, 2008 'What is it that Feminist Interventions Do? Feminism and Difference in Retrospect and Prospect' p. 248-280 in *Feminism Reframed Reflections on Art and Difference* A M Kokoli (ed) Cambridge Scholar Publishing, Newcastle, p.277.

Tate, Sue. Workshop: Towards a Discussion/Activist Network

Women are increasingly successful and visible in both local and global cultural activity in a way that completely outstrips their position a mere 40 years ago. Yet, anecdotal and other evidence suggests that women in the arts are still experiencing frustrations and difficulties. These circumstances are both rich with potential and fraught with the ongoing limitations imposed by patriarchy. *What is to be done?*

This workshop aims to:

- Identify the key issues, now, for contemporary women practitioners (artists, theorists and curators).
- See what energy there is for small regional discussion/activist groups
- Lay the foundations for a networking of groups to give a louder voice to our desires and concerns

Come to the workshop with *your* key issues/concerns/questions and ideas for action (or e-mail them in advance); we'll group them into themes and start sketching an agenda or series of agendas.

- *What will emerge as urgent issues, patterns of debate, points for discussion?*
- *Is there an appetite for action?*
- *Are there regional clusters that would like to start meeting?*
- *Is there the potential for a network of groups?*

Your issues/concerns might focus around the following themes (or others might emerge)

- The on-going frustrations/difficulties you meet as a women practitioner
- Ways in which the cultural space, so recently and so hard won by women, might be occupied and used.
- Our current position in relation to a 'long' history of feminism in which the second wave is an important but not defining episode.

Biography: *Sue Tate is Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture, University of the West of England, Bristol. Sue's background is in art history and museum education and she now teaches students of art and design. As a feminist and activist she values this coming together of theory, history and practice. Her research has been on women Pop artists, case studying Pauline Boty (British Pop Artist 1938-66).*

Thompson, Christie. 'Girly girls and Chicks with Dicks': Classism in 'Chick Lit' and Postfeminist Fictional Narratives

Contemporary feminist thesis is largely concerned with addressing a new generation of consumers for whom an interest in conforming to fixed paradigms of beauty and sexuality are perceived as integral in ensuring social, personal and financial success. Ideals of femininity and womanhood are now largely dependent on a woman's having economic and social access to the means necessary in order to compete for the social markers of success. The working class woman, who is unable or unwilling to access the means for competition, is often culturally marginalised. 'Feminist' heroes of contemporary fiction narratives and 'chick lit' narratives are overwhelmingly educated women who are plump, dress dowdily, are a little disorganised yet are endearingly feminine (*The Devil Wears Prada, Bridget Jones Diary, Eat Pray Love*). They achieve success by emulating their higher class bosses, wearing more fashionable clothes, subscribing to individualistic self-help regimes of personal improvement, and losing weight thereby increasing their wage earning capacities and romantic prospects. This type of narrative has become a heavily influential representation of how to achieve success as a female in contemporary society. The counter-narrative to the 'chick lit' heroine in contemporary postfeminist fiction is that of the phallic heroine- a woman who adopts the masculine traits of heavy drinking, swearing, smoking, fighting and being overtly sexual (*Brass, Taming the Beast, Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*). In many of these types of narratives the female heroines are from middle class backgrounds, are highly educated, attractive and articulate, all of which compensates for their non-conformity to other feminine ideals. These women 'out-phallicise' their male counterparts in order to ensure their power and success, yet it is rare that authors critically assess the masculine hegemony to which their heroines subscribe. Neither the chick lit heroine nor the postfeminist phallic heroine adequately represents the working class woman. My paper examines the factors that have caused working class women to be under represented in contemporary 'chick lit' and postfeminist fiction and argues that issues of classism within the feminist movement can be highlighted through sympathetic representations of working-class women.

Biography: Christie Thompson is a PhD Candidate in English at the Australian National University currently writing her thesis on Postfeminist Literature. She teaches Creative Writing at the Canberra Institute of Technology and has been shortlisted for several national writing awards.

Tomrley, Corinna and Sanchez, Becky Bad Art Workshop: 'Can't art? Won't art!' See under Sanchez.

Triston, Julia. 'Show Us Your Knickers!' Carnival Knicker Bunting – textile workshop

Want to take part in a unique feminist social art project? Then send me your knickers! This is a two-hour practical workshop, which is part discussion and part stitch. It is run by Julia Triston – a textile artist and designer – and the creator of the Bra-ra Dress (<http://www.bra-ra-dresses.com>). There is a request for knickers to be donated in advance of this workshop, from all delegates attending the conference but knickers may also be brought along on the day. In the workshop we will create a string of carnival bunting from the knickers. The bunting will become a unique piece of feminist, social artwork, permanently recording, in a very unusual way, attendees at the conference: capturing a moment in time. The final artwork will be displayed at the conference, and then donated to the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York. The aim of the carnival bunting is to show that our underwear can tell a story of its own, whoever we are, and whatever we portray externally. In this piece of artwork, we will be putting on show, proudly and honestly, what is usually unseen and taboo.

Sign up before the carnival starts (limited numbers); further details on <http://tinyurl.com/fca-thursday>

Biography: Julia Triston is a practising textile artist/designer and lecturer in stitch, design and surface decoration. She is known for her use of colour and embellishment in her textile artwork. Julia is a qualified teacher and an experienced City & Guilds tutor of more than ten years. She runs her own workshop programme from her studio, teaches textile courses in colleges, and runs City & Guilds and Master Classes in Durham through STITCHBUSINESS with Tracy A Franklin. www.juliatriston.com

Triggs, Teal – see under Downes, Triggs.

Vickery, Susie. Craft and Cooperation

For the past 12 years I have been working with handicraft groups in Nepal, India and China. These groups have had a profound effect on the lives of the women involved, to say nothing of their effects on mine. For women they are a source of income and empowerment and for me they are an inspiration for my own artwork. I embroider and animate the stories of the lives of people that I meet and work with. I will give an illustrated talk about the women working in the groups and how, through my artwork, I have interpreted the issues they face.

Biography: Susie Vickery is a theatrical tailor, handicraft consultant and textile artist. She currently works with the Tibet Poverty Alleviation Fund in China and has published on Tibetan dress in the Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion. Her particular interest is in embroidered and animated ethnography. In 2009 she won the Christine Risley Award from Goldsmiths University for her embroidered work on the history of tailoring. She is currently collaborating with an opera singer on an animated series of historical songs about tailors.

Wan, Pui Yin, Evelyn. 'Blood' Bond

Menstruation is an experience that is shared by all women, as part of our reproductive system, though the way we deal with it (e.g. pads vs tampons, religious/ cultural rituals, etc.) may differ based on cultural locations. The aim of the performance is to bring the topic into public space, share and express feelings towards the experience which is deemed such a private matter and sometimes a taboo. The performance will begin with a solo performance of performing poetry/prose together with contemporary dance movements. Instead of performing merely to a music track as dances usually go, it will be performed to the spoken words of poetry/prose with added soundscapes. Starting with Gloria Steinem's essay 'If Men Could Menstruate', the dance will feature writings by other feminists, and spoken poetry by myself with my reflections on the experience. The performance will be followed by a series of improvisations with collective input from audience members.

Biography: Originally from Hong Kong, Evelyn Wan is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Comparative Women's Studies in Culture and Politics in Universiteit Utrecht, The Netherlands. Outside of the classroom, she is an avid dancer and choreographer, specialising in contemporary dance, improvisation and site-specific choreography. Recent work in Hong Kong includes site-specific dance projects with New York City-based dance crew *Third Rail Projects* and Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation.

Wilde, Alison. We are pretty! Or, girls just want to have fun

Like Cyndi Lauper before them, the young women on this webcam performance 'We are pretty' broadcasted images of themselves having fun. And like the appeal made in Lauper's demands for girls 'to have fun', these girls use social networking and video sharing to emphasise the joys of female company, highlighting the

importance of female sociality and personal pride. Unlike Lauper's 'feminist anthem' their performance is designed for a niche audience of their own friends and is improvised for the prime purpose of personal pleasure. Its challenge to conventional ideals of femininity, normative ideals of the body and dominant discourses on celebrity appears to be accidental and ironic, simultaneously parodying therapeutic discourses of self help and personal pride. Is it art? Is it feminism?

Biography: *Alison has made arts, culture and representational concerns a central focus of her writing, research and teaching, making contributions to several arts organisations, including DAIL magazine and the GAGA film festival (Berlin). Alongside other work, she is currently evaluating diversity in visual arts practice for an Arts Council project.*

Withers, Deborah W. Sistersshow: Revisiting the Cultural Activism of the WLM

Sistersshow was the amateur feminist theatre branch of the Bristol Women's Liberation Movement. They used humour, dramatics and art to explore the feminist issues of the time. They challenged stereotypes about the humour-less feminist whilst exploring new forms of gender and sexual identities. This presentation will draw upon research conducted as part of the Bristol-based Heritage Lottery Funded project Sistersshow Revisited, exploring an example of WLM cultural activism. It will also reflect on the process of constructing a public history project in the present, which is, of course, an act of cultural activism itself.

Biography: *Deborah Withers' PhD explored subjectivity in the work of popular musician Kate Bush. In 2010 she published Adventures in Kate Bush and Theory, a popular re-interpretation of her thesis to critical acclaim. Deborah's current research explores the cultural activism of the Women's Liberation Movement. She is the curator of Sistersshow Revisited (May 2011), a Heritage Lottery Funded exhibition about a feminist theatre troupe based in Bristol in 1973-1975. The exhibition uses the activity of Sistersshow to tell the story of feminism in Bristol at the time. Deborah is also interested in examining the role inherited memories of feminism play in constructing contemporary feminist epistemology. Deborah is currently exploring research methodologies that consider the relationship between collective memory and social change through using public history, exhibitions and blogs. Her academic work has appeared in The International Journal of Heritage Studies, Women: A Cultural Review, The European Journal of Women's Studies and Feminist Theology.*

Womanism: Women who love (to perform with) each other

Founded under the collective of identity on tyne, we are a group of women writers who come together to share our work. Since 2003, following an Arts Council England financed feasibility study, Sheree Mack founded and subsequently managed identity on tyne, the only group in the North East providing a space primarily for writers of colour. Sheree has successfully secured funding for the group four years running, making sure that the region is introduced to the quality culturally diverse literature which is being produced within the region. Through our writings we celebrate the ways in which women negotiate the oppressions in our lives. Three readers will each to read/perform from their most recent works. All are published in anthologies and/or individual chapbooks published by ID on Tyne Press.

Biography: *Sheree Mack has successfully completed a PhD in Creative Writing at Newcastle University. Throughout her studies she has had the opportunity to present papers at Howard University (Washington, DC), Lancaster, Newcastle, Oxford, and Stirling Universities. Sheree Mack is a very active freelance writer within the region. She has worked with Creative Partnerships Durham Sunderland and Northumberland, Arts UK, Sangini, the Angelou Centre, The Poetry Vandals, Diamond Twig, Live Theatre, Durham*

Literature Festival and New Writing North. Sheree has enjoyed residencies at the Literary and Philosophical Society and the North of England Institute of Mechanical Engineering and Mining. Her first collection of poetry Family Album will be published by Flambard Press in May 2011.

Catherine Graham lives in Newcastle upon Tyne. She is a Northern Voices Poetry Award winner as well as being winner of the Northumberland Writers' Special Award, adjudicated by the poet Pat Borthwick. Her work has appeared in a number of magazines and anthologies as well as on the web. Catherine has read at numerous poetry events including the Durham Literature Festival, with ID on Tyne, Northern Stage, and Amnesty International Poetry Benefits. Degna Stone is a Midlander in self-imposed exile; she visited Newcastle for the summer in 1999 but never managed to go home. Now she lives with her husband and two daughters in a cottage in the middle of the city. A regular performer on the North East spoken word scene, her poems have appeared in several anthologies and she is the proud owner of a Northern Promise award. Maggie Tate grew up in Peckham, and was proud to attend one of London's first comprehensive schools. She has been a teacher, a researcher, a lecturer, a playwright, a performer, and writer. Taking early retirement, Maggie completed a MA in Creative Writing at Northumbria to kick-start her poetry. She has had poems published in several anthologies including by Blinking Eye Press and by ID on Tyne Press. Since retiring, Maggie's part-time work has involved supporting families seeking asylum and refugees. These interactions are touched upon in her poetry. She is a founder member of New Hope North East, a voluntary organisation that is helping orphans and children with disabilities in Zimbabwe. Maggie is currently a member of 'Carte Blanche' Women's Writing Group.

Worley, Jennifer. *Sex on Wheels* (2010, 27 minutes) (part of Thursday's feminist film night, City Screen) Professor Jennifer Worley will be at City Screen for a Q&A session after the film screening.

Sex On Wheels traces the secret history of San Francisco sex workers. Shot in glorious Super-8 mm film by an all-female crew, and punctuated with archival photos and film, *Sex On Wheels* follows a bicycle tour of site-specific, street-theatre performances by costumed docents (many of them current and former sex workers) using the "living history" model popular at tourist sites to re-tell their city's history from the point of view of its forgotten residents: a 19th-century African-American madam whose brothels helped fund the underground railroad; a male impersonator who worked the gay bars in the 1940s; a madam who became mayor; a gang of transgender teen hustlers who rioted for their right to public space; a posse of anarchist exotic dancers who took over a peep-show, and many more.

Biography: *Jennifer Worley (director) is a professor of English, Women's Studies and Lesbian/Gay Studies at City College of San Francisco. She began co-leading the Sex On Wheels tour in 2001 as a way of illuminating the history of sex work. Her spoken word performances have been featured on Outright Radio and she has lectured on sex work activism at UCSF Medical School, University of Washington, UC Davis and Rutgers University, and is the author of articles on lesbian pulp fiction and early gay youth activism. The trailer for Sex On Wheels premiered in 2010 at Frameline LGBT Film Festival in San Francisco*