

**FEMINIST
PERSPECTIVES
IN ARTISTIC PRODUCTIONS
AND THEORIES OF ART**

V. EDITION

2016

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Title

**CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST ART IN
ISRAEL: 21st CENTURY GLOCALISM OR
TRANSNATIONALISM?**



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This paper considers the development of feminist art in Israel, concentrating on the contemporary art scene. Using the analytical tool of intersectionality to investigate diverse manifestations of local feminist art, it will offer new strategies with which to engage with feminist art history and diversify its narratives.

In the first part of the paper, I will briefly elaborate on the "beginnings" of feminism and feminist art in Israel. In the second part, I will identify the crucial turning point in local gender and feminist criticism and feminist perspectives of art history, and demonstrate how this affected the Israeli art scene by creating new discourses. In the main part of the paper, I will present examples of contemporary feminist art illustrating the main topics that preoccupy Israeli women artists. In the concluding section, I will pose a series of questions arising from the discussion. These include, to what extent can the contemporary feminist art discourse be described as a "multi-centered" field, or to what extent can feminist art studies take into account feminist concepts of knowledge production which favor the involvement of the greatest possible diversity of artists? Through a consideration of such questions, I will offer new insights in relation to art and feminism, both in the region and in relation to global art history in general.

Background — The Beginnings

Over the last decade, mainstream feminist art criticism has moved to include an ever-growing number of geographies and cultures in its discourse (Reilly and Nochlin, 2007). This can be seen in, for example, the large number of exhibitions and scholarly texts about women artists of the Middle East, such as the exhibition "The Fertile Crescent: Gender, Art, and Society," presented in 2012 at the Rutgers University Institute for Women and Art (Brodsky and Olin, 2012). However, some scholars of feminist art history still subscribe to what Marsha Meskimmon describes as "imperial," or "normative" art history (Meskimmon, 2007). Such a perspective tends to present a linear global narrative, one that excludes locations that do not fit into a temporal trajectory, or do not offer some notion of progress. (Interestingly, this notion usually corresponds to locations outside the Euro-American map). Indeed, feminist art in Israel does not neatly correspond to the "transcript" of a linear, consistently developing narrative (Dekel, 2011)¹. This, perhaps, may be one of several reasons why such art remains unaddressed by the "imperial" feminist art history.

Until about two decades ago, the term *Israeli feminist art* had an unfamiliar ring and was only applicable — if indeed it existed at all — to the work of a small number of local women artists (Dekel, 2012). Today, there is some agreement that feminist art in Israel indeed exists; some believe that there are feminist artists, but no real feminist art movement or even a distinct group that could be called that as yet; but others strongly believe that such a movement is indeed evolving.

In many ways, the emergence of feminism in Israel parallels the development of the phenomenon in other parts of the world. In pre-statehood Israel, Zionism promoted the idea of gender equality in the spirit of the European and North American first wave of feminism. However, in Palestina (pre-state Israel) — as elsewhere in the world — women's suffrage presented the false impression of an egalitarian society, while in fact centuries-old patterns of masculine dominance were still maintained.² Today, there is a consensus in Israeli feminist research that in spite of the determined activism of local women, there was no actual "first wave of Feminism" in the country, nor the second wave to succeed it.

One possible reason for this is that the pioneering entities of the Kibbutz³ movement claimed equality between the sexes, even though this was, de facto, a false statement, as women were mostly marginalized to "feminine" roles and jobs in the Kibbutzim. Another reason is the dominant position of the army in the Israeli society.⁴ The fact that women serve in the army creates the mistaken impression that women in Israel are equal and in fact emancipated, and therefore there is no need for "foreign" ideas like feminism to be introduced into the

¹ Although this paper will start by somewhat "giving into" a linear logic of the Western narrative of feminist art and its historic "waves" (or in the words of Meskimmon, doing "imperial" feminist art history), it will part with this path after its introduction, and will propose an alternative perspective to understand feminist art in Israel.

² Women in Palestina were given the right to vote in 1926.

³ A kibbutz is a collective community, an organization which is a combination of socialism and Zionism, and is typical of the early settlements of Jews in modern Israel.

⁴ All 18-year-old Israeli citizens (except for some minority groups), including women, are conscripted to compulsory army service of between two to three years.



country (even though, as in the case of the Kibbutz movement, women serving in Israeli army have a clearly inferior status to that of men). Another explanation for the lack of enthusiasm for Feminism, especially second-wave Feminism, is that the new state of Israel, established in 1948, was in an almost constant state of war, struggling to establish and maintain its sovereignty, cultural definition and economic wellbeing. This may well have caused both men and women in Israel to feel incapable of dealing with any "additional ideology" — like Feminism — a low priority in view of the imperative task of nation-building.

So, if any female artists before mid-20th century actually survived the "general" oppressive forces and marginalization and succeeded in working as artists, they were generally very privileged women, well-connected to the mainstream and its key figures (all men) at the time. The subject matters of artworks by such women artists were related, not surprisingly, to the dominant Zionist ethos of the time, and to associated subjects such as nation-building. Monuments were especially typical of the work of women artists of the era. One such example are Batya Lishansky's sculptures. Lishansky created representations of men as brave pioneers, and women as mothers of the nation and nurturers of the soldiers.⁵ Women artists who did not align with Zionist narratives were marginalized, often to the point of being forgotten; some scholars are now doing interesting work, re-writing these artists back into the Israeli art canon.⁶

All the above explains why even deep into the 1960s, as second-wave Feminism swept across many Western countries, prompting artists' production to include feminist issues, Israel remained relatively untouched by this influence. If we look to the art field during the 1960s and 1970s, women artists in Israel seemed to still reject incorporating feminist notions in their art, rejecting even the very definition "women's art." These artists insisted that they did not feel at a disadvantage due to their gender. Aviva Uri, one of the most important Israeli artists of her generation and an influence on subsequent generations of artists — both men and women — was active between the 1950s and the 1980s. During the 1960s, she wrote in her memoirs: "...If one wishes to create good art, one must first be 'an artist', and only then consider also being 'a woman'..." (Bar Or, 2002). As the scholar Yael Guilat has shown, it was not for a lack of women critics, curators or artists that feminist art failed to emerge in Israel for so long: it was the climate of the art scene itself, and the chauvinist society at large, that did not encourage women artists to create from a feminist perspective, up until the early 1990s (Guilat, 2006).

A Quantum Leap: Israeli Women Artists in the 1990s

Doing Feminist Art

In the early 1990s, a paradigmatic shift occurred in the local cultural field, allowing for new ideologies and critical stances to be incorporated into the art production realm and local art criticism.⁷ Critics suggest that up to the 1990s, Israeli art was characterized by its "delayed reaction" in relation to the international art world and its trends; but after this point, the situation changed fundamentally, and as a result the contemporary art in Israel is now very up-to-date. Israeli Contemporary art, especially art that incorporates feminist components, is presently very aligned with the themes, styles and concerns at the center of the oeuvre of feminist artists around the world. However, the Western, "imperial", model, that frames feminist artistic production in a chronology of waves or decades, does not fit the Israeli scene, and thus cannot serve as a suitable framework with which to conceptualize it. Therefore, the use of terms like "progress" are not relevant to the discussion of the work of Israeli feminist artists, as these descriptions might contribute to narrowing the options available for understanding them.⁸ Feminist art in Israel maintains a dialectical relationship with feminist art created in other places

⁵ Editor's note: The author illustrates this through a photograph of: Lishansky, Batia. *Commemorating the Fallen*. 1953. Stone sculpture. Kfar Yehoshua Memorial, Israel.

⁶ For instance, Paula Birnbaum from San Francisco University is working on a book project about the artist Hannah Orloff, to be published in 2018. For a detailed discussion, see Markus, 2008.

⁷ For an detailed discussion about this subject, see Dekel, 2011.

⁸ Once this "quantum leap" occurred, in the 1990s, we could see that Israeli feminist artists shifted between subject matter, between theories and styles, and sometimes relating to "different kinds" of feminisms simultaneously, often even within the same art work.



around the globe, simultaneously drawing on the various themes, concerns and ideologies that are the concerns of feminist artists from different times and places — all at once.⁹

It can be said that it took Israeli women artists, who "skipped" first- and second-wave Feminism, less than a decade to make what I have described elsewhere as "The Quantum Leap" (Dekel, 2011), into a new theoretical and practical stage. Such Israeli artists are now working in the spirit of contemporary feminist art.¹⁰ Indeed, several of the feminist critical stances at the center of women's art all over the world can be also detected in the art of local feminist artists. An Israeli artist who relates to concept of the "Beauty Myth" is Ayelet Payento, a proponent of the feminist criticism of normative perceptions of the female body and its standardization. In the photograph series *Sausages* (1997), Payento wraps her naked body in sheets of plastic cling film, turning it into a grotesque object, much like a sausage ready to be sold in the market place. In another series, *Sunflowers* (1998), Payento photographs herself naked, staring directly at the camera, her hands grasping at her belly. Sitting straight and accentuating her "over-weight body," Payento commented that this project was strongly influenced by the feminist literature that she was exposed to as an art student, and that she hoped that this work conveyed a feminist message to other women.

Since the 1970s, feminist art in the international art scene has dealt not only with the woman's body as an object for the male gaze, but also with the internal world, experiences, and sexuality of women. Feminist artists have moved to focus on achieving a shift from the body as an object to the body as subjectively experienced. Similarly, feminist artworks in Israel have sought to address women's sexual experiences. One example is Galia Yahav's video installation, *Blindspots* (1999), a consideration of autoerotic pleasure drawing from feminist theories about the gaze and issues of representation and agency, as well as a reference to the relationship between Feminism and pornography (the anti-pornography versus anti-anti-pornography dispute).

Violence against women, as gender-based crimes, is also addressed by feminist artists in Israel, just as it is evident elsewhere around the world. One example is Neta Harari's 2009 series of paintings titled *Vertigo Inbox*, focusing on sexual violence. One painting shows a woman's face, battered; a second depicts a woman lying on an asphalt road, face down and dress raised above her waist, as though she had been thrown from a moving vehicle after being subjected to a sexual assault.

Another painful issue is that of ageism, especially the oppression of old women, a subject addressed by feminist artists in many parts of the world. In 2005, Chava Raucher created a series of huge paintings, featuring partially-clothed elderly women, which she hung on the exterior walls of a well-known and respected Tel Aviv art gallery (Raucher, Chava. *Calendar Girls*. 2005. Digital prints, 500x2000 cm.). However, the Tel Aviv municipal art committee censored the exhibition, ordering that it be taken down on the grounds that "...the exhibition is situated in a small street in a residential area, and the works are inappropriate for the location" (Raucher, 2014: 10). Interestingly, while the municipal authorities think nothing of the abundance of advertisements exploiting the almost-naked bodies of young women in sexist and degrading fashion posted on those exact streets, exposure to the bodies of old women in similar poses is considered deeply disturbing, a complete taboo that must be censored.

Several feminist artists in Israel have addressed the complex subject of motherhood. One such artist is Shira Richter, who drew notions from radical feminism in photographing her belly after giving birth to her twin children¹¹, and from Marxist feminism in photographing

⁹ For instance, the connection between Israeli feminist art to that in the U.S. can clearly be seen. It is certainly influenced by its "older sister," but it produces hybrid artworks: although it is very influenced by North American feminist art, feminist art in Israel incorporates different perspectives from other countries around the globe. But above all, I believe it reflects its own historical and local situatedness.

¹⁰ Several curators and scholars can be credited with laying the ground for this "leap." Two seminal exhibitions marked this major change: "The Feminine Presence," from 1991, curated by Ellen Ginton; and "Meta-Sex," from 1994, curated by Tami Katz-Frieman. Other exhibitions from the 1990s that were devoted to women's art include "A Room of her Own" (1991); "From Within" (1994); "The Full Part of the Sign" (1993-96); and "Oh Mama" (1997). Some of the leading curators and scholars from this era are Ariella Azoulay and Tal Ben-Zvi, Tali Tamir, Galia Yahav, and Ilana Tannanbaum, among several others.

¹¹ Editor's note: The autor illustrates this through: Richter, Shira. *Bad Aid*. Series *The Mother, the Daughter*, and the Holy Spilit. 2004. Color print.



the pacifiers and feeding bottles of her babies, highlighting the invisible mothering work that women do in their homes, usually without the support of official monetary payment or other work-value compensation.¹²

From the artworks discussed so far, we can see that contemporary feminist artists based in Israel work on very similar subjects to feminist artists in other parts of the world. However, there are also local specificities that are at the center of the oeuvre of Israeli feminist artists, unique and relevant to the place in which they live and work. Feminism has informed us about the ways in which knowledge and production of knowledge are always situated and context-dependent, affected by the position and the particularities of women's life experiences. For that reason, the analytical perspective of intersectionality¹³ helps to reveal the various positions of women's experiences in Israel, by interpreting the various power relations at work in the Israeli context.

Sexism, Racism and Chauvinism Under Feminist Criticism

Yael Bartana's video *Profile* (2001) recreates an army practice conducted by female soldiers on a firing range. The camera captures their routine actions performed in the military framework, exposing gendered issues of power and authority; the stress and professionalism that they experience, as women, during their mandatory army service. The subject of integrating women into combat units only became a serious subject for discussion in the Israeli public sphere in the mid 1990s (before that, most women served in dull, insignificant jobs, such as secretaries). Feminist art soon joined this public discussion, offering works such as Ofri Marom's piece¹⁴ or Anna Fromchenko's piece^{15,16}

As women make their way into more and more combat-oriented posts in the army, positions that until recently were exclusively male realms, they have received growing public recognition and respect, and are regarded by many as emblematic of highly significant changes in terms of gender equality. But despite these accomplishments, many feminists disapprove altogether of women (or men, for that matter) joining the army, because the army — by definition — is not solely concerned with defence and preserving life, but frequently employs violent, repressive, and destructive measures. One artist with such a stance is Avital Lifshitz, who shows in explicit fashion the combined oppressive forces of sexism and chauvinism (the growing nationalism and rhetoric of the motherland) working together with racism (against the Palestinians in Israel) in the Israeli context. In her work *War Porn* (2009)¹⁷, Lifshitz does this by presenting a soldier with an erect penis, shaped as a rifle; the "weapon" is pointed at the map of Israel, in the shape of the literal motherland, a woman's breast.

Tackling Representation through Identity Politics

Artist Shula Keshet creates representations of Mizrahi women, i.e. Jewish women of Middle Eastern ethnic origin, a social group that suffers from a double form of oppression — in terms of both gender and ethnicity.¹⁸ Keshet's work *Veiled* (1999)¹⁹ is part of a series of self-portraits, in which her face is covered with a "veil" woven in a traditional style. Representing both the aesthetic world of Oriental art — which Western art has traditionally dismissed as "crafts" — and also the stereotype of the Arab woman masked by a veil, Keshet undermines

¹² Editor's note: The author illustrates this through: Richter, Shira. *Mystic Topaz*. Series *Invisible Invaluables*. 2011. Color print.

¹³ The term intersectionality is the multiple identity-related facets — race, class, gender, religion, etc. — working together, but differently, on every particular woman, affecting her life and degree of agency. This analytical tool helps explain the multi-dimensional oppressions of women from different social groups working within a given field.

¹⁴ Editor's note: Marom, Ofri. *Girl Soldier*. 2014. Oil on canvas.

¹⁵ Editor's note: Fromchenko, Anna. *The vanishing General*. 2015. Mixed media on canvas.

¹⁶ Anna Fromchenko's work relates to a specific woman, Orna Barbivai, who was the highest-ranked woman in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), and was promoted to the rank of Major-General in 2011. She held this position till 2014; since then, no other woman has attained this rank.

¹⁷ Editor's note: Lifshitz, Avital. *Warn Porn*. 2009. Installation.

¹⁸ Because the hegemonic group in the country is Jewish people of Euro-American origin, a group called "Ashkenazim." For a detailed discussion, see Keshet, 2013.

¹⁹ Editor's note: Keshet, Shula. *Veiled*. 1999. Color photograph.



this derogative image with an assertive gaze directed at the camera, accentuating her pride in her Persian culture and belief in her own sovereignty as a woman and a subject.

Anisa Ashkar, a Palestinian-Israeli Muslim, employs a performative strategy in her body-art works, as she uses her own face as an artistic medium, inscribing sentences in Arabic on it. Using her face as a living canvas — a site for political as much as artistic declaration — the written words are drawn from multiple sources like songs, prose, and also her own thoughts, the captions on her face changing on a daily basis. Ashkar's work engages with the status of women in an intra-community context (religion, tradition), and also deals with Jewish-Arab relations (national identity, economic gaps between Jews and Arabs); the subjects she explores are linked to feminist activism within the Arab and Palestinian community, as much as they are to the feminist activities of Jewish and Palestinian women, fighting together against patriarchal oppression.

Sichi Gilad, a lesbian artist, has photographed a variety of women in her community. Her work is closely linked to the lesbian feminist movement, which has developed in Israel since the 1980s, fighting for recognition and rights within various frameworks (both within the LGBTQ movement, and in exclusively lesbian organizations such as "Claf", 1987; "Aswat", 2002; "Bat-Kol", 2005). Her piece *Yom Kippur* features a female couple²⁰. They are leaning against the railings of a deserted main road in Tel Aviv. The absence of traffic reflects the fact that the photograph was taken at a very special time, on Yom Kippur — the Day of Atonement. This is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, symbolizing the cessation of the natural flow of life as Jews pray for forgiveness for all the sins of the passing year. The work functions as a critique of the stereotypical view of intimate relations between two loving people. As opposed to the love between the hetero-normative male/female couple, many Israelis think of lesbian women as an unnatural phenomenon, an obstruction to the "normal" flow of life.²¹ The road depicted in the photograph is part of an urban space, in effect "every possible urban space," conferring a universal dimension upon the couple. However, at the same time, the scene is emblematic of the unique Israeli context, as only this country, which is designated as a Jewish State and implies Jewish laws such as ceasing all activities during the Day of Atonement, has such a unique situation in its public space.

Migration and Stratification Points — Transnational Feminisms

Israel has been a country of immigration from the moment of its establishment in 1948. The massive influx of immigrants has always had a major influence on its essence; but the 1990s introduced a whole new level of challenges, as it felt the after-shocks of the collapse of the Former Soviet Union and also the growing impact of globalization. These paradigmatic changes are best tackled through the conceptualization and frameworks of transnationalism.²²

Zoya Cherkassky-Nnadi immigrated to Israel from the Former Soviet Union as a young adult, and still maintains close contacts with many feminist activists in Russia. Many of her paintings reflect her hybrid identity and her strong feminist praxis, which draws on a transnational perspective. In her painting *Pussy Riot*, she depicts three members of the famous anti-establishment group, some of whom she knows in

²⁰ Editor's note: Gilad, Sichi. *Yom Kippur*. 2003. Color print.

²¹ It should be explained that Israel is an extremely pro-natal country, due to nationalist reasons deriving from its geo-politics and demographics (number of Jews vs. numbers of Arabs).

²² The term transnationalism refers to a broad social phenomenon that gained force in the late 1980s and has involved fundamental changes in the nature of nation-states in response to massive waves of migration. Transnationalism carries significant implications for the way in which we conceptualize the phenomenon of migration, as its attendant processes of identity formation have been taking place simultaneously in many sites across the globe and involve people who are linked, physically or virtually, to more than one geo-national space — through family connections, economics, and national and cultural praxis. For more, see Dekel, 2016a.



person due to her cultivation and maintenance of transnational connections²³. Her painting conveys the concerns of Russian-speaking women living in Israel, and at the same time points to a protest against the patriarchal oppression of women in all parts of the world.

Alex Kurbatov and Vannane Borian, who both also emigrated from the Former Soviet Union, are artists and frequent collaborators. In their work *Vagina*²⁴, they also express a feminist transnational stance. Specifically, this installation sought to focus on the ways in which structures of gender oppression move across countries and continents, directly affecting the lives of migrating women. This piece clearly explains how the oppression of migrant women is perpetuated in and by the new place in which women arrive: the central subject of the piece is the phenomenon of trafficking of women from the Former Soviet Union to Western countries. *Vagina* was a huge installation, erected on Rothschild Boulevard, the most upmarket spot in the city of Tel Aviv and a center of business and leisure. In a shape of a vagina, the installation was made out of thousands of calling cards advertising the "services" of women exploited in the sex industry. The piece attracted significant attention from the local media, and was pulled down by the police only a few hours after it was constructed.²⁵

Additional aspects of feminist transnationalism, such as religion (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), are popular subject matters for contemplation by feminist artists in Israel.²⁶ Last but not least, the subjects of migrant workers, political refugees and political asylum seekers are also addressed by feminist artists in Israel, because the artists understand the basic logic of Feminism: "oppression is oppression". Such artists include Inbal Egoz, who embraces this principle and the importance of solidarity between "different kinds" of oppressed social groups, including survivors of torture in Sudan, Eritrea and other disaster-stricken countries, both men and women. In a 2016 project, Egoz collaborated with refugees from Eritrea, exhibiting woven textiles made together with members of this refugee community in Israel.

Over the last decade, the Israeli art scene has produced many local initiatives in regard to feminist art, including the establishment of a new organization titled "The Association for Women's Art and Gender Research in Israel", set up to support women artists and women scholars engaging in art and feminisms. The organization initiates exhibitions, conducts studies and surveys about the status of women artists in Israel, and organizes annual conferences.²⁷ Also, a first all-women art gallery, *Artemisia*, was opened in Tel Aviv in 2015. Several collectives of feminist art, such as "The Bush" group, are promoting the feminist agenda in the arts by distributing fanzines, uploading internet interviews with local feminist activists in the arts, and performing street interventions to raise general awareness about women's rights.²⁸

Individual artists like Einat Amir are also promoting awareness about gender imbalance and the marginalization of women within the art scene through various art projects. In a high-profile, first of its kind artwork, in 2016 Amir created a performance²⁹ in which her former male professors, at one of the leading art academies in Israel, were asked to wear T-shirts on which she printed grim statistics about women's poor participation ratios in solo exhibitions, teaching positions, grants and prizes, and other parameters of gender parity, while reading aloud a text titled "Men Explain Things To Me" (Solnit, 2014).³⁰

²³ Editor's note: Cherkassky-Nnadi, Zoya. *Pussy Riot*. 2012. Oil on linen, 120x140 cm. Rosenfeld Gallery, Tel-Aviv.

²⁴ Editor's note: Borian, Vanane; Kurbatov, Alex. *Vagina*. 2016. Installation.

²⁵ For an elaboration on the subject, see Dekel, 2016b.

²⁶ See, for example, Sperber, 2014; Dekel, 2015.

²⁷ See: <http://womenartandgender.com/>

²⁸ The "Bush" collective aims to advance women and LGBT's rights and promote solidarity between women from different social groups in the country through artistic activity: <https://www.facebook.com/letthebushbegin/?fref=ts>

²⁹ Editor's note: Amir, Einat. *Men #2*. Performance shown as part of the show *Art School*. Curated by Avi Lubin at the Helena Rubinstien Pavilion of the Tel Aviv Museum, 2016.

³⁰ For more information about the project see: <https://einatamir.com/works/>



Conclusion

The art world in Israel differs from that of the other parts of the world in various aspects of its social and political contexts. The evolution of Israeli feminist art — both in terms of its theory and its artistic production field — has taken a unique course. Although it relates in some ways to the international art field, it cannot nonetheless be expected to precisely parallel it. One of the most effective ways to understand the Israeli field is to commit to a close listening to the experiences of local women artists³¹, without forcing a comparative analysis with the Western feminist art canon and its course and narratives. This could lead to the articulation of new questions, highlighting the need for a contemporary feminist conceptualization of the multilayered and relative status of women in Israel, in the context of their own nation-state and within the logic of the era of transnationalism.

I believe that feminist transnationalism is the optimal prism through which to critically consider women in present-day Israel because, as noted earlier, immigration is a pivotal factor in the nation's narrative. Thinking of cross-generational migrating women while nationalism is on the rise is an urgent, and indeed a highly productive perspective. In that sense, the legacy of Chandra Talpade Mohanty remains a key inspiration for transnational feminism, a theory and a praxis that goes beyond the universalizing tendencies of Western feminism, and which produces an ethical model for feminist scholars doing cross-cultural work through transnational feminism.

When I think about the ways in which I am able to maintain such a discourse in my own art-historical research, I try to bear in mind the suggestions made by scholars like Marsha Meskimmon (2007) — to strive to "flatten the hierarchies" (i.e., not to comply with the traditional art history praxis of comparison between artworks created in the "centers" to those from other places around the globe). An approach of relational feminist analysis might facilitate a way to discuss the work of feminist artists, in such a way that instead of a traditional analysis — such as a chronological or a stylistic analysis — we could consider looking at the similarities, as well as the differences between women artists: themes become the central tool, and through this one can ensure that the discussion will remain context-dependent. This approach could lead to a thematically organized exposition — on sexuality, for instance, or motherhood, or identity — leading to a discussion that reveals the particularities of each artist, according to her specific positioning.

Disrupting the globalizing scripts of liberation and the dichotomous notions of oppression (because in fact, oppression and agency operate simultaneously, to varying degrees, on all women around the globe) and by offering alternative genealogies and traditions of resistance, we are able to provide to women from places outside the "centers" the opportunity to articulate a self-referential model of representation, a platform through which to negotiate their Self, and — most importantly — exercise agency. By offering a radical criticism of women's lives, a political perspective on cultural situations, and by complicating the seemingly stable notions of self, nation-states, and cultural belonging, I hope this article reverberates the words of bell hooks, who taught us the most important lesson: Feminism is for everybody (hooks, 2000).

³¹ Contemporary feminist research suggests that "experience" and "voice" are discursive products—the voice is not simply "there," and experiences do not merely "happen" to women. Therefore, I acknowledge that we cannot be satisfied with just "making an experience heard" as a political project for its own sake. For a detailed discussion, see Phipps, 2016.



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