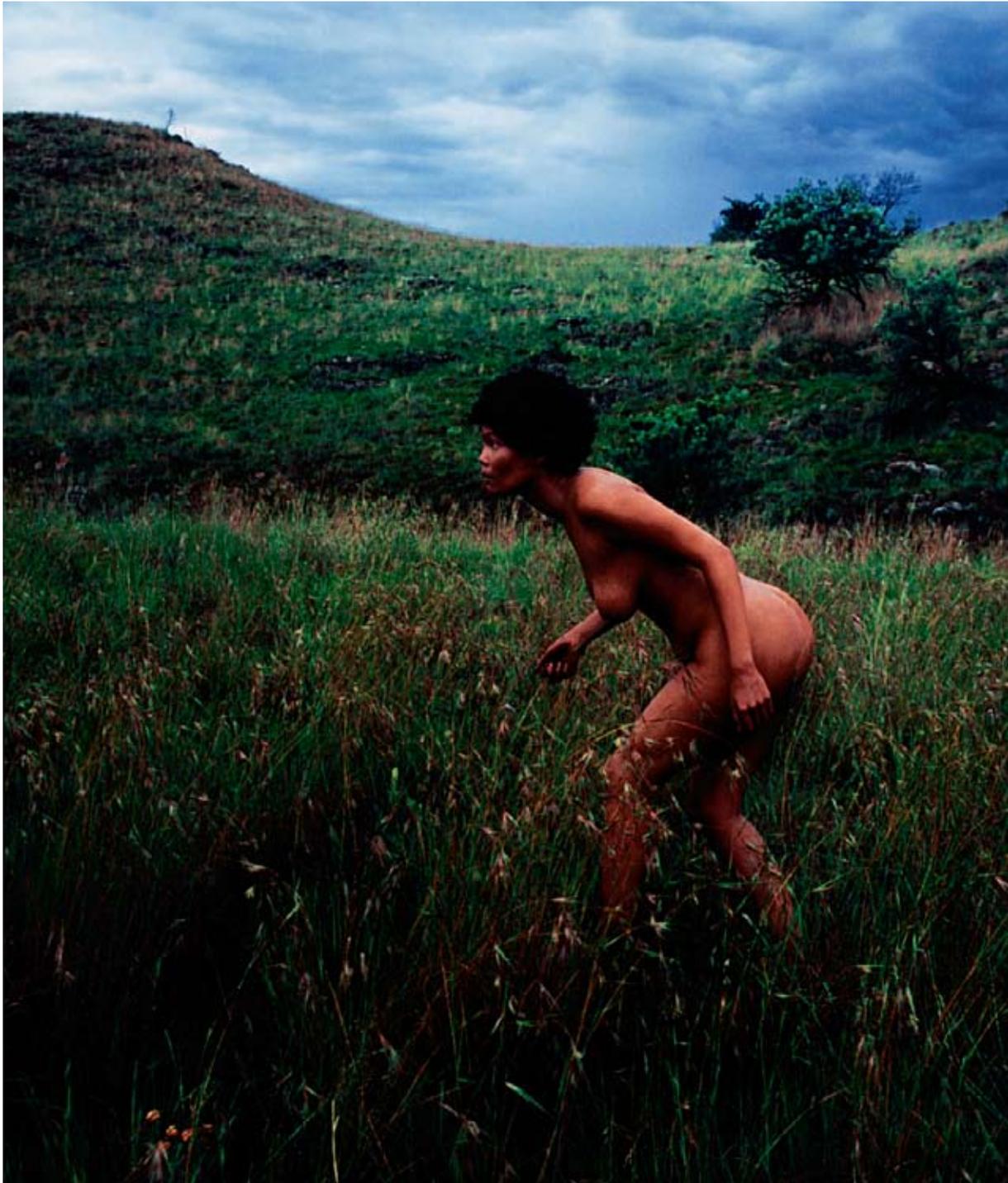


**Maura Reilly, "Introduction: Toward Transnational Feminisms," *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art* (London/New York: Merrell, 2007), pp. 14-45.**



## Introduction: Toward Transnational Feminisms

Maura Reilly

The first exhibition project of the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, *Global Feminisms* might perhaps have been expected to provide a broad overview of American feminist art from the 1970s to the present, in order to situate the Center within the historical context of the women's movement in the United States. Instead, while *Global Feminisms* does pay homage to that history, the exhibition also expands upon it in a quite specific way. From its inception, that is, *Global Feminisms* has defined itself in counterpoint to the pioneering exhibition *Women Artists: 1550–1950* (fig. 1), organized in 1976 by Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, which presented a historical survey of women artists from the Renaissance to the modern era. *Women Artists*, which opened at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in December 1976 and ended its four-venue tour at the Brooklyn Museum in November 1977,

was the first museum exhibition in the U.S. to offer a large sampling of work by Western women artists and, by extension, to challenge the dominant (read masculinist) art-historical canon. It was a landmark event in the history of feminism and art.

The year 2007 marks the thirtieth anniversary of *Women Artists* at the Brooklyn Museum. Now one of its organizers, Linda Nochlin, has returned to co-curate *Global Feminisms*, another major exhibition of women artists, this one devoted to contemporary feminist art since 1990 from across the globe. Unlike *Women Artists*, however, which ended its examination with the year 1950—prior to the Women's Liberation Movement in the U.S. and the development of feminism as an artistic practice—the present exhibition looks at contemporary work produced by artists for whom the heritage of feminism has long been part of the cultural fabric.

Moreover, whereas *Women Artists* was working within, and against, a Western canon of art history even as it questioned the so-called master narrative, *Global Feminisms* looks specifically beyond the borders of North America and Europe (often referred to collectively as Euro-America) in order to challenge what, it argues, is still a Westerncentric art system. Integrating into its curatorial strategy recent developments in feminist practice and theory that have helped move contemporary art toward a new internationalism, *Global Feminisms* seeks respectfully to update *Women Artists*, a curatorial project that was historically specific to the 1970s. Situated as they are, the two exhibitions can serve as conceptual bookends separated by thirty years of feminist artistic practice and theory.

Unlike *Women Artists*, which had the specific goal of reclaiming women lost from the Western historical canon, *Global Feminisms* aims to present a multitude of feminist voices from across cultures. In so doing, the exhibition challenges the often exclusionary discourse of contemporary art, which continues to assume that the West is the center and relegates all else to the periphery.



Opposite:  
Detail of Tracey Rose, *Venus Baartman*, 2001 (see page 238)

Fig. 1  
Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Women Artists: 1550–1950*, by Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976). Design by Rosalie Carlson

Instead, *Global Feminisms* imagines a more inclusive counter-discourse that accounts for, and indeed encourages, cross-cultural differences. While this exhibition acknowledges that women artists have achieved greater recognition and visibility in the Western art world over the course of the last half-century, it also insists that not only do those shifts remain insufficient and unsatisfactory, but that the majority of those advances have been bestowed on women from and in the privileged center. By offering visibility to women artists from across the globe, and on such a grand scale, we are attempting to level the field. To do so is to attempt a curatorial approach quite different from the mainstream.

The goal of this exhibition is to forge an alternative narrative of art today by presenting a wide selection of young to mid-career women artists, all born after 1960, from an array of cultures, whose work visually manifests their identities (socio-cultural, political, economic, racial, gender, and/or sexual) in myriad innovative ways. At the same time, it fully acknowledges the profound differences in women's lives, and in the meanings of feminisms, worldwide. In other words, this all-women exhibition aims to be inclusively transnational, evading restrictive boundaries as it questions the continued privileging of masculinist cultural production from Europe and the U.S. within the art market, cultural institutions, and exhibition practices. By extension, therefore, it also challenges the monocultural, so-called first-world feminism that assumes a sameness among women. It hopes thereby to help open up a more flexible, less restrictive space for feminism as a worldwide activist project.

*Global Feminisms* is a curatorial project that takes transnational feminisms as its main subject. The linking of the two terms—transnational and feminisms—is meant to complicate the hierarchy of racial, class, sexual, and gender-based struggles, underlining instead the intersectionality of all the axes of stratification. These struggles do not exist separately as hermetically sealed entities but are parts of a permeable interwoven

relationality. Since feminism is "itself a constitutively multi-voiced arena of struggle,"<sup>1</sup> as Ella Shohat argues, this exhibition is not an attempt at a facile internationalism that would claim to speak for all women, but rather an examination of the complex relationality between the center and the periphery, the local and the global.<sup>2</sup> In addressing the need for more inclusively international feminisms, this exhibition does not simply add voices to the mainstream of feminism, or extend a preexisting Euro-Americacentric feminism—as is the case, for instance, with special exhibitions with titles such as *Women Artists in Latin America*. Rather, *Global Feminisms* practices a relational feminist approach, or what Chandra Talpade Mohanty has called a "feminist solidarity/comparative studies model,"<sup>3</sup> which aims to dismantle restrictive dichotomies (us/them, center/periphery, white/black) in favor of an examination of themes about the individual and collective experiences of women cross-culturally.

The exhibition's installation at the Brooklyn Museum is therefore organized thematically, rather than geographically. The arrangement by theme aims to show both the interconnectedness and the diversity of women's histories, experiences, and struggles worldwide. Given the vast array of geographically, socio-culturally, and politically diverse situations for women, this exhibition challenges the concept of a monolithic definition of *woman* and, by extension, that of a global sisterhood, definitions that assume a sameness in the forms of women's oppression regardless of local circumstances. To counter such totalizing tendencies, *Global Feminisms*, following Mohanty's model, seeks instead to highlight cultural differences by presenting a collection of voices that "tell alternate stories of difference, culture, power, and agency."<sup>4</sup> Using a model of relational analysis, we can also place diverse works in dialogic relation in order to underscore what Mohanty refers to as "common differences"; which is to say, the significant similarities as well as the localized differences between women

across cultures.<sup>2</sup> Via careful juxtaposition of works, then, we can highlight the disparities and necessarily variegated responses of women artists in highly individualized situations to similar thematic material and subjects (i.e., death, hysteria, pain, old age, war, sex). In so doing, *Global Feminisms* attempts to offer a fresh and expanded definition of feminist artistic production for a transnational age, one that acknowledges incalculable differences among women globally, and that recognizes feminism itself as an *always already* situated practice.

Because it should always be contextualized and located, the concept of feminism in this exhibition has been kept open and supple and has not been considered an easily definable or universal term. The realization that feminism cannot be restricted to a single definition resulted from many years of self-reflection within the discipline itself that began in the 1970s, when women of color and third-world women began waging battles around issues of difference versus sameness. It culminated in a conceptual and theoretical shift in the late 1980s within feminism toward plurality, precipitated by the confluence of feminist, anti-racist, and postcolonial theory. It was during this decade that writers like Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Cherríe Moraga, Gayatri Spivak, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and countless others began arguing for a more inclusive, broader examination of feminisms *within* and *between* cultures, and *beyond* the borders of Euro-America, addressing the discrimination, oppression, and violence experienced by all women, everywhere. The year 1990 was chosen as the starting point of the exhibition to designate the approximate historical moment when the linked issues of race, class, and gender were placed at the forefront of feminist theory and practice. That change marked a move away from the first world's domination of feminism and opened up the discourse to include women outside the limited geographic regions of Euro-America.

*Global Feminisms* is a curatorial response to this specific discourse, insofar as it recognizes that the conspicuous marginalization of large constituencies of women can no longer be ignored, and that an understanding of co-implicated histories, cultures, and identities is crucial to a rethinking of feminism and contemporary art in an age of increased globalization.

The remainder of this introductory essay will place *Global Feminisms* within the context of recent exhibition practice and feminist theory. In order to demonstrate the continued disciplinary necessity of this curatorial project from a postcolonial feminist perspective, in what follows I will begin by querying the notion of gender and race parity in the art world, providing extensive statistical evidence of continued discrimination against women, persons of color, and non-Euro-American artists. I will then review a number of exhibitions since the 1970s that have attempted to face these specific concerns head-on as well, outlining the ways in which *Global Feminisms* works within that history in critical and innovative ways. I will also investigate the intersection of different strands of theory—postcolonial, anti-racist, and feminist—from the late 1980s onward, and the extent to which that exchange shifted definitions of what constitutes feminist cultural production worldwide. Finally, I will posit *Global Feminisms* as an embodiment of a new transnational phase of feminist theory and practice by outlining the curatorial strategies and organizational framework of the exhibition.

#### **Progress, or the Persistence of Inequality**

Women have certainly come a long way since Linda Nochlin wrote her landmark essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” in 1971.<sup>3</sup> They are now featured broadly in important museum and private collections; are included in art history textbooks; and are highly visible in galleries, in the media, and on the art scene in general. Over the last ten years, for instance,

hundreds of women have received grants from the Guggenheim and MacArthur Foundations; and since 1984, when the award was first established, the contemporary artists Gillian Wearing and Rachel Whiteread have been awarded the prestigious Turner Prize at Tate Britain. Agnes Martin and Marlene Dumas (fig. 2) made headlines in 2005 with their off-the-chart auction record prices; and the “art stars” of the eighties and nineties—Cindy Sherman, Kiki Smith, and Mona Hatoum among them—have demonstrated the seemingly endless possibilities for contemporary women artists. In the past two decades, there has been an increased interest on the part of curators in integrating women more fully into major group exhibitions. For instance, the Venice Biennale of 2005, organized by Rosa Martinez and Maria de Corral, featured the work of more women artists than any other previous Biennale. One-woman museum shows and retrospectives are on the rise; and feminist art exhibitions such as this one have been far more frequent of late. And, as if that were not enough, there is now a permanent exhibition space at a major American museum dedicated exclusively to feminist art, evidence of one institution’s desire to precipitate broad change.

Given all of these advances, one might think that women’s improved status and visibility in the art world were signs of significant progress. Yet while these are all optimistic signs, and certainly represent a shift in a positive direction, they are by no means seismic. There are still major systemic problems that need to be addressed. Do not misunderstand me: women artists are certainly in a far better position today than they were thirty-six years ago when Nochlin wrote her essay, and definitely hold a far more respectable professional status than they have had throughout history. For one thing, access to the “high art” education that women had historically been denied is now possible for many with financial means. (Indeed, women now represent 60 percent of the students in art programs in the U.S.)<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the institutional power structures that in her

essay Nochlin argued had made it “impossible for women to achieve artistic excellence, or success, on the same footing as men, no matter what the potency of their so-called talent, or genius,” have been shifting, if ever so slightly.<sup>8</sup> And women themselves, whom Nochlin cautioned against “puffing mediocrity,” have since taken the “necessary risks” and the “leaps into the unknown” that the author suggested were required for women to achieve “greatness.”<sup>9</sup> So, of course, the barriers are lifting, but they have not yet lifted.

In other words, it is important not to be seduced by what *appear* to be signs of equality in the art world, for it must be stated, and restated, that women have never been, nor are they yet, treated on a par with white men. With the Turner Prize listed above, the ratio of female to male recipients was 2 to 19; and while women artists are featured in art history textbooks now, not only are those

Fig. 2  
**Marlene Dumas** (South Africa, b. 1953). *The Teacher* (Sub a), 1987. Oil on canvas, 63 x 78 1/2" (160 x 200 cm). © Christie's Images Limited 2005. (Photo: courtesy of Christie's, London and New York)



numbers minimal, but it was only as recently as 1986 that the most widely used one, H. W. Janson's *History of Art*, first corrected its omission by adding 19 women artists out of 2,300. As we shall see in the statistics that follow, women are still far from equal when it comes to the art market, as well, where the monetary value of their work is far lower than men's; and the male to female ratios at galleries and museums are greatly imbalanced, with few exceptions. Women are also often excluded from exhibitions within which one would think they would play major roles, and women curators are rarely invited to organize the more prestigious international exhibitions. The Venice Biennale of 2005, for instance, cited above for the uniqueness of its gender parity, yet labeled a "garden party" in one sexist review, was the first one in the 110-year history of the Biennale to be organized by women.<sup>10</sup> Two women—as if one were not enough to handle the job. The Biennale committee has company. In the fifty-year history of Documenta, the most widely recognized international contemporary exhibition, held every five years in Kassel, Germany, only once has a woman been asked to organize the exhibition: Catherine David in 1997.<sup>11</sup>

In examining these facts it is also clear that there is another glaring and equally pressing problem that needs to be addressed if equality is to be achieved in the art world; that is, racism. While the statistics about gender disparity are alarming to some, it must be acknowledged that it is far worse for women of color and/or of non-Euro-American descent. In other words, of the advances made by women in the arts over the past three decades, the vast majority were, and generally continue to be, made by white Euro-Americans from or in the privileged centers.

Sexism and racism have become so insidiously woven into the institutional fabric, language, and logic of the mainstream art world that they often go undetected. Once ferreted out, however, there can be no denying their prevalence. The statistics speak for themselves. Upon investigating price differentials, ratios in museums and

at galleries, within thematic and national exhibitions, and in the press, the numbers demonstrate that the fight for equality is far from over. Indeed, the more closely one examines art world statistics, the more glaringly obvious it becomes that, despite the decades of postcolonial, feminist, anti-racist, and queer activism and theorizing, the majority continues to be defined as white, Euro-American, heterosexual, privileged, and, above all, male. When perusing the majority of mainstream (i.e., non-specialized) museums, for instance, one must search more diligently for the women artists, artists of color, and artists of non-Euro-American descent. Without question, the art world is not yet concerned with full assimilation of work by "minority," postcolonial, or other voices into the larger discourse—except, of course, as special exhibitions.

●

In a 2005 follow-up review of the new Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, published one year after its massive expansion and reopening, the art critic Jerry Saltz of *The Village Voice* suggested that the public boycott the institution until its "arrogantly parochial misrepresentation" of women artists was corrected and those responsible were "held accountable."<sup>12</sup> "Of the approximately 410 works in the fourth- and fifth-floor galleries," he reported, "only a paltry 16 are by women. Four percent is shameless, reprehensible, and unacceptable. Moreover, it's lower than it was a year ago."<sup>13</sup> To rectify this "distortion," he recommended that the museum "mount at least one retrospective of a living woman artist every year for the next fifteen years."<sup>14</sup> Coincidentally, Saltz wrote this review at the time of the Elizabeth Murray retrospective—one of only a few retrospectives organized by MoMA about a woman artist since 1990.<sup>15</sup>

MoMA is not alone. The situation for women artists at other museums is comparable. A quick perusal of most permanent displays of modern and contemporary art elsewhere in the U.S. and Europe will demonstrate

this fact. In their 2005 update of their 1989 poster *Do Women Have to Be Naked to Get into the Met. Museum?*, the feminist art activist group the Guerrilla Girls reported that less than 3 percent of the artists in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's modern art sections were women, whereas sixteen years earlier it had been 5 percent. A more recent Guerrilla Girls poster, made for the 2005 Venice Biennale, examines the permanent representation of women artists in museum collection displays throughout the city of Venice. It reports that

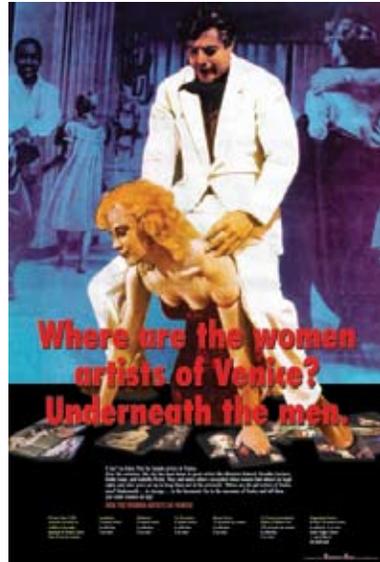
It isn't La Dolce Vita for female artists in Venice.

Over the centuries, this city has been home to great artists like Marietta Robusti, Rosalba Carriera, Giulia Lama, and Isabella Piccini. They and many others succeeded when women had almost no legal rights and rules were set up to keep them out of the artworld. Where are the girl artists of Venice now? Underneath ... in storage ... in the basement. Go to the museums of Venice and tell them you want women on top! FREE THE WOMEN ARTISTS OF VENICE!

[fig. 3].

The urgency of the plea was heightened by the statistics reported at the bottom of the poster: "Of more than 1,238 artworks currently on exhibit at the major museums of Venice, fewer than 40 are by women."<sup>16</sup>

A glance at the recent special-exhibition schedules at major art institutions, especially the presentation of solo shows, reveals that the problem of gender and race disparity continues. Of all the solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, during 2000–4, only 30 percent went to white women artists and 7 percent to females of color.<sup>17</sup> That is about "as good as it gets in NYC," according to the Guerrilla Girls.<sup>18</sup> Is 37 percent good? It is far better than what is on view at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, where women artists were granted only 11 percent of the solo exhibitions during 2000–4.<sup>19</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, again, gets one of the worst grades for inequality and discrimination. During the same four-year period,



90 percent of its solo exhibitions featured white male artists, 8.5 percent white female artists, and only 1.5 percent were granted to all artists of color.<sup>20</sup> Even more telling: over a five-year period in 2000–5, both Tate Modern in London and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art presented solo shows of women artists less than 2 percent of the time.<sup>21</sup> During a comparable time span at the Brooklyn Museum, 2000–6, 23 percent of the solo exhibitions were devoted to women artists.<sup>22</sup>

Women are featured far less at galleries as well. In 50 New York City galleries surveyed in spring 2005, 318 of the 990 artists represented were women.<sup>23</sup> That is 32 percent. The ratio of one-woman shows in New York galleries is even lower. In an article in *The Village Voice* titled "The Battle for Babylon," Jerry Saltz reported that in fall 2005 only 17 percent of the solo shows in New York galleries were by women.<sup>24</sup> In attempting to explain the reason for these "deplorable" ratios, he contended that the art system "knows art is a good investment and is traditionally made by men so more men show and sell while fewer women sell at all... Thus the discourse is being driven from a place that suppresses difference."<sup>25</sup>

Fig. 3  
**Guerrilla Girls** (U.S.A., est. 1985).  
*Free the Women Artists of Venice!*,  
 2005. One of six posters created  
 for the exhibition *Always a Little  
 Further*, 51st Venice Biennale,  
 2005. © Guerrilla Girls, Inc.  
 (Photo: courtesy of  
 www.guerrillagirls.com)

Fig. 4  
**Julie Mehretu** (Ethiopia,  
b. 1970), *Black City*, 2005. Ink  
and acrylic on canvas, 9 × 16'  
(2.74 × 4.88 m). Ovitz Family  
Collection, Santa Monica,  
California. (Photo: Erma Estwick,  
courtesy of The Project, New York)



The availability of works by women artists at galleries, of course, has a tremendous impact on the amount of press coverage they receive and the interest from collectors, museums, and so on, which, in turn, directly affects their market value and monetary value. This is an arena of the art world where women are particularly unequal.

In a *New York Times* article titled "X-Factor: Is the Art Market Rational or Biased?," Greg Allen investigated auction price differentials between male and female artists over the past few years.<sup>28</sup> The results were striking. Using the spring 2005 contemporary art auctions at Christie's, Sotheby's, and Phillips as his data, he revealed that of the 861 works offered by the houses, a mere 13 percent were by women artists, and that of the 61 pieces assigned an estimated price of \$1 million or more, only 6 were by women. And they were three white women: "a marble sculpture by Louise Bourgeois, 2 grid canvases by the late Minimalist Agnes Martin and 3 paintings by the South African artist Marlene Dumas."<sup>29</sup> He compared the market value of works by Rachel Whiteread to those of Damien Hirst, Joan Mitchell to Willem de Kooning, Elizabeth Peyton to John Currin, and others, to demonstrate the extreme gender disparity in price, where sometimes the difference is "tenfold or more." It does not matter if a woman artist is represented by a "blue chip"

gallery, he explained, or shows in prestigious museums, or is sought by prominent collectors; her work will always be priced considerably lower than that of her male colleagues simply because it is made "by a woman."<sup>28</sup>

Not only is work by women priced lower, but it is consistently held in comparatively lower esteem by the press as well; that is, if one judges from the amount of coverage allotted to them in magazines and other periodicals. *Artforum* annually publishes a "Best of" issue in December that includes an article in which several prestigious art professionals are asked to give their opinions. In the 2005 issue, only 12 of the 110 slots were granted to women (with Isa Genzken named twice).<sup>29</sup> All of the women were white Euro-Americans with one exception: Julie Mehretu from Ethiopia (fig. 4). (Thanks are perhaps due in this latter instance to Thelma Golden, director of the Studio Museum in Harlem.) An examination of the December *Artforum* issues over 2000–4 reveals a similar narrative of sexism and racism. Of the 580 entries over that four-year period, 65 went to white women, and 9 went to women of color and non-Euro-American women. But, of course, it is always interesting to consider who is doing the asking and who is doing the telling. Of the 28 people asked by *Artforum* to offer their opinions over the five-year period, only 8 were women and 2 of those were women of color.

It is disheartening that so many art professionals who have the power to institute change—curators, critics, dealers, editors, academics, museum directors, collection committees, and so on—often do nothing to counter overt discrimination. Why do there continue to be general exhibitions that have no, or very few, women, persons of color, and/or non-Euro-American artists when suitable work by all is readily available? In an era that postdates the women's and civil rights movements, how can a curator organize an international contemporary art exhibition that includes almost exclusively Euro-American male artists? One of the most glaring examples over the past few decades of such misrepresentation was an exhibition held at MoMA in 1984 titled *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, curated by Kynaston McShine, which marketed itself as an up-to-date summary of the most significant contemporary art in the world.<sup>30</sup> Out of 169 artists, however, only 13 were women.<sup>31</sup> As one of the Guerrilla Girls explained in an interview, "That was bad enough, but the curator, Kynaston McShine, said any artist who wasn't in the show should rethink 'his' career."<sup>32</sup>

A more recent example of a gender-biased exhibition close to home was one held at P.S.1 in Long Island City, New York, titled *Greater New York 2005* (a sequel to the 2000 exhibition *Greater New York*).<sup>33</sup> The goal of the 2005 exhibition, as outlined by its chief organizer, Klaus Biesenbach, was to present work by artists who had emerged onto the New York art scene since 2000 that showed "vitality, energy, and exciting promise," and that anticipated "new artistic directions."<sup>34</sup> Yet, despite the openness of this curatorial mission, the work included only 60 women artists out of a total of 162.<sup>35</sup> When Biesenbach was asked about the disparity in numbers by a reporter for the newspaper *New York Metro*, he replied, "Any discrepancy is due to the quality of the art."<sup>36</sup> In other words, he was implying that young male artists were making higher quality work at the time. However, this discriminating opinion was not his alone.

*Greater New York 2005* was organized by a team of art professionals and curators from P.S.1 and MoMA within which Biesenbach was one, albeit dominant, voice.<sup>37</sup>

The most conspicuous recent example of gender and race disparity in an exhibition may be *Dionysiac: Art in Flux*, curated by Christine Macel at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, in spring 2005. The show, which took the Greek god Dionysus as a source of inspiration and explored themes of intoxication, ecstasy, wild revelry, and music, featured commissioned installations by fourteen international artists—all white males.<sup>38</sup> "You got to admit, that takes balls," Max Henry exclaimed in a review of the show.<sup>39</sup> Dionysus, described in the exhibition's press release as the "god of both explosion and enthusiasm, the force of life and destruction, of all outbursts," was channeled in each of the works.<sup>40</sup>

*Dionysiac* was a blockbuster, and crowds of French hungry for rambunctious, lewd "fuck you art" by Paul McCarthy, Maurizio Cattelan, John Bock, Christoph Büchel, and others, flocked to the Pompidou in record numbers.<sup>41</sup> On the opening night, however, while visitors sipped from penis-shaped champagne flutes, a series of protests took place outside the museum. Les Artpies, a Paris-based group of women activists, passed out fliers denouncing the show, sarcastically noting that "finally the Pompidou has opened up to male art!" and "glory and eternity to virile art." Thanks to the *Dionysiac* exhibition, Les Artpies continued, the Pompidou has now become "100 percent pure male!" The group went on to congratulate Macel for her "revolutionary" zeal in her "engagement in the fight against sexism."<sup>42</sup> Les Artpies could have equally pointed out that the exhibition was 100 percent white, and that 13 of the 14 so-called international artists were of American or European descent, with the one exception being Kendell Geers, who is a white South African. In other words, the term international was hijacked here and rendered invalid.

Considering that the exhibition was four years in the making, it is hard to believe that the curator was

Fig. 5  
**lum** (South Korea, b. 1971).  
*Black Orchid*, from *The Four Gracious Plants*, 1998.  
 Installation with 4 photographs on transparent film, 4 light boxes, and black rubber; each print 9' 10<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 3' 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (3 x 1.2 m), overall 11' 5<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 26' 2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (3.5 x 8 m). Courtesy of the artist



incapable of finding some contemporary non-Western and/or women artists to include. Qin Yufen, Nalini Malani, Pipilotti Rist, Cecily Brown, lum (fig. 5), Charlotte Schlieffert, Jane Alexander, Rita Ackermann, Adriana Varejão, and Mariko Mori, among many others, all could have contributed to an exhibition purportedly about an art of excess and “the contemporary tragic,” to use the curator’s words.<sup>43</sup> Although she never addressed the issue directly, in the catalogue Macel did make several minor attempts to justify the omission of women artists from the exhibition. She wondered, for instance, whether it is possible for women to possess “l’énergie dionysiaque.”<sup>44</sup> While she admitted that Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Adrian Piper produced works of “tragic excess” during the 1970s, and that, in some instances, Cindy Sherman and Louise Bourgeois continued to do so, she maintained that most young women artists today, such as Valérie Mréjen and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, are more interested in personal fiction and narrative, in the tradition of Sophie Calle (or Virginia Woolf).<sup>45</sup> Her most interesting defense for her exclusion of women artists from *Dionysiac*, however, may have been the existence of the then-forthcoming exhibition *Global Feminisms*, which was posited in Macel’s catalogue essay as a possible

“corrective” to the *Dionysiac* exhibition’s omissions. As she explained: “Thus one awaits with great anticipation the exhibition being organized by Linda Nochlin and Maura Reilly on the subject of women artists at the Brooklyn Museum, New York, in 2006.”<sup>46</sup> The question remains, however, whether a show dedicated exclusively to women artists, such as ours in Brooklyn, can be used, somehow, to rectify other sexist and racist ones. And, if so, for how many years and how many institutions?

How is it possible to have a contemporary art exhibition today that purports to be thematic and international yet which is 100 percent male and 100 percent white? One might expect, given the long history of institutionalized sexism and racism in the art world, that a museum exhibition of Abstract Expressionism, for instance, would never feature Lee Krasner, Joan Mitchell, or Elaine de Kooning on a par with male artists like Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, or Franz Kline.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, after decades of feminist, anti-racist, and postcolonial theorizing, from the 1970s onward, could not one expect the contemporary art exhibitions being organized today to have become more inclusive of women, non-Euro-Americans, and persons of color? Or, at least, could not one expect curators to be more self-conscious about their exclusions and inclusions? After all, as Gayatri Spivak reminds us, “we must always acknowledge not only who we are, but *where* we are; that is, where we are positioned in relation to hierarchies of power, and to questions of authority and privilege.”<sup>48</sup>

In light of the foregoing statistics and analysis, it should be obvious to the reader that gender and race disparity is still omnipresent in this implicitly Euro-American-centric art system. It should also be clear that the prevailing discriminatory practices against women and other marginalized groups persist at every level—in the galleries, museums, exhibitions, the press, and the art market. The situation that these statistics document must be investigated, analyzed, and addressed, not ignored. The pretense that there is equality in the mainstream art

world needs to be challenged, again and again, until it is clear how misleading remarks like the following quotation are: when P.S.1's director, Alanna Heiss, was asked about the gender bias of the *Greater New York 2005* exhibition, she emphasized that there are "so many wonderful women in the show."<sup>49</sup> Feminist policies and other activism are still urgently needed.

In spite of the lack of support among many museum professionals who have the power to institute change, and the overwhelming disparity between white male artists and all others within our masculinist, not-so-global art systems, *there is always hope in resistance*. Over the past three decades, there has been a series of successful counterattacks against what Griselda Pollock calls the "hegemonic discourse of art history" that have sought to address the specific concerns of sexism and racism in the ranks.<sup>50</sup> First, the historiography of women's and feminist art exhibitions from the 1970s to the present, for instance, can be understood as correctives to the omission of women and feminists from the art-historical records, past and present. Second, within this trajectory of feminist art exhibitions, more recently there has been an increasingly concerted effort toward full international inclusion, with *Global Feminisms* being one such example. Finally, there have been several landmark exhibitions in recent years that have demonstrated a new interest in presenting multicultural and international contemporary art, beginning with *Magiciens de la terre* in 1989 and *The Decade Show* in 1990. All of these interventionist projects—the women's, feminist, multicultural, and international art exhibitions—specifically addressed the art world's inherent biases, using various strategies of resistance *from within*.

#### Landmark Exhibitions

Countless significant exhibitions and projects in the early years of the feminist art movement in America sought to correct the omission of women from historical and cultural records, or simply to celebrate women's artistic production as worthy of attention in and of itself.



Beginning in 1971, Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro organized the pioneering feminist art project *Womanhouse* (fig. 6), an exhibition of woman artists that included, among other installations and performances, a dollhouse room, a menstruation bathroom, a bridal staircase, a nude "womannequin" emerging from a linen closet, a pink kitchen with fried egg–breast décor, and a red lipstick bathroom. As Lucy Lippard explained at the time, *Womanhouse* was "an attempt to concretize the fantasies and oppressions of women's experience."<sup>51</sup> This landmark exhibition grew out of the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts, an arts curriculum that sought to create a safe haven for women to explore their artistic voices removed from what Hélène Cixous referred to in 1981 as the "systems of censorship that bear down on every attempt to speak in the feminine."<sup>52</sup> It was in educational arenas like these and the numerous women's collectives and exhibition spaces that developed nationwide at this time, beginning with A.I.R. Gallery in New York in 1972, that women artists first began to break from their traditional positions of silence to speaking subjects, and to make the revolutionary move from the personal to the political.

*Womanhouse* was followed a few months later by the important exhibition *Where We At: Black Women Artists*,

Fig. 6  
Cover of the exhibition catalogue *Womanhouse* (Valencia: Feminist Art Program, California Institute of the Arts, 1972) showing Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro. Design by Sheila de Bretteville. (Photo: Donald Woodman, courtesy of Through the Flower archive)



Fig. 7  
**Judy Chicago** (U.S.A., b. 1939).  
*The Dinner Party*, 1974–79.  
 Mixed media: ceramic, porcelain,  
 and textile, 48 × 42 × 3'  
 (14.6 × 12.8 × 0.9 m). Brooklyn  
 Museum. Gift of the Elizabeth  
 A. Sackler Center Foundation,  
 2002.10. © Judy Chicago. (Photo:  
 © Donald Woodman, courtesy of  
 Brooklyn Museum Archives)

at the Acts of Art Galleries, New York, in 1971, which featured the work of the artists Kay Brown, Dinga McCannon, and Faith Ringgold. These women later established the Where We At collective, which addressed the exclusion of women artists from many African American organizations. Then, in 1973, the Women's Building in Los Angeles was established. According to one of its founders, Arlene Raven, this landmark feminist project was founded "as an act against the historical erasure of women's art and an acknowledgment of the heritage we were beginning to recover."<sup>53</sup> As a testament to that mission, the Women's Building (which took its name and inspiration from a structure built by Sophia Hayden for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago) organized and hosted numerous all-female exhibitions and public programs throughout the 1970s and 1980s, most notably *What Is Feminist Art?* in 1977, which included work by more than thirty women artists.

The most important single artwork of the 1970s to address the omission of women from the mainstream historical record remains Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* of 1974–79 (fig. 7), now in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum. The large-scale installation, which has traveled extensively, both nationally and internationally, since its completion in 1979, commemorates 1,038 women,

39 of whom are granted place settings on the table, while the names of the other 999 are inscribed on the Heritage Floor tiles below. This massive ceremonial banquet for women is laid on an equilateral triangular table measuring forty-eight feet on a side. Each of the thirty-nine place settings includes a china-painted porcelain plate with a raised central motif based on vaginal iconography, as well as a chalice, utensils, and a brightly colored, embroidered runner bearing images appropriate to the subject's historical period. *The Dinner Party*—conceived as a visual, and historical, "feast" for the eyes—functions, then, to reclaim not only these specific women, the majority of whom had been neglected by history before the completion of the work, but also the crafts that have traditionally been associated with women in general, such as needlework, china painting, and embroidery.

By far the most significant curatorial corrective in the 1970s to the occlusion of women as cultural contributors from the larger historical record was the pioneering exhibition *Women Artists: 1550–1950* (fig. 8), organized in 1976 by Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris. The exhibition, which *Time* magazine called "one of the most significant theme shows to come along in years," was the *first* large-scale museum exhibition in the U.S. dedicated exclusively to women artists from a historical perspective.<sup>54</sup> Its central aim was the reclamation of women artists and their insertion back into the traditional canon of art history from which they had been lost, or forgotten, or simply dismissed as insignificant because female. The exhibition presented more than 150 works by 84 painters, from sixteenth-century miniatures to modern abstractions, including examples by Lavinia Fontana, Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith Leyster, Angelica Kauffman, Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Berthe Morisot, and Georgia O'Keeffe. It by no means pretended to be a comprehensive survey of painting by women artists over its four-hundred-year period—as if that were possible—but should be understood as a compilation of significant and, in some instances, "great" women artists.



Fig. 8  
Installation view of the exhibition  
*Women Artists: 1550–1950*,  
Brooklyn Museum, 1977, curated  
by Ann Sutherland Harris and  
Linda Nochlin. (Photo: Brooklyn  
Museum Archives)

From the moment they conceptualized the project in 1970, the two scholars were off and running on a five-year course through museums, libraries, and private collections in the U.S. and abroad. “It was like doing the whole history of art with a feminist cast,” Nochlin explained at the time.<sup>25</sup> And it was an overwhelming task. Art-historical literature about women artists was scant, monographs devoted to women were an absolute rarity, and museums and galleries were negligent about, if not averse to, exhibiting work by women at that time. Indeed, many of the paintings in the exhibition were excavated from the dusty basements of museums to which they had been relegated, like castoffs.<sup>26</sup> The already daunting task of mounting the largest exhibition of women artists to date was made all the more difficult by the general lack of interest and the misunderstanding among many of the curators’ peers. The curators often had to make strenuous efforts to persuade museum administrators, for instance, to loan works, because many had a hard time understanding that an exhibition of women artists could

be a serious or *scholarly* enterprise. It did not help that most of the artists the curators were interested in were unknown at the time, even to seasoned scholars working in areas from the Renaissance to the modern era. In 1976, when *Women Artists* was on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the museum’s director, Kenneth Donahue, reported that when a group of art historians from the College Art Association came to see the exhibition, “We heard them say over and over again that they didn’t know women artists were doing anything before Rosa Bonheur or Mary Cassatt.”<sup>27</sup> Yet what the exhibition and its catalogue made clear was that, although present-day scholars were largely unaware of these artists’ work, the neglect did not derive from a lack of accomplishment or success during the artists’ lifetimes. Many of these so-called unknown artists in the exhibition had in fact been hugely celebrated in their own time, including such figures as Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), who was one of the founding members of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where she was admitted

in 1768; Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750), whose specialty of fruit and flower paintings brought her international fame in her lifetime; and Anne Vallayer-Coster (1744–1818), whom Diderot considered a near-rival of Chardin.<sup>99</sup> The fact that scholars of the 1970s were unaware of such artists' work has more to do with widespread discrimination against women, historically, and the persistent erasure of their cultural production. As Sutherland Harris and Nochlin argued in their catalogue essays, since the Renaissance women had been systematically denied access to proper art education and had been institutionally prohibited from achieving "artistic excellence, or success, on the same footing as men, no matter what the potency of their so-called talent, or genius."<sup>98</sup> "Greatness," after all, Nochlin argued, had been defined since antiquity as white, Western, privileged, and, above all, male.

*Women Artists: 1550–1950* was an inherently feminist project that challenged not only the masculinist canon of art history, but also the history of museum exhibition practices that had helped sustain it institutionally for centuries. As Nochlin had argued earlier, the feminist project of the 1970s needed to start with the unburying and resurrection of women from history before analysis and deconstruction of the canon could commence.<sup>90</sup> The canon against and within which she and Sutherland Harris chose to work, and within which they were trained as art historians, was the dominant, Western one. No one questioned in 1976, therefore, why the exhibition focused solely on artists from America and Europe, or that it included only one woman of color (Frida Kahlo). It was understood that that was their chosen object of analysis. The academic canons of art history, literature, philosophy, and so on were being challenged by feminists at that time for their masculinist tendencies, for the most part, not their Eurocentric and imperialistic ones. It would not be until the 1980s that the hegemony of the Western canons themselves was questioned.

*Women Artists: 1550–1950* was a landmark event in the history of feminism and art. "As far as I am

concerned," the art critic John Perrault declared in his review of the exhibition, "the history of Western art will never be the same again."<sup>91</sup> After an exhibition such as this, Perrault continued, the occlusion of women from art history "can never happen again, for [the curators'] research has proved that there have been women artists of great accomplishment all along."<sup>92</sup> The exhibition had a considerable and immediate impact on the art-historical paradigm against which it was working. Museums lending to the exhibition began exhibiting their works by women artists more regularly once they had returned from the tour. *Women Artists* spawned countless articles and monographs and endless dialogue about the importance of women's artistic production as a whole. It also had an impact on all subsequent women's and feminist art exhibitions.

From the mid-1980s to the present, in the wake of *Women Artists*, numerous group exhibitions in the U.S. have dedicated themselves to the history of women's artistic production, past and present, but in these instances with a specific focus on post-1970 feminist artistic production. These exhibitions included *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970–85* (1989); *Bad Girls* (1994); *Division of Labor: "Women's Work" in Contemporary Art* (1995); *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's "Dinner Party" in Feminist Art History* (1996); *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine* (1996); *Gloria: Another Look at Feminist Art in the 1970s* (2002); *Regarding Gloria* (2002); *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969–1975* (2002); and *Art/Women/California, 1950–2000: Parallels and Intersections* (2002). Unlike *Women Artists*, which presented pre- and proto-feminist work, these exhibitions were specifically feminist in content and therefore can be situated more closely within the legacy of landmark projects like *Womanhouse*. Each of them presented a broad sampling of feminist work: some were historical overviews that advanced the legacy of American feminist art from

the 1970s onward, while others showed more contemporary work that explored the post-second-wave feminist generations.

The importance of these and other exhibitions like them should not be underestimated. By calling special attention to work by women as cultural producers, these exhibitions challenged the broader framework of contemporary art and its exhibition practices for being unconditionally masculinist. In other words, each took as its operative assumption that the U.S. art system—its institutions, market, press, and so forth—is a hegemony: a Marxist term that explains the way “a particular social and political order culturally saturates a society so profoundly that its regime is lived by its populations simply as ‘common sense.’”<sup>63</sup> As a hegemonic discourse, the current art system privileges, as we have seen in the previous section, “white male creativity to the exclusion of all women artists.”<sup>64</sup> As counter-hegemonic projects, then, these exhibitions expanded the canons of art history to include what it had hitherto refused—women, and feminist artists, in particular. Theirs are exhibition strategies of resistance *from within*. Teresa de Lauretis posits the critical project of feminism as the “elsewhere of discourse,” which is never outside that which it is critically “re-viewing.” It is “the spaces in the margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and in the chinks and cracks of the power-knowledge-apparati.”<sup>65</sup> The group exhibitions in the U.S. that dedicate themselves to the history of women’s artistic production successfully disrupt the hegemonic discourse from within by showing the gaps in representation, “the blind spots, or the space-off, of its representations.”<sup>66</sup>

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*Global Feminisms* seeks to use a similar strategy of resistance from within, but with a difference. While it, too, looks to expand and supplement the canons of art history, it is also an exhibition that urgently recognizes that no current evaluation of feminism—or contemporary

art, for that matter—can ignore the obvious marginalization of large constituencies of non-Western and/or non-white women who are under patriarchy, “doubly colonized,” in the words of Gayatri Spivak.<sup>67</sup> This is not to say that feminist art exhibitions in the U.S. have not been inclusive of “other” voices historically. Indeed, many have expressed an interest in multiculturalism and identity politics. However, none of them, to my knowledge, was genuinely international in scope. Of course, some non-Western artists were included, but the central focus was almost always on feminist art of the U.S., as if feminism were an ideology and a movement specific to this country alone. The present exhibition, *Global Feminisms*, avoids that assumption and insists, instead, on the full inclusion of third-world and so-called “minority” feminist voices, not just a token few. It takes as its operative principle that feminism is an irreducible term; that it has no single definition or history, but is rather itself a “constitutively multi-voiced arena of struggle” in which inter- and cross-cultural differences must always be taken into consideration. In so doing, it demonstrates the major shifts in feminist theory and practice that have occurred over the last few decades with the introduction of postcolonial and anti-racist ideas, shifts that resulted in a global mandate.

#### **Feminism’s Global Imperative**

Feminism has been coming to grips with this global imperative since the late 1980s. Throughout that decade, third-world women and women of color waged heated battles against first-world, white, middle-class women, which resulted in a critical collapse of consensus within feminism, under the weight of concepts such as colonialism, oppression, and difference. The “white women’s movement,” as the black feminist Frances Beale was determined to name it in the 1970 anthology *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, was accused of focusing on the oppression of women without taking into account issues

of racial, class, sexual, religious, and other differences.<sup>68</sup> While these issues had been contested during the 1960s and 1970s as well, most spectacularly around the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, it was during the 1980s that the intense anger and divisiveness of the 1970s finally precipitated substantive conceptual and theoretical shifts within the movement itself. By the late 1980s, then, feminism emerged with a new or revised agenda, one that favored diversity over sameness. It should come as no surprise, then, that this was also the moment for the birth of the term *feminisms*, "in the plural, which signifies difference among feminists—not a consensus, but a multiplicity of points of view."<sup>69</sup>

This new agenda of diversity and difference that emerged in late 1980s Western feminism was greatly informed by ideas put forth by postcolonial, anti-racist, and lesbian feminist writers. In their groundbreaking writings, with titles such as *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Woman Warrior*, and *Home Girls*, these women confessed to feeling excluded from mainstream feminism because it focused solely on the oppression of women without taking into account issues of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other differences.<sup>70</sup> In 1984, Gayatri Spivak spoke of Western feminism as "hegemonic," dominant, and colonizing;<sup>71</sup> and in 1986, Patricia Hill Collins wrote about being forced to internalize an "'outsider within' status."<sup>72</sup> Audre Lorde's collection of essays from 1984 perhaps best exemplifies the way most of these women felt at the time: *Sister Outsider*.<sup>73</sup>

Women artists of color were not immune to these feelings of isolation within the mainstream American feminist art movement. Howardena Pindell has written about the disappointment she felt as a member of an artist consciousness-raising group in the 1970s where her personal experiences as a black woman were considered too political by some and "therefore not worthy of being addressed." "Consequently," she continues, "I found my personal interactions in the feminist movement of the

1970s problematic, as some European American women would openly state that dealing with racism distracted one's attention from the issues of feminism." Pindell gradually withdrew from interacting with "white feminist groups, until they began to deal with the racism in their ranks."<sup>74</sup>

Despite the catalytic role that artists like Pindell, Betye Saar, Ana Mendieta, Faith Ringgold, Adrian Piper, Juane Quick-to-see Smith, and others played throughout the decade of the 1970s, women artists of color and of non-Euro-American descent were not well integrated into the women's art movement and exhibition planning, nor were they intimately involved in the mainstream women's galleries and collectives, "except as occasional members."<sup>75</sup> (For instance, Pindell was a member of A.I.R. Gallery from 1972 onward, albeit the first black one.) Moreover, as Judith Brodsky explains in her important essay on alternate gallery spaces for women in the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s, when artists of color were invited to participate in galleries and exhibition committees, it was "usually at a point when the planning was already complete."<sup>76</sup>

In the 1980s, women's galleries, collectives, and organizations eventually responded to the issue of racism in their ranks and began to stage important exhibitions, such as *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists in the United States*, at A.I.R. Gallery in 1980, which featured the work of Judith F. Baca, Beverly Buchanan, Janet Olivia Henry, Senga Nengudi, Lydia Okumura, Howardena Pindell, Selena Whitefeather, and Zarina.<sup>77</sup> This exhibition was accompanied by a small illustrated catalogue with an introduction by the Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta, who co-organized the show, after joining A.I.R. Gallery in 1978. Eight years later, the Women's Caucus for Art sponsored *Coast to Coast: A Women of Color National Artists Collaborative Book Exhibit*, organized by Margaret Gallegos, Faith Ringgold, and Clarissa Sligh. And while there were other exhibitions and programs throughout the country, as Brodsky explains, "the racial gap was difficult to close."<sup>78</sup>

Though it must be stated that second-wave feminism did not wholly ignore race or homosexuality, it did often place those issues in secondary positions to gender-based struggles.<sup>79</sup> While it was generally agreed upon at the time that patriarchal regimes and masculinist ideologies were the primary sources of oppression for all women, “minority” women emphasized that it was experienced “in different ways by different women,” and that it “results in different ‘sites of oppression’ and ‘sites of resistance.’”<sup>80</sup> As Amelia Jones explains, postcolonial, anti-racist, and lesbian feminists took issue with the tendency of second-wave feminists “to assume that there is such a thing as a unified—implicitly heterosexual and white (not to mention middle-class)—female experience.”<sup>81</sup> bell hooks, for instance, argued in 1984 that “Race and class identity create differences in quality of life, social status and life style that take precedence over the common experience women share—*differences* which are rarely transcended.”<sup>82</sup> As an example, hooks explained how irrelevant Betty Friedan’s “problem that has no name” was to the black female experience, since black women did not have the luxury of sharing the suburban boredom of “college-educated, white housewives.”<sup>83</sup> The assumption that women share the same common female experience, in other words, was contested because it did not account for the racial, cultural, sexual, class, religious, and other differences between women. By extension, feminism itself, it was maintained, could not be restricted to a singular definition, for it must always be contextualized. “It has become difficult to name one’s feminism by a single adjective,” Donna Haraway said in 1985, since “consciousness of exclusion through naming is acute.”<sup>84</sup>

Hence the rejection on the part of many so-called “minority” feminists at that time of a global sisterhood, which assumed a commonality in the form of women’s oppression and activism worldwide, and which tended to “circumscribe ideas about experience, agency, and struggle.”<sup>85</sup> In 1980, Audre Lorde stated that “today, there

is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *SISTERHOOD* in the white women’s movement. When white feminists call for ‘unity,’ they are misnaming a deeper and real need for homogeneity.”<sup>86</sup> “White women,” she continued, “focus on their oppression as women,” while continuing “to ignore the differences that exist among women.”<sup>87</sup> The false assumption, therefore, that all women share identical struggles, or that oppression is relative, needed to be challenged, especially when examining the status of non-white (or socio-economically disadvantaged) women, or of those outside of Euro-America.

It also needed to be emphasized, many argued, that while women in North America and Western Europe deal with discrimination, sexism, and violence on a daily basis, outside those borders many women are concerned with issues that are often less pressing in first-world nations, such as sanctioned rape, the right to vote, to educate, reform of unequal property laws, sexual trafficking, forced sterilizations, multinational exploitation of labor, and so on.<sup>88</sup> Gayatri Spivak, for instance, argued in 1985 in her famous essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” that the ethnocentric assumption inherent in notions like global sisterhood did not account, in particular, for those women in countries emerging from colonial cultures, such as India, who “were doubly colonized by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies.”<sup>89</sup> Indeed, according to Chela Sandoval, most of the postcolonial feminist writing in the 1980s was concerned with critiquing second-wave feminist discourses in terms of their ethnocentric, hegemonic, colonizing tendencies, which, according to Spivak, reproduced the “axioms of imperialism.”<sup>90</sup> Similarly, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, in her critique of Robin Morgan’s 1984 anthology *Sisterhood Is Global*, explains that the “universality of gender oppression” also seems “predicated on the erasure of the history and effects of contemporary imperialism.”<sup>91</sup>

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The critique launched against mainstream American feminism in the 1980s continued throughout the 1990s

in the theoretical discourses of post-structuralism, postcolonialism, and critical race theory. Writers such as M. Jacqui Alexander, Linda Martin Alcoff, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Rita Felski, Susan Stanford Friedman, Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan, Minoo Moallem, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Paula Moya, Uma Narayan, Chela Sandoval, and Ella Shohat urged feminists to move beyond what has often been characterized as “the difference impasse” of 1980s American feminism and to prioritize a new feminist political practice—variously referred to as transnational feminisms, relational multicultural feminism, the feminist solidarity/comparative studies model, and scripts of relational positionality.<sup>22</sup> While each of these terms and positions differs from author to author, in general it was argued that the new feminist practice must address the concerns of women across the globe, *transnationally*, in their historical and particularized relationships to multiple patriarchies and economic hegemonies. The term *transnational* was specifically advocated, instead of *international*, in order to signify a movement *across* national boundaries and to designate a new, postcolonial interest in exceeding the borders of the colonized world. Transnational projects, then, are different from international ones, since, in the latter case, the West is always the assumed center.

Drawing from concepts such as hybridity, borderland, *mestizaje*, creolization, and other forms of what Kimberlé Crenshaw calls “political intersectionality,”<sup>23</sup> these writers espoused a new or revised feminism free from monolithic binaries (e.g., center/periphery, oppressor/victim, active/passive), which, they argued, function to maintain systems of power and privilege. Feminism, like identities, it was maintained, could not be restricted to a singular definition: it was context-related, fluid, and unstable. Oppression was not relative, the writers argued, especially when considering broad inter- and cross-cultural differences. Rather than treating women in other areas of the world as foreign or exotic, a transnational perspective would allow us to make connections between the cultures and lives

of women in diverse places without reducing all women’s experiences to a “common culture.” In other words, highlighting the differences among women was as important as their cross-culturally shared common struggles. Most agreed, at this point, that it was only through an emphasis on these “common differences” that a genuine solidarity among women could be achieved.

More recently, with feminist art exhibitions like *Fusion Cuisine* (2002), *Post/feministische Positionen der neunziger Jahre aus der Sammlung Goetz* (2002), and *Girls’ Night Out* (2004), a few of these ideas were put into museum practice. By calling special attention to work by women as cultural producers between cultures (not just those in the West), the exhibitions sought to challenge the broader framework of contemporary art as implicitly masculinist as well as Euro-Americentric. These were successful endeavors, but only up to a point, I would argue. While their critiques of masculinism were highly successful, they interpreted feminism’s *transnational* imperative as an *international* one. In other words, instead of offering a broad, more inclusive selection of contemporary feminist art worldwide, which could function to dismantle the center/periphery binary, these international exhibitions continue to position the West as the privileged center, and to present not a multiplicity of voices, but rather a select sampling of Euro-American art with a tokenist inclusion of a few non-Western artists.

While inspired by these recent exhibitions, in the end *Global Feminisms* employs a different curatorial strategy. It does not “add” voices to the mainstream of feminism or extend a preexisting Euro-Americentric feminism. Instead, the exhibition presents an even wider geographical selection, arranged thematically, with a special emphasis on placing works in dialogic relation, underscoring “common differences” between women from various cultures, nations, religions, ethnicities, and sexualities. In doing so, the co-implicated histories, cultures, and stories between women can become part and parcel of a larger, dissonant (versus a linear or synchronic) narrative.

*Global Feminisms* represents the curatorial conclusion of a long period of self-reflection within feminist discourse and practice. It acknowledges that a new chapter of feminism has been necessary for some time, one that encourages the inclusion of non-Western and "minority" women's voices. This interest in a broader examination of feminism between cultures is a new development in feminist curatorial practice, and represents what I have called its new global imperative; which is to say, a mandate to look beyond the borders of North America or Western Europe, and address the shared and particularized discrimination and oppression experienced by all women. As I have outlined in detail, this new mandate is inseparable from the theoretical discourses of postcolonialism and, more recently, critical race theory, and their influence on feminist cultural production and practices in the U.S. from the 1980s onward. The year 1990, then, was chosen as the starting point of the exhibition to designate the approximate historical moment when this mandate began; which is to say, when the linked issues of race, class, and gender were placed at the forefront of feminist theory and practice. The year 1990 is also an important historical marker in the historiography of multicultural and international contemporary art exhibitions.

#### **Going Multi/Going Global**

Concomitant with mainstream feminism's increased interest in diversity and transnationalism, several landmark contemporary art exhibitions were organized, beginning in the late 1980s, that demonstrated a concern with multiculturalism, global visions, and a new internationalism in the visual arts, including *Magiciens de la terre* (1989), *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s* (1990), the 1993 Whitney Biennial, Documenta 11 (2002), and the 51st Venice Biennale (2005). The overall conceptual framework of *Global Feminisms* was greatly influenced by these exhibitions and, thus, a close examination of these "critical anti-hegemonic offensives"<sup>32</sup> is necessary at this point.

Each of these exhibitions, in its own way, sought to dismantle the Euro-Americacentric and monocultural assumptions embedded in the art-historical canon. To a greater or a lesser degree, each was highly successful; all of them were controversial. While there had, of course, been exhibitions prior to these that were international and multicultural—namely Documentas and biennials, as well as others that have been discussed above—none had set out to be as consciously inclusive of the "other," defined in these exhibitions as non-Western and/or non-white. This new curatorial and scholarly interest in a new internationalism was greatly influenced by postcolonial studies, including the writings of Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Jean Fisher, Michael Hardt, Geeta Kapur, Gerardo Mosquera, Antonio Negri, Olu Oguibe, Mari Carmen Ramírez, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak, among many others.

The first and most controversial of these exhibitions was *Magiciens de la terre*, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin and held at the Centre Pompidou and the Grand Hall at La Villette in Paris in 1989, which was presented as the first truly planetary exhibition of contemporary art. It was the first attempt in recent museum history to mount a large-scale, postcolonial exhibition in which hierarchies were meant to be eliminated between the 50 Western and 50 non-Western participants. Unlike the much-criticized "*Primitivism*" in *Twentieth-Century Art* show at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, five years prior, in 1984, which valorized Western artistic practice over the primitive objects it displayed alongside such "greats" as Picasso and Matisse, *Magiciens* sought to exhibit multiple works by first- and third-world artists in a way that would involve no projections about centers and margins. Well-established Western artists (such as Louise Bourgeois, Francesco Clemente, Anselm Kiefer, Barbara Kruger, and Sigmar Polke) were featured alongside then-unknown non-Western artists, such as Kane Kwei (Ghana), Patrick Vilaire (Haiti), Gu Dexin (China), Esther Mahlangu (South Africa), or beside anthropological, religious, and/or ritual

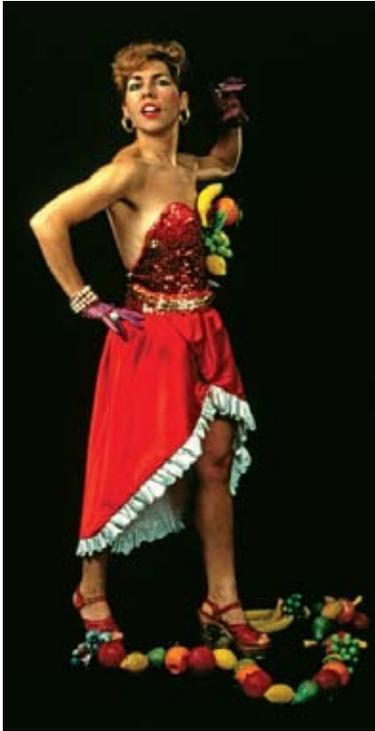
objects and artifacts, among them a Benin ceremonial mask and a mandala from Nepal created by three Buddhist monks.<sup>95</sup>

Despite his attempt to depart from what had been the traditional curatorial practices of Euro-American institutions, which continue to grant supremacy to Western art over all other regions of the world, Martin's show came under almost immediate attack. Much was made of the fact, for instance, that Martin employed anthropologists and ethnographers on his curatorial team to assist him in discovering contemporary non-Western artists and in understanding the context within which they produced their work.<sup>96</sup> Martin, presented as a curator-explorer, was then accused of fetishizing and decontextualizing the non-Western objects in the exhibition. Indeed, in a pre-exhibition interview with the curator in *Art in America* in May 1989, Benjamin Buchloch raised questions about the "exhibition's approach to the issue of cultural authenticity" and "about the exhibition's potential neo-colonialist subtext,"<sup>97</sup> and asked whether Martin's project inevitably "operated like an archeology of the 'other.'"<sup>98</sup> In the end, however, even Buchloch had to praise the curator for his "long overdue and courageous attempt to depart from the hegemonic and monocentric cultural perspectives of Western European and American institutions and their exhibition projects."<sup>99</sup> Eleanor Heartney's post-exhibition review in the same magazine, in July of that year, called *Magiciens* "a problematic but worthwhile attempt to come to terms with Western/non-Western cultural encounters,"<sup>100</sup> while also questioning whether the "museological enterprise inevitably smacks of cultural exploitation"<sup>101</sup> when coming to terms with such intercultural encounters.

Insofar as it was "the first major exhibition consciously to attempt to discover a post-colonialist way to exhibit objects together," Thomas McEvelley understood the show to be "a major event in the social history of art, not in its esthetic history."<sup>102</sup> Indeed, *Magiciens* was a pioneering event in the history of museum exhibitions. Yes, it was

flawed, but it initiated endless dialogue, just as Martin had intended.<sup>103</sup> In that same 1989 interview with Buchloch, Martin stated that he would like to see it "operate as a catalyst for future projects and investigations."<sup>104</sup> *Magiciens* has done just that. All subsequent international exhibitions have had to take it into account. Indeed, as shall be discussed shortly, many have seen Documenta 11 (2002) as a deliberate response and "corrective" to *Magiciens*.

Challenging the Westerncentrism and monoculturalism of contemporary art was not exclusive to European curatorial and exhibition practices. There were also numerous exhibitions in the U.S. from the late 1980s onward that sought to explore a multiculturalism in the visual arts, the most notable of these being *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s of 1990* and the 1993 Whitney Biennial. *The Decade Show*, co-organized and presented simultaneously by the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Studio Museum in Harlem, featured work in all media by more than 125 artists, including Emma Amos, Ida Applebroog, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Dara Birnbaum, Gran Fury, Alfredo Jaar, Yolanda López, James Luna, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Howardena Pindell, Lilliana Porter, Tim Rollins & K.O.S., Betye Saar, Carmelita Tropicana (fig. 9), and David Wojnarowicz, among others. The principal goal of the exhibition, as explained by Julia Herzberg in her catalogue essay, was to give voice to "minority" artists—defined as Asian, Afro-American, Anglo-European, Native American, Latin American, women, and homosexual artists—most of whom, she argued, "have been ignored, overlooked, or sidestepped by traditional museums and art-historical circles."<sup>105</sup> The identity politics on display ranged from works about the AIDS crisis and homelessness to censorship and miscegenation. The show received a tremendous amount of press, both good and bad. But, as the art critic Elizabeth Hess said in her review, *The Decade Show* was "bound for glory and controversy."<sup>106</sup> The exhibition's multicultural framework and content



posed an unprecedented challenge to the mainstream art world by calling its ethnocentrism into question.<sup>107</sup> As one art critic noted disdainfully, "Multiculturalism is the buzzword among arts groups trying to position themselves for the day when whites of European derivation become a minority in America."<sup>108</sup> Yet, in seeking "to do justice to artists outside the Western mainstream,"<sup>109</sup> *The Decade Show* was simultaneously accused, by Michael Brenson of the *New York Times* among others, of lacking quality artwork. As Roberta Smith reported, "Much too often the art in this exhibition nourishes the heart and mind more than the eye." "Sincerity, alienation, and just causes," she continued, "don't necessarily make convincing artworks."<sup>110</sup> In short, the show's identity politics and multiculturalism were seen

as sacrificing quality for diversity and difference. In retrospect, however, *The Decade Show* has come to be regarded by many as a turning point in the representation of hyphenated artists in this country and as paving the way for other landmark, multicultural exhibitions in the U.S., notably the 1993 Whitney Biennial.

Along with *The Decade Show*, the Whitney Biennial of 1993 is now regarded as a benchmark in the history of recent contemporary-art exhibitions in the U.S. It was one of the first major museum exhibitions in this country to open the discourse of contemporary art to include voices *other than the usual suspects* and introduced to the scene a whole generation of artists who had never shown together before and who "collectively demanded attention,"<sup>111</sup> including Shu Lea Cheang, Coco Fusco, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Renée Green, Zoe Leonard, Simon Leung, Glenn Ligon, Daniel Martinez, Pepón Osorio, Alison Saar (fig. 10), Lorna Simpson, and others. The exhibition touched on many of the pressing concerns facing the U.S. at that specific historical moment, including the AIDS crisis, race, class, gender, imperialism, and poverty. As Whitney Museum director David Ross explained in the preface to the catalogue, "The '1993 Biennial Exhibition' comes at a moment when problems of identity and the representation of community extend well beyond the art world. We are living in a time when the form and formation of self and community [are] tested daily. Communities are at war, both with and at their borders. Issues of nation and nationality, ethnic essentialism, cultural diversity, dissolution, and the *politics* of identity hang heavy in the air."<sup>112</sup> One of the most controversial contributions to the show, the buttons produced by Daniel Martinez that were distributed to visitors as they entered the museum, bore segments of the phrase "I can't imagine ever wanting to be white." The 1993 biennial was also unique within the museum's own exhibition practices. For decades the museum had included few women and persons of color in its exhibitions.<sup>113</sup> The 1993 biennial, however, became

Fig. 9  
**Carmelita Tropicana** (Cuba, b. 1957). Publicity photo from *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s*, Studio Museum in Harlem; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New York, 1990. (Photo: Miguel Rajmil, courtesy of the artist)

Fig. 10

**Alison Saar** (U.S.A., b. 1956),  
*Man Club*, 1993. Wood,  
copper, misc. objects,  
and tar, 86 × 22 × 15"  
(218.4 × 55.9 × 38.1 cm). Courtesy  
of the artist. (Photo: courtesy of  
the artist and Jan Baum Gallery,  
Los Angeles)

renowned as the first one in which white male artists were in the minority, and in which the percentage of female to male artists was larger.<sup>114</sup> Many have argued that it is for precisely this reason—the relative lack of white males—that the 1993 biennial also became one of the “most reviled and criticized Biennial[s] in recent history.”<sup>115</sup> In spite of its triumph as a new type of more *inclusive* curatorial endeavor, it met with “a maelstrom of negative criticism,” most of which centered on the buzzwords political correctness, implying that, like *The Decade Show*, the exhibition had sacrificed quality in favor of multiculturalism.<sup>116</sup> Interestingly, in 1995 the Whitney Biennial returned to its previously high percentage of white males and “miniscule percentage of artists of color.”<sup>117</sup> As the title of a Guerrilla Girls poster succinctly described the next biennial, “Traditional Values and Quality Return to the *Whitey* Museum.”<sup>118</sup>

Like the 1993 Whitney Biennial, Documenta 11 in 2002 represented a radical departure from the norm. Not only was it organized for the first time by a non-European, Okwui Enwezor, who is a Nigerian-born American curator, but it was also the first Documenta to employ a postcolonial curatorial strategy. In the exhibition’s catalogue, Enwezor stated his refusal to declare a “universal concept” for the exhibition, implying that this was what had underlain the exclusionary discourses and “institutional parameters” of modernism, and instead opted for emphasizing “spectacular *differences*” in his reflection on “contemporary art in a time of profound historical change and global transformation.”<sup>119</sup> Following a concept borrowed from Frantz Fanon’s book *The Wretched of the Earth (Les damnés de la terre)*, published in 1961, he explains that Documenta 11 aimed to articulate the “demands of the multitude,” or “resistant forces,” which, he argued, “have emerged in the wake of Empire,” with the latter term being defined as a domain that has come to replace imperialism.<sup>120</sup>

Insofar as it comprised a visibly larger number of non-Euro-American artists, Documenta 11 can be



considered the first truly *transnational* Documenta, especially in comparison with the outright exclusion of non-Western artists in previous Documentas. The term “transnational” is specifically chosen here, instead of “international,” in order to designate a new, postcolonial interest in exceeding what Enwezor calls, “the borders of the colonized world ... by making empire’s former ‘other’ visible *at all times*.”<sup>121</sup> A *transnational* exhibition, then, is different from an *international* one. As was being advocated simultaneously in postcolonial feminist discourses, the transnational was to be favored over the international insofar as the latter generally presents not a multiplicity of voices but a large sampling of Euro-American artists with a limited number of non-Western ones, as with previous Documentas, for instance.



Fig. 11  
**Barbara Kruger** (U.S.A., b. 1945).  
 Installation at the Italian Pavilion  
 and the exhibition *The Experience  
 of Art*, 51st Venice Biennale, 2005.  
 (Photo: courtesy of Mary Boone  
 Gallery, New York)

Transnational exhibitions, like Documenta 11, however, dismantle such restrictive binaries as center/periphery or East/West.<sup>122</sup> It is this desire to explode such oppositional practices that differentiates Enwezor's curatorial strategy from that employed by Martin in *Magiciens*. In a 2003 *Artforum* roundtable, Enwezor paid tribute to *Magiciens* as "no doubt crucial paradigmatically for the expansion of so-called global exhibitions," but was critical of its "opposition between the Western center and the non-Western periphery," an opposition that maintained the binary pairing of center/periphery upon which, he argued, modernism itself was founded.<sup>123</sup> This is why Documenta 11 has been positioned as a deliberate response and corrective to *Magiciens*.<sup>124</sup>

While Documenta 11 was well received at the time, several critics did claim that "its overwhelming focus on non-Western spaces," its transnational scope, "pandered to an ethos of identity politics and multiculturalism."<sup>125</sup> But as Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbecchie argues in a recent essay, Documenta 11 did no such thing, but instead insisted that "no evaluation of contemporary culture could ignore the glaring marginalization of large constituencies of non-Western artists that were, under Enwezor's watch, thereby included in a Documenta exhibition for the first time."<sup>126</sup> Enwezor's goal, Ogbecchie argues, was to construct "a new and inclusive discourse for art in an

age of globalization," one that could confront the "ethics and limits of occidental power" and thereby depart from hegemonic, Euro-American cultural perspectives and their exhibition projects.<sup>127</sup> This focus constituted the exhibition's principal organizational framework and its correlating public programs, or Platforms, as they were termed, which were devoted to "public discussions, conferences, workshops, books, and film and video programs that seek to mark the location of culture today and the spaces in which culture intersects with the domains of complex global knowledge circuits."<sup>128</sup> The five Platforms, which were hosted in Vienna/Berlin, New Dehli, St. Lucia, Lagos, and, finally, Kassel, where the exhibition took place, provided an opportunity for a critical dialogue of exchange between curators, scholars, theorists, and artists. The first four platforms also functioned to decenter or deterritorialize Documenta from its traditional site of operations.

The most important strategy Documenta 11 presented, and the one that most influenced the present curatorial project, was its transnational scope, which demanded "the radical overhaul of contemporary structures of power and privilege, rather than a call for tokenist inclusion of 'non-Western' peoples."<sup>129</sup> In so doing, following Ogbecchie again, it directed attention to the "immoral machinations of occidental power, with

Fig. 12  
**Kimsooja** (South Korea, b. 1957).  
*A Needle Woman* (details showing  
Delhi and Mexico City).  
1999–2001. Eight-channel video  
projection, color, silent, 6 min.  
33 sec. © Kimsooja. Courtesy  
of the artist

its legacy of injustice and inequality.”<sup>120</sup> Learning from Documenta 11, *Global Feminisms* seeks to dismantle the same structures of power, but in this instance, in calling special attention to work by women as cultural producers across cultures, not just in the West, the goal is to challenge the broader framework of contemporary art as implicitly masculinist as well as Euro-Americacentric.

The 2005 Venice Biennale, however, sought to problematize the masculinist *and* Eurocentric assumptions of contemporary art practice simultaneously, and thus resembles our present curatorial endeavor more closely. The 2005 exhibition, organized by Rosa Martinez and Maria de Corral, was the first in the Biennale’s 110-year history to be directed by women. Both Martinez and Corral, who curated the group shows *Always a Little Further* and *The Experience of Art* at the Arsenale and Italian Pavilion respectively, selected numerous female artists for their exhibitions. In sum, of the total works on display, 38 percent were by women and most were by feminist artists, many of whom are well known, such as Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Ghada Amer, and Mona Hatoum; while others are relative newcomers to the scene, including Runa Islam, Regina José Galindo, Lida Abdul, and Joana Vasconcelos. It was clear from their exhibitions that both curators wanted to identify their curatorial practices with feminism. De Corral, for instance,

awarded Barbara Kruger the most prominent position in the show, the white facade of the Italian Pavilion itself, upon which Kruger placed an enormous vinyl mural with her signature direct-address phrases such as “Admit Nothing. Blame Everyone”; “Pretend Things Are Going as Planned”; and “God Is on My Side” (fig. 11). Similarly, Martinez turned over the first few rooms of the Arsenale to the feminist collective the Guerrilla Girls, whose statistics, irony, and humor about gender biases at the Biennale and in Italian museums roused audiences from the get-go, and left no doubt that the show that lay ahead would inflect other feminist sentiments, such as those put forth by Emily Jacir, Shahzia Sikander, Kimsooja (fig. 12), and many others.

The Venice Biennale as a whole was a great source of inspiration for this project, not only because it showcased the prowess of contemporary female artistic production, but also because it was far more global in scope than those before it. More countries were represented in the pavilions than ever before (not to mention more women), and the selection of artists in the group shows demonstrated the curators’ concerted effort toward full transnational inclusion.<sup>121</sup> The global feminist scope of the exhibitions ensured that viewers were consuming feminisms, in the plural—which is to say, that they were being offered not a consensus, but a multiplicity of points



of view, and ones that emphasized differences among women artists cross-culturally. By extension, theirs were curatorial projects that challenged the Euro-Americancentrism of feminist art trajectories, as well. Given the fact that no Biennale prior to this had been curated by women, let alone by self-identified feminist curators, in addition to the quantity and breadth of feminist works on display, the exhibition can perhaps be deemed the “first transnational feminist Venice Biennale.”

#### **Global Feminisms: The Exhibition**

*Global Feminisms* embodies and mirrors the major transformations in feminist theory and contemporary art practice over the past few decades. It demonstrates the shifts from sameness toward difference, diversity, and finally transnationalism in the 1990s. It seeks to include *all* voices: hyphenated artists living in the U.S., non-hyphenated artists, non-Euro-Americans, Americans, exiles without homelands, nomads, and so on. Instead of a monologue of sameness, one encounters a multiplicity of voices, and ones that are primarily non-Euro-American, which is to call attention to the fact that feminism is a global issue, not one exclusive to the U.S. It is not meant to be, however, a celebration of happy pluralisms, a U.N.-style parading of women-of-the-world, which would mistakenly purport to be what Gerardo Mosquera calls an “illusory triumph of a transterritorial world.”<sup>132</sup> Instead, *Global Feminisms* is a careful exploration of what Chandra Talpade Mohanty calls “common differences,” which is to say, the significant similarities as well as the contextual differences between women across and within cultures, races, classes, religions, sexualities, and so forth. Using a curatorial strategy of relational feminist analysis that places these diverse and similar works in dialogue, these common differences, which are context-dependent, complex, and fluid, are underscored, generating fresh approaches to feminist artistic production in a transnational age.

In order to highlight the disparities, the particularized differences, and the necessarily variegated responses of

women artists in highly individualized situations to similar thematic material (e.g., hysteria, death, pain, old age, war, sex, motherhood, race), the exhibition's installation at the Brooklyn Museum does not follow a linear chronology, nor a geographic delineation, but is instead organized loosely into four sections within which the works can overlap: Life Cycles, Identities, Politics, and Emotions. Life Cycles charts the stages of life, from birth to death, but *not* in a traditional fashion, of course; Identities investigates the multifarious notions of self—be they racial, gender, cyborg, political, religious, or otherwise; Politics examines the world through the eyes of women artists whose overt declarations demonstrate that the political has now become deeply personal (the inverse of the 1970s feminist dictum “The personal is political”); and the final section, Emotions, presents artists self-consciously parodying, often through hyperbole, the conventional idea of women as emotional creatures or victims.

The four sections in which the exhibition is installed at the Brooklyn Museum should not be understood as universal categories, but rather as an attempt to organize the works as broadly as possible based on recurring subjects and concepts that arose during the course of our research. In bringing together such a large selection of works by women from across the globe, we hope that current and future viewers will make different connections than we have here. There is an infinitude of intersections to be made along this broad spectrum. Thus, despite the fact that our version of the exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum is organized into four sections, we are encouraging subsequent venues to emphasize other relationships among the works and to create different sections, if they so desire. Similarly, we felt it would be a disservice to the multi-layered complexity of the works we had chosen for the exhibition if we were to organize the plates in the catalogue based on the Brooklyn Museum installation alone. As a result, the catalogue plates are arranged alphabetically to encourage future dialogue and visual interaction between the works.

Fig. 13

**Catherine Opie** (U.S.A., b. 1961).  
*Self-Portrait/Pervert*, 1994.  
Chromogenic print, 40 x 30"  
(101.6 x 76.2 cm). Regen Projects,  
Los Angeles

The looseness of the four categories—Life Cycles, Identities, Politics, and Emotions—also allows for a wide range of artists to be exhibited and shown in juxtaposition to others whose modes of practice, socio-cultural, racial, economic, and personal situations might be radically different from their own. This type of relational analysis, which places diverse, transnational works by women in dialogic relation with careful attention to co-implicated histories, seeks to produce new insights into feminist art today.

If we examine the artists in the exhibition who explore motherhood as a topic, for instance, the differences in content, form, and modes of address are striking. Patricia Piccinini's *Big Mother* (page 233) consists of a hairy, six-foot tall, female Neanderthal who suckles a human baby, with a bright-blue leather-studded diaper bag in the ready at her side; while Hiroko Okada's *Future Plan* (page 229) offers up a utopian option for childrearing: in her future, hairy-bellied, smiling men will become pregnant and happily carry the burden. Men can certainly be mothers; so can eunuchs. In a series of photographs begun in 1990, Dayanita Singh has been documenting the life of Mona Ahmed, a *hijra* (eunuch) living in a rural village in India with her stepdaughter, Ayesha, belying all concepts about what constitutes maternity itself and what it has to do with one's sex and/or gender (page 251). Catherine Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing* (page 230) similarly subverts tropes of normalcy. In it, she presents herself as an aging, nursing mother, whose gaze lovingly meets that of her oversized, one-year-old son, Oliver. The artist's double chin, wrinkles, blotchy skin, multiple tattoos, and the ghostly remnant of a scratching on her chest in fanciful script reading "Pervert," remind viewers knowledgeable about her work of an earlier *Self-Portrait/Pervert* (fig. 13), which shows the artist in full S&M regalia replete with leather mask and pants, naked torso, and forty-six metal pins piercing her soft, pudgy arms. Now, ten years later, in this modern-day secularization of traditional Madonna-and-Child imagery, the "Virgin Mary" figure is an



overweight, lesbian mom with tattoos. Opie's vision of motherly intimacy, while clearly subverting traditional heterosexual notions of normalcy, is innocent and pleasant when seen in juxtaposition to Emmanuelle Antille's video *Night for Day* (page 174), which portrays bizarre, creepy moments shared between a grown woman (the artist herself) and her mother, including scenes in which the mother bites her daughter's thighs, scrubs her back with a sponge, and places a red dress upon her recumbent, seemingly corpse-like body.

A curatorial strategy of relational analysis, such as the one employed in the *Global Feminisms* exhibition, also allows us to re-read political, activist, religious, anti-colonialist, environmental, and other work as a kind of "subterranean, unrecognized form of feminism" that Ella Shohat argues is often left out of Euro-American trajectories of feminism because they are not "cast exclusively around terms of sexual difference."<sup>132</sup> She argues that the participation of colonized women in anti-colonialist, anti-patriarchal, and anti-heterosexist movements, which have not been "read" as relevant to feminist studies, often led to direct political engagement with feminism.<sup>134</sup>

Recently, scholars have been re-examining multiple disciplines with the intention of recognizing and rearticulating spaces for "invisible feminist histories"

that have hitherto remained outside of the feminist canon.<sup>135</sup> To do the same with works of art allows us to recognize “subterranean feminisms” in objects that investigate issues such as the global epidemics of violence, war, pollution, and so forth. Furthermore, when seeing the works synergistically—that is, together in the exhibition space—the cross-cultural dialogues between works becomes all the more enlightening. For instance, located together in one section of the exhibition are works of female political agency and activism, including photographs by the Beijing-based artist Yin Xiuzhen, who has documented an action-performance, *Washing the River* (page 261), in which the artist and passersby cleaned polluted blocks of ice before returning them to a river in Chengdu, China. Nearby is a video by the Afghani artist Lida Abdul, titled *White House* (page 168), which shows the artist silently whitewashing two bombed-out structures near Kabul, Afghanistan. The Israeli video artist Sigalit Landau swings a barbed hula-hoop around her bloody, naked midriff, the object of pain a symbol of the geographic barrier created along the West Bank to delineate land between Palestine and Israel (page 214). Politics and activism of all denominations are encountered everywhere in *Global Feminisms*.

Women across the globe face certain and varying limitations of artistic expression, as well as fears of censorship, imprisonment, and exile. The Iranian author Shahrnush Parsipur, for instance, was imprisoned in 1989 under the Ayatollah Khomeini for her feminist novel *Women without Men*, which was banned soon after being published in Tehran that same year. The novel, written from a feminist perspective using mythological terminology, comprises several short stories about the lives of five different women: a prostitute, an aristocrat, two working-class girls, and a schoolteacher. In order to escape the oppressive restrictions of family and social life in contemporary Iran, the five women eventually find themselves in a garden on the outskirts of Tehran, where they vow to form a new society “without men.”

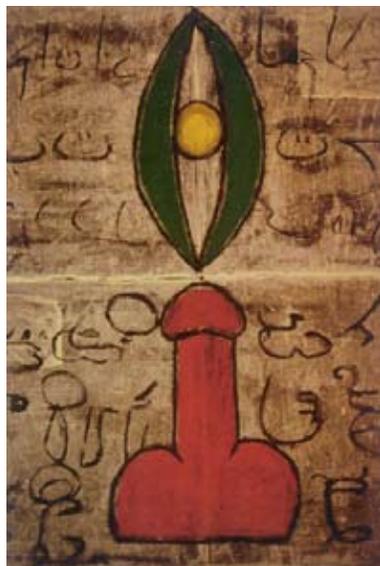


Fig. 14  
**Arahmaiani** (Indonesia, b. 1961).  
*Lingga-Yoni*, 1994. Acrylic on  
 layers of rice paper and canvas,  
 71½ × 55½" (182 × 140 cm).  
 Courtesy of the artist

Throughout the novel, some of them murder, marry, go through spiritual transformations, commit suicide, or are raped. No wonder the novel proved provocative. Incidentally, Shirin Neshat's recent body of video work, of the same title, is based on the book by Parsipur, with whom she collaborates on the project.<sup>136</sup> Parsipur now lives in exile in the U.S.

Several of the artists in *Global Feminisms* have faced similarly grave situations. In 1983, the Indonesian artist Arahmaiani was imprisoned and interrogated for a month after a performance in which she had drawn pictures of tanks and weapons on the streets—an act of rebellion not appreciated under the Suharto dictatorship. Then, in 1994, Arahmaiani took part in a major controversy that centered on two works she had included in a solo exhibition called *Sex, Religion, and Coca-Cola* at an alternative space in Jakarta. The two works *Display Case (Etalase)* (page 175) and *Lingga-Yoni* (fig. 14), the former of which is included in *Global Feminisms*, were so offensive to a group of Islamic fundamentalists that they were immediately censored, and death threats were leveled at the artist. At first glance, it is easier perhaps

Fig. 15  
**Parastou Forouhar** (Iran,  
b. 1962). Detail from the *Blind  
Spot* series, 2001. Courtesy of  
the artist. (Photo: Jogi Hild)



for us to understand why the painting *Lingga-Yoni* was threatening to the Muslim public: it displays a penis and vagina. However, it was *Display Case* that was the more controversial. The piece shows a photograph, Buddha, Coca-Cola bottle, fan, the Qur'an, Patkwa mirror, drum, condoms, and sand. It was the combination of sexual with religious imagery that was the most blasphemous, according to the local press. After the public outcry, and out of fear for her safety, Arahmaiani fled to Australia, where she remained in exile for a few years before returning to Indonesia. (Incidentally, this is only the second time since 1994 that Arahmaiani has been able to present this work, the other occasion being at the Asia Society in New York in 1996.)

More recently, in 2002, a few days before the opening of her exhibition of photographs, *Blind Spot*, at the Golestan Art Gallery in Tehran, the Iranian artist Parastou Forouhar was censored by the Iranian Cultural Ministry. *Blind Spot* (fig. 15) is a series of photographs depicting a gender-ambiguous human figure veiled from head to foot, its protruding head a whited-out or bulbous wooden form beneath a chador. In protest against the censorship, the

artist exhibited the empty frames on the wall on opening night. To her delight, many people came in support, and some even purchased the frames. The show closed after one day. Interestingly, the series of photographs had been exhibited just one year prior, during the Berlin Biennial of 2001, as large outdoor murals sprinkled throughout the city *Strassen*, and at sites such as the former Checkpoint Charlie. It is interesting to think about how this series is received in different contexts, how it translates, mistranslates, and reanimates as it travels from one culture to another. Exhibitions like *Global Feminisms* seek to underscore those complex translations and interpretations.

Emily Jacir's video installation *Crossing Surda* (*A Record of Going to and from Work*) (page 209) was born out of the limitations and censorship of her artistic voice. After a humiliating experience in which the artist was held at gunpoint at the militarized Surda checkpoint for three hours in freezing rain by an Israeli soldier who had thrown her American passport in the mud, the Palestinian-American artist began her 132-minute video piece by secretly and illegally recording a week of her daily crossings as she traveled within the West Bank from Ramallah to Birzeit University. The two-channel video documents Jacir's everyday commute to and from work through some banal, some harrowing, circumstances that have somehow become normal.

That identities can be "contradictory, partial and strategic,"<sup>137</sup> in the words of Donna Haraway, is an idea that is central to *Global Feminisms*, which embraces anti-essentialist concepts because it recognizes that identities (self, gender, racial, class, and so forth) are fluid, and never stable. Tracey Emin interviews her bad and her good selves (page 197); Amy Cutler illustrates an army of tiny "Amys" to conquer the world (page 193). Kate Beynon's playful images constantly negotiate her hybrid identity, which she defines as "Chinese (from Malaysia)/Welsh/Hong-Kong-born/'multiple migrant'/Australian." In her illustrations and paintings, which are drawn stylistically



from cartoon and comic-book graphics, Chinese text and calligraphy, traditional Chinese art, animation, and graffiti art, the recurring character Li Ji (inspired by a fourth-century story from China called *The Girl Who Killed the Python*) has become a contemporary warrior girl who confronts issues surrounding immigration, multiculturalism, and indigenous Australian rights (fig. 16).

Many of the artists in the exhibition perform the role of the exotic, histrionic, transgender, and/or abject "other" so as to deliberately overturn derogatory or restrictive stereotypes. Tracey Rose masquerades as the Hottentot Venus, crouching in the verdant African bush (page 14), an homage to Saartjie Baartman, the young Khoisan woman who was brought from South Africa to Europe in 1810, where she was displayed as a public spectacle because of her enormous buttocks and genitalia, which were studied by pseudoscientists, posthumously dissected, and then exhibited at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris until 1974. In her music video *Absolute Exotic* (page 234), Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen, a Filipino-Danish artist, performs the role of the exotic Asian dancer while rapping about interracial relations and ethnic minorities in Denmark; Pilar Albarracín parodies clichés of Spanish womanhood, from flamenco dancers and histrionic "gypsy" singers to a diva fleeing the streets of Madrid, trying to shake off musicians pursuing her with a traditional *paso doble*, in *Long Live Spain (Viva España)* (page 170).

While the performativity of identity underscores its constructed nature, so does its proliferation, as is visible in the work of Tomoko Sawada (page 243), who obsessively superimposes her "schoolgirl" face onto traditional class photography portraits. In one persona, she is a hipster teen with dreadlocks; in another, she is the frumpy schoolteacher. Sawada's "self-portraits," if one can call them that, also comment on the Eurocentric misconception that all Asians look alike, placing the viewer in a complicit position as s/he scrolls the rows of schoolgirls looking for subtle physiognomic, sartorial, light- versus dark-skinned, or other differences among sameness. In the tradition of the feminist photographers Cindy Sherman and Yasumasa Morimura, Sawada's is a complex game of gender and race deconstruction.

That gender is also "a kind of imitation for which there is no original,"<sup>138</sup> as Judith Butler tells us, can also be demonstrated by Jenny Saville's oil sketch for *Passage* (2004–5), a larger-than-life painting of a naked, fleshy, male-to-female transsexual in a semi-recumbent, come-hither pose (page 241). S/he looks out expectantly at the viewer, heavy-lidded eyes, pink lips pursed, arms back, silicone breasts up, legs splayed to expose her pudgy belly, thick thighs, and penis, all set against a background of warm Mediterranean blue. Saville presents the viewer with a "gender outlaw," a liminal figure irreducible to one gender or sex. As the artist explains, "I wanted to paint a visual passage through gender—a sort of gender landscape."<sup>139</sup>

When seen in juxtaposition to works in the exhibition that examine similar thematic material, the particularized and related responses of women artists in highly individualized situations become all the more acute. Exhibited near the Saville sketch is a cyborg sculpture (page 215) by the South Korean artist Lee Bul. Hybrids of machines and organisms, cyborgs are celebrated by cyberfeminists as creatures in "a monstrous world without gender," as Donna Haraway explains.<sup>140</sup> Like Saville's sitter, Lee's cyborg sculpture is devoid of simple definition: an un- or de-sexed, three-legged creature

Fig. 16  
**Kate Beynon** (Hong Kong, b. 1970), *Forbidden City (from the Dreams of Li Ji)*, 2001. Acrylic and enamel spray on canvas, 35 7/8 x 29 1/2" (90 x 75 cm). Courtesy of the artist. (Photo: courtesy of the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne)

with a long tail or braid of glass beads. Adjacent to that object, the American artist Cass Bird offers a photograph of a gender-ambiguous individual with cutoff shirt, tattoos, and a baseball cap bearing the words "I Look Just Like My Daddy" (page 181).

These more theoretical examinations of the fluidity of gender identity—modern architectures of the body, transgenderism, cyberfeminism—share with, and yet differ greatly from, for instance, the photographic portraits by Dayanita Singh of the self-castrated eunuch Mona Ahmed (page 251). While each of these art objects explores the performativity of gender and sex, and their irreducibility as terms, Singh's portraits resonate differently: for Ahmed's identity, as *hijra* (eunuch), must be set into the socio-cultural, class, ethnic, racial, and religious context of a rural village in modern-day India. Common differences between and among women transnationally are also underscored by comparing Singh's images with Oreet Ashery's *Self-Portrait as Marcus Fisher*, which shows the Israeli artist in drag as a Hasidic rabbi with *pajamas*, looking down at her large, exposed breast (page 176); or with Latifa Echakhch's self-portrait in which the Moroccan artist is shown with cropped hair seated atop a Muslim prayer rug wearing androgynous attire and a traditional prayer hat (page 196). Using World War II "pin-ups" of young men as her source material, Echakhch plays with the limits of seduction and provocation: she is a Muslim woman cross-dressed as a *jeune croyant* (youthful believer) who glances seductively at the viewer while touching her exposed foot—a gesture that is considered taboo in the Islamic religion, according to the artist. Although a certain amount of irony is present in the work, it is underlined by an attitude of investigation of the strict religious and social codes prevalent in the Muslim community, within which nonbelievers and, especially, women are made to feel like outsiders.

An exhibition such as *Global Feminisms*, using a relational feminist curatorial approach that places works dealing with similar subject matter in dialogue, attempts to offer a new and expanded definition of feminist artistic production for a transnational age, one that acknowledges incalculable cross- and inter-cultural differences among women globally, and that recognizes feminism itself as an *always already* situated practice.

In seventies and eighties second-wave feminism, the war against sexism often took precedence over any concern with racism or homophobia in the ranks. There was a general fear that a focus on differences other than sex-gender would result in the dissolution of the larger feminist agenda against sexism, and that the goal toward female empowerment would be diminished. This precise argument, though under a different academic guise, is being used today by many against those who are interested in pursuing a multicultural or transnational feminism for fear that its focus on multiple differences (race, class, sexual, religious, and so forth) will lead to political relativism, or fragment the discipline into multiple "isms" with no central focus. Instead of discovering power in the difference of our shared struggles as *women*, difference has come to mean disunity to some. *Global Feminisms* hopes to counter that by demonstrating that difference does not have to pose an a priori danger to unity and alliance. It is only through the understanding of our "common differences," as we hope to have visually emphasized through the careful placement of diverse cross-cultural works in the exhibition, that solidarity is achieved.

In the end, *Global Feminisms* hopes to have contributed productively to this and other dialogues about racism, sexism, and Euro-Americacentrism in contemporary art.

Notes

1. Ella Shohat in the introduction to her edited volume *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
3. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes" Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticaptalist Struggle," in her *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 242–44.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (1971), reprinted in her *Women, Art, Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988). The essay was first published in *Art News* in January 1971.
7. This statistic was noted by Roberta Smith in a panel she moderated, called "Feminisms in Four Generations," which featured the artists Tammy Ben-Tor, Collier Schorr, Barbara Kruger, and Joan Snyder, held on Saturday, January 7, 2006, at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City as part of the 5th annual New York Times Arts and Leisure Weekend.
8. Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," p. 176.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Marcia E. Vetocco, "Venice Biennale: Be Careful What You Wish For," *Art in America* 93 (September 2005), p. 108.
11. Likewise, the international biennial at SITE Santa Fe in New Mexico has only once been curated by a woman since it began in 1995: Rosa Martinez, in 1999. In the upper echelons of museums, gender equality has yet to be achieved either. In 2005, according to the American Association of Museum Directors, only 32 percent of U.S. museums had a woman in the position of museum director.
12. Jerry Saltz, "One Year After," *The Village Voice*, November 11, 2005.
13. *Ibid.* During a recent visit to MoMA, on May 25, 2006, the numbers were not much better than they were when Saltz wrote his critique in November 2005. Of the approximately 143 artists represented on the fourth- and fifth-floor galleries of MoMA, only 13 were women, including Anni Albers, Marianne Brandt, Dora Maar, Georgia O'Keeffe, Bridget Riley, Eva Hesse, Anne Truitt, Agnes Martin, Yayoi Kusama, Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, Louise Bourgeois, and Lygia Clark. Only two of these women, Yayoi Kusama and Lygia Clark, are non-Euro-American. Of the approximately 385 works on display on the fourth- and fifth-floor galleries, only 17 were by women artists. This number is minimal when compared to the number of works on display by the individual male artists: there were 33 works by Picasso alone; likewise, 23 by Matiseo, 17 by Kandinsky, and 8 by Pollock. Even among the male artists, only a handful were non-Euro-American, e.g., Jesús Rafael Soto, Wilfredo Lam, Armando Reverón, Matta, and Alejandro Otero.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Since 1990, MoMA has organized several large-scale shows about women artists: Gertrude Kasebier in 1992, *Arts and Messages* in 1995, Yayoi Kusama in 1998, Cindy Sherman in 2001, Lee Bontecou in 2004, and Elizabeth Murray in 2005. In comparison, however, retrospectives about male artists, both traveling and organized by MoMA, add up to more than 20 within this same period. Incidentally, these totals do not include any Projects shows.
16. In Spain, the disparity in representation has become so grave that it is being addressed by a manifesto currently circulating among a group of interested art professionals, led by the independent curator Xavier Arakistain. The petition, titled "Manifiesto 2005," demands that the publicly funded national museums display a reasonable quota of women artists and that they make a concerted effort to collect work by women as well (see <http://www.manifiestoarco2005.com/>). The manifesto offers several statistics in support of its mission. Of the 28 solo exhibitions held in 2004 at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, for instance, only 4 were of women artists. The most striking example the statistics presented, however, was the fact that neither of the two group exhibitions that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sponsored to represent Spain at the 2003 Venice Biennale included a woman artist.
17. *The Guerrilla Girls' Art Museum Activity Book* (New York: Printed Matter, 2004), p. 9.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Between 2000 and 2005, out of a total of 18 one-person exhibitions at Tate Modern, 3 were one-woman shows. That is less than 17 percent. The 3 women artists were: Frida Kahlo, Eva Hesse, and Elia-Lisa Ahtila. Note that these numbers do not include the one-person exhibitions in Tate Modern's Untitled gallery space, which are generally small in scale and often include only one installation work. At LACMA, the total number of one-person shows between 2000 and 2005 was 20, and only 1 of those was a one-woman show—a total of 5 percent. The exhibition was devoted to the work of Diane Arbus.
22. The Brooklyn Museum solo exhibitions dedicated to women artists from 2000 to 2006 included Vivian Cherny, Judy Chicago, Lee Krasner, Annie Leibowitz, and Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson.
23. This statistic was compiled by the New York-based feminist art activist group Brainstormers (Anne Polshenski, Maria Dumais, Danielle Mysliwiec, and Elaine Kaufmann). See their website <http://www.brainstormersreport.net>
24. Jerry Saltz, "The Battle for Babylon," *The Village Voice*, September 16, 2005.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Greg Allen, "X-Factor: Is the Art Market Rational or Biased?," *New York Times*, May 1, 2005, section 2, p. 1.
27. *Ibid.*
28. In a follow-up article on his weblog (<http://greg.org>), dated April 30, 2005, Allen presented some additional statistics from *Kunstkompass*, an annual publication put out by the German business magazine *Capital* that purports to announce "the world's 100 Greatest Artists." It bases its statistics on the frequency and prestige of exhibitions, publications, and press coverage, and the median price of one work of art. In the 2005 *Kunstkompass*, 17 of the 100 "great artists" were women. Of those 17, there was one artist of color (Kara Walker) and two of non-Euro-American descent (Mona Hatoum and Shirin Neshat). Only 5 of these women were ranked in the top 50: Rosemarie Trockel (ranked no. 4), Louise Bourgeois (no. 5), Cindy Sherman (no. 6), Neshat (no. 43), and Hatoum (no. 49). *Artfacts.net* does its own ranking, as well, based on art market sales. In its 2005 report, only two women made it into the top 50 slots (Bourgeois and Sherman). Picasso, of course, is ranked number one. See <http://www.artfacts.net/index.php?pageType/artists>
29. "Best of 2005: Eleven Critics and Curators Look at the Year in Art," *Artforum* 44 (December 2005). Besides Iaa Genzken, the women artists voted "Best of 2005" were: Karen Klimm, Jeanne-Claude (and Christo), Saskia Olden Wolbers, Julie Mehretu, Jacqueline Humphries, Zandra Rhodes, Rosemarie Trockel, Kay Rosen, Rita Ackerman, Trisha Donnelly, and Reena Spauling. This adds up to a total of 12 women, compared to 58 men.
30. Other examples of major exhibitions over the past few decades that display a surprising gender and race disparity include Documenta 8 (1987), organized by Manfred Schneckenburger; *Objects of Desire: The Modern Still Life* (1997) at MoMA, organized by Margit Rowell, which presented only 3 white women and one artist of color out of 71 artists; *Manifesta 5* (2004), in San Sebastian, Spain, which was approximately 80 percent male; and *Discrete Energies* (2005), a fifty-year-anniversary exhibition of Documenta held at the Friederichsmuseum in Kassel, Germany, and curated by Michael Glasmeier, which included 11 (white) women out of 83 artists.
31. Incidentally, it was this exhibition that gave birth to the Guerrilla Girls.
32. "Kathe Köllwitz," from a Guerrilla Girls online interview, <http://www.guerrillagirls.com/interview/index.shtml>
33. Klaus Biesenbach, ed., *Greater New York 2005* (New York: P.S. 1, 2005). The exhibition was jointly organized by P.S. 1 and the Museum of Modern Art and ran March 13–September 26, 2005.
34. From the undated press release for *Greater New York 2005*, <http://www.ps1.org/exhibits/exhibit.php?ref=16116>
35. This statistic is also cited by Jerry Saltz in "Lesser New York," *The Village Voice*, March 28, 2005.
36. Amy Zimmer, "Women Protest at P.S.1's Art Show," *New York Metro*, March 14, 2005, p. 6.
37. The Brainstormers protested the exhibition on the day of its opening, March 13, 2005, accusing P.S. 1 of gender bias. See their website, <http://www.brainstormersreport.net>
38. The featured artists were John Bock, Christoph Büchel, Maurizio Cattelan, Malachy Farrell, Gelatin, Kendell Geers, Thomas Hirschhorn, Fabrice Hyber, Richard Jackson, Martin Kersels, Paul McCarthy, Jonathan Meese, Jason Rhoades, and Keith Tyson.
39. Max Henry, "Dionysus in Paris," posted on [artnet.com](http://artnet.com) on March 9, 2005, <http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/features/henry/henry3-9-05.asp>
40. Quote from the exhibition's undated press release. The show opened with a towering, 20-foot-tall, 3-D Play-Doh sculpture by Gelatin, a Vienna-based collaborative, titled *Cockjockey Joe* (2004), a velvety pink wall construction of synthetic fabric that resembled a rabid animal with teeth and two women made of fluorescent light (Jackson's *Pump Pee Doo* (2005) was another highlight. His installation consisted of eight molded fiberglass bears poised at urinals and "pissing" paint onto the walls and floor.
41. "The Year in Art," in Max Henry, "Dionysus in Paris."
42. For the entire pamphlet, see <http://artpies.sanzdat.net>
43. As quoted by Macel in the press release to *Dionysiac*.
44. Christine Macel, "Art in a State of Excessive Flux or the Contemporary Tragic," *Dio / catalogue of the exhibition Dionysiac* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2005), tenth page of Macel's unpaginated essay.
45. *Ibid.* Macel states, "Are women today only found in the Apollonian? Are they that way by essence? Certainly not. However, many young artists today work in a personal fictional or 'narrative' style, following Sophie Calle—to mention but a few: Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Valérie Mrojen, Anne-Marie Schneider or Koo Jeong-A." At another point, *Dionysiac* is described as going "hand in hand with Apollonian, the harmonious force," implying that women occupy the position of the latter.
46. *Ibid.*, sixth page of Macel's essay. The original text reads, "On attend donc beaucoup de l'exposition en préparation de Linda Nochlin et Maura Reilly au sujet des femmes artistes, au Brooklyn Museum de New York en 2006."
47. A recent exception would be an exhibition held at the Robert Miller Gallery, New York, titled *Lee Krasner/Jackson Pollock*, December 2005–January 2006, which explored the working relationship between P.S. 1 and the Museum of Modern Art and ran March 13–September 26, 2005.
48. Gayatri Spivak, as paraphrased by Marcia Tucker in the foreword to Shohat, ed., *Talking Visions*, p. xii.
49. Nellie Lal, "Young Artists and Their Admirers Flock to LIC for P.S.1's Latest," *Queens Chronicle*, March 17, 2005: "Heiss said she hadn't seen the Brainstormers protest outside the opening, but emphasized that there were 'so many wonderful women in the show.'"
50. Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Feminist, Feminism, and the Histories of Art* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 183.
51. Lucy Lippard, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: Dutton, 1976), p. 57.
52. Hélène Cixous, "SIGNS: *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7 (Autumn 1981), pp. 50–51.
53. Arlene Raven, ed., *At Home* (Long Beach, Calif.: Long Beach Museum of Art, 1983), p. 27. For a detailed history of the Women's Building, see also <http://www.womansbuilding.org/people.htm>
54. Robert Hughes, "Rediscovered—Women Painters," *Time*, January 10, 1977.
55. Quoted in Grace Glueck, "The Woman as Artist: Rediscovering 400 Years of Masterworks," *New York Times Magazine*, September 25, 1977, p. 50.
56. Others had been horribly neglected. One painting on wood by Judith Leyster was found with a bad case of worms, "discovered only when the Dutch museum that owned it responded to a request for its loan." See Glueck, "The Woman as Artist," p. 50.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
59. Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," p. 176.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–48.
61. John Perrault, "Women Artists," *The SoHo Weekly News*, October 13, 1977, p. 40.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 10.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 25.
66. *Ibid.*
67. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985), in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–315.
68. Frances Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," in Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 136; emphasis added.
69. Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 141.
70. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983); Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf,

- distributed by Random House, 1976); Barbara Smith, ed., *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New York: Kitchen Table; Women of Color Press, 1983).
71. Gayatri Spivak has consistently referred to Western feminism as "hegemonic." For an early instance, see "The Rani of Simur," in Francis Barker, ed., *Europe and Its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1984*, vol. 1 (Essex: University of Essex Press, 1985), p. 147.
72. Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33, special Theory Issue (October–December 1986), pp. S14–S32.
73. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Crossing Press, 1984).
74. Howardena Pindell, as quoted in "Contemporary Feminism: Theory, Practice, Theory, and Activism—An Intergenerational Perspective," *Art Journal* 58 (Winter 1999), p. 22.
75. Judith K. Brodsky, "Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces," in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), p. 118.
76. *Ibid.*
77. In 1979, the feminist journal *Heresies* published an issue examining racism within mainstream American feminist art, titled *Third World Women: The Politics of Being Other*.
78. Brodsky, "Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces," p. 118.
79. For instance, the official policy of Women Artists in Revolution, as stated in an internal memorandum addressed to the Museum of Modern Art Executive Committee, dated 1969, stated: "The committee felt that a black woman artist should be considered a woman first, since this involved a more profound discrimination." See Simon Taylor's essay in *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969–1975* (East Hampton, N.Y.: Guild Hall Museum, 2002), p. 25.
80. Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 16.
81. Amelia Jones, ed., *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's "Dinner Party" in Feminist Art History* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center in association with the University of California Press, 1996), p. 100.
82. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), p. 4. Similarly, in her essay "Age, Race, Class, and Sex" (1984), Audre Lorde stated, "In a patriarchal power system where whiteness privilege is a major prop, the entrapments used to neutralize Black women and white women are not the same" (in her *Sister Outsider*, p. 118).
83. hooks makes this argument in "Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory," in *Feminist Theory*, pp. 1–15. See also Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), chapters 11 and 12, for a discussion of abortion, rape, and housework as white, middle-class feminist concerns.
84. Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" (1985, in her *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991)), p. 155.
85. Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, p. 248. In an earlier essay, titled "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," dated 1984, Mohanty explained that within Western feminist practice of the 1980s there was a "too easy claiming of sisterhood across national, cultural and racial differences" (p. 12).
86. Lorde as quoted in Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 45.
87. *Ibid.*
88. Indeed, there are still numerous places in the world today where women face unimaginable violence on a daily basis and where the need for an active, social feminism is more urgent than in others. An action that is socially accepted, if condoned, in one location—adultery, for instance—may result in the threat of death or violence in another—as has recently been the case in Nigeria, where numerous women have been sentenced to death by stoning for adulterous acts. I am thinking, for instance, of the 2002 death-by-stoning case against Safiyya Husaini, who was accused of adultery under Islamic Sharia law in Nigeria, but eventually released after much outcry from international human rights organizations. There have been several such cases in Nigeria since then, all of which have been overturned, fortunately.
89. See Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Because the "doubly oppressed native woman" is situated in a liminal space between two dominating forces, "the subaltern cannot speak," for she has been rendered mute by the cultures and structures of English imperialism within which she is situated.
90. Chela Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: Differential Social Movement," in *Methodology of the Oppressed*, pp. 40–63, which also quotes Spivak's remark.
91. Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, pp. 110–11.
92. On "the difference impasse" of 1980s American feminism, see Susan Stanford Friedman, "Beyond White and Other: Rationality and Narratives in Feminist Discourse," *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 21 (Autumn 1995), pp. 1–49.
93. On Crenshaw's notion of "political intersectionality," see her "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991), pp. 1241–99; and "Whose Story Is It Anyway? Feminist and Antiracist Appropriation of Anita Hill," in Toni Morrison, ed., *Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power* (New York: Pantheon, 1992), pp. 402–40.
94. Gerardo Mosquera, "Some Problems in Transcultural Curating," in Jean Fisher, ed., *Global Visions: Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts* (London: Kala Press in association with the Institute of International Visual Arts, 1994), p. 138.
95. Johanne Lamoureux, "From Form to Platform: The Politics of Representation and the Representation of Politics," *Art Journal* 64 (Spring 2005), p. 71. All artists were presented equally within the catalogue and the exhibition space, for instance, with the one often-cited exception being the much-denounced neighboring of works by the aboriginal Yuedumuru community and Richard Long; as Lamoureux states, "with the formers' sand paintings being relegated to a corner like some cast shadow or discarded double, set at the foot of Long's looming mud drawing that dominated an entire room of the Grand Hall."
96. Benjamin H. D. Buchloch, "The Whole Earth Show: An Interview with Jean-Hubert Martin," *Art in America* 77 (May 1989), p. 153.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
100. Eleanor Heartney, "The Whole Earth Show, Part II," *Art in America* 77 (July 1989), p. 90.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 91–92.
102. Thomas McEvilly, "The Global Issue," in his *Art and Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity* (Kingston, N.Y.: Documentx/McPerson, 1992), p. 157.
103. Buchloch, "The Whole Earth Show," p. 155.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
105. Julia Herzberg, "Re-Membering Identity: Vision of Connections," in *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s* (New York: Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art; Studio Museum in Harlem, 1990), p. 37.
106. Elizabeth Hess, "Breaking and Entering," *The Village Voice*, June 5, 1990.
107. "At the very least such an exhibit—because of its multicultural interests, its physical location in different demographic enclaves in the city, the equal involvement of culturally different institutions and networks—calls ethnocentrism into question. This is not a patronizing exhibit of the art of 'exotic' put together by the philanthropic goodwill and high-art-world curiosity of a few white curators. It is an exhibit attempting to construct a multivocal art world. It begins to suggest that the notion of a 'center' and a 'margin' is anachronistic and that maintaining such a model represents a desire to wield exclusive power and control." Eunice Lipton, "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow? Some Plots for a Dismantling," in *The Decade Show*, p. 20.
108. "Three's Company," *New York Magazine*, June 11, 1990. No author given for this article; see [www.marciatucker.com](http://www.marciatucker.com)
109. Michael Brenson, "Is 'Quality' an Idea Whose Time Has Gone?" *New York Times*, July 22, 1990.
110. Roberta Smith, "Three Museums Collaborate to Sum Up a Decade," *New York Times*, May 25, 1990.
111. Elisabeth Sussman, "Then and Now," *Art Journal* 64 (Spring 2005), p. 74.
112. David Ross, "Preface: Know Thy Self (Know Your Place)," in Elisabeth Sussman, Lisa Phillips, John Hanhardt, and Thelma Golden, 1993 *Biennial Exhibition* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993), p. 9.
113. The statistics for the representation of female versus male artists in the Whitney Biennials from 1973 to 1993 can be found in Carrie Rickey's "Illustrated Time Line: A Highly Selective Chronology," in Broude and Garrard, eds., *The Power of Feminist Art*, pp. 304–8. On average, the figure was 28 percent women artists.
114. Of the artists included in the 1993 Whitney Biennial, 36.4 percent were white males, 29.5 percent were white females, 22.7 percent were males of color, and 11.4 percent were females of color. These statistics are taken from a 1995 poster by the Guerrilla Girls titled "Traditional Values and Quality Return to the Whitey Museum." On their website, the caption to the poster reads: "The Whitey Museum Girls: A New Issue: The 1993 Whitney Biennial was the first ever to have a minority of white male artists. It was also the most reviled and criticized Biennial in recent history. In 1995 the museum announced a new initiative: 50 percent of artists of color. That's why when we tried to typeset the word Whitney, we just couldn't find the letter 'n.'" *Ibid.*
115. *Ibid.*
116. Sussman, "Then and Now," p. 75.
117. *Ibid.* From 1983 to 1995, the percentage of white males at the Whitney Biennial increased from 36.4 percent to 55.5 percent.
118. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
119. Okwui Enwezor, "The Black Box," in Okwui Enwezor et al., *Documenta 11, Platform 5: Exhibition, Catalogue* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), pp. 42–43.
120. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48. In their book *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri describe the "multitude" as a "resistance force, opposed to the power of the Empire." See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. xv; and Enwezor, "The Black Box," p. 45.
121. Enwezor, "The Black Box," p. 45, emphasis added.
122. 37 percent of the Documenta 11 artists were women: 31 women artists and 8 groups with women members, out of the total 116 artists and 15 named groups, as cited by Katy Deepwell, "Women Artists at Manifesta 4 and Documenta 11," *n.paradoxa* 10 (July 2002), p. 44.
123. Tim Griffin, "Global Tendencies: Globalism and the Large-Scale Exhibition," *Artforum* 42 (November 2003), p. 154. The participants in the roundtable included Enwezor, Yinka Shonibare, James Meyer, Francesco Bonami, Martha Rosler, Catherine David, and Hans-Ulrich Obrist. Incidentally, Shonibare also defended Magiciens when he placed it, along with Documenta 10 and 11, within a history of exhibitions that "created a necessary forum for giving visibility to the non-Western artist"; see pp. 152–63, especially 154; 206; 212.
124. Lamoureux, "From Form to Platform," p. 82.
125. Sylvester Okunwodu Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe: Documenta 11 and the Apotheosis of the Occidental Gaze," *Art Journal* 64 (Spring 2005), p. 82.
126. *Ibid.*
127. *Ibid.*
128. Enwezor, "Preface," in *Documenta 11, Platform 5*, p. 40.
129. Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe," p. 86.
130. *Ibid.*
131. Indeed, of the 34 feminist artists included in the exhibition, 17 were non-Euro-American.
132. Gerardo Mosquera, "Notes on Globalization, Art and Cultural Difference," in *Silent Zones: On Globalization and Cultural Interaction* (Amsterdam: RAIN, 2001).
133. Ella Shohat, "Area Studies, Transnationalism, and the Feminist Production of Knowledge," *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26 (Summer 2001), p. 1270.
134. *Ibid.*: "Since the anticolonialist struggles of colonized women were never labeled 'feminist,' they have not been 'read' as linked or as relevant to feminist studies.... Yet the participation of colonized women in anticolonialist and antiracist movements did often lead to political engagement with feminism. However, these antipatriarchal and even, at times, antiheterosexist subversions within anticolonial struggles remain marginal to the feminist canon."
135. Indeed, as the burgeoning research on global activism demonstrates, women are at the forefront of these transnational activist movements. See, for instance, Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Pfyegana, eds., *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War, and Resistance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Marguerite R. Waller and Sylvia Marcos, eds., *Dialogue and Difference: Feminisms Challenge Globalization* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2005); V. Mackie, "Language of Globalization, Transnationality, and Feminism," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3 (2001), pp. 180–206; Manisha Desai and Nancy Naples, eds., *Globalization and Women's Activism: Linking Local Struggles to Transnational Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Anna Sampaio, "Transnational Feminisms in New Global Matrix: Hermanas en la lucha," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 6 (2004), pp. 181–206.
136. Neshat's *Mahdokht* (2004) and *Zarin* (2005) constitute two independent sequences of what is to become a five-part feature film, each part of which will be dedicated to one of the five women in the novel.
137. "Identities seem contradictory, partial and strategic.... There is nothing about being female that naturally binds women." In Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 155.
138. "There is no original or primary gender a drag imitates, but gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original." Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in Diana Fuss, ed., *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 21.
139. Jenny Saville, in an interview with Simon Schama in *Jenny Saville* (New York: Rizzoli in association with a Gagosian Gallery, 2005), p. 126.
140. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," p. 181.