

folio

Časopis za sodobno umetnost, kulturo in veselje do življenja

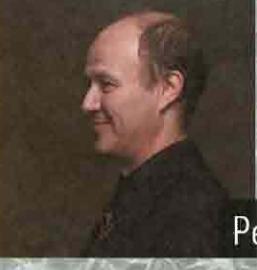
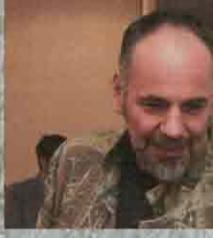
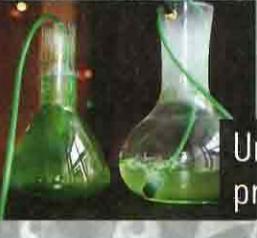
Magazine for contemporary art, culture and the joy of life

Letnik 3 (2011) / Volume 3 (2011), No. 1/4 Maribor, Slovenia

ISSN 1855-8976



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Evelin Stermitz

Dilema o podobi ženske The women's image dilemma

Evelin Stermitz se poleg umetniške dejavnosti v raziskovalnem delu ukvarja z umetnicami v medijih in novomedijski umetnosti in z vprašanji feminizma in spola.

Leta 2008 je osnovala ArtFem.TV – interaktivno televizijo za umetnost in feminism (www.artfem.tv) in si s tem projektom na IX. mednarodnem festivalu podobe na univerzi Caldas v kolumbijskem Manizalesu leta 2010 prisluzila posebno omemo.

Njena dela s področja medijev in novomedijske umetnosti so bila velikokrat razstavljena na feminističnih razstavah in drugih razstavah v okviru drugačnih kontekstov, v katere je želeta infiltrirati feministične ideje in s tem širiti feministični diskurz.

Kakšen koncept se skriva v ozadju projekta Cinéma Féministe?

Kolektiv son:DA me je povabil kot selektorico mesečnega niza projekcij v Kinu Udarnik v Mariboru, moja glavna zamisel pa je bila, da filmski niz razdelam v smislu prenosa ženskih video in filmskih del s spletno platforme ArtFem.TV in virtualnega spletka s pretežno posamičnimi pogledi v realni prostor, kjer je ob ogledu možen kolektiven pogled, pa tudi da spodbudim in razširjam feministični diskurz kot javni diskurz v kontekstu kinematografa. Ime Cinéma Féministe je nastalo na podlagi nekdanjega francoskega gibanja Cinéma Vérité, mi pa smo ga preoblikovali v okviru feminism, s čimer hočemo pokazati, da se video in filmska dela približujejo realnosti ženske oziroma ženskemu dojemanju kulture. Cinéma Féministe podobe prikazuje z ženske perspektive, kar ne izključuje moškega pogleda. Ženski pogled v vizualni kulturi je sicer vzpostavljen na podlagi moške predeterminacije, saj se le moškemu pogledu pripisuje moč določanja. Cinéma Féministe ima opraviti z ženskimi vprašanj, kar pa ne izključuje trditev o zmotnih pogledih na življenje in identiteto ženske ter zmotnem stanju osnovnih družbenih vprašanj. Od sedemdesetih dalje je s feministično filmsko kritiko in analizo v okviru feminističnega kontra-filma namreč prišlo do premika pri ustvarjanju ženskega pogleda v produkciji filmskih in video del in pri ustvarjanju različnih identitet za žensko gledalstvo.

Kaj dejansko je platforma ArtFem.TV in kako je konceptualno osnovana?

ArtFem.TV sem leta 2008 ustanovila v sodelovanju z mnogimi umetnicami kot obliko ženskega umetniškega in feminističnega projekta interaktivne televizije in kot kiberfeministično akcijo. Z vse večjo količino spletnih video del, ki jih predstavlja, izpostavlja ženske in umetnost. Razumemo jo lahko kot gibanje, ki nasprotuje moškemu umetniškemu sistemu in moškemu medijskemu aparatu – internetu, pa tudi kot obliko subverzivne spletnne televizije. V zadnjih letih razvoja se je jasno pokažal pomen poudarjanja ženskih video in filmskih del v kontekstu ženska – spol – mediji – podobe – in tako dalje, kot lahko opazimo na različnih predstavivah na raznovrstnih mednarodnih konferencah in prizoriščih. Na tem področju obstaja dolga teoretska tradicija, vendar pa se o njej večinoma razpravlja v okviru feminism, zato jo je treba premakniti iz pretežno feminističnih krogov. Po mojih izkušnjah se namreč feministične ideje zdijo zanimive predstavnikom obeh spolov. Poleg tega se postavlja vprašanje: Zakaj se morajo ženske vedno prilagoditi idejam in strukturam, ki so še vedno moške in služiti kot poblagovljeni konstrukti? Mar si ne želijo ubesediti svojih mnenj, vizij in pomembnih vidikov? Posebej na tehnikratskem področju filma, medijev in novomedijske

umetnosti nekatera dela, ki se posvečajo vidikom spola, ne pridejo do širše publike, ker preprosto ne odsevajo moških pogledov, zaradi česar se ne skladajo s splošno veljavnimi koncepti.

Dilema o podobi ženske od sedemdesetih dalje ter prej, pozneje in naprej

Kibernetični prostor – internet in ArtFem.TV, kako se to sklada?

Ko govorimo o kibernetičnem prostoru kot o konkretni lokaciji delovanja, dogajanja in formulacij, lahko na ArtFem.TV gledamo kot na prostor artikulacij ženskih umetnic v okviru spletnega medijskega konteksta, in sicer s postavljanjem vprašanj o prostoru za ženska vprašanja v naši multimedijski družbi. Vprašanja "prostora" ni postavila samo Virginia Woolf leta 1929 v delu Lastna soba, temveč tudi kiberfeministke ob koncu istega stoletja. ArtFem.TV ima opraviti z ustvarjanjem prostora za ženska vprašanja in aktivno uporabo medijskega interneta. Kar je najpomembnejše, je prepoznati oblikovanje subjekta v družbenem okolju, naj bo realno ali virtualno. Primer artikulacije v takšnem prostoru v naši multimedijski družbi je izoblikovan v performativnem videu "I Exist" (2001)¹ avtorice Michelle Handelman. Prikazan je kot stanje pretirane stimulacije, v katerem sama nastopa pred kamero, hkrati pa kot ponavljajoča se podoba med posameznimi posnetki nastopa v kameri, v okviru popačenih časovnih etap in delčkov, razdeljena, a hkrati v toku med hkratnim nahajanjem izven medijske podobe in znotoraj nje, kot podoba sama. Očitno je, da imamo v hipermedijski družbi poplavo podob v različnih medijskih oblikah, to pa vpliva na oblikovanje razcepljenega posameznika v množični pretirani ponudbi, a ker medije tradicionalno oblikujejo moške oblastne strukture, tudi internet oblikuje moške poglede na predstave o ženskah in utrjuje tradicionalno binarno spolno medijsko strukturo, ki je daleč od tega, da bi bila spolno uravnotežena. Vse to je vplivalo name, da sem na umetniški način ustvarila drugačno spletno estetiko, tako da sem opustila splošno "družbo spektakla" – če se navežem na misli Guya Deborda.²

Kako ste osnovali koncept za spored vsakega programa Cinéma Féministe?

Nekateri mesečni programi so bili nabrani na podlagi preteklih idej, ki so se mi porajale v okviru polja zanimalnega kot področja ali pojavi, na katere od sedemdesetih dalje vpliva tradicija feministične umetnosti, druge projekcije pa sem izbrala, ker se mi je zdelo pomembno, da javno razpravljamo o njih kot o trenutnih umetnostnih gibanjih, kot na primer skupina subRosa, pa tudi projekcija mednarodnih kolažev v okviru FemLink. Feministična video umetnost je od sedemdesetih dalje postala zelo pomembna za umetnice, saj umetniških medijev, ki so vzniknili v sedemdesetih, praktično skupaj z drugim valom feminism, niso obvladovale moške predstave,

ki izvirajo v tradiciji umetnostne zgodovine, kot to velja za slikarstvo in druga področja, poleg tega pa je postal mogoče, da se ženske izražajo v performativnem kontekstu. Dejansko pa program Cinéma Féministe, ko ga pripravljam, rada uskladim tudi s trenutnimi širšimi okoliščinami in v skladu s konceptom Cinéma Vérité s tistem, kar bi pritegnilo občinstvo. Tako bomo na primer imeli projekcijo z naslovom "moški", ki ima opraviti z ženskim pogledom na nasprotni spol, pa tudi z vključitvijo moškega spola. Cinéma Féministe bi dejansko moral pokazati, da feminism ni le stvar za ženske, ampak za ljudi vseh spolov. Še vedno v povezavi s pojmom feminism na nek način obstajata star strah in zavračanje, ker je dobil oznako zatiranja moških in boja z njimi, to pa vsekakor ni res, saj gre preprosto za enakost spolov v dojemaju naše družbe.

Kje je feminism bil, kje je trenutno in kam gre?

Feminizem je danes širok pojem z mnogimi različnimi usmeritvami, izvira pa iz političnih bojev pred sto leti. V osnovi gre za humanistično gibanje, ki pa je skozi zgodovino dobilo negativne oznake, ker je seveda šlo za boj proti moškim predstavam o zatiranju in izkoriscanju žensk, namesto da bi jih priznali kot enakovredne posameznike in subjekte. In ker so vsi mediji večinoma moški, je feminism komajda imel priložnost, da bi pridobil pozitivne konotacije, celo napade je doživljal, zato se ga povezuje s seksizmom in nanj gleda povsem ironično, celo dandanes, v 21. stoletju. Vendar pa je feminism dejansko družbeno in politično vprašanje, povezano s temeljnimi človekovimi pravicami. Kam feminism gre, je torej družbena paradiigma vseh družb na svetu.

Nedavno je prišlo do večjega institucionalnega premika v smislu priznavanja feminističnih umetnic iz sedemdesetih z razstavami na prizoriščih, kot so Centre Pompidou, MUMOK na Dunaju in različne lokacije v ZDA, vendar pa je tisto, kar to dejansko opisuje, getoizacija feminističnih idej kot oblike umetniške zgodovinske tendence in kot oblike ločenega kanona.

Kakšna je bila, je in bo vloga feminism?

Vloga feminism kot političnega gibanja je določiti pozicijo ženske na naši družbi, vendar gre lahko zelo daleč v smeri kiberfeminizma, postfeminizma, veliko pa ima tudi opraviti z dojemanjem našega sveta v splošnem. Feminizem se ukvarja tudi z mnogimi vprašanj, ki pravzaprav niso primarno ženska. V zadnjih desetletjih pa je postal izjemno teoretičen in vpliven. Na srečo se za koncepte feminism zanimali vse več ljudi moškega spola, zaradi česar se diskurz širi in odmika od svoje binarnosti, ki ga je zaznamovala v sedemdesetih. Gledano v celoti gre za razkrivanje oblastnih struktur, zato feminism lahko vidiemo kot filozofijo proti zatiranju, ki ga lahko opazimo na mnogih področjih naših družbenih problemov, dejansko pa imajo mnoge druge discipline koristi od feminističnih idej. Kakšna bo vloga feminism v prihodnosti, je močno odvisno od trenutnih in prihodnjih generacij in njihovih ambicij v smislu reflektiranja in spremicanja družbenih

1 Michelle Handelman, I Exist (2001), video http://artfem.tv/id:4/action;showpage/page_type;video/page_id;EXIST_michelle_handelman.flv/.

2 Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle, London: Rebel Press, 1983, prvi natis/first print: La société du spectacle, Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1967.

težav. Trenutno je poleg drugih vprašanj pomemben tudi post- in neo-kolonialni diskurz, tudi v okviru biotehnološke in genetske industrije, ki v veliki meri vplivata na telesa in življenja žensk.

Omenjali ste, da je umetnostni sistem še vedno strukturiran po mošku. Kako to razumete in mar ne gre tu za osrednjo pravico do "drugačnosti" ženskih umetnic kot takšnih?

Pravzaprav ne gre za pravico do "drugačnosti", ki bi jo določala kakršna koli vrsta biološkega spola, ampak gre za "drugačnost" v družbenem spolu – za družbeno konstruiran spol, ki ima več stoletno zgodovino, vendar je v zadnjih desetletjih postal svobodnejši in začel v večji meri podpirati ženske. Če se vrnemo k znanemu in pogosto citiranemu članku Linde Nochlin iz leta 1971: "Zakaj ni nobenih izjemnih umetnic?" avtorica doda, da bi se kar sam ponudil odgovor: "Izjemnih umetnic ni zato, ker ženske niso sposobne izjemnosti."³ Pri tem gre za vprašanje pripisovanja izjemnosti historično izoblikovanemu moškemu geniju in dostopu do ustrezne izobrazbe na vseh področjih, kar je v zadnjih desetletjih pridobilo enakopraven pravni status, ne pa tudi celovitega podpornega in spodbujajočega statusa v realnosti, ki jo doživljamo. Zato je ta "drugačnost" še vedno vprašanje dojemanja ženske kot subjekta v naši družbi na splošno, zasebni problemi iz sedemdesetih pa so še vedno politični problemi. Kje pa so danes skriti vsi ženski geniji? Nedavno je prišlo do večjega institucionalnega premika v smislu priznavanja feminističnih umetnic iz sedemdesetih z razstavami na prizoriščih, kot so Centre Pompidou, MUMOK na Dunaju in različnih lokacijah v ZDA, vendar pa je tisto, kar to dejansko opisuje, getoizacija feminističnih idej kot oblike umetniške zgodovinske tendence in kot oblike ločenega kanona. Vseeno pa danes drži trditev Linde Nochlin: "Pomembno je, da se ženske soočijo z realnostjo svoje zgodovine in svoje trenutne situacije, ne da bi se ob tem opravičevale ali poveličevale povprečnost."⁴

Ko opazujete situacije v filmskih delih, kako jih postavite v feministični kontekst?

Koncept, ki je za feminismem pomemben, je, da je družbena "resničnost" spremenljiv konstrukt.⁵ In ker so filmska dela kulturni artefakti, prikazujejo tudi kulturni konstrukt ženskosti, katerega podobe ustvarjajo pomen na način, ki je patriarhalno opredeljen. Filmske podobe, kot vsake druge, preko dialektičnega procesa tvorijo in spreminjajo zavest. Film lahko beremo kot dinamičen tekst, zakoreninjen v kontekst družbenih odnosov, kot ga vidimo v semiotični filmski analizi in v diskurzivnem pogledu. V tem smislu je za procese pomena pomemben tudi psihoanalitični vidik Lacanove teorije, pa tudi Marxova teorija o moški materializaciji ideologije. V tem kontekstu so videi in filmi, ki jih ustvarjajo ženske na feminističnem področju, sami po sebi kontra dela, ali povsem preprosto dela z drugačnimi pogledi in tematikami kot artefakti z moško usmerjenimi pogledi. Gledano v celoti gre za to, kako se pomen vizualno realizira in pokaže ter kakšne vrste spolnih oblastnih odnosov te podobe pravzaprav zastopajo. Če pogledamo na primer reklame za Milko na slovenski nacionalki, lahko vidimo, kako osladno je prikazana ženska kot mati, poleg tega pa asocira na obupano, depresivno gospodinjo, ki jo opogumljajo in držijo pri življenju le njeni otroci, ki ji prinesajo čokolado. S tem je bil povezan tudi oglas na veleplakatih, na katerem ji je skupaj z otroki mož prinesel čokolado v posteljo, ko se je zjutraj prebjala. Če na to pogledamo v okviru rangiranja položajev v družini, nizek status ženske v družinski strukturni nekako postane očiten in podoba lahko le pomilujemo. No, morda je primer s čokolado Milka nekoliko preveč preprost in lahko pove še več, tudi v okviru slovenskega postsocialističnega konteksta, vendar v spolno konstruiranih podobah v oglaševanju in drugje obstaja takšen status quo.

Kako vidite konstrukcije "ženskega" spola v medijih v prihodnosti?

Donna Haraway pravi: "Feministična zanimanja so znotraj tehnologije, ne le retorični pokrov. Tu govorimo o sobivanju – med različnimi znanostmi in vrstami kulture, med organizmi in napravami. Mislim, da vprašanja, ki res

³ Linda Nochlin: Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?, v/in: ARTnews, Let. 69, no. 9, January 1971, pp. 22–39, 67–71, ponatis v/reprinted in: Amelia Jones (Ur./Ed.), The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 229–233; p. 230.

⁴ Ibid.: p. 233.

⁵ Glej/See: Camera Obscura Collective, Feminism and Film – Critical Approaches, v/in: Amelia Jones (Ur./Ed.), The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 234–239; p. 235.

štejejo – kdo živi, kdo umre in za kakšno ceno – ta politična vprašanja uteleša tehnokultura. Na noben drug način se jih ni mogoče lotiti."⁶ Če se torej zgodovina ponavlja in predstavlja resničnosti, ki jih digitalna tehnologija ojača, žensko telo in s tem povezana politika spola služita kot umečna fantazija, ki podpira moško družbo in so ju celo ustvarile moške roke na podlagi moških misli. Ta dihotomija – ki jo spodbuja gospodarstvo – vpliva na nadaljnje generacije prihodnjih družb in prihodnjih kultur, medtem ko se zdi, da je digitalna doba brez konca. Podobe podpirajo družbe in njihovo kulturo, hkrati pa družbi in njenim kulturam zagotavljajo reference, saj živimo v medijski in multimediji družbi. Kar se tiče medijev in njihovih rezultatov v obliki družbenih procesov, ne samo kot mehanskih naprav, se jih pogosto navaja kot ključen vpliv na spreminjačo se kulturne vrednote in družbene prakse v globaliziranem svetu. Mediji lahko zagotovijo razloge za dejanja, procese, ideje in rezultate, njihovo posredovanje pa je mogoče izraziti v družbenih, političnih, ekonomskih, moralnih in kulturnih vprašanjih družbenega pomena, vključno s takšnimi koncepti, kot so identiteta, spol in moč. Te medijske rezultate vsiljujeta in podpirata gospodarstvo in tržna producija, s čimer podpirata in utrjujajo tradicionalni, starodavni diadni sistem podob moškega in ženske in njegovo politiko spolov, s tem ko izključuje pojmom družbenega spola in morebitno osnutje prihodnjega tretjega spola v smeri družbe brez družbenega spola.

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Besides her artistic work, Evelin Stermitz's research work focuses on women artists in media and new media art, as well as on feminist and gender issues.

She founded ArtFem.TV – Art and Feminism ITV (www.artfem.tv) in 2008 and received a special mention for the project at the IX Festival Internacional de la Imagen, University of Caldas, Manizales, Colombia, in 2010.

Her works in media and new media art have been exhibited widely within feminist exhibitions as well as within mixed gendered exhibitions of other contexts to infiltrate them with feminist ideas and to broaden the feminist discourse.

What is the concept behind Cinéma Féministe?

Actually, son:DA invited me to curate the monthly cinema series at Kino Udarnik in Maribor, and the main thought was to follow up a cinema series in the sense of bringing the women's video and film works out from the online platform ArtFem.TV and the virtual Internet, where the perception is mainly single, into the real space, where a collective perception to view them is possible, and also to encourage and broaden the feminist discourse as a public discourse in a cinematic context. The name Cinéma Féministe itself was constructed based on the former French Cinéma Vérité movement and now modified with feminism as an idea of showing video and film works nearing a woman's reality or rather a woman's perception of culture. Cinéma Féministe is showing images from a female perspective, which does not exclude the male gaze, of course, because the female gaze is constructed out of the male predetermined in visual culture since only the male gaze is associated with the power to determine. But despite this, Cinéma Féministe has to do with women's issues, which again does not exclude the claim on the misperceptions of a woman's life, identity, and mis-conditions of principal societal issues. Since the feminist film criticism and analysis from the 1970s onwards, it came to a shift of creating a female gaze in producing film and video works, and also in creating different identities for the female spectatorship as a feminist counter cinema.

What actually is ArtFem.TV and how is it created conceptually?

ArtFem.TV has been founded in 2008 by myself and many participating women artists as an idea of a women's Art and Feminism ITV project and as a cyber-feminist action. It has been growing steadily in its represented online video works to highlight women and art. It can be understood as a counter movement to a male art system and the male media machine Internet, also as a form of subversive online television. During the years of its development, the importance of highlighting women's video and film works became obvious, which can be seen based on different presentations at

various international conferences and venues within the context of women – gender – media – images – and so forth. There is a long theoretical tradition within this field, but actually mainly discussed within the feminist context and it has to be brought out of these mainly feminist circles. In my experience, people of all genders find feminist ideas interesting. In addition, the question is: Why do women always have to adjust to the ideas and structures that continue to be male, serving as a com-modified construct? Don't they have their own opinions, visions and important aspects to articulate? Particularly in the technocratic field of film, media and new media art, some works that address gender aspects don't make it to the wider audience, simply because they are not reflecting male ideas and therefore do not come along with common concepts.

The women's image dilemma since the 1970s and before and later and further

Cyber Space – the Internet and ArtFem.TV, how does this come along?

When dealing with cyberspace as a concrete space of action, happenings and formulations, ArtFem.TV can be seen as a space of articulations of women artists within the net-media context, where questions are raised about the space for women's issues in our multi-mediated society. The question of 'room' was not raised only by Virginia Woolf's writing "A Room of One's Own" in 1929, but also by cyberfeminists toward the end of the same century. ArtFem.TV has to do with creating space for female agendas and using the media Internet in an active way. But what is most important, that is to acknowledge the formation of a subject in a social space, whether real or virtual. An articulation of existence in such a space within our multi-mediated society is formulated in the performance video "I Exist" (2001)¹ by Michelle Handelman. It displays the state of over-stimulation, in which she is acting towards the camera and at the same time within the frames of the camera, within distorted time laps and fractations as a recurrent image, divided but also flowing between being outside the media image and simultaneously inside the image, being the image itself. There is an obvious overflow of images in various forms of media in our hyper-mediated society, influencing the construction of a fractured individual within multiple overidding. However, since all media are traditionally formed within male power structures, the Internet constructs male visions of images of women and stabilizes the traditional binary gendered media structure that is far from being gender balanced. All this has influenced me in creating a different net-aesthetics by artistic means and leaving the general "Society of the Spectacle" behind – in reference to thoughts of Guy Debord².

How did you conceptualize the programme of each Cinéma Féministe series?

Some of the monthly programmes have been collected together from former ideas which came to me within my field of interest as areas or phenomena influenced by the tradition of feminist art since the 1970s, and other screenings were chosen, because they seemed important to be discussed publicly as current movements in art, for example the subRosa group, or screening the international collages of FemLink. Since the 1970s, feminist video art has become very important to women artists. This artistic medium, that emerged together with the second wave of feminism, was therefore not occupied by old male notions originating in the tradition of art history, e.g. painting; etc.; also it became possible for women to act out in a performative context. But with regard to the Cinéma Féministe programming I actually like to adjust the programme also to broader circumstances of the given time and in a Cinéma Vérité concept, to where the audience would feel to be attracted. So in April, for example, there was the screening under the title "Male", which has to do with the female gaze on the opposite gender, but also with the inclusion of the male gender. Cinéma Féministe should actually show that feminism is not only a matter for women, but for people of any gender. Somehow, there is still this old fear and rejection of the term feminism, because it became labelled as the oppression of and fight against the 'male', which is definitely not true, because it is simply about gender equality in the perception of our society.

⁶ Donna Haraway, Donna Haraway – Quotes, The European Graduate School, <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/donna-haraway/quotes/>.

Where was, is and will be feminism?

Emerging from political struggles a hundred years ago, feminism nowadays is a broad term with many different directions. In principle, it is a humanist movement, but it acquired negative labels in the course of time, because, naturally, it was a fight against male ideas of social suppression and exploitation of women and not really recognizing women as equal individuals and subjects. And since all media are mainly male media, feminism has hardly had the chance to get connotated positively and even got attacked, therefore it has been associated with sexism and seen with plain irony, even nowadays in the 21st century. But in fact feminism is a social and political issue related to principal human rights. And where feminism will be, is therefore a social paradigm of societies in our world.

Lately it came to a major institutional shift of acknowledging feminist artists from the 1970s in exhibitions such as at the Centre Pompidou, MUMOK Vienna, and others in the U.S, but what it actually describes is a ghettoization of feminist ideas as a form of an art historical tendency and as a form of a separate canon.

What was, is and will be the role of feminism?

The role of feminism, as a political movement, is to determine the position of the woman in our society, but it can go very far toward cyberfeminism, postfeminism, and also has to do with the perception of our world in general. Feminism is also dealing with many issues that actually are not primarily female, and in the last decades became highly theoretical and influential. Fortunately an increasing number of male gendered people find interest in the concepts of feminism and broaden the discourse, to lead away from the binary discourse of the 1970s. All in all it is about the disclosure of power structures and feminism can be seen as a philosophy against suppression that can be found in many fields of our societal problems. Actually, many other disciplines have benefited from feminist ideas. What the role of feminism will be, depends strongly on the current and future generations and their ambitions to reflect and change the societal issues. Currently, besides other issues, the post- and neo-colonial discourse is important as well, also within the biotech and genetic industry, which has a major impact on women's bodies and their lives.

You've mentioned that the art system is still male structured. How do you perceive this and isn't it a major claim on the 'otherness' of women artists in general?

In fact it is not a claim on the 'otherness' described by any form of sex, but it is a form of 'otherness' of the gender – the socially constructed sex, which has its history of many centuries, but became more liberated and supportive toward women during the last decades. When going back to the famous and often quoted article by Linda Nochlin of 1971, "Why have there been no great women artists?" she mentions that the self-implied answer would be: "There are no great women artists because women are incapable of greatness."³ It is a question of ascribing greatness to the historically constructed male genius and of having access to adequate education in all disciplines, which of course in the last decades became equal in its legal status, but not throughout its supportive and encouraging status of experienced reality. Therefore this 'otherness' is still a question of the perception of a woman as a subject in our society in general, and the personal problems from the 1970s are still political problems, because: "Where are all the female geniuses hidden nowadays?" Recently there has been a major institutional shift of acknowledging feminist artists from the 1970s in exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou, MUMOK Vienna, MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and at various other venues. However, what it actually describes is the ghettoization of feminist ideas as a form of tendency in art history and as a form of a separate canon. This sentence by Linda Nochlin from 1971 is still accurate nowadays: "What is important is that women face up the reality of their history and of

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WOMEN ARTISTS

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DUBA SAMBOLEC

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The Feminist TV Channel

Recognizing the art and activism of women on screen

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their present situation, without making excuses or puffing mediocrity."⁴

When viewing the situation in film works, how do you set it in a feminist context?

Regarding feminism, an important concept is, that social 'reality' is a changeable construct. And since film works are cultural artefacts, they also demonstrate a cultural construct of femininity with images which generate meaning in a patriarchally defined mode. Film images, like all images, form and transform consciousness in a dialectical process. The film can be read as a dynamic text embedded in the context of social relations, seen in a semiotic film analysis and a discursive view. In this regard, the psychoanalytic aspect of Lacan's theory is also important for processes of signification and so is

Marx's theory of male materialisation in ideology.⁵ In this context, video and film works produced by women in a feminist field are per se a counter work, or simply work with different perspectives and issues than artefacts with male centred viewpoints. All in all it is about how meaning is visually realized and manifested, and what kind of gendered power relations these images actually represent. Even if you watch the simple 'Milka' commercials on the Slovenian National Television, you can see how sappy a woman as a mother is depicted, also associated with a desperate, depressive housewife only encouraged and kept alive by her children who bring her a chocolate. There was also a related billboard ad, where even the husband together with the children brought chocolate to her bed when she was waking up in the morning. Somehow, if you consider this in terms

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of ranks within the family, the low status of a woman in the structure becomes obvious and the image is to pity. Well, maybe the 'Milka' chocolate example is a way too plain and tells even more, also within the Slovenian post-socialist context, but this is the status quo of gendered image constructions in advertisements and elsewhere.

How do you see future constructions of the 'female' gender in media?

Donna Haraway declares: "Feminist concerns are inside of technology, not a rhetorical overlay. We're talking about cohabitation: between different sciences and forms of culture, between organisms and machines. I think the issues that really matter — who lives, who dies, and at what price — these political questions are embodied in technoculture. They can't be got at in any

other way."⁶ Therefore, if history repeats itself, representing realities enhanced by digital technology, the female body and its gender politics serve as an artificial fantasy supporting a male society, even having been created by male hands out of male minds. This dichotomy — enforced by economy — has an impact on further generations of future societies and future cultures, as the digital era seems to be never-ending. Images support societies and their cultures, but images also give references to societies and their cultures since we are living in a media and multi-mediated society. Regarding media and their outcome as social processes, rather than only mechanical devices, media are often implicated as a major influence over changing cultural values and social practices in the globalised world. Media can provide reasons for acts, processes, ideas and results, and their mediation

can be expressed in social, political, economic, moral and cultural issues of societal significance, such as identity, gender and power. These media results are forced and supported by economy and the market production, supporting and stabilizing the traditional, ancient dyadic image system of male and female and its politics of the sexes by excluding the term gender and possible drafts of a future third sex towards a non-gendered society.

Miha Horvat