

**THE FEMALE BODY IN CONFLICT:
U.S. AND EUROPEAN FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART 1963-1979,
CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBACH**

by

KATHLEEN WENTRACK

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2006

UMI Number: 3205456

Copyright 2006 by
Wentrack, Kathleen

All rights reserved.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3205456

Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2006

KATHLEEN WENTRACK

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Professor Anna Chave

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Professor Patricia Mainardi

Date

Executive Officer

Professor Sally Webster

Professor Rose-Carol Long

Professor Marga van Mechelen

Supervision Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT**THE FEMALE BODY IN CONFLICT:
U.S. AND EUROPEAN FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART 1963-1979,
CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBACH**

By

Kathleen Wentrack

Advisor: Professor Anna Chave

This dissertation examines the work of Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach as case studies in a cross-cultural examination of feminist performance art of the late 1960s and 1970s. It explores the second wave women's movements in the United States, Austria, and Germany to contextualize the development of each artist's work. To facilitate such an examination, selected works are analyzed in four thematic areas: personal experiences, beauty and the (nude) female body, female sexuality, and myth and ritual. These topics emerged as dominant concerns in feminist performance art in the late 1960s and 1970s. The aim of this study, then, is to understand the development of these topics in early feminist performance art, to undertake the first international study on feminist performance art, and to provide detailed analyses of selected work by three significant practitioners in this medium.

Each of these artists chose the medium of performance art in which to use their own bodies to challenge patriarchal definitions of women in their respective societies. Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach developed new visual territory in which women could address their lives, question their identities, and look to the female body for inspiration. The artists presented images of women that conflicted with social norms for

women's bodies and with accepted standards of female behavior. The female body was, and continues to be, contested ground and these artists challenged traditional social, cultural, and historical assumptions about women through their work.

Due to the conflicts surrounding the use of the female body in cultural production, much of the work by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach has been insufficiently analyzed. In the dominant discourses of post-World War Two art, this important body of work has been neglected. Moreover, essentialist labeling has minimized the scholarly attention received by feminist performance art of the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, it is the aim of this dissertation, through the chosen examples of work by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach to increase the knowledge of their work, of feminist performance art, of significant themes in feminist performance, and of feminism in the United States, Austria, and Germany.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Professor Anna Chave, my Committee Chair and advisor, for her commitment and painstakingly close reading of my work. She provided guidance and opportunity for growth that I will take with me into all my scholarly pursuits. Professor Sally Webster brought a sense of overview to my project, always providing constructive criticism and practical advice. Professor Rose-Carol Long offered insight and perspective to my subject, as well as guidance during my coursework at the Graduate Center. Marga van Mechelen of the University of Amsterdam provided the close and critical reading of this dissertation that I knew she would. I continue to be inspired by the work of Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach. I thank them for creating challenging feminist work and offering their time to me while I was writing this dissertation.

I would like to express my gratitude to many members of the Graduate Center community for leading me through the processes of attaining my degree, especially Lauren Frederick-Bowen who continually guides students in the right direction. I also want to thank Sandylene Wakefield, Jane Tartaro, and Judy Waldman. Financial assistance through the Graduate Center also helped facilitate my education, especially the Kristie Jayne Fellowship, and various art history program and university fellowships.

I conducted research at numerous institutions that made this dissertation possible. I would like to thank the staff at Montevideo/The Netherlands Media Art Institute and De Appel Foundation, both in Amsterdam, the wonderful librarians and archivists at the Generali Foundation in Vienna, and the helpful staff at 235 Media in Cologne. I would like to thank the Getty Research Institute for awarding me the Library Research Grant

and the librarians in their special collections. In New York, I am grateful to the staff and facilities provided by the Museum of Modern Art's Library and the New York Public Library.

Many friends and colleagues have accompanied me through the long journey of this dissertation, and many deserve a special thank you, especially Debra Wacks, Catharina Manchanda, Claire Grandpierre, Marianne Egger-Gerozissis, Anne-Marie Sprokkreeff, Margriet Schavemaker, Sands Murray-Wassink, and Betti-Sue Hertz. I would like to thank my dissertation writing group, Jennifer Farrell, Lise Kjaer, James Romaine, and especially Craig Houser who helped in invaluable ways, not only through their intelligent insights into my work, but for the emotional support at crucial times during my writing.

My family has supported me in so many ways that words cannot begin to describe my gratefulness. Dave, John, Angela, Cheryl, and Mike, you know what you mean to me. Phyllis and Thomas Hughes always provided positive words of encouragement, I am fortunate to have them as in-laws. My parents, Barbara and Joseph Wentrack, always believed in me and have supported me in ways both big and small. They willingly gave their advice, but always respected my decisions and helped in every way possible to make my dreams come true.

My sons, Tom and Dylan, put a smile on my face and joy in my heart everyday I was writing. My husband, John, was always there when I needed to work and made it all possible. To the lights of my life, Tom, Dylan, and John, I dedicate this to you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	xi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	
A CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRIA, AND WEST GERMANY	32
Introduction	32
1. Terminology of the Feminist Movements in the United States, Austria, and West Germany	33
1.1.1. Second Wave Feminism in the United States—A Brief History and Strategic Approaches	35
1.1.2. Second Wave Feminism in the United States—Ideology	42
1.1.3. Second Wave Feminism in the United States—Important Issues	45
1.2. The New Women’s Movement in Austria	50
1.2.1. The New Women’s Movement in Austria—A Brief History and Strategic Approaches	51
1.2.2. The New Women’s Movement in Austria—Ideology	60
1.2.3. The New Women’s Movement in Austria—Important Issues	63
1.3. The Autonomous Women’s Movement in West Germany	66
1.3.1. The Autonomous Women’s Movement in West Germany—A Brief History and Strategic Approaches	67
1.3.2. The Autonomous Women’s Movement in West Germany—Ideology	73
1.3.3. The Autonomous Women’s Movement in West Germany—Important Issues	76

1.4. Contrasting Environments—Summary	81
CHAPTER 2	
FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE: AN INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW	84
2.1. Performance Art—Introduction	84
2.2. Performance Art—A Contextual Overview	84
2.3. The 1970s—Feminist Performance Art and the Feminist Art Movements	98
2.3.1 Feminist Art	98
2.3.2 Feminist Performance Art	110
2.3.3 Female Contemplation and Male Aggression	115
CHAPTER 3	
THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: PERFORMANCE ART AS POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE WORK OF CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBAACH	117
3.1 Introduction	117
3.2. Celebrating the Personal	117
3.3 Carolee Schneemann: Intimate Work	120
3.4 Valie Export: The Body in a Social Context	133
3.5 Ulrike Rosenbach: Feminist Art as Artist’s Identity	141
3.6. The Role of the Personal in the Artists’ Work	148
CHAPTER 4	
BEYOND BEAUTY: THE (NUDE) FEMALE BODY IN PERFORMANCE ART BY CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBAACH	150
4.1 Introduction	150
4.2 Reviewing Beauty and the Nude	150
4.3 Early Feminist Performance Art and the Female Nude	156
4.4 Carolee Schneemann	159
4.5 Valie Export	178

4.6 Ulrike Rosenbach	187
4.7 Beyond Beauty	202
CHAPTER 5	
FEMALE SEXUALITY IN PERFORMANCE AND FILM: EROTIC, POLITICAL, CONTROLLABLE? THE CONTESTED FEMALE BODY IN THE WORK OF CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN AND VALIE EXPORT	206
5.1 Introduction	206
5.2 Distinguishing Images of Female Sexuality in Art	207
5.3 Performance Art—Performing Sexuality	209
5.4 Film: Women’s Perspectives on Erotic Pleasures	242
5.5 Concluding Remarks: The Contested Female Body	256
CHAPTER 6	
LOST STORIES, NEW HISTORIES: MYTH AND RITUAL IN THE FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART OF CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBAACH	263
6.1 Introduction	263
6.2 Context and History	264
6.3 Schneemann, Rosenbach, Export—Researching Lost Stories and Creating New Histories	269
6.4 Concluding Remarks	306
THE FEMALE BODY IN CONFLICT: CONCLUSION	308
BIBLIOGRAPHY	312
ILLUSTRATIONS	339

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1 Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz, *Three Weeks in May*, 1977. Performance at Los Angeles City Hall.
- Figure 2 Laurie Anderson, *Object/Objection/Objectivity*, 1973. Six photo and text works, each 8x10”.
- Figure 3 Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, 1976. Photograph of performance in Arnhem, Festival of Performance Art, 9 June 1977.
- Figure 4 Valie Export, *Body Sign Action*, 1970. Body action, tattoo.
- Figure 5 Gina Pane, *Le Lait Chaud (Warm Milk)*, 1972. Performance in a Paris apartment.
- Figure 6 Carolee Schneemann, *Interior Scroll*, 1975. Performance at Women Here and How Festival, East Hampton, New York.
- Figure 7 Valie Export, *Aktionhose: Genitalpanik (Action Pants: Genital Panic)*, 1968. Photograph made after action in Munich.
- Figure 8 Mary Beth Edelson, *Mourning our Lost Herstory*, 1977. Performance in the exhibition *Your 5,000 Years Are Up!* Mandeville Gallery, University of San Diego.
- Figure 9 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Glauben Sie nicht, daß ich eine Amazone bin (Don't Believe I'm an Amazon)*, 1975. Performance held at the Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf.
- Figure 10 Carolee Schneemann, *Aggression for Couples*, 1971-72.
- Figure 11 Carolee Schneemann, *Aggression for Couples*, 1971-72.
- Figure 12 Carolee Schneemann, *Aggression for Couples*, 1971-72.
- Figure 13 Carolee Schneemann, *Aggression for Couples*, 1971-72.
- Figure 14 Carolee Schneemann, *Aggression for Couples*, 1971-72.
- Figure 15 Carolee Schneemann, *Aggression for Couples*, 1971-72.
- Figure 16 Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, 1977. The Book Box, edition of 151, 10x14x9.5cm.

- Figure 17 Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, 1977. Image card number 41.
- Figure 18 Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, 1977. Image card number 39.
- Figure 19 Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, 1977. Image card number 77.
- Figure 20 Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, 1977. Image card number 92.
- Figure 21 Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, 1977. Image card number 123.
- Figure 22 Valie Export, *Smart Export*, 1968/1970.
- Figure 23 Valie Export, *Identitätstransfer (Identity Transfer)*, 1968.
- Figure 24 Valie Export, *Identitätstransfer I (Identity Transfer I)*, 1968.
- Figure 25 Valie Export, *Homometer I*, 1973. Performance on the Belgian coast.
- Figure 26 Valie Export, *Homometer II*, 1976. Street action in Vienna.
- Figure 27 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Einwicklung mit Julia (Bandage with Julia)*, 1972.
- Figure 28 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Frauenkultur—Kontaktversuch (Women's Culture—Try to Contact)*, 1977. Performance held at the Stichting Amazone, Amsterdam in 1978.
- Figure 29 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Meine Macht ist meine Ohnmacht (To Have No Power is to Have Power)*, 1978. Performance held at the Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf.
- Figure 30 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Meine Macht ist meine Ohnmacht (To Have No Power is to Have Power)*, 1978. Performance held at the Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf.
- Figure 31 Carolee Schneemann, *Eye/Body—Thirty-Six Transformative Actions for Camera*, 1963.
- Figure 32 Carolee Schneemann, *Eye/Body—Thirty-Six Transformative Actions for Camera*, 1963.

- Figure 33 Carolee Schneemann, *Up To and Including Her Limits*, 1974. Performance photograph.
- Figure 34 Carolee Schneemann, *Up To and Including Her Limits*, 1974. Installation, recreated for The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.
- Figure 35 Carolee Schneemann, *Forbidden Actions—Museums, No. 1*, 1977. Silkscreen.
- Figure 36 Carolee Schneemann, *Forbidden Actions—Museums, No. 2*, 1977. Silkscreen.
- Figure 37 Export, *Tapp- und Tastkino (Tap and Touch Cinema)*, 1968. Performance on the streets of Munich.
- Figure 38 Valie Export, *Eros/ion*, 1971. Performance at Electronic Cinema, Amsterdam.
- Figure 39 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Reflexionen über die Geburt der Venus (Reflections on the Birth of Venus)*, 1976. Photograph from a performance in Los Angeles.
- Figure 40 Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, c.1486.
- Figure 41 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Reflexionen über die Geburt der Venus (Reflections on the Birth of Venus)*, 1976. Shell object for performance.
- Figure 42 Ulrike Rosenbach, *California Girls*, 1976.
- Figure 43 Ulrike Rosenbach, *California Girls*, 1976.
- Figure 44 Ulrike Rosenbach, *VENUSVISION*. Fur coat window display, Cologne, mid-1970s.
- Figure 45 Ulrike Rosenbach, *VENUSVISION*. Wine bottle found in grocery store in Valencia, California, 1975-76.
- Figure 46 Venus line of lingerie by Triumph, Germany.
- Figure 47 Carravagio, *Medusa*, after 1590.
- Figure 48 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Venusdepression (Venus Depression)*, 1977. Performance at the Pallazzo Strozzi, Florence.
- Figure 49 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Venusdepression (Venus Depression)*, 1977. Performance at the Pallazzo Strozzi, Florence.

- Figure 50 Sandro Botticelli, *The Story of Nastagio degli Onesti*, 1483.
- Figure 51 Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538.
- Figure 52 Alessandro Allori, *Venus and Cupid*, 1543-44.
- Figure 53 Jacopo Tintoretto, *Venus and Adonis*, 1543-44.
- Figure 54 Valie Export, *Tapp- und Tastkino (Tap and Touch Cinema)*, 1968. Performance on the streets of Munich.
- Figure 55 Valie Export, *Aktionhose: Genitalpanik (Action Pants: Genital Panic)*, 1968. Photograph from 1969 for a poster action. This was a repeated poster action in 1994 on the occasion of the exhibition “GEWALT/ Geschäfte” at the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Künste Berlin.
- Figure 56 Carolee Schneemann, *Interior Scroll*, 1975. Performance at Women Here and How Festival, East Hampton, New York.
- Figure 57 Carolee Schneemann, *Interior Scroll*, 1975. Performance at Women Here and How Festival, East Hampton, New York. Box with paper scroll, 50x30x10”.
- Figure 58 Barbara Hammer, *Multiple Orgasm*, 1976. 16mm film, color, silent.
- Figure 59 Hannah Wilke, *Pink Champagne*, 1975. Latex.
- Figure 60 Judy Chicago, *Red Flag*, 1971. Photograph.
- Figure 61 Catherine Elwes, *Menstruation*, 1979. Performance at Slade School of Art, London.
- Figure 62 Monica Sjöö, *God Giving Birth*, 1968.
- Figure 63 Frans Beelen, *Cyclus*, 1977. Terracotta.
- Figure 64 Carolee Schneemann, *Fuses*, 1964-67. Film still.
- Figure 65 Carolee Schneemann, *Fuses*, 1964-67. Film strip.
- Figure 66 Valie Export, *Mann & Frau & Animal (Man & Woman & Animal)*, 1973. 16mm, film stills, performance for camera.
- Figure 67 Carolee Schneemann, *Unexpectedly Research*, 1992. Images made and performed, 1962-82, 90x51 inches. Laser prints on board with text.

- Figure 68 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen* (*Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*), 1976-77. Performance at Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen.
- Figure 69 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen* (*Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*), 1976-77. Performance at Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen.
- Figure 70 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Glauben Sie nicht, daß ich eine Amazone bin* (*Don't Believe I'm an Amazon*), 1975. Target with reproduction of Stefan Lochner's *Madonna im Rosenhag*.
- Figure 71 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Glauben Sie nicht, daß ich eine Amazone bin* (*Don't Believe I'm an Amazon*), 1975. Video stills from performance.
- Figure 72 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Meine Verwandlung ist meine Befreiung* (*My Transformation is My Liberation*), 1978. Performance for the "Forum Musik Bremen" at the Bremen Cathedral, Bremen.
- Figure 73 Ulrike Rosenbach, *Meine Verwandlung ist meine Befreiung* (*My Transformation is My Liberation*), 1978. Performance for the "Forum Musik Bremen" at the Bremen Cathedral, Bremen.
- Figure 74 Valie Export, *Delta. Ein Stück* (*Delta. A Piece*), 1977. First performed at "Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977," Berlin.
- Figure 75 Valie Export, *Delta. Ein Stück* (*Delta. A Piece*), 1977. First performed at "Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977," Berlin.

INTRODUCTION

THE FEMALE BODY IN CONFLICT: U.S. AND EUROPEAN FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART 1963-1979, CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBACH

It is not the quality of our femaleness that is inferior, but the quality of a society that has produced such a viewpoint. To deny one's sex is to deny a large part of where art comes from. I do not think it is possible to make important or even communicable art without some strong sense of source and self on one hand and some strong sense of audience and communication on the other.¹

—Lucy Lippard (1975)

The 1960s and 1970s work of three feminist performance artists—Carolee Schneemann (United States, b. 1939), Valie Export (Austria, b. 1940), and Ulrike Rosenbach (Germany, b.1943)—will be examined in relation to one another to elucidate differences and parallels between their art practices and between the formulation of feminist issues in their respective countries. The examination of the performance works of these artists will illustrate that they expanded the vocabulary of not only feminist art but of performance art as well. Moreover, Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach presented alternative paradigms of the female body, which were often in conflict with traditional representations of women and their bodies. I structured this dissertation to analyze the work of these three artists through the four different yet overlapping lenses of personal experience, of beauty and the (nude) female body, of female sexuality, and of myth and ritual. Investigating the works of artists from three different countries within this

¹ Lucy Lippard, “The Women Artists’ Movement—What Next?” in: *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women’s Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976), 148.

framework will help to demonstrate differences between feminist art practice in the United States, Austria, and Germany.

Background

My long-standing interest in contemporary feminist art practice and performance art initiated my research in this area, but it was also the lack of scholarly work on feminist performance art of the 1960s and 1970s that prompted my examination of this genre by women internationally.² In addition, for many years the work of Carolee Schneemann held a particular attraction for me, and I felt that her contributions to the areas of contemporary art in general and performance art in particular were seriously undervalued. The manner in which she unabashedly used her body in her performances and the way in which she expressed her creativity through her body brought her work both awe and disparagement. This paradox intrigued me.

In 2001, I wrote the catalogue essay for an exhibition of Schneemann's work in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in conjunction with the work of Sands Murray-Wassink, a young, gay, American artist based in Amsterdam whose main inspiration at the time was feminist art.³ This prompted me to further examine Schneemann's performance work and an international context for her practice. I found that a number of artists were creating

² By "feminist art," I mean work by, typically, female artists whose intent is to expose the conditions of women's lives and to alter the prejudices against women in art and society. "Performance art" refers most often to visual artists (rather than actors) performing in front of a live audience in any location, sometimes with audience participation. Such performances, which are infrequently repeated, can include text, music, and various objects (theatrical-like props were avoided). Performances executed in private may also be recorded as performance art. In Europe, "actions" or "action art" was initially preferred to the term "performance art."

³ *Double Trouble: Carolee Schneemann and Sands Murray-Wassink* (Rotterdam and Amsterdam: Cokkie Snoei Gallery, 2001).

feminist performance pieces during the 1960s and 1970s throughout Europe yet no scholarly study or exhibition had been devoted to an international analysis of this area. A number of books and exhibitions since 1980 (to be discussed later in this introduction) focused on performance, or included it as part of the project, but none had specifically addressed the feminist manifestation of the medium in an international context. I had to question why this was the case as many of these women artists developed unique and challenging works.

My research led me to believe that much feminist art of the 1960s and 1970s (what is often considered the first phase of feminist art) has been underappreciated due to later charges of essentialism. In the 1980s, a greater emphasis on theory defined art historical and feminist art discourses. Theoretical issues in both the United States and Europe were newly informed by French poststructuralist thought.⁴ This meant a greater concern with codes, symbols, and structures of representation and how these effected both art making and interpretation. The disparagement of work by many feminist artists of the 1960s and 1970s followed as favor fell on the more theoretically-informed work of the 1980s. Not only were ties to earlier feminist art and the new ground it established for later artists overlooked, but this early work was labeled essentialist.

In this context, essentialism can be defined as an ideology which argues that women possess an innate essence or female nature whose elements can be emphasized for purposes of validating female attributes and experience. Feminist art, especially performance art, which used the female body as a tool to analyze the social and cultural roles of women, as well as to celebrate women and their bodies, came to be regarded by

⁴ Some of the earliest theoretical debates from a feminist perspective began in England with the work of Griselda Pollock, Roszika Parker, and Laura Mulvey, however.

numerous critics in and since the 1980s as simplistic, naïve, essentialist, and notably in conflict with contemporary theoretical positions.⁵ The charge of essentialism was even more apt to be applied to feminist performance art from this period, as women's bodies most often occupied a role as both the subject matter and the chosen material with which to work. As a result, much feminist performance art from the 1960s and 1970s has been insufficiently analyzed or omitted from exhibitions and histories of post-war art. This dissertation aims to rectify this situation by examining feminist performance art in a comparative international context, specifically the United States and Europe.

An international study on feminist performance art in the United States and Europe is important because my research revealed that the relationship between feminism and art manifested itself quite differently in Europe compared with the United States where feminist practices emerged sooner. Relative to Europe, the United States had more galleries, organizations, and magazines showing and supporting feminist work by the mid-1970s. Many early European feminists did not consider that making art afforded sufficient possibility for political action. As the German art historian Anette Kubitzka stated in 1996,

In contrast to the situation in the United States, where the feminist movement was from the very beginning also a cultural movement, art by women has not become an integral part of the feminist movements in European countries, with the limited exception of Great Britain.⁶

⁵ For example, Pollock and Parker were among the first feminist art historians to critique 1970s work and its putatively essentializing elements. They will be discussed below.

⁶ Anette Kubitzka, "Rereading the Reading of *The Dinner Party* in Europe," *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, ed. Amelia Jones (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 151. This essay is the basis of Kubitzka's book: *Die Kunst, das Loch, die Frau: Feministische Kontroversen um Judy Chicagos »Dinner Party«*, (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1994). For a related perspective on feminist art as political strategy, see: Hanneke Dantuma and Marlite Halbertsma, "Feministische kanttekeningen bij de dokumenta 6," *Museumjournaal* 22, no. 5 (October 1977): 195-202.

Twenty years earlier Lucy Lippard, one of the most prominent American feminist art critics of the 1970s, similarly observed, “One does not call oneself a feminist in polite art society in Europe unless one wants to be ridiculed or ignored.”⁷ It appeared that being a feminist was incompatible with having a career as an artist, as a French group of women artists noted: “To paint or to fight—that appeared to be the alternative of the year 1968.”⁸ Within the political left in many European countries, art was sometimes regarded as a bourgeois activity and, as such, was not seen as a political tool for feminists. Moreover, the climate for political art in Europe was framed by a tradition of Marxist thought which placed the proletariat’s struggle before that of women. Despite this invidious climate, I found that numerous women artists in Europe were producing feminist work in the 1960s and 1970s and, more specifically, were drawn to the action-based art of performance as a potential vehicle of protest and political change.⁹

My initial investigations opened up numerous questions and potential routes for further research and led me to the work of three artists. Carolee Schneemann from the United States, Valie Export from Austria, and Ulrike Rosenbach from Germany were mentioned in the literature on performance art, yet existing descriptions and analyses of their work were insufficient. Their frequent appearance in the performance art literature

⁷ Lippard, “The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: Women’s Body Art,” *Art in America*, vol. 64, no. 3 (May-June, 1976): 75.

⁸ “Malen oder Kämpfen—dies schien die Alternative des Jahres 1968 zu sein.” *Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauen in der Kunst (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst, 1977), 288. Quoted in Kubitza, “Rereading the Reading of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” 151-2, the translation is Kubitza’s. The members of this French group of artists included Claudette Brun, Colette Deble, Françoise Eliet, Monique Frydman, Michèle Herry, and Christine Maurice.

⁹ Video also became an important medium for feminist artists. Not only could video be used as an element in a performance but it could record the event as well.

and participation in international exhibitions indicated that they were important figures but they were rarely discussed in major surveys on art or in modern and contemporary art books.¹⁰ These books are often used to teach the next generation of artists, art historians, and the general public. Moreover, existing studies of their work lacked a proper contextualization in regards to women's movements and the international aspect of feminist performance art, even though all three artists executed performance art works in international venues and each lived abroad for periods of time in their lives. Due to these circumstances, it was clear that Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach would be excellent case studies, but also each artist represented the forefront of feminist performance art in her own country as each challenged accepted notions of female identities and bodies during the late 1960s and the 1970s.¹¹

The work of Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach undermined culturally sanctioned female behavior. The appearance and function of women's bodies in feminist

¹⁰ For example, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, ed. Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin Buchloh (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004); David Hopkins, *After Modern Art, 1945-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); H. Harvard Arnason, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1986); or Sam Hunter and John Jacobus, *Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* (New York, H.N. Abrams, 1985).

¹¹ Artists from other European countries were not selected for a variety of reasons. For example, in England, more research has been conducted on the relationship between the women's movement and feminist art. Therefore, different country examples were chosen. See: Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-85* (London: Pandora, 1987). While there have been some studies and exhibitions in the United States as well, the U.S. is often regarded as the standard and the country that is most often compared with others in regards to both feminist art and the second wave women's movements. Hence, I included the U.S. via the work of Carolee Schneemann (which is not to state that her work is representative of all feminist performance art in the U.S.). Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms "feminist art" and "feminism" not to imply that there is one type of either, rather we can only speak of feminisms and the plurality of feminist art production.

performance art, typified by their work, often conflicted with social norms and with traditional images of women in art. Their work presented a contentious female body.

Introduction to the Artists' Work and Relevant Literature

Active before the advent of 1970s feminism, Carolee Schneemann was a groundbreaking figure for feminist art, employing her own body to confront issues of female sexuality and pleasure. Schneemann arrived in New York City in 1961 after studying painting at Bard College and the University of Illinois. Schneemann's early paintings and constructions exhibited a tactile, physical quality, and included boxes with mirrors, lights, and moving parts. She quickly became involved with the avant-garde scene in New York through her work with dance and Happenings. In 1963 she worked with the Judson Dance Theater and created her first performance, *Eye/Body—Thirty-Six Transformative Actions for Camera*. She gained notoriety in the art world the following year with *Meat Joy* (1964), a group piece performed in New York, London, and Paris. She began making films by the mid-1960s and other solo performance pieces. After several years in London, she returned to an active feminist art movement in New York in 1973. That climate was evident with Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* (1975), which began with research into symbols of ancient civilizations and goddess imagery, emphasizing female sexuality as a source for creativity—a dominant theme in her oeuvre.

While Schneemann's iconic works—*Eye/Body*, *Meat Joy*, and *Interior Scroll*—are typically selected for exhibitions, and the artist has published several books—*Parts of a Body House Book* (1972), *Cézanne, She was a Great Painter* (1975), *More Than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings* (1979) and *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays*,

Interviews, Projects (2002)—the variety and depth of her output is rarely examined.¹²

While these typical examples of Schneemann's work are frequently included in a variety of publications, the most important books on her work are her own. The only major retrospective she has received was held at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York which produced a small catalogue.¹³ As evidence of the continued undervaluation of Schneemann's work, this institution often produces larger catalogues, and one might question why Schneemann's exhibition received such a limited publication.

Schneemann's work was pivotal not only to the development of feminist art, but to non-feminist work by both men and women. The audacity with which she used her body and challenged taboos of western culture has been influential to contemporary art generally, yet she has not received her due. As an anonymous "chief curator" of a "major American museum" reported in a letter to the art historian Kristine Stiles, when the latter proposed a major retrospective of Schneemann's work, "'In the case of Carolee Schneemann,' he responded 'we were compelled by the case that *you* ([Stiles] emphasis) made but, while she may be the stem, we felt that our audience would be better served by the apple.'" ¹⁴

¹² Carolee Schneemann, *Parts of a Body House Book* (Cullompton, U.K.: Beau Geste Press, 1972); *Cézanne: She was a Great Painter* (New Paltz, NY: Tresspuss Press, 1975); *More than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings* (New Paltz, New York: Documentext, 1979); and *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002).

¹³ Dan Cameron, et al., *Carolee Schneemann: Up To and Including Her Limits* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996).

¹⁴ Kristine Stiles, "Schlagt Auf: The Problem with Carolee Schneemann's Painting," in *Carolee Schneemann: Up To and Including Her Limits*, 20-1. Stiles stated in a note that the name of the curator and museum must remain anonymous. It is also worth noting that at the end of the essay, Stiles reports that "a large section of this essay was edited out by the New Museum because it felt that the content (which named names in describing how Schneemann's work has been appropriated inauthentically by artists and critics) was not appropriate for this exhibition catalogue." Stiles, "Schlagt Auf: The Problem with Carolee Schneemann's Painting," 24. Schneemann's work, and the writing around it, is repeatedly censored. See Chapter 5.

This is typical of the treatment that Schneemann's work receives; her importance is acknowledged but few are willing to support it. This project will help explain the significance of her work and discuss pieces which have never before been analyzed.

Born Waltraud Lehner in Linz, Austria, Valie Export was schooled in a convent until the age of fourteen and later studied applied art in that city. After moving to Vienna in 1960, she studied design at the Höhere Bundeslehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Textilindustrie until 1964. Over the next couple of years she began to work with film and became a founding member of the Austrian Filmmakers Cooperative. By 1966 she adopted the name VALIE EXPORT, with her own logo, as both brand and concept.¹⁵ Her work at that time already contained an undeniable feminist content, with a focus on how images, both historical and from the mass media, shaped women's identities. In 1968 she made her first performance with *Tapp und Tastkino* (*Tap and Touch Cinema*), and she continued through the 1970s to work with film, photography, video, and performance art. In the 1980s she spent intermittent periods as a guest professor at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee (1983-85) and at the San Francisco Art Institute (1987-88). She currently holds a professorship in Media and Performance at the Kunsthochschule für Medien in Cologne.

Export's writings address her analysis of feminism and women's role in media, and include: "Woman's Art: Ein Manifest" (1972), "Feministischer Aktionismus. Aspekte" (1980), *Das Reale und sein Double: Der Körper* (1987), and "Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality" (1991).¹⁶ While scholarly attention to her in U.S.

¹⁵ At the time she stipulated that her name be written in all capital letters. See Chapter 3.

¹⁶ Valie Export, "Woman's Art: A Manifesto," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles

publications has been minimal, Export's film work was the focus of Roswitha Mueller's *Valie Export: Fragments of the Imagination* (1994), and Export had a small but representative retrospective at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia (2000).¹⁷ Anita Prammer's monograph on Export, *Valie Export: Eine multimediale Künstlerin* (1988) provides some descriptions of the artist's performance works, but often details are missing. Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger's book *Valie Export und Elfriede Jelinek im Spiegel der Presse: zur Rezeption der feministischen Avantgarde Österreichs* (1992) offered potential but focused solely on the reception of Export's films in Austria (and Jelinek's writing). "Split, Reality: Valie Export" was a major exhibition of the artist's work in 1997 at the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig in Vienna and produced a large catalogue listing almost all of her work in a timeline inclusive of photographs. Unfortunately, few details on the documented performances are provided.

Ulrike Rosenbach has received minor scholarly attention in both the United States and Europe. Her performance art work during the 1970s manipulated traditional representations of women in order to undermine stereotypes, often emphasizing history

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 755-6, originally published as "Woman's Art: Ein Manifest," *Neues Forum*, no. 228 (January 1972): 47; "Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality," *Jam*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July 1991): 7-13; "The Real and its Double: The Body," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, no. 11/1 (Fall/Winter 1988-89): 3-27, the original German published as *Das Reale und sein Double: Der Körper* (Bern: G.J. Lischka, 1987), and "Aspects of Feminist Actionism," *New German Critique* 47 (Spring/Summer 1989): 69-92, originally published in German as "Feministischer Aktionismus. Aspekte," in *Frauen in der Kunst*, ed. Gisliind Nabakowski, Helke Sander, and Peter Gorsen (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), 139-76.

¹⁷ Roswitha Mueller, *Valie Export: Fragments of the Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) and Robert Fleck, et al., *Ob/De+Con(Struction)* (Philadelphia: Moore College of Art and Design, 2000). Other significant publications on Export include: Anita Prammer, *Valie Export: Eine multimediale Künstlerin* (Vienna: Weiner Frauenverlag, 1988) and Export, *Split, Reality: Valie Export* (Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig and Springer, 1997).

and myth. Born in Bad Salzdetfurth, Germany, she studied in the sculpture department of the Staatliche Akademie für Bildende Kunst in Düsseldorf from 1964 to 1969, where she was a student of Joseph Beuys, whose ritualistic art practices would have a meaningful effect on her work. By 1972 Rosenbach was working with video and performance, which would become the main outlets for her feminist positions. During the 1970s she maintained contact with American feminists including Lucy Lippard who would later write a catalogue essay on Rosenbach's work. Rosenbach also accompanied Beuys to a "feminist breakfast" organized by Lippard at the Stanford Hotel in 1974.¹⁸ From Rosenbach's experiences in New York in 1974, she explained how she felt that the avant-garde art scene overlapped with the feminist art scene, an interaction she felt was missing from the art world in Germany. In 1975 Rosenbach went to Los Angeles, on a residency, teaching video and feminist art at the California Institute of Arts in Valencia, filling the vacancy left by Judy Chicago. After her contact with American feminist artists, she established the Schule für Kreativen Feminismus (The School for Creative Feminism) in Cologne the following year. She would continue throughout the decade to work in both video and performance.

Rosenbach's work was often praised and presented by American and European art professionals in the 1970s. The artist performed in New York at 112 Greene Street in 1974, at the Biennale des Jeunes in Paris in 1975, at the Los Angeles Institute for Contemporary Art in 1976, at De Appel Foundation in Amsterdam in 1976, at the "Künstlerinnen International" exhibition in Berlin in 1977, and at the "Feministische Kunst Internationaal" exhibition in Amsterdam in 1978. Several solo exhibitions of

¹⁸ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

Rosenbach's work have included catalogues in German or English, such as the shows at the Neue Galerie in Aachen in 1976, at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston in 1983, and at York University in Toronto in 1989, but these offer only minimal critical analysis.¹⁹ Moreover, none of these publications address the artist's work in an international women's movement or feminist art context. Rosenbach was included in one of the earliest books on performance art, *Performance by Artists*, in 1979 written by A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale, which had her image on the cover, but this too provides minimal descriptions and little analysis of her work.²⁰ The most comprehensive publication on her 1970s performances is her self-published catalogue, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, Feministische Kunst* (1982).²¹

Though their backgrounds and development as artists differed, Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach share a number of commonalities. Each artist was responding to the male-dominated artistic environments that their cultures presented at the dawn of the second wave women's movements. Schneemann moved to New York at a time when the legacy of Abstract Expressionism was still dominant in the art community, though experiments with Happenings were beginning. Export challenged the tradition of the

¹⁹ These catalogues include: *Ulrike Rosenbach: Foto, Video, Aktion* (Aachen: Stadt Aachen, Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig, 1976); Dorine Mignot, *Ulrike Rosenbach* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1980); Lucy Lippard, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Video and Performance Art* (Boston: ICA, 1983); and see also Claudia Lupri, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Video, Performance, Installation, 1972-1989* (Toronto: York University, 1989). A book was just released on the artist's work but was not yet available in the U.S.: Gerhard Glüher, *Ulrike Rosenbach, Wege zur Medienkunst 1972-2002* (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2005).

²⁰ *Performance by Artists*, ed. A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1979).

²¹ Ulrike Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, Feministische Kunst* (Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982).

Viennese Actionists, yet she is often wrongly associated with this group of male artists.²² While Export and the Actionists do share an interest in the critique of cultural taboos, her performance art reproved the Actionists for their machismo, their embrace of conventional gender roles, and their degradation of the female body. In the 1960s Rosenbach was a student of Joseph Beuys, a figure whose mythology cast a strong shadow over artists working with performance in West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. As part of this response to the artistic environment, Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach took risks with their bodies in their work. They interrogated traditional images of women in art as well as accepted norms of female behavior. Frustrated with the status quo, each of these artists sought an artistic community that would support women's work with a feminist perspective. They often tried to connect with other female artists in similar circumstances.

By the late 1960s Schneemann had become dissatisfied with the New York art world and the politics of the United States especially due to the Vietnam War; she traveled to Europe and settled in London for several years (1969-73). Because Export felt isolated in Austria, due to its lack of a feminist art movement, she traveled when possible to meet others with similar interests.²³ When in London in 1970, Export visited

²² While some may dispute Export's involvement with the Viennese Actionists, as far as I have been able to ascertain, she has never performed with them. Benjamin Buchloh acknowledges that Export's *Tapp und Tastkino* (1968) "appears as a paradigmatic reversal of almost all the principles of Viennese Actionism," yet he still refers to her as an Actionist, ignoring any feminist context to her work. See: *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, ed. Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin Buchloh (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 469.

²³ Valie Export, interview by author, 9 April 2005, New York. During this interview Export expressed the isolation she felt in Austria at the beginning of her career saying that the only contact she had with other feminist artists was limited to the trips she was able to take and to some correspondence. In terms of images of work by those with feminist interests, she stated that there was almost nothing available to her.

Schneemann at home and Schneemann later described their exchange: “Together our purposes were confirmed—the potentiality of the destabilizing powers of the female body in our own hands.”²⁴ Both artists understood the impact of using their own nude bodies in a contentious way and turned to performance art to strengthen the political messages of their work. After this meeting, Export began planning an exhibition of feminist art in Vienna, and organized the first such show there in 1975 entitled “Magna. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität” (“Magna. Feminism: Art and Creativity”).²⁵ Both Schneemann and Rosenbach participated in this event.

A number of European feminist performance artists looked to the United States for support due to the organized feminist art movements active there by the mid-1970s. For example, Rosenbach contacted Lippard and members of Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) in New York in 1970. She sought out California-based performance artists during a 1975 visit, and the following year she performed *Reflexionen über die Geburt der Venus (Reflections on the Birth of Venus)* at the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles. In addition, Rosenbach and Export participated in several of the same exhibitions and performance venues, such as Documenta 6 in Kassel in 1977 and solo shows at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1980. The latter show produced individual catalogues for each of their works, but they were bound together in one volume.

²⁴ Carolee Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002), 97.

²⁵ Valie Export, *Magna. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität* (Vienna: Galerie nächst St. Stephan, 1975).

Even without support structures and with limited women's art communities, some European feminist artists did form contacts among themselves and with American colleagues. It is these types of connections and the commonalities I identified among these artists that make them excellent candidates as case studies. A consideration of the general literature confirms the inadequate scholarly attention to feminist performance art and to the work of Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach.

General Literature

Feminist performance art has received relatively minor attention in the literature. The first general study on performance art, Roselee Goldberg's *Performance: Live Art, 1909 to the Present* (1979) provides a cursory discussion of feminist practices. Henry Sayre's *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970* (1989) devotes two chapters to feminist performance art, but lacks any cross-cultural analysis. In "Feminist Performance Art: Performing, Discovering, Transforming Ourselves" (1994), Josephine Withers briefly outlines the origins of performance art in the United States, and differentiates feminist performance art activity on the East and West coasts. More theoretically informed studies concerned with feminist performance art include Rebecca Schneider's *The Explicit Body in Performance* and Amelia Jones' *Body Art: Performing the Subject*.²⁶ Schneider considers the precedents and the theoretical background that

²⁶ Roselee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art, 1909 to the Present* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1979); Henry Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Josephine Withers, "Feminist Performance Art: Performing, Discovering, Transforming Ourselves," in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994); Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (London: Routledge, 1997); and Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

helped form feminist performance art, using examples from 1963 to 1992 with a focus on issues of desire in representation, but her study is limited to U.S.-based artists. Jones' analysis of the second half of the twentieth century posits body art as representing a major shift from the centered, Cartesian subject of modernism to the decentered subject of postmodernism.²⁷ None of these texts effectively addresses the relationship between feminist performance art in the United States and Europe, nor do they consider the work in the context of the second wave women's movements.

Scholarship on feminist performance art in Europe is especially insufficient. An early European publication, Lea Vergine's *Il Corpo Come Linguaggio (La "Body-art" e Storie simili)* (1974), briefly discussed the development of performance art with an emphasis on European artists, but no attention was given to feminist manifestations of this medium.²⁸ Elisabeth Jappe's *Performance, Ritual, Prozess: Handbuch der Aktionskunst in Europa* (1993) is the most comprehensive European publication on performance to date, yet devotes only three pages to feminist works. Another important publication on performance art is *Art Action, 1958-1998*, edited by Richard Martel.²⁹ This

²⁷ While many of the examples Jones discussed are American, feminist performance artists, Jones juxtaposes with them a number of European and male practitioners to expand the scope of her thesis. The term "body art," more inclusive than "performance art," was often used by writers in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, the author argues that feminist body art effectively challenges traditional art history and the masculine assumptions embedded in its practice.

²⁸ Lea Vergine, *Il Corpo Come Linguaggio (La "Body-art" e Storie simili)* (Milan: Giampaolo Prearo Editore, 1974). This book included English translations of all the texts. A new edition was published as *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*, rev. ed. (Milan: Skira Editore, 2000), which includes a new essay at the end responding to developments since 1974 entitled "Diffused Body and Mystical Body," 269-91.

²⁹ *Art Action, 1958-1998: Happening, Fluxus, Intermédia, Zaj, Art Corporel/Body Art, Poésie Action/Action Poetry, Actionnisme Viennois, Viennese Actionism, Performance, Arte Acción, Sztuka Performance, Performans, Akció Művészet*, ed. Richard Martel (Quebec: Editions Interventions, 2001).

large and detailed compilation of essays from an international conference on performance art includes country analyses and texts on the early development of performance.

However, not one of the authors addresses feminist performance art and women practitioners in general are underrepresented. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present* (1998), curated by Zdenka Badovinac, also lacks a discussion of feminist work.³⁰ A forthcoming publication by Marga van Mechelen on the history of De Appel Foundation in Amsterdam from 1975 to 1983, a premier European center of performance art, should help shed some light on the situation in Europe during that period.³¹

³⁰ Elisabeth Jappe's *Performance, Ritual, Prozess: Handbuch der Aktionskunst in Europa* (Munich: Prestel, 1993) and Zdenka Badovinac, curator, *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present* (Ljubljana, Slovenia: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 1998).

³¹ This book will be published by De Appel Foundation in 2006 in both Dutch and English.

A number of dissertations have included feminist performance art, but their scope has been mostly confined to the U.S. See: Debra Wacks, "Subversive Humor: The Performance Art of Hannah Wilke, Eleanor Antin, and Adrian Piper" (Ph.D. diss., Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, 2003); Kathy O'Dell, "Towards a Theory of Performance Art: An Investigation of its Sites" (Ph.D. diss., Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, 1992), the basis for her book: *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art and the 1970s* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Jayne Wark, "The Radical Gesture: Feminism and Performance Art in the 1970s" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1997); and Cassie Carter, "'Woman Red in Tooth and Claw': Angry Essentialism, Abjection, and Visionary Liberation in Women's Performances" (Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 1998). None of these texts contrasts U.S. and European cases, nor do they thoroughly examine the performance work of Schneemann, Export, or Rosenbach. A few dissertations written in Europe have addressed the artists' works, but none have focused on a comparative analysis of performance art by these artists, nor has any author considered an international juxtaposition of these or other feminist performance artists. The following dissertations are worth mentioning. Brigitte Zehethofer focuses on the video output of Export and Rosenbach in "Inszenierte Körperlichkeit und das Medium Video. Analyse ausgewählter Videoarbeiten von Valie Export und Ulrike Rosenbach" (Ph.D. diss., University of Salzburg, 1991). Adeline Blanchard considers Export's work in the context of 1970s Austria in "Valie Export: le corps au féminin. Les performances et happenings dans l'Autriche des années 70" (Ph.D. diss., University of Bourgogne, 2000). Alexandra Schüssler addressed violence and obscenity in contemporary Austrian art but focused mainly on the work of Elke Krystufek and the Viennese Actionists in "Austria im Fleischnetz. Gewalt und Obszönität in österreichischer Gegenwartskunst" (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 1998). Finally, the most helpful is

Two major exhibitions in the 1990s spoke to the medium of performance art and both included extensive catalogues. *Outside the Frame, Performance and the Object: A Survey of Performance Art in the USA from 1950 to the Present* (1994), curated by Robyn Brentano and Olivia Georgia, provides the first overview of performance work in the United States. Acknowledging the interdisciplinary aspect of performance art and influences from Europe, the catalogue emphasizes the relationship between performance and the art object. The second, *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979* (1998) organized by Paul Schimmel, presents the residue of performance art—the objects and documents left behind—and is international in scope, especially Kristine Stiles’ essay “Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions.” But with few exceptions, both catalogues leave feminist performance art largely unexamined.³²

A number of exhibitions have specifically addressed feminist work, and some of these have considered performance art. In 1978, the “Feministische Kunst Internationaal” (“International Feminist Art”) exhibition at De Appel Foundation in The Netherlands focused on performance art and video work from the United States and Europe.³³ This

Anette Kubitzka’s book, *Fluxus, Flirt, Feminismus: Carolee Schneemann’s Körperkunst und die Avantgarde* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2002), based on her dissertation, which focuses on Schneemann’s work from the 1960s, especially *Eye/Body* (1963), *Meat Joy* (1964), and *Fuses* (1964-67). This book places Schneemann’s work in the contexts of Action painting, Fluxus, the Judson Dance Theater, and the cultural events of the 1960s.

³² Robyn Brentano and Olivia Georgia, *Outside the Frame, Performance and the Object: A Survey of Performance Art in the USA from 1950 to the Present* (Cleveland: Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, 1994) and Paul Schimmel, *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998).

³³ This was a two-part exhibition. The first focused on performance and video while the second, showing paintings, sculpture, prints, and photographs, opened in 1979 and traveled throughout The Netherlands. *Feministische Kunst Internationaal: performance, video, film, dokumentatie* (Amsterdam: De Appel, 1978) and *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979). Rosenbach performed at this event, and Export submitted a statement because, at the last minute, she was unable to attend and execute her work. See also Chapter 5

major public event indicated the growth of feminist networks in Europe and the dialogue between artists on both continents. The most significant American exhibition for feminist performance art was “The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance in America, 1970-1980,” held on the occasion of the Women’s Caucus for Art conference in New Orleans in 1980, and included a piece by Schneemann. In the catalogue, Moira Roth noted that a comparative study on women performance artists in the United States and Europe was necessary but, until this present study twenty-five years later, this remained to be accomplished.³⁴ “About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by 21 Women Artists” was also held in 1980 at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, but focused on British or British-based artists.³⁵ Other exhibitions which functioned as surveys on art by women—typical of the recovery effort made by feminist art historians and curators during the women’s movement in the 1970s—included a number of performances as part of the exhibition programming. For example, when the Brooklyn Museum of Art exhibited “Women Artists, 1550-1950,” Schneemann performed *Homerunmuse* (1977).³⁶ At the first European exhibition with an overview of women’s art, including feminist art, “Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977” in Berlin in 1977, Export participated with *Delta. Ein Stück (Delta. A Piece)* (1977) and Rosenbach

“Two Special Events: *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (1978-1979) and *Works and Words* (1979)” in van Mechelen’s forthcoming publication on the history of De Appel from 1975 to 1983. The author was kind enough to share parts of her manuscript with me.

³⁴ *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance in America, 1970-1980*, ed. Moira Roth (Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983).

³⁵ *About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by 21 Women Artists* (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980). This exhibition traveled in England and Ireland.

³⁶ Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists, 1550-1950* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1976). A similar type show took place in England in 1982; “The Women’s Art Show, 1550-1970” was held at Nottingham Castle Museum.

presented *Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen (Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping)* (1976-77).³⁷ While these events and related publications were important in their own right at the time, their analyses of feminist performance art of the 1960s and 1970s in general as well as of the performances presented were inadequate.

Critiques and Contributions

Until this present dissertation, no international study on feminist performance art has been conducted. As discussed in the previous section, some books and exhibitions have addressed feminist performance art, but these have focused on one country or provided limited descriptive analyses of the work. It will be my contribution to establish an international comparative framework to study feminist performance art in the contexts of the international women's movements during the late 1960s and 1970s. Thus, this dissertation will include both a comparative analysis of artists from three different countries and an overview of the international women's movements as a context for the work's development.

As a genre, feminist performance art from this period has been undervalued by art historians and critics from the 1980s onward and I believe this is due to assumptions of essentialism or the presence of some essentializing qualities without a broader understanding of the work. As the performance scholar Peggy Phelan described the situation in her detailed essay for the survey *Art and Feminism* in 2001:

As psychoanalytic and poststructuralist theory became the lingua franca of the academy in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, some feminist art and thinking of the early 1970s began to be seen as naïve,

³⁷ *Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauen in der Kunst (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977).

narcissistic, *passé*. This accusation is a curious one, for even while feminist art historians and theorists were urging a more sophisticated reading of representational codes, many were denouncing, with a breezy simplicity, the art which made possible many of their own insights.³⁸

Phelan proceeded to note that, “the claim was that such art was insufficiently savvy about the complex codes of representation that framed the female body; the work was declared ‘essentialist.’”³⁹

Others have tried to explain the misunderstanding of work labeled essentialist, such as Norma Broude and Mary Garrard who argued in their introduction to the *Power of Feminist Art* that “First-generation feminists reexamined what ‘female’ meant, not in an effort to limit it to a biological essence, but, rather, to test the culturally constructed definitions of the ‘feminine’ that they knew.”⁴⁰ Feminist artists who used their bodies and, at the same time, addressed female experiences and traditional women’s roles were criticized for supporting a universal female essence, without an appreciation for a fuller context of the work.

The German art historian Anette Kubitzka discussed the issue of essentialism in Europe in the context of the reception of Judy Chicago’s *Dinner Party* on that continent. Kubitzka points out that the *Dinner Party* was rejected by most of the art community in Europe (as well as in the United States), but especially in Great Britain and Germany

³⁸ Peggy Phelan, “Survey,” in *Art and Feminism* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 20.

³⁹ Ibid., 23. A critique of work claimed as essentialist is Judith Barry and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, “The Politics of Art-Making,” in *Feminist Art Criticism*, ed. Joanna Frueh, Cassandra Langer, and Arlene Raven (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 87-97.

⁴⁰ Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, “Introduction: Feminism and Art in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Power of Feminist Art*, 24.

where it was exhibited in the 1980s, which pushed it “into an essentialist and biological-determinist corner.”⁴¹ Kubitza summarized that,

The Dinner Party’s European reception offers a prime example of the tendency of feminist art critics during the 1980s to distance themselves from the artists who originated and developed the women’s art movement in the 1970s. The work of these artists is generally equated with an essentialist and reactionary feminism and considered obsolete.⁴²

Kubitza also addressed another concern among feminists in Europe, that any efforts towards the idea of an “essential femaleness,” or anything that appears like it, has historically been linked with fascism by European critics and artists.⁴³

In their overview of the history of British feminist art, *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women’s Movement 1970-85* (1987), Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock discussed the problems associated with the concepts of a “feminine sensibility” or a “female aesthetic” in response to an exhibition which celebrated women’s sexuality and creativity:

The positive pleasure of such a belief is the celebration of the specificity of women’s identity, life and experiences. This can, however, easily slide into an assertion of an essence of womanhood, suppressed or distorted in male society which it is the feminist project to liberate.⁴⁴

⁴¹ This was for the exhibition *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* in 1996. Kubitza, “Rereading the Reading of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” 153; see especially 159 and 163-69 for greater detail on the criticism in Great Britain and Germany.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴³ Kubitza, “Rereading the Reading of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” 153. Such concerns were also expressed by the group of French artists who exhibited in the “Künstlerinnen International” exhibition in Berlin in 1977.

⁴⁴ Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism*, 29. The British touring exhibition was titled “Womanmagic” and included Marika Tell, Monica Sjöo, and Beverly Skinner.

Feminist art that pursued such a direction was also argued against by a group presenting a paper at the Socialist Feminist National Conference in London in March 1979 which reviewed current tendencies in feminist art practice:

But in celebrating what is essentially female we may simply be reinforcing oppressive definitions of women, e.g. women as always in their separate sphere, or women as defining their identities exclusively, and narcissistically, through their bodies.⁴⁵

The German feminist Silvia Bovenschen, in her essay “Is There a Feminine Aesthetic?” (originally published in German in 1976), understood that female difference was not solely determined by biology and recognized that society also played a role in constructing women’s self-awareness. However, she stated “conscious identification with one’s sex paves the way for everything else...it determines our actions and thoughts.”⁴⁶ For Bovenschen, this included women’s approach to art.

Despite what appears to be a conflict among feminist artists and art historians between concepts of an essential femininity and a socially, culturally, and historically constructed one, Parker and Pollock correctly point out that both these positions still entail a belief that suppressed elements of women’s lives are acceptable topics in art.⁴⁷

Despite this general belief much of the work of the first generation of feminist art, which

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Cowie, Claire Johnston, Cora Kaplan, Mary Kelly, Jaqueline Rose, and Marie Yates, “Representation versus Communication,” in *No Turning Back* (London: London Women’s Press, 1981), 240. Quoted in Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism*, 29.

⁴⁶ Silvia Bovenschen, “Is There a Feminine Aesthetic?” trans. Beth Weckmueller, in *Feminist Aesthetics*, ed. Gisela Ecker (London: The Women’s Press, 1985), 33, originally published in German as “Über die Frage: Gibt es eine weibliche Ästhetik?” *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 25 (1976): 60-75.

⁴⁷ In *Essentially Speaking* Diana Fuss offered a balanced discussion of essentialism versus constructivism. She outlined that the essentialist states “the natural is *repressed* by the social” while the constructionist (the position that differences are constructed, not innate) argues that “the natural is *produced* by the social.” Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), 3.

often focused on women's bodies and experiences, has been underexamined because of essentialist labeling. Analyzing feminist work from the 1960s and 1970s solely through an essentialist lens, or dismissing it outright, means neglecting the motivations and the dynamic circumstances under which the work was produced. This dissertation also aims to rectify this history and reassert the importance of feminist performance art in the 1960s and 1970s. I therefore present an alternative thematic framework within which to read the feminist performance art of Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach. It was my desire to move away from rhetorical battles and focus on the works themselves.

Many publications on performance art lack detailed descriptions and therefore inadequate analyses of the work, and this is even more the case in regards to feminist performance art. Part of this problem stems from the ephemeral nature of the medium. Should a historian choose to write about a work after it was performed, she is left with little to go on, other than written descriptions, photographic documentation, video recordings, and artists' own descriptions. Often, those writing have not seen the work in person nor viewed a recording of it. This dissertation aims to provide detailed written descriptions and analyses of the studied works through the extensive research I conducted in archives both in the United States and Europe.

In order to best interpret the performance work by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach I attended as many exhibitions of the work as possible, I visited the repositories of their recorded performances, and studied their papers in relevant archives. In New York, I viewed taped performances and films by Schneemann and Export at Electronic Art Intermix and the Museum of Modern Art, and visited Schneemann's studio. All of Export's recorded works and papers are housed at the Generali Foundation

in Vienna where I conducted research in the summer of 2002. During that trip, I also visited 235 Media in Cologne which distributes videos of Rosenbach's recorded performances and The Netherlands Media Art Institute/Montevideo in Amsterdam which houses the archived recordings from De Appel Foundation. At Montevideo I was able to view numerous recordings of Rosenbach's work, as well as a tape of a performance by Schneemann from 1977. In addition, I received a Library Research Grant from the Getty Research Institute in 2003 to study Schneemann's papers in their special collections. Finally, I interviewed each of the artists to obtain unique information unavailable elsewhere. This cumulative research gave me the tools to provide descriptive analyses of the artists' performance pieces, an aspect which is often missing in discussions of their work.

The Thematic Approach

From my research a number of common themes emerged that crossed borders and continents. Specifically, these topics included the personal experiences of women's lives, the role of standards of beauty and the use of the nude female body, explorations of female sexuality and women's sexual experiences, and investigations of myth and ritual in women's historical and current lives. These oft appearing topics warranted further consideration due to their transnational frequency and could provide a unique framework for analyzing the artists' works. Delving more deeply into these concerns among feminist performance artists could help explain why themes repeatedly appeared and enrich the understanding of feminist art production of the period. While a thematic approach to feminist performance art is new, Moira Roth described a number of issues she considered

important among American performance artists in her essay “The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America” (1983).⁴⁸ Specifically Roth cited personal experience, activism, and ritual as important directions in American feminist performance art. Yet, a thematic approach to provide a thorough analysis of feminist performance art will only be accomplished for the first time with this dissertation.

The feminist mandate, “the personal is political,” was first coined by the activist Carol Hanisch in 1968 at the beginning of the second wave women’s movement.⁴⁹ However, Schneemann and Export were already including their personal lives and experiences as part of their work earlier in the decade. As the women’s movement strengthened during the 1970s, consciousness-raising activities intensified and taught many women to recognize the value of their personal lives which patriarchal society had suppressed. Moreover, many of women’s physical experiences had also been censored from general public view and considered taboo subject matter, including childbirth, menstruation, and rape. Many feminist performance artists integrated these types of personal experiences into their work, making them acceptable subject matter in ways which had not yet been accomplished. For example, Schneemann’s performance *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards* (1976) was based on collected statements from her friends, from her two lovers, and from her own experiences and dreams at an uncertain moment in her life when one relationship was ending and another beginning. These

⁴⁸ Roth, “The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America,” *The Amazing Decade*, 14-41.

⁴⁹ Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (New York: Dial Press, 1999), 45. See also the photograph caption on the unpaginated photograph inserts between pages 120 and 121: on the second page of photographs, the text next to an image of Hanisch reads “Carol Hanisch invented the memorable phrase ‘the personal is political,’ and came up with the idea for the Miss America Protest, the new movement’s first national action.”

statements were then incorporated into a performance in which the artist read the texts and juxtaposed them with diaristic photographs of her life.

The female nude has held a powerful position in the history of western art and culture, and has often signified beauty in art. The nude has reflected standards of appearance defined by patriarchal society; standards which have, in effect, repressed women. The nude and standards of beauty became popular issues among feminist artists, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. Many feminist performance artists chose to challenge these standards through their work. By way of example, in *Eros/ion* (1971) a nude Export rolled through broken glass and then across a sheet of white paper, recording the small cuts in her skin on the blood marked paper. This action broke the surface of the nude female body—symbol of beauty—and denied the consumption of this body by a voyeuristic male gaze.

The new women's movement brought with it an appreciation for women's sexual bodies and experiences, and the topic would be quickly embraced by feminist artists. Performance art was well suited to interrogate such topics due to the presence of the artist and her body in the work. The purpose was often to critique socially constructed norms of female sexuality, but also to present new models for sexual liberation. For instance, Schneemann, in her *Interior Scroll* (1975), outlined the contours of her nude body in broad strokes of paint, then extracted a scroll from her vagina and read a text from it about critical resistance to her work. For Schneemann, her sexual female body was a source for her creativity.

As part of the many activities of the women's movements, history and religion were reinterpreted and this included a reevaluation of pre-patriarchal and patriarchal

myth and ritual. In response many feminist performance artists devised new ritually-centered work and were inspired by a belief in ancient matriarchal cultures including the mythologies of the Great Goddess and the Earth Goddess. Others directly critiqued patriarchal rituals and the suppression of women which often accompanied such activities. This theme was taken up by Rosenbach in *Glauben Sie nicht, daß ich eine Amazone bin (Don't Believe I'm an Amazon)* (1975), in which she portrayed an Amazonian archer aiming at an image of the Madonna and Child; a paradigm of a submissive, “good” woman was thus contrasted with the Amazon, exemplifying the strong, independent woman.

The performance art work of Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach has been chosen to serve as examples of these broader thematic trends I identified among feminist performance art because all three made specifically feminist performance art during the 1960s and 1970s that cultivated the themes of personal experience, beauty and the nude body, female sexuality, and myth and ritual in the work.

* * *

Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach were all politically engaged through their work, which was informed by the dynamic cultural and political atmosphere of the late 1960s and 1970s. To understand the context in which their art flourished, an overview of the feminist movements in the United States, Austria, and Germany is provided in Chapter 1, “A Contextual Overview of the Women’s Movements in the United States, Austria, and West Germany.” While comparative research on women’s movements is minimal, some insights are drawn from the scholarly work of

sociologists, such as Mary Katzenstein, Carol Mueller, and Diane Margolis.⁵⁰ In this dissertation, the United States, Austria, and Germany are considered in terms of the history of their women's movements, the strategies employed by feminist activists, the dominant feminist ideologies, and the issues most relevant to women's struggles. The framework will establish a social and political context for feminist performance art in the respective countries which is missing from examinations of this work.

Chapter 2, "Feminist Performance Art in the U.S. and Europe: An International Overview," places the evolution of feminist performance art in the broader, international contexts of feminist art practice and performance art in the U.S. (both on the East and West coasts) and in Europe during the late 1960s and 1970s. In Europe, "actions" and "action art" were often preferred to the term "performance art" for at least two reasons. First, "performance art" was seen as too closely tied to theater and second, the word "action" expressed a more political dimension than the term "performance art," which did not enter art discourse until the 1970s. The term "body art" emerged in the late 1960s as a category which sometimes includes performance art. Performance art will be the preferred term throughout this study.

The remaining four chapters conduct close, extensive readings of individual feminist performance art works via contemporaneous recordings and written descriptions. The works discussed span the years of 1963 through 1979, following the period's political and cultural upheavals to the strong establishment of the second women's movements by the late 1970s. In addition to the performance art works from this period,

⁵⁰ *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Mary Katzenstein and Carol Mueller (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997) and Diane Margolis, "Women's Movements Around the World: Cross-Cultural Comparisons," *Gender & Society* 7, no. 3 (September 1993): 379-99.

two short films by Schneemann and Export are also examined since they specifically address concepts vital to this dissertation.

Chapter 3, “The Personal is Political: Performance Art as Political Activism in the Work of Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach,” focuses on personal experiences as the starting point for discussing the artists’ work. During the 1960s, and especially the 1970s, many women recognized that their personal lives had been undervalued and they sought ways to validate their daily activities. Within this environment many feminist artists celebrated their private experiences in their work. This chapter functions as an introduction to Schneemann’s, Export’s, and Rosenbach’s work, and as a study of the unique approaches each artist took to integrating her own life experiences into her art.

Analyses of selected examples of the artists’ work in relation to the female nude and conventions of beauty in art are presented in Chapter 4, “Beyond Beauty: The (Nude) Female Body in Performance Art by Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach.” The nude in art has traditionally been associated with not only the female body but also with norms of beauty. All three artists analyzed issues of beauty in their performance art work. When using the nude female body—their own bodies—in an art framework, Schneemann and Export engaged problems associated with the idealization of the body, while Rosenbach specifically addressed the theme of Venus, goddess of love and beauty. All three artists challenged traditional concepts of beauty and offered alternatives through their performances.

The following chapter, “Female Sexuality in Performance and Film: Erotic, Political, Controllable? The Contested Female Body in the Work of Carolee Schneemann

and Valie Export,” discusses examples of performance art by both artists that specifically engage female sexuality. This theme is to be distinguished from the themes of beauty and the nude covered in the previous chapter, as the body of work in question in Chapter 5 presents and interrogates representations specifically of female sex organs and functions, as well as of women’s sexual experiences. The work’s purpose is not only to critique socially constructed norms of female sexuality, but also to present new models for liberation.⁵¹

The area of myth and ritual is the focus of Chapter 6, “Lost Stories, New Histories: Myth and Ritual in the Feminist Performance Art of Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach,” which includes an examination of performance art pieces by the artists that were inspired by women from ancient or mythic cultures. The theme of the Great Goddess will be considered as it emerged in work of a ritualistic nature intended to provide support for women. Other work discussed in this chapter includes critiques of patriarchal rituals.

⁵¹ As Rosenbach did not directly approach this theme, her work will not be discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 1

A CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRIA, AND WEST GERMANY

We want to attempt to develop models of a utopian society within the existing one. Our own needs must find a place in this society.
–Helke Sander¹

Introduction

This chapter will investigate distinctions between the women's movements in the United States, Austria, and Germany in an effort to establish a framework of crucial ideas and issues informing the feminist art movements in each of these countries. These three locations represent the homes of the artists whose work is the focus of this dissertation: Carolee Schneemann from the United States, Valie Export from Austria, and Ulrike Rosenbach from Germany. All three of these artists traveled, performed, and exhibited throughout Europe and the United States during the 1970s. The context of the women's movements will provide a backdrop against which to compare feminist performance art by the artists in question and to examine the differences and parallels among their works.

¹ From a well-known speech by Helke Sander, a leading German feminist activist, at the twenty-third national conference of the Socialist German Students' Federation (the *Sozialistischen Deutschen Studentenbundes* or SDS) in Frankfurt. The speech generally marks the beginning of the feminist movement in West Germany. See Helke Sander, "Rede des Aktionsrates zur Befreiung der Frauen," *Frauenjahrbuch 1* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Roter Stern, 1975) 10-15. For an excerpted English translation, see: *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Altbach et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 310.

1. Terminology of the Feminist Movements in the United States, Austria, and West Germany²

Over the course of the last two centuries, the terminology denoting movements for women rights has evolved depending on the country and the political circumstances. The term “feminism” came to replace “woman movement” late in the nineteenth century; woman movement had been the most popular term in Europe, North American, Australia, India, Egypt, and some Latin American countries. When the focus of women’s struggles turned to the right to vote, “suffrage movement” was most commonly used. After the right to vote was achieved in Europe and the United States between 1906 and 1945, depending on the country, the term “suffrage” fell out of use. By the 1960s and 1970s, “feminism,” “women’s movement,” and “women’s liberation” were most commonly heard in Western countries. Of course, individual countries used terminology specific to the locale. Sometimes a qualifier, such as “second wave” or “new,” would be added to distinguish activities of the 1970s from earlier women’s movements, which are generally considered to have begun in the mid-nineteenth century and continued until women earned the right to vote in the beginning of the twentieth century. During the late 1960s and 1970s the term “second wave feminism” was the expression of choice in the U.S., while in Germany and Austria the preferred term was the “new women’s movement” (*die neue Frauenbewegung*) or, especially in Germany, the “autonomous women’s movement” (*die autonome Frauenbewegung*).³

² German reunification had not yet taken place in the period of focus: 1968-1979. Discussed events took place in West Germany, as this is where Rosenbach studied and lived, and where Export and Schneemann visited and performed.

³ For the development of terminology discussed in this paragraph, see: *Global Feminisms since 1945*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 1-2. For terminology in West Germany see: Detlef Hoffmann, et al, *Frauenalltag und Frauenbewegung 1890-1980*

Women's movements of the period discussed here generally shared a desire to alter society and to undermine the traditional suppression of women in personal, economic, political, social, and cultural spheres.⁴ Mary Katzenstein, who has researched feminist movements based on cross-national characteristics, has referred to this desire in terms of the "transformational" nature of feminist movements.⁵ While certain issues overlapped regional and national borders—for example, the struggles over equality in the workplace and home, over childcare, over fighting violence against women, and over women's roles in social and political organizations—specific differences in the movements' formations, their emphasized issues, and their demands can be identified. The following presents an overview of the second wave women's movements in the United States, Austria, and West Germany. Each country discussion is subdivided into sections that analyze the movements' history and employed strategies, the ideologies, and important issues.

(Frankfurt am Main: Historische Museum Frankfurt am Main, Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1981), 137-147.

⁴ I will use the terms women's movement, feminist movement, and feminism interchangeably to refer to second wave/new/autonomous women's movement beginning in the late 1960s. The above sentence will serve as my basic definition of the goals of the movement. The term second wave women's movement must be distinguished from the concept of a second phase of the women's *art* movement. The latter generally refers to the second generation of feminist artists in the late 1970s and 1980s.

⁵ Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, "Comparing the Feminist Movements of the United States and Western Europe: An Overview," in *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 5. See also: Diane Rothbard Margolis, "Women's Movements around the World: Cross-Cultural Comparisons," *Gender and Society* 7, no. 3 (September 1993): 379.

Most studies on feminist movements are single nation case studies; if they are comparative, the U.S. is most often compared to another Western nation. See Margolis, "Women's Movements around the World," 380-81.

1.1.1. Second Wave Feminism in the United States—A Brief History and Strategic Approaches

Political science scholars have analyzed the development of the feminist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s in the United States in terms of the political strategies that feminists and their fledgling institutions followed. An effective approach by Anne and Douglas Costain divides this period into three stages as discussed in their essay “Strategies and Tactics of the Women’s Movement in the United States: The Roles of Political Parties” (1987). These three phases form a framework for a discussion of historical developments in women’s liberation: the “formative” years (1966-1972), the “routinizing” period (1972-1977), which I will call “legislative,” and finally the “institutional” phase (1978 into the 1980s).⁶

Active protests and demonstrations by women’s groups characterized the first phase or formative period (1966-1972). These tactics were appropriated from Civil Rights activists, radical student movements, and the antiwar movement of the 1960s. Not only did the Civil Rights Movement offer tactical models, but it also provided a theoretical framework that would prove useful to the women’s movement in the United

⁶ Anne N. Costain and W. Douglas Costain, “Strategies and Tactics of the Women’s Movement in the United States: The Role of Political Parties” in: *The Women’s Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, ed. Katzenstein and Mueller, 196-214. The tactical periods I discuss follow their periodization. However, I have changed the name of the second period to “legislative” because “routinizing” does not adequately describe the period, when women’s activities here were anything but routine.

For a slightly different division of the period’s development, see: David Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge: The Movement for Women’s Liberation in Britain and the USA* (London: Macmillan, 1983). Bouchier divides the period as follows: New Beginnings: The Rebirth of Feminism (1963-69), High Hopes: the Growth of Feminism (1970-1975), and New Directions: Policy Conflicts and Fresh Campaigns (1976-78). Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess offer yet another breakdown of periods in *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985). Their phases are as follows: Reemergence (1963-70), Dilemmas of Growth/Feminist Organizations in Transition (1970-73), and Interest Group Politics (1973-83).

States.⁷ Those choosing protest tactics were involved in controversial events such as crowning a pig Miss America or holding sit-ins at male-only bars. Consciousness-raising and self-help groups were also established along with underground press activities to inform and assist women.⁸ In these early years, some women with access to government officials pursued nonpartisan routes to bring about policy changes.

Members of the State Commissions on the Status of Women founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 in response to the need for a more vocal and active organization pressing for changes in the conditions of women's lives. This was prompted by the poor results obtained on women's behalf through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, established to administer the Civil Rights Act of 1964. With Betty Friedan as the first president of NOW, its founding document stated early goals: "To take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society *now*, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men."⁹ NOW posited a two-pronged approach: first to fight sex

⁷ The ideological influence that the Civil Rights movement had on the second wave feminist movement in the U.S. will be discussed below.

⁸ Consciousness-raising groups were designed to increase women's and men's awareness of the circumstances and experiences of women. As a group, women's contributions to society have been undervalued and their experiences subordinated to those of men. Consciousness-raising was meant to make both men and women aware of this undervaluation of women and of the discrimination against women in all facets of society, with a view to altering and improving women's lives.

⁹ Text is from the founding document of NOW, their italics, see: Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge*, 45. On the formation of NOW, see: Costain and Costain, "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States," 198-201 and Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge*, 44-48. Note that NOW founded itself as an organization for women and men, and that men have always constituted about ten percent of the organization's membership.

For insight into the origin and early years of NOW, see Betty Friedan's autobiographical essays in *It Changed My Life* (New York: Random House, 1976). Friedan is best known for her feminist text, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963).

discrimination on a case by case basis using current laws and, second, to educate the general public on women's lives, activities, and traditional female roles.¹⁰ This second approach would be echoed in the actions of some feminist performance artists in the 1970s.¹¹ The actions of NOW chapters included letters to and meetings with legislators and government representatives, protests, petitions, surveys, research projects, and press releases. NOW was composed largely of upper-middle class women who based their arguments on the liberal values of the American Constitution, with its assurance of equality for all.¹² They initially imagined that no one could legitimately argue against them or their demands, as it would be unconstitutional. This constitutional orientation added to the group's legitimacy.

Organizations such as NOW, the largest and most influential group within the women's movement, used the weight of its membership to bring attention to women's issues and concerns.¹³ In 1968, as the effects of consciousness-raising spread, other women's groups formed including Federally Employed Women (FEW) and Women's Equity Action League (WEAL). WEAL was founded by Elizabeth Boyer when more conservative members left NOW driven by opposition to activities dominated by protests, and by ideological differences. Those who joined WEAL disagreed with NOW on its support of women's right to choose abortion and over open discussions on sexual

¹⁰ Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge*, 45.

¹¹ See Chapter 2.

¹² The class and racial composition of NOW and the women's movement in the U.S., in general, has been at various times controversial due do a white, middle-class majority.

¹³ When NOW was first formed in 1966, it had 300 charter members. By 1983, membership grew to 175,000, making it the largest women's organization in the world. Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge*, 47. NOW was unique in that it tried to be a mass-based organization run by paid professionals. NOW had no equivalent organization in Europe.

orientation.¹⁴ WEAL focused on fighting discrimination in the workplace, on education, and on various sexually invidious laws, including tax law.

NOW's activities included picketing the office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to demand a ban on sex-segregated employment advertisements. In May 1968, NOW also held the largest march on Washington D.C. supporting women's rights to occur since the early twentieth century when protests were organized for women's right to vote.¹⁵ By 1972 under the leadership of Wilma Scott Heide, NOW not only used protest-based activities to raise public awareness, but shifted their emphasis towards pursuing policy changes to improve the conditions of women's lives. At the end of the decade, WEAL pursued legal routes to gain enforcement of laws against sex discrimination, targeting such government agencies as the Department of Labor and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

By the early 1970s, feminists were reevaluating their initial tactics and activities, such as demonstrations and protests, and considering other ways to bring lasting change to women's lives. At this time direct involvement with major political parties was viewed by most women's organizations as ineffective. The National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) was formed in 1971, but the end of the decade would arrive before it pursued involvement with the major political parties on a tactical level. The NWPC did, however, encourage the Republican and Democratic parties to increase the representation of women in the party hierarchies as well as in public office, and to eradicate sex

¹⁴ By 1972, WEAL would also support a women's right to choose abortion. Costain and Costain, "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States," 201.

¹⁵ For an overview of the first wave feminist movement in the U.S., see Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge*, 8-19 and Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, *The Rebirth of Feminism* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971).

discrimination within their own organizations. That same year, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was supported by both political parties and passed in both the House and Senate, eliminating the need for women's organizations to align themselves with a particular party to get the amendment passed. The ERA, which would have guaranteed equal rights based on equality for all, would never be made into law. By 1978 only thirty-five of the necessary thirty-eight states ratified the amendment to make it part of the Constitution, after which the process was stalled.¹⁶ The executive branch of government offered no support to the women's movement; the only action taken during the 1960s and 1970s, under pressure from NOW, was President Lyndon Johnson's 1967 addition of gender to his original Executive Order 11246, on which the initiatives of affirmative action are based. By 1972 feminist organizations would pursue legislative action.

Hence, the second stage or legislative period (1972-1977) of the feminist movement in the United States was characterized by a focus on lawmaking activities, in addition to lobbying and boycotts. Moreover, due to the perceived failures of the previous years, greater cooperation occurred between the conservative and the radical factions of the feminist spectrum. By the early-to-mid-1970s, many members of the women's movement viewed working with Congress and advocating legislative action as the best avenues for implementing change.

Signaling the pursuit of legal routes to bring change, many established women's movement organizations opened their first offices in Washington, DC in 1972 and 1973. Lobbying became a contentious issue among the organizations' members, especially at

¹⁶ Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge*, 139-40. For a contextual and historical consideration of the ERA see: Janet Boles, *The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment* (New York: Longman, 1979) and Susan D. Becker, *The Origins of the Equal Rights Amendment* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981).

NOW and WEAL, as local chapters felt that such actions by the national organizations undermined their power at the local level. As a result WEAL, as well as the NWPC, used only volunteer or part-time lobbyists until 1979, after which they each hired a full-time professional lobbyist to pursue their goals on Capital Hill. To facilitate successful lobbying efforts, these women's groups formed alliances with more traditional women's organizations such as the League of Women Voters (LWV), the American Association of University Women (AAUW), and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW). While protests and demonstrations were downplayed as viable means for change during this second period, the efforts of these groups to work within the system proved quite successful in achieving legislative action.¹⁷

The positive results realized through working within the government in the mid-1970s had brought substantive change by 1978. The third phase or institutionalizing period (1978-1980s) of the women's movement entailed the establishment of even closer ties with governmental institutions as well as the solidification of those women's organizations and issues that had been founded in the prior period. Women's groups began to routinely work within the existing political structures, as the Costains describe:

Congressional lobbying and electoral politics emerged from the wide range of tactics pursued by the women's movement in the 1970s as the vehicle most likely to advance women's interests in the 1980s. By the late 1970s, representatives of women's groups had established routinized, efficient lobbying coalitions.¹⁸

¹⁷ This period saw important legislation enacted into law: in 1971, *Reed v. Reed* fought discrimination based on the equal protection clause of the Constitution, and in 1973 *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion based on the constitutional right to privacy. For a discussion of legislation see Costain and Costain, "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States," 201-204.

¹⁸ Costain and Costain, "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States," 204.

Many women active in the American feminist movement found that a broad-based approach to women's issues was unlikely to effect change in a decentralized federal government. As a result, each of the individual women's movement groups would come to specialize in particular issues, such as education or pensions, as they related to women in particular. The Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, founded in 1977, coordinated these numerous activities. These pursuits were strengthened by an awareness of the "women's vote," as representing a significant constituency with specific issues and demands.¹⁹

While many women's groups felt that pursuing legislative avenues was the most effective way to influence policy change, others argued against the effectiveness of seeking legislative change without political party support, such as Ethel Klein:

The organization of American politics around interest groups has allowed for the rapid emergence of women's groups concerned with a broad set of issues, but the absence of strong parties to coordinate these disparate concerns has made the passage of feminist policies, despite their broad-based support, much more difficult.²⁰

Throughout the 1970s many feminists regarded the Democratic and Republican party platforms as lacking and, therefore, could not be relied upon to seek and implement policy changes regarding women's issues. By the 1980s some groups would pursue stronger ties to the political parties, sometimes for ideological reasons.²¹

¹⁹ For a discussion of the women's vote, see Costain and Costain, "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States," 205-6, and Ethel Klein, "The Diffusion of Consciousness in the United States and Western Europe," in *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, ed. Katzenstein and Mueller, 29-30.

²⁰ Klein, "The Diffusion of Consciousness in the United States and Western Europe," 33.

²¹ It must be noted, however, that by the early 1980s, NOW began to align itself with the Democratic Party. In fact, NOW-PAC (political action committee), which donated money to

1.1.2. Second Wave Feminism in the United States—Ideology

In 1987, the sociologist Myra Marx Ferree analyzed the spectrum of feminist ideology from the period of second wave feminism and identified three main perspectives: “radical feminism,” “socialist feminism,” and “liberal feminism.”²² Radical feminism viewed “the oppression of women to be the root and image of all oppressions” and understood patriarchy to be a system, which is “pre-existing and pervading all other forms of socioeconomic oppression, socialist and capitalist alike.” Important issues for radical feminists included male violence against women and the incongruity between the needs of women and men. Many, but not all, proponents of radical feminism advocated separate institutions for women. Socialist feminism, while critical of Marxist orthodoxy, argued for “a historical material analysis and emphasize[d] that women’s freedom cannot be gained without a reordering of capitalist economic relationships.” Finally, the roots of liberal feminism are found in the ideology of the Enlightenment, which influenced the ideals of the American Revolution and resulting political texts such as the Declaration of

candidates, gave 85% of its funds in 1982 to Democrats. Other feminist organizations such as WEAL chose not to pursue party politics because they felt it would weaken their lobbying efforts. For a discussion of women’s movement organizations and political parties in the United States, see Costain and Costain, “Strategies and Tactics of the Women’s Movement in the United States,” especially 204-210, and Jo Freeman, “Whom You Know versus Whom You Represent: Feminist Influence in the Democratic and Republican Parties,” in *The Women’s Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, ed. Katzenstein and Mueller, 215-244.

²² While Ferree admitted that these are forced generalizations, the terms will be useful in comparing the ideologies of the U.S., Austria, and West Germany. In the discussion below, I follow these generally accepted categories, as detailed in Myra Marx Ferree, “Equality and Autonomy: Feminist Politics in the United States and Western Germany,” *The Women’s Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, ed. Katzenstein and Mueller, 172-195, especially 172-175.

Independence. Equality under the law represented the core aim for liberal feminists, who focused on individual rights and self-determination.²³

In the United States liberal feminism encompassed the largest constituency of feminists and, by and large, its ideology was viewed as mainstream feminist thought by the general public. Moreover, the liberal feminist position was perhaps the easiest for the public and lawmakers to understand, with its basis in the history and development of political thought in the United States. In contrast, socialist feminism did not take hold in the United States, in part because of the repression of Marxist-based working-class movements beginning in the nineteenth century. The United States is the only western country without a strong socialist tradition or political party. This has influenced the ideology of American feminism and set it apart from its European counterparts. Both radical and socialist feminists in the United States used liberal terminology, such as equal rights under the law, to promote their agendas and were not averse to working with liberal feminists.

The Civil Rights movement, which focused on race discrimination and equal rights, set an example that is crucial for understanding the development and ideology of American feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s.²⁴ Civil Rights activists fought against racism in the name of equal treatment under the law. The legal basis for this struggle had been established in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which forbids

²³ Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 173.

²⁴ Most scholars of the American women's movement of the second wave discuss this relationship. For a good overview, please see Ferree, "Liberal Feminism and the Race Analogy: The U.S. Model," a subsection of "Equality and Autonomy," 175-177 and Sara Margaret Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Knopf, 1979).

discrimination based on sex as well as race.²⁵ As Ferree noted, the legal struggles and consciousness-raising tactics of African-American activists provided a model for feminists:

The race analogy defined women as a minority group whose status could be improved by “sameness” of treatment, created a legal lever for dismantling protective legislation, and raised consciousness about the effects of disparate treatment.²⁶

For feminists arguing for equal treatment under the law, this also meant opportunities and benefits equivalent to those of men. The Civil Rights Movement not only established an ideological framework for liberal feminism, but it also demonstrated a number of political tactics that feminists used: protests, demonstrations, and legal action.

The notion of sameness of treatment, guaranteed by equality under the law, was extremely important for the issues, tactics, and legal actions pursued by liberal feminists.

²⁵ Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 begins with the general statement: “An Act. To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that this Act may be cited as the ‘Civil Rights Act of 1964.’”

Following the general statement of the Act, there are numerous explanatory sections and updates. Section 2000e-2 [Section 703] is an example of how sex discrimination is legally forbidden: “(a) It shall be unlawful employment practice for an employer – (1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or (2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.”

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is in Volume 42 of the United States Code. This Act is available online, see: “Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” United States Government, last updated with the Civil Rights Act of 1991, available from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/vii.html>, Internet, accessed 16 April 2003.

²⁶ Ferree, “Equality and Autonomy,” 177.

Radical and socialist feminists, however, were less than enthusiastic about the results this approach could offer. Radical feminists believed the equality approach would not solve the basic conflicts of interest between men and women at home, in the workplace, and in society. Socialist and radical feminists, along with labor unions and some government organizations, were also concerned that the equality approach would restrict or undermine the benefits and laws already in place to protect women. This point would divide a majority of American feminists from West German and Austrian feminists, for whom this was a particularly sensitive issue. In West Germany and Austria, feminists wanted to legislate special laws for the protection of women based, not on equal rights, but on the fact that they were women, and so had different needs and circumstances than men; for example, one issue that continues to be debated is the treatment of pregnant women in the workplace.

1.1.3. Second Wave Feminism in the United States—Important Issues

The American women's movement distinguished itself from its counterparts in Western European countries both as to the issues addressed and with respect to the approaches taken to resolve them. For example, in the United States during the 1970s, employers could legally deny pregnant women both sick leave and health insurance benefits for childbirth. While illnesses would normally be covered, pregnancy was not considered an illness, and so providing treatment for pregnant women was considered potentially discriminatory as they were not a protected group. American feminists did not pursue this issue because they believed fewer women would be employed if a government policy change mandated such coverage. Other related protections and

benefits, such as public childcare and job security during pregnancy were also not on the mainstream feminist agenda. This omission followed from the liberal ideology of equal rights and equal treatment. Little was done to address the social costs of motherhood; moreover, motherhood was considered a choice. Finally, in 1978 Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was updated with the Pregnancy Disability Act, which outlawed discrimination against pregnant women.²⁷

An important early issue in the women's movement was the right to choose abortion, in addition to other reproductive rights. Since its inception, NOW had argued for abortion rights. This was an issue that American feminists shared with feminists in West Germany and Austria; and the United States was the first of these countries to obtain this right for women. In 1973 abortion choice proponents successfully argued for the "right to privacy" guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution to legalize abortions in the Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade*.²⁸

With regards to violence against women, providing shelters for battered women was a common concern among feminists in the United States, Austria, and West Germany. The shelters provided women with a safe haven from which to rebuild their lives. In the United States radical feminists first raised the issue of aggression towards

²⁷ The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission states the following: "The Pregnancy Discrimination Act is an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions constitutes unlawful sex discrimination under Title VII. Women affected by pregnancy or related conditions must be treated in the same manner as other applicants or employees with similar abilities or limitations." See: "Facts about Pregnancy Discrimination," United States Government, available from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-preg.html>, Internet, accessed 16 April 2003.

For a discussion on the rights of pregnant women see also Costain and Costain, "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States," 203.

²⁸ Costain and Costain, "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States," 203.

women, but the liberal camp quickly subsumed it as well. The radical faction saw the shelters as a way for women to take control of their lives and live collectively—thus, women would assume responsibility for running the shelters themselves rather than have them operated by volunteers or government agencies.²⁹ For the liberal group, however, the prime focus was gaining equal funding for women's organizations, funding on a par with that for male dominated social programs, such as those assisting drug abusers and ex-convicts. Thus, equity, the liberal feminist credo, also drove the dominant American feminist response to providing social services to abused women and their children.

Liberal feminists in the United States also differed from those in West Germany and Austria on their position towards women in the military. Liberal feminists generally supported the position that men and women should have equal access to military service. Radical feminists, however, did assert differences between men and women, and accepted different treatment for women in the military. While the United States government allowed women access to military careers, only men had to register (and still have to) with the Selective Service System on their eighteenth birthday.³⁰ That is not to say that women were (or are) necessarily treated equally. To this day, women are denied access to certain positions in the military, such as any front-line combat position.³¹

²⁹ This approach was problematic for obtaining government funding, which demanded oversight, or private agency funding, which would also require professional management of shelters. For a comparison on the U.S. and West German approaches to sheltering abused women, see: Ferree, "Shelters for Battered Women: Radical Feminism in Action," a subsection of "Equality and Autonomy," 185-188.

³⁰ Selective Service System Web site, available at <http://www.sss.gov/FSwho.htm>, Internet, accessed 21 April 2003.

³¹ Sexism still exists in the military, not only in the positions available to women. There are numerous tragic stories of violence against women in the American military most often in the form of rape. News stories that address rape at the Air Force Academy include: Michael Janofsky

European countries, such as West Germany or Austria, lacked an equal rights basis to guarantee women a place in the military.

Consciousness-raising was an important and necessary facet of women's liberation, as has been noted by Ethel Klein:

The belief that personal problems result from unfair treatment because of one's group membership rather than from lack of personal effort or ability is known as group consciousness. The emergence and maintenance of this group consciousness is central to the formation and success of political movements.³²

Elevating women's consciousness was, therefore, crucial to the formation of the feminist movement. Moreover, consciousness-raising not only helped expose the unfair treatment of women and the marginalized conditions of women's lives but also functioned as a cathartic experience for women to come together, share their personal experiences, and work for change. Many elements of women's lives were suppressed or undervalued, including female sexuality, motherhood, and women's roles in the workplace, which became topics for feminists to address. The consciousness-raising efforts of the women's movement resulted in the increased recognition of sex discrimination over the period of the 1970s. For example:

More women felt that they were excluded from leadership responsibilities in 1985 (46 percent) than in 1970 (31 percent), and the sense that women had less access to skilled jobs grew from 40 percent in 1970 to 51 percent in 1985. Overall, the percentage of women

with Diana Jean Schemo, "Women Recount Life as Cadets: Forced Sex, Fear and Silent Rage," *The New York Times*, Sunday, March 16, 2003, Late Edition, Section 1, Page 1, Column 1 and Michael Janofsky, "Academy's Top General Apologizes to Cadets," *The New York Times*, Tuesday, April 1, 2003, Late Edition, Section A, Page 14, Column 5.

³² Klein, "The Diffusion of Consciousness in the United States and Western Europe," 23.

arguing that there are more advantages to being a man than a women increased from 31 percent in 1974 to 49 percent in 1985.³³

Various venues, organizations, and tactics were involved in consciousness-raising efforts. During the course of the 1970s, 452 women's studies programs were established with 30,000 course offerings at U.S. universities.³⁴ New literature and theorists provided textual resources for women, such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) in which she described some of the social circumstances that necessitated and fueled the feminist movement. Visual artists also experimented with a variety of techniques to broaden awareness of women's lives. The Feminist Art Program was established first at Fresno State University in 1970 and then at the California Institute of the Arts in 1971. Early activities of the Feminist Art Program included performance art pieces in which women shared a variety of personal experiences including, not just traditional women's roles such as childbearing, but also rape. Carolee Schneemann's performance art piece *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards* (1976) is indicative of the consciousness-raising aspect of the feminist movement in which women shared their personal experiences. For the work Schneemann collected statements by her friends and two lovers as well as her own experiences and dreams at a moment in time when her personal relationships were in flux. These statements were then incorporated into a performance in which the artist read the texts and juxtaposed them with photographs including diaristic images of her life.³⁵

³³ Ibid, 25. This data is based on the Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll taken in 1970, 1972, 1974, 1980, and 1985.

³⁴ Katzenstein, "Comparing the Feminist Movements of the United States and Western Europe," 4.

³⁵ See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of this work.

Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the second wave women's movement in the United States used varying strategies, from protests to legal action, to bring about lasting change in American society. The issues emphasized and the tactics employed were influenced by diverse feminist ideologies during the period, with the liberal agenda being most dominant. Following the model of the Civil Rights movement, the quest for equal rights under the law provided the major framework for action taken by liberal feminists. This issue would distinguish the American feminist movement from its counterparts in Europe, where legal institutions frequently allowed for sexual difference under the law.

1.2. The New Women's Movement in Austria

Post-World War II Austria has generally been a society of contradictions, and this was also true of the late 1960s and 1970s. The Second Austrian Republic was established in 1945, and its rigid social structures reflected the country's fascist past and the lingering traditions of the Habsburg Empire. Austria's conservatism is also evident in its 90% Roman Catholic population. On the other hand, socialist and liberal ideologies intertwined with progressive ideas on the environment and on peace.³⁶ The contradictions inherent in this society affected the establishment of the women's movement and the way in which political and legislative action evolved.

³⁶ For example, in one of its first political acts after World War II, Austria declared a commitment to neutrality in a manner similar to Switzerland and Sweden, and it later stated that it would not use nuclear power.

1.2.1. The New Women's Movement in Austria—A Brief History and Strategic Approaches

When the First Republic of Austria was founded in 1918, women were given the right to vote and to participate in public office. The Constitution of 1920 states that “all citizens are equal before the law and bars discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or creed.”³⁷ This did not mean, however, that women were represented in government or that they held equal positions in the workplace. While women held jobs during the Second World War, at the war's end they were relegated to the private sphere of the home, where they were meant to provide a sense of stability to the homecoming soldiers and to society in general. “Women's ‘proper’ sphere was the family, whereas politics and business were viewed as the spheres of men.”³⁸ This would not be questioned until the 1970s, but even then women were not given fair opportunities. Women had not made any gains in the workforce by the mid-1970s, indicating a later initiation of women's liberation activities in Austria compared to the United States and West Germany.³⁹

The feminist movement in the U.S. and West Germany had marked beginnings in the late 1960s, but in Austria activity was not noticeable until the 1970s. The women's movement began about 1972 and was similar to that of West Germany in that it included

³⁷ Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer, “Austria,” in *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan (Garden City, New York: Archer Double Day, 1984; reprint, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996), 69.

³⁸ Sieglinde Katharina Rosenberger, “Politics, Gender, and Equality,” in *Women in Austria*, Contemporary Austrian Studies, Volume 6, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Erika Thurner (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 104.

³⁹ For example, in 1910, 1,387,260 women were in the workforce, while in 1971 and 1974, their numbers had dwindled to 1,199,655 and 1,018,000, respectively. Erika Weinzierl, *Emanzipation? Österreichische Frauen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1975), 10.

an autonomous group and a group of women associated with the Socialist Party (*Sozialistische Partei Österreichs* or SPÖ).⁴⁰ Some scholars have noted that while a number of women's groups had connections with the SPÖ and other leftist groups, these associations held few activities and achieved minor results.⁴¹

The autonomous women's group criticized women's unequal status in Austrian society, yet it was rarely involved in protest or demonstration activities. Rather, women's groups, including the autonomous group, negotiated with the government for changes; or, the efforts of women's groups were co-opted by various government organizations.⁴²

This was at least partially due to the social and political environment in Austria, where radical action for any cause was rejected not only by the government but also by the general public. Extreme social pressure forced early feminist activists in Austria to work within existing institutions and political routes to voice opinion and introduce change. The effect on the women's movement was often to keep the desires and needs of women practically invisible outside these traditional precincts, which were slow in responding.

Though there developed a network of feminist groups and activities in Austria, there was no mass movement or large feminist organization such as NOW. Several scholars concerned with Austrian feminism believe that such a large feminist movement was impossible in Austria in the 1970s because social structures were "too catholic [*sic*],

⁴⁰ For women's organizations associated with the Socialist Party, see: Brigitte Geiger and Hanna Hacker, *Donauwalzer Damenwahl: Frauenbewegte Zusammenhänge in Österreich* (Vienna: Promedia, 1989).

⁴¹ Gisela Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," *Contemporary Western European Feminism* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 137 and Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 105.

⁴² Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 137.

too authoritarian, too traditional patriarchal.”⁴³ Moreover, Gisela Kaplan, a scholar of western feminist movements, argued in 1992 that “writers on women’s issues in contemporary Austria seem agreed that women have not made much progress, either in the more limited framework of ‘emancipation’ or in the wider sense of ‘liberation.’”⁴⁴ Despite these discouraging circumstances, some changes did occur for women under a system that was not always open to reform; and some of these developments even came from the top down.

Today, Austrian women have rights equivalent to those of their counterparts in the rest of the European Union and the United States, but in the 1970s the Austrian government was often opposed to or conflicted about the demands of the women’s movement. Issues of social justice were not held to be of the highest priority; rather, due to the devastating effects of World War II, resources were concentrated on developing a strong economy. Similar to West Germany, there was some commitment to welfare programs that were specifically tailored to women’s needs, but a drive toward equal rights was not part of the government’s efforts until the mid-1970s. This was at least in part due to the two main political parties’ opposing views on women’s roles in society, and this lack of a unified position made change difficult to legislate and enforce. The People’s Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei* or ÖVP), similar to a Christian democratic party, believed that women should be defined by the family structure. While not a progressive party, the ÖVP was formed after World War II from the following

⁴³ Kaplan, “Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria,” 137, quoted from Erika Fischer, “Frauenbewegung in Österreich,” in *Frauenbewegungen in der Welt*, Vol. 1, *Westeuropa*, ed. by Autonome Frauenredaktion (Hamburg: Argument, 1988), 184-188.

⁴⁴ Kaplan, “Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria,” 137.

organizations: the Austrian Workers and Employees Union (ÖAAB), the Austrian Farmer's Association (ÖBB), the Austrian Economic Union (ÖWB), the Young People's Party (JVP), the Austrian Senior Citizens Association (ÖSB), and the Austrian Women's Union (ÖFB).⁴⁵ On the other hand, the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ) had an interest in women's rights in regards to the workplace.⁴⁶ Considering the relatively small population of the country the SPÖ was quite large and one of the strongest parties in the international socialist movement.⁴⁷ Under the leadership of the Socialist Party during the 1970s, new legislation promoting women's public and private rights, and so improving women's everyday lives, was established.

Many of Austria's social reforms took place during the mid-to-late 1970s, especially under the Socialist Chancellor Bruno Kreisky. He caused quite an uprising in the country after arguing that reform was necessary "whether the public wanted it or not."⁴⁸ In 1979, he sought to establish a new cabinet position: the Secretary of State for Women's Affairs. However, he had to threaten to resign before the new appointment was accepted by his own party, while other parties strongly criticized this move. This is typical of actions for social reform for women in Austria, where an idea, structural

⁴⁵ Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 130.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the two main parties' opposing views of women, see: Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 111. Other significant political parties in Austria include the Libertarian Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* or FPÖ) and the Green Party (GAL).

⁴⁷ Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 129-130.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

change, or piece of legislation, even with wide support, would take time before it would actually be accepted by the population and enforced by the government.⁴⁹

Several tactics used by the women's movement in Austria included quotas, commissions, and legislation. The first time a woman held a cabinet position was in 1966 as the Minister of Social Affairs. From 1979 to 1983, when the Socialist Party was in power, six out of twenty-two cabinet ministers were women.⁵⁰ Although this is advanced compared to women's situation in the United States cabinet, this figure reflects the modest representation of women in the Austrian government, especially in positions of power and prestige. Some felt that "in male-dominated decision-making processes, the principle of a quota system is an important strategy to increase female representation in politics and public employment."⁵¹ However, any type of quota system was strongly criticized by conservative groups, especially when it involved high-ranking positions. Not until the late 1980s was any such system implemented. By way of example, quotas were established voluntarily by some political parties to ensure a minimum number of women as candidates on their national ballots.⁵²

⁴⁹ For a discussion of Kreisky's role in social reforms for women, see: Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 108-109; Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 132; and Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer, "Austria: Benevolent Despotism Versus the Contemporary Feminist Movement," in *Sisterhood is Global*, ed. Robin Morgan, 74-75.

⁵⁰ Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 106.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵² In 1986, the SPÖ introduced a 25% quota for female candidates and by 1993 raised this to 40%. In 1990, the Green Party made their Declaration of Principle in which they argued for a 50/50 split in national elections. In 1995, the ÖVP stated they would have a minimum of 30%. Other parties such as the FPÖ and the LIF (Liberal Forum) never instituted quotas for ideological reasons. Regardless of the difficulties women had in gaining representation in the Austrian parliament, by the mid-1990s they were better off than their American counterparts. In 1998, 27% of the Austrian parliament were women, while in 1994 in the U.S., only 10% of the House of

Another strategy used by the Austrian women's movement was to establish government organizations that promoted women's interests in the form of a commission or agency. This type of reform began only in the late 1970s, with Chancellor Kreisky's addition of a government office for women, following his establishment of two positions: the Secretary for General Women's Affairs headed by Johanna Dohnal and the Secretary for the Affairs of Working Women held by Franziska Fast.⁵³ During the 1970s, these were the only government agencies working towards equal rights for women, and they emerged only at the end of the decade. Moreover, there was no organization charged with safeguarding the equal treatment and equal rights of any minority group in Austria, comparable to the EEOC in the United States, until the Commission on Equal Treatment was established in 1992.⁵⁴ These changes in government agency involvement in women's affairs and in issues of equitable treatment demonstrate the relatively delayed organization of the Austrian women's movement and its lagging impact on Austrian society. That reality would make women's issues all the more pressing for feminist artists in Austria during the 1970s.

While strategies such as quotas and government commissions did not come to fruition until late in the 1970s, legislative change had already begun in the mid-1970s—the years of 1974, 1975, and 1978 marked the institution of significant new policies or

Representatives and 6% of the Senate were women. See: Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 106-107.

⁵³ In 1990, the Secretary of General Women's Affairs was upgraded to a Minister position giving the position veto rights in the cabinet and bringing more prestige to women's issues. Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 108.

⁵⁴ The Commission on Equal Treatment is composed of members from the unions, the Chamber of Labor, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Chamber of Agriculture. Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 118, note 12.

the updating of existing laws with respect to women's issues. In 1974, the Austrian regulation forbidding abortion was repealed and a new law was enacted that stated that abortions were legal up to the twelfth week of pregnancy for medical and social reasons. This change in government policy was initiated from above, not from a broad feminist movement supported among the Austrian population. As Kaplan states, this implementation of policy was "initiated by the government against staunch catholic [*sic*] opposition voiced not only by the church but also by the population."⁵⁵ The Austrian abortion law is considered one of the most liberal in all of Europe today, requiring no notification or special licensing. However, social customs can effectively override legislative action and outside of Vienna it was difficult (and still can be) to find a doctor and facility willing to perform such a procedure due to the Catholic belief of most citizens.

The Family Law reform bills of 1975 and 1978 were the second and third significant instances of legislative change for the Austrian women's movement. The 1975 reform proclaimed that a husband was no longer the legal head of household, and it emphasized the financial and familial sharing of responsibilities between husband and wife. Now, a woman no longer needed her husband's permission to work outside of the home. These legislative changes altered the relationship between men and women, as well as women's position in the workplace. However, the way certain passages were worded caused feminist critics to view the reforms as inadequate: "The regulation that stated responsibility for housekeeping depends on a person's ability supported the notion

⁵⁵ Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 132. For a discussion of abortion legislation see Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 132-133; and Benard and Schlaffer, "Austria," 70; and Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 109.

that women are best suited for housekeeping and bringing up children.”⁵⁶ The 1978 reforms also reversed hitherto discriminatory laws. Until 1978, a man had all legal rights to a child.⁵⁷ Also, previously all property and assets in a marriage were considered to be the property of the man; if the wife’s signature was on a deed, a gift tax had to be paid on the property. The assumption was that a woman could never have purchased or participated in purchasing the property on her own and it must, therefore, be a gift from her husband, or father. After the 1978 reform, a couple could divorce by mutual consent, and housework and childcare were considered financially meaningful contributions to be considered and divided at the time of divorce. These are examples of the laws that were updated in the 1978 legislation.⁵⁸

For women in Austrian society, maternity leave has long been regarded as an important right; Austrian legislation concerning this matter far surpasses that in the United States, even today. Already in 1957, the Maternity Protection Act gave women eight weeks pre-delivery and eight weeks post-delivery paid leave. An Austrian woman’s position was protected while she was away from work and she could remain on leave for up to one unpaid year. The 1978 Family Law reforms improved on these benefits by

⁵⁶ Rosenberger, “Politics, Gender, and Equality,” 110. This perspective was upheld until the mid-1990s when efforts were made to alter the legislation.

⁵⁷ If, for example, a woman needed to obtain a passport for her child, she could not get one without the permission of the father, even if they had been divorced for many years.

⁵⁸ It would not be until 1995, with the Surname Act, that a married couple no longer had to have the same last name, but a woman still needs to state that she does not want her name changed at the registry office. See: Rosenberger, “Politics, Gender, and Equality,” 111. For a discussion of the 1975 and 1978 reforms to the Family Law, see: Kaplan, “Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria,” 133; Benard and Schlaffer, “Austria,” 69; Rosenberger, “Politics, Gender, and Equality,” 110-111, and Emmerich Tálos and Gerda Falkner, “Politik und Lebensbedingungen von Frauen: Ansätze von ‘Frauenpolitik’ in Österreich,” in: *Der Geforderte Wohlfahrtsstaat: Traditionen—Herausforderungen—Perspektiven*, ed. Emmerich Tálos (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1992), 204-205.

providing women up to one year paid leave based on a minimum monthly stipend, after a woman had worked for at least one continuous year before pregnancy. A higher rate was set for single mothers. This law also allowed any worker one week per year for sick leave to care for an ill child.⁵⁹

An extremely important gain for women's rights in Austria was the Equal Treatment Act of 1979, which included several amendments guaranteeing equal opportunities and equal treatment with regard to wages and promotions. The act stated that men and women must be paid equal wages for work of equal value and made salary discrimination due to gender illegal. An odd element to the regulation stated that these laws only applied to the private sector. Not until 1993, with the Federal Equal Treatment Act, would these laws be extended to the Austrian federal government. This is typical of the conflicting achievements of women's rights initiatives in the country.⁶⁰

In Austria, party politics have had a stronger role in bringing about legislative changes than the autonomous women's movement. Women in parliament have seldom worked together to effect legislative change for women's rights due to a strong allegiance to their respective parties.⁶¹ The above-mentioned legal gains for women were initiated

⁵⁹ For discussions of these laws, see: Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 133 and Benard and Schlaffer, "Austria," 70. In 1990, the maternal leave act was changed to parental leave, but few men take advantage of the law. See: Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 110-111

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the Equal Treatment Act, see: Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 134 and Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, and Equality," 112-114.

⁶¹ Women legislators have only crossed party lines a handful of times, and not at all during the 1970s. For example, in 1989 there was a women's caucus on rape in marriage and a male member of the ÖVP made a sexist remark that served to bring women together to draw up and get a bill passed. In 1992 women also joined together to get an equality package passed, a maneuver that worked because the male members of parliament did not anticipate their moves. Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, Equality," 107-108.

by the Socialist party, with some mixed effects, as noted by the Austrian feminist activists and sociologists Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer:

Yet an honest conclusion would have to be that the emancipatory attitude taken by the Socialist government has genuinely improved women's status but had the effect both of co-opting activist women and of reducing the incentive for grassroots agitation.⁶²

Neither the Austrian government nor the public at large valued grassroots activism; rather, feminists had to work within existing government institutions.

1.2.2. The New Women's Movement in Austria—Ideology

In Austria, as in West Germany, the women's movement of the 1970s developed out of a political movement that questioned existing structures of society. This awareness inspired women to establish feminist organizations and, to some extent, to reject traditional social rules and institutions, forming the Austrian women's movement.⁶³ Compared to the United States and West Germany, the socialist party had a greater impact on the women's movement in Austria. But while they may have supported the socialist ideology, in principle their actions did not exemplify it. Oddly, the Austrian movement followed their colleagues in West Germany and used the term "autonomous women's movement," yet they did not fight for separate institutions for women.⁶⁴ As Benard and Schlaffer observed the situation in 1984:

⁶² Benard and Schlaffer, "Austria: Benevolent Despotism Versus the Contemporary Feminist Movement," 76.

⁶³ Gabriella Hauch, "Rights at Last? The First Generation of Female Members of Parliament," in: *Women in Austria*, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Erika Thurner, 61.

⁶⁴ See section 1.3.2.

The combination of antique tradition, a conservative and Roman Catholic population, an urbane history as a multinational empire, and the present socialist government—all these elements have brought about a situation in which the women's movement *per se* is weak while, ironically, general public awareness of the issues, government willingness to initiate reforms, and the actual facts of women's status compare favorably with other Western industrial nations.⁶⁵

While weaker than in the United States or West Germany, the women's movement in Austria possessed its own ideological development.

A number of unique factors frame the women's movement in Austria. First, the government appears to have been open to listening to input from political and other groups, such as women's organizations, as long as no agitation or protests took place. Demonstrations were also unpopular among the general public influencing the tactics of the autonomous women's movement.⁶⁶ In this social context, it is easy to understand the power of Valie Export's performance art works since she defiantly took to the streets with numerous protest-like actions in the late 1960s. For example, for *Tap and Touch Cinema* first performed in Vienna in 1968, Export attached a curtained box, or mini-cinema, to her naked chest and invited any pedestrian on the street to feel her chest. She aimed to expose the visual objectification of the female body which her street performance materialized.

A second important factor framing the ideology of the women's movement in Austria was that women's issues were most often linked with the cause of social

⁶⁵ Benard and Schlaffer, "Austria: Benevolent Despotism Versus the Contemporary Feminist Movement," 72. In regards to the government in power, please note that this was first published in 1984, and later re-printed by the Feminist Press in 1996, with only an additional preface. The Socialist government was in power until 1983.

⁶⁶ One must consider the history of the Nazi Party's street displays of power in the 1930s in this rejection of demonstrations.

democracy in the country, an association that has been called “fateful.”⁶⁷ At the beginning of the century, the women’s movement was allied with the workers movement which had rallied for women’s support; but when women fought for the right to vote, the workers abandoned them. By the 1970s, the women’s and the workers’ movements both contained a mixture of passive and progressive ideologies; as Benard and Schlaffer described Austria in this period: “unions don’t strike; the women rarely agitate.”⁶⁸ The autonomous women’s movement focused its activities on writing letters and signing petitions or sending delegates to the Chancellor to explain their issues in person. Unlike the United States, they did not protest to obtain equal rights or to pass legislation. Also, the women’s movement did not argue for separate institutions, as will be seen in West Germany. Another device that ironically worked in Austria was passivity or taking no action, since surprisingly, the government would often pick up on reforms that were “currently modern or fashionable” in other countries.⁶⁹ In Austria much of women’s liberation came about through legal reforms that were often based on activities in West Germany and the United States (and even Italy or France) and therefore took place slightly later than in West Germany or the United States.⁷⁰

Different from the liberal feminists in the United States who had to protest, lobby, and petition to bring about a general awareness and achieve change, their Austrian

⁶⁷ For a discussion on the relationship between the women’s movement and the workers movement, see: Benard and Schlaffer, “Austria: Benevolent Despotism Versus the Contemporary Feminist Movement,” 72-73.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

counterparts received these benefits without such a struggle, albeit later than the Americans. However, even though there was an equal rights law, dating back to the Austrian constitution, when that law was contradicted and violated, there was no challenge. This is where the weakness in the Austrian women's movement lay: there were no protests, demonstrations, or legal action taken against discriminatory acts even when the laws were on women's side.⁷¹ The Austrian women's movement generally viewed itself as ideologically superior to the American movement.⁷² The movement leaders admired the breadth of activism in the United States, yet "Austrians consider U.S. feminism insufficiently 'political,' or too 'bourgeois.'"⁷³ Many of the American activities, such as the focus on affirmative action and networking, were viewed as helping a few to the top but not as a way to change society.

1.2.3. The New Women's Movement in Austria—Important Issues

Consciousness-raising efforts were among the most significant activities undertaken by the women's movement in the United States, but this was not the case in Austria despite a concern for similar issues. It was the government that brought about awareness of women's issues through subtle prodding by members of the women's movement. Once new laws were implemented under a socialist regime, attitudes began to

⁷¹ This problem dates back to the original equal rights clause in the Austrian constitution of the turn of the century when women were barred full access to universities, but it was never contested. *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷² For a comparison of the U.S. and Austrian women's movement in the 1970s, see: Benard and Schlaffer, "Austria: Benevolent Despotism Versus the Contemporary Feminist Movement," 75.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 75.

slowly change. For example, women's position within the family structure and the workplace was of great concern to Austrian feminists. To assess social developments one study addressed the percentage of Austrian husbands helping in childcare and housework. There appeared to be an increase between 1977 and 1983, after the Family Law reforms of 1975 and 1978, in the number of men helping daily in housework, from twenty to twenty-nine percent, and in assisting in daily childcare, from thirty to fifty-four percent.⁷⁴

Considering the ties between the women's movement and the Socialist Party, it is not surprising that many Austrian feminists were concerned with equality for women in the workplace. Moreover, equal treatment meant equal salary and opportunities, allowing women the potential to earn a living wage and to be independent from husbands (or families). Important steps were the Family Law in 1978 and the Equal Treatment Act of 1979.⁷⁵ Despite the later establishment of regulations for women's rights at work compared to the United States, they were still crucial to feminists in Austria. The effect this legislation had on women's independence is clear from the declining number of women who were married by the end of the 1970s.⁷⁶ Women could now more easily support themselves and choose alternate roles from that of the traditional housewife.

Important organizing issues were woman's reproductive rights. Before it was legalized in 1974, 100,000 illegal abortions were performed annually, but while it was punishable by up to one year in jail, it was rarely prosecuted. The right to choose what a

⁷⁴ Kaplan, "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria," 134.

⁷⁵ Until 1996, women were prohibited from working at night, except professions such as nursing. Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, Equality," 112.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of statistics on marriage, see: Susanne Feigl, *Frauen in Österreich 1975-1985* (Vienna: Staatssekretariat für allgemeine Frauenfragen im Bundeskanzleramt, 1985), 10.

woman could do with her own body was an important element of self-determination, which made this issue so crucial for many Austrian women.

Similar to both the United States and West Germany, the women's movement in Austria was concerned with violence against women, including in the home. Beginning in the late 1970s, numerous projects were undertaken to assist women in abusive situations, including homes for battered women and children, hotlines for victims of rape, and various forms of counseling for victims of violence.⁷⁷ For feminists in Austria, funding was even harder to come by than in the United States or West Germany. With the Austrian emphasis on working with the government, outside agencies such as independent shelters, were not strongly supported. And due to its taboo nature, sexual violence against women in the home would not be addressed in public until the late 1980s.⁷⁸

In summary, the autonomous women's movement in Austria was not active through protests and demonstrations as their counterparts in the U.S., nor were they as independent, as we shall see, as their sisters in West Germany. Owing to cultural circumstances, they had to use more subtle approaches to achieve their goals. The issues that were relevant to them were often supported by legislation but only later in the 1970s, such as equal rights for women in the workplace. Issues of violence against women and

⁷⁷ The feminist sociologists Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer established the first shelter for battered women in Vienna, see: Benard and Schlaffer, "Austria: Benevolent Despotism Versus the Contemporary Feminist Movement," 76.

⁷⁸ Rosenberger, "Politics, Gender, Equality," 111.

the right to choose abortion held the same importance as they did in the U.S. and West Germany.

1.3. The Autonomous Women's Movement in West Germany

The West German women's movement of the 1970s was more radical than the women's movement in the United States most likely due to an atmosphere more hostile to change. In a comparative study of feminist movements in the United States and Europe, Mary Katzenstein argued that feminists found weaker support from the general public in countries with a strong social democratic tradition, such as West Germany, than in countries with a socialist or communist tradition.⁷⁹ After Willie Brandt's period as the socialist Chancellor (1969-74), the Christian Democrats dominated West German politics. However, there is also a history of class-based parties in West Germany—unlike the United States but typical of Europe—which has undermined feminist activity and organizing efforts by placing issues of the working class and labor parties above those

⁷⁹ Mary Katzenstein, "Comparing the Feminist Movements of the United States and Western Europe: An Overview," 9.

pertaining to women.⁸⁰ This historical background, among other characteristics, affected the development of the new women's movement in West Germany.⁸¹

1.3.1. The Autonomous Women's Movement in West Germany—A Brief History and Strategic Approaches

Typical of many European countries, the feminist movement in West Germany was influenced by the social protests and student uprisings of the late 1960s. Early activity centered around the Socialist Democratic Students (the *Sozialistischen Deutschen Studentenbundes* or SDS) and the raising of women's issues in various publications with increasing frequency.⁸² The establishment of the Action Council for Women's Liberation (*Aktionsrat für die Befreiung der Frauen*) in the spring of 1968 is regarded as the official beginning of the new women's movement in West Germany.⁸³ That same year, Helke Sander, a feminist leader, presented her famous speech at the twenty-third national

⁸⁰ Katzenstein, "Comparing the Feminist Movements of the United States and Western Europe," 3-22; Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 172-195, which provides an overview of historical positions of women and political parties in Germany since the nineteenth century; and Edith Hoshino Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," in: *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Altbach et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 3-26. For a general overview of changing opinions on and priorities of the women's movement in West Germany see: Ethel Klein, "The Diffusion of Consciousness in the United States and Western Europe," in *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe*, ed. Katzenstein and Mueller, 23-43, especially 39-41.

⁸¹ For a history of the German women's movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see: *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Florence Hervé (Cologne: PapyRossa Verlag, 1990).

⁸² For example, the journal *Das Argument* published an essay on "Sexuality and Domination" ("Sexualität und Herrschaft") in the 1967/1968 issue no. 22-24 and *Das Argument* even republished Ernst Bloch's essay "The Struggle for the New Woman" ("Kampf ums neue Weib") from the 1930s. See Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 4.

⁸³ Other earlier individual activity did take place. For example, Gunhild Feigenwinter was a one-woman demonstration when she passed out pamphlets on abortion at the Duisburg train station in 1962. Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 5.

conference of the SDS.⁸⁴ In her talk, she addressed a number of issues that became part of the women's movement in West Germany: "patriarchy, token women (in German 'alibi-women'), the politics of personal life, [and] the rights and needs of mothers."⁸⁵ In her speech, Sander was extremely critical of the SDS and of society in general, as she described where women's organizing was taking place and what women had already accomplished, no thanks to any help from the SDS.⁸⁶ She reproved members of the socialist organization for not supporting women's issues and said that, had the women been accorded the same treatment as male workers, their problems would have been solved.⁸⁷ At the end of her speech, Sander threw a tomato at the male SDS leaders, marking the beginning of the feminist movement in West Germany.

As the women's movement developed, various events and issues came into focus. The Action Council had reorganized itself in 1969 without the involvement of some of its original members who were mothers. It felt that the focus on issues of motherhood detracted attention from political growth and original group members who had children formed their own organization: Against the Old and for the New. Many other groups formed by 1971, such as the Frankfurt Old Wives Council (*Weiberrat*), one of the several

⁸⁴ This speech was first published as Helke Sander, "Rede des Aktionsrates zur Befreiung der Frauen," *Frauenjahrbuch 1* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Roter Stern, 1975) 10-15. For an excerpted English translation, see: *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Altbach, et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 307-310.

⁸⁵ Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 5. For another discussion of Sander's speech and the role of the SDS in the development of the women's movement in West Germany, see: Hilke Schlaeger, "The West German Women's Movement," trans. Vicki Williams Hill and Carol Poore, with an introduction by Nancy Vedder-Shults, *New German Critique*, vol. 13 (Winter 1978): 59-68.

⁸⁶ For example, women established daycare centers without SDS support.

⁸⁷ This is typical of the critique that the autonomous women's movement would make of the left in West Germany. This break will be discussed below.

groups that had broken away from the SDS. In March of that year, the first national women's conference was held in Frankfurt indicating a fully active movement

These organizing activities of the new women's movement grew out of two separate developments: a reaction to the New Left and concern over the opposition to abortion reform.⁸⁸ The New Left included the German Communist Party (the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* or KPD) and the SDS. As the sociologist Myra Marx Ferree states, this first group of feminists was informed by socialism:

Feminists coming to the movement via this route [the New Left] were typically well informed about socialist theory and practice, and their own ideas owe as much to their continuing struggle within and against the traditional Left.⁸⁹

By 1968, women had criticized the sexism within the organizations of the New Left, as well as its ignorance of women's potential contributions to the movement, and its indifference to their needs as mothers. Moreover, KPD and SDS tactics were becoming increasingly violent, which disturbed many women involved with these organizations. In opposition to most concerns of the New Left, feminists voiced the most outrage towards society's lack of support for mothers, as well as the underappreciation of traditional women's work in the home.⁹⁰ Thus, while the New Left purported a position of liberation, in practice it did not really apply to the particular circumstances or concerns of many women.

⁸⁸ For a good discussion of the New Left and the issue of abortion in the development of the women's movement in West Germany see: Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 182-183.

⁸⁹ Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 183.

⁹⁰ The importance of the issue of women's work and childcare in West Germany will be addressed in greater detail below in 1.2.3. West German Feminist Movement—Important Issues.

The second route that brought women to the feminist movement in West Germany was the struggle to overturn Paragraph 218—the German law that forbid abortion. Already at the turn of the century radical feminists had tried unsuccessfully to have the restrictive law repealed and it became an organizing issue for women beginning in 1970, particularly when male leaders of political parties on both the right and the left denied abortion reform.⁹¹

The controversies identified by women involved with the New Left and those working for abortion reform resulted in the formation of the “autonomous women’s movement” (“*die autonome Frauenbewegung*”).⁹² An important aspect of the movement, which differs significantly from mainstream feminism in the United States, was its striving for separate women’s institutions; the idea of autonomy literally meant free from existing institutions. The autonomous women’s movement rejected the major political parties of the period in West Germany as inattentive to their needs; these included the German Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland* or SPD) and the German Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* or CDU). Furthermore, women who were involved with mixed-sex organizations in the 1970s, including political parties, were mostly either ignored or pressured to leave. The autonomous women’s movement even went so far as to call women’s groups that had a more traditional bureaucratic structure and formation, such as the Association of Social

⁹¹ Altbach, “The New German Women’s Movement,” 6 and Ferree, “Equality and Autonomy,” 183.

⁹² For documentary information on the autonomous women’s movement in West Germany, including photographs from protests and meetings, see: Detlef Hoffmann, et al, *Frauenalltag und Frauenbewegung 1890-1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Historische Museum Frankfurt am Main, Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1981), 137-147.

Democratic Women (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft sozialdemokratischer Frauen*) or the Women's Council (*Frauenrat*), non-feminist.⁹³

The first phase of the West German women's movement focused on consciousness-raising and self-discovery, similar to these activities in the United States. Different from the United States, however, the base of the West German women's movement consisted of local initiatives and women's collectives, and they lacked a national organization that could be considered the equivalent of NOW. Unlike NOW, the Action Council was not a national organization with a broad reach to local branches. Most activity took place within local groups that worked to raise consciousness and organize events to improve the conditions of women's lives. An important and unique aspect of these local organizations was their non-hierarchical approach. Representative efforts included women's centers (*Frauenraum*), often at universities, the first of which opened in 1972. This was followed by separate projects such as shelters for abused women (*Frauenhäuser*), support groups for single mothers and immigrant women, health centers, counseling centers, coffee shops, and bookstores.⁹⁴

One contentious issue of the 1970s was whether efforts, and limited resources, should be placed into women's centers at the universities or into the additional projects. The university centers functioned as places for consciousness raising as well as political organizing while the other projects made more tangible differences in women's daily

⁹³ See Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," especially the section "Autonomous Radical Feminism: The West German Model," 182-85. However, not all radical feminists wanted to work from the outside; others worked their way up organizational ladders. By the early 1980s, many women who had been involved with the autonomous women's movement were open to working with existing institutions to bring about social change.

⁹⁴ For a discussion of local initiatives see: Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 174 and Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 7-8.

lives. However, many felt that the projects diluted the movement's power base by depleting financial and volunteer resources, and did not do enough to effect real political change.⁹⁵ Yet, for many the establishment of a separate realm for women seemed impossible, and the efforts towards it masked the root of the problem: the elimination of the sources of the pain and struggle in women's lives.⁹⁶

Due to the emphasis on autonomy, by the end of the 1970s the efforts of the women's movement in West Germany had left many women's everyday lives unchanged. A good deal of energy had gone into maintaining independence from larger, male-dominated organizations at the expense of other, more direct forms of action. Due to the movement's limited contact with institutional and governmental structures, little significant change could happen. Unlike American women, German activists in the movement never organized to increase women's representation in existing institutions, nor did they work towards getting new legislation passed, which would have guaranteed the equal treatment of women.

The end of the first phase of self-discovery of the new women's movement in West Germany is generally said to be marked by the publication of the 1979 anthology *Overcoming Speechlessness (Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit)* edited by Gabriele Dietze.⁹⁷ This volume contains numerous essays of feminist cultural criticism and reflects

⁹⁵ By the mid-1980s most of the university centers were closed, but the projects continued as "models for an alternative women's culture." Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 7-8.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of projects, see: Lottemi Doormann, "Die neue Frauenbewegung: zur Entwicklung van 1968 bis anfang der 80er Jahre," in *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Florence Hervé, 261-64.

⁹⁷ *Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit*, ed. Gabriele Dietze (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1979).

the realization that little social change had actually taken place. It was, thus, during the latter 1970s that West German feminism moved into a second phase with an emphasis on political power to bring about significant change in women's positions in society.

Women began to discuss their role in the political apparatus and issues of empowerment, and by 1979, a new political party was founded: the Women's Party (*Frauenpartei*). This was actually the eighth women's party established since 1951. Up to 1979, all of these parties had failed.⁹⁸ This focus on the political establishment coincided with similar activities in the United States at the end of the 1970s. While some feminist issues would be the same as in the United States, the West German feminists pursued a few of their own.

1.3.2. The Autonomous Women's Movement in West Germany—Ideology

As in the United States, the new women's movement in West Germany crossed a broad spectrum of ideologies in the late 1960s and 1970s: radical feminism, socialist feminism, and liberal feminism.⁹⁹ In West Germany, however, the more radical wing of the movement argued for a greater autonomy for women. Radical feminists viewed all organizations and institutions as embedded with a patriarchal order in which women's unique needs were ignored; therefore, many advocated separate women's institutions.

⁹⁸ For a discussion of these political parties see: Hannelore Mabry, "Die neue Frauenbewegung und die Partei—und Gewerkschaftsfrage," in *Autonomie oder Institution: Über die Leidenschaft und Macht von Frauen. Beiträge zur 4. Sommer-Universität der Frauen, 1979* (Berlin: Dokumentationsgruppe der Sommeruniversität der Frauen, 1981), 218-233. For an English translation see: Mabry, "The New Women's Movement and the Party and the Trade Union Question," in Altbach et al., 1984, 324-329.

⁹⁹ For more detailed definitions see section 1.1.1. and Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 173.

Socialist feminism still regarded class issues as crucial and, thus, during this period, the term was used for those feminists still tied to the traditional left, including the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the unions. The liberal feminist position, which focused on equal rights and equality under the law, had little following in West Germany, unlike its strong presence in the United States.

In West Germany, however, the terminology most often used for the feminist movement during the 1970s was the “autonomous women’s movement.”¹⁰⁰ This term encompassed the ideology of radical feminism, the dominant position in West Germany, as well as some concepts from the socialist feminist perspective. Terminology such as “marxist-feminist” or “socialist-feminist” would never be used in West Germany, rather “autonomous” was used to indicate independence from any other groups or institutions.¹⁰¹ The autonomous women’s movement argued for organizations separate from male-dominated groups, independence for local women’s groups with an emphasis on non-hierarchical organizational structures, and groups that emphasized individual autonomy. In addition, it rejected any notion of an organization arranged around class structures as entailed in strict socialist principles. The autonomous women’s movement was active through an informal network of women’s centers, publications, bookstores, and local initiatives, rather than a national organizational effort. Any networking

¹⁰⁰ Ferree, “Equality and Autonomy,” especially “Autonomous Radical Feminism: The West German Model,” 182-85; Altbach, “The New German Women’s Movement,” 10-11; Schlaeger, “The West German Women’s Movement,” 64-66; and Doormann, “Die neue Frauenbewegung: zur Entwicklung van 1968 bis anfang der 80er Jahre,” 268-272.

¹⁰¹ Avoiding terms like “socialist-feminist” also indicated their break with the left.

activities were coordinated by word-of-mouth and through the national magazines *Emma*, with Alice Schwarzer as founder and publisher, and *Courage*.¹⁰²

While some socialist feminists participated in these activities, liberal feminists were rarely visible. Smaller in number, the liberal feminists had a separate organizational structure in the Women's Council. This was an umbrella organization for the more traditional women's clubs, which lacked any strong social transformational agenda. The Frauenrat was different from NOW in the United States through, for instance, its lack of an active political strategy and of local branches. The group had few members or activities that overlapped with the autonomous women's movement.¹⁰³

Regardless of these activities, Ferree states that by the 1980s, "even among feminists, there is considerable consensus on the weakness and 'backwardness' of the West German movement relative to the American."¹⁰⁴ Its perceived weakness throughout the 1970s may well have been caused by its lack of willingness to work with and through existing, male-dominated social institutions, or on national initiatives. Moreover, the autonomous women's movement did not take the legislative or legal routes that feminists followed in the United States. Many scholars of the new women's movement state that this was, at least partially, due to Article 3: the Equal Rights Statute of The Basic Law,

¹⁰² Reports of feminist events were covered in *emma*, which began publishing in 1978 and continues today. The magazine's tagline states it is a "magazine for women from women" (*Zeitschrift für Frauen von Frauen*). *Courage* was published from 1976 through 1984, the year it ceased publication. Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 174.

¹⁰³ See Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 175 for a discussion of the Frauenrat. Ferree also discusses an interesting development in local German governments by the 1980s: an increase in the number of appointees by local and state governments to be responsible for women's issues, the *Frauenbeauftragten*. Persons in this position have tended to act as liaisons between traditional women's groups and the activities of the autonomous women's movement.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 175.

which was enacted in 1949 as the constitution of West Germany.¹⁰⁵ Article 3 did not provide a basis for legal action against sexual discrimination. This law has further affected women's position in West German society, as Ferree writes:

With no separate-but-equal tradition as a pretext for inequality, differences between men and women (real and supposed) were invoked from the start to justify separate treatment. This includes protective legislation excluding women from entire industries, such as construction and mining, and allowing employers to restrict women to so-called "light"—low paying—work.¹⁰⁶

This law and perspective influenced other areas of women's issues in West Germany. It gave a legal basis to the disparate treatment of women, which has sometimes worked to women's advantage, as will be discussed below regarding maternity leave for working women.

1.3.3. The Autonomous Women's Movement in West Germany—Important Issues

The West German feminist movement was concerned with a number of issues from the late 1960s through the 1970s, including a striving for: abortion rights, consciousness-raising, maternity leave, and shelters for battered women as well as a fight against violence and the *Kinder-Kuche-Kirche* (Children-Kitchen-Church) ideology. Their position in favor of abortion rights was similar to that of their American counterparts. In the early 1970s, they worked to repeal Paragraph 218. In response to a law they considered repressive, many women at this time, however, performed secret abortions or arranged trips to other countries where it was legal. In 1975 a modified

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of the Equal Rights Statute, see Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 177 and Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 8.

¹⁰⁶ Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 177.

Paragraph 218 legalized abortion if a woman met specific physical or psychological conditions. But this only added to women's sense of powerlessness over their situation.¹⁰⁷

Fighting violence directed at women was an important issue for the women's movement. The radical faction maintained a strong presence around the shelter issue with almost two-thirds of the women's houses (*Frauenhauser*) run by autonomous women's groups. As opposed to the American situation, the homes accepted money from the government, foundations, or individuals only if they could remain independent from outside scrutiny in the daily operations of the homes. As most financial supporters demanded oversight in how their money was being spent, the shelters were continuously in precarious financial situations and relied heavily on volunteers.¹⁰⁸ An additional element of autonomy to the homes related to their unusual structure as non-hierarchical in which the sheltered women assisted in running the homes. The organization and support of the homes was consistent with a radical feminist agenda.

Women's centers were crucial for the consciousness-raising and self-discovery efforts of the women's movement in West Germany. These efforts led to a flourishing women's literature by the mid-1970s. The first women's publishing house, Frauenoffensive, was established in 1975 with its first book by Verana Stefan called *Shedding (Häutungen)*, in which a woman leaves the urban sex battles for the countryside

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of the 218 campaign, see: Doormann, "Die neue Frauenbewegung: zur Entwicklung van 1968 bis anfang der 80er Jahre," 259-61.

¹⁰⁸ An example of this difficulty in the late 1970s was the Bremen Parliament "cut their [women's shelters] funds because the women wanted to manage it autonomously." See: Delphine Brox-Brochet, "Manifesto of the 'Green' Women," in *German Feminism*, ed. Altbach et al., 316.

and rids herself of social forms of femininity.¹⁰⁹ In 1976 Ulrike Rosenbach founded the School for Creative Feminism (*Schule für Kreativen Feminismus*), which was established as an alternative art education system for women with goals similar to the Feminist Art Programs at Fresno State College and the California Institute of the Arts. For her performance work *Frauenkultur—Kontaktversuch* (*Women's Culture—Try to Contact*) of 1977, Rosenbach researched women lives and social practices in numerous cultures in an attempt to raise awareness of women's diverse experiences, as well as to find a connection among women as a group.

As part of the consciousness-raising activities in West Germany, beginning in 1976, there was an annual Summer University for Women in West Berlin at the Freie Universität.¹¹⁰ It was a conference for all women in society, from academics to housewives and office employees. The focus of the event was to discuss issues surrounding women's lives and to bring about social change. Other important consciousness-raising centers were the *Volkshochschulen* or the adult education institutions, which date back to the beginning of the twentieth century. After 1945 they served as training centers for democracy and eventually became education centers and organizing venues for women.¹¹¹ By the 1970s, the *Volkshochschulen* held official

¹⁰⁹ Verena Stefan, *Häutungen* (Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1975). For a discussion of literature see Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 14-15 and the volume *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Altbach et al.

¹¹⁰ Annemarie Tröger, "Summer Universities for Women: The Beginning of Women's Studies in Germany," trans. Beth Weckmueller, *New German Critique*, vol. 13 (Winter 1978): 175-179.

¹¹¹ They were also seen as training centers for housewives, as women were the majority of enrolled students. Small towns most likely had such a school and, for example, in the early 1980s West Berlin had ten. For a discussion of the *Volkshochschulen* see Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 9-10.

“Women’s Discussion Groups.” All of these diverse efforts were part of the self-discovery and heightened awareness of issues related to women’s personal lives and experiences that took place during the 1970s.¹¹²

The women’s movement was generally considered pacifist and when women’s involvement in the Red Army Faction (RAF) was noted, or specifically in the Baader-Meinhof group, terrorism entered into feminist discussions. After attacks on government buildings in 1977, feminists felt forced to come out with statements against violence, terrorism, and war. The women’s movement soon became aligned with anti-war and anti-nuclear efforts, along with ecological ones. It was at this point that the Green Party established itself as a union between leftist and environmental organizations. Feminist groups in West Germany were then often aligned with the Green efforts, but many were still frustrated by the lack of women’s representation and lack of support for their issues in the environmental party.¹¹³

Finally, a number of work-related issues, including maternity leave and the role of the housewife, differed significantly in West Germany from the United States. Maternity leave for working women was supported in 1970s West Germany. As German law allowed for discrimination based on sex, women were permitted separate treatment when they were pregnant. The labor a housewife expended on housework and childcare also became a major political issue for the West German feminist movement. The children-

¹¹² For a detailed discussion on feminist consciousness and awareness of feminism in general see: Klein, “The Diffusion of Consciousness” in which she discusses a 1983 study by the European Community (now the European Union) entitled: *European Men and Women in 1983* (Brussels: Commission of the European Community, 1984).

¹¹³ For a discussion of the women’s movement, peace, and the Greens, see Altbach, “The New German Women’s Movement,” 20-21. For a specific example of the struggle of a female Green Party member, see: Brox-Brochet, “Manifesto of the ‘Green’ Women,” 315-317.

kitchen-church ideology, which viewed these areas as women's domain, had been forced upon German women since the nineteenth century. Feminists considered this ideology oppressive and to impress the actual labor women did seven days per week, the idea of wages for housework became a new issue by 1977. As Edith Altbach describes the idea:

Free women for jobs and careers outside the home, made possible through reforms in child care and household services and in the division of labor by sex. The repercussions of these changes, plus a strong women's movement, will then serve to overcome the patriarchal and capitalist forms of women's oppression.¹¹⁴

Another, related strain of thought argued that motherhood was the highest calling but that the current system made women completely dependent on men. To free women, there must be compensation for motherhood. Another argument for pay for housework stated that women working at home, cooking and cleaning, were subsidizing companies who could give men lower pay because they did not need to hire someone for these duties. As unions did not represent the labor of housewives, many feminists felt it was their duty to do so.¹¹⁵ Feminists in West Germany during the late 1960s and 1970s placed greater emphasis on issues of compensation for housework and motherhood, and maternity leave, as well as treatment of victims of violence. This contrasts with the American feminists' focus on equality.

¹¹⁴ Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 17.

¹¹⁵ For a discussion on the pay for housework issue, see: Ferree, "Equality and Autonomy," 179, Altbach, "The New German Women's Movement," 16-19, and several essays in: *German Feminism*, Altbach et al., including: Gisella Boch, "Wages for Housework as a Perspective of the Women's Movement," 246-250; Alice Schwarzer, "A Salary for Housewives?" 251-253; Claudia von Werlhof, "The Proletarian is Dead, Long Live the Housewife," 254-264; and Hannelore Mabry, "The Feminist Theory of Surplus Value," 265-274.

1.4. Contrasting Environments—Summary

While the second wave women's movements in the United States, Austria, and West Germany share a number of elements, contrasts were identified, particularly in strategies for change. In the U.S. the first tactics beginning in the late 1960s were demonstrations and protests for women's rights, raising consciousness of women and the general population. Legislative action followed in the mid-1970s, and by the late 1970s, women's groups lobbied, and developed closer ties with, governmental institutions. Activities in Austria differed significantly. No protests or demonstrations took place as this type of radical action was rejected by the government and the public. Rather, a quiet social pressure forced women to work within existing institutions to bring about change. With no grassroots agitation, change was slow and often came from the top down. Leading political parties held conflicting views as to women's roles in society stalling much action (the People's Party saw women's place in the home, while the Socialist Party worked towards the emancipation of women in the workplace). The women's movement in West Germany contrasted with that in both the U.S. and in Austria in that the movement developed out of a reaction against the left's apathy towards women's issues and out of a drive toward abortion reform. The autonomous women's movement developed arguing for independent institutions for women because existing structures were not meeting their needs. For most of the 1970s, efforts focused on various consciousness-raising initiatives, but by the end of the decade, most women realized that political power was necessary to bring about lasting change in women's lives. In contrast to Austria, there was an active grassroots movement in West Germany. Unlike the U.S., the Germans did not work towards equal rights legislation.

There are also significant ideological differences between the feminist movements in the U.S., Austria, and West Germany. In the U.S. a liberal ideology dominated the second wave women's movement, which argued for equal rights whereby women took legal action to ensure equal treatment under the law in all facets of life. In Austria the dominant position of the women's movement devolved from a socialist perspective and it was through subtle prodding by the Socialist Party that changes were actually legislated. In West Germany, a radical ideology dominated the autonomous women's movement and informed their arguments for independent women's institutions because they believed that traditional patriarchal organizations ignored women's needs. The second wave women's movements in the U.S., Austria, and West Germany crossed the spectrum from liberal to socialist to radical ideologies.

While issues overlapped, resolutions found and solutions chosen depended upon the dominant ideology in each country. Abortion reform was crucial to feminists in all countries with the crux lying with women's control over their own bodies. Women's equal treatment and access to opportunities in the workplace was central to all women's movements. In the U.S. the emphasis was on equal treatment, therefore feminists did not fight for protection of pregnant women. In Austria and West Germany, this protection for women was crucial and, over the course of the 1970s, women were eligible for unpaid and, eventually, paid maternity leave. Moreover, their jobs were guaranteed if they returned within a reasonable timeframe. Finally, the issue of violence against women was not broadly addressed in any country during the 1970s, yet some action was taken in the form of shelters for women who emerged from abusive relationships. In the U.S. in the 1970s, feminists sought government funding for women's shelters, in Austria the

government ran shelters, and in West Germany feminists wanted shelters to be run independently by women, for women, making funding difficult to obtain. These are just a few of the major issues important to feminist activists during the 1970s.

CHAPTER 2

FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE: AN INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW

2.1. Performance Art—Introduction

The following section affords an overview of the development of performance art as an artistic medium in both the United States and Europe. It will provide a basic definition and description of performance art and, then, consider precursors to the medium as well as early influences and practitioners. An introduction to feminist performance art will follow and distinctions between feminist performance art practice and that of male performance artists during the 1970s will be discussed. The purpose of highlighting artists working in the medium is to place feminist performance art in an appropriate context and to understand the achievements and unique contributions of the feminist performance artists who are the focus of this dissertation.

2.2. Performance Art—A Contextual Overview

For the purposes of the present study, the term “performance art” refers to visual artists performing most often in front of a live audience in any location, sometimes with audience participation, in an event infrequently repeated.¹ A performance may also take place in a private space and then be recorded on film or in digital media for later exhibition. Performance art works can include text, music, and variety of objects, while

¹ Recently, Marina Abramovic staged five performances at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in which she repeated five well-known performance art pieces by early practitioners. This type of reenactment by an artist different from the original creator is generally unheard of among performance art practitioners. One such event on the 11th of November 2005 included a re-enactment of Valie Export’s *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik* (*Action Pants: Genital Panic*) of 1968.

their duration can last from less than a minute, to several days, to a year. These performances can be scripted but not necessarily line-for-line and traditional narrative is generally avoided. Elements of chance and improvisation can also be involved, but this tends to be more integrated or controlled within the composition of the performances of the 1960s.

The art historian Henry Sayre described the difference between performance art and theater as one in which the performance artist plays the part of herself or himself, while in theater the actor takes on the character of a different person:

The notion of acting, then, contains an element of difference—the difference between who you are, the artist, and what you play, the image. And this is the essential distinction between performance and theater as media.²

When performance artists realized a work in the 1960s and 1970s, they were typically themselves. A number of performance artists have portrayed various personas, but in these cases the fact of the role-playing is made evident.³

Some artists consider the performance itself the sole work of art and any recording of the event, through photography or video, as documentary evidence. Other artists view the documents as related, yet independent, artworks which may be as important as the performance itself. Historically, the images of performance work have

² Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 79.

³ For example, Eleanor Antin's *Portrait of the King* (1972) in which she plays the King of Solana Beach, California or any of the characters of Paul McCarthy, as in *Trunks* (1973-83) or *Sailor's Meat* (1975).

come to be even more important to art historians than the work itself given the ephemeral nature of performance.⁴

The term “performance art” was used by the late 1960s in the United States and it was only in the early 1970s that the term appeared in Europe to describe actions and performances by visual artists. In Europe, the terms “actions” and “action art” were widely preferred over the term “performance art.” Early European performance art often displayed an activist component and many found the term action art better suited as a descriptor. Moreover, action art better connotes a singular event, than does the term performance art, which may be confused with theater, along with its scripted dialogue and tightly directed movement.⁵

Performance art, as a contemporary genre, does not belong to any particular movement, but rather has been developing as a more or less independent art form since the late 1950s. However, artists have been involved with performance in some form since at least the beginning of the twentieth century, as in the events of the Futurists, Russian Constructivists, Dadaists, and Surrealists.⁶ RoseLee Goldberg’s pioneering study on

⁴ Artists may sell these objects and museums have come to collect them. For the reaction of one art historian working from documents when studying performance, see Amelia Jones, “‘Presence’ in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation,” *Art Journal*, vol. 56, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 11-18. For a discussion of the relationship between performance and photography, see: *Photography as Performance: Message through Object and Picture* (London: Photographers’ Gallery, 1986) and *Photography & Performance* (Boston: Photography Resource Center, 1989).

⁵ See: Elisabeth Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess: Handbuch der Aktionskunst in Europa* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1993), 9, for European terminology, and *Studio International* 192, no. 982 (July/August 1976), a special issue devoted to performance, especially Georg Jappe, “Performance Art in Germany: An Introduction,” 59-61. Georg Jappe wrote that the terms “action” and “demonstration” were used in Germany, not “performance.”

⁶ Artists in earlier periods were also involved with performances and performance-like events. For example, during the Renaissance artists would be employed in the service of the ruling classes to organize fantastical events. This was recently explored as part of the exhibition

performance art, *Performance: Live Art, 1909 to the Present*, traces a history back to the Futurists, and she argues that artists of the historical avant-garde, in the early twentieth century, turned first to performance to experiment with new ideas, which were later applied to physical objects.⁷

Others writing on performance art, such as Paul Schimmel in the exhibition catalogue *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-79*, look past the early twentieth century to mid-century artists like Jackson Pollock (United States), John Cage (United States), Lucio Fontana (Italy), and Shozo Shimamoto (Japan) for the “origins” of performance art.⁸ Schimmel frames performance art within a polemic of the object versus the act, identifying these artists as marking the beginning of a move from the primacy of the object in modern art to an all-important artistic act.⁹ Pollock’s dripping, Cage’s inaction, Fontana’s slashing, and Shimamoto’s cutting all represent a shift of attention whereby the process of art making became just as crucial as the final object.

Several other European and American artists engaged the act of painting as the focus of their artistic production. Associated with Nouveau Réalisme in France, Yves Klein (France) is considered by many to be the originator of performance art in Europe

Magnificenza! The Medici, Michelangelo and the Art of Late Renaissance Florence at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 16 March-8 June 2003.

⁷ RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, rev. and enlarged ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 8, originally published as *Performance: Live Art, 1909 to the Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979).

⁸ Paul Schimmel, “Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object,” *Out of Actions: between performance and the object, 1949-1979*, ed. Paul Schimmel (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art and Thames and Hudson, 1998), 18-25.

⁹ It bears noting that Marcel Duchamp’s work pursued the concept of the artistic act much earlier in the century.

and his *Anthropométries* series, begun in 1958, were directly related to the primacy of the act.¹⁰ In this group of works, he applied his patented International Klein Blue (IKB) paint to women's nude bodies and directed them to press or move their bodies against sheets of paper. Their nude female bodies, as extensions of the artist's own body and intentions, functioned as human paintbrushes. When emphasis moved from the object to the act, Klein, as well as a number of other male artists, still found a way to include the nude female body in their work. With the female nude on canvas no longer fashionable, she was instead manipulated, powerless in the act of painting itself.¹¹ Different from Klein's work, yet indicating a related focus on the act of painting, Niki de Saint Phalle (France/United States) shot a gun at paint-filled balloons attached to assemblage covered canvases beginning in 1961. These works that she called *tirs* brought an element of chance into the final piece and their production was often photographed.

The focus on the creative act also extended to sculpture, as in the work of Jean Tinguely (Switzerland), a friend of Klein's and husband of Saint Phalle's who, like Klein, exhibited at the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris. In 1959, Tinguely began his *méta-matics* or drawing machines, which were mechanically activated to produce drawings without the artist's hand directly touching the surface. The images were child-like and the machines often ran until they destroyed themselves. The artist was notorious in the United States

¹⁰ The following all cite Klein's importance for the origins of European performance art: Lea Vergine, *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*, rev. ed. (Milan: Skira Editore, 2000), 12, originally published as *Il Corpo Come Linguaggio (La "Body-art" e Storie simili)* (Milan: Giampaolo Prearo Editore, 1974); Lucy Lippard, "The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women's Body Art," *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976), 122; Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess*, 15-16; and Schimmel, "Leap into the Void," 31-6.

¹¹ Klein also used his own nude body in this series, though rarely, as in *Untitled Anthropométrie with Male and Female Figures* (1960).

for his *Homage to New York*, a machine that self-destructed in the Museum of Modern Art's garden in 1961.

The late 1950s and early 1960s ushered in a burst of performance activity both in the United States and in Europe. With the development of Happenings, a break with painting was established and the creative act stood independently. Allan Kaprow (United States) described the direction the new art of performance was taking in his 1958 essay responding to the death of Jackson Pollock entitled "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock":

Pollock, as I see him, left us at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-second Street. Not satisfied with the suggestion through paint of our other senses, we shall utilize the specific substances of sight, sound, movements, people, odors, touch. Objects of every sort are materials for the new art: paint, chairs, food, electric and neon lights, smoke, water, old socks, a dog, movies, a thousand other things that will be discovered by the present generation of artists. Not only will these bold creators show us, as if for the first time, the world we have always had about us but ignored, but they will disclose entirely unheard of happenings and events, found in garbage cans, police files, hotel lobbies; seen in store windows and on the streets...

Young artists of today need no longer say, "I am a painter" or "a poet" or "a dancer." They are simply "artists." All of life will be open to them.¹²

Kaprow, more than any other artist or critic, predicted the direction performance art would take in the coming decades.

In 1959, Kaprow held his first Happening at the Reuben Gallery in New York with the work entitled *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*. At the event, audience members were given three cards with instructions:

¹² Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 7-9.

The performance is divided into six parts... Each part contains three happenings which occur at once. The beginning and end of each will be signaled by a bell. At the end of the performance two strokes of the bell will be heard... There will be no applause after each set, but you may applaud after the sixth set if you wish.¹³

The audience was also told when to move between rooms constructed with semitransparent plastic sheets, which had been painted and collaged. In this tightly scripted work, he gave audience members specific instructions making it, at that date, the most extensive artwork to involve spectators. Happenings are often regarded as an American phenomenon that spread to other countries, yet some have argued that there was instead a spontaneous eruption of performance activity throughout the west by the early 1960s with audience participation being a key characteristic of such work.¹⁴

While Happenings were conceived initially in part as a response to the second generation of New York School action painters, the activities of Fluxus artists were more closely related to those of John Cage.¹⁵ While Happenings consisted of a process set in motion with the resulting performance based heavily on audience response, Fluxus events were tightly scripted and controlled by the artists, though a strong spectator reaction was

¹³ Allan Kaprow cited in Adrian Henri, "Allan Kaprow," *Total Art: Environments, Happenings, and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 90-91, quoted in Schimmel, "Leap into the Void," 61. Kaprow was also influenced by some of John Cage's ideas; Kaprow had been a student of Cage's at the New School for Social Research in New York in the late 1950s.

¹⁴ For a European perspective on Happenings in the U.S. and in Europe, see: Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess*, especially 17-19.

¹⁵ The term Fluxus was coined by the movement's self-appointed leader George Maciunas (Estonia/United States) in 1961 based on the word "flux," referring to change and flow. Schimmel, "Leap into the Void," 71. For a period discussion of these groups, see: *Happenings, Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme: Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, 1965). While the documentary information and photographs are of value, the work of not one woman is discussed. For a more recent exhibition catalogue, see: *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, essays by Simon Anderson et al., organized by Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993).

often sought.¹⁶ Contact with the ideas of John Cage was important for a number of the Fluxus group members, including the connection with music. George Brecht, for one, had taken classes with Cage at the New School for Social Research in New York. Brecht went on to write instructions for his performance pieces, such as *Three Aqueous Events* (1961), as musical scores and to call them performance sculptures. The technique of describing and scripting performances in ways similar to musical scores was a characteristic of a number of Fluxus artists' work.¹⁷

Fluxus was international in scope, brought together artists from different countries, and held events in a variety of locations. Nam June Paik (Korea) often culled classical and avant-garde music sources as well as Dada and electronic technology. At the Fluxus International Festival of Very New Music held in Wiesbaden Germany in 1962, Paik performed La Monte Young's 1960 composition *Zen for Head*, which had the following score: "Draw a straight line and follow it." In Paik's interpretation he dipped his head in ink and painted a line on a scroll-like paper unrolled on the floor.¹⁸ After moving to New York in 1964, Paik often performed with Charlotte Moorman (United States), a classically trained cellist. Their work together revolved around music, as in *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (1969) in which Moorman wore a bra of two small televisions sets while playing the cello. After moving to the United States in the 1950s, Yoko Ono

¹⁶ For a comparative analysis on Fluxus and Happenings, see: Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess*, 17-22, especially 19.

¹⁷ Other prominent Fluxus members include: Dick Higgins, Allison Knowles, Robert Filliou, Shigeko Kubota, La Monte Young, among others.

¹⁸ The Fluxus International Festival of Very New Music was organized by George Maciunas. For a discussion of Paik's work, see: Schimmel, "Leap into the Void," 72-75 and *Nam June Paik: Fluxus, Video*, ed. Wulf Herzogenrath (Bremen: Kunsthalle Bremen, 1999).

(Japan) became involved with Fluxus; Cagean ideas provided a route from her music into visual art. Ono's proto-feminist performance *Cut Piece* (1964) was first performed at Yamaichi Concert Hall in Kyoto. Dressed in a suit, she sat on her heels in the middle of the stage in a state of contemplation and invited the audience to cut away pieces of her clothing with a pair of scissors. The remarkable sense of sexual tension and danger in the piece resulted in repeat performances at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York (1965) and at the Destruction in Art Symposium in London (1966).¹⁹

Joseph Beuys, based in Düsseldorf, was an influential artist and teacher in Europe who worked with sculpture and performance. After involvement with early European Fluxus events, he quickly ended any association because he felt that Fluxus was ineffective at initiating real social change. A German who fought at the eastern front during World War II, Beuys created a mythology that while he was a pilot he was shot down and saved by the Tartars in the Crimea who invited him to be one of their own.²⁰ Beuys' work and persona entailed a ritualistic, shamanistic form of performance art that several other artists also pursued. The objects he often used in his performances—chalkboards, felt, hats, canes, fat, pianos, a hare, among others—subsequently became relics regarded as individual sculptural works. He believed in a concept of “social sculpture,” meaning that everyone has the power to shape the world in which he or she lives and in this sense everyone is an artist—or at least has the potential to be one. He felt

¹⁹ A good recent exhibition catalogue is Alexandra Munroe with Jon Hendricks, *Yes Yoko Ono* (New York: Japan Society: Harry N. Abrams, 2000).

²⁰ According to Benjamin Buchloh, however, the myth really exposed a developing artist in 1950s Germany coming to terms with one of the worst moments in human history and his own involvement in those events. See: Benjamin Buchloh, “Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol,” *Artforum*, vol. XVIII, no.5 (January 1980): 35-43.

that art and life should be better integrated and that art had the potential to heal. For *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965), performed in the Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf, Beuys covered his face with gold leaf and quietly described the pictures on the wall to the dead animal in his arms. Though morbid, the work addressed complex issues surrounding death and evinced a sense of ambivalence in dealing with an unaesthetic subject matter.²¹

While less political than Beuys, the artists associated with the Viennese Actionists (*Weiner Aktionsgruppe*) were equally important for performance art in Europe. Formed in 1965, its members included Günter Brus, Otto Mühl, Hermann Nitsch, and Rudolf Schwarzkogler, all of whom had performed individually since at least 1962 after working in other media. Their performances share a ritualistic use of music, animal blood and carcasses, food, viscous material, ropes, plastic, nude women, and themselves. Interested in early twentieth-century Viennese artists (such as Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka, Gustav Mahler, and Arnold Schönberg), the cult of Dionysus, rituals of the Catholic Church, and the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the artists composed excessive and ritualistic work, which often garnered police attention. The work frequently focused on sexual and religious taboos as a reaction against the strong social controls in Vienna, the dominance of the Catholic Church, and social repression after

²¹ For a focus on Beuys' performance art, see: Uwe M. Schneede, *Joseph Beuys, die Aktionen: Kommentiertes Werkverzeichnis mit fotografischen Dokumentationen* (Ostfildern-Ruit bei Stuttgart: G. Hatje, 1994); *Ein Gespräch = Una discussione: Joseph Beuys, Jannis Kounellis, Anselm Kiefer, Enzo Cucchi*, ed. Jacqueline Burckhardt (Zurich: Parkett-Verlag, 1986); and Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess*, 23-24. For a comparative analysis, set in an economic and political context, of Beuys with key figures in twentieth-century art, see: Thierry de Duve, *Cousus de fil d'or: Beuys, Warhol, Klein, Duchamp* (Villeurbanne: Art édition, 1990).

World War Two.²² In Mühl's *Material Action No. 1: Degradation of Venus* (1963), for instance, the artist threw paint and garbage over a woman's nude body as she stood against a background of junk collages, thus assuming the role of aggressor towards the woman as victim. In 1968, the Actionists had been invited to a political discussion at the University of Vienna and Brus performed *Art and Revolution*, which forced him into exile in Germany to avoid a six-month prison sentence. During the event, Brus removed his clothes, stood on a chair, cut his chest with a razor blade, urinated into a cup and drank it, defecated and smeared feces on his body, and masturbated on the floor while singing the Austrian national anthem. Typical of the aggressive nature of the Viennese Actionists' work, this piece attacked social taboos associated with cleanliness and sexuality.

In New York City the activities of the Judson Dance Theater provided performance artists alternatives to the traditional visual arts, though its role is sometimes overlooked.²³ The name Judson was originally applied to the dancers and choreographers who participated in Robert Dunn's dance class at the Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village and included Simone Forti, Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, Judith Dunn, Deborah Hay, Fred Herko, David Gordon, Yvonne Rainer, and Elaine Summers. The first dance and performance events took place at the Church on July 6, 1962 and generally

²² Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess*, 22; Hubert Klocker, "Gesture and the Object, Liberation as Aktion: A European Component of Performative Art," in Schimmel, *Out of Actions*, 167-191; *Bildkompendium Wiener Aktionismus und Film*, ed. Peter Weibel and Valie Export (Frankfurt: Kohl Kunstverlag, 1970); and Kerstin Braun, *Der Wiener Aktionismus: Positionen und Prinzipien* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999).

²³ For example, the *Out of Actions* exhibition and catalogue failed to adequately discuss the role the Judson Dance Theater played in the development of performance art and a number of visual artists involvement with the group's activities.

marked the beginning of post-modern dance in the United States. Additional members, including visual artists, soon included Robert Morris, Alan Hay, Lucinda Childs, and Robert Rauschenberg, while Carolee Schneemann was later involved with a number of Judson held events including her own *Meat Joy* in 1964. The diverse composition of people involved with the Judson Dance Theater reflected the expansion of dance to include visual artists, musicians, and filmmakers.

The Judson group challenged specific dance traditions including the highly trained and detailed movements of classical ballet. Moreover, there was an effort to remove traditional time structures and narrative from dance choreography, while working in a collective development process. New elements included the use of everyday actions, such as walking and sitting, performed without the usual technical precision of dance. By introducing banal actions from everyday experience into the realm of dance, the Judson members paralleled visual artists' use of everyday objects in their work, as in the proto-Pop and Pop Art movements. A representative example of the work produced includes Rainer's *Trio A* (1966) in which everyday movements were performed by ordinary people of varying sizes and shapes. Dressed in casual street clothing and seemingly oblivious to the audience's presence, the dancers performed without a narrative or music. The Judson Dance Theater exemplified the 1960s as a period in which artists worked in interdisciplinary ways and the boundaries between mediums and art forms were made fluid.²⁴

²⁴ The most informative book on the early years of the Judson Dance Theater is by a dance historian, Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-1964* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

Performance art came into its own as an independent medium in the late 1960s and 1970s, which is also when “performance art” became a commonly used term.²⁵

Goldberg regards the heyday of performance art to be the 1970s:

Performance became accepted as a medium of artistic expression in its own right in the 1970s. At that time, conceptual art—which insisted on an art of ideas over product, and on an art that could not be bought and sold—was in its heyday and performance was often a demonstration, or an execution, of those ideas. Performance thus became the most tangible art form of the period.²⁶

Goldberg rightly observed the rejection of the commoditization of art objects by many artists which included an embrace of the evanescence of performance. Some artists turned away from traditional exhibition venues and art world values as they moved towards alternative forms of expression. The medium of performance, which often took place in new alternative spaces—even the streets—entailed these new challenges. In the United States important locations for the growth in performance included New York City on the East coast and California, especially Los Angeles, on the West coast. In Europe, Amsterdam, particularly De Appel Stichting (the Appel Foundation founded in 1975), as well as Cologne and Düsseldorf were important centers of performance art activity.

During the 1970s, there were fewer, regularly scheduled international exhibitions than there are today. However, when such exhibitions were organized, performance art often played a significant part of the program. For example, Documenta in Kassel, Germany became an increasingly important international event where artists from different generations and countries came together, shared ideas, and showed performance

²⁵ Jappe argues that the term was first used to describe the work of Vito Acconci and Bruce Nauman in the late 1960s. Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess*, 24.

²⁶ See: Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 7 and Jappe, *Performance, Ritual, Prozess*, especially 28-32.

art, among other media. At Document 5 in 1972, for example, the following artists participated with performance art pieces: Rebecca Horn (West Germany), Hermann Nitsch, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, George Brecht (West Germany/United States), Robert Filliou (France), Joan Jonas (United States), Vito Acconci (United States), La Monte Young (United States), Terry Fox (United States), and Dan Graham (United States), among others. At Documenta 6 in 1977, performance artists included: Laurie Anderson (United States), Dennis Oppenheim (United States), Allan Kaprow (United States), Valie Export, Friederike Pezold (Austria), Ulrike Rosenbach, Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell (West Germany), Ben d'Armagnac (Belgium), Shigeo Kubota (Japan), Marina Abramovic (b. Yugoslavia), Ulay (West Germany), and Joan Jonas, among many others.²⁷ The large international exhibitions, like Documenta, sometimes showed feminist performance work, but it was rarely indicated as such, especially in Europe. Early in the feminist art movement, this performance work was often presented independent of larger art venues. Organizers frequently had to resort to women-only shows, indicative of the difficulties to exhibit early feminist art.

²⁷ Florian Matzner, *Künstlerlexicon mit Registern zur Documenta 1-8* (Kassel: Verlag Weber & Weidemeyer/Documenta Archiv für die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts, 1987), 301-303, 316-317. Some of the pieces by the artists listed were submitted in the form of video recordings. See also: *Documenta 5: Befragung der Realität, Bildwelten heute* (Kassel: Verlag Documenta GmbH/Verlagsgruppe Bertelsmann GmbH, 1972), especially 16.86-16.138, and *Documenta 6, Band 1: Malerei, Plastik, Performance* (Kassel: P. Dierich, 1977), 285-317 ("Performances/Aktionen").

2.3. The 1970s—Feminist Performance Art and the Feminist Art Movements

2.3.1 Feminist Art

Guided by the actions of women's movements, feminist art developed as a recognizable force in the 1970s, even though some feminist art activity already began in the 1960s in the United States and Europe. Diverse in its manifestations, the feminist art movements in the 1970s generally worked towards greater recognition for the work of contemporary women artists and those of the past, while protesting the lack of support from, and representation in, galleries, museums, art schools, and other art world institutions. A new awareness and valuation of traditional art-making by women, which was conventionally relegated to the distinctly separate and less valued realm of craft, took place. Moreover, performance art and video attracted feminist artists of the period as they represented new mediums free of male-dominated styles and traditions. These endeavors often incorporated the consciousness-raising efforts of the new women's movements throughout the United States and Europe.

The years 1970 through 1974 marked the most active political period in the U.S. art world with respect to women's issues—a time of strikes, marches, and protest letters.²⁸ The Art Workers Coalition (AWC) formed and protested events such as the

²⁸ Randy Rosen, "Moving into the Mainstream," and Thomas McEvilley, "Redirecting the Gaze," in *Making their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-85*, Randy Rosen, Curator and Catherine C. Brawer, Associate Curator (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), 12-14 and 187-9, respectively; Lawrence Alloway, "Women's Art in the '70s," *Art in America*, vol. 64 (May-June 1976): 64-72; a special issues of *ARTnews* "Where are the Great Men Artists?" (October 1980); and Mary D. Garrard, "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations," in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 88-103.

The Power of Feminist Art, Making Their Mark, and Art and Feminism, ed. Helena Reckitt (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2001) provide general surveys of the women's art movement mainly in the U.S. The latter also provides a selection of important feminist (art) texts, but often in abbreviated form. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock's *Framing Feminism: Art and*

Vietnam War. Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) broke off from the AWC to work against the inequity women faced in the art world. In 1970, WAR's activities included writing protest letters to the Museum of Modern Art in New York regarding its policies, and to the Whitney Museum of American Art for denying equal representation to women in its Annual—that year only 8 of 143 artists in the show were women. The Ad Hoc Committee of Women Artists was formed in 1970 by Brenda Miller, Faith Ringgold, Poppy Johnson, and Lucy Lippard. One of their first activities was to picket the Whitney Museum to demand a 50% representation of women in the Annual. The exclusion of women from the large *Art and Technology* exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1971 also caused an uproar, which brought about the founding of the Los Angeles Council of Women. In 1972, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., was picketed for the lack of women artists in its biennial bringing about the first National Conference on Women in the Visual Arts held at the museum. That same year, women members of the College Art Association formed the Women's Caucus for Art.

Feminist artists, critics, and historians questioned all facets of the established art community, including education. Understanding the limits of traditional art programs, Judy Chicago founded the Feminist Art Program at Fresno State University in California in 1970, and subsequently co-founded the Feminist Art Program with Miriam Schapiro at the California Institute of the Arts in 1971.²⁹ *Womanhouse* (1972) was one of the most important events resulting from the CalArts collaboration, and it included some of the

the Women's Movement 1970-1985 (London: Pandora, 1987) offers a survey of Great Britain; surveys on other European countries are lacking.

²⁹ For a detailed discussion of the Feminist Art Program, see: Faith Wilding, "The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts, 1970-75," *The Power of Feminist Art*, 32-47.

earliest feminist performance artworks.³⁰ The event, organized by Chicago, Schapiro, and Faith Wilding, transformed a condemned house into an art installation site that centered on traditional activities within the home, mainly women's private experiences. As new subject matter for art—the personal spaces of women's lives—it challenged the traditional boundaries of visual art.³¹ This exhibition inspired a number of women's groups to come together, and it led to the opening of the Woman's Building in Los Angeles in 1973.³²

Given the exclusion of women artists by mainstream art institutions, women in the United States organized numerous exhibitions and founded alternative spaces for showing women's work. Some curators and art historians focused on art by women of the past. These recuperative efforts culminated in exhibitions like “Women Artists: 1550-1950” of 1976-77, organized by Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris, and presented a large historical overview proving the blatant omission of women artists over centuries.³³ Women artists, art historians, and critics were not about to let these omissions

³⁰ See: *Womanhouse* (Valencia: California Institute of the Arts, Feminist Art Program, 1972); Miriam Schapiro, “The Education of Women as Artists: Project Womanhouse,” *Art Journal*, vol. 31, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 268-70; and Arlene Raven, “Womanhouse,” *The Power of Feminist Art*, 48-65. For a European perspective of *Womanhouse*, see: Gisland Nabakowski, “Das ›Womanhouse‹. Scharfe Kritik an der domestizierten Phantasie. Ein Gruppenenvironment,” in Nabakowski, Helke Sander, and Peter Gorsen, *Frauen in der Kunst*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1980), 224-236.

³¹ Earlier depictions of the spaces of women's lives are to be found in the Impressionist paintings of Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt during the latter nineteenth century. See: Griselda Pollock, *Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988), 50-90.

³² Rosen, “Moving into the Mainstream,” in *Making Their Mark*, 14. For an early description of the Woman's Building, see: Lucy Lippard, “The L.A. Woman's Building,” *Art in America*, vol. 62, no. 3 (May-June 1974), reprinted in Lippard, *From the Center*, 96-100.

³³ This exhibition was held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the University Art Museum, the University of Texas at Austin; Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; and

continue and many were actively involved in promoting and exhibiting art by contemporary women, including specifically feminist art. “Mod Donn Art, 11 Women Artists” held at the Public Theater in Manhattan in 1970 constituted one of the earliest exhibitions of contemporary feminist art. The following year, “Twenty-Six Contemporary Women Artists” curated by Lucy Lippard was shown at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield, Connecticut raising awareness of women’s art of the period.³⁴ New, alternative exhibition venues were opened in the United States, including the establishment of AIR (Artists-in-Residence) in New York in 1972, a women artists’ cooperative that exhibited women’s work and held numerous lectures designed to help develop a language for understanding and discussing new feminist work. Other important venues for exhibiting women’s work opened throughout the country in 1973: Soho 20 in New York, Artemesia and ARC in Chicago, and Womenspace Gallery in the Women’s Building in Los Angeles. In addition, the new women’s arts organizations began to mount their own shows, increasing the visibility of women’s and feminist art.³⁵

While the feminist art movement in the United States was extremely active by the early 1970s, it was not until mid-decade that such activities were evident in most of

the Brooklyn Museum of Art. See the exhibition catalogue: *Women Artists: 1550-1950*, ed. Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1976).

³⁴ Rosen, “Moving into the Mainstream,” 14. See: Lucy Lippard, *Twenty-Six Contemporary Women Artists* (Ridgefield, Connecticut: Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 1971), catalogue preface reprinted in Lucy Lippard, *From the Center*, 38-42.

³⁵ For a discussion of exhibition spaces in the U.S., see: Judith K. Brodsky, “Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces,” *The Power of Feminist Art*, 104-119.

Europe.³⁶ However, a cohesive movement in many countries was missing, as the German art historian Anette Kubitza described: “Although European artists often work together in groups or on special projects, and although there have been some landmark exhibitions of feminist art in Europe, there has not been a close-knit women’s art community there.”³⁷ In Austria, for example, there was no organized feminist art movement, as even the new women’s movement had to work in subtle ways to promote their interests. In Germany, the autonomous women’s movement was financially constrained between supporting local initiatives to assist women in their daily lives and working on consciousness-raising activities, which left little room for feminist art. Yet, a number of feminist art groups, exhibitions, exhibition venues, and magazines in European countries formed mostly after 1975. For example, in The Netherlands the Stichting Vrouwen in de Beeldende Kunst (SVBK or Women in the Visual Arts Foundation) was established in 1977 based on feminist principles.

While in the United States the feminist movement was a cultural movement as well, in Europe politics and art had a more complicated relationship. This situation added to the later development of feminist art and of feminist art history in Europe.³⁸ Valie Export described it as follows: “The position of art in the women’s movement matches

³⁶ See, for example: *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979), 3.

³⁷ Anette Kubitza, “Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, ed. Amelia Jones (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 152.

³⁸ See Kathleen Wentrack, “Introduction”; Kubitza, “Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” especially 151; and Helke Sander, “Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Kunst und Politik,” in *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn*, ed. Silvia Eiblmayr, Valie Export, and Monika Prischl-Maier (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1985), 89-92.

the position of women in art.”³⁹ In addition, the male dominated tradition of art and its history was not immediately viewed as an outlet for political agitation by many feminists or feminist artists in Europe, as Kubitza explains:

This fear may originate in the ambivalent relationship of the left, the cradle of the second wave of the European women’s movement, to art. Many feminists simply left unquestioned the left’s general attitude toward art as being primarily a bourgeois form of expression and hence inconsistent with its political agenda.⁴⁰

Many European feminist artists were suspicious of any feminist art that attempted to define a female aesthetic, a popular notion among some artists in the United States in the 1970s.⁴¹ This skepticism even extended to representational or narrative modes of working, which were popular among some feminist artists in the United States. Some artists in Europe who created feminist work often denied having such interests for fear that it would hinder their success. These attitudes limited the growth of more unified feminist art movements in most European countries. The exception to this would be the development of the feminist art movement in the United Kingdom, which held protests and feminist art exhibitions, and saw the establishment of some feminist organizations parallel to those in the United States early in the 1970s.⁴² In London the Women’s Art

³⁹ Valie Export, “Woman’s Art: A Manifesto,” in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 755, originally published in German as “Woman’s Art: Ein Manifest,” *Neues Forum*, no. 228 (January 1973): 73.

⁴⁰ Kubitza, “Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” 152.

⁴¹ For example, see Kubitza, “Rereading the Readings of *The Dinner Party* in Europe,” 152 and Silvia Bovenschen, “Über die Frage: Gibt es eine weibliche Ästhetik?” *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 25 (1976): 74, for an English translation, see: “Is There a ‘Female’ Aesthetic?” in *Feminist Aesthetics*, ed. Gisela Ecker (London: Women’s Press, 1985), 23-50.

⁴² In addition to their analytical essays, Parker and Pollock’s *Framing Feminism* includes historical documents and articles on the feminist art movement in the United Kingdom.

History Collective was formed in 1972 and focused on group teaching, study, and research projects. Another early effort was the Women's Workshop of the Artists' Union, which worked to support feminist artists and to end the isolation that many of them felt. The examples laid out by feminist art activists in the United States often provided models and a basis for women artists in the United Kingdom and Europe.

European feminists organized numerous exhibitions of art by women and specifically feminist work beginning in the 1970s, but, in contrast with the United States, these events were held later in the decade. Despite the lack of an organized feminist art movement in Austria, two of the earliest feminist exhibitions were organized there: "Magna. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität" ("Magna. Feminism: Art and Creativity") in Vienna and "Frauen, Kunst, Neue Tendenzen" ("Women, Art, New Trends") in Innsbruck, both in 1975.⁴³ In Rome, Italy in 1976, "Art and Feminism" was part of the larger international exhibition: "Intorno all Ideologia" ("Around Ideology").⁴⁴ "Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977" ("International Women Artists, 1877-1977"), held in Berlin, Germany in 1977, aimed to write a history of women artists who had too long been ignored by mainstream art history.⁴⁵

Another important exhibition took place in Amsterdam and throughout Holland entitled "Feministische Kunst Internationaal" ("International Feminist Art"). The first part of the exhibition was held from 29 November 1978 to 31 January 1979 at De Appel

⁴³ *Magna. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität* (Vienna: Galerie nächst St. Stephan, 1975) and *Frauen, Kunst, Neue Tendenzen* (Innsbruck: Galerie Krinzinger, 1975).

⁴⁴ *Art and Feminism* (Rome: Palazzo Esposizioni, 1976).

⁴⁵ *Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauen in der Kunst (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977). This project had goals similar to the previously cited "Women Artists: 1550-1950" exhibition.

Foundation in Amsterdam with a focus on performance art, video, and film.⁴⁶ The second installation traveled to seven locations throughout The Netherlands between November 1979 and February 1981 and was devoted to American and European feminist art and covered the media of painting, drawing, sculpture, graphics, photography, textile, and pottery.⁴⁷ The organizers selected work by international contemporary artists that elicited feminist content, as described by the Dutch art historian Marlite Halbertsma:

Feminist engagement of the *female artist* is not the most important, but rather the feminist expression of the *artwork*. It is about a woman's interests, her problems, her expectations, her experiences, her dreams, her sorrow, her individuality and that everything is formulated in a stimulating manner, to cause reflection and incite action and change—that is feminist art. Feminist art is giving form to feminist consciousness *and* the dissemination of feminist consciousness.⁴⁸

In contrast to the Berlin exhibition, the Dutch show demanded that their chosen work presented feminist content.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Feministische Kunst Internationaal: Performances, Video, Film, Dokumentatie* (Amsterdam: De Appel Foundation, 1978). See also Marga van Mechelen's forthcoming book on the history of De Appel Foundation from 1975 to 1983 that will be published by De Appel Foundation in 2006. The "Feministische Kunst Internationaal" exhibition is discussed in Chapter 5, "Two Special Events: *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (1978-1979) and *Works and Words* (1979)."

⁴⁷ *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979).

⁴⁸ "Centraal staat niet in de eerste plaats het feministische engagement van de *kunstenaars*, maar de feministische uitspraak van het *kunstwerk*."

Het gaat om de belangen van de vrouw, haar problemen, haar verwachtingen, haar ervaringen, haar dromen, haar woede, haar individualiteit en dat alles op een wijze geformuleerd die stimulerend is, tot nadenken stemt en tot actie en verandering aanzet—dat is feministische kunst. Feministische kunst is het vorm geven aan het feministische bewustzijn en het uitdragen van een feministisch bewustzijn." Marlite Halbertsma, "Feministische kunst—een verkennende inleiding," *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979), 7. The translation is my own.

⁴⁹ By the 1980s, numerous other exhibitions and organizations sprouted to support and promote feminist art. For example, held in Vienna in 1985 "Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn" comprised the work of contemporary women artists from Europe and North America and presented ten performance art pieces. *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn*, ed. Eiblmayr, Export, and Prischl-Maier.

In connection with the first installation of the “Feministische Kunst Internationaal” show, a panel discussion was held on the 10th of December 1978 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam that included a number of artists and art historians from the United States and Europe. This panel needs to be mentioned as it considered feminist art from an international perspective. The American art historian and critic Lucy Lippard and the German art historian Celia Rentmeister participated and their two positions on the state of feminism and art delineated some difference between their respective countries. Rentmeister maintained that since the art world was male dominated, so were its aesthetic standards. She argued for a completely new conception of art and its practices to meet feminist needs, and then new aesthetic standards could be applied. In many ways, this position relates to the autonomous women’s movement in Germany that sought separate institutions and social structures for women. From a different position Lippard stated that what was first needed was a cataloguing and promotion of women’s art. Lippard’s position was a more open, even democratic, approach to feminist art and art by women.⁵⁰

Some European feminists were also concerned with art education. For example, Ulrike Rosenbach established the Schule für kreativen Feminismus (The School for Creative Feminism) in Cologne, Germany, which she founded and directed from 1976 until 1982, after her engagement at CalArts and contact with the Feminist Art Program. In 1975, John Baldessari had invited Rosenbach to “take care of the ‘girls’” and teach her

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the positions of Lippard and Rentmeister at this panel, see: Chapter 5 in van Mechelen’s forthcoming book on De Appel Foundation. See also: Antje von Graevenitz, “Halverwege het feministische kunstseizoen,” *Museumjournaal*, vol. 24, no. 1 (February 1979): 29-32; Rosa Lindenburg, “Feminisme en Kunst in Nederland,” *Opzij* (December 1978): 41; and Flavio Pons, “Feministische Kunst International: Panel discussion organized by Stichting de Appel, Stedelijk Museum, December 10 1978,” typed report in the “Feministische Kunst Internationaal” papers, archives of De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam.

“video-live-performance” method for two semesters at CalArts after Judy Chicago left.⁵¹ In her Schule für kreativen Feminismus, Rosenbach held workshops consisting of four-month long semesters, where female artists came together to discuss their work and problems. She wanted to address the cultural history of women, provide training in self-awareness and consciousness-raising, and explore practical applications for feminist ideologies in creative work.⁵²

Different from Continental Europe, the United Kingdom experienced an earlier feminist art movement, which entailed a number of exhibitions. The first “Women’s Liberation Art Group” show was held in March 1971 at the Woodstock Gallery in London and included women from the UK. One of the artists, Liz Moore, wrote a statement for the exhibition that highlighted the increased awareness of fellow artists and the potential community the women could hope for:

Women artists are making contact with each other, coming out of their isolation. We are beginning to acknowledge the validity of our own and each other’s work; to learn to do without male approval, to be proud to show in the company of each other. We are learning to provide each other with the confidence to explore and develop our own vision of a new consciousness.⁵³

⁵¹ Ulrike Rosenbach, interview by author via email, 27 September 2005. When Chicago left, a number of female students were still working on feminist art and Rosenbach was invited to work with them. Rosenbach knew Baldessari from earlier contact in Düsseldorf.

⁵² Ulrike Rosenbach, “Feminismus und Kunst: Auszüge aus einem Gespräch mit Amine Haase, 1982,” Ulrike Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, Feministische Kunst* (Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982), 135. See also: Ulrike Rosenbach, *Schule für Kreativen Feminismus: Beispiel einer autonomen Kulturarbeit* (Cologne: Schule für Kreativen Feminismus, 1980) and Lidewij Reckman, “Samen sterk: Voorbeelden van samenwerking in de feministische kunst,” *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979), 57.

⁵³ Liz Moore, statement for the first *Women’s Liberation Art Group* exhibition in *Towards a Revolutionary Feminist Art*, no. 1 (1972): 1. Quoted in *Framing Feminism*, 4.

These sentiments were similar to those of the early feminist artists in the United States. In fact, there was an exchange of ideas taking place between the two countries as, for example, with *c.7500* an exhibition organized by Lippard that traveled to England in 1974.⁵⁴

Feminist art criticism began with Linda Nochlin's insightful essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" published in 1971 in the United States and quickly known in Europe.⁵⁵ The essay argued that economic, political, and social causes led to women's unequal achievements in the arts, rather than superior male talents. This also marked the beginning of women looking to the past for examples of female artists who did achieve excellence and could provide role models for women in the 1970s. As part of this effort, and the development of support networks for women in the arts, numerous periodicals and newsletters surfaced beginning in the early 1970s in the United States. The most notable of these publications includes the New York-based quarterly *The Feminist Art Journal* (1972-1977), *Women Artists News(letter)* (1975-1991), The Los Angeles-based *Chrysalis* (1977-1980), the New York-based collective and journal

⁵⁴ The exhibition was of work by female conceptual artists, much of it feminist. The title refers to the population of the town of Valencia, California where the exhibition originated. Lippard curated a number of shows around this time all with a title consisting of the population of the city in which the show began; *c.7500* was the only show that contained exclusively women, including Ulrike Rosenbach. For the British press release and published reactions to the show, see: *Framing Feminism*, 194-199.

⁵⁵ Linda Nochlin "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *ARTnews*, vol. 69, no. 9 (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71. For an example of how Nochlin's essay is discussed in Europe, see: Marlite Halbertsma, Chapter 6 "Vrouwenstudies Kunstgeschiedenis," *Gezichtspunten: Een Inleiding in de Methoden van de Kunstgeschiedenis*, ed. Marlite Halbertsma and Kitty Zijlmans (Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Sun, 1993), 212-240.

Heresies (1977-1992), and *Women's Art Journal* (1980-present).⁵⁶ American feminist art historians laid the groundwork for many critics and art historians in Europe, as detailed by Halbertsma in her essay “Vrouwenstudies Kunstgeschiedenis” (Women’s Studies Art History”).⁵⁷ In Europe, a number of magazines and newsletters began in the late 1970s, such as the *Bulletin van de SVBK* (*Bulletin of the SVBK*) out of The Hague, which focused exclusively on women artists. Other Dutch journals included *Lover* (1974 to the present) that was devoted to feminism in The Netherlands and later *Ruimte* (1987-96) that focused on feminist art. In Germany, the only feminist art magazine was *Kassandra: feministische Zeitschrift für die visuellen Künste*, which was published from 1977 to 1978. In addition to these specialized journals, other magazines regularly published feminist art or texts, as *Neues Forum* (Vienna). Many other art magazines devoted a special issue to feminist art during the 1970s, including *Heute Kunst* (Milan) in 1975, *Aesthetik und Communication* (Berlin) in 1976, *Studio International* (London) in 1977, and *Art Press International* (Paris) in 1977.⁵⁸ The 1980s brought the establishment of many other journals and magazines dedicated exclusively to feminist art.

⁵⁶ For more information on these and other related publications, see: Carrie Rickey, “Writing (and Righting) Wrongs: Feminist Art Publications,” *The Power of Feminist Art*, 120-129.

⁵⁷ Marlite Halbertsma, Chapter 6 “Vrouwenstudies Kunstgeschiedenis,” *Gezichtspunten*, 212-240. This chapter discusses feminist art history, including the influence of the feminist art movement in the U.S. on Europe. It also addresses the work of English art historians Griselda Pollock, Rozsika Parker, and Lisa Tickner. This publication presents the methodologies of art history and has also been translated into German as *Gesichtspunkte. Kunstgeschichte Heute*, ed. Marlite Halbertsma and Kitty Zijlmans, trans. Thomas Guirten (Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 1995).

⁵⁸ The dates of these magazines and journals, and other examples include: *Heute Kunst* (Milan) in February-March 1975, *Circular* (Bonn) in December 1975-January 1976, *Art Journal* (New York) in Summer 1976, *Aesthetik und Communication* (Berlin) in September 1976, *Studio International* (London) in 1977, *Art Press International* (Paris) in March 1977, *Kunstforum International* (Mainz) in 1978, *Kunstschrift* (Weesp, The Netherlands) in 1978, *Bauwelt* (Berlin) in August 1979, *Aesthetik und Communication* (Berlin) in September-October 1979. For a good

2.3.2 Feminist Performance Art

Feminist performance artists occupied the forefront of the avant-garde in the late 1960s and 1970s both in the United States and in Europe. While some artists felt actively a part of a feminist art movement, others were guided by different factors and by their own personal feminist convictions. The female body was often the subject of feminist art in the 1970s and while this could also be said to be the case in more traditional media, such as painting and sculpture, it was especially in performance that women used their own bodies as statements of agency. Feminist performance art would provide one of the most significant sites for mounting a challenge to modernism, particularly in its most restrictive Greenbergian terms. For example, performance art offered the potential for collaboration, a popular manner of working among some feminists, and so provided an alternative to the model of the individual genius. Moreover, performance crossed the traditional boundaries between art disciplines, as performance artists used their bodies in conjunction with other elements, such as music, film, and voice. In addition, the medium provided a flexible and relatively direct format for reaching the spectator. Feminist performance art played a crucial role in formulating a critique of existing art institutions, and of the patriarchal structures of society more broadly. Many feminist performance artists from this period used their work to expose biased social structures and artificially constructed gender roles. Once exposed, these structures could potentially be rethought

bibliography of early feminist publications, see: *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979) and the website of the international feminist art journal, *n.paradoxa*: <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/>.

and changed. These political missions distinguish most feminist performance art from other traditions of performance such as Happenings and Fluxus.

Feminist performance art in the United States and Europe complemented the feminist movements' consciousness-raising activities during the 1970s as it often exposed the conditions of women's lives, critiqued those conditions, and presented alternative possibilities for women. By way of example, Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz's *Three Weeks in May* (1977, Figure 1) used political and media routes to orchestrate a city-wide performance in Los Angeles over a period of three weeks to raise public awareness of rape.⁵⁹ This work also reflected the interest of a number of feminist artists in moving beyond the gallery space towards the integration of art and daily life. Laurie Anderson's *Object/Objection/Objectivity* (1973, Figure 2) framed a response to the catcalls she received while walking on New York City streets. She brought her camera poised to shoot and attempted to reverse the ogling males' gazes by photographing them. At a moment in her life when her personal relationships were in flux, Carolee Schneemann recorded her observations and those of friends and presented them with photographs in the performance *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards* (1976, Figure 3). In England, Kate Walker performed various roles in *Sweet Sixteen and Never Been Seen* (1975) as, in her words, "Beginning nude, I performed a reverse strip tease act; dressing in a sexist style (black stockings, underwear, heavy make up); then as a housewife; then as a male

⁵⁹ They were assisted by Barbara Cohen, Melissa Hoffman, and Jill Soderholm. The piece included two 25-foot maps of Los Angeles placed in the City Hall shopping mall. One map recorded the locations of rapes each day while the other listed locations of organizations assisting women.

artist-hero walking off presumably into the art world.”⁶⁰ Walker enacted roles as a woman, but really wanted to be an artist, where the successful role models were male. In *Die Einwicklung mit Julia (Bandage with Julia)* (1972), Rosenbach stared straight into the video camera with her daughter Julia sitting on her lap. In this private performance Rosenbach binds herself to her daughter with a long bandage to present a reverse birth or reconnection to her child with a symbolic umbilical cord. In *Pyramid* (1979), Natalia LL (Poland) analyzed women’s symbolic state of sleep and looked to an awakening that could transform women’s current social conditions.⁶¹

It has been argued that feminist artists who used performance as their medium were building on the traditional associations of women with masquerade.⁶² As Cheri Gaulke, a Los Angeles-based performance artist, described:

Performance is not a difficult concept to us [women]. We’re on stage every moment of our lives. Acting like women. Performance is a declaration of self—who one is—a shamanistic dance by which we spin into other states of awareness, remembering new visions of ourselves. And in performance we found an art form that was young, without the tradition of painting or sculpture. Without the traditions governed by men. The shoe fit, and so, like Cinderella, we ran with it.⁶³

⁶⁰ Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism*, Figure 6, 17. This work was shown at the first exhibition of the Women’s Free Arts Alliance established in 1972; the Alliance functioned as an arts lab for women where collaborative activities in all media were housed, such as film, theater, dance, visual arts, and music.

⁶¹ *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present*, ed. Mika Briški (Ljubljana, Slovenia: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 1998), 131 and *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979), 80.

⁶² Josephine Withers, “Feminist Performance Art: Performing, Discovering, Transforming Ourselves,” *The Power of Feminist Art*, 160. For a theoretical analysis on women and masquerade, see: Mary Ann Doane, “Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator,” in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, and Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1991), 17-32.

⁶³ Cheri Gaulke, “Performance Art of the Woman’s Building,” *High Performance 3* (Fall/Winter 1980): 156, quoted in Withers, “Feminist Performance Art,” 160.

The function of the masquerade encompasses traditional notions of beauty with which women too often felt pressured to conform. In *I Make Up the Image of My Perfection/I Make Up the Image of My Deformity* (1974), Martha Wilson (United States) made up her face as a feminine woman in one photograph and as a tired and less attractive person in the other. In a related approach, Marieken Verheyen (The Netherlands) photographed herself in fashionable dress and hairstyles from various years of her life between 1954 and 1978 in *Aanpassing 1954-78 (Adaptation 1954-78)* (1978). Eleanor Antin (United States) dieted for one month in *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (1972) to model her figure, commenting on the current standards of female beauty. In a wry comment on women's accoutrements, Valie Export tattooed a garter belt on her thigh in *Body Sign Action* (1970, Figure 4). In *Art Must be Beautiful, Artist Must be Beautiful* (1975) Marina Abramovic (born Yugoslavia) brushed her hair for an hour while repeating the work's title over and over in an obsessive, trance-like state. To comment on the social value of a woman's face and beauty, Gina Pane (France) cut her face with a razor blade in front of a live audience at the end of *Le Lait Chaud (Warm Milk)* (1972, Figure 5).

Both European and American feminist performance artists employed their bodies not only to critique social expectations of beauty but also to explore female sexuality. In Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* (1975, Figure 6), she extracted a scroll from her vagina to emphasize her sexuality as a personal source of creativity. As part of her two-year long *Prostitution* series, in 1976 Cosey Fanni Tutti (England) infiltrated the sex industry posing as a model with the intention of exhibiting the work on a gallery wall in its original magazine format. Poster-sized images of Export's *Aktionhose: Genitalpanik (Action Pants: Genital Panic)* (1969, Figure 7) recorded the artist's adventure into an art

film theater dressed in jeans with the crotch cut out, where, while carrying a gun, she invited the movie-goers to touch. In *Let's Dance Together* (1979), Renate Bertlmann (Austria) wore nipples on her fingers as well as a nipple mask—to the artist nipples symbolize erotic feelings—and asked people to dance with her to the Janice Joplin music that played in the room. These performance efforts, while often confrontational, strove for ways women could control their own sexuality.

Feminist performance artists during the 1970s explored ritual and myth, themes well suited to researching women's lost histories. In *Mourning Our Lost Herstory* (1977, Figure 8), Mary Beth Edelson (United States) orchestrated a group performance consisting of chants and movements to grieve the loss of women's history and to celebrate the downfall of a patriarchal society. Edelson also created a series of photographs from private performances, such as *Goddess Head* (1975), which celebrated a past history of goddess worship. In *The 7,000 Year Old Woman* (1977), performed in the United States and Europe, Betsy Damon (United States) covered her body with many small, cloth bags of sand to evoke the many-breasted Artemis of Ephesus, then ritualistically slit each bag for the sand to slowly fall to the ground in a symbolic gesture of reclaiming women's unrecorded history. Rosenbach enacted the role of Amazon in *Glauben Sie nicht, daß ich eine Amazone bin (Don't Believe I'm an Amazon)* (1975, Figure 9), to portray a legendary exemplar of the strong, independent woman. Rosenbach's work often explored roles of women throughout (art) history emphasizing mythic tropes.

The above mentioned works touch on some of the major themes and issues addressed within feminist performance art from 1968 through the 1970s. These women's

approaches generally differed significantly from those of their male counterparts during the same period, as I detail below.

2.3.3 Female Contemplation and Male Aggression

During the late 1960s and 1970s both in Europe and the United States, female and male performance artists often worked differently in terms of both their chosen subject matter and their use of the body. Moreover, male artists were generally warmly received for using their own bodies in confrontational ways, while female artists were often criticized for such actions. This was due in large part to the lack of appreciation for women's issues, and to a lack of social permission for women to work with, and control, their own bodies in challenging ways. One of the most significant differences between male and female performances artists of the period is that women tended towards self-exploration, while men often acted in more aggressive ways and inflicted harm on their bodies.⁶⁴ Vito Acconci (United States) burned, bit, and scarred his own body and Chris Burden (United States) had himself shot, almost electrocuted himself, and nearly immolated his body. In contrast, a number of women at the time made use of autobiography and personal experiences while using their bodies in their performances (see above). Many feminist artists were more interested in recuperating their personal lives through their work.

For men—and especially the dominant heterosexual white male—the changes fomented since the 1960s through both the women's movement and the civil rights movement in the United States, might be seen as prompting a form of identity crisis, such

⁶⁴ Lucy Lippard is one critic who begins to discuss this issue, see: Lippard, "The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth," 134-135.

that inflicting pain on the body, by pushing the physical limits of the male body, served to test the male ego, or as a way of exposing stereotypes of masculinity. As Lippard has noted, this work is not like the theatricality of the Viennese actionists; rather many American male performance artists had a “deadpan masochism” that is disturbing in other ways.⁶⁵ Yet, such activity was not exclusive to American male artists; their counterparts in Europe, and elsewhere, abound. A notable example is Stelarc (Australia) whose body suspensions involve piercing his body with large fish or meat hooks and suspending himself from various locations including a gallery ceiling and above a street.⁶⁶

There were some women who tested the physical limits of the body in their performance works, as did Marina Abramovic in a series of performances she conducted in the first half of the 1970s. For example, in *Rhythm 0* (1974) Abramovic held a performance at Studio Morra in Naples with a table that held numerous objects, ranging from the mundane (a feather duster) to the dangerous (razor blades and a gun), and the audience was invited to use any of these object on her as she stood passively. As the tension level rose, the spectators stopped the performance after six hours. The work dealt directly with control over the female body or the lack thereof.⁶⁷ However, most feminist performers took risks in less violent ways, in searching to articulate a female voice and subjectivity, and to probe questions of female identity within a male dominated society.

⁶⁵ Lippard, “The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth,” 135.

⁶⁶ For a discussion of masochism in performance art, see: Kathy O’Dell, *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art, and the 1970s* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

⁶⁷ And to reiterate, Gina Pane’s *Le Lait Chaud* dealt with issues of endurance as well as beauty, as she cut her face with a razor blade. Export also created a number of performances that tested the limits of the body, such as *Eros/ion* (1971) and *Hyperbulie* (*Hyperbole*, 1973).

CHAPTER 3

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: PERFORMANCE ART AS POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE WORK OF CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBACH

3.1 Introduction

During the 1970s, the consciousness-raising activities of the women's movements taught many women to recognize that their personal lives had been undervalued and many women sought ways to validate their lives. Within this environment many feminist artists celebrated their private experiences and personal choices in their work. The personal and life experiences of Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach emerged as significant elements in the artists' performance art. Therefore, this chapter will form a foundation for a discussion of their work on which the themes of the following chapters build.

3.2. Celebrating the Personal

During the 1970s in the United States, Austria, and Germany, feminist activists viewed the truths of women's daily lives as suppressed by mainstream, patriarchal society, resulting in the devaluation of women's roles. The women's movement sought to change this through consciousness-raising events and protests, among other activities, so that women could recognize their similar circumstances and offer support to one another. These protests and consciousness-raising efforts examined personal experiences as political events and formed a precedent for feminist performance art. As Moira Roth

discussed in her essay on the 1970s, “The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America”:

[The work] suggest[ed] the range of content, style, audience and geographic distribution of the new mode of personal performance that was influenced, directly or indirectly, by the theories and practices of the women’s movement.¹

Feminist performance artists gained momentum and support from the women’s movement, and, I would argue, were significant contributors to the cause. As Susan Brownmiller wrote in her memoir, “The artists...became the vortex, adapting readily to consciousness raising and producing some of the best early papers.”²

The concerns and methods of these feminist artists differed significantly from those of their male counterparts, as Lucy Lippard has noted.³ More male performance artists of the 1970s focused on violence or physical alterations to the body, while women generally explored more personal elements in their work, as Roth detailed:

The introduction of autobiography, characters and personae by women into the field of performance totally transformed the substance and direction of this medium.

...

There is no equivalent to this rich collective personal performance among men (although certainly individual male performers have resorted successfully to autobiography and personae). It is basically women who are responsible for introducing and developing these arenas in performance art, and it was one of the main reasons—because women performers early on saw the potential of performance for

¹ Moira Roth, “The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America,” *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America, 1970-1980*, ed. Moira Roth (Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983), 17.

² Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (New York: Dial Press, 1999), 44. Quoted in Simon Taylor and Natalie Ng, “Introduction,” in *Personal & Political: The Women’s Art Movement, 1969-1975* (East Hampton, New York: Guild Hall Museum, 2002), 7.

³ Lucy Lippard, “The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women’s Body Art,” *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women’s Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976), especially 122-127.

expressing such material—that so many women were drawn to work in the medium.⁴

This distinction was especially notable in the United States, as in Europe several notable women performance artists were also aggressive to their bodies, such as Marina Abramovic and Gina Pane, and some men also allowed their personal lives to enter the work. In general, however, it was the female artists who understood the possibilities of performance art to express their personal lives in their work, moving art in new directions.

The very elements of performance art itself—with the artist’s body used as material, the potential for sound and movement, and often a live audience—brought unique advantages for feminist artists. When working in front of a live audience, they could obtain immediate feedback and support. Roth identified this opportunity:

It was this fresh and passionate investigation of self and of identification with other women that created the fervent supportive alliance between the first women performers and their audience. And it was this bonding with the often all-women audiences, as much as the new personal content in the art, that accounted for the power of the early work.⁵

Much like consciousness-raising and women’s support groups, through performance art an artist and an audience could connect and share an experience together.⁶

Another advantage to performance art as a vehicle for personal material was the potential the medium held for creating personae and integrating autobiography.

⁴ Roth, “The Amazing Decade,” 20-21.

⁵ Roth, “The Amazing Decade,” 16.

⁶ It should be mentioned that by the end of the decade, the ideal of sharing “common experiences” was challenged and a new recognition of the differences among women became a prominent theme in feminist (and non-feminist) art.

Characters could develop in three-dimensional space over real time. Autobiography was often used, sometimes in conjunction with fictional characters, resulting in personae that were sometimes closely related to an artist's identity and at other times completely imagined.⁷ Many early approaches challenged the stereotyped images of women, through analysis and parody. Alternative models for women's lives were developed along with those that confronted difficult, yet all too real, experiences.⁸

Often the physical experiences of women lives have been hidden or considered taboo subject matter. Performance art's potential for using narrative provided an outlet for such subjects, ranging from joyful events, such as childbirth, to abusive events, as in rape. It was due to the women's movement and feminist performance art that these new subjects became integrated into the language of art during the 1970s.

3.3 Carolee Schneemann: Intimate Work

Carolee Schneemann's personal experiences, and her life itself, intertwine through her artistic endeavors and enter into work she exhibited (and exhibits) publicly. Her project continues to be courageous as the artist has exposed herself, not just physically, but emotionally and intellectually, to challenge viewers on many levels.

In 1969, Schneemann moved to London for four years. This was the same moment when the women's movement began to flourish internationally. Beginning in

⁷ Autobiography became less used by the end of the decade as other issues came more into focus, such as the social and economic contexts of women lives. That being said, it is this autobiographical work of the late 1960s and 1970s that paved the way for the exploration of identity politics in art widespread during the 1980s and 1990s.

⁸ See also: Lucy Lippard, "Making Up: Role Playing and Transformation in Women's Art," *From the Center*, 101-108.

1971, Schneemann created an extensive series of performative photographs emblematic of both the feminist movement and the personal characteristic of her work. *Aggression for Couples* (1971-72, Figures 10, 11, 12, and 13) consists of twenty-two photographs eight by ten inches in size with more than fifty smaller photographic studies.⁹ These images of private performances, which Schneemann conducted with Anthony McCall, her partner at the time, were composed as a handbook for couples to process their negative feelings towards one another and improve their relationship. While these works were performative in nature, Schneemann prefers to call them “domestic actions for camera” because the term “performance” holds connotations of rehearsal, repetition, and perfection.¹⁰ This series has never been exhibited, nor has it been studied by an art historian, although Schneemann considers the work “one of the magical eggs I have been sitting on all these years.”¹¹ In an unpublished typed statement which accompanies the photographs in the artist’s papers, Schneemann elucidates her intentions with the piece:

A Handbook of Physical Agression [*sic*] for Couples
The Joy Through Agression [*sic*] Exercise Book for Couples

Assumption of this book: that an integral, vital love relationship can accommodate expressions of anger, boredom, hysteria, sexual tension, repressed aggressivity [*sic*], irritability, nagging, hopelessness, and depression.

In an attitude of trust and experimenta ion [*sic*] a couple can modify destructive, repressed behavior by enacting together physical actions which release and defuse represses [*sic*] negative feelins [*sic*]—(which do not simply disappear by themselves but jam up the flow of positive feeling.)

⁹ The photographs were taken by Schneemann’s friend Philippe Ehrenberg. Carolee Schneemann, interview by author, via telephone, 2 October 2005.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Schneemann, email correspondence with author, 29 September 2005.

Test explores: transformations of erotic energy in time; the pressures of idealism; what interferes in relationships: banalities, daily concerns, routines, frustrations, boredom.

How we are culturally conditioned even in our ideas of spontaneity, what we can share and express together, to each other...

(The other side of tenderness and romantic love)

WHY AGRESSION [*sic*] IS GOOD FOR YOU
Stop being a goody-goody nice boring careful NAG

ANGER CAN BE JOYOUS
Physically these exercises strengthen and relax the body.¹²

The artist's description of the sequence reads as an emotional manual for experimenting with her recorded aggressive exercise movements. It represents a realistic consideration of the complex aspects of relationships.

One subgroup of ten performance photographs in black and white depicted the couple in a domestic interior that included two small coffee tables and a plant to the left and a bookshelf on the right; a blank wall behind them enclosed the staged scene. Schneemann wore a dark shirt and light shorts while McCall wore a light print shirt and dark trousers. The photographs are numbered in the upper right hand corner, indicating the sequence of events, and signed in the lower right "C.S. '72." Schneemann intended the photographs to stand as independent works, delineated by the individual treatment each photograph received through the application of paint and arrows indicating directed movement, as well as collaged elements in another subgroup of photographs in the series.

¹² Schneemann, Carolee Schneemann Papers, 1959-1994, Research Library, Getty Research Institute (Accession no. 950001), Series X. Performance Albums, Box 81, Album 28, *Aggression for Couples*. London 1971. Schneemann's typed description of the work is given in full. The formatting and emphasis is Schneemann's. These photographs only exist in the artist's papers at the Getty Research Institute.

The first image of *Aggression for Couples* depicted the couple facing one another on their knees with hands gripping each other's shoulders. McCall is on the left and an arrow at his left indicated movement to the right, towards Schneemann. The second image (Figure 10) recorded the moment after the movement took place; with hands still on each other's shoulders, Schneemann was pushed back almost to the bookcase. For the next scene (Figure 11) her partner sat on his feet on the floor while Schneemann's body formed an inverted V with her head in his lap and her hips raised up in the air. In photograph number four, Schneemann bent her knees to the floor with her back parallel to the ground. An arrow to the upper right of Schneemann in both three and four indicated movement towards McCall, that she pushed her aggressive feelings towards him. These first four photographs are covered with a light blue wash in which irregular brushstrokes are visible.

In the images numbered five and six (Figure 12), the pair is now back-to-back, arms linked behind them. Schneemann, on the left, pulled McCall over onto her back, as the yellow arrow directed the movement to the left. By image six, his back was arched and he was lifted off the ground by the artist. In photograph seven they were on their knees again, but this time the arrow indicated that Schneemann, on the right, pushed towards her partner, forcing him to lean backwards. In number eight, the direction of the arrow continued so that Schneemann pushed him to the ground. His back was towards the camera and Schneemann's tight grip on his shoulder was visible. The latter group of four images was painted with a bright blue wash, again with irregular strokes across the surface. Images nine and ten (Figure 13) depicted the couple standing back-to-back, arms linked but now Schneemann, on the left, is lifted up by her partner as he bent over to pull

her weight onto his body. This last image of the group depicted Schneemann on McCall's back with her knees tucked to her chest almost flipping over to the other side of him.

Within the context of the early 1970s and the burgeoning feminist movement, Schneemann's work relates to the early consciousness-raising events that aimed to improve women's lives. In *Aggression for Couples*, she described and examined the problematic range of emotions involved in a relationship. Her solution authenticated negative feelings but more importantly, through the performance, she found a potential way to resolve them. Of course, there is a fine line between aggressive behavior to release tension and physical abuse, which some women experienced. However, the work aimed not only to diffuse those feelings before a woman could be harmed, but also to take control of her (or a woman's) life. The piece represented an act of empowerment for women within the dichotomy of a romantic relationship.

The activities of the Judson Dance Theater in New York, which Schneemann was involved with in the early 1960s, also informed the actions the artist staged and recorded in the photographs of *Aggression for Couples*. A number of Judson participants used everyday movements executed by untrained "dancers" in ordinary dress in their performances, as in Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* (1966).¹³ An additional subgroup of eight photographs in *Aggression for Couples* also referenced everyday actions. This subgroup parodied a potential exchange between a man and a woman in a traditional relationship. In fact, Schneemann stated that this performance series is "supposed to be very funny" and that for her "humor is based on rage or outrage."¹⁴ The first photograph recorded

¹³ See Chapter 2.

¹⁴ Schneemann, interview by author, via telephone, 2 October 2005.

McCall sitting in a recliner reading a newspaper, followed by two images in which Schneemann appeared to attempt to speak with him as he pulled the paper down as if annoyed with her presence. In the sequential images of the event, Schneemann moved closer and closer until the couple ended up wrestling to the floor (Figures 14 and 15). Each of the eight black and white photographs was covered with a color wash and included a small, collaged piece of a torn letter in Schneemann's hand writing. The meaning of the fragmented texts on the collaged pieces is difficult to ascertain, reflecting the potential miscommunication in a relationship. For this work, Schneemann took the everyday movements of a couple, in addition to the written description of emotions, and transformed them into exercises to better a relationship.

Several years later during a turbulent moment in her relationships, Schneemann recorded her thoughts and the observations of her friends.¹⁵ She asked herself, "If change and disruption in personal life was making it impossible for me to work, could charting confusion and despair become a work?"¹⁶ To examine layered contradictions and meaning, she developed a work that would chart the process, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards* (1976):

Every dilemma of our life is in there, every contradiction. It was a wonderful piece to be able to create, because it came out of such chaos. My partner was leaving me and strange enough it seemed like I was falling in love with someone else. It was so confusing. So when people would talk on the phone they would give me advice...I would write that down and drop it in the drawer...Finally I looked in this drawer and I had all these notes piled up and thought maybe I could do something with this.¹⁷

¹⁵ This was the moment when her relationship with McCall was ending.

¹⁶ Carolee Schneemann, *More than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson, 2d ed., (Kingston, New York: McPherson, 1997), 246.

¹⁷ Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001.

Schneemann collected these comments and thoughts for *ABC* between March and November 1976.

The work consisted of two parts: a performance (Figure 3) presented on several occasions lasting approximately one hour and an artist's book (Figure 16) in an unconventional format.¹⁸ Schneemann stated that her performances of *ABC* in Holland—at De Appel and at the Festival of Performance Art in Arnhem, both in June of 1977—were important because they marked the full integration of three elements.¹⁹ For the first element, slides of cards with the accumulated statements on the life changes she was experiencing were projected onto a screen. The second part comprised the accompanying photographs, also projected, that included friends, the two people with whom she was involved (A. and B.), pets, travel views, nudes, and archaic erotic sculpture. Finally, for the third element she performed in front of a blank screen onto which light was projected. Just prior to the event in Arnhem, Schneemann dreamt of a large, upholstered, gray chair, and when she arrived at the location for the first time, there it was, but in red. Struggling with the chair as an inanimate partner, she moved across, on, and around it while reading the texts and projecting the photographs. She purposefully chose a direct, unmodified

¹⁸ The performance was shown at Franklin Furnace, New York (9 November 1976), New York University, "Discussion as an Art Form" (14 May 1977), De Appel Stichting, Amsterdam (3 and 4 June 1977), and the Festival of Performance Art, Arnhem (9 June 1977). Schneemann more recently gave a talk and reading of *ABC* at White Box Gallery, New York City, 5 June 2002. The artist's book was published in The Netherlands: Carolee Schneemann, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards* (Beuningen, Holland: Brummense Uitgeverij Van Luxe Werkjes, 1977) and is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. There are four work-in-progress versions of these cards in Schneemann's archives, see: Carolee Schneemann Papers, 1959-1994, Research Library, Getty Research Institute (Accession no. 950001), Series I. Projects, Box 5 *ABC We Print Anything*, 1976, Folder 1.

¹⁹ A recording of the performance at De Appel in June 1977 is available at Montevideo/Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, which houses the collection of performance and video archives of De Appel Stichting, Amsterdam.

voice while reading the cards, rather than using emphasis on certain texts or phrases, to allow viewers to draw their own conclusions from the information she presented.

Schneemann collected cards of statements and photographs to use as the performance in *ABC*—it could even be described as a book in a performance format.²⁰ Schneemann herself referred to it as “a book of cards which could be presented as a performance—rather than making a book from a performance work.”²¹ Published in 1977, the “book” contains 318 index-sized cards arranged with one text card followed by a photograph card (139 in total), all placed in a handmade box covered with blue cloth and tied with a ribbon.²² The text is printed on three different colored cards: the pink cards contain comments by friends; the yellow are diary extracts and elements of her dreams that she would regularly record and that she felt revealed truths; and the blue cards contain comments by A—the partner who was leaving, B—the one who was arriving, and C—Schneemann herself.²³ Schneemann intended this loose card format to allow for an open-ended reading of the work. She, as performer, or the individual viewer could shuffle the cards and read them in a chosen or random order:

I ordered the sequence very carefully in terms of elements of the time. I wanted one of the cards to say now you can shuffle. So I needed to establish an order and it has to do with certain kinds of rhythms and implications and dynamics within the statements and the fragments of

²⁰ As the critic Michael Gibbs noted of Schneemann’s approach in 1977, “Taking the book into the performance arena (rather than making a book from a performance) does seem to offer a new direction for the art of the book. . . . The book of this piece is already complete: it is the piece.” Gibbs, “Everything in the art world exists in order to end up as a book,” *Art Communication Edition* 6, July 1977, n.p.

²¹ Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, 246.

²² According to Schneemann, Jan Brand, organizer of the Festival of Performance Art, was the driving force behind the book’s publication.

²³ A=Anthony McCall, B=Bruce McPherson.

the relationships. But then it's planned so that anyone can shuffle it, just like a deck of cards. You can start anywhere and end up anywhere. It's a broken novel.²⁴

The cards, however, are numbered, so that a reader would know Schneemann's original intended order. Numerous conversations and stories intertwine and separate as a story line begins, then resumes several cards later. The fragmented nature of texts and format incline the viewer/reader to draw relationships between cards as well as between the cards and the photographic images, in an attempt to understand the complex interrelationships taking place. For a viewer, it is a natural reaction to search for a coherent narrative and to seek resolution. Yet, in Schneemann's work these relationships continually change, reflecting life's processes and uncertainties.

The photographs in *ABC* date from the year prior to the performance and sometimes reference the text. For example, "A. told C., that he'd insist on just one thing—B. was not to wear his moccasins" is accompanied by a photograph of those same moccasins. Other conversation excerpts from her daily life can be accompanied by a photograph of Schneemann with A or B offering insight into the dynamics of the relationships. Other images included ancient goddess sculptures reflecting the artist's research of matriarchal civilizations. Other references were more oblique, such as a nude image of Schneemann paired with the statement, "The women agreed their energies should be directed to their personal strengths and creative will, not to an idea of 'happiness'" (Figure 17). This type of statement is indicative of feminist declarations

²⁴ Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001.

found at various points throughout the text.²⁵ Schneemann could be criticized for exposing her nude body when referencing “creative will” and “personal strengths”; however, Schneemann believes that her body is often the source of her creativity.

One story line, which shall serve as an example, revealed Schneemann’s personal sexual desires.²⁶ Typical of the cards’ layout, the story line is not on sequential cards, but weaves within other comments, thoughts, and narratives. When Schneemann performed *ABC*, she kept the cards in their numbered order.²⁷ From a yellow card—the color containing dreams and diary recordings—Schneemann read:

Finally she appealed to the Goddess
my body distracts me, desire returns
over & over again, my cunt howls, my
breasts ache. I would like a year off
from desire in order to complete works
in my mind.²⁸

The photograph that accompanied this text on image card 39 (Figure 18) is of an ancient goddess statue, indicative of Schneemann’s interest in ancient matriarchal civilizations and goddess worship, from a period in which some believe that women were more revered and powerful than in contemporary society. This story line referencing the goddess and Schneemann’s sexual desires continued on yellow text card 77 on which she

²⁵ It should also be noted that statements from this work often contain loaded meanings about life, women’s condition in society, etc. and could be seen as a precedent for the text-based work of artists such as Jenny Holzer or Barbara Kruger.

²⁶ See cards 39, 77, 92, 107, 123, and 151 in Schneemann, *ABC*. When this piece has since been exhibited as an object, five of the text cards were enlarged and printed on Plexiglas panels each positioned in front of a photograph from the book.

²⁷ In the recording of the performance I viewed at Montevideo in Amsterdam and in the artist’s June 2002 reading, the cards were read in numerical order. I follow that here in my analysis.

²⁸ Schneemann, *ABC*, text card 39.

typed, “She asked the Goddess to consider a lover who would make in her just one orgasm which could last for a year.” This is accompanied by another image of an ancient goddess figure on image card 77 (Figure 19). Joined with a photograph of the new lover’s sneakers on image card 92 (Figure 20), the story continued on a yellow card:

The Goddess had someone in mind and arranged for them to find each other. When he took off his frayed overcoat, his sneakers and glasses, and torn underwear, she could see he had been in her dreams. They were flooded with desire for each other. In his body was the expectation that he would form in her the orgasm to last for the year. Their embrace was irradiated by the Goddess. When he entered her the sky fell into the sea, the earth shattered, molten, burning.²⁹

The story lacks a pleasurable ending, however, as the audience of the performance or reader of the book discovers in due course. After fifteen additional text and image cards, Schneemann read text card 107 (accompanied by image card 107 with a repeat of the ancient goddess statue on card 39):

Despite themselves, the Goddess has tricked them. When she sat on the subway, when she sat at the typewriter, as she combed her hair, she felt his cock moving in her.

When he sat at the typewriter, when he walked in the street, while he ate dinner, he felt his cock rising in her.³⁰

On text card 123 (with image card 123, Figure 21), the audience learned that they tried to contact the Goddess to no avail. The story concluded with text card 151 (with the same ancient goddess figure as image card 77), which stated that,

²⁹ Schneemann, *ABC*, text card 92.

³⁰ Schneemann, *ABC*, text card 107.

He said the Goddess had tricked them both.
 You should have asked for the orgasm to
 “suffice” all year not “last” all year.³¹

Throughout this series of cards, Schneemann’s passionate dreams, sexual fantasies, and frustrations are revealed in the content of the cards as an intimate expression of her inner sexual life. The subject matter relates to the experiences of some women and the efforts of many feminist artists to address their sexual experiences through their work.

Other story lines in the *ABC* performance address conversations with different friends on similar topics or conversations C. engaged in with A. and B. In a manner similar to the example already described, none of the cards in a particular story line are sequential and another audience member (or reader of the book) may align different cards with each other to reveal different narratives. However, particular story lines are often ambiguous and never fully resolved. Through this ingenious structure and narrative technique, Schneemann has replicated the experience of life, tangible yet never fully resolved, always changing, unstable, at times foreign, yet always personal.

The title of the performance work and the book, *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*, holds numerous connotations. “ABC” not only represents the protagonists of the narrative, but it also references childhood learning and the education process of those involved. “We Print Anything” speaks to the unusual subject matter of the cards: the unfolding of an intimate and difficult moment of a relationship ending and the tentative beginning of a new one. “In The Cards” adds a sense of prophecy as if the outcome would be revealed in the cards.

³¹ Schneemann, *ABC*, text card 151.

ABC is based on the direct experiences of Schneemann, exposing the personal elements of her life at specific moments—emotionally, physically, and sexually. Scott MacDonald, writing on *ABC*, realized the difficulty of this kind of work in a society and art world where heterosexual men still control the dominant aesthetic values. “In a culture where men still tend to be trained to deny their emotions, the assumption that the making of ‘serious’ art must involve a position of detachment mitigates in the direction of art produced by males.”³² Schneemann worked to counter this problem by developing a female subjectivity in her work by positioning herself as both subject and object. She creates the work but at the same time she uses herself and personal experiences as the core of the piece. She described this intention in her work as follows:

It is more the direct lived experience that is transgressive because in male culture you can never represent yourself...the self always has to be in control and traditionally it's hierarchical so male image making has someone else be the subject. You're not the subject, you're not vulnerable, you're not exposed. That position of my work is freeing and revelatory.³³

Transforming one's personal experience and integrating it into a publicly presented visual work is both challenging and risky. Schneemann understood this vantage point but also acknowledged what it might offer others, “In some sense I made a gift of my body to other women: *giving our bodies back to ourselves*.”³⁴

³² Scott MacDonald, “The Men Cooperated,” *Afterimage* 12, No. 9 (April, 1985): 12. Schneemann also made a silkscreen based on *ABC* and the relationships it addressed titled *The Men Cooperate*.

³³ Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001.

³⁴ Schneemann's quote is from a text written between 1962 and 1968. See: Schneemann, “Istory of a Girl Pornographer,” *Cézanne: She Was a Great Painter* (New Paltz, New York: Tresspass Press, 1975), 24. Emphasis is Schneemann's.

3.4 Valie Export: The Body in a Social Context

In her early performance art, Valie Export interrogated the function and representation of the female body within social, cultural, political, and artistic contexts, because a renewed perspective on women's bodies could initiate a transformation in women's lives. Her concern with the self in her work is directly related to her concern with the image of woman as it affects women's experiences. In 1972, Export wrote "Woman's Art: A Manifesto" describing her views in regards to women and art, women and society, and the female body in art and media. She argued that "man has defined the image of woman for both man and woman, men create and control the social and communication media."³⁵ She continued to explain that women will come into their own once there is access to visual media and once they develop a language to define and understand themselves. She believed in resistance and "changes in the whole range of life not only for ourselves but for men, children, family, church...in short for the state."³⁶ She demanded a liberation of all culture from male values and argued that art is a means to influence the consciousness of society in order to:

Destroy all these notions of love, faith, family, motherhood, companionship, which were not created by us [women] and thus replace them with new ones in accordance with our sensibility, with our wishes...The arts can be understood as a medium of our self-definition adding new values to the arts, these values, transmitted via the cultural

³⁵ Valie Export, "Woman's Art: A Manifesto," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 755, originally published in German as "Woman's Art: Ein Manifest," *Neues Forum*, no. 228 (January 1973): 73.

³⁶ Export, "Woman's Art: A Manifesto," 756.

sign-process, will alter reality towards an accommodation of female needs.³⁷

To Export art is a means for social change with the potential to alter the personal lives of women, and it is for this reason that the term “action,” rather than “performance,” is often used to describe her work.

Early in her life, Export faced challenges devolving from the received social norms and expectations for women’s lives. Educated in a convent until the age of fourteen, she married young and had children, but quickly divorced. She resumed her art education and, soon after beginning her active career in the late 1960s, the Austrian government tried to take her children from her due to the difficult and confrontational nature of her work. In another legal battle, Export had to appear before a judge with fellow Austrian artist Peter Weibel on account of a source book they produced together on Viennese Actionism.³⁸ These events represent samples of moments in the artist’s life that convinced her that social norms and expectations needed to change and propelled her activism through her art.

In several of her early works and acts, Export addressed her personal life in a number of ways. In an ultimate performance of her identity, the artist, born Waltraud Lehner, began to use the name “VALIE EXPORT” after 1966 as a social and political act. It was an invented construct that would represent at once an artistic concept and a kind of logo. “Valie” was taken as a nickname from Waltraud and “Export” was drawn from “Austria Export,” the most widely smoked and cheapest cigarette brand in the

³⁷ Export, “Woman’s Art: A Manifesto,” 756.

³⁸ *Wien: Bildkompendium Wiener Aktionismus und Film*, ed. Peter Weibel and Valie Export (Frankfurt: Kohlkunstverlag, 1970).

country. The cigarettes were the equivalent of the French Gauloise, including the macho image accompanying that brand.³⁹ The cigarette brand was not the impetus for the name change, as Export explained:

I did not want to have the name of my father [Lehner] any longer, nor that of my former husband [Höllinger]. My idea was to export from my “outside” (heraus) and also ex-port, from that port. The cigarette package was from a design and style that I could use, but it was not the inspiration.⁴⁰

She had stipulated that her new name only be written in all capital letters.⁴¹ A name defines identity, especially when a woman is named after either her father or her husband. In *Smart Export* (1968/1970, Figure 22), the artist looked at the camera with teased hair and cigarette in mouth while holding an altered packet of Austria Export cigarettes close to the camera. “Valie” replaces “Austria” and a small photograph of her face is placed in the center of the logo. Her “smart export” is herself as artist, challenging conventions of women’s identities.

As a member of the Austrian avant-garde in the mid-1960s, Export questioned state institutions through her performative work. The artists were the leaders in the period’s protests against the conservative Austrian government, which had been in power since the Second World War. As elsewhere in Europe, these activities boiled over in 1968. Export was unique as the lone feminist among her male colleagues in Vienna and

³⁹ For a discussion on the artist’s name change, see: Robert Fleck, “VALIE EXPORT,” in *Valie Export: Ob/De+Con(Struction)* (Philadelphia: Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, 1999), 7.

⁴⁰ Export quoted in Kristine Stiles, “CORPORA VILIA, VALIE EXPORT’S Body,” in *Valie Export: Ob/De+Con(Struction)*, 26.

⁴¹ Valie Export, *Split/Reality* (Vienna: Springer and Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, 1997), 52. In some texts, Valie Export appears in all caps, as if a brand, as in the *Valie*

made feminist political statements long before any appearance of the new women's movement in Austria. Robert Fleck described the effect of Export's name alteration and the work announcing the event:

VALIE EXPORT mixed all these things together—her own pseudonym, her provocative stance towards Austria's beautiful self-image, her attack on the position of men, and her own unabashed, actionist behavior... In some ways, *this photo marks the beginning of feminism in German-speaking art*: The demonstrative demand to be respected as an artist—who is a woman—becomes the content.⁴²

The act of her name change was powerful, personal feminist performance, which continues to this day. A number of feminist artists in the United States also changed their names in an act of defiance of social norms, including Judy Chicago and Wanda Westcott over the period of 1969-70.⁴³

Continuing her interrogation of issues of identity during the late 1960s, Export experimented with a number of personas in her *Identitätstransfer (Identity Transfer)* series begun in 1968. The work indicated the political and social turbulence of the period as well as the personal difficulties of a woman coming into her own in a society defined by male parameters. These performance works were sometimes presented in public and at other times carried out in private. In many ways they entailed research into the recently created "Valie Export" brand.⁴⁴ In two different *Identity Transfer* works, Export experimented with socially-coded dress in one of the earliest gender investigations in art

Export: Ob/De+Con(Struction) catalogue. In other publications it is lower case. I have chosen to use the lower case unless quoting a source that prints her name in this manner.

⁴² Fleck, "VALIE EXPORT," 7, my emphasis.

⁴³ See: Roth, "The Amazing Decade," 39, Footnote 11.

of the contemporary period.⁴⁵ In the first, *Identity Transfer* (1968, Figure 23), the artist wore a light mini-dress and white go-go boots. She looked up at the camera in an inquiring expression with her feet spread apart and slightly turned at an angle, mimicking a fashion model's pose before the photographer's gaze. Her head was tilted to the side, her left hand placed on her hip, and her right hand was turned in towards the middle of her chest. The pose suggested an inquisitive gesture of innocence, as if she asked "who me?" and provided no impression of assertiveness or fortitude. *Identity Transfer I* (1968, Figure 24) portrayed a more androgynous, even masculine, figure who stared straight into the camera displaying a resigned expression. Atop dark pants with legs spread apart, Export wore a long sleeved white shirt with heavy chains appearing down the middle. Her breasts were indiscernible underneath the shirt. The masculine garments contrasted sharply with the make-up covered face and short, high tousled wig, which appeared to be the same one as in the previous image. The feminine image of her face and hair conflicts with the masculine dress indicative of the more socially powerful sex. This ambiguous sexual direction signifies a desire to be a woman while not wanting to be defined by established social expectations.

These two *Identity Transfer* works are not self-portraits of Export, but rather represent a transformation of her image with a view to normative values of masculinity

⁴⁴ Sabine Breitwieser, "Einleitung/Introduction," *Double Life: Identität und Transformation in der zeitgenössischen Kunst (Identity and Transformation in Contemporary Arts)* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2001), 15.

⁴⁵ Marcel Duchamp was among the earliest to pursue gender transformations in his work, as with *Rose Sélavy* of 1920, a photograph of Duchamp dressed as a woman and taken by Man Ray.

and femininity.⁴⁶ Export chose the word transfer for the titles, indicating that the identity is not her own, that it was assumed from elsewhere and transferred to her body. The artist exhibited a great degree of ambivalence in these photographs as she mirrored cultural norms onto her body as she experienced them in her own social environment. However, due to the potential for transformation, these works can be described as “an appeal to women to use self-representation as a means of creating their own subjectivity.”⁴⁷ Export has argued that men have defined women’s reality; therefore, it is vital to:

Let women speak so that they can find themselves, this is what I ask for in order to achieve a self-defined image of ourselves and thus a different view of the social function of women. We women must participate in the construction of reality via the building stones of media-communication.⁴⁸

Export took control of her own image by assuming different identities in the photographs; control of the production and dissemination of images of women provided the potential to change women’s social positions. Export used her own body in her works, though, as the art historian Kristine Stiles describes:

While EXPORT has identified the foundation of her work as biographical, it is *not* the artist’s personal history that makes her work so art historically and socially significant but *how* she translated intimate experiences into aesthetic forms with the power to carry a social message. EXPORT’S biographical experiences operate in

⁴⁶ These performative works predate the “Transformer” exhibition held in 1974 at the Kunstmuseum in Luzern, which explored the boundaries between masculinity and femininity as well as work that manipulated traditional stereotypes. See: “*Transformer*”: *Aspekte der Transvestie* (Luzern: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1974).

⁴⁷ Ruth Noack, “Inszenierte Existenzen in der Kunst der siebziger Jahre/Producing Existences in the Art of the Seventies,” in *Double Life: Identität und Transformation in der zeitgenössischen Kunst (Identity and Transformation in Contemporary Arts)* (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2001), 29.

⁴⁸ Export, “Woman’s Art: A Manifesto,” 756.

dialectic with her aesthetic production to create an historical synthesis of artistic, feminist, and political importance.⁴⁹

Her personal experiences as a woman in Vienna in the late 1960s helped motivate her to form each of these pieces into a political and feminist statement. Moreover, she worked (and works) with the body as sign on which social and cultural norms have been inscribed but can be rewritten.⁵⁰

Homometer I (1973, Figure 25) and *Homometer II* (1976, Figure 26) evoked Export's biological experience as woman. The artist seldom took such a direct approach to her subject matter, but in these works she focuses on symbols of women's reproductive potential, reflecting the mid-1970s growth of the new women's movement in Austria and landmark legislation legalizing abortion (1974) and changing family law (1975).⁵¹ In both performances, Export tied loaves of bread to her body to symbolize nourishment and survival. In *Homometer I*, an action on the Belgian coast, the artist took two loaves of bread, filled them with mussels and sand, and then nailed them to the beach. After photographing the loaves, Export tied them to her legs and walked into the sea; the bread was immediately soaked with water and weighed down, making movement difficult. The artist then enacted a departure or birth from the sea, yet the loaves of waterlogged bread tied to her ankles did not move easily. She fell in the waves and allowed the water to roll over her body before making her way back to dry sand. The socially stipulated role of

⁴⁹ Stiles, "CORPORA VILIA," 26.

⁵⁰ The *Identity Transfer* series foreshadowed the drag and personae pieces of United States-based artists, such as Martha Wilson, Eleanor Antin, and Cindy Sherman, by several years.

⁵¹ See Chapter 1.

reproduction and nourisher burdened some women, symbolized by the bread bound to Export's body.⁵²

The bread connoted numerous meanings: fertility, pregnancy, motherhood, nourishment, security, the social obligations of women to reproduce, and a connection with the earth through farming, among other possibilities. She chose bread specifically for the conflicting symbolism associated with it. At that time, Export was concerned with the way in which meaning was conveyed visually versus textually, as well as with how images were interpreted. She chose a substance like bread to manipulate its meaning through the performance and photographs documenting the event. The result produced is one in which meaning is enigmatic and often dependent on the viewer.⁵³

Export performed *Homometer II* as a street action in Vienna in which she hung a loaf of bread from her neck and offered it to passersby.⁵⁴ The bread referenced a source of life and nourishment, the more so because its location in front of Export's stomach linked the food to pregnancy and women's traditional role as nurturer. However, the knife offered to passersby who chose to participate complicated the work. They were given the knife to cut a piece of bread from the loaf still hanging from her neck, but the knife was extremely close to Export's vital organs and uterus. The work spoke to women's role as caretaker, nurturer, and giver, but at the same time addressed the danger posed to some women who are forced to assume this role.

⁵² For a discussion of this performance, see: Anita Prammer, *Valie Export: Eine Multimediale Künstlerin* (Vienna: Wiener Frauenverlag, 1988), 66-69. See Export's own description in Export, *Split/Reality*, 108-9.

⁵³ For Export's explanation of *Homometer I*, see: Export, *Split/Reality*, 108.

⁵⁴ A recording of *Homometer II* is available in Export's archives at the Generali Foundation, Vienna.

In much of Export's early work, that of the late 1960s and early 1970s, she often performed in the streets and confronted the public with her strong political art and ideas.

Export described a central goal of her work, using her descriptive term "Feminist Actionism":

Just as action aims at achieving the unity of actor and material, perception and action, subject and object, Feminist Actionism seeks to transform the object of male natural history, the material "woman," subjugated and enslaved by the male creator, into an independent actor and creator, object of her own history. For without the ability to express oneself and without a field of action, there can be no human dignity.⁵⁵

Often choosing her own body and personal experience of that body as material, it was her goal to transform the situation of women: historically, socially, and culturally.

3.5 Ulrike Rosenbach: Feminist Art as Artist's Identity

Ancient history and mythology, as well as her personal experiences, were the impetus for Ulrike Rosenbach's performance art during the 1970s. She stated "as an artist I cannot separate my political conviction from my work just as I cannot separate my personal experiences. Both form the basis of my work and also my life."⁵⁶ In conjunction with these beliefs, the artist also aimed to incorporate women's shared experiences into her art. Throughout the 1970s, Rosenbach identified herself with her feminist art production.

⁵⁵ Valie Export, "Aspects of Feminist Actionism," *New German Critique* 47 (Spring-Summer 1989): 71. An earlier German version appeared as "Feministischer Aktionismus, Aspekte," in Gisland Nabakowski, Helke Sander, and Peter Gorsen, *Frauen in der Kunst*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1980), 139-76.

⁵⁶ "Ik kan als kunstenaar mijn politieke overtuiging niet van mijn werk scheiden net zo min als van mijn persoonlijke ervaringen. Beide vormen de basis van mijn werk en ook van mijn leven." Rosenbach, "Ter introductie enkele vragen aan Ulrike Rosenbach," in *Ulrike Rosenbach/Valie Export* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1980), 1, the translation from Dutch into English is my own.

Einwicklung mit Julia (*Bandage with Julia*, Figure 27) is an early private performance recorded on videotape from 1972 in which Rosenbach bandaged her daughter Julia tightly to her own body.⁵⁷ In *Bandage with Julia*, her daughter of about five years old sat facing the camera on the artist's lap; both appeared nude from the waist up. This close-up view of their torsos and heads did not change throughout the six minutes of the work. Using a gauze-like bandage material, Rosenbach wrapped her daughter tightly to her own body; moving slowly up and down their torsos. They never spoke as they looked straight into the camera or as their eyes followed the movement of the bandage. The only sound heard is their breathing which gave the effect of wind slowly breezing back and forth. Near the end of the tape, soft classical music could be heard as Rosenbach turned to one side to reveal how they were now bound together.

The act of binding one's child to oneself is reminiscent of the wrapping of small children in cloth tied to a mother's back among native North and South American peoples and Asian populations. However, the reference to the original, natural connection between mother and child, the umbilical cord, is evident particularly in the long, thin form of the bandage. The child, once physically attached to her mother, received all nutrition through this lifeline. That physical tie is severed at birth but an imaginary umbilical connection always remains. Rosenbach's daughter is once again tied and bound to her. There is a sense of protection involved in this act, as if wrapped and close to her mother, she will be cared for and protected from the world. In some sense the piece could be thought of as enacting a reverse birth process, a reconnection with the mother. Yet, the lack of joy on their faces evinces the work's ambiguity, as some women may feel forced

⁵⁷ The recording is available through 235 Media in Cologne, Germany.

into the role of motherhood that society prescribes for her. Particularly in 1972, women had few options and support for roles other than those of childbearer and family caregiver; this appears to be a very sensitive issue among many women artists. Lucy Lippard has noted that binding, wrapping, and holding were common features in women's art during this period as exemplified in the wrapping pieces of Jackie Windsor or Eva Hesse.⁵⁸

Rosenbach felt that personal experience was crucial to the development of (feminist) artworks but that a direct connection to specific autobiographical experience was not necessarily evident or required in a work. In a statement of 1975, Rosenbach specified her definition of feminist art:

Feminist art is the elucidation of a woman artist's identity: of her body, of her psyche, her feelings, her position within society. The work is crucial and inquiring; it searches for the essence in women and is in a continuous phase of discussion. Feminist art is the artistic elucidation of women's historical role: as a mother, a housewife, a woman prostituted by men, as a saint, virgin, witch.⁵⁹

For Rosenbach, the personal aspects of a woman's life inform and define the work. The artist demonstrated this position in her own art production and imparted it through the workshops she held at her Schule für Kreativen Feminismus (School for Creative Feminism) in Cologne in the latter half of the 1970s. She advocated a process of researching ancient cultures and practices in women's lives, consciousness-raising, and

⁵⁸ Lucy Lippard, "Die Vergangenheit als Ziel(scheibe) der Zukunft/The Past as Target of the Future" in Ulrike Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, feministische Kunst* (Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982), 124.

⁵⁹ Ulrike Rosenbach, "Untitled Statement," in *Korpersprache* (Berlin: Haus am Waldsee, 1975), reprinted in *Feministische Kunst International* (Amsterdam: De Appel Stichting, 1978), n.p. English translation appears in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Selz and Stiles, 757. This English translation is used.

application of this new knowledge in the work.⁶⁰ An example of this process is *Frauenkultur—Kontaktversuch* (*Women's Culture—Try to Contact*) of 1977.

Women's Culture—Try to Contact (Figure 28) was first performed in Essen, Germany and Vienna in 1977, then in Amsterdam the following year.⁶¹ The piece developed as research into women's lives in ancient and pre-modern cultures. In Amsterdam, the performance occurred in a long, rectangular space at the Stichting Amazone; one of the longer walls contained 65 photographs of women from diverse cultures hung just above the floor. Wearing a white leotard and lying on the floor between the photographs and the audience, Rosenbach positioned a small, hand-held video camera next to her face. Perpendicular to the hanging photographs, she rolled in a movement parallel with the wall and wrapped herself in the coax cable that connected the camera to the recording device. As Rosenbach's body moved across the floor, the camera was directed towards the images at ground level and the faces of the women spun as they were projected onto one of the shorter walls in the space. When she reached the end of the longer wall, the artist was completely wrapped in the cable and the image on the wall was a modern woman who appeared well dressed and made-up. Rosenbach was bound and confined by the cable symbolizing the restrictive social norms placed on a woman's appearance. At the end of the performance, Rosenbach rolled free from the cable, and the final projected image represented a woman from a non-western culture with the tools

⁶⁰ Ulrike Rosenbach, *Schule für Kreativen Feminismus: Beispiel einer autonomen Kulturarbeit* (Cologne: Schule für Kreativen Feminismus, 1980) and "Ter introductie enkele vragen aan Ulrike Rosenbach," 1.

⁶¹ The locations are as follows: Folkwang Museum Essen; Galerie Heike Kurtze, Vienna; and Stichting Amazone, Amsterdam.

necessary to hunt and provide for herself. For the artist, the last image signified woman's autonomy as reflected in the artist's own freedom from the video cables.⁶²

Rosenbach's research led her to other women who experienced the same confinement as she herself felt in western society. As the title indicated, she tried to make a connection with other women. For the spectator, she sought to visually depict the isolation many women felt in their predetermined roles, including a sense of a world upside down and spinning out of their control. At the same time, the artist chose to include many photographs of culturally different women to bring across a commonness in their plight. Rosenbach could be criticized for using photographs of women from developing nations out of their cultural context and attempting to equalize their social conditions. However, in the context of 1970s feminism, the artist aimed to directly and simply portray a political message, to expose the "psychic conditions which depend on the obstructing force of social structures," as she described it.⁶³

A performance art piece from the following year demonstrates another symbolic approach to women's social conditions during the period. *Meine Macht ist meine Ohnmacht* (*To Have No Power is to Have Power*, Figures 29 and 30) was performed at the Kunstmuseum in Düsseldorf in 1978.⁶⁴ The performance space included four windows, onto which she placed the negatives of her photographic series: *Frauen aus alle kulturen* (*Women from all Cultures*). Rosenbach lay in a net that hung from the

⁶² For a discussion of *Women's Culture—Try to Contact*, see: Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 47-48 and A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale, *Performance by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1979), 146.

⁶³ Rosenbach, "Untitled Statement," 757.

⁶⁴ The translation of the title into English is Rosenbach's own and I use that here. Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 67.

ceiling above an area of the floor covered with a large amount of salt. In between her and the ceiling, a mirror reflected the light in the space and cast Rosenbach's shadow onto the salt-covered floor below. For three hours Rosenbach remained motionless and the only sound in the space came from the artist. A microphone was attached close to her mouth and, as she breathed in and out, she stated the words "frau-frau" ("woman-woman") over and over again for the duration of the performance. A video camera recorded her shadow and reversed it onto two video monitors in the space. In intervals, over this image the following text was displayed:

Meine Macht ist meine Ohnmacht.
Die wuetende Ohnmacht, die den Tod der vitalen Aktivitaet der
Maennergeseellschaft, ihrer zwang—haften Virilitaet einlaetet—wo
Frauen einen gegenteiligen Traum traehmen, in Metamorphose denken,
ihre zur OHNMACHT gewordene MACHT ueberwinden, sich
verwandeln, sich neu denken.⁶⁵

(To have no power is to have power.
The furious powerlessness that the dead ushers in from the essential
male society with its relentless virility—where women dream an
opposite dream, in metamorphosis thinking, their powerlessness being
overcome by power, changing themselves, thinking of themselves
anew.⁶⁶)

After three hours, Rosenbach freed herself from the net by cutting her way out and falling onto the salt-covered floor.⁶⁷

The piece functioned as an invitation to other women to seek power through their individual feelings of helplessness in their own lives, to channel the energy of those feelings towards change. Photographs of individual women from diverse cultures, similar

⁶⁵ Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 67.

⁶⁶ The translation from German into English is my own.

⁶⁷ For other descriptions of the work, see: Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 67-68 and *Ulrike Rosenbach/Valie Export*, 13.

to those in *Women's Culture—Try to Contact*, circumscribed the environment. Rosenbach arranged the images of the photographic series, which ostensibly represented sisters from “all” cultures, to be watching her, explicating her desire to reach out to women to transform their positions in society. Rosenbach tried to impart a sense of power to other women, so that they would act accordingly and transform their cultures. The words Rosenbach breathed as she lay above the space made this call clear. The salt on the ground, an element she used frequently in her performances during the 1970s, represented a cleansing element, as she describes: “it kept an aspect of cleaning in my early performance work, which actually always was a part of my intentions, cleaning away old understandings of womanhood.”⁶⁸ The salt and release from the net to the earth symbolized a renewed life as an empowered woman.

A problem with this work, as with *Women's Culture—Try to Contact*, is the equating of women from different cultures without an acknowledgement of their differences, and the assumption that the artist could speak for all women, essentializing women's experiences and identities. Many pioneering feminists and feminist artists made similar moves through their endeavors. In the context of the 1970s, however, their initiatives must be understood as a search for strength and support through other women, and as an attempt to share experiences not admitted by dominant social institutions and family structures. The goal was to join forces to make change, assuming that women had in common, at the least, an alienation from patriarchal society and its institutions.

Many of Rosenbach's performance art works, along with the school she established in Cologne, focused on reaching out to women, strengthening their positions,

⁶⁸ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

and improving their lives. Her project is indicative of the consciousness-raising efforts of the women's movement in Germany in the 1970s. Through her works, Rosenbach demanded an acknowledgment of discrimination against women and, at the same time, hoped to foster a positive women's culture.⁶⁹

3.6. The Role of the Personal in the Artists' Work

Carolee Schneemann's performance art is more intimate and personal in nature than that of Valie Export or Ulrike Rosenbach. Schneemann revealed private details of her life through her work often emphasizing her intimate relationships. Her life experiences became the material for many of her performance works and are inextricably linked with her artistic processes to the extent that it is difficult to ascertain where her life ends and her work begins. Export's own body and daily life in Austrian society were the starting points for her explorations during the period. The body is a carrier of social and cultural signs that she marked, or allows to be marked, in numerous ways in an effort to alter representations of women. She differs from Schneemann in that autobiographical details did not appear in the performances; rather, her personal experiences informed her choices for social interventions through the work. Rosenbach differs from both Schneemann and Export in her direct, even simple, presentations but this does not diminish the complex issues at work in her performances. Rosenbach's subjects developed through research into women's history, but she shares with Schneemann and Export, an interest in exploring and changing the confines of women's cultural roles and social positions in her own time period. While Export and Rosenbach assumed a more

⁶⁹ See: "Feminismus und Kunst/Feminism and Art, Auszüge aus einem Gespräch mit Amine Haase, 1982," in *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 131-135.

symbolic approach to undermining women's traditional positions, Schneemann's method and content was immensely more personal.

CHAPTER 4

BEYOND BEAUTY: THE (NUDE) FEMALE BODY IN PERFORMANCE ART BY CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBAACH

4.1 Introduction

The female nude has appeared in western art for centuries, but it has generally been painted or sculpted by men for their own purposes and gratification, and reflected standards of appearance defined by a patriarchal society. Women have, of course, been affected by these norms. A number of feminist performance artists in the 1960s and 1970s chose to address nudity and norms of beauty in their work because these norms had effectively controlled and repressed women for centuries. There is an implicit and explicit addressing of issues surrounding beauty and the nude in the work of Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach. By using the nude female body—their own bodies—in an art context, Schneemann and Export engaged problems associated with the idealization of the body, while Rosenbach specifically worked with the theme of Venus, goddess of love and beauty. I have chosen to address the work of these three artists because of the diversity of their approaches, which serve to illustrate the richness of feminist art practice.¹

4.2 Reviewing Beauty and the Nude

The quest for beauty in western civilization has often been linked with the aim of producing an ideal human form in art. In the history of western art, Ancient Greece has

¹ The idealized nude that I refer to in this chapter is almost always that of a classical or Euro-American aesthetic, ergo typically a white beauty. This in itself warrants further consideration. I do not address the complexities of this issue with regards to the artists here, all of whom are white.

been considered a moment of achievement of this beauty, most notably with the male nude dating back to the Classical Period (c.450-400 BCE), for example, in the writings and sculptures of Polykleitos.² While Classical Greek images (and the faithful Roman copies) of the idealized male body entailed nude, hyper-developed musculature, regular yet angular facial features, a contrapposto stance, and an impassive expression, the female body was mostly depicted clothed. By the Late Classical Period, the nude female body emerged in the form of a goddess, often as Aphrodite (or the Roman Venus), the goddess of love.³ While sculptures of men generally had detailed genitalia complete with penis and pubic hair, female nudes did not display any specificity in pubic hair, labia, or clitoris (for example, Polykleitos' *Spearbearer* of c.450-440 B.C. and Praxiteles' *Aphrodite of Knidos* of c.350-340 B.C.).

During the Renaissance revival of classical art and humanist thought, the idealized male and female nude reappeared, especially in Italy where new archeological explorations identified monuments from antiquity.⁴ The male body was either that of a

² One of the earliest art historical discussions on the ideal in the art of Ancient Greece and Rome was written by Johann Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (Volume 1 Dresden, 1763 and Volume 2, Vienna, 1776), for an English translation, see *The History of Ancient Art*, trans. G. Henry Lodge (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1856). For Winckelmann, the young nude male represented ideal beauty. While dated, classic analyses on the nude and the ideal in art have been written by Kenneth Clark and Erwin Panofsky. See Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (New York: Pantheon, 1956) and Panofsky, "The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles," *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), 55-107. Clark identified a distinction between the naked ("deprived of clothes") and the nude ("a balanced, prosperous, and confident body"); see Clark, *The Nude*, 3. For a more contemporary analysis of the female nude in art, see Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Pandora Press, 1981), especially "Painted Ladies," 114-33, and Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992).

³ The female nude was rare before Praxiteles time; see Clark, *The Nude*, 75.

⁴ For a period description, see Leon Battista Alberti's *De Pictura* written in 1435 in which he observed that an artist should be more concerned with beauty than with likeness and

god or of a figure from the Bible, such as Isaac or David. Influential to the period, Leonardo da Vinci drew an idealized human form in his version of the Vitruvian Man, based on ancient texts by Vitruvius (c.1490).⁵ The female nudes depicted most often took the form of an Ancient goddess, especially Venus. From this period onward, there was an ever-increasing number of female nudes—in relation to the number of male nudes—produced in western art.⁶

Models for the embodiment of standards of beauty for female nudes in painting and sculpture were established in classical antiquity and reified during the Renaissance. While each time period and culture chose different physical aspects of the female nude on which to focus, numerous depictions of the female body exemplified this idealized perspective and came to represent beauty. The above, brief overview of the appearance of the female nude in art and the idealization of the human form, both male and female, was codified in Kenneth Clark's *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Art*, first published in 1956. The standards of beauty and the relationship to the nude in art that he promoted were selective, even exclusionary, as they ignored depictions of the nude that did not fit within the antiquity to Renaissance model.⁷ As the art historian Lynda Nead observed in her

that the best parts of observed nature should be combined into one body, as was done by the painter Zeuxis in antiquity, forming an idealized body. For an English translation next to the Latin text, see *On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De Pictura and De Statua*, ed. and trans. Cecil Grayson (London: Phaidon 1972).

⁵ Clark believes Vitruvius' text was of the utmost important to Renaissance artists in regards to their portrayal of the human form. See Clark, *The Nude*, 15.

⁶ During the Baroque period, for example, other nude female imagery appeared including Biblical figures, such as Bathsheba rendered by Rembrandt, for example, in 1654.

⁷ For example, it dismissed any non-western representations of the nude body. See also, Nead, "A Discourse on the Naked and the Nude," *The Female Nude*, 12-16. In addition to Clark's work, she also discusses John Berger's and T.J. Clark's approach in the nude versus naked paradigm.

1992 study *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, the term “nude” in Clark’s analysis quickly came to mean really the “female nude” and the viewer was implicitly male. She stated:

It is in the process of dropping the gendered prefix—the moment when the female nude becomes simply “the nude”—that the male identity of artist and connoisseur, creator and consumer of the female body, is fully installed.⁸

In 1972, John Berger took up the relationship between the naked and the nude first examined by Clark. While Berger privileged the naked as a state of liberation, he upheld the male artist/female nude relationship, which is one of subject and creator versus object to be viewed:

In the art-form of the European nude the painters and spectator-owners were usually men and the persons treated as objects, usually women. This unequal relationship is so deeply embedded in our culture that it still structures the consciousness of many women. They do to themselves what men do to them. They survey, like men, their own femininity.⁹

In their essay “Painted Ladies” of 1981, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock further defined the cultural effects of the depiction of the female nude:

In art the female nude parallels the effects of the feminine stereotype in art historical discourse. Both confirm male dominance. As female nude, woman is body, is nature opposed to male culture, which, in turn, is represented by the very act of transforming nature, that is, the female model or motif, into the ordered forms and colour of a cultural artefact, a *work of art*.¹⁰

⁸ Nead, *The Female Nude*, 13.

⁹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972), 63. In 1985 T.J. Clark also reworked ideas on the naked and the nude in his analysis of Édouard Manet’s *Olympia*. Clark reads nakedness on Olympia’s body as signaling her working-class origins. T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984): 79-146. See also, Nead, *The Female Nude*, 15-16.

¹⁰ Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, “Painted Ladies” in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London: Pandora, 1981), 119, their emphasis.

These above-mentioned studies established the existence of the paradigm of the male viewer and creator versus the female art object in western art with its abundant production of female nudes. In the 1960s and 1970s, this paradigm was still embedded in general art practice and art historical discourses, impacting the direction of feminist performance art and the work of Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach.

In *Face Value: The Politics of Beauty*, Robin Tolmach Lakoff and Raquel Scherr focused on the role beauty has played in women's lives and attempted to develop a scientific definition for beauty. Ultimately turning to the history of art, Lakoff and Scherr surveyed images of Aphrodite (Venus) in western art over the centuries under the assumption that artists would portray their view of an idealized female beauty in an image of that goddess. They established a number of opposing typologies: neat versus wild beauty; the temptress versus the innocent beauty; and the thin, child-like body versus the matronly, buxom body.¹¹ Despite this diversity of categories, they found something in common in all the representations they surveyed:

All images of feminine desirability over the ages share certain characteristics: they stress, from one angle or another, feminine helplessness and passivity, however this is to be achieved, whether because the woman is pregnant, or weak, dependent and sickly, or fat and slowed by her girth. Male beauty, as depicted in art, seldom if ever suggests weakness or dependency; idealized women almost always do.¹²

¹¹ Robin Tolmach Lakoff and Raquel Scherr, *Face Value: The Politics of Beauty* (Boston and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 58-63. Lakoff is a professor of Linguistics and Scherr a professor of English.

¹² Lakoff and Scherr, *Face Value*, 64.

This reading is problematic on several accounts and revealed the authors' own biases on body types and women's roles in their research, which began in 1979. For example, pregnant women are not helpless and the girth, for example, of Peter Paul Rubens' women can arguably be said to represent health, rather than weakness. This view also ignores numerous other images of strong women in art, such as the Amazon or Judith, as portrayed by Artemisia Gentileschi, for example. However, while not "all images of feminine desirability" depict passivity and helplessness, there is an abundance of female nudes in western art that do. Passivity and helplessness suggest a susceptibility to being controlled. The feminist art of the 1970s set out to challenge such tacit assumptions and norms, especially in the arena of performance art, as evidenced in the work of Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach.

A number of general observations may be made with respect to the addressing of standards of beauty and the female nude by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach. The female nude came to represent an ideal body and norms of beauty for western cultures, specifically produced for a generalized male viewer. The idealized female nude has effectively represented a form of beauty that "entails a loss of corporeal subjectivity" for women themselves, the disembodiment of women.¹³ The female nude does not speak or function physically as real women do, but operated on the level of image. The exploration of nakedness as inscribed onto women's bodies came to be established as an alternative. Nakedness, in contrast to the nude, indicates the potential for a real, functioning body, as it points to the material existence of the body. Schneemann and Export, who performed

¹³ Francette Pacteau, *The Symptom of Beauty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 95, quoted in Joanna Frueh, "Introduction: My Body, My Beauty," *Monster/Beauty: Building the Body of Love* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2, see also her entire introduction, 1-38.

without clothing during the 1960s and 1970s, effectively interrogated the divide between being the nude and being naked. Moreover, while Schneemann and Export were and are conventionally attractive, their bodies were nonetheless real and so did not perfectly conform to the norms of the idealized female nude in art. Rosenbach, on the other hand, challenged an exemplar of beauty in the history of western art, Venus, to undermine the traditional notions of beauty that the goddess came to embody. The work of these artists aimed to establish their corporeal subjectivity as women.

4.3 Early Feminist Performance Art and the Female Nude

Male and female performance artists used their nude bodies in their work during the late 1960s and 1970s in both the U.S. and in Europe. Yet, indicative of the position the nude female body still maintained in the art world, some female artists on both continents were criticized for using their own nude bodies. In an essay of 1976, “The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women’s Body Art,” the American feminist art critic Lucy Lippard observed:

When women use their own bodies in their art work, they are using their *selves*; a significant psychological factor converts these bodies or faces from object to subject. However, there are ways and ways of using one’s own body, and women have not always avoided self-exploitation. A woman artist’s approach to herself is necessarily complicated by social stereotypes. I must admit to a personal lack of sympathy with women who have themselves photographed in black stockings, garter belts, boots, with bare breasts, bananas, and coy, come-hither glances...A woman using her own face and body has a right to do what she will with them, but it is a subtle abyss that separates men’s use of women for sexual titillation from women’s use of women to expose that insult.¹⁴

¹⁴ Lucy Lippard, “The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women’s Body Art,” *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women’s Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976), 124-25. This essay was originally published as “The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: Women’s Body Art” in *Art in America*, vol. 64, no. 3 (May-June 1976): 74-81.

In effect, women were not always taken seriously as artists if they were nude or looked too good while performing. In Europe in the 1970s, similar criticisms of women using their bodies can be found, as in the French art critic Catherine Francblin's response to the Paris Biennale in 1975 in *Art Press*. Writing from a psychoanalytic perspective, she argued that women were suppressing the recognition of their objectification in art:

If it is true that our society works in such a way that what is expressly forbidden by the community as a whole comes to a head in the institution of art in a kind of return to that which has been repressed, then we will be able to measure the weight of feminine guilt aroused by all reactivation of primitive autoerotic pleasure. Because in the field of art—here within the framework of this Biennale—what women, for the most part, are showing, is the complete opposite of a denial of the woman-object, because the object of desire (to portray) is precisely the woman's body itself.¹⁵

For Francblin, women could not use their bodies in their work and maintain subjecthood. Parker and Pollock also identified difficulties women encountered when using their nude bodies, especially those representations that emphasized sexual difference. Looking at a history of representations of nude women in art, including examples from the 1970s, the art historians explained in 1981:

However, such images [emphasizing sexual difference] are dangerously open to misunderstanding. They do not alter radically the traditional identification of women with their biology nor challenge the association of women with nature. In some ways they merely perpetuate the exclusively sexual identity of women, not only as body but explicitly as cunt.¹⁶

¹⁵ Catherine Francblin, "Body-Object, Woman-Object [1975]," trans. Elizabeth Manchester, in *The Artist's Body*, ed. Tracey Warr, survey by Amelia Jones (London: Phaidon, 2000), 238. Originally published as "Corps-object, femme-object," *Art Press*, vol. 20 (September-October 1975): 14-15.

¹⁶ Parker and Pollock, "Painted Ladies," 127.

They contended that women who depicted sexual difference by using their own bodies in their work risked becoming sex objects devoid of meaning beyond connotations of biology and nature.

In stark contrast, male artists were not confronted with similar dilemmas when using their own nude bodies, owing in part to the position the female (nude) body held in culture and society. Moreover, male artists could manipulate the nude female body without negative criticism and, when placing their own bodies in their work or inflicting pain on themselves, they were even considered brave. Consider, for example, the work of Yves Klein who began his *Anthropométry* series in 1958 in which nude female models covered each other with paint and moved each other, like paint brushes directed by Klein, across paper laid on the floor, or pressed their bodies onto paper hung on the wall. As another instance, the Viennese Actionists “defaced” the female body, and the human body in general, in their ritualistic performances, as in Otto Mühl’s *Material Action No. 1: Degradation of a Venus* in 1963. Mühl stated, “We must strive to destroy humanity, to destroy art...;” his choice of action to accomplish this was to throw garbage and paint onto a nude female body, that is, the body that came to represent beauty in art.¹⁷ In the United States, Vito Acconci used his own body to perform a gender transformation in *Conversions* (1971), in which he burned the hairs off his chest with a candle. He then hid his penis between his legs—and in the mouth of a nude woman crouched behind him, making the work less about becoming a woman than about coming in a woman’s mouth. Moreover, in a recent description of the work, it was described as a “painful alteration of

¹⁷ *The Artist’s Body*, ed. Warr, 94. See also Chapter 2.

his body” whereby he was “purging his body for sacrifice.”¹⁸ This type of heroic language is rarely applied to women using their nude bodies.

The difficult situation presented for feminist artists using their own (nude) bodies, then, was how to critique images of the female nude and develop new norms of beauty that did not objectify women, but rather empowered them. This was the challenge before Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach.

4.4 Carolee Schneemann

With Carolee Schneemann’s first performance at the Judson Dance Theater, *Newspaper Event*, on the 29th of January 1963, she demonstrated interest in the material potential of the body through the performers’ random movements, interaction with each other, and physical contact with newspaper.¹⁹ In December of that year Schneemann made a significant breakthrough with *Eye/Body—Thirty-Six Transformative Actions for Camera* (1963, Figure 31 and 32), a series of photographs based on a private performance in which the artist incorporated her body into a painting construction. This is Schneemann’s first use of her body as a material art surface and it specifically interrogates the theme of beauty. Schneemann described the development of the work in her performance anthology *More than Meat Joy* (1979):

In 1962 I began a loft environment built of large panels interlocked by rhythmic color units, broken mirrors and glass, lights, moving umbrellas and motorized parts. I worked with my whole body—the scale of the panels incorporating my own physical scale. I then decided I wanted my actual body to be combined with the work as an integral material—a further dimension of the construction... Covered in paint,

¹⁸ *The Artist’s Body*, ed. Warr, 136.

¹⁹ Schneemann, “Newspaper Event,” *More than Meat Joy*, 32-5.

grease, chalk, ropes, plastic, I establish my body as visual territory. Not only am I an image maker, but I explore the image values of flesh as material I choose to work with. The body may remain erotic, sexual, desired, desiring but it is as well votive: marked, written over in a text of stroke and gesture discovered by my creative female will.²⁰

In one of the photographs (Figure 31), a nude Schneemann stood facing the camera in front of a group of painting constructions taller than herself and wider than it was in height. A number of separate, completed works by Schneemann were used as the constructions in *Eye/Body* and exemplified some of her work in the 1960s. The pieces included: *Four Fur Cutting Boards* (1962), *Ice Box* (1962), *Window to Brakhage* (1962), *Fur Wheel* (1962), and *Gift Science* (1963).²¹ In this image from *Eye/Body* with some of her early constructions, a cloth was draped over the construction on the left while from its vertical surface, a variety of materials were hung, such as: a small framed picture, an electrical socket, and wood. An umbrella arrangement was to the left of Schneemann—some of her constructions during this period included umbrellas and motorized parts. To her right a wooden frame partitioned in three stood with wires wrapped around its surface. In another, oft reproduced photograph in the *Eye/Body* series (Figure 32), Schneemann was lying nude on plastic with her head resting on a large wooden spool. Her arms were raised above her head as two snakes slithered across her torso: one by her right shoulder and breast, the other on her stomach. The snakes reference Adam and Eve,

²⁰ Schneemann, “Eye Body,” *More than Meat Joy*, 52. This private performance was photographed by Schneemann’s friend Erró, an Icelandic painter based in Paris.

²¹ Kristine Stiles, “Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions,” in *Out of Actions: between performance and the object, 1949-1979*, ed. Paul Schimmel (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art and Thames and Hudson, 1998), 297. Before Schneemann moved into her former loft on 29th Street in New York, the space was occupied by a furrier who left some of the materials behind. Schneemann incorporated these found objects into some of her constructions. For an exhibition catalogue of some of these early works, see *Carolee Schneemann*, vol. 1 (New York: Max Hutchinson Gallery, 1982).

but also ancient matriarchal goddess religions for which the serpent was a symbol.²² A black line was painted down the middle of Schneemann's face, reminiscent of Henri Matisse's painting of his wife, *The Green Stripe* (1905). In both photographs Schneemann's body was smeared with dark paint, appearing dirtied. The painting on her flesh indicated her intention of using her own body as material, as the support for the work, and integrating it into her painting constructions.

While a number of artists had been actively working with the sensate body's interaction with, and involvement in, painting and other media since Abstract Expressionism, such as Sue Weil and Robert Rauschenberg's life-size cyanotype prints from 1951, Schneemann was among the first to actually incorporate her own body into the work.²³ While both images of Schneemann that documented *Eye/Body* and the Weil and Rauschenberg project were based on photography and the indexical nature of the medium, the appearance of a real body in Schneemann's work distinguished it from the latter which reproduced only the outline of a body. Moreover, Schneemann's work differed from Jackson Pollock's drip paintings because her body and flesh were integrated as materials in the work and as support onto which elements were added. Pollock, in contrast, performed the act of painting, but he was not physically part of the final product nor was his body a surface onto which paint or other materials were applied to be part of the final work. Schneemann controlled the paint and her body functioned as an integral element in the constructions, not as, for example, the female nudes Klein used in his *Anthropométry* series. Klein never "dirtied" himself with paint, but rather directed

²² See Chapter 6.

²³ These prints were full-body contact prints and published in *Life* April 9, 1951. Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 373.

the models to act as live brushes and make prints with their bodies on paper. While although they were performing, the models' bodies were not physically present in the final product, except indexically as their body imprints were left on the paper's surface, as were Pollock's hand prints on some of his canvases. Schneemann's installations in *Eye/Body* reflected an affinity with Rauschenberg's combine paintings, but differed significantly in that Schneemann's living and breathing body became a part of the material on which she painted. With this act, she marked her body as creative surface, flesh as artistic material. Her work is at once painting, installation, and performance, but also photography as the intended final product. The work was complicated by various issues, which challenged the traditions in the history of western art and culture, including norms of beauty.

First, the marking and "dirtying" of the female nude was problematic for, as art historian Lynda Nead describes, "more than any other subject, the female nude connotes 'Art'...it is an icon of western culture, a symbol of civilization and accomplishment."²⁴ Schneemann incorporated her body into a tradition of western art in which nude women were frequently portrayed, but also symbolized beauty. Schneemann corrupted this tradition; the surface of a female nude was no longer pristine and clean but smeared with paint that appeared as dirt. Moreover, many of the other materials she used did not represent attributes of traditional nudes but rather found objects: broken umbrellas, old frames, wires, and other detritus. The marking of her body and the use of unconventional materials subverted norms of beauty. Schneemann's body conformed to current standards of beauty, thus strengthening the work's impact and enhancing the sense of disruption of

²⁴ Nead, *The Female Nude*, 1.

those standards.²⁵ It was not just her body that was beautiful, but the way in which Schneemann unabashedly presented herself, as Kristine Stiles described, “for Schneemann’s art has been full of the joy and celebration of female bodies in and for themselves.”²⁶ This does not conflict with Schneemann’s subverting traditional notions of beauty because women did not necessarily celebrate their bodies in art. This was still a domain dominated by male artists in 1963.

Secondly, Schneemann used a *real* female body as one of the objects of her work. Juxtaposing it among other objects emphasized and clarified this intention. The real body, however, was read by some as a naked body, rather than a nude. This perception was reinforced by a history of female nudes in art and while these nudes may have been realistic, they were more often idealized such that the female genitals were covered (for example, Sandro Bottocelli, *Birth of Venus*, c. 1486 or Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863) or wiped clean—meaning that they were smoothed over and did not include pubic hair (for example, Praxiteles, *Aphrodite of Knidos*, c.350-340 B.C. or Bronzino, *Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time*, c.1546). Schneemann’s body was a real functioning female body and she captured its physicality in the photographs for this series; specifically, the snake image presented Schneemann’s genitals and pubic hair. Schneemann took the photographs of *Eye/Body* to the person she considered the most adventurous curator at the time, the soon-to-be director of the Jewish Museum in New York City, Alan Solomon. After she showed him the photographs, he reportedly said, “These have

²⁵ Schneemann understood the effect that her attractive body could have on the reception of her work. She discussed this at her lecture: “Carolee Schneemann: Disruptive Consciousness” (“Performance: A Photographic Perspective,” The 2001 National Graduate Seminar, New York University, New York, June 7, 2001).

²⁶ Stiles, “Uncorrupted Joy,” 297.

nothing to do with the art world and if you want to take your clothes off and run around naked, go find another place to do that.”²⁷ This reaction indicated what female artists could do with their bodies in their work in the early 1960s, or rather, what they were culturally *not* permitted to do.

Thirdly, it was not just that a real female nude was part of the work, but more significantly that Schneemann was the body depicted; the artist was both the creator of the work and its object. The title, *Eye/Body*, helps to explicate what is at work in her project. She is the artist, the “I” and the “eye” constructing the work of art, whereas the dominant eye in the history of western art has been that of the male artist and viewer. Yet, Schneemann is also the “body” that traditionally has been the object manipulated by the male artist for the male viewer’s pleasure. When the body is the artist’s and the artist is female, a twist and transformation takes place, evacuating the traditional function of a female nude in art. As the art historian Rebecca Schneider explained in her discussion of *Eye/Body*, “*The agency of the body displayed, the author-ity of the agent*—that was the problem with women’s work.”²⁸ Schneemann assumed authority over traditional representations of the female as passive and took action, and thus control. She challenged the position traditionally held by the “active” male artist to create the “passive” female nude for male visual pleasure. As the creator and object of the work, Schneemann

²⁷ Schneemann quoted in an interview in *Reclaiming the Body: Feminist Art in America*, prod. and dir. Michael Blackwood, ed. Julie Sloane, PBS documentary of the *Bad Girls* exhibition at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, Michael Blackwood Productions, 1995. See also: Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (London: Routledge, 1997), 37-8. Schneider interviewed Schneemann and the artist similarly described Solomon’s reaction to the photographs of *Eye/Body*.

²⁸ Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, 35, Schneider’s emphasis.

undermined traditional notions of female beauty, as Lakoff and Scheer stated in their study on beauty:

Beauty, like women, is stereotypically passive; it is created by the beholder, it is appreciated, it is an adornment to someone else. Beauty merely *is*, it does not *do*.²⁹

While this statement may appear simplistic today, in 1984 when the authors published the findings of their research begun in 1979, it was revolutionary in terms of thinking about women and beauty. This helps to understand in part the difficulties Schneemann's work presented in 1963. In contrast to images of women, presented as passive, to be visually consumed by the male viewer, Schneemann challenged this construct by creating an environment to transform her nude body into her paintings.

Schneemann's nude body formed an integral part of her work, and *Up to and Including Her Limits* (first performed in 1974) is no exception. Exploration for the work began in the spring of 1973, upon her return from England to her farmhouse in upstate New York. She had seen a neighbor trim his tree using a harness and rope system to move up and down and she asked to use it to experiment with floating in a tree, eventually experiencing a sense of flight.³⁰ She first worked with the harness in an art venue in December 1973 at the "Avant Garde Festival #10" organized by Charlotte Moorman and held in Grand Central Station in New York City. Individual artists were given space in open boxcars to perform simultaneously alongside a platform in the station. *Trackings*, as Schneemann called the piece at the time, consisted of the artist

²⁹ Lakoff and Scherr, *Face Value*, 18, emphasis is theirs.

³⁰ For Schneemann's description of the development of the work, see: Schneemann, "Up To and Including Her Limits," *More than Meat Joy*, 224-233. See also the performance pamphlet *Up to and Including Her Limits*, n.d., available at the library of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

suspending various body parts—no longer than an arm or leg, as the space was constricting and did not allow for full suspension—and marking the walls or the floor with the chalk she held in her hand. Although she had initially experimented with performing the work in the nude, in the *Trackings* event she was fully clothed due to the low temperature of the space. In this piece, as well as in the experiments that led up to it, she has said that she reached a state of meditation, such that she felt unaware of the viewer's presence, as she focused on her own movements and her body's physical experience of the environment.³¹

Trackings formed experiments into motion and the body's potential freedom from everyday movements. The work began as a test of the body's limits against gravity, a physical experience which brought Schneemann to a meditative place as the body's actions took over her mental state. In this respect the body takes over as her conscious mind was not directly forecasting or indicating her movements. The chalk she used in the *Trackings* performance marked the space, recording her presence in the intimate space of a box car. The chalk "tracked" her movements and was not unrelated to the markings that Jackson Pollock made on his large canvases, such as *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)* (1950). One significant aspect of Schneemann's work is that she marked the surfaces of the space, a process which has often associated with male art production and epitomized by Abstract Expressionism.³² Schneemann could be criticized for making a work so tied

³¹ Schneemann, "Up To and Including Her Limits," *More than Meat Joy*, 227.

³² While this group of artists was supposed to have brought liberation as Harold Rosenberg stated in 1952 in *Art News*: "The gesture on the canvas was a gesture of liberation, from Value—political, aesthetic, moral," it excluded liberation for women or their art practices. Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters [1952]," in *The Artist's Body*, ed. Warr, 193; originally published in *Art News*, vol. 51, no. 8 (December 1952): 22-23, 48-50. The exclusionary practices of this male club have been well-examined and previously unacknowledged

to the strokes of paint on Pollock's canvases, but her body is equally crucial for this work. She, a woman artist, used her entire body to draw on this three-dimensional work; the physical presence and experience of the performance were at least equal to the markings on the surface.

Starting in 1973, during the same period as *Trackings*, Schneemann filmed *Kitch's Last Meal* using a borrowed Super-8 camera. Kitch was Schneemann's gray Maltese cat, and she recorded one of his meals each week, a practice that would continue until his death. By fixing the camera to a tripod, Schneemann also filmed what she thought Kitch observed of her and her companion's (Anthony McCall) daily lives. Footage also included Schneemann's experiments with the rope and harness system at her country home. Schneemann referred to the eight reels, recorded between 1973 and 1976, as a "daily domestic diary—where I am usually..."³³ The recorded sound entailed noises from their daily lives, including personal comments on everything from feminism to sex. The artist considers *Kitch's Last Meal* and its soundtrack crucial elements of *Up To and Including Her Limits*.³⁴

The ideas the artist first explored in *Trackings* and *Kitch's Last Meal* developed into *Up To and Including Her Limits*. In its final version, the work would appear eight times as a performance and/or a performance installation between 1974 and 1976. A number of elements overlapped between these performances (Figure 33): the

practitioners studied in Ann Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

³³ Schneemann, "Up To and Including Her Limits," *More than Meat Joy*, 229.

³⁴ Schneemann, "Carolee Schneemann to Daryl Chin: Regarding Up To and Including Her Limits," letter dated 28 May 1975, in *Up To and Including Her Limits* performance pamphlet, 4. Daryl Chin is a playwright and critic who has written on performance art.

performance space consisted of a corner area with the two walls (at right angles) and the floor each covered with white paper, and lit by a filmless Super-8 projector. A rope and a harness, from which the artist suspended herself, were attached to the ceiling. A double projection of *Kitch's Last Meal* ran continuously next to the performance area. A sound track on tapes and three to six video monitors ran black and white recordings of previous performances of *Up To and Including Her Limits*, as well as covering the current action. A reading area contained Schneemann's writings and slides relating to the work, while a wall between the reading and performance spaces displayed texts informing the viewer of the work's elements.³⁵ Since the 1970s, *Up To and Including Her Limits* has been exhibited as an installation (Figure 34)—as at the artist's retrospective at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City in 1996, which included an example of the performance area where Schneemann originally was suspended and the harness. A set of original meditative drawings on paper from a 1976 performance was placed in the original corner format during the retrospective.³⁶ To either side of the performance area six video monitors played *Kitch's Last Meal* or previous recordings of the 1970s performances, including sound. The artist described the work in a 1976 article by art critic Ann-Sargent Wooster:

³⁵ These elements were all shared in the performance installations at Artists Space, New York (1 December 1974), The Kitchen, New York (13-14 February 1976), and Studiogalerie, Berlin (10 June 1976). Additional showings included: University Art Museum, Berkeley, California (11 April 1974); Arts Meeting Place, London (18 June 1974); London Filmmakers Cooperative (19 June 1974); Anthology Film Archive, New York (12-13 December 1974); and Basel Art Fair (13-20 June 1976). See Schneemann, "Up To and Including Her Limits," *More than Meat Joy*, 224.

³⁶ The drawings exhibited as part of the 1996 exhibition at the New Museum are from the 13-14 February 1976 performance held at The Kitchen in New York City. See: Dan Cameron, et al, *Carolee Schneemann: Up To and Including Her Limits* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996), 42.

The drawing accumulations which occur during my suspension on the rope are called automatic writing or trance markings. For non-specified durations I turn myself into a randomized drawing machine. The situation seems personal—being nude, my voice on the tapes, my image in the film—but while the figure on the ropes is actual it becomes less “real” than the woman of the film. There is no idea of “performance” whatsoever; while working on the rope, I may not know if there are any spectators or none. The movements and gestures which produce the strokes are controlled by the torsion of my body wound in the rope. My only thought is to be an extension of the rope itself. Until the discomfort or loss of concentration occurs I let my entire body function as a pencil.³⁷

The performance of *Up To and Including Her Limits* had its roots in Schneemann’s earlier work, antedating *Trackings* and *Kitch’s Last Meal*, as the artist described in a letter of 1975:

This may be a fond and ironical re-connection to those painterly origins from which I explored increasing dimensionalities in my Kinetic Theater and film works from the early 60’s onwards. Having moved as far away from actually painting on canvas as I could, here I paradoxically *enact* the body following the eye into physical space, the hand as guide, transmission, marker.³⁸

While *Up To and Including Her Limits* was a performance, it reconnected with Schneemann’s understanding of herself as a painter.

In conceptualizing *Up To and Including Her Limits*, as Schneemann described in *More than Meat Joy*, she tried to remove elements previously important to her performance work:

- I realized my intentions were TO DO AWAY WITH:
1. Performance
 2. A Fixed Audience
 3. Rehearsals
 4. Performers

³⁷ Carolee Schneemann, cited in Ann-Sargent Wooster, “Up To and Including Her Limits,” *Artforum* 14, no. 9 (May 1976): 73.

³⁸ Schneemann, “Carolee Schneemann to Daryl Chin,” 4, emphasis is Schneemann’s.

5. Fixed Durations
6. Sequences
7. Conscious Intention
8. Improvisation
9. Technical Cues
10. A Central Metaphor or Theme³⁹

Rhetorically, she asked, “what was left?” She did not provide a specific written answer outside of these notes to the performances of the piece. However, in an *Up To and Including Her Limits* performance pamphlet that included a letter Schneemann wrote to the critic Daryl Chin, she included these above listed intentions, but emphatically stated: “What I would not do away with was a close and sustained use of my own life as material.”⁴⁰ This insistence has continued through all of Schneemann’s work, and in *Up To and Including Her Limits*, the “use of [her] own life as material” was captured by the momentary physical presence of the artist on paper.

Schneemann’s aim was to enact her own physicality in the present to provide an occasion for a female body to speak. The performance of *Up To and Including Her Limits* was stripped down and simplified to the most basic elements: the nude artist, harness, white paper, and pencil. Her movements were simple: swinging, twisting, and marking the paper. This environment allowed for varying interpretations by a viewing audience as Schneemann described in 1975:

I use my nude body in “Up To and Including Her Limits” as the stripped down, undecorated human object; it is not necessarily erotic, comic, cosmic, maternal, poignant, expressive, attractive, repellent, implacable though it might seem any of these things to different people at the same time.⁴¹

³⁹ Schneemann, “Up To and Including Her Limits,” *More than Meat Joy*, 227.

⁴⁰ Schneemann, “Carolee Schneemann to Daryl Chin,” 3.

⁴¹ Schneemann, “Carolee Schneemann to Daryl Chin,” 1.

Up To and Including Her Limits pursued a direction different from *Eye/Body*, in which she used her body in specific arrangements as a surface on which to paint and as an element of the constructions. In *Up To and Including Her Limits* Schneemann used her body as an active component not unrelated to Pollock's albeit private painting "performances"; both marked the surface in what appeared to be a randomized manner and in a trance-like state. But Schneemann's work differed, as she described:

Our work seized dynamic implications of Abstract Expressionism to extend the active visual surface of painting into actual physical space and time, and to dematerialize the frame, the object, the aesthetic commodity.⁴²

The process of marking and creating with her body drove Schneemann, rather than the idea of making a tangible object. In addition, instead of the phallic gesture of marking the canvas, as in a Pollock painting, in *Up To and Including Her Limits* a woman performed the action—while nude—and thus in a sense became the "phallus." As has been noted by the art historian Rebecca Schneider: "Woman as artist's brush, woman fetishized as phallus was acceptable, even chic. But woman *with* brush was in some way woman *with* phallus and thus unnatural, monstrous, threatening, primitive—certainly not artistic."⁴³ Schneemann took the active role both in the process of executing her work and by incorporating her body as her work.

⁴² Schneemann, "The Obscene Body/Politic," *Art Journal*, vol. 50, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 31. When saying "our" Schneemann is referring to many performance artists in the 1960s coming out of Happenings and Fluxus. The women she mentions from her first years in New York doing objects, installations, and performances like herself include: Yoko Ono, Alison Knowles, Charlotte Moorman, Marta Minujin, and Yayoi Kusama.

⁴³ Schneider, *Explicit Body*, 38. This observation was made in regards to Shigeko Kuboto's *Vagina Painting* performed at Perpetual Fluxfest in New York in 1965, but it applies equally to Schneemann's performance.

Crucial to understanding what Schneemann accomplished was that she was at once the artist and utterly integral to the art: they are indistinguishable. In *Up To and Including Her Limits* the female nude is still in a way part of its long aesthetic tradition, but there are at least three crucial differences. First, the real, living body appears naked not as a nude because of her activity of moving on the harness and marking the space. The activity does not allow for the traditional art relationship of passive object/active viewer to form. Secondly, the real body disturbed the traditional viewing act. The rendered female nude was usually the object of the viewer's gaze. However, Schneemann's live body threatened the viewer with a potential return of that gaze and undermined the traditional art-spectator relationship.⁴⁴ Schneemann stated that she was often in a trance-like state, oblivious to the presence of the audience. However, the potential existed that she would stare back at the viewer who was peering at her body. Returning the gaze was always a possibility, as Schneemann would lose her concentration or tire, removing herself or readjusting the harness. Thirdly, genitals were visible as she moved around in the space, twisting and sometimes almost falling out of the harness. Historically, female nudes were idealized and the genitals smoothed over, as previously discussed.⁴⁵

Schneemann challenged concepts of beauty and the history of the nude in Western art most directly in the series *Forbidden Actions* (1977-79) in which, in addition, she infiltrated the traditional viewing space of the art public. The artist described the series:

The woman artist turns into a nude; a nude “escaped” from the traditional canvas of male imagination; an artist “escaped” from the

⁴⁴ Of course, Manet's *Olympia* also “returns” the gaze.

⁴⁵ See also Chapter 5.

aesthetic expectations controlled by the Museum; and a “Muse” cut loose within her linguistic “home.”

She makes direct physical contact with an environmental aspect of the museum space. To accomplish this she avoids administration, the guards, and visitors to the museum.

...

The actions are pre-planned to engage my body with a particular aspect of the museum space. The physical action is carried out as fast as possible and filmed by a companion on a simple camera, using existing lighting conditions.

Images of these actions are later introduced into the Museum publicly as part of a context for which I have been invited. The images may be in the form of black and white photographs, color slides, or at another stage, as a silk screen edition of prints made from the color slides or photographs.⁴⁶

It was in the late 1970s that Schneemann executed these works, placing her nude body within a museum environment and having her actions photographed. Schneemann performed these forbidden acts at the Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, in Arnhem, and at the Kröller-Müller Museum, in Otterlo near Arnhem, both in The Netherlands.⁴⁷ She also included several other photographed actions in this series, such as a birthday party she attended for Hermann Nitsch at a popular restaurant in Arnhem.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Taken from the text “Schneemann Proposal II, Installation of *Museum Series—Forbidden Actions*” sent to this author by Schneemann via fax dated 10 October 2001.

⁴⁷ She had planned, but never executed, similar interventions at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York and at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. These specifics are taken from “Schneemann Proposal II, Installation of *Museum Series—Forbidden Actions*.” In this text the artist stated that the series continued for four years. However, I have only found evidence (photographs, press releases, references to performance dates, etc.) from 1977 to 1979. I viewed the photograph-based silkscreens from the series at the artist’s former loft on 29th Street in New York on 21 September 2001. Ideas pursued in *Forbidden Actions* were continued in her performance *HOMERUNMUSE*, executed at the Brooklyn Museum of Art on the 20th of November 1977. Carolee Schneemann, interview by author, via telephone, 2 October 2005.

⁴⁸ The term action is used when describing this work because the artist used it for this work. Throughout this dissertation, however, I most often use performance art to describe Schneemann’s work. The artist herself dislikes the term performance because it holds too many

For the actions in Arnhem, Schneemann did not request permission for her unannounced performances and entered the museums unbeknownst to any of the institution's personnel. The artist dressed in nothing but a large, long shirt to facilitate quick disrobing. She waited for the moment when the guards would change shifts and placed her nude body at various locations in the museums. In an interesting twist to the work, after the actions at the Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, Schneemann discovered that while she was doing her poses around the space, the guards had actually gone to the basement and repositioned the security cameras to watch her.⁴⁹ They had a secret around her secret, and allowed her to do her work—they were her invisible audience.

Schneemann developed the images from the actions into a rich body of silkscreens.⁵⁰ A detailed five-layer silkscreen, *Forbidden Actions—Museums, No. 1* (Figure 35, 1977) is composed of six photographs of the artist's nude body shot from within the former Gemeentemuseum at a windowsill.⁵¹ Arranged in a loose, three-by-two

connotations of repetition, perfection, and lack of spontaneity. Carolee Schneemann, interview with author, via telephone, 2 October 2005.

⁴⁹ Carolee Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001.

⁵⁰ In 1977, when Schneemann was about to lose her loft on 29th Street in Manhattan, she completed a number of silkscreens through the sponsorship of the Alternative Gallery System, Inc. so she could raise the funds to purchase it. The commission came through this group looking to invest in art as a commodity. "All of a sudden there were these mysterious contracts and someone came here and signed me up to do a series of silkscreens for which I would be paid \$2000 for each work. It was fabulous...this was called the Alternative Gallery System. Who knows who they really are or were. They disappeared because the market got flooded with prints." Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001. The photographs were taken by a young Dutch artist whose name Schneemann no longer recalls.

⁵¹ As of 1996, the Gemeentemuseum Arnhem is now the Museum voor Moderne Kunst and the Arnhem Historisch Museum Burgerweeshuis now houses part of the former collection of the Gemeentemuseum. I originally wrote that this group of photographs were ones taken at the Kröller-Müller Museum and I thank Marga van Mechelen, University of Amsterdam, for correcting this information; Schneemann confirmed this. Schneemann, interview by author, via

grid format, three images include Schneemann's whole body while the lower three images offer closer, cropped views. The silkscreens depicted Schneemann arranging her body across a low windowsill. Her hands and head were at ground level while her hips lay on the windowsill, and her feet and legs were often directed upwards in the photographs. The photographs are layered with silkscreened markings similar to paint strokes in subtle tones of pink, green, purple, and blue. These painterly layers add surface energy to the bodies caught in motion and assert Schneemann's hand in the final image of a female nude within the museum space.

In another group of photographs at the former Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, *Forbidden Actions—Museums, No.2* (Figure 36, 1977), Schneemann stretched out her nude body, with her arms above her head, and rolled across a glass case enclosing an ancient female mummy in a sarcophagus. The silkscreen follows a format similar to *No. 1* in the series and includes eight images of the artist's body interacting with the image of the female mummy. Schneemann recounts that a number of mummies had been recently discovered for which numerous museums were bidding. "All the big male mummies went to big, major museums and little Arnhem ended up with a female mummy in the basement kept under glass."⁵² The mummy is difficult to discern in the completed images, occluded by the glass and by the body of Schneemann who rolled over the case making of herself a kind of vital artifact in motion. As the artist explained, her interaction with the female mummy "was relating to all the research I was doing at the time on the marginalization of the history, of artifacts, sculptures, processes initiated in particular to

telephone, 2 October 2005. See also, my text in *Double Trouble: Carolee Schneemann and Sands Murray-Wassink* (Rotterdam and Amsterdam: Cokkie Snoie, 2001).

⁵² Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001.

women.”⁵³ The artist’s research into ancient cultures and women’s histories, begun by 1960 when she was still an art student, has continued throughout her art practice.⁵⁴

Schneemann challenged the tradition of female nudes in art in a very direct and confrontational manner. Women were most often present in art museums as an idealized nude in a work of art, not as the artist producing the work.⁵⁵ And, despite the formal changes brought about through modernism and the avant-garde, this is still the tradition in major art museums, survey textbooks, and courses on art history. However, this tradition is questioned through Schneemann’s performances as she described:

It was a project to invade museums and to do actions that were forbidden in museums. To take the nude off the wall, in a way to de-sacrilize or re-consecrate this iconography that was part of, locked into the masculine traditions of appropriate representation. So that any part of the feminine could accept the projections as subject. As I did with *Eye/Body* in 1963, I wanted to experience being my own subject and action that could also become the imagery of a work.⁵⁶

Schneemann aimed to recapture the female body for herself and for other women, to be at once the image and the image maker.⁵⁷ She believed that women had to consider how

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ For example, Schneemann described “I first wrote about ‘vulvic space’ in 1960 as a result of an art istory [*sic*] assignment on symbolism...,” Schneemann, “Interior Scroll,” *More Than Meat Joy*, 234.

⁵⁵ For example, as the Guerrilla Girls announced in 1989: “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art section are women, but 85% of the nudes are female.” They recounted in 2004, only 3% of the artists were women and 83% of the nudes were female. <http://www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/venicewallf.shtml>, Internet, accessed 16 October 2005.

⁵⁶ Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001.

⁵⁷ Schneemann’s description of “image and image maker” has often been quoted. For the original citation, see: Schneemann, “Istory [*sic*] of a Girl Pornographer,” *Cézanne: She was a Great Painter* (New Paltz, New York: Tresspuss Press, 1975), 24-25. This statement is from a section of text to which the artist has given the date 1962-68.

they wanted their bodies to be portrayed and desired. With *Forbidden Actions*, the artist reimagined the female nude precisely as at once outside of and within a patriarchal institution (the museum). She inserted her real body into the museum's structure in the form of a female nude, yet a nude removed from the conventional canvas surface and insinuated into the social space of the museum. Moreover, Schneemann's active nude body subverted traditions of passive beauty, as previously discussed in relation to *Eye/Body*.

Through *Forbidden Actions*, Schneemann penetrated the intellectual underpinnings of the museum and traditional institutions of art. In addition, Schneemann's choices were not random. The use of the female mummy located in the basement of the Gemeentemuseum reflected her interest in women of ancient cultures, their portrayal, and how their histories have often been overlooked or suppressed.⁵⁸ With *Forbidden Actions*, Schneemann symbolically undermined aspects of patriarchal structures of Western culture, which have controlled images of the female body and traditional ideals of beauty. She often felt that she needed to be nude so as to pose a particular kind of threat to traditional representations of women in art, especially those that focused on the beauty of the physical body.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Schneemann has often used images of ancient women and goddesses in her work. She has discussed her research into women in prehistoric and ancient cultures in lectures and writings. This topic was central to a two-dimensional work entitled *Unexpectedly Research* 1963-1990, a photographic montage of laser prints on board comprising stills from Schneemann's performances, artworks, visual icons, her research, and texts, currently in the collection of the artist. This interest is also evident throughout her papers, now housed at the Getty Research Library: Carolee Schneemann papers, 1959-1994, Research Library, Getty Research Institute (Accession no. 950001), especially "Series VI. Feminist Research Files."

⁵⁹ Schneemann has reintroduced the photographs of these actions into the museum context via lectures and performances she has given, as with *HOMERUNMUSE* first performed in 1977. This piece, which evolved between 1977 and 1979, explored imagery of women in art, art by women, the idea of the muse, and the museum as institution. See Schneemann,

4.5 Valie Export

Valie Export began her career in the mid-1960s when Happenings, multi-media work, and the counter-culture sparked her interest in new art forms and materials as they represented modes of resistance to the dominant media and forms of communication, as the artist herself argued in 1972:

Women must make use of all media as a means of social struggle and social progress in order to free culture of male values. In the same fashion she will do this in the arts knowing that men for thousands of years were able to express herein their ideas of eroticism, sex, beauty including their mythology of vigor, energy and austerity in sculpture, paintings, novels, films, drama, drawings etc., and thereby influencing our consciousness. It will be time.
AND IT IS THE RIGHT TIME.⁶⁰

Like Schneemann, Export was interested in the potential the body held as artistic material. Both artists made films and Export, in particular, was concerned with the possibilities that film offered as material and process. Her interest in the human body and in film combined in the development of her version of “expanded cinema,” which she described as follows:

“Expanded cinema,” i.e., the expansion of the commonplace form of film on the open stage or within a space, through which the commercial conventional sequence of filmmaking—shooting, editing (Montage), and

“HOMERUNMUSE,” *More than Meat Joy*, 250-55. In 1978 a lecture that was part of *HOMERUNMUSE* performed at the Gemeentemuseum Arnhem (for the Arnhem Performance Festival), Schneemann used images from her *Forbidden Actions* intervention. The museum director was horrified at discovering that a *Forbidden Action* had happened at the museum, feeling that Schneemann was “about to make this outrage in front of the gentle, thoughtful public.” Schneemann, interview by author, New York, 21 September 2001.

⁶⁰ Export wrote this manifesto in 1972 and it was first published in 1973. Valie Export, “Woman’s Art: a Manifesto,” trans. Resigna Haslinger, in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 756; originally published in German as “Woman’s Art: Ein Manifest,” *Neues Forum*, no. 228 (January 1973): 47.

projection—is broken up, was the art form that I chose in the mid-1960s.⁶¹

Export ruptured traditional cinematic conventions when she substituted film materials such as the screen or projector with other materials, such as a mirror as reflector and projector; focused on the audience's reception; or used the human body as film material, as in *Tap and Touch Cinema* (see below) or *Actions Pants: Genital Panic* (see Chapter 5).⁶² When the body became filmic material, it often resulted in work that explored the “ideological effect of cinema,”⁶³ but more importantly for this discussion, the work approached performance. Export explicated the relationship between expanded cinema and performance, and her intentions:

I have also found a way to continue expanded cinema in my physical performances in which I, as the centerpoint for the performance, positioned the human body as a sign, as a code for social and artistic expression.⁶⁴

In a number of expanded cinema works, Export performed as the filmic material, as in *Tapp und Tastkino* (*Tap and Touch Cinema*) of 1968. Or rather, Export's performance art was concerned with expanded cinema concepts in which the body recorded social signs in much the same manner as film recorded such signification; but the body can carry connotations that a film surface clearly cannot. For example, when the body, specifically a female body, is used as a filmic surface (meaning the material with

⁶¹ Valie Export, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality,” *Jam*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July 1991): 7. This essay offers a good explanation of Export's concept of expanded cinema.

⁶² Roswitha Mueller focuses on these three cinematic elements, giving several examples of how each of these functions with specific Export works. Roswitha Mueller, *Valie Export: Fragments of the Imagination* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994) Chapter 1 “Expanded Cinema,” especially 3-23.

⁶³ Mueller, *Valie Export*, 3.

⁶⁴ Export, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality,” 7.

which the artist works, similar to how Schneemann uses her body as material), social codes will be read into that body, such as standards of beauty.

Tap and Touch Cinema (Figure 37), first performed in Vienna in 1968, was described by Export as a “street action, mobile film, expanded cinema, body action, social action.”⁶⁵ The artist aimed to examine the role of female breasts in the film industry, as breasts function as a defining social sign of female beauty. Men tend to judge women, and women to judge themselves, by this measure of their body, judgments which have caused some women to find themselves inadequate.⁶⁶ Moreover, not only is breast size and shape typically considered a defining element of women’s physical beauty, it is also often read, especially in male eyes, as a sign of women’s sexuality.⁶⁷ As a result, the topic of female breasts was a particularly attractive one for a feminist artist determined to question social conventions through elements of film, which could be “partially replaced by reality in order to install new signs of the real.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Elsa Longhauser, *Valie Export: Ob/De+Con(Structure)* (Philadelphia: Goldie Paley Gallery, Galleries at Moore, Moore College of Art and Design, 2000), 59. See also: Export, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality,” 12-13; “Tapp und Tastkino” in the Valie Export Archives, The Generali Foundation, Vienna, Notebook entitled “Notes from Export to Generali”; Anita Prammer, *Valie Export: Eine Multimediale Künstlerin* (Vienna: Wiener Frauenverlag, 1988), 103-7; and “Tapp und Tastkino, Expanded Movie, 1968,” *Oh Boy, It’s a Girl, Feminism in der Kunst* (Munich: Kunstverein München, 1994). A recording of a *Tap and Touch Cinema* performance is in the Export Archives at the Generali Foundation, Vienna.

⁶⁶ Breast size was a preoccupation of social customs evident in the desired hourglass dimensions of 36-24-36 inches idealized in the 1950s and early 1960s by Marilyn Monroe and sung about by the Commodores in *Brick House* in the 1970s. Marilyn Monroe’s dimensions are reportedly to have been 37-23-36 by her studio and 35-22-35 by her dressmaker. She was voted in 1999 as *People* magazine’s sexiest woman of the twentieth century, www.marilynmonroe.com, Internet, accessed 11 October 2005. The Commodores song *Brick House* debuted in 1977, <http://www.70disco.com/brickh.htm> and <http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/undercoverbrother/brickhouse.htm>, Internet, accessed 11 October 2005.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of *Tap and Touch Cinema* and female sexuality, see Chapter 5.

⁶⁸ Export, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality,” 8.

In a challenge to the film industry and conventional standards of beauty, Export attached a mini-movie theater to her chest. Curtains covered the front opening of the box with her naked breasts hidden underneath. Using a bullhorn, her colleague Peter Weibel⁶⁹ invited people on the street to come to the miniature cinema and touch, but only for 13 seconds. As in a full-sized theater, the action took place in the dark, but only two hands could fit in the space. The spectator viewed the “film” with the hands not the eyes. Export described the action:

Tactile reception counteracts against the fraud of voyeurism. In state-sanctioned cinema, they sit in the dark and see how two people make it with each other, and they themselves are not seen. In *Tapp und Tastkino*, social prescriptions are no longer obeyed, the intimate sphere of what the state permits is forced open into public space.⁷⁰

The enclosed space of the so-called adult movie was turned inside out such that the audience’s viewing pleasure is exposed. The eyes can no longer enjoy the view, and it is the hands that experience the nude female breasts. Voyeurism, however, inheres in the prospect of anonymous yet forbidden access. Roswitha Mueller observed: “the film spectator’s interest is locked in through the promise of disclosure of the forbidden. In the majority of commercial films the forbidden revolves around the body of woman, more specifically her breasts and genitals.”⁷¹ As Export described, however, access is granted, but in the light of day, exposing the audience’s voyeuristic and objectifying impulse towards the female body, or in this case, towards the female breasts. In addition, the

⁶⁹ Export executed a number of her performance works with Weibel assisting her, as in for example, *Cutting* from 1967-68 and *From the Portfolio of Doggedness* of 1969. The Austrian Weibel is an artist, curator, and researcher and currently works as the Chairman of the Center for Art and Media (Zentrums für Kunst und Medientechnologie) in Karlsruhe.

⁷⁰ Export, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality,” 12-13.

⁷¹ Mueller, *Valie Export*, 15.

“voyeur” is now the “voyee,” as Export herself stares into the face of the man caressing her breasts and he, in addition, is watched by others on the street.

Other performance works by Export during this period—namely, *Body Sign Action* (1970) and *Eros/ion* (1971)—aimed to undermine the social and cultural inscriptions of beauty on the female body, to move beyond those limitations. *Body Sign Action* (Figure 4) took place in Frankfurt, Germany when the artist had a representation of a garter tattooed on her left thigh, such that the life of the artist necessarily determines the duration of the work. Export described this continual performance as follows:

The photograph shows a tattooed garter on my thigh. The garter is used as a sign of past enslavement, as a symbol of repressed sexuality. The garter as the sign of belonging to a class that demands conditioned behavior becomes a reminiscence that keeps awake the problem of self-determination and/or other-determination of femininity.⁷²

The garter was a clothing item that, before the advent of full-length pantyhose, was required of a woman, though of course some men also wore garters to hold up stockings. And stockings also held a practical function of keeping legs warm in colder months. But while men also used this item, the connotations associated with garters worn by women, an item not normally allowed to be viewed, referenced the sexiness associated with women’s legs. Export had the tattoo applied to her leg in 1970, after the 1960s era of miniskirts and sexual liberation. For the artist the garter signified sexual repression of women and culturally defined norms imposed onto women, which she still regarded as present in Austrian society despite the cultural revolutions that took place during the 1960s. It could be argued that it is a dubious symbol for the artist’s intentions, because historically men also used garters. But with this action, Export allowed cultural codes to

⁷² Valie Export, *Valie Export. Austria. Biennale di Venezia 1980* (Vienna: Galerie in der Staatsoper, 1980), 46. Text is also in Export Archives, Generali Foundation, Vienna.

be literally written on her own body as a constant reminder. The tattoo also functions as a sign of defiance by breaking the surface of the skin with a tattoo, permanently marking the female body.

With the second wave feminist movement, and even earlier, with artists such as Export and Schneemann, women began to challenge social restrictions forced upon them by a patriarchal society. *Body Sign Action* is one way in which Export attempted to expose such perceived restrictions on women and she continued this intent with her performance *Eros/ion* (Figure 38). Referred to as a body-material interaction, the work illustrated the interpenetration of the surface of the artist's body with the chosen material, glass. The feminist struggle against patriarchy is invested in the body of woman delineated by the skin—the female body, and who controls it, has been and still is a battleground. For Export the female body's representations in the visual arts and mass media need to be transformed in order for true liberation of women to be possible, as she explained in 1972:

To change the arts that man forced upon us means to destroy the features of woman created by man. The new values that we add to the arts will bring about new values for women in the course of the civilizing process. The arts can be of importance to the women's liberation insofar as we derive significance—our significance—from it: this spark can ignite the process of our self-determination. The question, what women can give to the arts and what the arts can give to women, can be answered as follows: the transference of the specific situation of woman to the artistic context sets up signs and signals which provide new artistic expressions and messages on one hand, and change retrospectively the situation of women on the other.⁷³

Export was committed to an art that would improve women's lives by establishing new models and meanings through and for women's bodies.

⁷³ Export, "Women's Art: A Manifesto," 756.

Eros/ion, performed three times in 1971, aimed to explore social and cultural inscriptions on the female body by breaking through the surface of the female skin and aestheticizing the resultant destruction of that surface.⁷⁴ The piece also experimented with the changing states of material: the female form and glass. For each performance, Export rolled over an area covered with broken glass and then rolled over a pristine glass surface. The second roll emphasized the broken nature of the first through the sound and pressure, which further pushed the glass into her skin. Finally, the artist rolled over a paper screen. Traces of blood were left on the surface of the paper. This series of movements was repeated for approximately ten minutes.

Several important elements can be read from *Eros/ion*. First, the traditional female nude in art was framed as a beautiful body such as is often produced for male visual consumption: this beautiful body was violated by Export. As she stated, the purpose was “to change the male gaze. The man can see you naked...yet he cannot see you the way he *wants* to see a naked female body.”⁷⁵ This was an affront to cultural conventions: the skin, representing the abstract idealized image of beauty, like the glass, was broken. Second, the solid glass pane represents “transparency” while the broken glass signifies “lesion” as Export herself recognized: “to change the state of the material means to change the meaning of the material.”⁷⁶ Just as the broken glass takes on a new

⁷⁴ The work was performed in 1971 at Experimenta 4 in Frankfurt, Arts Lab in London, and Electric Cinema in Amsterdam.

⁷⁵ “Valie Export” (Interview with Andrea Juno), *Angry Women* (1991): 190. Emphasis is Export’s. Export has stated that she performed nude to remove the social connotations in clothing. Nonetheless, besides the work not being possible unless she was nude, this above statement indicated her concerns with connotations of the nude female body. Export, interview by author, New York, 9 April 2005.

⁷⁶ Valie Export, *Valie Export. Austria. Biennale di Venezia 1980*, 14.

and threatening meaning—the ability to inflict injury and pain—so too does the female body with cut and broken skin. However, while this masochistic performance did not significantly injure Export—the cuts were minor, yet still evident—the artist conquered the physicality of the body, which could be read as a symbolic triumph over the social constraints placed upon women and their bodies.⁷⁷ Export described this herself: “Der Mensch wälzt sich in zerbrochenem Glas, ohne daran zu verbluten. Er erweist sich stärker als das ihn umgebende System, indem er dessen Austragungsort, den Körper überwindet.”⁷⁸ A surpassing of the social constraints represented by conquering the physicality of the body is developed a step further by Export to mean: “the cuts in the skin are no longer lethal, they are openings giving access to the intima, to the innermost lining membrane of the vessels, to our selves.”⁷⁹ Export was attempting to connect to the concept of woman symbolically, actively seeking new meanings, new messages, and, ultimately, new images for women in the visual arts. Furthermore, the artist’s blood marked a piece of paper, as if the artist was painting with her own blood.⁸⁰ She

⁷⁷ As a sign of cultural transgressions made possible by the social changes of the 1960s, among other reasons, a number of performance artists during the 1970s embodied masochistic aspects to their work. See: Kathy O’Dell, *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, performance Art, and the 1970s* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). This book originated as a doctoral dissertation at the Graduate Center, CUNY.

⁷⁸ “Man is rolling in broken glass without bleeding to death. He proves stronger than the ambient system by overcoming its point of impact, the body.” Export, *Valie Export. Austria. Biennale di Venezia 1980*, 14. This catalogue has the text in German (Export’s native language) and is also translated into English (given at the beginning of this note) and Italian. The original German is used in the text, rather the English because of the usage of “man” and “he.” The German uses the word “Der Mensch” which in this case could also be translated to mean “human being” or “person,” not just man. Moreover, “he” is used for the translation from the German pronoun “Er” although in German, as used to be the norm in English, the male pronoun is used in reference to persons in general.

⁷⁹ Export, *Valie Export. Austria. Biennale di Venezia 1980*, 14

transformed what appeared to be a potentially lethal situation into an aesthetic one with political intent.

Eros/ion, the title of the performance, refers both to the erosion of the glass and the body. The glass has been broken and crushed against her body. The skin was slowly eroded away by the repeated movement across the glass. “Erosion” contrasts starkly with “Eros,” which has been deliberately separated out by the slash mark in the title. Eros references the Ancient Greeks’ god of love. While a lesser god, he gained popularity in art during the Renaissance. He often appears in paintings to indicate that the depicted story is about love. In mythology, Eros is traditionally regarded as Aphrodite’s (Venus’s) son. Hesiod’s text, which details the birth of Venus, described how, when she arrived at Cyprus on her scallop shell, she was accompanied by Eros.⁸¹ In a sense, then, Export refers indirectly to Venus the goddess of love who over the centuries has come to represent the ideal female nude in art.

The above examples of Export’s work reveal how she addressed the female nude and beauty in her work. Like Schneemann, Export spoke to the objectification of the female body as well as to the social codes inscribed on that body to dismantle standards of beauty. However, the artist’s approach often differed from Schneemann’s in that Export also dealt with issues of pain and pushing the body to its limits, as in *Eros/ion*.

⁸⁰ There is, of course, a relationship with the Yves Klein *Anthropometries* series through the pressing of the female body onto the surface of paper, but only formally. Klein directed women where Export uses her own nude body. Moreover, the marking material is significantly different: paint versus life-sustaining and life-taking blood.

⁸¹ Hesiod, *The Work and Days, Theogony, The Shield of Herakles*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 134-35. For a discussion of Eros, see “Cupid” (the Roman name for Eros) in James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (London: John Murray, Ltd., 1974), 87-88.

The Austrian artist also focused on the effects of cinema and the role of representations of women's bodies in that medium. Schneemann's work exudes a greater celebration and sense of pleasure in the female body and its creative potential as she smeared her body with paint or swung from a rope letting her body take control of the creative process.

4.6 Ulrike Rosenbach

Analogous to work by Schneemann and Export, several performance pieces by Ulrike Rosenbach addressed concepts and images of beauty during the 1970s. Different from these contemporaries, however, Rosenbach did not perform in the nude. In general, nudity was less shocking to a German audience in the 1970s, than it was to an American one, due to a German sense of health associated with the nude human form.⁸² Dressed in a leotard she directly referenced images of Venus in several of her works. *Reflexionen über die Geburt der Venus* (*Reflections on the Birth of Venus*, Figure 39) from 1976 was the first in a series that dealt with the goddess of love. This art piece was performed seven times over a two-year period in Germany, The Netherlands, and the United States.⁸³ In

⁸² For example, see: Karl Eric Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁸³ Rosenbach performed the piece in 1976 at: the Women's Building, Los Angeles; The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; And/Or, Seattle; De Appel Stichting, Amsterdam; and the Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen; and in 1977 at the Oppenheim Gallery at the International Art Fair, Bologna and the Frauenzentrum Eindhoven, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. See: Ulrike Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, feministische Kunst* (Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982), 202-203 and A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale, *Performance by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1979), 142.

There are two recordings of the work that I viewed: one at Montevideo/Nederlands Instituut voor Mediakunst in Amsterdam, a 49 minute, black and white version and a similar recording at 235 Media in Cologne. The Montevideo version is a recording of the performance at De Appel Stichting, Amsterdam on the 17th or 18th of September 1976. In addition, Rosenbach made two color video versions of this performance as an independent work. One recording is at Montevideo and runs 21.5 minutes (1977) and another is at 235 Media and runs 15 minutes (1976). 235 Media acts mainly as a distributor of video and performance work, similar to

addition to the performance piece, the series included an installation from recordings of the performance and a photograph series.

Working with a projection of *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli (c.1486, Figure 40), from the collection of the Uffizi in Florence, Rosenbach queried whether “the worn-out image of Venus is worth becoming a subject in the new research for a basis for female culture.”⁸⁴ The search for a definable female culture distinct from male-dominated western society was an early preoccupation of the women’s movement in the 1970s.⁸⁵ In *Reflections on the Birth of Venus*, Rosenbach chose to work with this painting by Botticelli because she felt it embodied the original meaning of Venus⁸⁶:

In this painting, Venus is always seen in a pagan meaning, namely as the old mother goddess at the moment she lost her virginity or when she went from girl to woman on the island of Cyprus when Flora covered her with a coat. These are all symbols of fertility for mother earth. Flora covered her with a coat of flowers and Venus represented the girlish nudity.⁸⁷

Electronic Art Intermix in New York, but they also offer scholars access to research materials in their library. 235 Media is putting together a DVD collection of Rosenbach’s recorded oeuvre.

⁸⁴ Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 142.

⁸⁵ In California, for example, many at the Feminist Art Program were concerned with this issue. See Chapter 2.

⁸⁶ It is believed that Botticelli was inspired by a poem by Agnolo Poliziano. Venus was particularly popular during the Renaissance because Neo-Platonic thought believed that man communicated with the Divine through Love. See Liana De Girolami Cheney, *Botticelli’s Neoplatanic Images* (Potomac, Maryland: Scripta Humanistica, 1993), 115-17, which includes a translation of the poem.

As noted by Kristine Stiles in her essay “Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions,” 280, Mark Boyle and Joan Hills also used a projected image of Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* in their performance *Suddenly Last Supper*, set in their London flat in 1963. The painting was used to different ends however. Rosenbach was unfamiliar with the work and stated that her concentration on sculpture in art school never included a study of performance art. Ulrike Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁸⁷ “Op dit doek wordt de Venus nog altijd gezien in heidense zin, namelijk, als de oude moedergodin die op ‘t moment waarop ze haar maagdelijkheid verliest of waarop ze van meisje vrouw wordt op ‘t eiland Cythera door Flora met ‘n mantel omhuld wordt. Dat zijn allemaal symbolen voor de vruchtbaarheid van moeder aarde. Flore bedekt haar met ‘n bloemenmantel en

Rosenbach came to the Venus imagery because she felt that Venus' original symbolism of fertility, of a woman coming of age, and of the "Great Mother" was lost and that Venus in contemporary society represented a sex symbol and an unreal cliché.⁸⁸

According to the Greek poet Hesiod, Venus was born from the foam produced when Uranus was castrated and his genitals thrown into the sea. Hesiod wrote that in the beginning Gaea (Mother Earth) and her son (Uranus) copulated producing the first race, the Titans. The youngest son Cronus (Saturn) castrated his father, with a sickle his mother gave him, to punish his father for throwing his sons into the underworld.⁸⁹ Once born Venus rose from the water in a scallop shell, in which she was blown by the mild wind Zephyr and the nymph Chloris to shore. She went first to Kythera then landed in Cyprus at Paphos.⁹⁰ She was received by the nymph Pomona who covered her with a cloak. Despite this lengthy story on Venus's birth, Rosenbach described how in "matriarchal feminist studies [Venus] shows up with a different beginning as the 'Great Mother'" and this was her intention in using this story.⁹¹ The pose in which Botticelli

Venus stelt de meisjesachtige naaktheid voor." Quote taken from an interview with Rosenbach on a Dutch television special sponsored by the Openbaar Kunstbezit entitled "De Vernietiging van het valse vrouwbeeld" (The Destruction of the False Image of Women) on the occasion of the Feministische Kunst Internationaal exhibition at De Appel in Amsterdam with performances from 8 to 16 December 1978. The 45-minute program aired on the channel Nederland 1 on 4 December 1978. This and all translations from Dutch into English are my own. A tape of this program is in the collection of Montevideo in Amsterdam.

⁸⁸ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁸⁹ See Hesiod in *Theogony* 133-200. For a discussion on mythology in art, and Venus, see: Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, 273, 318-20.

⁹⁰ During antiquity this location became a major site of her worship.

⁹¹ When Rosenbach was in California in 1975 and 1976, she was part of a group of women who studied matriarchal texts and cultures, including books by Marija Gimbutas; Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of an Archetype*, trans. Ralph Manheim, 2nd ed.

painted his Venus, one which Rosenbach repeated, is referred to as the *Venus Pudica* (Venus of Modesty) and originated in religious statuary of antiquity. One hand covers the genitals and the other covers her breasts.⁹²

The subject of Venus is typical for a period when Italians wanted to revive the former glory and power of ancient Rome. For the Renaissance, ancient mythology was considered to harbor truths, and as for Venus, “the story of her birth was the symbol of mystery through which the divine message of beauty came to the world.”⁹³ Moreover, Botticelli’s rendition of the theme has been considered an attempt to reconcile Christian with non-Christian (Neoplatonic) beliefs, and so to “establish the meeting-point of the spirit and natural realms.”⁹⁴ This Venus has often been regarded as the first nude woman in the art of the Renaissance, as a pagan image different from images of Eve or of those damned to hell in Last Judgment scenes.⁹⁵ Some argue that it is not really the Birth of Venus being represented but rather her arrival on earth, as she is about to step onto land and the shore is about to sprout growth.⁹⁶

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); and Robert Ranke-Graves, *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1948). Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁹² In the general culture it is unlikely that most would be aware of Uranus’ severed genitals as the origin of Venus, even Rosenbach was unfamiliar with this aspect of the myth. Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁹³ Ernst Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 15th ed. (Oxford: Phaidon, 1989), 199.

⁹⁴ Cheney, *Botticelli’s Neoplatonic Images*, 121.

⁹⁵ Eve is sometimes portrayed as covering her body in a gesture of embarrassment due to her nakedness, an awareness resulting from eating fruit from the forbidden tree, or she can be depicted as unattractive after the Fall of Man, as for example, in Masaccio’s banishment of Adam and Eve from paradise in the Brancacci Chapel, 1428.

⁹⁶ Frank Zöllner, *Botticelli: Images of Love and Spring* (Munich: Prestel, 1998), 82-99. Botticelli’s painting was commissioned by Lorenzo de Medici to commemorate either the

For the *Venus* performance, Rosenbach began with a slide projection of only the Venus and shell portion from Botticelli's painting, so that the image of the figure was life-sized and equivalent to the artist's height. This cut-out of Venus effectively forced the spectator to focus exclusively on the representation of the goddess. In front of the projection on the ground, lay a triangle-shaped layer of salt to demarcate the performance space. A video monitor that played an image of foam-filled waves (Figure 41) sat in an extra-large artificial scallop shell that was placed on the salt. This referenced the foam from which Venus was born; the salt was purposefully chosen for its reference to saltwater and the sea of her birth.⁹⁷ Throughout the performance a segment of Bob Dylan's *Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands* played repeatedly:

With your mercury mouth in the missionary times,
 And your eyes like smoke and your prayers with rhymes,
 And your silver cross, and your voice like chimes,
 Oh, who among them do they think could bury you?
 With your pockets well protected at last,
 And your streetcar visions which you place on the grass,
 And your flesh like silk, and your face like glass,
 Who among them do they think could carry you?
 Sad-eyed lady of the lowlands,
 Where the sad-eyed prophet says that no man comes,
 My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums,
 Should I leave them by your gate,
 Or, sad-eyed lady, should I wait?⁹⁸

marriage of Maria Margherita dei Medici or the death of Simonetta Cattaneo de Vespucci. Others have suggested that Botticelli was trying to reconstruct the ancient painter Apelles' *Venus Anadyomene*. Mirella Levi D'Ancona, *Due Quadri del Botticelli Eseguiti per Nascite in Casa Medici: Nuova interpretazione della Primavera e della Nascita di Venere* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1992), 68. Cheney, *Botticelli's Neoplatonic Images*, 114, which argues that Venus is an idealized portrait of Simonetta, and 117. Surprisingly, Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* survived the brief rule of Savonarola in Florence (1494-1498), including the book burning and destruction of objects considered morally questionable or pagan in 1497.

⁹⁷ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005

⁹⁸ Rosenbach, *Rosenbach*, 13.

The music segment is cut and repeated. The song, which was included on Dylan's 1966 album *Blond on Blond*, has been considered a "solemn, moving hymn to beauty,"⁹⁹ making it a fitting choice for Rosenbach's performance. The artist stated that she chose Dylan's song because it "was connected to the coldness and unrealness this cliché of the image of Venus has nowadays and in a man's world, in the fields where it is used, advertising, etc.," and that "for me, feminist artwork is not excluding men, it is—in particular in this work, to consciously show the ideas men have about the beauty of women and therefore I kept the male voice."¹⁰⁰

After two minutes of Dylan's music playing in conjunction with the projection, Rosenbach stepped in front of the image of Venus. She assumed a pose identical to the goddess and expressed no emotion on her face. She began to rotate very slowly in place—in the filmed versions it took her about three minutes to turn completely around. She wore a leotard that was white on the front and black on the back. When she faced towards the audience, Botticelli's image of Venus was reflected on her front and clearly visible. However, when her back was to the viewers, the image of Venus was absorbed into the blackness of her leotard. This revolving motion was repeated with a continual,

⁹⁹ Piero Scaruffi, <http://www.scaruffi.com/vol1/dylan.html>, Internet, accessed 30 March 2005. Besides being a cognitive scientist and specialist on artificial intelligence, Scaruffi is a rock critic who recently published *A History of Rock Music: 1951-2000* (Lincoln, Nebraska: iUniverse, 2003).

"The final track [of *Blond on Blond*] is of course 'Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands' considered by many to be Dylan's finest moment of this particular era; in fact, he told biographer Robert Shelton at the time that he regarded it as the best song that he had ever written. Almost certainly inspired by his wife Sara, whom he had married some three months earlier, this song was astonishingly recorded in one take," observed Peter James, "Warehouse Eyes: The Recorded Works of Bob Dylan," <http://warehouseeyes.netfirms.com/blonde.html>, Internet, accessed 30 March 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005

painstakingly slow appearance and disappearance of the main character in Botticelli's painting. Rosenbach referred to her body's different sides as "day" and "night."

In the Montevideo recording of the Amsterdam performance, after about 17 minutes, when Rosenbach was facing forward, the entire Botticelli painting appeared in a new slide projected on Rosenbach who stood in the same location. Rosenbach continued to rotate so that her back was eventually to the audience. At that point, a new slide was projected showing the whole Botticelli painting but with Venus and the shell removed. The space where they had been remained blank and black as Rosenbach took Venus' place. She represented a modern, real woman in the flesh, standing before the audience, as she rotated to face the audience—a new Venus transformed from painted to living woman. With the image of Venus gone, a symbolic representation of the projections of beauty which society had placed on women was removed. The performance ended when the artist literally stepped out of the painting and walked away from the performance area. Symbolically, she no longer participated in the oppression of women caused by the social demands of beauty.

Venus represented a goddess, the incarnation of beauty, and her image would repeatedly be used in the twentieth century, in marketing and popular culture. In fact, Rosenbach gathered numerous images from popular culture, including product marketing and advertising, that used the Botticelli image or referenced its composition. Other research conducted by Rosenbach into the roles modern Venuses were playing, and could play, that provided sources of information for the work included a number of photographs entitled *California Girls* (Figure 42 and 43) that Rosenbach produced the same year as the Venus performance, images on which she stamped the term "VENUSVISION."

These photographs were appropriated from coverage of the Miss California pageant, an event that emphasized and evaluated a woman's "Venus-like" appearance. In her self-published book (1982) surveying her work to date, Rosenbach described the process the contestant and eventual winner must endure, including becoming an advertising adjunct for make-up companies. Her description approaches satire as she details, for instance, how a pageant winner gets a skin rash from the make-up and hot lights and ends up losing her hair. Eventually she is so distraught and exhausted she must spend all the money she earned at a sanitarium.¹⁰¹ Eventually, the reader learns that this narrative is actually based on a recorded conversation Rosenbach heard at the Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles with the 1976 Miss America who had recently finished her tour.

In another example of images Rosenbach collected as part of the VENUSVISION series, Botticelli's painting formed the backdrop in a window display in Cologne selling fur coats (Figure 44). The Venus figure from Botticelli's painting was also used in another instance for the shape of a wine bottle Rosenbach found in a grocery store in Valencia, California, and a reproduction of the painting was printed on its box (Figure 45). On both of these photographs the artist also stamped "VENUSVISION." In the mid-1970s Rosenbach also found advertisements directed at women, such as those from a Venus line of lingerie manufactured by the Triumph Company in Germany (Figure 46). The accompanying text stated:

Venus—the divine form is reborn. Venus, beautiful as the goddess, agile as wave, seductive as a pearl. They are the new top products from the Collection 2000 from Triumph: Modern materials of high shaping strength give your figure the perfect feminine line. The controlled cut adjusts softly to the body, guarantees the highest wearing comfort and unrestricted freedom of movement. Venus—that is the harmony of

¹⁰¹ Rosenbach, *Rosenbach*, 17.

comfort, beauty and functionality. Venus fulfills what the woman of now desires in modern body wear.¹⁰²

In the images for the advertisement, on the right a woman rises from a scallop shell clothed in a brassiere and underwear, arms outstretched, and bearing a wide smile. On the left, three women stretch and recline in their undergarments. Even though the words of the advertisement promise “comfort, beauty, and functionality,” and visually it promises a youthful body, of course, a true transformation is impossible. She found these and other references to Botticelli’s painting in the mass media, signifying the objectification of the female body in popular culture through the assimilation of an image of the goddess of beauty. The title VENUSVISION stamped on these found photographs and advertisements could be thought of as pointing to a limited vision of women, one with narrow parameters, focused solely on women’s outer appearance and whether or not it met certain standards of physical beauty.

Rosenbach described how: “This collection is important for this work. However, it rarely was shown as a gallery or museum show, but the video of the performance became quite famous for ‘its beauty,’ which is a sign for a misunderstanding again.”¹⁰³ Her intention of interrogating the Venus myth and its potential for contemporary women was overlooked, as was her conclusion. Rosenbach observed that the original sense of

¹⁰² “VENUS—Die göttliche Form ist wiedergeboren. Venus, schön wie die Göttin, beweglich wie eine Welle, verführerisch wie eine Perle. Das sind die neuen Spitzenprodukte aus der Collection 2000 von Triumph: Modernste Materialien von hoher Formkraft geben ihrer Figur die perfekte frauliche Linie. Die Schnittführung passt sich weich dem Körper an, garantiert höchsten Tragekomfort und uneingeschränkte Bewegungsfreiheit. Venus—das ist die Harmonie von Bequemlichkeit, Schönheit und Zweckmäßigkeit. Venus erfüllt, was die Frau von heute von modernen Miederwaren verlangt.” Rosenbach, *Rosenbach*, 15. Unless otherwise noted, this and all translations from German into English are my own.

¹⁰³ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005

Venus, as depicted by Botticelli's painting, had been altered to something that was controlling women as opposed to empowering them. Rosenbach described the change:

Meanwhile, the meaning of the image has changed. The old mother goddess and her aspects of fertility and rebirth are a cliché for the erotic acculturation of women to the sexual needs of patriarchal society. Synonymous with physical youth and beauty, she serves product advertising, as advertisements for fur coats and lingerie appear exemplary. Women's bodies themselves have long been for sale.¹⁰⁴

The Venus performance related the status the artist felt norms of beauty held in contemporary life for women. In the work, Rosenbach turns quite slowly, her motion almost imperceptible at times, giving the appearance that she was a statue and inactive. She stood at times as Venus, in front of the audience as an icon of beauty, as if on display for their viewing consumption and pleasure. More importantly, she was silent, unspeaking. The words from the Dylan song were the only ones being spoken, the only actual voice. However, in the end the Venus image disappears and we are left with Rosenbach, a real woman, who insists on the reality of her body against the unreality of the Venus.

The theme of Venus often returned to Rosenbach through her repeated encounters with the goddess in advertising and popular culture.¹⁰⁵ These countless images kept the topic fresh in Rosenbach's mind. In the summer of 1977, Rosenbach spent several weeks in Florence, Italy at the Agerman Arts Building. After touring the galleries of the Uffizi

¹⁰⁴ "Die Bedeutung des Bildes hat sich inzwischen verändert. Aus der alten Muttergöttin und ihrem Aspekt der Fruchtbarkeit und Wiedergeburt ist ein Klischee für die erotische Anpassung der Frau an die sexuellen Bedürfnisse einer Männerwelt geworden. Gleichbedeutend mit körperlicher Jugend und Schönheit dient sie der Produktwerbung, wie Reklame für Pelzmantel und Unterwäsche exemplarisch zeigen. Der Körper der Frau selbst ist lang käuflich geworden." Rosenbach, *Rosenbach*, 13.

¹⁰⁵ To Rosenbach's great dismay, she learned that the word Venus was used as a code word for sex shops in Australia. "Aus Tagebuchnotizen," Rosenbach, *Rosenbach*, 19.

Museum, the artist noticed the numerous Venus paintings, besides the Botticelli, as well as a striking image of Medusa painted on a shield by Caravaggio (Figure 47). During this trip and following these encounters, Rosenbach developed *Venusdepressionen—Medusaimagination* (*Venus Depression—Medusa Imagination*, Figures 48 and 49), which she performed in Florence with the participation of four other women at the Pallazzo Strozzi in 1977.¹⁰⁶ The artist described her inspiration:

The Medusa became a strong image of protection to me: quite different than it was meant by the patriarchal mythology. Also, it seemed a mother-earth image as well and I got very fascinated by the idea of using this shield. The Venus-images are very common in Florence. They can be seen as paintings and outdoor sculptures all over the city. Venus seemed to have that expression which I hated so much—an expression of weakness and lacking spirit. The only Venus that is different is the Botticelli-Venus which tells about the original strong power of the goddess-aspect.¹⁰⁷

She performed this once, after which she did not address the topic of Venus again.

The *Venus Depression—Medusa Imagination* performance took place in a space covered with a circle of salt into which a pentagram was drawn. Rosenbach was in the center of the pentagram, which was also the center of the circle. A taped woman's voice read the story of a hunted woman from Giovanni Boccaccio's (1313-75) *Decameron* in Italian while three paintings by Botticelli depicting this hunt, *The Story of Nastagio degli*

¹⁰⁶ This work is sometimes referred to as just *Venus Depression*. For descriptions of the work, see Rosenbach, *Rosenbach*, 31-36 and Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 145.

¹⁰⁷ Ulrike Rosenbach, "Venusdepression (1977)," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, eds. Selz and Stiles, 757. This text was originally published on the occasion of the exhibition in Amsterdam with the accompanying catalogue: *Feministische Kunst Internationalaal* (Amsterdam: De Appel Stichting, 1978), n.p. A similar text also appears in Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 145. The work was presented in the framework of a German art exhibition entitled *Die Materialien der Sprache*.

Onesti (Figure 50), were projected on the walls.¹⁰⁸ The length of the performance was defined by the duration of the story telling which lasted about forty minutes. Other images that the artist used included five reproductions of Caravaggio's *Medusa* shield and five reproductions of Venus images painted by Caravaggio, Jacopo Tintoretto, Titian, Alessandro Allori, and Goya.¹⁰⁹ Examples of the Venus paintings most likely used include: Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (Figure 51), Allori's *Venus and Cupid* (Figure 52), and Tintoretto's *Venus and Adonis* (Figure 53).

As the story was read, Rosenbach sat crouched in the center of the pentagram in what she described as a "cowering" position, face towards the ground, with one of the Medusa shields over her head. This is the first of five positions she held which indicated the five-part composition of the piece. She referred to this work as "the rite as a

¹⁰⁸ Figure 50 illustrates all four paintings in this series by Botticelli. It is unclear which three Rosenbach used, with the exception of the lower left, Figure 50C which can be seen in photographs documenting the performance, see Figure 48. The top two and lower left image are in the collection of the Prado, Madrid and the lower right at the National Gallery in London. The paintings were commissioned by Lorenzo the Magnificent for the Wedding of Giannozzo Pucci and Lucrezia Bini in 1483. For a description of the series see: Gabriele Mandel, *The Complete Paintings of Botticelli* (New York: Abrams, 1970), 97-8, from which this illustration is drawn, and Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

¹⁰⁹ Rosenbach lists these five artists as the painters whose Venus images are to be found in the Uffizi and as the ones she used for this performance in: Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 145. In her 1982 catalogue she only lists Tintoretto, Titian, and Allori as three out of five. No Venus by Caravaggio is in the collection of the Uffizi and, in fact, after looking through several catalogue raisonnés of Caravaggio's work, to the best of my knowledge he never painted a representation of Venus. Nor is there a painting of Venus by Goya in the collection of the Uffizi. Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and Allori's *Venus and Cupid* are in the museum. Tintoretto has a *Venus and Adonis* in the Uffizi. The illustrations I included are these three. See: Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto: Le Opere Sacre e Profane* (Milan: Alfieri, 1982), Volumes 1 and 2; José Luis Morales y Marín, *Goya: Catalogue of his Paintings*, trans. Muriel Feiner (Zaragoza: Real Academia de Nobles y Bellas Artes de San Luis, 1997); Claudio Pescio, *New Complete Guide of the Uffizi*, rev. ed. (Florence: Bonechi, 1989); John T. Spike, *Caravaggio* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2001); Maurizio Marini, *Caravaggio: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio "pictor praestantissimus": la tragica esistenza, la raffinata cultura, il mondo sanguigno del primo Seicento, nell'iter pittorico completo di uno dei massimi rivoluzionari dell'arte di tutti i tempi* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1987).

performance in 5 stations (parts),”¹¹⁰ employing language with religious overtones as in the “Stations” of the Cross in Roman Catholic religious practice when a devotee prays by sequential images of Christ carrying the cross to his death. After nine minutes, Rosenbach stood up and burned one of the Venus prints in one of five bowls that already contained a small fire. For the artist the fire referred to the witch burnings that took place on the Plaza di Signoria. She returned to her central spot and took the second position, kneeling, holding the Medusa in front of her. At the same time one of the four women participants went to the back wall, removed one of the Medusa shields, placed it on her arm, and took a position at one point on the pentagram. The performance continued in this format until Rosenbach held each position in turn; the four remaining Venus images were burned; and the other women had taken their spots on the remaining points. The artist’s positions included: “standing with the Medusa shield covering my belly,” “standing with the Medusa shield held behind my head like a crescent,” and “standing, holding up the Medusa shield with its moon-like backside and making a fist.”¹¹¹ The performance ended with all five women standing in this last position with Rosenbach.

The artist felt the *Decameron* story was rather modern even though it had been written in the fifteenth century.¹¹² The tale began with Nastagio who retreated to a forest after his love for the daughter of Paolo Traversari was unrequited. Aimlessly roaming, a woman appeared who was chased by a knight and his dogs that bit her (Figure 50A). The knight fed her heart to the dogs after which she was revived and the chase continued

¹¹⁰ Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 145.

¹¹¹ Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 145.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 145.

(Figure 50B). The knight explained that he was Guido, an ancestor of Nastagio, who committed suicide after being rejected by his love. As punishment for their earthly sins, they were forced to replay the chase one year for every month she tortured him. In the following panel (Figure 50C), Nastagio invited Traversari and his daughter to a banquet in the forest location of the chase scene and once the woman, knight, and dogs appeared, the daughter recognized her supposed cruelty in refusing his advances and agreed to marry Nastagio. The marriage took place in the fourth panel (Figure 50D), which was probably the scene unused by Rosenbach. The use of the Nastagio story seems fitting in light of how Rosenbach was feeling at the time in regards to the Venus images she experienced in Florence. As already noted, the artist found that in most representations the goddess embodied “weakness and lack of spirit.”¹¹³ Here she has chosen a story of a woman who refuses to marry a man, and because she does so, is damned to experience awful cruelty. The length of the punishment was dependent on her actions, not his. And, finally the Traversari daughter did not want to meet the same fate so she enacted weakness and agreed to a union with someone she did not wish to marry. The story ultimately portrays women’s fate as controlled by men.

The mythology surrounding Medusa contrasts significantly with that of Venus and with the Nastagio tale. In Rosenbach’s opinion, images of Venus from the Uffizi that she used in the performance represented weakness rather than the original attributes of strength in the goddess of love. This icon of beauty had to be destroyed to begin anew and, hence, Rosenbach burned the prints of the Venus paintings as part of the performance. Medusa, as one of the three Gorgon sisters, was so incredibly ugly that

¹¹³ Ibid., 145.

anyone whose gaze fell upon her would be turned to stone. Despite the fact that she was beheaded by Perseus, Medusa's head was still deadly. With snakes for hair and fangs for teeth, she was often represented on warriors' shields as a good luck charm for protection. In psychoanalytic paradigms, Medusa's decapitated head is synonymous with castration; "The terror of Medusa is thus a terror of castration that is linked to the sight of something."¹¹⁴ By this reasoning, while Medusa's head represents the female genitals, the snakes in her hair serve to mitigate the horror of the castration complex by replacing the penis, because displaying the genitals has an apotropaic effect. Medusa is strong and powerful, and gave Rosenbach a sense of protection along with a relationship to mother earth. In the performance, she armed each woman with a Medusa shield. Medusa was the exact opposite of the representations of Venus, which Rosenbach came to despise, and could perhaps offer new inspiration to women.

To challenge dominant images of beauty in contemporary society, Rosenbach chose to work with Venus, who traditionally represented beauty. Even though *Reflections on the Birth of Venus* began as research into the potential the Venus myth held for a new women's culture, she ended up creating *Venus Depression—Medusa Imagination* in response to the negative impact of the imagery she saw based on Venus. Ultimately, Rosenbach worked to undermine the social codes of beauty she saw forced upon women.

¹¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head (1940; 1922)," *Abstracts of the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Carrie Lee Rothgeb (New York: International Universities Press, 1973), 1940C 18/273.

4.7 Beyond Beauty

By examining selected performance art works by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach, this chapter illustrated how each artist worked with concepts of beauty in the representation of women in art. Rosenbach focused on the theme of Venus, altering her historically nude depictions. Rosenbach assumed the role of Venus, clothed her in a white and black, but revealing, leotard, and presented a real woman as a replacement for the idealized figure of Venus. Schneemann and Export chose to use their own nude bodies as their material, often referencing a history of female nudes in art and this tradition's association with beauty. Their work criticized and subverted a long tradition of a patriarchally defined female body in art, but they were also searching for alternative modes of representation for women through their work.

Several issues need to be considered in regards to the challenges these works presented to art production during a period which still holds significance thirty years later. First, in choosing their subject matter, the artists negated the "beauty myth" which has been said to prescribe women's behavior. It has been argued by Naomi Wolf that a false standard of an objective and definable beauty exists that women are told they must aspire to obtain, and that this standard represents a key aspect of the workings of male dominance in western society.¹¹⁵ Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach aimed to subvert any notion of an objective female beauty which their respective societies attempted to levy upon them. Furthermore, in defining the beauty myth, Wolf wrote:

The qualities that a given period calls beautiful in women are merely symbols of the female behavior that that period considers desirable:

¹¹⁵ Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (New York: Perennial, 1991), 12. This point is the main premise of Wolf's book. This publication is considered to be of a popular nature, not strictly academic.

*The beauty myth is always actually prescribing behavior and not appearance.*¹¹⁶

Women's behavior in regards to their appearance is affected by these norms of beauty; that is, steps women take to enhance their appearance mostly aim to conform to these standards. But also, the techniques and concepts employed by Schneemann and Export with their nude bodies showed their refusal to be controlled by such standards of female behavior, such as submissiveness and weakness. Rosenbach returned to the theme of Venus, often equated with the idealized female nude, because she felt Venus's identification with the "Great Mother" and women of strength were no longer integrated in contemporary notions or representations of Venus since the Renaissance. For Rosenbach, the image of Venus prescribed behavior associated with weakness.

Secondly, performance art pieces by Schneemann and Export investigated the border between the female nude in art and a state of nakedness in revealing a real female body. This border exposed the living, breathing, speaking, bleeding body of women, not a disembodied shell of an idealized and silenced beauty. Their approach to performance and feminist art opposed the modernist privileging of visuality at the expense of denying the body its physicality, as Craig Owens framed this dichotomy in the early 1980s, a bias that acts to deny the artists their womanhood.¹¹⁷ Owens deduced that a denial of the body in favor of the visual "transformed [the body] into an image."¹¹⁸ It was the prospect of

¹¹⁶ Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, 13-14.

¹¹⁷ Craig Owens discusses the opposition of the visual versus the physical in "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 178-184. This essay was originally published in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), 57-82.

¹¹⁸ Owens, "The Discourse of Others," 179.

being a mere image that was unacceptable to Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach. Working with concepts of female beauty, the ultimate re-presentation of woman as (desirable) image, provided a means to invalidate such artificial modes of female experience. Rather, their techniques and processes reveal the materiality of the (female) body. As discussed, Schneemann exposed and rolled her naked female body across various art museum surfaces in *Forbidden Actions*, metaphorically taking the female nude off the wall and substituting it with a real female body. In *Tapp und Tastkino* Export invited spectators to touch her bare breasts which were out of the sight of the participant, who was instead confronted with the artist's face. Finally, Rosenbach took the most literal approach by manipulating images of Venus in her performances to dismantle constructs of beauty.

Yet, once traditional notions of beauty and images of women are dismantled what are we left with? Recent scholarship has offered a different perspective on the concept of beauty in Western culture. The art historian and performance artist Joanna Frueh has addressed this issue in her writings, concluding that “discussing beauty is taboo. It is a sacred and forbidden subject because female beauty as it has been constructed in Western culture is a paradox—necessary for women yet impossible to achieve.”¹¹⁹ It is in the concept itself that the paradox lies, for ideal beauty is a disembodied beauty, lacking a real, functioning body. Frueh proposes a different concept of beauty, “monster/beauty,” which is “the flawed and touchable, touching and smellable, vocal and mobile body that, by exceeding the merely visual, manifests a highly articulated sensual presence.”¹²⁰ The

¹¹⁹ Frueh, *Monster/Beauty*, 3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

concept of monster/beauty is in no way abject; quite the contrary, it is “an extremely articulated sensuous presence, image or situation in which the aesthetic and the erotic are inseparable.”¹²¹

The concept of rewriting the female beauty as a body with a mind and physical experiences provides a space in which women (and men) can truly function as whole persons, an aim coinciding with that of many performance art projects by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach. In *Up To and Including Her Limits*, Schneemann presented her nude form as an active, sensual, creating body, which undermined traditional notions of the female nude in art. A very real and fragile body was exposed as shattered glass touched, cut, and marked Export’s skin in *Eros/ion*. In *Venus Depression*, Rosenbach exposed the shallow, disembodied woman in traditional representations of Venus dating back to the Renaissance. Moreover, her juxtaposition of Venus and Medusa approached something like Frueh’s dualistic concept of monster/beauty from yet another angle. Frueh’s concept further explains the resistance that often confronts particularly Schneemann and Export’s work, for “monster/beauty destabilizes both the image and ideology of female beauty,”¹²² both of which are deeply embedded in the visual constructs of western societies.

¹²¹ Ibid., 11.

¹²² Ibid., 13.

CHAPTER 5

FEMALE SEXUALITY IN PERFORMANCE AND FILM: EROTIC, POLITICAL, CONTROLLABLE? THE CONTESTED FEMALE BODY IN THE WORK OF CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN AND VALIE EXPORT

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined selected works by Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach in relation to the history of the female nude and norms of beauty in art, a tradition that suppressed the realities of a physically functioning female body. The issue of the female nude and beauty is to be distinguished from this chapter's topic of a direct engagement with female sexuality, meaning works that present, examine, and interrogate representations of female sexual organs and their functions, as well as women's sexual experiences. Performance art was especially suited to address the challenge of female sexuality in art due to the presence of the artist and her body, often in front of a live audience. Selected performance art works and short films by Schneemann and Export are discussed as they confront sexuality from the artists' perspectives. As Rosenbach did not so directly address issues of female sexuality, her work will not be discussed in this chapter. A brief discussion of female sexuality in art made in the late 1960s and 1970s is set alongside these examples of work by Schneemann and Export. It will be argued that the performances and short film pieces by Schneemann and Export break free from any previous traditions approaching a representation of female sexuality in art, and from the work of their contemporaries, particularly through their emphasis on sexual self-awareness, on the specificity of expressed experiences, on political imperatives, and on the complexity of the issues addressed.

5.2 Distinguishing Images of Female Sexuality in Art

The topic of female sexuality emerged in the latter 1960s and 1970s as a prominent theme in feminist art in both Europe and the United States. Framing this work, a number of issues immediately presented themselves. First, in contrast to male-created imagery of sexuality in modern art, which frequently entailed domination over and degradation of women, work produced by female artists addressing sexuality tended to be more politically driven.¹ Sexuality as a general theme—as the topic is complex—came to be one aspect of women’s emerging self-exploration and political empowerment during the 1970s. Coming of age on the cusp of the second wave feminist movement, which brought with it a liberation of sexuality for heterosexual and homosexual women,² Schneemann and Export defied the traditions of western, patriarchally-defined female sexuality. Their work sought to define powerful images of women *for* women. Neither Schneeman, Export—nor this writer—want to reduce a woman’s sexuality to being the

¹ See Joan Semmel and April Kingsley, “Sexual Imagery in Women’s Art,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1980): 1-6; Carol Duncan, “The Aesthetics of Power in Modern Erotic Art,” *Heresies*, no. 1 (January 1977): 46-50; Rosa Lindenberg, “Sexualiteit en bevrijding,” *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979), 46-52; *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art, 1730-1970*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin (New York: Newsweek, 1972); and Silvia Eiblmayr, “Die weibliche Selbst-Inszenierung: Dialektik von Reflexion und Revolte im Bildstatus der Frau,” in *Die Frau als Bild: Der Weibliche Körper in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Reimer, 1993), 137-215.

² Both Schneemann and Export are heterosexual and express this through their work. Thus, heterosexuality will be the focus in this chapter. For a discussion of lesbian sexuality in art, see: Harmony Hammond, *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (New York: Rizzoli, 2000); James Saslow, *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking, 1999); *Outlooks: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities and Visual Culture*, ed. Peter Horne and Reina Lewis (London: Routledge, 1996); and *In a Different Light: Visual Culture, Sexual Identity, and Queer Practice*, ed. Lawrence Rinder, Nayland Blake, Amy Scholder (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995).

sole determinant of her character, but rather to consider it as one of many facets to women's complex identities.³

Secondly, women's representations in art, as in their real-life roles, were often contradictory in nature and especially loaded when it came to sexuality. As the British art historian Lisa Tickner noted in 1978, women have conventionally been the "embodiment of virtue," but at the same time "instigator and repository of sin."⁴ As sinners they appear as the courtesan or mistress in art, for example; as virtuous woman they must be pure, innocent, and unthreatening—they passively submit to male sexual fantasies. In addition, until this most recent women's liberation movement, erotic images of women were almost always defined by culturally sanctioned, heterosexual male desires and intended for a male audience. Expressions of women's own sexual feelings were rarely visible in art until the feminist art movement.

Finally, as American artist Joan Semmel and art critic and historian April Kingsley argued in 1980, sexual imagery in art made by women during the late 1960s and 1970s extended between two extremes: one that stressed the highly negative sexual experiences of women in which they were victimized, and the other that "celebrates

³ In her introductory catalogue essay for the controversial 1996 exhibition *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, American art historian Amelia Jones wrote that the controversy surrounding the *Dinner Party* and 1970s feminist art is based on the placement of "female sexuality as the defining component of female identities and experiences living in patriarchal culture." See "Sexual Politics: Feminist Strategies, Feminist Conflicts, Feminist Histories," in *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* (Los Angeles: UCLA at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, 1996), 22.

⁴ Lisa Tickner, "The Body Politic: Female Sexuality & Women Artists since 1970," *Art History* 1, no. 2 (June 1978): 237. Paula Webster discusses similar, socially defined sex roles in her article on pornography and the second wave feminist movement's response at the end of the 1970s. See Paula Webster, "Pornography and Pleasure," *Heresies* 12, vol. 3, no. 4 (1981): 48-51, especially 50.

female sexuality as a joyous, liberating and creative experience...influenced by feminist ideals.”⁵ Schneemann and Export each tended toward positive expressions of sexuality, although they could also be combative in nature, especially in Export’s case.

5.3 Performance Art—Performing Sexuality

The late 1960s were an important period of development in Export’s oeuvre, in which her personal experiences influenced her work, and her body was used to establish strong political statements. Besides working with issues of beauty and the female body, *Tapp und Tastkino* (*Tap and Touch Cinema*, 1968, Figure 37) directly confronted several sexual taboos.⁶ This “expanded movie,” as Export referred to it, was considered by the artist to be “the first real women’s film.”⁷ As described in the prior chapter, the artist strapped a box to her bare chest and left an opening with a curtain in the front. Assisted by Peter Weibel, who announced the event in the mini-theater to passersby, Export allowed the viewer to feel her breasts and experience the real thing. Export stated that the work “deals with erotic hypocrisy. When audiences see breasts within a dark theater context on film, they are distanced from their sensuality or physicality. When you expose

⁵ Semmel and Kingsley, “Sexual Imagery in Women’s Art,” 1.

⁶ I viewed a recording of the *Tap and Touch Cinema* street action in Munich in the collection of the General Foundation in Vienna. This work was performed by Export in 1968 in Vienna in front of an audience in a theater showing Export’s film *Ping Pong* for the 2. Maraisiade, Junger Film in Vienna. A Swiss director, G. Radanowicz, came onto the stage and began hitting the mini-cinema attached to Export’s chest, saying these “breasts are for the people.” The photographs produced here and elsewhere are from the Munich performance conducted a few days later in 1968. Anita Prammer reported that Export performed this work one additional time with Erika Mies in Amsterdam. Mies wore the mini-cinema and Export invited the participants. No exact date could be identified for this last performance. Prammer, *Valie Export: Eine Multimediale Kunstlerin* (Vienna: Wiener Frauenverlag, 1988), 104-5.

⁷ Export, Valie, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality,” *Jam 1*, no. 4 (July 1991): 12.

breasts openly and people can touch them publicly, everyone is ashamed.”⁸ The piece problematized the voyeurism inherent in cinema in which the female body is objectified, particularly when it comes to sexual engagement. The eyes were deprived of the voyeuristic gaze onto the female body as Export’s breasts cannot be seen. Yet, the voyeuristic impulse is still present, it has just been displaced from the male viewer looking at a female body to the larger street audience, including men, women, and children, looking at the man feeling Export’s breasts. The work countered what Export named the “fraud of voyeurism” by offering the viewer a chance to touch real breasts, which in a standard movie theater were only accessible visually on screen.⁹ The male gaze at the female body fetishized in art was exposed and displaced in Export’s performance. The male viewer’s look was returned by Export’s own gaze into his eyes. In order to touch her breasts, the participant had to literally get within breathing space of the artist; the experience was both tactile and visual as the viewer was now within the intimate space of a physical sexual encounter. No movie or performance art piece had altered the conventional male viewing apparatus of cinema in this manner, nor was it discussed on a theoretical level in 1968.¹⁰

One of the main concerns of Export has been visual representations of women and how codes of female behavior are inscribed onto women and their bodies through this imagery. Film presented an area of access to the general population in which women and

⁸ “Valie Export Interview with Ruth Askey,” *High Performance* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 80.

⁹ Export, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality,” 12.

¹⁰ For an important theoretical discussion on the gaze, see: Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18.

their bodies were readily presented. *Tap and Touch Cinema* was a work in which Export explored cinematic functions of viewing. This street performance fulfilled the promise of the forbidden female body, which is never quite achieved through distance between viewer and screen in film. The sexual taboo of actually touching the object of the gaze is broken. Export invited all to participate, as she described:

Since the consumer can be anyone—child, man, woman—it is an unveiled intrusion into the taboo of homosexuality; the morality of the state prescriptions, the state, family, property, is exploded. For as long as the citizen remains satisfied with a reproduced copy of sexual freedom, the state will be spared a sexual revolution.¹¹

Export argued that the sexual acts in pornography granted a false sense of sexual freedom, and that the Austrian government was complicit in such acts. Sexual freedom was extremely difficult for women in Austria, a country that was ninety percent Roman Catholic in the 1970s, and women had little in terms of reproductive rights.¹² Moreover, by allowing anyone to participate in her street action, Export felt that she was subverting taboos surrounding homosexuality and female exposure. However, upon examination of the taped street performance and photo documentation (see Figure 54), it became clear that the project was not necessarily successful on all desired accounts. It appears that only men participated. The looks on the men's faces, both the man touching and those watching, could even be interpreted as entertained and intrigued, while a number of men almost break into a smile. For example, in Figure 54, a man to the right holding a child and a man whose head is just above Export's in the photograph both have wide smiles.

¹¹ Export, "Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality," 13.

¹² Abortion was legalized in Austria in 1974 against strong opposition from the Catholic Church and the general public. Abortion rights, along with other reproductive rights, gave women control over their own sexuality. See Chapter 1.

It could also be questioned how the work represented sexual freedom for women as Export is still objectified through the performance, observable in the male ogling of her and the arrangement.

Devices similar to those deployed in *Tap and Touch Cinema* are at work in *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik* (*Action Pants: Genital Panic*, Figure 7) performed in 1968, which also included a poster action in 1969. For *Genital Panic*, Export confronted the viewer in an aggressive expression of sexuality, as she entered a movie theater for art films (not pornographic films) in Munich wearing a jacket and pants with the crotch cut away to reveal her pubic hair and genitalia.¹³ Holding a machine gun close to the viewers' heads, she slowly paced the aisles and confronted the viewers with her female sexuality. According to the artist, "what is on the screen, now you have in reality. This is an open cinema."¹⁴ The artist intended to expose the hidden apparatus of the gaze, and at the same time question what it meant to bring a form of reality into the space of the cinema—an expression of her expanded cinema efforts. A viewer of a nude woman on the screen, whether it be pornography or popular films, could leer in the dark and not be too concerned about who may be watching them look. However, in *Genital Panic* the woman was real and the tension, invisible but nonetheless present, was heightened as the artist imperiled the viewer with the gun in her hands. Export was so close that her gaze met the audience members' gazes. Moreover, other audience members could observe the encounters as she continued down the aisles. Related to *Tap and Touch Cinema*, this

¹³ It was reported as being performed at the Stadkino in Munich. See: *Split: Reality, Valie Export* (Vienna: Springer and Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, 1997), 70.

¹⁴ "Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor," *(Re)Presenting Performance: A Symposium*, 9 April 2005, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, organized by Nancy Spector and Jennifer Blessing.

work offered the possibility to touch what is normally only seen in this context with the eyes. However, the large gun in her hands deterred anyone from doing so and, at the same time, represented the threat that this action was to the audience and, by extension, the threat that a real vagina and clitoris could represent to patriarchal culture. Export's work showed that women's sexuality as presented in their sex organs could challenge the primacy of the phallus—not the physical possession of the organ but the power it represents for men.

Psychoanalysis postulated that anxiety develops when a male catches sight of a woman's genitals. Sigmund Freud described how a young boy views the pubic region of his mother, sister, or female playmate and notices no penis. At first, the boy child may think that it has not yet grown. However, several sightings and some time later, the boy comes to believe that the girl's penis has been cut off. After this realization he fears his own castration and threat to his masculinity.¹⁵ Hence, from a Freudian perspective, Export's exposed genitals may threaten masculine identities. This threat, outlined by Freud, caused by the sight of the "lack" of a penis in female genitalia, however, is really a lack of understanding of female sexuality by men. This was particularly so in 1968 before feminist movements brought a measure of sexual liberation to women. Export did not necessarily support a Freudian view of sexuality; however this perspective needed

¹⁵ Freud discusses this fear in several essays, including the following: "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood (1910)" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, vol. XI (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1957), 94-5; "Female Sexuality (1931)" in *The Standard Edition*, vol. XXI (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1961), 229; "Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence (1940[1938])" in *The Standard Edition*, vol. XXIII (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964), 276-77; and "Chapter VII: An Example of Psycho-Analytic Work (1940 [1938])" a chapter in "An Outline of Psycho-Analysis" in *The Standard Edition*, vol. XXIII (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964), 190-91.

addressing, considering that both Export and Freud hail from Vienna, but also that she revealed her genitalia in the performance, an area of the body upon which Freud focused several of his theoretical positions.

Export stated that *Genital Panic* took place in an art cinema, not in a film theater of pornography, as was mistakenly reported in an interview in *High Performance* in 1981.¹⁶ However, in the interview Export was quoted at length describing the action:

Genital Panic was performed in a Munich theater that showed pornographic films. I was dressed in a sweater and pants with the crotch completely cut away. I carried a machine gun. Between films I told the audience that they had come to this particular theater to see sexual films. Now, actual genitalia was available, and they could do anything they wanted to it. I moved down each row slowly, facing people. I did not move in an erotic way. I walked down each row, the gun I carried pointed at the heads of the people in the row behind. I was afraid and had no idea what the people would do. As I moved from row to row, each row of people silently got up and left the theater. Out of film context, it was a totally different way for them to connect with the particular erotic symbol.¹⁷

Export clarified that a myth formed around this work in regards to the location of her performance due to that interview which contained inaccurate information, and in 2005 she stated that “I could never go into a pornography cinema with a gun, I would have been killed.”¹⁸ This statement is a curious one, for she was the one who was armed and dangerous. Moreover, it brings into question the accuracy of the entire interview

¹⁶ “Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor,” 9 April 2005 and “Valie Export Interview with Ruth Askey,” *High Performance* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 80.

¹⁷ “Valie Export Interview with Ruth Askey,” 80. Quoted and discussed in Kristine Stiles’ essay, “Corpora Villa, Valie Export’s Body,” in: *Valie Export: Ob/De=Con(Struction)* (Philadelphia: Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, 1999), 17-33, especially 18 and note 7. Stiles states that Export denies the accuracy of the quote and that the editor of *High Performance* only stated that the interview was part of Askey’s Master’s thesis and gave her no additional information.

¹⁸ “Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor,” 9 April 2005.

published in *High Performance*, a document that was one of the earliest describing this work in English to an American audience. Despite the inaccuracy of the pornographic cinema location, it appears that the rest of the information is correct and is consistent with other descriptions and how the artist recently described the piece in an interview.¹⁹

A number of crucial issues arise in examining this performance. If this work was really presented to an art audience, and not in a pornographic theater, as Export now claims, does her intention of questioning and exposing the mechanisms underlying pornography really have the desired effect she described and can this quoted intent be trusted? The viewing audience of art films is already an elite and rather informed public.

Guns are rarely used in works of art and contain their own connotations. In the early 1960s, Niki de Saint Phalle used a gun in her “tir” series of paintings in which she tacked paint-filled balloons to a vertical canvas and popped each with bullets shot from a gun allowing the paint to ooze down the canvas.²⁰ However, guns are generally associated with phallic power, the military, crime, and death. Chris Burden played with the life threatening character of guns in his performance *Shoot* (1971) whereby his assistant shot him in the arm. A gun shoots bullets intended to penetrate a body; though its aim is to cause harm, its action nonetheless bears resemblance to the penile function. Why did Export feel the need to choose this phallic object, a gun, as a tool of empowerment? It could be argued that relying on an object of male power and phallic symbolism undermined the artist’s feminist intent. However, Export challenged the socially constructed meaning attached to both male and female sexuality by juxtaposing a

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979*, organized by Paul Schimmel (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 39-43.

machine gun with female genitalia, which contrasted the extreme vulnerability of an exposed vagina next to a gun. The gun reads as male and was there to threaten. Export created a performance piece in which real sex and real violence came head-to-head.

To document *Genital Panic*, Export had herself photographed in her action pants sitting on a chair facing the camera (Figure 7).²¹ Wearing high-heeled shoes, her right leg is in front of her and her left leg is off to the side with her foot resting on a chair, clearly revealing her cut-out crotch. She stares straight ahead and tightly grips the upward pointing, erect, machine gun that rests on her leg. The high heels signify her female identity, also evident in the exposed genitalia, but contrast with the guerilla appearance of her wildly-teased hair, jacket, jeans, and gun. Her hair appears as out of control in the photograph as she, as a woman, was out from under the control of socially acceptable behavior by pointing a gun at the moviegoers and wearing her revealing pants.

Poster art was gaining popularity among artists during the late 1960s and Export produced a poster referencing the action using a different photograph taken in 1969 (Figure 55).²² In this photograph, Export is barefoot and dressed in the same outfit with similarly teased hair. Her bare feet augmented the rebellious behavior of her actions and pants. She sits on a bench outside against a wall with her legs spread apart. The posters were hung outside that year but quickly destroyed. The poster action was repeated in 1994 for the “GEWALT/Geschäfte” exhibition at the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Künste, Berlin, and these too were removed soon after they were placed around the city

²¹ Export stated that she did not think of documenting the performance in any other way. “Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor,” 9 April 2005.

²² *Split:Reality, Valie Export*, 70, and “Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor,” 9 April 2005.

of Berlin.²³ The posters' disappearance could be attributed to a number of events, which could have differed between 1969 and 1994. They could have been placed in illegal locations, but more than likely, it was the socially unacceptable, some may argue pornographic, exposition of the female body that might have prompted officials to pull down the posters. Of course, members of the general public could have pulled them down also, if they took offense, or a fascination with the image could have inclined some people to remove them for themselves.

The exposure of female genitalia acted against conventional norms of sexual decorum in Germany and in Austria (and in most other countries), where the artist worked during this period. This performance piece and poster action were actually disliked by Export's friends who found them to be too aggressive and macho, too close to the work of the Viennese Actionists.²⁴ While also from Vienna and frequently mentioned as associated with the Actionists, Export never did work with any of the group's members. In fact, she was working against their denigration of the female body in their work. The performances that Export created were meant to work to these ends, even though she, too, could be aggressive and destructive to her own body. And that is the point. Export used her *own* body to critique social and cultural inscriptions on the female body. Traditional connotations of woman as submissive, unthreatening, or pure were undermined.

It is to Export's credit that she was able to create this body of work in the late 1960s. Not only did it prefigure the new women's movement in Austria, but she achieved

²³ *Split:Reality, Valie Export*, 70, and "Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor," 9 April 2005.

²⁴ "Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor," 9 April 2005.

these brave projects in a context without any support structures for women artists. Export stated that she received no encouragement or assistance from other women artists or feminists in Austria.²⁵ And she did not have contact with women in other countries during the 1960s, besides reading about their work in art magazines. There were no exhibitions of feminist art in Vienna until 1975 when Export herself organized “Magna. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität” at Galerie nächst St. Stephan.²⁶ This environment was different from what Schneemann could seek out in the United States during the 1970s. However, by 1969 Schneemann had moved to London for four years where the two artists met in 1970. Both performed at the Filmmaker’s Cooperative action event that year held at an abandoned dairy facility in Camden Town.²⁷ Schneemann described their encounter at her London flat:

We didn’t require food for our instant rapport; fervid issues of the body to be put at risk, in action; to fracture predictability, aesthetic formalizations, to pull the female body off the art historical walls, out of suppressive idealizations of muse and model. We told each other how we were in risk of losing everything but our art vision: the Austrian government had taken Valie’s child from her, as an unfit mother, and considered her unemployable. I was in exile from my partner, home, job. Both fragile, fierce. Together our purposes were

²⁵ Valie Export, interview by the author, New York, 9 April 2005. See also Chapter 1.

²⁶ See the catalogue: *Magna. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität: Ein Überblick über die weibliche Sensibilität, Imagination, Projektion und Problematik, suggeriert durch ein Tableau von Bildern, Objekten, Fotos, Vorträgen, Diskussionen, Lesungen, Filmen, Videobändern und Aktionen*, organized by Valie Export (Vienna: Galerie nächst St. Stephan, 1975). The exhibition included work by Schneemann and Rosenbach.

²⁷ According to Schneemann’s description, it appears that Export performed *Eros/ions* and she performed an early version of *Trackings*, which would eventually develop into *Up To and Including Her Limits*. But this is contradictory to what Schneemann wrote about *Trackings* in *More than Meat Joy*, 226-7. Carolee Schneemann, “Valie,” in: Carolee Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002), 97. In *Imaging Her Erotics* the text on Export is not dated outside of a note stating that it was from *Text* magazine (Spring 2000).

confirmed—the potentiality of the destabilizing powers of the female body in our own hands.²⁸

This appears to be among the few feminist art contacts Export did have early in her career and she would include Schneemann in her 1975 “Magna” exhibition.

Seven years after Export’s *Genital Panic*, and created within the context of a feminist art movement in the United States, Schneemann first performed *Interior Scroll* (Figure 6) on the 29th of August 1975 at the “Women Here and Now” festival in East Hampton, New York in front of a group of mostly women artists.²⁹ The piece is based on research into “vulvic space” that Schneemann began in 1960, research that included the study of symbols in ancient civilizations.³⁰ Schneemann described in 1979 how she believed the inception of *Interior Scroll* was also influenced by two films she viewed in 1974 at the “Women in Film and Video” conference at Buffalo University: Sharon Hennessey’s *What I Want* in which she read from a scroll-like paper and Anne Severson’s *Near the Big Chakra* (1972) in which successive images of vaginas were filmed.³¹

For the *Interior Scroll* performance in East Hampton, Schneemann set up a long table under dim lights in the corner of the exhibition space of the old town meeting hall.

²⁸ Schneemann, “Valie,” 97.

²⁹ Typical of how performance art pieces can be “exhibited,” after the event, *Interior Scroll* would be shown as a grid of photographs with the text of the scroll, all in one framed piece. Sometime the encased scroll is also included separately.

³⁰ See “Interior Scroll” in Carolee Schneemann, *More than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson, 2d ed., (Kingston, New York: McPherson, 1997), 234-39. The text describing the work is identical to that in the 1979 edition of *More than Meat Joy*. Although no exact date is given for this entry, or most other descriptions of the works in the book, it must have been written between 1975 and 1979.

³¹ Schneemann, “Interior Scroll,” *More than Meat Joy*, 235. No exact date for Hennessey’s film could be located.

The performance began with Schneemann undressing, laying a sheet on the table, and wrapping her body in another sheet. She told the audience she would read from her text *Cézanne, She was a Great Painter* (1975).³² She then dropped the sheet and covered her body in broad strokes of paint. The strokes of paint Schneemann applied to her body emphasized line and drawing—the mark of the artist—and highlighted the edges and contours of her body. In Figure 56, the top, second from left photograph displays how this contour paint was applied: one stroke down the back of her leg and a curved stroke following the shape of her left buttock. Additional paint was applied down her legs and arms, under her breasts, around her stomach, down the sides of her face, and under her chin. At some point, although this is never described by her, and only viewable in documentary photographs, she tied a small apron-like cloth around her waist, which covered her genital area. This apron might refer to traditional women's roles, but it also covered the area from which the text would come, visually enhancing the later revelations Schneemann made.

Standing on the table, the artist assumed various positions, which she described as “a series of life model ‘action poses.’”³³ In contrast to a history of women often modeling for male artists who controlled their poses, Schneemann assumed both roles: that of the artist and of the model. The poses, however, displayed an activity uncommon in historical representations of nude women in art. In the lower right hand image of a series of stills from the performance in Figure 56, Schneemann's stance looks like a runner getting into position to begin a race: both hands are on the ground, her hips are raised in the air, and

³² Carolee Schneemann, *Cézanne: She was a Great Painter* (New Paltz, New York: Tresspass Press, 1975).

³³ Schneemann, “Interior Scroll,” *More than Meat Joy*, 235.

her right leg is lifted behind her as if setting it into a runner's start position. To the left of this image, the artist stands semi-crouched, with her arms raised in front of her, and one hand holding the *Cézanne* text. To the left of this, another photograph captured Schneemann lying on her side, legs bent with the right one lifted. She leans on the table with her right elbow as this hand holds the text, and her left arm appears to be perpendicular to the table in a supporting function. In the lower left image, the artist faces towards the ceiling; only her feet, head, and right shoulder touch the table with her hips raised high. In the upper left photograph, her body faces the table and is supported by both knees and elbows. Her left hand supports her head and her right holds the text. In the upper right image she is upright and sitting on her left leg, her right foot and left hand support her as they touch the table. She reads the text held in her raised right hand. In none of these six images of Schneemann reading from *Cézanne* did she resemble historical representations of female nudes in art. Moreover, she spoke her own written words, whereas models usually appeared silent.

This first part of the performance included a specific reading from Schneemann's book, *Cézanne, She was a Great Painter*. The title came from Schneemann's childhood belief that, with a name like "annie," "Céz-anne" must be a female artist.³⁴ These musings on Cézanne came at a time before Schneemann's education as an artist began, but she was in search of female role models. Schneemann stated that the text she read for the *Interior Scroll* performance was "Be Prepared":

³⁴ Schneemann pronounces it "says-annie" when discussing this point. Statement made during a Schneemann interview in *Reclaiming the Body: Feminist Art in America*, prod. and dir. Michael Blackwood, ed. Julie Sloane, PBS documentary of the *Bad Girls* exhibition at the New Museum of Contemporary, New York, Michael Blackwood Productions, 1995. Schneemann wrote that she was about twelve years old when she was first discovering artists and imagined Cézanne to be a woman. Schneemann, *Cézanne, She was a Great Painter*, 1.

BE PREPARED:

to have your brain picked
 to have the pickings misunderstood
 to be mistreated whether your success
 increases or decreases
 to have detraction move with admiration—in step
 to have your time wasted
 your intentions distorted
 the simplest relationships in your thoughts twisted
 to be USED and MISUSED
 to be “copy” to be copied to want to cope out
 cop out pull in and away
 if you are a woman (and things are not utterly changed)
 they will almost never believe you really did it
 (what you did do)
 they will worship you they will ignore you
 they will malign you they will pamper you
 they will try to take what you did as their own
 (a woman doesn’t understand her best discoveries after all)
 they will patronize you humor you
 try to sleep with you to transform them
 with your energy
 they will; berate your energy
 they will try to be part of your sexuality
 they will deny your sexuality or your work
 they will depend on you for information for generosity
 they will forget whatever help you give
 they will try to be heroic for you
 they will not help you when they might
 they will bring problems
 they will ignore your problems
 a few will appreciate deeply
 they will be loving you
 as what you do as what you are
 loving how you are being they will of course
 be strong in themselves and clear they will NOT
 be married to quiet tame drones they will not say
 what a great mother you would be
 or do you like to cook and where you might expect
 understanding and appreciation you must expect NOTHING
 then enjoy whatever gives-to-you
 as long as it does and however
 and NEVER justify yourself just do what
 you feel carry it strongly yourself³⁵

³⁵ Schneemann, “Be Prepared,” *Cézanne, She was a Great Painter*, 26, the page was dated 1966. Printed in Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects*

This text revealed Schneemann's disillusion with the art world in 1975 and a sense of mistrust towards those who were supposedly interested in her work. The audience to whom she first read this text was filled with mostly women artists who spent summers in East Hampton, and who, most likely, would have been receptive to Schneemann's skepticism.

After these acts came the celebrated and infamous section of the performance often cited and visually reproduced in photographs as a pivotal work of feminist art. This point also marks a transition in the piece from when it took the female nude as its inspiration to a direct employ of female sexuality as a creative force for Schneemann. The artist slowly extracted a scroll (Figure 57) from her vagina, from which she read her critique of the misunderstandings of her work. The text was taken from *Kitch's Last Meal* (1973-1977), a work-in-progress. In 1991, Schneemann described the drive behind this section of the performance:

I didn't want to pull a scroll out of my vagina and read it in public, but the culture's terror of my making overt what it wished to suppress fueled the image; it was essential to demonstrate this lived action about "vulvic space" against the abstraction of the female body and its loss of meanings.³⁶

(Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 156-7. Format of text follows this latter publication. In *Imaging Her Erotics* the text has been laid out so that it appears as if this was a separate scroll text that she read in East Hampton (and not the one which is often cited and begins "I met a happy man," discussed later in this chapter). Between a photograph of her reading from the scroll and the beginning of this cited text, the words "Scroll 1 (1996)" have been printed on page 156. Schneemann stated that this information is incorrect and that she remembers this to be the text from *Cézanne* that she read. Schneemann, interview by author, via telephone, 2 October 2005, and Schneemann, email correspondence with author, 4 October 2005.

³⁶ Carolee Schneemann, "The Obscene Body/Politic," *Art Journal*, vol. 50 (Winter 1991): 31-33.

The artist sought a manner to literally express female creativity from within her body. As Joanna Frueh has described, her performance was “giving female genitals a public and spiritual voice.”³⁷

Artistic creativity was (is) too often equated with male creativity, but Schneemann’s *Interior Scroll* challenged this association. For Schneemann it was crucial that she worked with her nude body to express the lived physical and sexual experience of herself, which she felt had been suppressed. More specifically this latter part of the performance was based on Schneemann’s understanding of “interior knowledge” and how she “related womb and vagina to ‘primary knowledge.’” She described in 1979 how her thoughts evolved to develop *Interior Scroll*:

I thought of the vagina in many ways—physically, conceptually: as a sculptural form, an architectural referent, the source of sacred knowledge, ecstasy [*sic*], birth passage, transformation. I saw the vagina as a translucent chamber of which the serpent was an outward model: enlivened by its passage from the visible to the invisible, a spiraled coil ringed with the shape of desire and generative mysteries, attributes of both female and male sexual powers. This source of “interior knowledge” would be symbolized as the primary index unifying spirit and flesh in Goddess worship. I related womb and vagina to “primary knowledge.”³⁸

Schneemann effectively birthed her work, this knowledge, as she extracted the text; the scroll has a metaphorical resemblance to an umbilical cord. The performance posits the female body and female sexuality as a source of creativity—a theme that runs through much of Schneemann’s work.

³⁷ Joanna Frueh, “The Body through Women’s Eyes,” in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994), 192.

³⁸ Schneemann, “Interior Scroll,” *More than Meat Joy*, 234.

Inspiration and empowerment through the lived experience of female sexuality remained a problematic concept to understand, especially when it was visually accessible, as Schneemann used her own, often nude, body as the artistic surface. Inserting her fingers into her vagina—a part of female anatomy ignored, albeit difficult to depict, in the visual arts—and pulling the folded paper out of it was an explicitly visceral action. Moreover, the scroll had to be placed, or rather “stuffed,” into her vagina before the performance began, and this only furthered the unorthodox usage of this vessel.³⁹ The vagina is socially inscribed for reproduction, female and male pleasure, or even as a source of male fear.⁴⁰ Schneemann’s female body and sexuality form the impulse behind *Interior Scroll*, which the artist transformed into performative acts of stuffing, extracting, and reading her words. She was not essentializing “woman,” rather she found a method to voice and visualize certain social prescriptions for herself as a woman and for her work.

The use of the word “scroll” in the title—a scroll has historically been a carrier of proclamations or sacred texts, such as the Torah—demonstrates the seriousness of the artist’s intentions with her chosen words. While Schneemann described the paper as a scroll, it is actually a long folded, not rolled, piece of paper that is now covered with her vaginal excretions. The text written on the scroll was addressed to a “structuralist filmmaker’s” perception of Schneemann and her work and specified “his” misunderstandings of both. The text follows:

³⁹ Jane Blocker, *What the Body Cost: Desire, History, and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 126-7. Blocker addresses Schneemann’s placement of the scroll in her vagina as “stuffing.”

⁴⁰ Menstrual blood could symbolize female castration and a man’s own castration anxiety, according to psychoanalytic theory. See the beginning of this section and note 15.

I met a happy man
 a structuralist filmmaker
 —but don't call me that
 it's something else I do—
 he said we are fond of you
 you are charming
 but don't ask us
 to look at your films
 we cannot
 there are certain films
 we cannot look at
 the personal clutter
 the persistence of feelings
 the hand-touch sensibility
 the diaristic indulgence
 the painterly mess
 the dense gestalt
 the primitive techniques

(I don't take the advice
 of men who only talk to
 themselves)
 PAY ATTENTION TO CRITICAL
 AND PRACTICAL FILM LANGUAGE
 IT EXISTS FOR AND IN ONLY
 ONE GENDER

even if you are older than me
 you are a monster I spawned
 you have slithered out
 of the excesses and vitality
 of the sixties.....

he said you can do as I do
 take one clear process
 follow its strictest
 implications intellectually
 establish a system of
 permutations establish
 their visual set.....

I said my film is concerned
 with DIET AND DIGESTION

very well he said then
 why the train?

the train is DEATH as there
is die in diet and di in
digestion

then you are back to metaphors
and meanings
my work has no meaning beyond
the logic of its systems
I have done away with
emotion intuition inspiration—
those aggrandized habits which
set artists apart from
ordinary people—those
unclear tendencies which
are inflicted upon viewers.....

it's true I said when I watch
your films my mind wanders
freely.....
during the half hour of
pulsing dots I compose letters
dream of my lover
write a grocery list
rummage in the trunk
for a missing sweater
plan the drainage pipes for
the root cellar.....
it is pleasant not to be
manipulated

he protested
you are unable to appreciate
the system the grid
the numerical rational
procedures—
the Pythagorean cues—

I saw my failings were worthy
of dismissal I'd be buried
alive my works lost.....

he said we can be friends
equally tho we are not artists
equally I said we cannot
be friends equally and we

cannot be artists equally

he told me he had lived with
a “sculptress” I asked does
that make me a “film-makeress?”

Oh No he said we think of you
as a dancer.⁴¹

As Schneemann has since divulged, this text was actually a “letter” to the film critic Annette Michelson who had said she could not look at Schneemann’s films.⁴²

Michelson and Rosalind Krauss held influential positions at *Artforum*, an important magazine for contemporary art in the 1970s, and they were not friendly to feminist art.⁴³

Michelson, along with Krauss and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, went on to found the art journal *October* in the Spring of 1976 (a year after *Interior Scroll*), a publication which aimed to reshape the practice of art criticism and history by rejecting formalism and embracing certain poststructuralist and postmodernist strategies. The journal’s writers and editors relied heavily on the writings of French literary theorists, such as Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Roland Barthes, to revise the modernist canon and its privileging of genius, originality, authenticity, and so forth in favor of a more pluralistic approach.

⁴¹ The text was taken from Tape 2 of “Kitch’s Last Meal,” super 8 film, 1973-77, the ellipses are in Schneemann’s original text, Schneemann, “Interior Scroll,” *More than Meat Joy*, 238-39. Tape 2 is dated more specifically to 1973, as noted in *Feminism—Art—Theory: An Anthology 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 33-4.

⁴² Scott MacDonald, “Carolee Schneemann” (1979), *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 143.

⁴³ For example, a letter to the publisher of *Artforum* co-signed by them and others criticized Lynda Benglis’ *Double Dildo Self-Portrait* published in the November 1974 issue, see: Lawrence Alloway, Max Kozloff, Rosalind Krauss, Annette Michelson, “Letters,” *Artforum* 13, no. 4 (December 1974): 9. Anna Chave discusses the circumstances surrounding this exchange and the relationships among those involved including Benglis, Krauss, and Robert Morris. See: Anna C. Chave, “Minimalism and Biography,” *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 82, no. 1 (March 2000): 153-54. This essay also exposes a dominant critical denial of the personal in art interpretations in relation to Minimalism.

However, *October* evolved into an elitist publication in which male voices and artists predominated, and feminist artists and writers, such as Schneemann, were more or less systematically excluded from their pages.⁴⁴

In the scroll text Schneemann indirectly took aim at exclusionary art criticism, which she believed failed to view and analyze her work properly, by focusing on a powerful player in contemporary art, namely Michelson. However, her target was not made public until thirteen years later in a published interview Scott MacDonald conducted with Schneemann. The artist referred to her act of addressing the letter to a man who was really a woman as “a double invention and transmutation.”⁴⁵ Schneemann felt that film and art criticism generally were written from a male perspective that she saw as rejecting personal experience in favor of unemotional, detached art and writing. And while the subliminal addressee of the letter was Michelson, an awareness of that fact was not needed to appreciate the words on the scroll. At the height of the second wave women’s movement when Schneemann first performed *Interior Scroll* in 1975, researching and expressing women’s personal lives were crucial to many feminists. The written and spoken expressions of the scroll text were produced within the social circumstances of the women’s movement and by the personal desires of the artist.

⁴⁴ Schneemann was published once in *October* for a special project in which twenty-five artists, art historians, and critics were asked for a response to two questions on feminism and feminist art practices, see “Feminist Issues,” *October*, 71 (Winter 1995): 5, 40-41. Schneemann submitted one page of images and another with the text “Vulva’s School.” For an overview of the role of *October* and its ideas in the context of contemporary art, see Irving Sandler, *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Later 1960s to the Early 1990s* (New York: IconEditions, 1996), 335-344.

⁴⁵ MacDonald, “Carolee Schneemann,” 143.

Schneemann has stated that “the projected quotes [in the scroll] are from her [Michelson’s] students.”⁴⁶ Schneemann knew one of the critic’s students who told her, “Well, look, there are certain films she simply cannot look at: the diaristic indulgence, the hand-touch sensibility.”⁴⁷ It is from statements like this that we can begin to understand the source and meaning behind Schneemann’s text. The artist felt that her work was ignored on account of its embrace of her personal life and experiences as inspiration and subject matter. Terms such as “personal clutter,” “persistence of feelings,” “hand-touch sensibility,” “diaristic indulgence,” and “painterly mess” were generally coded as feminine. The resistance to analyzing these aspects of her work revealed the dominant, tacitly masculinist, aesthetic that Schneemann felt she was up against in seeking recognition of her work. The artist believed her films were ignored by important critics, however, her work was later included in two significant books on film from the 1960s and 1970s: Scott MacDonald’s *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (1988) and David James’ *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties* (1989).

Schneemann referenced theoretical discourses that she believed were written in a language defined by patriarchal terms, which did not have space for women’s voices and differing opinions of social and cultural experiences. As Schneemann stated in the Scroll:

PAY ATTENTION TO CRITICAL
AND PRACTICAL FILM LANGUAGE
IT EXISTS FOR AND IN ONLY
ONE GENDER

The text also included an exchange on emotional versus rational thought, for example:

⁴⁶ Ibid., 143.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 144. Schneemann does not state who this student was.

he protested
 you are unable to appreciate
 the system the grid
 the numerical rational
 procedures—
 the Pythagorean cues

Intellectual, mathematical, and scientific advancements have often been associated with the development especially of western culture and were linked to the domain of men, while emotional, often personal, responses have generally been coded as feminine and of lesser value.⁴⁸ Schneemann was at odds with such paradigms and was particularly sensitive to a lack of appreciation for personal experiences entering the work. She was also concerned with how her work would be received, and, from the scroll text, she even feared that her films would be lost because she would be overlooked for her transgressions. Finally, she noted the disregard of her films by the “structuralist filmmaker” when Schneemann said she was referred to as a “dancer”—known for her *body and not her work*.

Schneemann performed *Interior Scroll* only one other time, on the 4th of September 1977, at the Telluride Film Festival in Colorado in a hastily planned act of protest of the Festival’s treatment of a group of erotic films by women. Schneemann had been invited by Stan Brakhage to introduce a program of erotic films by women, which

⁴⁸ This issue was only beginning to be discussed in the 1970s, and by the 1980s artists were directly criticizing this binary, as in work such as Barbara Kruger’s *We Won’t Play Nature to Your Culture* (1983). For an early essay on this issue, see: Sherry B. Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture” (1972), in: *Feminism—Art—Theory: An Anthology 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 17-33, reprinted from *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 2 (1972): 5-31.

they had selected together.⁴⁹ However, when she arrived she discovered that the event was titled “The Erotic Woman” and that the program cover included a drawing of a man with sunglasses opening his trench coat to expose his torso, although his genitals were erased, leaving the pubic area blank. The event’s title, “Fourth Telluride Film Festival,” was written across his chest. The program’s publicity did not emphasize the screening of films by women portraying a female perspective on sexuality. Rather, the subject and purpose of these films were degraded, in the opinions of Schneemann and Brakhage, to the status of constituting a form of male gratification and exploitation of women through the program title and drawing juxtaposition. Disturbed by this change of emphasis, Schneemann felt it could reinforce (or introduce new) stereotypes of women. When she was to introduce the films, she stood in front of the audience wrapped in a sheet and read this statement:

Having been described and proscribed by the male imagination for so long, no woman artist now wants to assume that she will define an “erotic woman” for other women—the very notion immediately reverts to the traditional stereotypes that this program of films vividly counters. Perhaps these films will redefine “The Erotic Woman,” or to the contrary, the films will be found to be anti-erotic, sub-erotic, non-erotic. Perhaps this “erotic woman” will be seen as primitive, devouring, insatiable, clinical, obscene, or forthright, courageous, integral.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ A discussion of Brakhage in relation to Schneemann’s work appears later in this chapter. For Schneemann’s description of the Telluride performance, see Schneemann, “Interior Scroll,” *More than Meat Joy*, 236-7.

⁵⁰ Schneemann, “Interior Scroll,” *More than Meat Joy*, 237. Originally published as Schneemann, “Introduction to ‘Erotic Films by Women,’” in *Deciphering America, a Traveling Collection Assembled by Michael Gibbs* (Amsterdam: Kintexts Publications, 1978), 108-11.

After the statement, she dropped the sheet, applied lines of mud to her body, extracted the scroll from her vagina, and read the text from *Kitch's Last Meal*.⁵¹

As she wrote during the 1960s, at an earlier point in her career Schneemann was aware of the problems her work would encounter as well as of its power:

There were many reasons for my use of the naked body in my Kinetic Theater works (my development of “the happening”): to break into the taboos against the vitality of the naked body in movement, to eroticise my guilt ridden culture and further to confound this culture’s sexual rigidities—that the life of the body is more *variously* expressive than a sex-negative society can admit. I didn’t stand naked in front of 300 people because I wanted to be fucked; but because my sex and work were harmoniously experienced I could have the audacity, or courage, to show the body as a source of varying emotive power.⁵²

Using her sexualized body as vessel of text, creator of meaning, and instigator of change, Schneemann desired to express the sexual vitality of the female body and its creative potential.

Schneemann continued to explore themes of female sexuality after *Interior Scroll*, although this work has consistently received the most attention, and not always positive attention. This piece was most recently censored from a 2002 exhibition entitled “Personal & Political: The Women’s Art Movement, 1969-1975” at the Guild Hall Museum in East Hampton. A trustee of the Guild Hall had reviewed the pieces to be included in the show with the museum’s director, Ruth Appelhof, and insisted that

⁵¹ In addition to Schneemann’s *Fuses* and *Plumb Line*, the following were also screened at the Telluride Film Festival: Agnes Varda, *L’Opera Mouffe*; Marie Mencken, *Orgia*; Gunvor Nelson, *Schmeerguntz*; and Anne Severson, *Near the Big Chakra*. David Levi Strauss, “Love Rides Aristotle through the Audience: Body, Image, and Idea in the Work of Carolee Schneemann,” in Dan Cameron et al., *Carolee Schneemann: Up To and Including Her Limits* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996), 28 and Note 6.

⁵² Schneemann’s quote is from text written between 1962 and 1968, emphasis is Schneemann’s. See: Schneemann, *Cézanne: She was a Great Painter*, 24.

Interior Scroll not be included in the exhibition, effectively censoring Schneemann's work.⁵³ Schneemann was informed of this decision through Simon Taylor and Natalie Ng, curators of the exhibition, after the show had been installed without this piece.⁵⁴

Female sexuality and genitalia: source of creative power or a threatening unknown; revealing knowledge or mysterious enigma? Schneemann identified her sexuality as a site of origin for creativity symbolized by the words on the scroll she extracted from her vaginal canal. While Export was potentially vulnerable in *Genital Panic*, when she exposed her pubic region, the artist was actually threatening to the moviegoers not only because she was wielding a gun but also due to her exposed genitals: the prospect of touching her body was associated with danger. These two performances present contrasting ideologies on the function of female sexuality in the artists' work. As an American feminist artist in the mid-1970s, Schneemann had feminist colleagues around her who could encourage and understand the personal nature of her words and actions, whereas in Austria there was no feminist art movement and Export was living under the legacy of the aggressive work of the Viennese Actionists. These works bear imprints of the cultural frameworks from which they originate.

During the 1970s, one faction of the feminist art movement sought to define exactly what female art entailed. Feminist artists and art historians tried to identify

⁵³ "Must Curators Self-Censor," *Censorship News Online*, issue no. 88, website of the National Coalition Against Censorship, Internet, http://www.ncac.org/cen_news/cn88curators.htm, accessed 22 October 2005. This article also describes how one of the curators, Simon Taylor, was fired half-way through the show, most likely due to the exhibition's content, although Appellhof denied this was the reason.

⁵⁴ Schneemann stated this to me in conversation in Fall 2002.

specific qualities in imagery by women artists, both contemporary and historic, to understand what distinguished it from imagery by their male colleagues. Some artists emphasized the female body as the unavoidable differentiating feature of women, and, hence, saw this as emphasized in women's and feminist art. A number of female artists looked to women's biology and concluded that work with "central core imagery," as Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro defined it in 1973, referenced the female body and specifically the loosely circular or oval forms of a woman's genitalia, vagina, and uterus.⁵⁵ As Chicago and Schapiro both worked in an abstract idiom with circular compositions in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this argument helped attach a feminist reading to their work during a period when abstraction was still prominent.⁵⁶ Most conspicuous on the American West coast, central core imagery—which was meant to be symbolic in nature, rather than realistic—was not extensively pursued in Germany and Austria, or elsewhere in Europe.⁵⁷ It was not until the second half of the 1970s that

⁵⁵ Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, "Female Imagery," *Womanspace Journal*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 11-14; Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (Garden City New York: Double Day, 1978; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1993) 142-44, 180-81; Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, "Conversations with Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro," *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York : H.N. Abrams, 1994), 66-85, especially 67-70 and 74.

⁵⁶ Schapiro described how she used specific colors in her work *Big Ox #1* (1968) to enhance its sexual identification and Chicago's *Pasadena Lifesavers, Yellow No.4* (1969-70) is viewed as displaying the central core imagery she advocated. As discussed in Chapter 2, Schapiro and Chicago founded the Feminist Art Program together at the California Institute of Arts in 1971. Chicago first started the Feminist Art Program at Fresno State College in 1970. See Faith Wilding, "The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts, 1970-75," Broude and Garrard, *The Power of Feminist Art*, 32-47.

⁵⁷ See *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979), especially Lindenberg, "Sexualiteit en bevrijding," 46-52; Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, "I: Fifteen years of feminist action: From practical strategies to strategic practices," *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-85*, ed. and introduction by Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (London: Pandora, 1987), 3-78; Tickner, "The Body Politic," *Art History*, vol. 1,

feminist art movements were active in various European countries, and then, the work of those movements was often under the influence of, or compared with, American work from both the East and West coasts of the United States (see Chapter 2). By this time, there was a more critical view of central core imagery and feminist art practices became more diverse. However, a number of art historians, critics, and artists in Europe, especially in Germany, did consider the issue of what defined a female art or feminist art. For instance, the German art historian Celia Rentmeister believed that under the current male-dominated art world, aesthetic standards needed to be completely reformulated to meet women's needs. Silvia Bovenschen also argued that an artist's sex determined her social perspective and, therefore, art production. And the Dutch art historian Marlite Halbertsma argued that feminist art necessarily expressed a feminist consciousness and inspired social change.⁵⁸

Symbolic references to female sexuality in central core imagery must be differentiated from elements in Export's and Schneemann's work, which problematized female sexuality through the direct use of their bodies and sexual organs. Performances by Export and Schneemann related more closely to work that tended to be specific when referencing the sexual female body and its functions. These types of representations in art were of interest to women during the second wave feminist movement of the 1970s on account of the lack of understanding or openness about women's sexuality and bodies up

no. 2 (June 1978): 236-251; *Art and Feminism*, ed. Helena Reckitt, survey by Peggy Phelan (London: Phaidon, 2001), especially "Essentialism: Language and the Body," 36-38, "Too Much," 51-67, and "Personalizing the Political," 68-109; *Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977); and Silvia Eiblmayr, Valie Export, and Monika Prischl-Maier, *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn: aktuelle Kunst von Frauen: Text und Dokumentation* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1985).

⁵⁸ For these European perspectives, please see my Introduction and Chapter 2.

to that moment. As Germaine Greer stated in 1971, “Women’s sexual organs are shrouded in mystery,”⁵⁹ and a number of women artists sought to understand their own bodies through their work.

The term “vaginal iconology” was used by the American art critic Barbara Rose in 1974 and Lisa Tickner in 1978 to define an expanded category that included both central core imagery, which was abstract and symbolic, and work with specific references to female sexual anatomy.⁶⁰ Both authors agreed that the use of specific sexual imagery by female artists was not erotic but political, as Rose wrote in “Vaginal Iconology”: “It is designed to arouse women, but not sexually.”⁶¹ This awakening operated on women’s sense of sexual inferiority, as Rose continued in her essay:

By depicting female genitals, women artists attack one of the most fundamental ideas of male supremacy—that a penis, because it is visible, is superior. At issue in vaginal iconology is an overt assault on the Freudian doctrine of penis envy, which posits that all little girls must feel that they are missing something. The self-examination movement among women that strives at familiarizing women with their own sex organs, and the images in art of nonmenacing and obviously complete vaginas, are linked in their efforts to convince women that they are not missing anything. In realizing that “equality” depends on more than equal rights and equal salaries, women are exalting images of their own bodies. Their erotic art is, in effect, propaganda for sexual equality based on discrediting the idea of penis envy.⁶²

⁵⁹ Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 29. See her chapter “Sex,” 29-37. For descriptions of a variety of mysteries and myths surrounding women’s sexuality, see Hoffman Reynolds Hayes, *The Dangerous Sex: The Myth of Feminine Evil* (New York: Putnum, 1964).

⁶⁰ Barbara Rose, “Vaginal Iconology,” *New York Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 6 (11 February 1974): 59, and Tickner, “The Body Politic,” 241-243.

⁶¹ Rose, “Vaginal Iconology,” 59.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 59.

Of course, in *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir had already critiqued Freud's concept of penis envy as not a desire for the organ itself but a want for the social advantages given automatically to men:

In woman the inferiority complex takes the form of a shamed rejection of her femininity. It is not the lack of the penis that causes this complex, but rather woman's total situation; if the little girl feels penis envy it is only as the symbol of privileges enjoyed by boys.⁶³

Related to Beauvoir's explanation of the inferiority complex and similar to Rose's position, Tickner described imagery with female genitals as a means of evoking pride in women:

The acceptance and re-integration of the female genitals into art has thus been a political, rather than a directly erotic gesture. Like the associated violation of the menstrual taboo, it celebrates the mark of our "otherness" and replaces the connotations of inferiority with those of pride.⁶⁴

This work celebrated the female sexual body, its functions, and experiences as it represented female genitalia, with related bodies of work concerned with menstruation and childbirth. Sometimes the genital references were specific, as in Barbara Hammer's (American) *Multiple Orgasm* of 1976 (Figure 58), a 16mm film, or as in Marianne Wex's (German) photographs of women's clitorises taken in the mid-1970s and compiled into a book entitled *Klitorisbilder (Clitoris Pictures)*.⁶⁵ Wex aimed to take back women's sexuality and pleasure from men and doctors. At other times genital sources were more

⁶³ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H.M. Parshley (New York: Knopf, 1953; New York, Knopf, 1993), 44.

⁶⁴ Tickner, "The Body Politic," 241-2.

⁶⁵ For a description of Hammer's work, see: *Art and Feminism*, ed. Helena Reckitt, survey by Peggy Phelan (London: Phaidon, 2001), 103. For Wex's work, see Lindenberg, "Sexualiteit en bevrijding," *Feministische Kunst Internationaal*, 49, 95-96.

symbolic (yet more specific than central core imagery) as in Hannah Wilke's (American) latex wall sculptures, such as *Pink Champagne* of 1975 (Figure 59), which has been described as "a rippling pink, petal-like, horizontal expansion of pleasure...[the layers] suggest waves of sensation experienced in excited vaginal and clitoral flesh."⁶⁶ Depicting female sex organs in art in such a specific manner is a political act, rather than solely erotic, especially since female anatomy and sexuality were rarely discussed or represented outside of pornography or the medical field until this period.

Other, related imagery in feminist art of the 1970s looked to other sexual functions of the female body. Judy Chicago imaged menstruation in *Red Flag* of 1971 (Figure 60), a cropped photograph of her pubic and upper thigh area with her hand pulling a blood-soaked tampon out of her vagina. Catherine Elwes (born in France, practicing in England) performed *Menstruation* in 1979 (Figure 61) in which she spent the three-day duration of her period inside a glass-faced white box dressed in white against which menstrual blood was seen. While isolated from the public, as women in some cultures are forced to be during menses, Elwes wrote answers to viewers' questions on the walls, to "reconstitute menstruation as a metaphorical framework by giving it the authority of cultural form and placing it within an art context."⁶⁷ Monica Sjöö's (Swedish) painting *God Giving Birth* of 1968 (Figure 62), which was threatened with charges of obscenity and blasphemy, depicts a woman in the middle of birthing a child where only the head has appeared.⁶⁸ In *Cyclus* of 1977 (Figure 63) Frans Beelen (Dutch)

⁶⁶ Joanna Frueh, "The Body through Women's Eyes," in *The Power of Feminist Art*, 201.

⁶⁷ *Art and Feminism*, 130. See also Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism*, 31-32.

⁶⁸ Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism*, 6.

sculpted seven terracotta reliefs of a woman's head and torso to depict a woman's biologically- and socially-defined life cycle from penis penetration to pregnancy, birth, and old age.⁶⁹ These works, which have been chosen here as representative examples among many, aimed to expose, normalize, and celebrate the variety of suppressed aspects of women's sexual lives up until the 1970s—subjects that became topics in social and political discussions of the period in the United States and various European countries owing much to the consciousness-raising efforts by second wave women's movements. While these works exemplify both cultural and biological elements of female experience, however, all are based on women's biologically defined and culturally determined life roles up until second wave feminism.

While the work that Export and Schneemann produced is more closely related to pieces making direct references to and images of female sexuality, their works must be differentiated from those of their contemporaries approaching similar themes, and also one from the other. Their performances are multi-layered and complex in the issues they address. Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* involves the extraction of the paper from her vagina, in a visceral manner akin to Chicago's pulling out of a bloody tampon. However, that is where the similarities end. Chicago tried to naturalize this monthly occurrence of menstruating women's lives, making explicit the hidden aspects of women's personal experiences. Schneemann's piece, on the other hand, is not focused on menstruation or solely the functioning of the uterus and vagina, but rather the inspiration from her sexuality that she believes enhances her creativity. Through the extraction of the text written to a critic of her work, she created a visceral interpretation of her sexuality

⁶⁹ Lindenberg, "Sexualiteit en bevrijding," *Feministische Kunst Internationaal*, 50, 62.

through which she physically and metaphorically birthed her clarification of her artistic production. In contrast to Export's *Genital Panic*, Schneemann's piece was not aggressive towards the audience (only to Schneemann's own body as it was painful to place the entire scroll in her vagina).⁷⁰

Export confronted socially accepted means of oppressing women through pornography and forced sexual roles by contrasting her exposed genitalia with the machine gun she was carrying to create a tension between a represented body on the screen and her real body. A similar aim was presented in *Tap and Touch Cinema*, in which the artist was critiquing the state's acquiescence to the adult film industry, as well as the male film goers who objectify the female body onscreen, by inverting the viewing apparatus and changing the visual experience to a visceral one. The revealing of Export's sex organs differs significantly from the work of Wex, for example, who catalogued images of women's clitorises in an effort to celebrate women's sexuality and to help women to understand their own bodies. Wex's project runs parallel to many of the aims of the women's movement itself during the 1970s.

Export's performances are also distinct from Schneemann's who uses her body to liberate her sexual creativity and comment on her personal experiences in the art world. Schneemann's performance takes a more personal approach to her analysis of art criticism and bespeaks the 1970s insight that the personal is political. Export's performances aimed to critique social apparatuses of cinema, in general, and pornography, more specifically. While different, both artists took more critical, political approaches than many of their contemporaries.

⁷⁰ Schneemann has spoken of the pain involved in forcing the entire scroll into her vagina. See: Blocker, *What the Body Cost*, 126.

5.4 Film: Women's Perspectives on Erotic Pleasures

Performance art was among the earliest expressive forms Schneemann would choose in the 1960s, but by mid-decade she also worked with film. *Fuses* (1964-1967) was her first film and part of her *Autobiographical Trilogy*, which included *Plumb Line* (1971) and *Kitch's Last Meal* (1978).⁷¹ In *Fuses* (Figure 64)—chosen for the Cannes Film Festival in 1968—the artist explored new territory in the handling of female sexuality and pleasure in the ecstasy of a loving relationship.

Schneemann had been in two films by Stan Brakhage, *Loving* (1957) and *Cat's Cradle* (1959), which focused on her relationship with James Tenney. The filming experiences with Brakhage informed her formal and contextual approach in *Fuses*. Brakhage has been compared to a poet, for he developed “film poetry as the elaboration of discrete incidents rather than the continuously unfolding linear action of the feature film.”⁷² His films denied linear narrative while they emphasized the visual, the primacy of the material, by trying to let it tell its own story. For Brakhage film was a very personal activity in which he would eventually document his family. His relationship with his wife, Jane, was featured in *Wedlock Houses: An Intercourse* (1959), which included scenes of them arguing, engaged in sexual intercourse, and in daily activities. Other films recorded similarly intimate events, such as the births of their first and third

⁷¹ While not performance per se, the film must be analyzed in this context, as this is the first time that a woman had so clearly attempted to portray a complete sense of female sexuality from a woman's perspective in art. This film is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and can be viewed in the Celeste Bartos Film Study Center at the Museum.

⁷² David E. James, “Stan Brakhage: The Filmmaker as Poet,” *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 29-30.

children in *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959) and *Thigh Line Lyre Triangular* (1961). He used 16mm and, later, 8mm film, which produced a home movie aesthetic that emphasized the personal character of his project. It is this innovation in production techniques in conjunction with the personal subject matter that would influence Schneemann's work in *Fuses*.

Schneemann had already been in films by Brakhage that portrayed her sexual relationship with Tenney, but she felt her female perspective was missing and that the films lacked a proper consideration of the eroticism between Schneemann and Tenney.⁷³ Schneemann stated: "Since my deepest expressive and responsive life core was considered obscene, I thought I had better see what it looked like in my own vision. I had never seen any erotica or pornography that approached what lived sexuality felt like."⁷⁴ While working in the mode of "home movies as art film" and the "use of film as a participant in erotic activity" developed by Brakhage, Schneemann took the possibilities further to express a mutually loving sexual relationship between a woman and a man.⁷⁵

Schneemann was both filmmaker and participant in the action—heterosexual erotic activity—which was filmed at her home over a period of three years and captures intimate moments in the artist's relationship with Tenney. As the film begins, the first

⁷³ MacDonald, "Carolee Schneemann," 142. Schneemann has stated that *Fuses* was also responding to Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving*, as she described, "I know that Stan and Jane passed the camera back and forth, but I was still very concerned that the male eye replicated or possessed the vagina's primacy of giving birth." Schneemann understood that viewing was mediated by social and cultural constructs. See, Carolee Schneemann, "Interview with Kate Haug," Carolee Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002), 23. This interview was originally published in *Wide Angle* 20, no. 1 (1977): 20-49.

⁷⁴ Schneemann, "The Obscene Body/Politic," 31.

⁷⁵ David E. James, "Carolee Schneemann: *Fuses*," *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 317.

images are blurred, but an eye, then hair, and her vaginal area can be distinguished. It is followed by scenes of Schneemann running on the beach, views of trees, the interior of her house, her cat Kitch, naked bodies close together, a view out a window with trees, her house, Tenney receiving fellatio, and a window. Then blurred images of their bodies including a view of the artist's clitoris can be seen followed by the cat in the window, intercourse, cat, Schneemann and Tenney engaged in sex in front of this same window, views of them kissing tenderly, and his penis in various states of excitement. All of these montages—a method to defamiliarize viewing in order to see and perceive differently—are one to three seconds long in duration and taken from the thirty-second clips of film Schneemann made with the wind-up Bolex camera she was using.⁷⁶ Similar types of clips continue and show an excessively bright, indistinguishable scene. This bright scene breaks up the fast paced images and was deliberately placed here by Schneemann, “I wanted everything to suddenly drain into this open, indecipherable whiteness—like that orgasmic space where you are out beyond wherever you are. You don't know where you are.”⁷⁷ The film continues with views of the beach, Tenney, his genitals, the landscape as the camera spins within it, Schneemann's genitals, views of Schneemann and Tenney, the beach, kissing, short clips of intercourse, then their faces, nude bodies, petting the cat, and a close-up of them in bed overlaid with images of sex in different positions. The overlaying of images is a technique Schneemann frequently employed in *Fuses*, along with marking and painting the surface of the celluloid after the film was developed. Schneemann felt it was imperative that she interfere with the straightforward recording of

⁷⁶ Schneemann, “Interview with Kate Haug,” 23.

⁷⁷ The scene is actually a view of cows in a snowstorm. Schneemann, “Interview with Kate Haug,” 33.

the film: “film as part of performance remained something that was in the studio along with all the other rough materials being tried out.”⁷⁸

The film continues with an image of Schneemann’s genitals from an angle similar to that in Gustave Courbet’s *The Origin of the World* (1866) or Marcel Duchamp’s *Étant Donnés* (1946-66). While perhaps making these art historical references to the nude female body explicit, the connotations are extremely different. The filmmaker and actor are one and the same: a woman recording her sexual experience, which can be shared with other women and men. Schneemann drew and marked the surface of the celluloid, which is clearly visible at this juncture of *Fuses*. The following scene shows images of Tenney on the bed, Tenney and Schneemann kissing, she in silhouette in front of the window, them caressing each other in front of the window, then his playing with her clitoris and vulva after which she is filmed touching him, and then receiving cunnilingus. This section captures the reciprocity in their sexual relationship. These images are followed by scenes of their surrounding lives, such as the landscape, a Christmas tree, Kitch, a farm with silos, tinsel on Schneemann, and fast moving trees viewed from a car. Then there are views of oral sex, sun shining in the window, a view out the window, he on top of her with her legs pulled up, in bed having sex moving quickly. This scene is interspersed with clips of traffic at night. Additional images reveal tender caressing, close-ups of genitals, she giving him oral pleasure, a longer scene of them both lying in bed without their faces in view. Overlaid images of the beach, and Tenney and Schneemann fooling around follow, and then highway signs, which appear to be those seen when entering New York City from the George Washington Bridge. The film then

⁷⁸ MacDonald, “Carolee Schneemann,” 137.

returns to Tenney and Schneemann in bed, and her running nude on the beach, footage that becomes layered with lovemaking scenes and then hugging in bed. The film culminates with a view of the window from within their house, first up close then farther away, with the sun shining.

Schneemann established an egalitarian means of filming such that she and Tenney alternated holding the camera and recording each other as part of the project, in addition to the use of camera stands. Thus, she aimed to avoid conventional gender coding in the filmic work, that is, portraying a man as subject and woman as object. Due to the camera's constantly changing point of view, the position of one possible narrator is undermined, an unconventional and avant-garde practice at the time.⁷⁹ However, Schneemann was the creative force behind the idea and completed the editing alone. She cut the clips and montaged the images together:

When I was starting *Fuses*, I saw film as thousands of frames of paintings passing and was very concerned with breaking frame. I had spent years as a painter trying to get out of the fixity of the rectangle... That's why a lot of the cutting in that film is inside out and upside down, because I never want to automatically accept technical systems.⁸⁰

The title, *Fuses*, refers to the act of Schneemann "fusing" not only the images together but also the male and female bodies.⁸¹ However, a "fuse" can also be used to detonate explosives; Schneemann's film sparked new perspectives on women's sexuality and filmmaking. Through her montage choices and use of two people behind the camera, the

⁷⁹ James, *Allegories of Cinema*, 319.

⁸⁰ MacDonald, "Carolee Schneemann," 137.

⁸¹ Schneemann stated that the title had a number of related references like this. She also said that Tenney was studying Greek at the time and that the title came out of that, as *physis* (for "physics" and potentially "fuck"). See: MacDonald, "Carolee Schneemann," 140.

artist avoided the traditional narrative paradigms of cinema as well as the traditional filmic climax that audiences had come to expect.⁸²

While some would consider the subject matter of *Fuses* pornographic, it clearly deviates from this filmic genre. Pornography normally makes use of sharp, clear images and follows a linear narrative, which leads to sexual climax and male ejaculation. Its focus is on making the experience seem almost real to the audience and it typically plays to the male viewer in its climactic sequencing. *Fuses*, in contrast, uses out-of-focus images, overlapping of scenes, quick clips of sexual and domestic scenes—which are not always specifically related to what came before or after—no narrative, no climax, and no single perspective. These characteristics of *Fuses* undermine the pornographic tradition and Schneemann's film should not be regarded as related to this genre.

These scenes of Schneemann's very personal life form an album in motion that is viewed through the distance that memory inherently brings to images held in our mind's eye. Figures are seen for only a moment. Sometimes they appear as if viewed through fog or other obstructions, and at other times close-up views make the image difficult to discern. Schneemann achieved these effects through the use of short clips, the overlaying of scenes, and the physical treatment of the film itself—marked with heat, acid, scratches, and paint (Figure 65). The sensual encounters Schneemann recorded with Tenney are only equaled by her own tactile encounters with the film through her markings on the celluloid.⁸³ The artist described the intentions of her film in 1977:

⁸² MacDonald, "Carolee Schneemann," 135. Schneemann noted that one scene she used of her and Tenney kissing was taken by Vanderbeek, see MacDonald, "Carolee Schneemann, 140.

⁸³ James, *Allegories of Cinema*, 320.

Explicit sexual imagery propels the formal structure of *Fuses*. Initially it was clear to me that people were so distracted by being able to have a voyeuristic permission to see genital heterosexuality that it would take them—if they ever came back to see it again—many showings before the structure was clear: the musicality of it and the way it was edited. *Fuses* is very formal in how it is shaped; that was crucial to making it have a coherent muscular life. Visualized erotic, active bodies deflect the very structures which shape montage: viewers are distracted by the simultaneity of perceptual layers *Fuses* offers.⁸⁴

The multi-layered effect the film presents provides a challenging visual experience for the viewer while presenting the personal and sexual perspective of a woman.

Until this time, no female artist had approached this subject matter in such a direct and liberating manner. At roughly the same time, Export created a short film with similar content entitled *Orgasmusfilm* (*Orgasm Film*, 1967).⁸⁵ It would not be until 1972, for example, that Ann Severson would make her film *Near the Big Chakra* in which she filmed the vulvae of thirty-eight women of all ages. Female sexuality and pleasure had typically been represented and defined according to heterosexual male desires, excluding female desire, either lesbian or straight. Schneemann's film pursued heterosexual female desire, sexuality, and experience. In 1971, the artist reflected on some of the first reactions to *Fuses*:

After one of the first screenings of *Fuses*, a young woman thanked me for the film. She said she had never looked at her own genitals, never seen another woman's, that *Fuses* let her feel her own sexual curiosity as something natural, and that she now thought she might begin to experience her own physical integrity in ways she had longed for. That was 1967.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Schneemann, "Interview with Kate Haug," 21.

⁸⁵ *Orgasm Film* is discussed later in this chapter.

⁸⁶ Carolee Schneemann, "Notes on *Fuses*" (1971), in Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002), 45.

The film was evidently empowering for some heterosexual women, at a time when few women were talking about their sexual experiences.

The reactions to *Fuses* were not always celebratory. In an interview with Scott MacDonald in November 1979, Schneemann shared an account of a number of more confrontational screenings. At Cannes in 1968, about 40 men ripped the seats up in the theater while the film was being shown as Schneemann sat in the audience terrified. *Fuses* was part of a special jury selection that had mostly socially political films, but, as she noted, *Fuses* was sexually political. Schneemann described another incident: “There was also a fight at the University of Massachusetts in 1973, where some man in the audience said he didn’t get a hard-on, so what’s the point to it? And a woman in the back row said to him something like, ‘You didn’t get a hard-on because you wouldn’t recognize something that was truly sexual if it sat in your lap.’”⁸⁷ The argument escalated from there. As a final example, a lesbian was distraught with *Fuses* at a showing at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1972 or 1973 because it did not offer a role model for her, and Schneemann told her that she completely understood her objections. However, one woman voiced her opinion stating “The role model in the film is the fact that the filmmaker envisions her own life, and we should see it in that way.”⁸⁸ While these are anecdotal recollections by the artist, these examples suggest the powerful reactions *Fuses* can incite when it is screened. Another aspect that Schneemann regarded as a problem with her work in general, and *Fuses* is a prime example, is that people cannot see past the body she uses in her work, “It is still kind of a mind/body split. ‘If you are going to

⁸⁷ MacDonald, “Carolee Schneemann,” 141.

⁸⁸ MacDonald, “Carolee Schneemann,” 141. These words are quoted in Schneemann’s interview.

represent physicality and carnality, we cannot give you intellectual authority.”⁸⁹ And this is the type of resistance that her performance and films have continually encountered.

In *Fuses*, Schneemann captured and shared her lived sexual experience from a woman’s point of view. It would not be until the 1970s that personal experiences were more often incorporated into art through the feminist art movement, yet Schneemann prefigured this initiative. Moreover, the burgeoning women’s movement soon validated the personal perspectives Schneemann aspired to incorporate into her work.

The year that Schneemann completed *Fuses*, 1967, Export created a comparable film that would challenge the conservative social and cultural norms of Austrian society. *Orgasm Film* is an 8mm film running one minute and thirty seconds in length that depicts the sexual engagement between a man and herself.⁹⁰ Both Export and Schneemann, in their respective films, aimed to project sexual experience from a woman’s perspective. These daring acts for the 1960s can be explained in the words of Export: “Let women speak so that they can find themselves, this is what I ask for in order to achieve a self-defined image of ourselves and thus a different view of the social function of women.”⁹¹

Export’s film begins with a close-up shot of her breasts and moves slowly from one nipple to the other for closer, detailed views. A tightly framed scan of the surface of the body follows; although the viewer sees skin, its exact location on the body is unclear

⁸⁹ Schneemann, “Interview with Kate Haug,” 21.

⁹⁰ This 1:30 version is in the collection of the Generali Foundation in Vienna. The film is not often mentioned in lists of Export’s work and, when listed, the reported length has varied between 30 seconds and 2 minutes.

⁹¹ Valie Export, “Women’s Art: A Manifesto” (1972), trans. Resigna Haslinger, in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 756. Originally published in *Neues Forum* 228 (January 1973): 47.

and the image itself remains blurry. The camera moves to the vulva where hands spread open the lips of the vagina and fingers caress the area. The next clip focuses on a tongue moving across her clitoris followed by views of her face and a man's face with pleasurable expressions. Yet, all these views are somewhat blurred, as if a memory. The final shot is a close-up of her vagina with sperm oozing forth. Of particular significance are the focus on the woman's body, the climax expressed on the couple's faces, and the closing image of the vagina rather than pornography's more typical scene of male ejaculation. In fact, the physical act of male ejaculation was not presented. The silence of the film focuses the viewer's attention on the visceral images of a woman's experience of intercourse, more so than the man's, and her sexual pleasure.

While depicting sexual intercourse, *Orgasm Film* is not pornographic in its handling of the female experience. As I already described, pornography is normally detailed and clear, for the viewer to visually experience what plays out on the screen and to feel as close to the filmed experience as possible. In contrast, Export's work is often out of focus, blurred, and fragmented, in a manner similar to *Fuses*. It is composed of edited clips of her experience and does not depict male excitement as much as it presents female pleasure.

This very personal experience that Export recorded was unusual for the period. The direct display of Export's orgasm in the film is related to Schneemann's piece in its revelation of intimate experience (it does not appear that they were aware of one another's films in 1967). Schneemann, however, included views of her and her partner's home, travel on the road, their cat, all in an effort to illustrate the context of sexual activity in a loving relationship. In contrast, Export's version focuses exclusively on the

act of sexual pleasure. In addition, Schneemann added a different, more formal dimension to the work by layering the scenes and marking the film's surface.

By filming her personal sexual experience in 1967, Export, like Schneemann, explicitly chose to challenge a powerful set of cultural taboos surrounding women's lives. By 1973 Export would again scrutinize the suppressed subject matter of women's sexual lives by recording a female orgasm and a woman menstruating. That year, Export made another film, this time 16mm, which directly addressed female sexuality from a personal approach. *Mann & Frau & Animal* (*Man & Woman & Animal*, Figure 66), considered a performance for the camera⁹² running twelve minutes, is created without a continuous linear narrative but is composed of distinct sections.⁹³

Man & Woman & Animal begins with a lengthy erotic scene of the artist masturbating in a bathtub with the use of a showerhead. The first scene is a close-up of a faucet, the hot and cold knobs, and a showerhead attached to a long metal cord, which could be hung for a shower function. The camera pans out to a view of the tub where the faucet is located in the middle of the tub lengthwise. The image moves into a view of the faucet and a hand enters and turns on the water, after which it becomes known that the film includes sound, noted in the running water. The frame proceeds to a close-up of the water, a wider view of water entering the tub, the hand adjusting the water, and a shot of the drain. The water stops and the plumbing fixtures are again shown, followed by a

⁹² Mueller, Roswitha, *Valie Export: Fragments of the Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 44.

⁹³ This film is in the archives of Valie Export at the General Foundation in Vienna. Another copy of this short film has a shorter running time of 8:50 with a date of 1970-73, and credits the camera work to "Didi." My description is based on my own viewing of the film. A good source for additional information and a discussion with the artist on the film is "Mann, Frau, Animal (Interview with Valie Export)" in *Frauen und Film*, no. 7 (March 1976): 38-42.

close-up of a showerhead, which the hand removes. The scene cuts to water running from the showerhead and directed by the artist onto her clitoris, as she lay in the bathtub. The body in the film is identifiable as that of the artist despite the framing only including the lower torso, genital area, and upper legs, as her *Body Sign Action* (1970) tattoo of a garter is visible on her upper left thigh. Her left hand holds part of her labia while the right directs the showerhead, after which she has three orgasms, conspicuous by her moans and quivering legs. During the film, the scene sometimes expands to include a view of her breast, covered by a bra. Her intent is to focus the viewers' attention on her vagina and clitoris and the sexual act of female orgasm, as opposed to the "secondary" sexual apparatus of breasts—which are arguably a part of female anatomy more visible to and enjoyed by men than the genitals.

In the following section the camera cuts to an image of a triangle with upward pointing apex and the sound changes to burping and grunting noises. The image changes to a close-up of a vagina covered with sperm and, as the view gets tighter, the sound intensifies to an animalistic, male orgasm. Male grunting sounds continue as the camera cuts to a photographic image of the same crotch shot, however, it is now covered in menstrual blood. The camera then zooms into a close-up image of the vaginal opening. The scene cuts back to the triangle and silence. The use of menstrual blood would be unheard of in pornography. But the blood could also reference attacks on the female body owing to the continual animal-like male grunting sounds that are almost violent. This bestial quality is in stark contrast with the first part of the film that recorded Export experiencing orgasmic pleasure.

The next sequence is the filming of a photograph of a woman's nude torso shown from just below the breasts to above the knees with the legs spread to emphasize, again, the external female sexual organs. This representation of a representation lies in a photograph-developing tub.⁹⁴ A male left hand appears above it and is cut; then blood drips off the hand and onto the photograph. The drops hit the clitoris and vaginal opening. This dripping blood from a male hand represents what Export considers that man should have to sacrifice for woman.⁹⁵ The scene is accompanied by a grating, high-pitched, techno-inspired music. The camera moves in closer on the vagina, then cuts to a wider angle view in which the blood is smeared on the photograph. The short film ends.

Export and Schneemann were not alone in drawing from women's sexual experiences for their work. However, female artists seldom approached this subject matter in the 1960s and it does not become more prevalent until the 1970s with the burgeoning of second wave feminism. Other work by contemporary artists, such as that previously mentioned, illustrated women's clitorises, but Hammer's *Multiple Orgasm* or Wex's *Clitoris Pictures* were exploratory in nature as they captured numerous images of women's sexual anatomy. In contrast, Schneemann and Export's imagery incorporated their specific and personal experiences, which included their whole bodies. Another strategy was to voice or reference sexual observations, whether positive or negative, in a

⁹⁴ Because the liquid is yellow, it is a stop bath. Joanna Kiernan, "Films by Valie Export," *Millennium Film Journal*, no. 16/17/18 (Fall/Winter 1986-87): 183.

⁹⁵ Valie Export, interview by the author, New York, 9 April 2005.

work, as in *Ablutions* (1972), a group performance by Judy Chicago, Suzanne Lacy, Sandra Orgel, and Aviva Rahmani, addressing rape.⁹⁶

Consciousness raising groups at the Feminist Art Program in California in the early 1970s (which produced *Ablutions*) worked to help the participating artists express their sexual experiences and desires in their art, as did later European groups such as Ulrike Rosenbach's *Schule für Kreativen Feminismus* (School for Creative Feminism) in Cologne in the latter half of the decade.⁹⁷ These types of activities were based on the consciousness raising events that began with the women's movement in the 1970s in both the United States and in Europe.⁹⁸ A number of artists also turned to deploying the nude to explore their own fantasies and intimate lives, and even to critique patriarchal control over women's sexuality.⁹⁹ Eunice Golden (American) painted larger than life-size male

⁹⁶ Other negative or cynical expressions of sexuality can be found in the U.S. and Europe. Examples include work by Mariam Cahn (Swiss) who filled books with her drawings of anger and sadness as in the series *Verweigerungen (Refusals)* from 1978-79, which depicted empty beds, a woman alone in bed, and related subjects to express unfulfilled sexual feelings. See Lindenberg, *Feministische Kunst Internationaal*, 48-9, 66. In *Concetto di Verginità (Concept of Virginity)* from 1973, Adreina Robotti (Italian) manipulated old-fashioned women's undergarments to address the double standards of virginity. See Lindenberg, *Feministische Kunst Internationaal*, 49, 87. It was only in this decade, due to the second wave feminist movement, that women's victimization, such as rape and sexual violence, became a topic for art. While still taboo to discuss publicly, artists took up the theme to expose the problem. For example, Ana Mendieta's constructed *Rape Scene* (1973) was meant to upset and provoke the viewer into understanding the violence of rape. See *Art and Feminism*, 98. For a discussion of more positive representations and references to female sexuality and experiences, see below.

⁹⁷ See the publication of this group: Ulrike Rosenbach, *Schule für Kreativen Feminismus: Beispiel einer autonomen Kulturarbeit* (Cologne: Schule für Kreativen Feminismus, 1980).

⁹⁸ See Chapter 1.

⁹⁹ See Eunice Golden, "The Male Nude in Women's Art: Dialectics of a Feminist Iconography," *Heresies* 3, no. 4, issue 12 (1981): 40-42; Semmel and Kingsley, "Sexual Imagery in Women's Art," 4; Tickner, "The Body Politic," 240-41; Linda Nochlin, "Some Women Realists: Painters of the Figure," *Arts Magazine* 48, no. 8 (May 1974): 29-33.

The examples mentioned below could be considered equally in the context of the nude and beauty in Chapter 4, however, in the suppressive sexual environment of women's lives in the

torsos as in *Study for Flag* (1974), which depicted a six-foot long, erect yet tilting penis in a deliberate show of power that is about to collapse, but at the same time, the male body is associated with nature as his body appears as landscape.¹⁰⁰ This painting subverts traditions in which women were associated with nature and men with culture. Joan Semmel painted self-portraits with lovers taken from the perspective of her own eyes in order to present an intimate situation from a women's point of view, as in *Touch* (1975). In contrast to these various examples, Schneemann's and Export's films pull the audience in, especially the female viewer, to their very private expressions of sexuality through the use of their own bodies and the medium of film. In *Fuses* Schneemann's passionate encounters are intertwined with views of her and her partner's daily lives and home, providing knowledge and understanding of how the artist's eroticism functioned within the whole relationship. *Fuses* differs from Export's interpretation of female sexual pleasure in *Orgasm Film* and even more so from *Man, Woman, Animal* in the latter's somewhat ambiguous message and conflicting imagery.

5.5 Concluding Remarks: The Contested Female Body

Both Schneemann and Export elicited a powerful idea of the "uncontainable" body through their performance art and films, a body that did (and does) not conform to the social restrictions and codes for women. One of the main arguments of Lynda Nead's

1970s and according to some of the artists, this work can also be read as women's expression of their own heterosexual desires through images of themselves and men.

¹⁰⁰ Golden, "The Male Nude in Women's Art," 41. The work relates formally to Claes Oldenburg's *Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks* first installed in 1970 at Yale University as an act of antiwar activity.

1992 book, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, identified a problem with the history of female sexuality in art:

One of the principal goals of the female nude [in art] has been the containment and regulation of the female sexual body. The forms, conventions and poses of art have worked metaphorically to shore up the female body—to seal orifices and to prevent marginal matter from transgressing the boundary dividing the inside of the body and the outside, the self from the space of the other.¹⁰¹

The performances and film work by Export and Schneemann described in this chapter defy this history and reveal female genitalia in the work to express female sexuality and pleasure. With *Interior Scroll* Schneemann exposes the important opening to women's interior, their sexuality and fertility, and pulls out her own powerful words critiquing the art establishment. Not only were the words not acceptable, the act itself transgressed acceptable feminine decorum—that is, what a woman could do with her body and sexuality, and what she was allowed to represent in art. Schneemann's orifices were not sealed but visibly open and functioning, as are Export's. In Export's films her vagina oozes sperm and blood, uncontained bodily fluids. She transgressed the boundaries between inside and out, and entered the space of the other, meaning these materials not meant for public view are now in the social spaces in which people co-exist.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.

¹⁰² In the theory of the abject as defined by Julia Kristeva in *The Powers of Horror*, bodily fluids, considered abject, must be rejected in order for the individual to obtain subjecthood. See Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). For an analysis of the abject and contemporary art, see: *Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993), the catalogue of an exhibition organized by Craig Houser, Leslie C. Jones, and Simon Taylor, and Wentrack, "The Body Fragments of Kiki Smith: Object of Society or Society's Abject," (Master's thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1995). Marga van Mechelen has also written and lectured widely on the abject in art, see for example: "Abjecte Kunst," in *Lengte, Breedte en Diepte. Twaalf interculturele ontmoetingen* (Arnhem: GBK, Interart, and De Gele Rijder, 1998), 12-16; "Excreta in Art," in *La Semiotica Interseccion entre la Naturalez y la*

Nead also wrote that, “Historically, the sexual has been seen to constitute dangerous knowledge which, in the wrong hands, can lead to a dangerous society; the regulation of obscenity is thus shown to be a procedure for the regulation of populations.”¹⁰³ Export already critiqued this argument almost twenty-five years earlier in *Genital Panic* and *Tap and Touch Cinema*. Schneemann’s knowledge *is* dangerous—the power of her female body—and demonstrably threatening to established social structures. I would argue further that the female body itself tends to be considered obscene by western culture—it drips, oozes, bleeds regularly—and social structures aim to control this functioning female body. Through their work the artists’ bodies exceeded the physical and social boundaries for women, and challenged the established patriarchal order, often to portray representations of women for women, if not for women alone.

Not all art historians or critics approved of tactics creating positive images of women’s sexuality as a means to counter patriarchal representations of women, as art historian Amelia Jones indicated in her 1996 essay “Sexual Politics: Feminist Strategies, Feminist Conflicts, Feminist Histories.”¹⁰⁴ There is disagreement between those who view the use of the female body by women performance artists and other artists as offering new models for women, a way to return the gaze, gain subjectivity, and speak as subjects and those who believe that work like that of Schneemann and Export will be co-

Cultura, ed. Adrian Gimete Welsh (Guadalajara, Mexico: Proceedings of the VIth International Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, 1999), CD-ROM, no pagination, 7 pages; “Abjecte Kunst” (paper presented at the lecture series “Fascinatie voor het Abjecte,” Studium Generale Crea, Amsterdam, 20 April 1999); and “De Plaats van het Abjecte in Onze Beschaving” (paper presented at the lecture series “Fascinatie voor het Abjecte,” Studium Generale Crea, Amsterdam, 27 April 1999).

¹⁰³ Nead, *The Female Nude*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Jones, “Sexual Politics,” 38, Note 12.

opted and recuperated for the male gaze and patriarchy's construction of women, especially when that work takes female sexuality as its subject. The British art historian Griselda Pollock argued in 1977 in her essay "What's Wrong with Images of Women?" that the feminist images celebrating female genitals and sexuality that were meant to empower women were appropriated by the sex industry in magazines like *Penthouse*.¹⁰⁵ Pollock wrote that until this period, sex magazines' tradition of "coyness" in representing "sexual invitations" in photographs had been replaced by "liberated" open shots of the genital area, which created an image of "forceful intrusion or indeed possessive voyeurism inviting rape."¹⁰⁶ She argued that the sex industry was mimicking artists' explorations of female sexuality and specifically genital imagery. However, this problem is more complex than the sex industry simply mimicking compositions from art. The relationship and gap between woman as signifier and signified is dependent on ideological systems of representation that are often in conflict. Pollock contended that a critique of the dominant ideology inherent in visual representations of female bodies is necessary; how meaning is read literally onto women and their bodies must be analyzed.

Other theorists regard positive representations of women and their bodies as potentially successful positions from which to work. An important viewpoint in this discussion is taken up by Jeanne Forte in "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism," where she argues that women's performance art works to dismantle the

¹⁰⁵ Griselda Pollock, "What's Wrong with Images of Women?" in Parker and Pollock, *Framing Feminism*, 132-38, especially 135. Reprinted from *Screen Education*, no. 24 (1977): 25-33. See also: Sally Potter, "On Shows," in: *Feminism—Art—Theory: An Anthology 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 446-53, originally published in *About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by 21 Women Artists*, ed. Catherine Elwes, Rose Garrard, and Sandy Nairne (London: ICA, 1980), unpaginated.

¹⁰⁶ Pollock, "What's Wrong with Images of Women," 135-6.

patriarchal construction of woman as object. Using theories of Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, Forte argues that by writing the body through performance art the social construct of woman is exposed and that women have the opportunity to create and take control of representations of women.¹⁰⁷ In a similar manner, Elvan Zabunyan believes that women can find their identity again “through a process of visualization” of representations of the female body.¹⁰⁸ Some theorists argue that positive models for women can be a persuasive means to express women’s identity, including female sexuality, a step that Schneemann and Export both take with their work.¹⁰⁹

While positive imagery of women’s sexuality was a tactic used in the 1970s, both Schneemann and Export avoided many of the potential pitfalls as they produced more complex analyses of women’s sexuality that could recuperate images of female sexuality for women. *Fuses* and *Orgasm Film* presented scenes of sexual intercourse which celebrated female pleasure. *Fuses* incorporated Schneemann’s intimate relationship within its erotic content, limiting a potential pornographic reading of the work. Export’s *Orgasm Film* also fragmented the body through close-up views of the skin, mimicking a sensual touch of the body’s surface. This method limited a complete view of the body and denied the objectifying male gaze.

¹⁰⁷ Jeanne Forte, “Women’s Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism,” *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 2 (May 1988): 217-35.

¹⁰⁸ Elvan Zabunyan, “Anatomy/Autonomy,” trans. Paul Buck and Catherine Petit, in *Keep This Sex Out of My Site*, Elvan Zabunyan et al. (Paris: Dis Voir, 2003), 10.

¹⁰⁹ For example: Tickner, “The Body Politic,” 241-2; Semmel and Kingsley, “Sexual Imagery in Women’s Art,” 1-6; and Lindenberg, “Sexualiteit en bevrijding,” 46-52.

Work that focused on women's sexuality could be labeled essentialist.¹¹⁰ But examining the work through only this lens misses the cultural context of the late 1960s and 1970s, and the necessary goals of the women's movements to improve women's knowledge of their bodies and increase women's pride in themselves. The essentialism discussion often focuses on issues raised by the French theorist Luce Irigaray who used language and psychology based on female biology to help redefine female sexuality and desire in terms other than the phallogocentric logic that structures western civilization. Thus, some look to her work as a means of rupturing ideological structures in visual representations of women under patriarchy. For example, in evaluating Freud, among others, she states that for him:

Woman's erogenous zones never amount to anything but a clitoris-sex that is not comparable to the noble phallic organ, or a hole-envelope that serves to sheathe and massage the penis in intercourse: a non-sex, or a masculine organ turned back upon itself, self-embracing.¹¹¹

Part of her project is to critique western thought and its repression of women, especially sexually. But she goes beyond this to offer alternative ways of thinking about the female body, as in this oft cited passage:

Woman's autoeroticism is very different from man's. In order to touch himself, man needs an instrument: his hand, a woman's body, language...And this self-caressing requires at least a minimum of activity. As for woman, she touches herself in and of herself without any need for mediation, and before there is any way to distinguish activity from passivity. Woman touches "herself" all the time, and

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of the essentialist descriptor, see: Peggy Phelan, "Survey," in *Art and Feminism* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 36-8, and Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, "Introduction: Feminism and Art in the Twentieth Century," in *The Power of Feminist Art*, especially "The Problem of Essentialism," 23-8. See also: Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989).

¹¹¹ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 23.

moreover no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact. Thus, within herself, she is already two—but not divisible into one(s)—that caress each other.¹¹²

Irigaray defines a female sexuality different from what the dominant discourse, particularly Freudian psychoanalysis, prescribes for her. This reliance on the body to define “woman” and feminine sexuality has brought charges of essentialism to Irigaray’s work. However, she has countered that:

To seek to discover-rediscover a possible imaginary for women through the movement of two lips re-touching...does not mean a regressive recourse to anatomy or to a concept of “nature,” nor a recall to genital order—women have more than one pair of two lips! Rather it means to open up the autological and tautological circle of systems of representation and their discourse so that women may speak (of) their sex.¹¹³

In this way, Irigaray’s use of the body can also be considered in a symbolic sense, the body as opening up possibilities. And a similar argument can be drawn for feminist performance art taking female sexuality as its theme during the 1970s, the practitioners of which took recourse in using their own bodies, their bodily experiences, or images of the female body in their art practice, “so that women may speak (of) their sex.” While it could be asserted that essentialist approaches served to preserve female subjection in a patriarchal order, this work aimed instead to expose female oppression and to offer alternative representations of female sexuality from women’s perspectives, despite the risks of appropriation by the sex industry and others.

¹¹² Ibid., 24.

¹¹³ Irigaray, quoted in Margaret Whitford, “Irigaray’s Body Symbolic,” *Hypatia* 6, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 101. See also: Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford, *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

CHAPTER 6

LOST STORIES, NEW HISTORIES: MYTH AND RITUAL IN FEMINIST PERFORMANCE ART: CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, VALIE EXPORT, AND ULRIKE ROSENBACH

6.1 Introduction

The second wave women's movement reevaluated many aspects of women's lives from the home to the workplace, from history to religion. Within feminist art practice this reevaluation involved reinterpretations of history that would include pre-patriarchal and patriarchal myths and rituals. A number of artists performed ritually-centered work in front of an audience, sometimes with its participation, while others pursued private actions, often in remote locations.¹ The mythologies of the Great Goddess or Earth Goddess played a significant part in many of these works.

This chapter will examine performance art by Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach that addressed ritual and ancient mythology, including goddesses of pre-patriarchal societies. In addition to ritualistic performance work that referenced archaic or mythic cultures, performances that critiqued contemporary ritual, such as religious practices, will also be analyzed. Scholarly attention to the themes of the Great Goddess, mythology, and ritual in feminist performance art from the 1970s is limited, yet this was an important area of inspiration for feminist artists as well as a place from within which to examine social structures that defined women's lives under patriarchy.

¹ Moira Roth, *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America 1970-1980* (Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983), 22. The work by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach that is discussed here was mostly performed in front of an audience. For an example of a private action, see: Mary Beth Edelson, "Pilgrimage/See for Yourself: A Journey to a Neolithic Goddess Cave, 1977, Grapveca, Hvar Island, Yugoslavia," *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 96-99.

6.2 Context and History

The engaging of ritual and myth through feminist performance art took a variety of forms in the 1970s, yet a straightforward definition might describe these activities generally. In her analysis of this myth-themed work in the United States, Moira Roth defined ritual in 1983 as follows: “The term ‘ritual’ is usually employed to describe a codified set of actions and behaviors that relates in some way to a culturally shared system of beliefs and myths.”² This ritualistic performance work often sought to establish a women’s culture, sometimes, though not always, independent from that of men. It was believed to be important to women’s survival to establish and continue a tradition of female knowledge and culture, as anthropologist Evon Vogt stated in 1976, “Ritual perpetuates knowledge essential to the survival of the culture.”³ Women’s knowledge of themselves and of the conditions of their lives was expanded by the consciousness-raising activities of feminist movements in the United States and Europe in the 1970s. Consciousness-raising tactics were sometimes incorporated into feminist performance art that was concerned with ritual and myth.⁴ Some performance artists focused on critiquing established patriarchal ritual to expose its biases and exclusionary practices.⁵ Perhaps

² Roth, *The Amazing Decade*, 22.

³ Evon Vogt, *Tortillas for the Gods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 8. Vogt’s book was a study of Zinacanteco rituals in Mayan culture. Quoted in Kay Turner, “Contemporary Feminist Rituals,” *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 24.

⁴ See Chapter 1 in which the consciousness-raising activities of the women’s movements in the U.S., Austria, and Germany are discussed.

⁵ Roth established two categories for ritual work: the first, which she called “Women’s Public Ritual Theater Performance,” was group based and often repeated among a mixed audience in theaters. The second entailed private ritual in remote places focusing on the individual experience. This latter category could be more autobiographical, or related to myth, nature, and the goddess, or both. See Roth, *The Amazing Decade*, 23-4. I would expand Roth’s definition to include work that also critiques patriarchal rituals.

most important, ritual in feminist performance art during this period functioned to provide a support structure for women during this time of great upheaval and change. As Kate Turner described in her 1978 article “Contemporary Feminist Ritual” published in the feminist journal *Heresies* devoted to the concept of the Great Goddess:

As in traditional societies, feminist ritual provides an emotional, descriptive, intensified and sanctifying version of emergent ideological systems. Feminist ritual offers an imagistic revitalization for women, participation in the concrete, bodily expressive creation of new images of the feminine which will help alleviate the stress of a liminality.⁶

Ritual provided a stabilizing activity during times of change that could connect individuals with a group establishing a sense of belonging and identity.

As part of their research on women’s identities and culture, feminist historians researched periods, both archaic and mythic, in which women were thought to hold a culturally and politically superior role. A number of feminists came to believe that the current patriarchal civilization was preceded by a matriarchal one in which women held positions of power and were highly revered, including the honoring of female deities in the form of a Great Goddess, possessor of all creative powers, as well as goddesses related to the earth and moon. Influential publications for the women’s movements and feminist artists included Sibylle von Cles-Reden’s *The Realm of the Great Goddess: The Story of the Megalith Builders*, first published in German in 1960 (English translation in 1962), Helen Diner’s *Mothers and Amazons: The First Feminine History of Culture*, first published in German in 1932 (English translation in 1965), Marija Gimbutas’ *Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 6500-3500 B.C., Myth and Cult Images* (1974), and Merlin

⁶ Turner, “Contemporary Feminist Rituals,” 20.

Stone's *When God Was a Woman* (1976).⁷ This re-examination of pre-patriarchal cultures was based mostly on archeological evidence such as images of goddesses, fertility figures, tools, and sites of worship in Paleolithic and Neolithic cultures. The main focus of many of these authors was a European pre-history encompassing the Near and Middle East, as opposed to a worldwide perspective.

The concept of the Great Goddess was influential not only to feminists and to women's evolving spiritualism generally in the 1970s, but also to a significant body of feminist art. The major source for feminist artists at the time supporting the belief in matriarchal cultures of the past in which female deities were worshipped was Gimbutas' *God and Goddesses of Old Europe*, in which the author examined archeological evidence from 6,500 to 3,500 BC to conclude that:

The culture called *Old Europe* was characterized by a dominance of woman in society and worship of a Goddess incarnating the creative

⁷ Sibylle von Cles-Reden, *The Realm of the Great Goddess: The Story of the Megalith Builders*, trans. Eric Mosbacher (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), originally published as *Die Spur der Zyklopen* (Schauberg, Germany: Verlag M. Dumont, 1960); Helen Diner, *Mothers and Amazons: The First Feminine History of Culture*, ed. and trans. by John Philip Lundin (New York: Julian Press, 1965), she also went by Bertha Eckstein-Diener, originally published as *Mütter und amazonen, ein umriss weiblicher reiche* (Munich: A. Langen, 1932); Marija Gimbutas, *Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 6500-3500 B.C., Myth and Cult Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), she published an updated version in 1982 and changed the title to *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe* to emphasize the central role of goddesses; and Merlin Stone, *When God Was a Woman* (New York: Dial Press, 1976). Other significant publications were Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973) and *Gyn/Ecology, the Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978); Susan Griffin, *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); *The Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power within the Feminist Movement*, ed. Charlene Spretnak (Garden City, NY: Anchor Book, 1982); Heide Göttner-Abendroth, *Die Tanzende Göttin: Prinzipien einer Matriarchalen Ästhetik* (Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1982); Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), especially 41-77; and Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987). For one of the most recent perspectives on ancient goddesses and matriarchal cultures, see: Cynthia Eller, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

principle as Source and Giver of All. In this culture the male element, man and animal, represented spontaneous and life-stimulating—but not life generating—powers.⁸

According to Gimbutas, Old Europe was a period in which women maintained positions of power, with female goddesses held in higher esteem than their male counterparts, owing to the importance of the life-sustaining activities of women such as childbearing.⁹

Feminist artists were inspired by pre-patriarchal cultures because they hypothesized that women had once had more control over their own lives, by contrast with the 1960s and 1970s when social, political, and cultural institutions had long since been defined almost entirely by male interests. When feminist artists referred to the Great Goddess, they were not necessarily basing their imagery on specific examples of ancient goddesses. Nor can the feminist concept of an archaic Great Goddess be equated in any way to contemporary notions of a goddess, as may be applied to a woman of socially-determined beauty, or to a specific mythological goddess such as Venus or Athena. Rather, as Gloria Feman Orenstein described in her essay, “The Reemergence of the Archetype of the Great Goddess in Art by Contemporary Women,” published in the 1978 issue of *Heresies*:

The Goddess, then, is that archetype which mediates between image, energy and history, evolving and unfolding destiny through the

⁸ Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500-3500 B.C., Myths and Cult Images*, new and updated ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 9. The term Old Europe is one that Gimbutas developed, as she described: “The term *Old Europe* is applied to a pre-Indo-European culture of Europe, a culture matrifocal and probably matrilinear, agricultural and sedentary, egalitarian and peaceful. It contrasted sharply with the ensuing proto-Indo-European culture which was patriarchal, stratified, pastoral, mobile, and war-oriented.” *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹ See also, Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe*, 236-7. Gloria Orenstein argued that Gimbutas’ and Stone’s books were the most influential to feminist artists. Gloria Feman Orenstein, “Recovering Her Story: Feminist Artists Reclaim the Great Goddess,” in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 176.

redirection of energy into a revolutionary manifestation of being. When imaged and celebrated in contemporary art, the Goddess signifies Being as a verb, as a creative energy, as a transformative energy, as sacred earth-energy and as psychic energy.¹⁰

As such, the goddess can embody the creative energies of the earth—life force energies—binding spirituality to the physical matter of the earth. Orenstein’s description marks a stark contrast to patriarchal concepts which polarize mind and matter, and which align women with nature and man with culture, for the goddess she conceived linked spirit and matter together.¹¹ However, statements relating the goddess to “sacred earth-energy” also served to reinforce women’s association with nature and exclusion from culture. But Orenstein understood this differently and stated what she believed this meant for feminists and feminist artists alike:

This new Goddess consciousness might be described most effectively as a holistic mind-body totality. As we move away from the cultural dominance of the masculine archetype, characterized by a mind-body duality, we find that the model of the sorcerer’s vision serves as a corrective alternative for a consciousness expansion in which intuitive body-knowledge is reaffirmed as a faculty of intelligence...the Great Goddess as a psychic symbol suggests the rebirth of woman to a holistic psychophysical perception of the sacred, as a new form of her feminist evolution.¹²

Goddess imagery promised a resource for a rebirth of women to many female artists. For example, a belief in a “mind-body totality” and “a consciousness expansion in

¹⁰ Gloria Feman Orenstein, “The Reemergence of the Archetype of the Great Goddess in Art by Contemporary Women,” *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 75.

¹¹ For a contemporaneous discussion on the mind/body duality, see: Sherry Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” (1972) in *Feminism—Art—Theory, An Anthology 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 17-33. Originally published in *Feminist Studies*, 1 (2) (1972): 5-31.

¹² Orenstein, “The Reemergence of the Archetype of the Great Goddess in Art by Contemporary Women,” 74.

which intuitive body-knowledge is reaffirmed as a faculty of intelligence” aptly applies to performance and other work in the oeuvre of Carolee Schneemann.

6.3 Schneemann, Rosenbach, Export—Researching Lost Stories and Creating New Histories

In the first performance work of her career, Schneemann used elements that she later said revealed an affinity with ancient goddesses. *Eye/Body—Thirty-Six Transformative Actions for Camera* (1963), discussed in Chapter 4, included an iconic image of Schneemann lying with two snakes slithering across her stomach (Figure 32). In a handwritten text dated from the 1970s that is located in the artist’s archives, Schneemann explained her association of the serpent with the goddess:

The religion
The symbols
The psychology
There are infinite ways to discover the Goddess

My own recuperation [*sic*] of her began with the serpent. The serpent and Eve, the serpent as a symbolic form invited my attention. . . . It seemed mysteriously [*sic*] the mythical relation of the serpent to the female had something to do with the ambivalent or negative attitudes surrounding my own development as an artist.

To come in contact with to find the Goddess in one’s own life, in history is automatically and suddenly to dismantle and break into the conventions of social culture patriarchal [*sic*] which for centuries filled our field of vision exclusively.¹³

The goddess represented a strict break with contemporary social structures, in Schneemann’s opinion. In the photograph from *Eye/Body*, it is the snakes that stand out

¹³ The text is taken from a handwritten, undated statement on white legal paper in a folder with other loose pages dated to the 1970s. Carolee Schneemann, *Carolee Schneemann Papers, 1959-1994*, Research Library, Getty Research Institute (Accession No. 950001), Series VI. Feminist Research Files, Box 59, Folder 1 (The Artists-She, 1970s: Notes).

on the artist's nude body. There was no specific visual inspiration that Schneemann used for the snakes, at that time, but she later said that their appearance only made sense to her eight years later after she began researching sacred Earth Goddess relics from 4,000 years ago.¹⁴ In an unpublished statement Schneemann described in greater detail what she came to understand about her use of the serpent:

In *Eye/Body* (1963), I performed with snakes on my body as one of a series of transformative actions. The serpent was the particular symbol I was tracing towards its positive attribution in Goddess worship. Judeo-Christian patriarchy identifies the serpent with forbidden knowledge, death, deception, and obscene mysteries. As an attribute of the Goddess the serpent signifies a sacred vulvic complementariness, an emblem of sacred knowledge the passage from visible to invisible, prophesy [*sic*], healing, the female generative mysteries and transformative powers.¹⁵

Schneemann has attributed a great significance to the serpents' appearance in her work, viewing the serpents as designating ancient goddess worship. One example from ancient Crete is the *Goddess with Snakes* from the palace complex at Knossos (c.1600-1550 B.C.) in which a skirted goddess with exposed breasts holds up a snake in each hand. An image of this Snake Goddess appeared later in Schneemann's work as a print or slide, as in *Unexpectedly Research* of 1992 which was an accumulation of images she used and performed between 1962 and 1982 (Figure 67). In *Unexpectedly Research* the

¹⁴ Carolee Schneemann, "Eye Body," *More than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson, 2d ed., (Kingston, New York: McPherson, 1997), 52. It is also reported that Schneemann had a Scottish nurse as a child who shared stories of the goddess and Great Mother in the moon. See Lippard, *Overlay*, 66.

¹⁵ The text is taken from a typed, undated statement with a photocopy of the image of *Eye/Body* taken by Erró (Figure 32) in Schneemann's archives. Carolee Schneemann, *Carolee Schneemann Papers, 1959-1994*, Research Library, Getty Research Institute (Accession No. 950001), Series I. Projects, Box 1 (1960-67), Folder 7.

artist juxtaposed an image of the Cretan Snake Goddess with the *Eye/Body* photograph of her lying with two snakes on her torso.

The serpent or snake in western patriarchal culture connotes various symbolic meanings, as phallic, medical, or evil, among others. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the serpents in Medusa's hair are theorized to relieve castration anxiety because the snakes function as a replacement for the penis, eliminating this fear.¹⁶ The snake is also used as a doctor's symbol, based on representations of a single snake wrapped around the staff of Asklepios, the ancient Greco-Roman god of medicine.¹⁷ The snake can also represent evil and is synonymous with the devil in *The Bible*. Images of Mary, Jesus' mother, often show her stepping on a serpent, representing the obliteration of sin. Also following Judaic-Christian tradition, the book of Genesis describes Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden for eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge after it was offered to them by a serpent.¹⁸ In *When God was a Woman*, Merlin Stone suggested that

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head (1940; 1922)," *Abstracts of the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Carrie Lee Rothgeb (New York: International Universities Press, 1973), 1940C 18/273. See also Chapter 4.

¹⁷ Robert A. Wilcox and Emma M. Whitham, "The Symbol of Modern Medicine: Why One Snake Is More Than Two," *Annals of Internal Medicine*, vol. 138, issue 8 (15 April 2003): 673-77, accessed online at <http://www.annals.org/cgi/content/abstract/138/8/673> on 28 August 2005. The most common American medical symbol uses two snakes, but this is based on the emblem of a nineteenth-century medical publisher.

¹⁸ While Eve is also depicted as carrying blame, it is the serpent that tempted Adam and Eve both into disobeying the patriarch. Often in historical representations, the serpent from this Genesis story is depicted as female, as in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling frescos (1508-12) at St. Peter's in Rome.

the latter story was written to deter cultures in biblical times from adhering to any religion based on goddess worship; the serpent being a symbolic link to a female deity.¹⁹

To prove the historic connections between ancient female goddesses and serpents, Stone examined Near East and Middle Eastern sources. She stated that the serpent is “primarily revered as a female in the Near and Middle East and generally linked to wisdom and prophetic counsel.”²⁰ Stone’s examination included Sumerian, Babylonian, Cretan, Egyptian, Greek, and Philistine archeological and research resources—although few specific sources are named. An Oxford archeologist and excavator of Sumer, Stephen Langdon, is described as stating that Inanna was a Serpent Goddess known as the Divine Mother who Reveals the Laws. Ishtar of Babylon, successor to Inanna, was shown sitting on her throne holding a staff coiled with snakes. On the island of ancient Crete, images of the Snake Goddess or her priestesses hold snakes in their hands or wrapped around their bodies. Arthur Evans, an archeologist who has studied the Cretan palace at Knossos, found cylindrical objects with serpents wrapped around them and referred to them as snake tubes, assuming they were used to feed the sacred serpents kept at sanctuaries of the Snake Goddess. Evans also argued that the Cretan Snake Goddess symbolism originated in pre-dynastic Egypt in the worship of the Cobra Goddess. This Cobra Goddess was so integrated in Egyptian culture that the hieroglyph for goddess was a cobra; hence, a cobra preceded the name of any goddess of ancient Egypt. She later appeared as the *uraeus* cobra on the headdress of later Egyptian deities and royalty. Most

¹⁹ Stone, *When God was a Woman*, 198-9. While the snake carries numerous other meanings, those given here are for illustrative purposes. See James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols of Art* (London: John Murray, 1974), 283-4.

²⁰ Stone, *When God Was a Woman*, 199.

significantly, “the cobra was known as the Eye, *uzait*, a symbol of mystic insight and wisdom.”²¹ While only a few of Stone’s examples are given here, throughout her discussion, the link is made between snakes, a female deity, and special knowledge.

Even though Stone’s information is not footnoted in a scholarly manner, this book with its leading title, *When God Was a Woman*, was often referenced by feminists in the 1970s. For a feminist artist such as Schneemann, the discovery of these theories of the symbolism associated with the snake and its connection with goddesses provided an alternative mythological frame for her work.

The serpent inspired distinctive imagery in another key work by Schneemann, *Interior Scroll* (Figure 6, 1975), discussed in detail in Chapter 5. As stated, in this performance Schneemann undressed, wrapped herself in a sheet, and made a statement about the work. She then removed the sheet, painted the contours of her body in broad strokes of paint, and read from her book *Cézanne, She Was a Great Painter*. She assumed several active poses while reading. Then, from her vagina, she slowly extracted a scroll from which she read a text indicating the difficult reception of her work. Among her inspirations for the piece was the concept of the creative energy and interior knowledge of the female body and the serpent symbolism of the Earth, Snake, and Great Goddesses of pre-patriarchal cultures.

Her research into the serpent and her concept of “vulvic space” was first developed in 1960 while she was still in school. She had believed that the serpent was

²¹ Stone, *When God Was a Woman*, 201. For Stone’s entire discussion of the association between ancient goddesses and serpents, see 198-214. She also discussed the appearance of snakes in early Ancient Greece, especially linking early Mycenaean structures at Delphi and Athens upon whose foundations later temples were built. Her observations included the appearance of the serpent in the Middle East, arguing that the original Philistines came to Canaan from Crete and brought the Snake Goddess with them.

traditionally a phallic symbol, but found this to be a misappropriation of goddess imagery and meaning. She continued her research in the 1960s and read Donald MacKenzie's *The Migration of Symbols and Their Relations to Beliefs and Customs* (1926) which she described as a source for her symbolism in *Interior Scroll*:

In MacKenzie I read that: Cro-Magnon people believed in a Mother Earth Goddess; their cave paintings exaggerate the female sexual characteristics. Water and wind were of fundamental importance and were symbolized by natural spirals. The snake symbolized whirlpool, whirlwind, cosmic energy. Snakes originally symbolized the cosmic energy of the female womb which protected and nourished the embryo as they believed the ocean originally did the earth.²²

Her research and MacKenzie's text inspired her to reference the serpent as symbolizing female energy and creative powers associated with women's bodies. The serpent then was a direct reference to, and a stimulus for, female energy and interior knowledge in the artist's work. Schneemann actively visualized this concept by pulling the scroll from her vagina; the long, thin paper mimicked the shape of a serpent.

In Gloria Orenstein's 1994 essay reflecting on the 1970s and goddess-inspired art, she contrasted the position of New York-based artists with that found among feminist artists on the West Coast.²³ Many feminist artists in New York learned of the concept of the goddess through a renewed interest in Carl Jung's idea of the Great Goddess archetype popularized by Erich Neumann's book *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (1955). The archetype of the Great Goddess was seen as a symbolic image derived from a collective past and present in the collective unconscious, according to the

²² Schneemann, "Interior Scroll," *More than Meat Joy*, 234. Donald MacKenzie, *The Migration of Symbols and Their Relations to Beliefs and Customs* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1926).

²³ Orenstein, "Recovering Her Story," 176.

Jungian position reported by Neumann. New York-based artist Mary Beth Edelson, for example, also looked to the construct of the goddess to counter the emptiness she felt in contemporary patriarchal society in the 1970s. Edelson took seminars on Jungian theory in Washington D.C. during the time, believing in such concepts as the collective unconscious and the archetype.²⁴ On the West Coast, Orenstein argued that feminist artists were more inspired by archeological artifacts such as the *Woman from Willendorf* (22,000-21,000 BC) and the Bird-Headed Snake Goddesses from Africa (c.4,000 B.C.) and Crete (c.1,600 B.C.). For example, representations on the plates of Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* (1979) include dedications to Gaea (Mother Earth), a fertility goddess, and a Cretan snake goddess. However, archeological artifacts were also a resource for artists on the East Coast pursuing concepts of the goddess.

European artists also sought inspiration in goddess imagery and history, as in Monica Sjöö's *God Giving Birth* of 1969 (Figure 62) which depicts a woman with a child just emerging from her vagina. The German artist Anna Fengel painted matriarchal themes, sometimes in a series, as part of a spiritual growth process. In *Unterirdische Göttin II* (*Subterranean Goddess II*, series painted 1970-81), Fengel intertwined an image of a goddess under the earth, with her face composed of plant roots and fish, and with budding plants as her headdress. For the 1979 "masculin-feminin" exhibition at the Neue Galerie in Graz, the French artist Colette created an installation called *Spiegelsaal als Kirche* (*A Hall of Mirrors as Church*) that included blue draped windows and a runner

²⁴ Simon Taylor, "The Women's Movement: From Radical to Cultural Feminism, 1969-1975," in *Personal & Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975* (East Hampton: Guild Hall, 2002), 22. See also, Mary Beth Edelson, *The Art of Mary Beth Edelson* (New York: Seven Cycles, 2002).

that led to an altar with the artist's picture. Colette celebrated herself as a new goddess and sought out a form to capture a sense of goddess energy.

Like these European examples, Ulrike Rosenbach was also inspired by pre-patriarchal goddess concepts because they offered hope of empowering and improving women's lives, as well as a sense of pride in the creative powers of the female body. Begun a year after Schneemann's *Interior Scroll*, Ulrike Rosenbach's *Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen* (*Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*, 1976-77) was a performance and installation at the Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig in Aachen and a performance for the "Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977" exhibition in Berlin in 1977.²⁵ In Aachen a circle of salt six meters in diameter covered the marble ballroom floor of the Neue Galerie. In the center of the salt, another circle of fresh green moss was placed on which Rosenbach lay on her side with her body placed inside an enormous Japanese Zen bow constructed of bamboo (Figure 68). Her body was squeezed within the tension of the bow, as it also functioned as an arrow waiting to be released. A video camera moved along a thin, circular, metal rail that surrounded this performance construction and recorded Rosenbach in the center. She lay still as the video recording was saved and displayed on a monitor at the edge of the performance space. The small camera functioned as a spy satellite rotating around the artist, continually watching and recording every inch of her. It also appeared as a controlling mechanism, which

²⁵ From this work she produced a 20-minute black and white video based on the performance, what she calls a "Video Live Aktion." No copy of the video work is available at 235 Media in Cologne or Montevideo/Nederlands Instituut voor Mediakunst in Amsterdam, the two main repositories for her work. See Ulrike Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, Feministische Kunst* (Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982), 201-2. For the artist's description of the performance see: Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 51-4. The "Künstlerinnen International" exhibition was organized by the Arbeitsgruppe Frauen in der Kunst (Work Group for Women in Art).

symbolically reinscribed the established boundaries for her as woman. Rosenbach was still, tensed within the stretched bow, waiting for something to happen, for her to awaken and spring from the bow. Yet, for three hours she never moved. Finally, she slowly left the bow and rose from her crouched position (Figure 69) to cut the electricity that kept the monitoring video moving. She then walked out of the circle of salt to its edge and wrote into the salt: “Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen und nun bin ich erwacht” (“Ten thousand years I’ve been sleeping and now I am awakened”).

Rosenbach almost always performed in front of an audience, as she did for *Ten Thousand Years I’ve Been Sleeping*. While the work was performed in a public space, Rosenbach performed by herself. Not moving or speaking over the three-hour duration of the piece and holding her position within the bow brought the artist to a very private realm. The strength needed to lay still and hold the arrow in place for three hours evidences the type of concentration and energy often needed in ritual performances.

Salt and circles of salt appeared several times in Rosenbach’s performance art. The functions and associations of salt are numerous; not only is salt (sodium chloride) necessary for cell functioning in human beings but it has been the most used food preservative throughout history.²⁶ Those with an abundance of salt were considered wealthy and it was often used as a means of payment or exchange. It can cleanse wounds, put out fires, and is said to have at least 14,000 other uses. Symbolically, salt represents numerous important aspects of human history. It signifies the covenant that Jews have with God. Jews and Muslims believe that salt protects one from the evil eye. Salt was used to protect children, through rubbing salt on their skin, bathing them in salty water, or

²⁶ For a recent historical analysis of salt, see Mark Kulansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York: Walker and Co., 2002).

just placing some in a crib. A circle of salt holds additional meanings, some referencing witchcraft and ancient cultures. Meant to bring protection to the one who creates it, a circle of salt can be formed to ward off evil and negative energy, according to several popular witchcraft sources.²⁷ Witchcraft was of interest to some feminists in the 1970s, as they conceived it as yet another female culture which was suppressed by patriarchy.²⁸ While these meanings can be read into the salt in Rosenbach's performance, the artist has stated, as mentioned in Chapter 4, that salt was used for several reasons, depending on the performance. In *Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*, she intended the salt to metaphorically act as a cleanser. As she described, the salt was a way of "cleaning away old understandings of womanhood."²⁹

In *Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*, Rosenbach chose other materials for specific reasons. The large bow Rosenbach lay in was modeled on a Japanese Zen bow, as the artists described her intentions:

The bow is used because of the same reason in the Amazon piece: to wake up from old understandings and unconscious standards/lifestyles to a state of self-responsibility as a woman who stands for her own.

²⁷ In Wiccan and other pagan traditions, casting a circle with salt is said to provide protection from evil spirits, or to contain energy from a chant or dance. Such a circle is also regarded as a space which connects the real world with the world of gods and magical spirits. See: "Magic Circle (Wicca)," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_circle_\(Wicca\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_circle_(Wicca)), accessed 26 August 2005, website's emphasis. Other similar references include: "An Issian Circle Casting" <http://ladyoftheearth.com/circles/casting-01.txt>, accessed 26 August 2005 and "Issian Circle Casting," http://wiccanet.net/wicca/reading_room/wicca17.htm, accessed 26 August 2005. Again, the popular, or cult nature, of witchcraft must be emphasized.

²⁸ Zsuzsanna Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Feminist Witchcraft, Goddess Rituals, Spellcasting, and Other Womanly Arts* (Berkeley: Wingbow Press, 1989). By way of example, Mary Beth Edelson created a ritual group performance entitled *Memorials to the 9,000,000 Women Burned as Witches in the Christian Era* (1977).

²⁹ Ulrike Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

This means freedom—freedom from an old self (according to zen-bow shooting).³⁰

As exemplified in the bow, Rosenbach's performance symbolized an awakening from old concepts of woman to a new state of responsibility and freedom. Rosenbach's body acts as the bow, it was not meant to be outwardly aggressive or deadly. Rather, the bow represents a tool for change and symbol of empowerment for herself as woman.

Rosenbach wore a full-body, white leotard, as she did for other work, such as *Reflections of the Birth of Venus*. While many female and male performance artists were performing nude, Rosenbach specifically chose not to do so, as she stated:

In my understanding of the time, the nude body of the female performer was taking too much attention from the meaning—which I wanted to enroll to the audience. I was not a typical body artist, my intention was rather to let show up the spiritual or philosophical sense of my work, the story also which had to do with criticism of cultural conditions for women down the history of the west.³¹

The focus of her work, including the objects and materials she used and wore, was on the spiritual, philosophical, and cultural conditions of women's lives.

In this performance Rosenbach also made use of additional references including the Amazon and Mother Earth all in her effort to be an initiator, and facilitator, of change. The bow and arrow related to her performance the previous year, *Don't You Believe I'm an Amazon* (see below). But Rosenbach was also thinking of issues related to the concept of Mother Earth; the artist had been studying ancient goddesses while living

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

in California in 1975 and 1976.³² She described her intent in a text on this performance work for her self-published catalogue of 1982:

10,000 years I have slept
and now I am awake.
My heavy eyelids are the forest.
They bow.
My heart, the clouds are surprised,
because I am called.
My earth body is covered with thousands of flowers.
My breasts, the mountains
their tops rise joyful.
They call, they call
I like to embrace all
the sad and the lost.
Everything that is bad
I will condemn to death.
I am the defense of every woman,
As I am the protector
of my own, holy self.
I am the Earth Mother, the only one.
Everything springs from me.
I carry the seeds for creation.
I alone am the guardian of life.
I am awake, I answer all questions.³³

While this text was not part of the performance, it explains the artist's intentions in the work. Rosenbach symbolically assumed the goddess position, not as a specific visual source but as a spiritual one. As Orenstein noted, to reiterate: "When imaged and celebrated in contemporary art, the Goddess signifies Being as a verb, as a creative

³² Ibid.

³³ "10000 Jahr habe ich geschlafen und nun bin ich erwacht. Meine schweren Augenlider sind die Wälder. Sie verbeugen sich. Mein Herz, die Wolken ist überrascht, denn ich werde gerufen. Mein Erdkörper ist bedeckt mit tausend Blumen. Meine Brüste, die Berge erheben freudig ihre Spitzen. Sie rufen, sie rufen. Ich möchte alle, die traurig und verloren sind, umarmen. Alles, was schlecht ist, werde ich zum Tode verdammen. Ich bin die Verteidigung jeder Frau, so wie ich die Beschützerin meines eigenen, heiligen Selbst bin. Die Erdmutter bin ich, die Einzige. Alles entspringt aus mir. Ich trage die Saat für die Schöpfung. Ich alleine bin die Bewahrerin des Lebens. Ich bin erwacht, ich beantworte alle Fragen." Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 54. Format in above text follows Rosenbach's in this publication.

energy, as a transformative energy, as sacred earth-energy and as psychic energy.”³⁴

Hence, Rosenbach sought inspiration for change in the conditions of women’s lives through the transformative, psychic energy believed to be of the Earth Mother. Yet, it is uncertain as to whether references to goddesses and Earth Mother would have been fully understood by Rosenbach’s audience without the artist’s text.

The only statement by Rosenbach during the piece was written into the salt—“Ten thousand years I’ve been sleeping and now I am awakened”—and referred to a much discussed aspect of the idea of the Great Goddess and related goddess worship which was crystallizing during the 1970s. The concept of time as part of a ritual performance piece or the idea of being symbolically asleep for centuries and experiencing an awakening was common among feminists and feminist artists of the period, supported by the ideas and actions of the feminist movement. Writers and believers in a Great Goddess and matriarchal cultures of the past tried to date the length of time that patriarchal society has existed. Most subscribing to this history have dated it to 5,000 years, rather than 10,000 years, as Gloria Steinem did in a speech from 1972.³⁵ Using this idea for her performance, after 10,000 years, the goddess was thought to be newly awake and embodied by Rosenbach.

The concept of matriarchal cultures has been discussed by many authors including Heide Göttner-Abendroth in *The Dancing Goddess: Principles of a Matriarchal Aesthetic* (1991) (a work that originally appeared in German in 1982) and Cynthia Eller in *The*

³⁴ Gloria Feman Orenstein, “The Reemergence of the Archetype of the Great Goddess in Art by Contemporary Women,” 75.

³⁵ Gloria Steinem, *Wonder Woman* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, and Warner Books, 1972), n.p. Steinem quoted in Eller, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*, 1-2, see also 3.

Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory (2000). Göttner-Abendroth longed for a past period of goddess worship characterized by a matriarchal structure entailing a complete transformation of the arts and social structures as we know them. But Eller is surprised that the myth of the goddess and the concept of prehistoric matriarchal societies has so many followers despite a lack of evidence.³⁶ Writing at a very different moment in time for women, three decades after the beginning of the second wave feminist movement, Eller's book is one of the most recent publications on the topic of matriarchal cultures. The author does make a significant point, and one that had been overlooked by many prior authors writing on pre-patriarchal cultures and goddess worship: evidence that major parts of the world were ever actually controlled solely by matriarchies is paltry. In her book, Eller detailed the scholars who promoted a matriarchal past, described the stories they tell, and then refuted the possibility that such a past existed.³⁷ She also stated that a number of significant problems present themselves in terms of a belief in, and hope for a return to, matriarchal cultures:

And the gendered stereotypes upon which matriarchal myth rests persistently work to flatten out differences among women; to exaggerate differences between women and men; and to hand women an identity that is symbolic, timeless, and archetypal, instead of giving them the freedom to craft identities that suit their individual temperaments, skills, preferences, and moral and political commitments.³⁸

³⁶ Heide Göttner-Abendroth, *The Dancing Goddess: Principles of a Matriarchal Aesthetic*, trans. Maureen T. Krause (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), especially Chapter 2: "The Dancing Muse: Principles of a Matriarchal Aesthetic," originally published in German as *Die tanzende Göttin: Prinzipien einer matriarchalen Ästhetik* (Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1982) and Eller, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*, especially Chapter 1: "Meeting Matriarchy," 1-9.

³⁷ See Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 7 in Eller, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*, 10-55 and 93-156. Chapter 2 provides an overview of literature on matriarchal cultures and goddess worship.

³⁸ Eller, *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*, 8.

Despite the problems associated with the concept of a matriarchal prehistory, in the 1970s numerous feminists and feminist artists believed in a past when women were honored for their life-giving powers and matriarchal societies worshipped goddesses.

Whether the world was ever, in fact, totally matriarchal was irrelevant to feminist artists interested in this subject for their work, however. Idealizing a different social structure from the one they knew and imagining powerful and independent women as exemplified by goddesses was enough to kindle creative inspiration and the hope to bring about change through their work. For example, Edelson created an installation entitled *Your 5,000 Years are Up!* in 1977 (Figure 8) that included a performance element, *Mourning Our Lost Herstory*.³⁹ The performance included shrouded figures meant to mourn the loss of women's unrecorded history. Recovering women's lost histories was important to many feminists and feminist artists in the 1970s, and Rosenbach's use of the term "awakened" could also refer to the education of contemporary women and society on women's past experiences. Such an education and awareness was brought on by consciousness-raising activities and performance art events, such as Suzanne Lacy's and Leslie Labowitz's *In Mourning and In Rage* (1977) meant to raise awareness of, and counteract, rape and other violence against women. Another example is Edelson's ritual performance entitled *Memorials to the 9,000,000 Women Burned as Witches in the Christian Era* (1977) in which participants read the names and accounts of women and men who were killed as witches.

Rosenbach's work, as in *Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*, often assumes a ritualistic nature due to the length of her pieces, the minimal yet meaningful gestures, and

³⁹ Edelson, *The Art of Mary Beth Edelson*, 110-1.

the topics she undertakes. Rosenbach was a former student of Joseph Beuys in the sculpture department of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1964 until 1969, and his ritualistic performances, mythical persona, and drive for social change undoubtedly affected her work. Beuys was extremely influential as a teacher to a generation of German artists, and particularly noteworthy for his ritualistic approach to performance art; in fact, his own mythicized history itself became fodder for his performative events.⁴⁰ Rosenbach stated that she did not believe, however, that Beuys' influence on her work was that profound as he disliked video and resisted feminism, both of which were important to Rosenbach's work.⁴¹ However, the performances of both artists revealed an interest in myth as well as a contemplative, slow development over a length of time in front of an audience. While Beuys created his own personal mythology, Rosenbach turned to the women's movements' rediscovery of ritual through the myth of the Great Goddess. Rosenbach described her contact with Beuys:

He [Beuys] was a serious teacher, I was the first female student in his class (together with Katharina Sieverding). And I learnt sculpture, not performance, which I really did not intend to do in those years. On the contrary, I hated his actions putting such an intense psychological manipulation on the audience, which I tried to avoid when I started performance art in 1972. In order to create a distance between the audience and the performer, I chose the medium video to put in between which was leading to the first video-live-performances done in 1973/74 at Cologne ART Fair and at New York, "112 Greene Street."⁴²

⁴⁰ See Chapter 2 and Benjamin Buchloh, "Beuys: Twilight of the Idol," *Artforum*, vol. 18, no. 5 (January 1980): 35-43.

⁴¹ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁴² *Ibid.* Rosenbach performed *Isolation is Transparent* (1974) at the 112 Greene Street exhibition curated by Willoughby Sharp.

Rosenbach developed the term “video-live-performance” to describe her combination of her own body and video as an integral element, as she did in *Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*. The recording from the monitoring eye that rotated around the artist was shown in real time on a monitor in the performance space.

While both Schneemann and Rosenbach were inspired by pre-patriarchal goddess mythologies, each artist chose a unique approach to the subject matter. Schneemann took her own body as a source for female creativity based on sexual and biological powers. Schneemann's personal research on the Great Goddess and other goddesses sometimes ascribed to matriarchal cultures validated, for the artist, her chosen methods and beliefs. For example, Schneemann sought a renewed meaning for the snake, based on ancient cultures that regarded snakes as symbolizing female deities. However, while she hoped to endow the serpent with this new symbolism, it was difficult for viewers, especially those with a Judeo-Christian background, not to read associations of evil or the devil from the snakes in the work. In contrast, Rosenbach looked to goddesses as representing a period when women were socially and politically more powerful and religiously more significant than during the 1970s. The role of the body as an agent of creative energy was less important, and the concept of goddess energy was culturally, rather than sexually, symbolic to Rosenbach. Moreover, this contrast in emphasis was also represented in Rosenbach's choice to wear a leotard and Schneemann's choice to be nude, as the latter reinforced Schneemann's sense of physical and sexual connection to the past.

In the 1978 issue of the feminist journal *Heresies* that was dedicated to the concept of the goddess, Carol Christ articulated four main benefits that the goddess

brought to women in “Why Women Need the Goddess.”⁴³ First, the goddess legitimized female power. Second, it affirmed the female body in all its biological and spiritual functions, including menstruation and the birth process as life-giving powers of the universe. Also, it provided a positive assessment of personal will, meaning a belief in collaboration with the energies of others. Finally, it brought a reevaluation of the mother-daughter relationship and other female-to-female relationships. From a present-day perspective, these observations may at first appear simplistic. However, in the late 1970s women did not yet hold positions of power, nor was a woman’s functioning body a culturally acceptable topic for conversation among the general public or in popular media. Rather, women often sought the support of other women to validate their experiences. Moreover, this period in general brought a reevaluation of female relationships and the development of new women’s organizations and support structures.

Following the 1970s, critics, art historians, and artists alike have exposed a number of problematic issues surrounding goddess-inspired feminist art. The points that Christ emphasized, for example, essentialize women’s identities due to her focus on women’s biological functions or on women-only relationships. While she does discuss the validation of women’s power and collaboration, both of which could be seen as social, cultural, and political aspects of women’s lives, there is a determined effort to focus on those elements specific only to women’s experiences. However, as Orenstein argued in 1994, goddess-inspired work did not aim to essentialize women or women’s roles in ancient history; rather, “The creation of a monolithic Goddess symbol was an attempt to establish not a universal image of the ‘feminine’ but rather a universal symbol

⁴³ Carol P. Christ, “Why Women Need the Goddess,” *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 8-13, especially 9-12.

of a worldwide civilization that was the antithesis of patriarchy.”⁴⁴ The desire was not necessarily to substitute a patriarchal society for a matriarchal one, but a recognition and acknowledgment of women in society. However, it was meant to bring about a complete cultural change for women, and men. While what has been coded as feminine is culturally constructed, it could be argued that many artists, who pursued the idea of the goddess through their work, were trying to isolate specific qualities and inner strengths that only women embodied—an essentializing endeavor, but not without merit.

Goddess-inspired work has been interpreted as a form of imperialism due to “appropriating images from tribal people and foreign cultures.”⁴⁵ Again, Orenstein tried to counter these types of accusations when she stated that the period of the 1970s and the factor of Jungian influence placed these initiatives in a different context:

Many artists and scholars tended to believe that this collective unconscious [the goddess archetype] was equally accessible to anyone, anywhere and that the images thus inspired or created transcended all patriarchal cultural barriers. Indeed, it was believed that via these images all oppressed women (whether oppressed by class, race, or ethnic origin, for example) could reconnect with an ancient primal female force emanating from these symbols, which would charge them with a specifically female energy (known as “gynergy”). This gynergetic force would then bring together in a new harmony women who had previously been separated from each other by patriarchally constructed divisions such as class and race.⁴⁶

While this perspective is overly idealistic, some have found it provocative. Thomas McEvelley, for example, wrote on the use of Great Goddess and Earth Mother stereotypes

⁴⁴ Orenstein, “Recovering Her Story,” note 17, page 295.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

in the exhibition catalogue *Making their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-1985*, and found that:

This approach was radical in that rather than attempting to modify the outlines of art history as they had been known it vaulted over them altogether. The patriarchal nature of art historiography made it seem worthless, an artificial boundary to be leapt over into a much vaster arena.⁴⁷

It was impractical to think that that all women could be united through this renewed symbolism, even if it was cultivated and embraced by many women. However, while goddess-symbolism did not bring about a wholesale change for women, it was part of a myriad of feminist and feminist art activities that did serve to initiate social changes for women.

In addition to her work featuring the Great Goddess, Rosenbach developed a separate body of work that addressed Ancient Greek and Roman mythology, such as *Reflections on the Birth of Venus* discussed in Chapter 4. The cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome form the basis of western patriarchal society in politics, philosophy, and art. These origins are a suitable topic of critique for an artist who believed in a matriarchal prehistory.

Rosenbach's *Glauben Sie nicht, daß ich eine Amazone bin (Don't You Believe I'm an Amazon)* of 1975, performed first at the Biennale des Jeunes in Paris and later that year in Innsbruck, challenged western mythical symbols.⁴⁸ For the performance

⁴⁷ Thomas McEvilley, "Redirecting the Gaze," in *Making their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-1985* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), 191-2.

⁴⁸ Rosenbach recorded an eight-minute color documentation of the event and created a 15 minute black and white video work. She refers to this latter work as a "Video Live Aktion." The performance was held at the "9e Biennale de Paris: Manifestation Internationale des Jeunes

Rosenbach was dressed in a white leotard (Figure 9) and shot fifteen arrows at a circular-shaped reproduction of Stefan Lochner's Gothic painting *Madonna im Rosenhag* (*The Madonna of Rosenhag*, c.1450).⁴⁹ While the actual painting has a traditional rectangular format, Rosenbach reformatted her reproduction of it to assume the circular form of a bull's eye (Figure 70). The video work (made during the performance) began with a close-up view of the painting. Then an image of Rosenbach was superimposed onto the Madonna's haloed head as the artist walked into the space. In silence, the artist picked up the bow and an arrow, aimed, and shot directly into the middle of the Madonna's forehead. The monitor revealed the face of the artist and the Madonna overlapping, as a thud was heard when the arrow pierced the canvas (Figure 71). Rosenbach picked up another arrow, aimed, and hit the forehead once more. Rosenbach's face was recorded from a camera placed behind a square-cut hole in the center of the reproduction of the Lochner painting⁵⁰ so that in the video it appears as if Rosenbach was shooting at the viewer. She took aim and shot each arrow, then stared directly into the camera, at the observer, as if pausing for a reaction. During the actual performance, the audience could see Rosenbach shooting the arrows at the reproduction and a live-feed recording on a video monitor with the image of Rosenbach and the Madonna melded into one. The sequence of events was methodically repeated: arrow retrieved, pulled back in bow,

Artists" and at "Frauen—Kunst—Neue Tendenzen" at the Galerie Krinzinger in Innsbruck. Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 201-2. See also A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale, *Performance by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1979), 141. I viewed recordings of the performance at Montevideo in Amsterdam and at 235 Media in Cologne.

⁴⁹ The original painting is 50x40cm, oil on wood, and located in Cologne in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum.

⁵⁰ The square cut whole is described in *Art and Feminism*, ed. Helena Reckitt (London: Phaidon, 2001), 101.

aimed at painting, and shot into image followed by a piercing gaze at the viewer. She often stared directly into the camera after aiming before releasing the arrow. The Madonna was repeatedly hit in the forehead and chin, or below, but the facial features were always kept in tact. Rosenbach only missed the target once and she appeared surprised—the artist had studied archery for an entire year before the event.⁵¹ This was the only point at which she revealed any emotion throughout the performance. Once the artist had shot all the arrows she stood still and her face overlapped exactly with the Madonna's for about twenty seconds. She bent down as the performance and video ended.

For this work Rosenbach assumed the role of an Amazon, a member of the legendary female tribe known as independent warriors skilled in archery and horseback riding according to ancient Greek mythology.⁵² Her chosen object of attack was a painting by a German old master. But more important was the work's subject matter, the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus, an iconic image of Christianity, Western art, and patriarchal society. Moreover, Mary was typically portrayed as demure, submissive, and proper, prefiguring traditional roles for women as virgins and mothers. As Rosenbach described it:

The image of the madonna keeps up appearances, is inaccessible, beautiful, gentle and shy. It shows the traditional role of the woman. As

⁵¹ Rosenbach stated that she had intended to study, and then use, the Japanese Zen bow technique, but there were no teachers in the Cologne area. Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁵² The Amazon was popular in classical Greek art, as for example, in a sculpture by Polykleitos. One such work, *Sculpture of a Wounded Amazon* (c.1st to 2nd century A.D., Roman copy of a Greek bronze of c.450-425 B.C.), believed to be by Polykleitos is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

an image rather absurd, it appears nevertheless in my own existence. While the arrows hit the image—they hit my own ego.⁵³

Not only did Rosenbach shoot the Madonna, she also took aim at the Amazon and herself. The piece constituted a focused attack on the conflicting identities women experienced in 1975, as Rosenbach stated: “It was about killing the meaning of one image (Madonna) with the meaning of the other image (Amazon), both of which only are pictures about womanhood how it is traditionally understood in patriarchy.”⁵⁴

The Madonna embodied characteristics that have been embedded in Rosenbach as a culturally constructed role for women. On the other hand, the Amazon figure, as a strong and independent woman, stands in stark contrast to the symbolism of the Madonna. Amazon women had little need for men whereas Mary’s identity was defined by the men in her life. The Amazon represents a culture in which women held positions of power, a matriarchal culture not unrelated to that associated with the Great Goddess. But the way that the Amazon has been portrayed under patriarchy has distorted her potential; typically the Amazon appears as symbolically male: an aggressive warrior. Rosenbach commented on this in a photographic series in which she took stills from a film called *Die Amazonen kommen* (*The Amazons Are Coming*), in which a male fantasy was played out in the figures—beautiful women who act like men—and added her own commentary.⁵⁵

⁵³ Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 141.

⁵⁴ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁵⁵ Rosenbach’s work is a 16-part color photographic commentary on the film in question, a German film that appears to have been released in the 1970s, but information about it could not be located. See Rosenbach, *Rosenbach*, 3-4 and Göttner-Abendroth, *The Dancing Goddess*, 98-9.

The intended contrast between the Madonna and the Amazon is emphasized through Rosenbach's superimposing images of these two historical figures. Yet, these personas also represent the artist herself and the internal conflict presented in the two role models for women. This discord was symbolized by the act of shooting the arrows at not only the faces of both figures but also at an image of Rosenbach herself. The artist's theme in her Amazon work, and other performances that deal with patriarchal constructs of women, focused on her lack of identification with any one of these role models, none of which represent an emancipated woman. Rosenbach explained the conundrum in 1982:

All characteristics of women are simplified, clichéd; we are not permitted to be diverse, according to society. I am a Madonna. I am an Amazon. I am a Venus. I am all of these and none of these.⁵⁶

This conflicting attitude aptly describes how many women feel about such clichéd representations of women. While the artist's intentions in *Don't You Believe I'm an Amazon* was to argue for multi-faceted aspects to women's identities that do not fit any one clichéd image, it could have been difficult to discern that from viewing the work.⁵⁷

For the performance in Paris, Rosenbach wrote on the wall of the performance area, "This is a piece of feminist art."⁵⁸ This act of "graffiti," as she called it, was a daring

⁵⁶ "Alle Charakteristika der Frauen werden vereinfacht, klischiert; wir dürfen nicht vielfältig sein, meint die Gesellschaft. Ich bin eine Madonna. Ich bin eine Amazone. Ich bin eine Venus. Ich bin alle zusammen und keine von diesen." Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 3.

⁵⁷ While she has been ambiguous about the Amazon as role model for women, she still used the figure of the Amazon to represent a strong woman, in contrast with the image of Mary. For example, she used it in the title for a compilation of her video and recorded performance work. See: *Amazonensignale* (Amazon Signals, 1978) which includes commentary by Rosenbach. Works are shown in the following order: *Frau—Frau* (1977), *Don't You Believe I'm an Amazon* (1975), *Madonna of the Flowers* (1975), *Reflections of the Birth of Venus* (1976), *Signal for Housewives* (1977), *Frauenkultur—Kontaktversuch* (1977), and *Sorry Mister* (1974). Technical assistance from Klaus vom Bruch, editing by Wibke von Bomen. The tape is 40 minutes long and I viewed it in the collection of Montevideo in Amsterdam.

⁵⁸ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 1 October 2005.

act for a European artist in 1975, as no coherent feminist art movement existed outside of England. Rosenbach observed the difficulties she was to encounter after she announced that her performance was feminist art:

This was for the first time that I stated this in a context of the international art scene. Before this time, it was somehow like a private underground movement to me and in Germany. Not in the states! Afterwards, this statement became a serious obstacle for my career in Germany.⁵⁹

The problems she encountered inspired her to found her School for Feminist Art in Cologne, which she stated was based on her experiences in California and her understanding of the Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts.⁶⁰ Claiming the status of feminist artist in Germany in the 1970s had its drawbacks, despite the strength of the women's movement in the country, as Rosenbach explained:

There was no gallery for me on "feminist art," which would hold the standard I was demanding. Most of that artwork was shown in women centers, as far as I know or remember. My galleries showed my work because of its contemporary quality and then focused on the term "Women in art" when they did group shows on the female art, they never used the term "feminist" which is indeed a difference.⁶¹

According to Rosenbach's experiences as a practicing feminist artist in the 1970s, the term feminism was seldom used for exhibitions of women's art with feminist content. She recalled that most shows related to feminist art were held at women's centers, which were first established in 1972 and most often at universities as places for women to come together in consciousness-raising events and political organizing (see Chapter 1).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 27 September 2005.

⁶¹ Rosenbach, interview by author, via email, 30 September 2005.

The following year, Rosenbach created *Meine Verwandlung ist meine Befreiung* (*My Transformation is My Liberation*, 1978) as a performance for the “Forum Musik Bremen.” Rosenbach’s event, held in the crypt of the Bremen Dom, the cathedral of Bremen, was videotaped in a twenty-minute documentation, and the props from it were left with the video as a short-term installation in February of that year.⁶² The space was formed by a small nave and twelve columns, roughly two meters in height. In front of the small altar, Rosenbach stacked thirteen video monitors in a pyramidal shape (Figure 72); the artist felt that thirteen held special meaning for women. While the audience slowly entered the space, the artist was winding sixty meters of red wool around her waist as she stood next to the “monitor altar.” The audience was sitting on church pews in front of this altar, as if present for a religious service. Twelve of the monitors, symbolizing the apostles, each displayed the same close-up view of Albrecht Dürer’s painting of the apostle Saint Paul, part of his diptych *The Four Apostles* (1526), which Rosenbach described as a “dark, patriarchal face, with one amazing looking eye.”⁶³ A “blank” flickering picture tube was presented on the thirteenth monitor, which was the apex of the pyramid.

Rosenbach began by unwinding the wool from her waist as she slowly turned on her axis and circled around the columns, thereby enclosing the space of the pews. After

⁶² This documentation was not part of the collections of 235 Media or Montevideo. For the artist’s description of the work, see Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 63-66.

⁶³ Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 144. The Dürer image of St. Paul is part of a diptych painted in oil on panel in the collection of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. St. Paul is depicted with St. Mark, and St. John and St. Peter are painted on the other panel. The panels contain inscriptions at the bottom intended to profess the faith of the Reformation and act as a warning to the town council in Nuremberg not to sway from Luther’s teachings. See: Anja-Franziska Eichler, *Albrecht Dürer*, trans. Fiona Hulse (Cologne: Könemann, 1999), 126-7.

she finished the first circling of the space and was back at the apse by the monitors, she switched one of the images of St. Paul to a close-up image of her own face. The pre-recorded video showed the artist's head looking straight out toward the viewer then turning to assume exactly the same pose as St. Paul, but looking the opposite direction. The audio element of the performance was limited to the repetitive sound of a strong heartbeat, which filled the entire space. Without saying a word Rosenbach continued unwinding the wool from her body and wrapping it around the columns and switching the monitors, in a repetitive and ritualistic manner. The combination of the repetitive heartbeat and constant turning created a physical sensation that brought with it a lost sense of time. After all twelve screens showed her face, she switched the thirteenth monitor to the image of her face (Figure 73). Her goal had been achieved—a woman filled the space—and she ended the performance. Rosenbach consciously took an important symbol of Christianity painted by one of the most celebrated (male) painters from Germany and replaced it with her own image. She found an alternative in a woman, in herself. Rosenbach was now freed from the red wool, the binding of which had symbolized traditional social, cultural, and political constraints for her as woman. In contrast, the viewing public, representing patriarchal society, was now confined to the space of the pews by the wrapped wool and symbolically under the control of a new social order.

The numbers twelve and thirteen were deliberately chosen in this performance for their religious and earth cycle references. The performance included thirteen monitors—twelve images of St. Paul plus one—with eventually thirteen images of Rosenbach, and thirteen rotations with the red wool around the columns. Rosenbach described what this

signified to her: the twelve months have thirteen moon orbits, there are thirteen menstrual cycles in twelve months, and there were twelve apostles.⁶⁴ An apostle, but not one of the original twelve, the patriarch Paul wrote several books of the New Testament of *The Bible* including the Epistle to the Ephesians from which Rosenbach quoted in her description of the performance's symbolism in 1982: "The husband is the head of the wife."⁶⁵ To contextualize her choice of this text as part of her description of this performance and the choice of an image of St. Paul, the surrounding passage from *The Bible* is cited:

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.⁶⁶

This section from the epistle describes how Christian churches, through St. Paul's own writings, promoted the oppression of women by men within the family structure. Rosenbach's chosen patriarch of the church, St. Paul, signifies western civilization's repression of women through religion, a repression that Rosenbach challenged in this performance. After quoting the apostle, Rosenbach then stated her aim: "Through my

⁶⁴ Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 63.

⁶⁵ "Der Mann sei das Haupt der Frau." Rosenbach quoted this as her description of the performance order of events in her catalogue: Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 63. She wrote "(E 5, 22)" or Ephesians 5:22 as the source for the text but it actually appears in Verse 23, not 22. *Der Mann sei das Haupt der Frau* is also the title of a video work by Rosenbach from 1973. See: Lucy Lippard, "The Past as Target of the Future," in: Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 123.

⁶⁶ Ephesians 5:22-24, *The Bible, Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha*, intro and notes by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 243.

uninterrupted transformation I evade that ordering and control.”⁶⁷ On the video monitor, when Rosenbach’s face appeared, she turned her head in the opposite direction of St. Paul, to indicate that she sought a new direction for women. Obviously, the artist could not transform the patriarchal construction of western society through one performance event in a church. However, by choosing this location, text, and imagery she could potentially expose and begin to erode this type of social structure. Many aspects of western ritual, including certain aspects of Christian religions, exclude women. Celebrants of religious services had been almost exclusively men, at least until the feminist movements in the 1970s. And one of the most visible Christian religions, Catholicism, still denies women full participation in church services as priests.⁶⁸

Very little ritual or sacred space was yet open to women during the 1960s or 1970s. Traditionally, the sacred was a domain of men which granted them cultural authority and power.⁶⁹ And, as Kay Turner has argued, if you have power then you can change culture.⁷⁰ Due to women’s historical lack of power within the church, Rosenbach chose to critique its institutions. Rosenbach reproved the church for encouraging women to be submissive to their husbands, and assailed the role of patriarchs in the church in her performance. Performance art, with its ritualistic potential, presented a perfect medium

⁶⁷ “Durch meine ununterbrochene Verwandlung entziehe ich mich der Einordnung und Beherrschung.” Rosenbach, *Ulrike Rosenbach*, 63.

⁶⁸ Catholicism was one of the two main religions in West Germany in the 1970s with 44% of the population Catholic (49% was Protestant). “Germany (West),” in *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women’s Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan (Garden City, New York: Archer Double Day, 1984; reprint, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996), 245.

⁶⁹ There were, of course, nuns but they were sometimes cloistered or given positions in education. They were not leading masses or administering Roman Catholic sacraments.

⁷⁰ Turner, “Contemporary Feminist Ritual,” 21.

with which to pursue such analysis. Through the use of ritual shaped by a critical and renewed perspective, Rosenbach and other artists hoped to gain a measure of power and thereby effect cultural change. As Turner elaborated:

Ritual participation will no doubt stimulate further and deeper political change for there is, indeed, a continuum between ritual and everyday life for feminists. The female bonds established in ritual lend incentive to the female bonds that inspire social change. The use of ritual is significant as a source for the renewal of commitment to evolving and transforming society as a whole.⁷¹

The use of ritual by feminist performance artists such as Rosenbach focused on social, political, and cultural transformation.

Like Rosenbach's *Ten Thousand Years I've Been Sleeping*, Valie Export's performance *Delta. Ein Stück (Delta. A Piece)* was also presented at the "Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977" exhibition in Berlin in 1977.⁷² The performance was based on hand and shoulder symbolism the artist researched in historical representations of women and men. As the artist described the piece, it represented

A drama in the distress continuum of two people's inter-sexual relations. Departing from the shoulder- and hand symbolism as historical body language, the history of the woman in the male world is unsealed.⁷³

Similar to Rosenbach, Export's aims concerned the role of male-dominated religion in the subjugation of women. Much of the symbolism Export analyzed was based on

⁷¹ Ibid., 23.

⁷² It was first performed at this exhibition on the 16th of March 1977 and repeated later that year at the Cologne Kunstmarkt on the 30th of October 1977 from which a video recording was made. I viewed this recording at the Export Archives at the Generali Foundation in Vienna. For written descriptions of the work, see: Valie Export, *Austria, Biennale di Venezia* (Vienna: Bundesministerium für Unterricht und Kunst, 1980); Export, "Delta. Ein Stück," *High Performance 13*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 1981): 18+; and Anita Prammer, *Valie Export: Eine Multimediale Künstlerin* (Vienna: Wiener Frauenverlag, 1988), 77-83.

religious ceremonies and their art historical representations, including the ritual of marriage within the Catholic Church.⁷⁴

The performance materials for *Delta. A Piece* included a black, triangle-shaped board, each side measuring three meters. One apex was raised to about one meter and a pole stood at this point almost three meters tall (Figure 74). Her other performance objects included a wooden shoulder yoke with an attached plaster masculine shoulder (Figure 75), a wooden hand yoke, a feminine plaster fist, a wand made of gilded wedding rings, a wash basin with water, a mirror, and an amplified tape recorder with tape loop. Near the apex of the triangle, the artist had written “via maritalis” (conjugal path), referring to the main critique she meant to undertake. She was dressed in jeans and a black turtleneck and had painted her face black with coal to reference “woman as protectress of the hearth.”⁷⁵

The performance began with the artist lying in the middle of the triangle board with her body parallel to the floor. She rolled down to the ground, then gathered the props at either, lower point of the triangle. Standing, she lifted up a metal triangle and hit it with the feminine plaster hand after which she hung the triangle on the pole at the apex of the triangle. She returned to the ground then walked back up the board to clang the metal triangle once more with the hand. This type of repetitive movement would continue

⁷³ Export, *Austria, Biennale di Venezia*, 81.

⁷⁴ Catholicism was and is the dominant religion in Austria. In the 1970s, ninety percent of the population was Catholic. “Austria,” *Sisterhood is Global*, ed. Morgan, 69. As stated in the introduction, Export was educated in a convent until the age of fourteen. Export, “Delta. Ein Stuck,” *High Performance*, 18.

⁷⁵ She also stated that she painted her face black because “women are the niggers of the world, the anonymous sex, the missing sex whose own expression has been destroyed” meaning

throughout the performance in a deliberate, ritualistic manner. Then, the audio element was projected in the space: a man's voice that slowly got louder and repeatedly stated "Freche Sau" (you dumb sow).⁷⁶ Export chose these words, played on a loop, because they represented the disrespect she felt she repeatedly experienced as a woman.⁷⁷ As if a restricted animal, she then placed the shoulder yoke with attached male shoulder in plaster around her neck and clasped it shut. Movement was difficult, as she had to balance the yoke on her shoulders, but the male plaster shoulder kept pulling the yoke down on one side threatening to restrict her breathing or cut circulation as it pressed against her neck. In another move to restrict herself, but also to help balance the weight around her neck, Export tied two small straps from the yoke around her waist. She then walked to the top of the board and again banged the triangle with the plaster hand.

The social function of marriage, and its potential for a suffocating control of women, was a major target of Export's critiques through this performance. The restrictive yoke, and its weighing down by the male plaster shoulder, symbolized the social confinement of marriage for women. When Export began her career as an artist, options for women were limited and the necessary social structures to enable the combining of family and career were lacking. She wrote that the terms "marriage" and "yoke" share the

that women were discriminated in a manner similar to people of non-western descent. Export, "Delta. Ein Stück," *High Performance*, 18.

⁷⁶ In the *High Performance* article of 1981, Export translated "Freche Sau" as "you dumb sow" but earlier she translated it to "filthy swine" for the Biennale de Venezia catalogue of 1980. Gisland Nabakowski, for an essay in *Performance by Artists* in 1979, translated it as "shameless slut." I follow Export's later translation. See: Export, "Delta. Ein Stück," *High Performance*, 80; Export, *Austria, Biennale di Venezia*, 84; and Gisland Nabakowski, "The Flirtation with the 'It'—On Transgressing the Law in the Performance of the Seventies," in Bronson and Gale, *Performance by Artists*, 251.

⁷⁷ Export, "Delta. Ein Stück," *High Performance*, 80.

Latin root “tie to” and that “the marriage yoke led to the oppression of women.”⁷⁸ Export presented this theme through the masculine plaster shoulder attached to the confining yoke around her neck. Moreover, the movements that she made with the yoke and masculine shoulder were appropriated from Export’s own analysis of historical paintings and written accounts.⁷⁹

The next stage of the performance included writing on the triangular board, which she equated with “the plane of the female sex.”⁸⁰ She walked up the board and began to write the following words underneath “via maritalus”: “Wort” (word), “Antwort” (answer), and “Verantwortung” (responsibility). While she wrote, she periodically stopped to bang the hanging metal triangle with the female plaster hand. She described these three words as “thesis, antithesis, synthesis in reference to ‘in the beginning, there was the Word and the Word was with God,’ that is God the Father, the man.” She continued, in a published statement about *Delta*, to describe the purpose of the piece:

I thereby decree, respectively discredit, the masculine origin and teleology of the intersexual dialogue and its resultant ideology of responsibility. The repressive purposes of this ideology may especially be read in gestural language (from historical religious representations to the present): God the Father symbolically placing his hands on the shoulders of the engaged couple, the priest joining the couples [*sic*] fingers with rings—such gestures trace the curve of all discourse between the sexes in which the man plays the role of the spirit, speech and power and the woman is relegated the role of the body, speechlessness and unconsciousness. The conjugal bond requires the blessing of the man in the figure of the father.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁹ Export never gave details about sources for the movements and was never specific about what paintings she analyzed and what texts she read.

⁸⁰ Export, “Delta. Ein Stuck,” *High Performance*, 18.

⁸¹ Ibid., 18.

Export rejected what she saw as a superior position for men in heterosexual relationships. This domination received the approval by a man in the figure of the priest. Export felt that men's position of power contrasted significantly with a woman's forced silence. To counter this silence she included the clanging of the metal triangle hanging from the pole at the apex of the performance board ("the plane of the female sex") by a feminine hand-shaped plaster form. This action was "to make (declare) a sound, to find one's own sound. The scream—the speech of the suffering and defenseless."⁸² But this latter symbolism was difficult to perceive from the performance.

After writing on the board, the artist sat down in front of a full-length mirror placed to the left of the triangle board, looked at herself, and made gestures with her hands at her shoulders as she adjusted the yoke still bound at her neck. She slid down the board, stood up, walked up the board and banged the metal triangle. She returned to the mirror three more times to repeat the hand and shoulder gestures. These gestures were based on the symbolism she had studied, but the movements were all but impossible to understand during the performance, as viewed through its documentation. She has described this step of the performance as follows:

The gestural speech in front of the mirror is an attempt to find contact with oneself, to make oneself visible for oneself, no longer to stand next to or, as in most cases, behind the partner. The attempt at liberation from the determinism, an emancipation from the constraint represents isolation as well as being closed in (the realm of men).⁸³

After her intervals at the mirror, Export removed the neck yoke and placed it on the ground.

⁸² Ibid., 18.

⁸³ Ibid., 18.

For the following segment Export fastened a rectangular, wooden hand yoke around her right hand; the restrictive yoke had a plaster hand on the left side that mirrored the right hand. After this action she hit the metal triangle once again. Returning to the bottom of the board, she wrote with her bound right hand onto the surface: “Die Macht der Ohnmächtigen ist das Schweigen?” (The power of those without power is to keep silent?),⁸⁴ stopping several times to sound the triangle. Once she completed the phrase, she hit the plaster yoke hand with the loose plaster hand, freeing it and her own hand from the yoke, then clanged the triangle.

The clanging of the metal triangle served as a symbolic scream, voice, or sound for the speechless. The artist wished to transform this act into something more powerful for the next movement, choosing to use an ax, which Export regarded as a “tool for change.” The artist placed an ax head in her mouth, with which she aimed to break the wand of gilded wedding rings she held in her hands. To Export the wand represented the ruling authority of men in western society, as well as the illusion of equality in marriage. She stopped to sound the triangle halfway through the attempt to break the wand. She later described the action with the ax, “the tongue becomes a sharp metal edge, speechlessness turns into violence.”⁸⁵ The artist intended to show violence against social structures foreign to her (and women) and against a sense of self controlled by others. For the viewer, the symbolism of what she was breaking is lost, as it was next to impossible to see that the rod was constructed of wedding rings.

⁸⁴ Export translated this as “the power of those without consciousness is to keep silent” in “Delta. Ein Stuck,” *High Performance*, 18. In the Biennale di Venezia catalogue she translated the text as “the power of the powerless is silence,” Export, *Austria, Biennale di Venezia*, 84.

⁸⁵ Export, *Austria, Biennale di Venezia*, 84.

The final act began with Export returning to the raised apex of the board to clang the metal triangle several last times, and then removing the triangle entirely. She took the ax to the board to destroy it in a gesture that she described as the destruction of patriarchy's hierarchy, which informs all elements of culture:

The stigma of the body continues to remain the stigma of the female sex, that dumb energy whose will has been sacrificed in the discourse of culture. The hierarchy of the sexes in our own culture is structured with the aid of reason (therefore is an apparently reasonable way) into the spirit and character (not only of the law of books, customs, and habits) of its victims. The basis of this hierarchy is removed in the final action. With pick-ax in hand, the black triangular rising field of action is destroyed. For the might of women does not reside in the exhausted image of feminine moderation.⁸⁶

The aggressive act of destruction was aimed at traditional images of the married woman and, at the same time, symbolized new paths that have opened for women beyond the *via maritalis*. That being said, the board was not destroyed, but only marked by the ax on the right side of the triangle. Moreover, the intended relationship of the board to the female body, and the idea of the attack on patriarchy via the ax on the board were evidently difficult to ascertain from the viewing of the performance alone.

This last act was indicative of the difficulties in understanding the symbolic content of the work. The viewer needed information from the artist to understand the complex system of gestures and symbolism involved in the performance. But, at the time, only the title provided information: Delta, the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet is a triangle, like the performance board. Delta also means an incremental change—which is what the piece was working toward.

⁸⁶ Export, "Delta. Ein Stuck," *High Performance*, 80.

Export chose a complex system of references to address the topic of female oppression through Christian supported bond(age) of marriage. This tactic differed from Rosenbach's approach to critiquing religious structures in *My Transformation is My Liberation*, which took a complicated topic and reduced it to a few simple, repetitive actions. Export's performances are much more aggressive than Rosenbach's, with Export's use of an ax, breaking of plaster molds, and producing loud, annoying, repetitive sounds.⁸⁷ However, both of their performances were concerned with women's oppression by traditional religious institutions and words from *The Bible*. These artists' ritualistic performances, with repetitive actions aimed at critiquing and breaking down established religious ritual, aimed to generate new sacred spaces and power for women, a goal whose importance has been expressed by Turner:

That women in the United States and elsewhere have begun to claim sacred space for themselves, to create rituals which emphasize their loyalty to each other and finally name the powers which men have found "anomalous" (i.e. nameless) is indeed an ultimate, radical (proceeding from the root) affirmation of the revolutionary potential of the feminist movement. Asserting the right to ritual means as a source of power, vision and solidarity is the symbolic corollary of equal pay, choice of abortion, domestic freedom, the establishment of women's businesses, etc. Successful and enduring change in the status of women will come only through parallel transformation of symbols and realities. Feminist ritual practice is currently the most important model for symbolic and, therefore, psychic and spiritual change in women.⁸⁸

Ritual was regarded by many feminists and feminist performance artists as a powerful tactic to address some of the difficult issues facing women. Moreover, Export and

⁸⁷ Of course, Rosenbach's piece *Don't You Believe I'm an Amazon* is aggressive in as much as it entailed shooting arrows at the Madonna and image of herself as Amazon.

⁸⁸ Turner, "Contemporary Feminist Ritual," 21.

Rosenbach both challenged traditional cultural rituals in their own performative approaches.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach each followed different paths in their approach to myth and ritual, indicative of the differing cultural backgrounds and framing feminist movements in the home countries of each artist. Some of Schneemann's and Rosenbach's works made direct and indirect references to the Great Goddess and other pre-patriarchal symbols. For Schneemann the inner creative source of her body was best expressed by symbols of goddesses, including specifically the Snake Goddess, in the works in question. The inspiration Rosenbach drew from ancient goddess cultures gave her a sense of empowerment which she manifest through her work. She made several trips to the United States and met with feminist artists in California, visits which helped inform her outlook on feminism. Rosenbach also addressed other mythological figures, tacitly asking what they represented, or could potentially offer, to women. In terms of contemporary ritual, both Rosenbach and Export critiqued Christian religious practices and institutions through their own personal ritual performances, a topic not tackled by Schneemann. It could be argued that Export's religious education figured more prominently in the development of her ideas. The Viennese Actionists, who often took aim at Catholic Church rituals, could also have helped compel Export to take on current ritual, in the form of Christian ceremonies and structures, in her work.

Ritual was a popular performance art approach among feminist artists in the 1970s, as it was also important to feminist groups during the period. It offered a way to

critique dominant institutions but at the same time gave women support in their search for alternative structures for society. Goddess imagery had similar potential for feminist artists, but held greater attraction for feminists in the United States, and for Schneemann, in particular. Yet, in many respects, the concept of the goddess was too far removed from everyday life, and it could not concretely describe the social and cultural conditions of women's lives. It could also be seen to reinforce the idea of an almighty power from which all life flows, similar to the Judeo-Christian tradition. At the same, however, goddess themes did provide inspiration for women to celebrate themselves as well as the relationships amongst women. Female pride, which often accompanied this work, was expressed through a celebration of the creative powers of the female body. Yet, the focus on women's bodies, and on relationships with the Great Goddess or Earth Goddess, reinscribed women's association with nature, upholding the nature/culture, female/male dichotomies of patriarchal society. Moreover, for some the emphasis on the creative powers of the female body was problematic in its underlying, essentialist premises. In spite of these drawbacks, for many feminist artists working with the female body through ritual, pre-patriarchal cultures, and goddess imagery, this direction once symbolically represented the possibility for a new society in which women could more fully participate in all social, cultural, and political capacities.

THE FEMALE BODY IN CONFLICT: CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined the work of Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export, and Ulrike Rosenbach as case studies in a cross-cultural examination of feminist performance art of the late 1960s and 1970s. It explored the second wave women's movements in the United States, Austria, and Germany to contextualize the development of each artist's work and to better understand the relevant issues of feminism in each country. To facilitate such an examination, selected works were analyzed in four thematic areas: personal experiences, beauty and the (nude) female body, female sexuality, and myth and ritual. These topics had emerged as dominant concerns in feminist performance art in the late 1960s and 1970s. The aim of this study, then, was to understand the development of these topics in early feminist performance art, to undertake the first international study on feminist performance art, and to provide detailed analyses of selected work by three significant practitioners in this medium.

For each artist, personal experiences helped to define the direction upon which their work would embark, as discussed in Chapter 3. The consciousness-raising activities of the second wave women's movements played a key role in substantiating women's awareness of the conditions of their lives and validating personal experiences as potential subject matter for feminist art. For Schneemann, her personal relationships became integral to the development of a number of performance pieces, to the extent that it was difficult to discern where her art ended and her life began. In an effort to avoid patriarchal definitions of her identity, Export rejected both her birth name and her married name by altering it to "Valie Export" early in her career. Export was concerned

with the social markings of “woman” and how these were inscribed onto women’s bodies. To challenge these markings, the artist performed a number of gender altering photographic performances to investigate the limits between the feminine and the masculine. For Rosenbach personal female relationships were integral to her work in the 1970s in which she examined the mother-daughter relationship as well as possibilities for women’s communities.

In the history of western culture, women’s (nude) bodies have traditionally symbolized beauty in art and this beauty often represented a passive, helpless, and objectified woman, as established in Chapter 4. Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach set out to interrogate such tacit assumptions in their work. However, when using their own, often nude, bodies in their work, it was a challenge to critique images of the female nude and standards of beauty that did not objectify women, but rather invested them with power over their own bodies and identities. To these ends, the artists worked to dissolve traditional representations of women that idealized and disembodied them, and instead they presented real, functioning bodies as alternatives. Schneemann activated the female nude in the museum environment to challenge the passive representations of women in painting. Export defaced her female body by tattooing her leg and putting her nude body in a precarious position by cutting through its surface and challenging notions of beauty associated with women’s bodies. In a different strategy Rosenbach dressed in a skin-tight leotard and assumed the role of Venus, the patriarchal goddess of love and beauty, to question this goddess’s recurrent appearance in western culture.

Chapter 5 took female sexuality to task, analyzing performance art and films by Schneemann and Export that revealed a sexual self-awareness and specificity in their

sexual experiences. The work was often politically driven in an effort to liberate women's sexuality from socially condoned sexual behavior. Both artists produced short films that aimed to reveal sexual experiences from a woman's perspective, a viewpoint missing in the visual imagery from both of their societies until the women's movement. In performances Schneemann posited her female sexuality as a crucial source for her creativity. Export, on the other hand, also critiqued western culture's (especially Austrian society's) perception of women's sexuality and their bodies in performances which challenged the objectification and social control of women's bodies. The work of both artists exceeded the physical and social boundaries of women's sexuality.

Reinterpretations of history that would include pre-patriarchal and patriarchal myths and rituals played an important part in the performative examinations by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach as detailed in the final chapter. For Schneemann the inner creative source of her body was best expressed by symbols of goddesses, including specifically the Snake Goddess. This was not to state that there is an underlying female essence to identify but rather to celebrate women's creativity and inspiration from their individual bodily and social experiences. The inspiration Rosenbach drew from ancient goddess cultures gave her a sense of empowerment which she manifest through her work. She also expressed her ambivalent feelings towards traditional roles and representations of women through an analysis of patriarchal mythology and religion. Export critiqued patriarchal religious structures and the tradition of hand and shoulder symbolism in the history of western painting in an effort to locate a new space for woman. Working with ritual offered a way for these artists to critique dominant institutions but at the same time gave them support in their search for alternative structures for society.

Each of these artists chose the medium of performance art in which to use their own bodies to challenge patriarchal definitions of women in their respective societies. Under the auspices of the activities of the second wave women's movements, Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach developed new visual territory in which women could address their lives, question their identities, and look to the female body for inspiration. The artists presented images of women that conflicted with social norms for women's bodies and with accepted standards of female behavior. The female body was, and continues to be, contested ground and these artists challenged traditional social, cultural, and historical assumptions about women through their work.

Due to the conflicts surrounding the use of the female body in cultural production, much of the work by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach has been insufficiently analyzed. In the dominant discourses of post-World War Two art, including the surveys that teach generations of students the history of art, this important body of work is neglected and in some cases not even mentioned. Moreover, essentialist labeling has minimized the scholarly attention received by feminist performance art of the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, it was the aim of this dissertation, through the chosen examples of work by Schneemann, Export, and Rosenbach to increase the knowledge of their work, of feminist performance art, of significant themes in feminist performance, and of feminism in the United States, Austria, and Germany.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by 21 Women Artists*. London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980.
- Alberti, Leon Battista. *On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De Pictura and De Statua*, ed. and translated by Cecil Grayson. London: Phaidon, 1972.
- Alloway, Lawrence, Max Kozloff, Rosalind Krauss, Annette Michelson. "Letters." *Artforum*, vol. 13, no. 4 (December 1974): 9.
- Alloway, Lawrence. "Women's Art in the '70s." *Art in America*, vol. 64 (May-June 1976): 64-72.
- Altbach, Edith Hoshino. "The New German Women's Movement." In *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 3-26.
- The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance in America, 1970-1980*, ed. Moira Roth. Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983.
- De Appel Stichting, archive of video recordings at Montevideo/Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- Arnason, H. Harvard. *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1986.
- Art Action, 1958-1998: Happening, Fluxus, Intermédia, Zaj, Art Corporel/Body Art, Poésie Action/Action Poetry, Actionnisme Viennois, Viennese Actionism, Performance, Arte Acción, Sztuka Performance, Performans, Akció Művészet*, ed. Richard Martel. Quebec: Editions Interventions, 2001.
- Art and Feminism*. Rome: Palazzo Esposizioni, 1976.
- Art and Feminism*, ed. Helena Reckitt. London: Phaidon, 2001.
- Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, ed. Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin Buchloh. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004.
- "Austria." In *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan. Garden City, New York: Archer Double Day, 1984; reprint, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996, 69-71.

- Badovinac, Zdenka. *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present*, ed. Mika Briški. Ljubljana, Slovenia: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 1998.
- Banes, Sally. *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-1964*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Barry, Judith and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis. "The Politics of Art-Making." In *Feminist Art Criticism*, ed. Joanna Frueh, Cassandra Langer, and Arlene Raven. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988, 87-97.
- Becker, Susan D. *The Origins of the Equal Rights Amendment*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1981.
- Benard, Cheryl and Edit Schlaffer. "Austria: Benevolent Despotism Versus the Contemporary Feminist Movement." In *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan. Garden City, New York: Archer Double Day, 1984; reprint, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996, 72-6.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972.
- Berger, Renate, Ingrid Kolb, and Marielouise Janssen-Jurreit. "Germany (West; FRG): Fragmented Selves (A Collage)." In *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan. Garden City, New York: Archer Double Day, 1984; reprint, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996, 248-54.
- The Bible, Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha*. Introduction and notes by Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Bildkompendium Wiener Aktionismus und Film*, ed. Peter Weibel and Valie Export. Frankfurt: Kohl Kunstverlag, 1970.
- Blanchard, Adeline. "Valie Export: le corps au feminine. Les performances et happenings dans l'Autriche des années 70." Ph.D. diss., University of Bourgogne, 2000.
- Blocker, Jane. *What the Body Cost: Desire, History, and Performance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Boch, Gisella. "Wages for Housework as a Perspective of the Women's Movement." In *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 246-250.
- Boles, Janet. *The Politics of the Equal Rights Amendment*. New York: Longman, 1979.

- Bouchier, David. *The Feminist Challenge: The Movement for Women's Liberation in Britain and the USA*. London: Macmillan, 1983.
- Bovenschen, Silvia. "Is There a Feminine Aesthetic?" Translated by Beth Weckmueller. In *Feminist Aesthetics*, ed. Gisela Ecker. London: The Women's Press, 1985, 23-50. Originally published in German as "Über die Frage: Gibt es eine weibliche Ästhetik?" *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 25 (1976): 60-75.
- Braun, Kerstin. *Der Wiener Aktionismus: Positionen und Prinzipien*. Vienna: Böhlau, 1999.
- Brentano, Robyn and Olivia Georgia. *Outside the Frame, Performance and the Object: A Survey of Performance Art in the USA from 1950 to the Present*. Cleveland: Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, 1994.
- Brodsky, Judith K. "Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 104-119.
- Broude, Norma and Mary D. Garrard. "Introduction: Feminism and Art in the Twentieth Century." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Broude and Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 10-29.
- _____. "Conversations with Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Broude and Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 66-85.
- Brownmiller, Susan. *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*. New York: Dial Press, 1999.
- Brox-Brochet, Delphine. "Manifesto of the 'Green' Women." In *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 315-7.
- Buchloch, Benjamin. "Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol." *Artforum*, vol. 18, no.5 (January 1980): 35-43.
- Budapest, Zsuzsanna. *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Feminist Witchcraft, Goddess Rituals, Spellcasting, and Other Womanly Arts*. Berkeley: Wingbow Press, 1989.
- Burke, Carolyn, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford. *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

- Cameron, Dan. "Object vs. Persona: The Early Work of Carolee Schneemann." *Arts Magazine*, vol. 57, no. 9 (May 1983): 122-5.
- Cameron, Dan et al. *Carolee Schneemann: Up To and Including Her Limits*. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.
- Carter, Cassie. "'Woman Red in Tooth and Claw': Angry Essentialism, Abjection, and Visionary Liberation in Women's Performances." Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 1998.
- Castle, Ted. "Carolee Schneemann: The Woman Who Uses Her Body as Her Art." *Artforum*, vol. 19, no. 3 (November 1980): 64-70.
- Chave, Anna C. "Minimalism and Biography." *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 82, no. 1 (March 2000): 149-63.
- Cheney, Liana De Girolami. *Botticelli's Neoplatanic Images*. Potomac, Maryland: Scripta Humanistica, 1993.
- Chicago, Judy and Miriam Schapiro. "Female Imagery." *Womanspace Journal*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 11-14.
- Chicago, Judy. *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist*. Garden City, New York: Double Day, 1978; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1993.
- Christ, Carol P. "Why Women Need the Goddess." *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 8-13.
- Clark, Kenneth. *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. New York: Pantheon, 1956.
- Clark, T.J. *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Cles-Reden, Sibylle von. *The Realm of the Great Goddess: The Story of the Megalith Builders*, translated by Eric Mosbacher. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962, originally published as *Die Spur der Zyklopen*. Schauberg, Germany: Verlag M. Dumont, 1960.
- Costain, Anne N. and W. Douglas Costain. "Strategies and Tactics of the Women's Movement in the United States: The Role of Political Parties." In *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987, 196-214.

- Cowie, Elizabeth, Claire Johnston, Cora Kaplan, Mary Kelly, Jaqueline Rose, and Marie Yates. "Representation versus Communication." In *No Turning Back*. London: London Women's Press, 1981.
- Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
- _____. *Gyn/Ecology, the Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
- D'Ancona, Mirella Levi. *Due Quadri del Botticelli Eseguiti per Nascite in Casa Medici: Nuova interpretazione della Primavera e della Nascita di Venere*. Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1992.
- Dantuma, Hanneke and Marlite Halbertsma. "Feministische kanttekeningen bij de dokumenta 6." *Museumjournaal*, vol. 22, no. 5 (October 1977): 195-202.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*, ed. and translated by H.M. Parshley. New York: Knopf, 1953; New York, Knopf, 1993.
- de Duve, Thierry. *Cousus de fil d'or: Beuys, Warhol, Klein, Duchamp*. Villeurbanne: Art édition, 1990.
- In a Different Light: Visual Culture, Sexual Identity, and Queer Practice*, ed. Lawrence Rinder, Nayland Blake, Amy Scholder. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995.
- Diner, Helen. *Mothers and Amazons: The First Feminine History of Culture*, ed. and translated by John Philip Lundin. New York: Julian Press, 1965. Originally published as Bertha Eckstein-Diener. *Mütter und amazonen, ein umriss weiblicher reiche*. Munich: A. Langen, 1932.
- Doane, Mary Ann. "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator." In *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, and Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1991, 17-32.
- Documenta 5: Befragung der Realität, Bildwelten heute*. Kassel: Verlag Documenta GmbH/Verlagsgruppe Bertelsmann GmbH, 1972.
- Documenta 6, Band 1: Malerei, Plastik, Performance*. Kassel: P. Dierich, 1977.
- Doormann, Lottemi. "Die neue Frauenbewegung: Zur Entwicklung van 1968 bis anfang der 80er Jahre." In *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Florence Hervé. Cologne: PapyRossa Verlag, 1990, 255-89.

Double Life: Identität und Transformation in der zeitgenössischen Kunst (Identity and Transformation in Contemporary Arts), ed. Sabine Breitwieser. Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2001.

Duncan, Carol. "The Aesthetics of Power in Modern Erotic Art." *Heresies*, no. 1 (January 1977): 46-50.

Edelson, Mary Beth. *The Art of Mary Beth Edelson*. New York: Seven Cycles, 2002.

_____. "Pilgrimage/See for Yourself: A Journey to a Neolithic Goddess Cave, 1977, Grapveca, Hvar Island, Yugoslavia." *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 96-99.

Eiblmayr, Silvia, Valie Export, and Monika Prischl-Maier. *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn: aktuelle Kunst von Frauen: Text und Dokumentation*. Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1985.

Eiblmayr, Silvia. "Die weibliche Selbst-Inszenierung: Dialektik von Reflexion und Revolte im Bildstatus der Frau." In *Die Frau als Bild: Der Weibliche Körper in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Reimer, 1993, 137-215.

Eichler, Anja-Franziska. *Albrecht Dürer*, translated by Fiona Hulse. Cologne: Könemann, 1999.

Ein Gespräch = Una discussione: Joseph Beuys, Jannis Kounellis, Anselm Kiefer, Enzo Cucchi, ed. Jacqueline Burckhardt. Zurich: Parkett-Verlag, 1986.

Eller, Cynthia. *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2000.

Enright, Robert. "Carolee Schneemann in Conversation: The Articulate Body." *Border Crossings*, vol. 17 (Winter 1998): 14-27.

Evans, Sara Margaret. *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*. New York: Knopf, 1979.

Valie Export Archives, The Generali Foundation, Vienna.

Export, Valie. "Artist Conversation: Valie Export and Maria-Christina Villaseñor." *(Re)Presenting Performance: A Symposium*. 9 April 2005, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, organized by Nancy Spector and Jennifer Blessing.

_____. "Delta. Ein Stück. Delta. A Fragment. 1976." *High Performance* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 18.

_____. "Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality." *Jam*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July 1991): 7-13.

- _____. *Valie Export. Austria. Biennale di Venezia 1980*. Vienna: Galerie in der Staatsoper, 1980.
- _____. "Feministischer Aktionismus. Aspekte." in *Frauen in der Kunst*, ed. Gisliind Nabakowski, Helke Sander, and Peter Gorsen. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980, 139-76. Published in English as "Aspects of Feminist Actionism." *New German Critique* 47 (Spring/Summer 1989): 69-92.
- _____. "Frau und Kreativität." In *Zur Situation und Kreativität der Frau*. Innsbruck: Forum für aktuelle Kunst, 1976, unpaginated.
- _____. "Interview with Andrea Juno." *Angry Women* (1991): 186-93.
- _____. Interview by Kathleen Wentrack. New York, 9 April 2005.
- _____. "Interview with Ruth Askey." *High Performance* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 15, 80.
- _____. *Magna. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität: Ein Überblick über die weibliche Sensibilität, Imagination, Projektion und Problematik, suggeriert durch ein Tableau von Bildern, Objekten, Fotos, Vorträgen, Diskussionen, Lesungen, Filmen, Videobändern und Aktionen*. Vienna: Galerie nächst St. Stephan, 1975.
- _____. "Mann, Frau, Animal (Interview with Valie Export)." In *Frauen und Film*, no. 7 (March 1976): 38-42.
- _____. "Mediale Anagramme: Ein Gedanken und Bilder-Vortrag. Frühe Arbeiten." In *Difference: Eiblmayr, Export, Moser, Peskoller, Steixner, Schlegel, Wibmer*, ed. Christoph Bertsch, Judith Reichart, and Heidrun Sandbichler. Innsbruck: Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität Innsbruck, 1999, 75-83.
- _____. "Persona, Proto-Performance, Politics: A Preface," translated by Jamie Owen Daniel. *Discourse*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 26-35.
- _____. *Das Reale und sein Double: Der Körper*. Bern: G.J. Lischka, 1987. Published in English as "The Real and its Double: The Body." *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, no. 11/1 (Fall/Winter 1988-89): 3-27.
- _____. *Split, Reality: Valie Export*. Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig and Springer, 1997.
- _____. "Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Frau und Kreativität." In *Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977*, ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauen in der Kunst. Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977, 100-105.

- _____. "Woman's Art: Ein Manifest." *Neues Forum*, no. 228 (January 1972): 47. Published in English as "Woman's Art: A Manifesto," translated by Resigna Haslinger. In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 755-6.
- Falkner, Gerda and Emmerich Tálos. "Politik und Lebensbedingungen von Frauen: Ansätze von 'Frauenpolitik' in Österreich." In *Der Geforderte Wohlfahrtsstaat: Traditionen—Herausforderungen—Perspektiven*, ed. Emmerich Tálos. Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1992, 195-234.
- Feigl, Susanne. *Frauen in Österreich 1975-1985*. Vienna: Staatssekretariat für allgemeine Frauenfragen im Bundeskanzleramt, 1985.
- Feminism—Art—Theory: An Anthology 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
- Feministische Kunst Internationaal: performance, video, film, dokumentatie*. Amsterdam: De Appel, 1978.
- Feministische Kunst Internationaal*. The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979.
- Ferree, Myra Marx and Beth B. Hess. *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985.
- Ferree, Myra Marx. "Equality and Autonomy: Feminist Politics in the United States and Western Germany." In *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987, 172-195.
- Fleck, Robert et al. *Ob/De+Con(Structure)*. Philadelphia: Moore College of Art and Design, 2000.
- Forte, Jeanne. "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism." *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 2 (May 1988): 217-35.
- Frauen, Kunst, Neue Tendenzen*. Innsbruck: Galerie Krinzinger, 1975.
- Freeman, Jo. "Whom You Know versus Whom You Represent: Feminist Influence in the Democratic and Republican Parties." In *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987, 215-244.

- Freud, Sigmund. "Chapter VII: An Example of Psycho-Analytic Work (1940 [1938])." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and translated by James Strachey, vol. XXIII. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964, 183-94.
- _____. "Female Sexuality (1931)." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and translated by James Strachey, vol. XXI. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1961, 221-43.
- _____. "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood (1910)." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and translated by James Strachey, vol. XI. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1957, 57-137.
- _____. "Medusa's Head (1940; 1922)." In *Abstracts of the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Carrie Lee Rothgeb. New York: International Universities Press, 1973, 1940C 18/273.
- _____. "Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence (1940[1938])." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and translated by James Strachey, vol. XXIII. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964, 271-8.
- Friedan, Betty. *It Changed My Life*. New York: Random House, 1976.
- _____. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton, 1963.
- Fischer, Erika. "Frauenbewegung in Österreich." In *Frauenbewegungen in der Welt*, vol. 1, *Westeuropa*, ed. Autonome Frauenredaktion. Hamburg: Argument, 1988, 184-188.
- Francblin, Catherine. "Body-Object, Woman-Object [1975]," translated by Elizabeth Manchester. In *The Artist's Body*, ed. Tracey Warr, survey by Amelia Jones. London: Phaidon, 2000, 238. Originally published "Corps-object, femme-object." *Art Press*, vol. 20 (September-October 1975): 14-15.
- Frueh, Joanna. "The Body through Women's Eyes." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 190-207.
- _____. *Monster/Beauty: Building the Body of Love*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Fuss, Diana. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference*. New York and London: Routledge, 1989.

- Garrard, Mary D. "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Garrard. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994, 88-103.
- Gaulke, Cheri. "Performance Art of the Woman's Building." *High Performance* 3 (Fall/Winter 1980): 156-63.
- Geiger, Brigitte and Hanna Hacker. *Donauwalzer Damenwahl: Frauenbewegte Zusammenhänge in Österreich*. Vienna: Promedia, 1989.
- German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.
- "Germany (West)." In *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan. Garden City, New York: Archer Double Day, 1984; reprint, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996, 245-8.
- Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Florence Hervé. Cologne: PapyRossa Verlag, 1990.
- Gibbs, Michael. "Everything in the art world exists in order to end up as a book." *Art Communication Edition* 6, July 1977, n.p.
- Gibson, Ann. *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Gimbutas, Marija. *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500-3500 B.C., Myths and Cult Images*, new and updated edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Global Feminisms since 1945*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Glüher, Gerhard. *Ulrike Rosenbach, Wege zur Medienkunst 1972-2002*. Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2005.
- Goldberg, RoseLee. *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, revised and enlarged edition. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988, originally published as *Performance: Live Art, 1909 to the Present*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979.
- Golden, Eunice. "The Male Nude in Women's Art: Dialectics of a Feminist Iconography." *Heresies* 3, no. 4, issue 12 (1981): 40-42.
- Gombrich, Ernst. *The Story of Art*, 15th edition. Oxford: Phaidon, 1989.

- Gorsen, Peter, Gisland Nabakowski, and Helke Sander. *Frauen in der Kunst*, vol. 1 and 2. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1980.
- Göttner-Abendroth, Heide. *The Dancing Goddess: Principles of a Matriarchal Aesthetic*, translated by Maureen T. Krause. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991. Originally published in German as *Die Tanzende Göttin: Prinzipien einer Matriarchalen Ästhetik*. Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1982.
- Graevenitz, Antje von. "Halverwege het feministische kunstseizoen." *Museumjournaal*, vol. 24, no. 1 (February 1979): 29-32.
- Greer, Germaine. *The Female Eunuch*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.
- Griffin, Susan. *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.
- Grolitsch, Gerhild. "We are feminists, interview with Gisland Nabakowski." *Flash Art*, no. 68-69 (October-November 1976): 17-20.
- Halbertsma, Marlite. "Van naïeve clichés tot individuele vrijheid: Waarom feministische kunst zichzelf moest overleven." *Opzij* (September 1987): 26-9.
- Halbertsma, Marlite. Chapter 6 "Vrouwenstudies Kunstgeschiedenis." In *Gezichtspunten: Een Inleiding in de Methoden van de Kunstgeschiedenis*, ed. Marlite Halbertsma and Kitty Zijlmans. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Sun, 1993, 212-240.
- Hall, James. *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*. London: John Murray, Ltd., 1974.
- Hammond, Harmony. *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History*. New York: Rizzoli, 2000.
- Happenings, Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme: Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, 1965.
- Harris, Ann Sutherland and Linda Nochlin. *Women Artists, 1550-1950*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1976.
- Hauch, Gabriella. "Rights at Last? The First Generation of Female Members of Parliament in Austria." In *Women in Austria, Contemporary Austrian Studies*, Volume 6, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Erika Thurner. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998, 56-82.
- Hayes, Hoffman Reynolds. *The Dangerous Sex: The Myth of Feminine Evil*. New York: Putnum, 1964.

- Henri, Adrian. *Total Art: Environments, Happenings, and Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Hesiod. *The Work and Days, Theogony, The Shield of Herakles*, translated by Richmond Lattimore. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959.
- Hirsch, Robert. *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.
- Hoffmann, Detlef et al. *Frauenalltag und Frauenbewegung 1890-1980*. Frankfurt am Main: Historische Museum Frankfurt am Main, Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1981.
- Hole, Judith and Ellen Levine. *The Rebirth of Feminism*. New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971.
- Hopkins, David. *After Modern Art, 1945-2000*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Houser, Craig, Leslie C. Jones, and Simon Taylor. *Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993.
- Hunter, Sam and John Jacobus. *Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*. New York, H.N. Abrams, 1985.
- In the Spirit of Fluxus*, essays by Simon Anderson et al., organized by Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which is Not One*, translated by Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- James, David E. "Carolee Schneemann: *Fuses*." In *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, 317-21.
- _____. "Stan Brakhage: The Filmmaker as Poet." In *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, 29-30.
- Janofsky, Michael. "Academy's Top General Apologizes to Cadets." *The New York Times*, Tuesday, April 1, 2003, Late Edition, Section A, Page 14, Column 5.
- Janofsky, Michael with Diana Jean Schemo. "Women Recount Life as Cadets: Forced Sex, Fear and Silent Rage." *The New York Times*, Sunday, March 16, 2003, Late Edition, Section 1, Page 1, Column 1.
- Jappe, Elisabeth. *Performance, Ritual, Prozess: Handbuch der Aktionskunst in Europa*. Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1993.

- Jappe, Georg. "Performance Art in Germany: An Introduction." *Studio International* 192, no. 982 (July/August 1976), 59-61.
- Jochimsen, Margarethe. "Feministische Kunst." *Kunstmagazin*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1977): 66-89.
- Jones, Amelia. *Body Art: Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- _____. "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation." *Art Journal*, vol. 56, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 11-18.
- _____. "Sexual Politics: Feminist Strategies, Feminist Conflicts, Feminist Histories." In *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, ed. Jones. Los Angeles: UCLA at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center and the University of California Press, 1996, 20-38.
- Kaplan, Gisela. "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Germany." In *Contemporary Western European Feminism*. New York: New York University Press, 1992, 103-28.
- _____. "Conservatism in the Germanic Countries: Austria." In *Contemporary Western European Feminism*. New York: New York University Press, 1992, 128-38.
- Kaprow, Allan. "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock." In *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, 7-9.
- Katzenstein, Mary Fainsod. "Comparing the Feminist Movements of the United States and Western Europe: An Overview." In *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987, 3-20.
- Kiernan, Joanna. "Films by Valie Export." *Millennium Film Journal*, no. 16/17/18 (Fall/Winter 1986-87): 181-7.
- Klein, Ethel. "The Diffusion of Consciousness in the United States and Western Europe." In *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987, 23-43.
- Klocker, Hubert. "Gesture and the Object, Liberation as Aktion: A European Component of Performative Art." In *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object*,

1949-1979, ed. Paul Schimmel. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art and Thames and Hudson, 1998, 167-191.

Kristeva, Julia. *The Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Kubitza, Anette. *Fluxus, Flirt, Feminismus: Carolee Schneemann's Körperkunst und die Avantgarde*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2002.

_____. *Die Kunst, das Loch, die Frau: Feministische Kontroversen um Judy Chicago's "Dinner Party."* Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1994.

_____. "Rereading the Reading of *The Dinner Party* in Europe." In *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, ed. Amelia Jones. Los Angeles: UCLA at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center and the University of California Press, 1996, 148-76.

Kulansky, Mark. *Salt: A World History*. New York: Walker and Co., 2002.

Kultermann, Udo. "Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen." *Du*, no. 12 (December 1990): 49-53.

Künstlerinnen International, 1877-1977, ed. Arbeitsgruppe Frauen in der Kunst. Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1977.

Lakoff, Robin Tolmach and Raquel Scherr. *Face Value: The Politics of Beauty*. Boston and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

Lamb-Faffelberger, Margarete. *Valie Export und Elfriede Jelinek im Spiegel der Presse*. New York: Peter Lang, 1992.

Lightbown, Ronald. *Sandro Botticelli*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Lindenburg, Rosa. "Feminisme en Kunst in Nederland." *Opzij* (December 1978): 38-41.

_____. "Sexualiteit en bevrijding." *Feministische Kunst Internationaal*. The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979, 46-52.

Lippard, Lucy. *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976.

_____. "The L.A. Woman's Building." *Art in America*, vol. 62, no. 3 (May-June 1974). Reprinted in *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976, 96-100.

- _____. "Making Up: Role Playing and Transformation in Women's Art." In *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976, 101-108.
- _____. *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.
- _____. "The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: Women's Body Art." *Art in America*, vol. 64, no. 3 (May-June, 1976): 74-81. Reprinted in *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976, 121-38.
- _____. *Ulrike Rosenbach: Video and Performance Art*. Boston: ICA, 1983.
- _____. *Twenty-Six Contemporary Women Artists*. Ridgefield, Connecticut: Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 1971.
- _____. "Die Vergangenheit als Ziel(scheibe) der Zukunft/The Past as Target of the Future." In Ulrike Rosenbach. *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, feministische Kunst*. Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982, 121-6.
- _____. "The Women Artists' Movement—What Next?" In *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976, 139-48.
- Longhauser, Elsa. *Valie Export: Ob/De+Con(struction)*. Philadelphia: Goldie Paley Gallery, Galleries at Moore, Moore College of Art and Design, 2000.
- Lovelace, Carey. "The Gender and Case of Carolee Schneemann." *Millennium Film Journal*, no. 16/17/18 (Fall/Winter 1986-87): 162-8.
- Lupri, Claudia. *Ulrike Rosenbach: Video, Performance, Installation, 1972-1989*. Toronto: York University, 1989.
- Mabry, Hannelore. "Die neue Frauenbewegung und die Partei—und Gewerkschaftsfrage." In *Autonomie oder Institution: Über die Leidenschaft und Macht von Frauen. Beiträge zur 4. Sommer-Universität der Frauen, 1979*. Berlin: Dokumentationsgruppe der Sommeruniversität der Frauen, 1981, 218-233. Published in English as "The New Women's Movement and the Party and the Trade Union Question." In *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 324-329.
- _____. "The Feminist Theory of Surplus Value." In *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 265-274.
- MacDonald, Scott. "Carolee Schneemann" (1979). *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 134-51.

- _____. "The Men Cooperated." *Afterimage*, vol. 12, No. 9 (April, 1985): 12.
- MacKenzie, Donald. *The Migration of Symbols and Their Relations to Beliefs and Customs*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1926.
- Mandel, Gabriele. *The Complete Paintings of Botticelli*. New York: Abrams, 1970.
- Margolis, Diane Rothbard. "Women's Movements Around the World: Cross-Cultural Comparisons." *Gender & Society* 7, no. 3 (September 1993): 379-99.
- Marini, Maurizio. *Caravaggio: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio "pictor praestantissimus" : la tragica esistenza, la raffinata cultura, il mondo sanguigno del primo Seicento, nell'iter pittorico completo di uno dei massimi rivoluzionari dell'arte di tutti i tempi*. Rome: Newton Compton, 1987.
- Matzner, Florian. *Künstlerlexicon mit Registern zur Documenta 1-8*. Kassel: Verlag Weber & Weidemeyer/Documenta Archiv für die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts, 1987.
- McEvelley, Thomas. "Redirecting the Gaze." In *Making their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-85*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1989, 187-95.
- Mechelen, Marga van. "Abjecte Kunst." In *Lengte, Breedte en Diepte. Twaalf interculturele ontmoetingen*. Arnhem: GBK, Interart, and De Gele Rijder, 1998, 12-16.
- _____. "Abjecte Kunst." Paper presented at the lecture series "Fascinatie voor het Abjecte," Studium Generale Crea, Amsterdam, 20 April 1999.
- _____. "Excreta in Art." In *La Semiotica Interseccion entre la Naturalez y la Cultura*, ed. Adrian Gimete Welsh. Guadalajara, Mexico: Proceedings of the VIth International Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, 1999, CD-ROM, no pagination, 7 pages.
- _____. Forthcoming book on the history of De Appel Foundation from 1975 to 1983, to be published by De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam in 2006. See Chapter 5 "Two Special Events: *Feministische Kunst Internationaal* (1978-1979) and *Works and Words* (1979)."
- _____. "De Plaats van het Abjecte in Onze Beschaving." Paper presented at the lecture series "Fascinatie voor het Abjecte," Studium Generale Crea, Amsterdam, 27 April 1999.
- Mignot, Dorine. *Ulrike Rosenbach/Valie Export*. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1980.

- Montevideo/Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, video archive.
- Moore, Liz. "Statement for *Women's Liberation Art Group*." In *Towards a Revolutionary Feminist Art*, no. 1 (1972): 1.
- Morales y Marín, José Luis. *Goya: Catalogue of his Paintings*, translated by Muriel Feiner. Zaragoza: Real Academia de Nobles y Bellas Artes de San Luis, 1997.
- Mueller, Carol McClurg. "Collective Consciousness, Identity Transformation, and the Rise of Women in Public Office in the United States." In *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Katzenstein and Mueller. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987, 89-108.
- Mueller, Roswitha. *Valie Export: Fragments of the Imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen 16*, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18.
- Munroe, Alexandra with Jon Hendricks. *Yes Yoko Ono*. New York: Japan Society: Harry N. Abrams, 2000.
- Nabakowski, Gisland. "Das ›Womanhouse‹. Scharfe Kritik an der domestizierten Phantasie. Ein Gruppenenvironment." In Nabakowski, Helke Sander, and Peter Gorsen. *Frauen in der Kunst*, vol. 1. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1980, 224-236.
- _____. "The Flirtation with the 'It'—On Transgressing the Law in the Performance of the Seventies." In *Performance by Artists*, ed. A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale. Toronto: Art Metropole, 1979, 250-9.
- Nam June Paik: Fluxus, Video*, ed. Wulf Herzogenrath. Bremen: Kunsthalle Bremen, 1999.
- Nead, Lynda. *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Neumann, Erich. *The Great Mother: An Analysis of an Archetype*, translated by Ralph Manheim, 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Nesweda, Peter. In Her Own Image: Valie Export, Artist and Feminist." *Arts Magazine*, vol. 65, no. 9 (May 1991): 70-3.

- Noack, Ruth. "Inszenierte Existenzen in der Kunst der siebziger Jahre/Producing Existences in the Art of the Seventies." In *Double Life: Identität und Transformation in der zeitgenössischen Kunst (Identity and Transformation in Contemporary Arts)*, ed. Sabine Breitwieser. Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2001, 23-40.
- Nochlin, Linda. "Some Women Realists: Painters of the Figure." *Arts Magazine* 48, no. 8 (May 1974): 29-33.
- _____. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *ARTnews*, vol. 69, no. 9 (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71.
- O'Dell, Kathy. *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art and the 1970s*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- _____. "Towards a Theory of Performance Art: An Investigation of its Sites." Ph.D. diss., Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, 1992.
- Oh Boy, It's a Girl, Feminism in der Kunst*. Munich: Kunstverein München, 1994.
- Orenstein, Gloria Feman. "Recovering Her Story: Feminist Artists Reclaim the Great Goddess." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994, 174-89.
- _____. "The Reemergence of the Archetype of the Great Goddess in Art by Contemporary Women." *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 74-84.
- Ortner, Sherry B. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture? (1972)." In *Feminism—Art—Theory: An Anthology 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, 17-33. Reprinted from *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 2 (1972): 5-31.
- Outlooks: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities and Visual Culture*, ed. Peter Horne and Reina Lewis. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Owens, Craig. "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism." In *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 166-90.
- Pacteau, Francette. *The Symptom of Beauty*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Panofsky, Erwin. "The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles." In *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955, 55-107.

- Parker, Rozsika and Griselda Pollock. *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-85*. London: Pandora, 1987.
- _____. *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*. London: Pandora Press, 1981.
- Performance by Artists*, ed. A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale. Toronto: Art Metropole, 1979.
- Personal & Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975*. Curated by Simon Taylor and Natalie Ng. East Hampton, New York: Guild Hall Museum, 2002.
- Pescio, Claudio. *New Complete Guide of the Uffizi*, rev. ed. Florence: Bonechi, 1989.
- Phelan, Peggy. "Survey." In *Art and Feminism*, ed. Helena Reckitt. London: Phaidon, 2001), 14-49.
- Photography as Performance: Message through Object and Picture*. London: Photographers' Gallery, 1986.
- Photography & Performance*. Boston: Photography Resource Center, 1989.
- The Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power within the Feminist Movement*, ed. Charlene Spretnak. Garden City, New York: Anchor Book, 1982.
- Pollock, Griselda. *Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*. London: Routledge, 1988.
- _____. "What's Wrong with Images of Women?" In Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock. *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-85*. London: Pandora, 1987, 132-38. Reprinted from *Screen Education*, no. 24 (1977): 25-33.
- Pons, Flavio. "Feministische Kunst International: Panel discussion organized by Stichting de Appel, Stedelijk Museum, December 10 1978." Typed report in the "Feministische Kunst Internationaal" papers, archives of De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam, unpaginated.
- Potter, Sally. "On Shows." In: *Feminism—Art—Theory: An Anthology 1968-2000*, ed. Hilary Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, 446-53. Reprinted from *About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by 21 Women Artists*, ed. Catherine Elwes, Rose Garrard, and Sandy Nairne. London: ICA, 1980, unpaginated.
- The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994.

- Prammer, Anita. "Avantgarde—Die Lust des Geistes: Anita Prammer im Gespräch mit Valie Export." In *Avantgardefilm Österreich. 1950 bis heute*, ed. Alexander Horwath, Lisl Ponger, and Gottfried Schlemmer. Vienna: Wespennest, 1996, 175-87.
- _____. *Valie Export: Eine multimediale Künstlerin*. Vienna: Weiner Frauenverlag, 1988.
- Ranke-Graves, Robert. *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*. New York: Creative Age Press, 1948.
- Raven, Arlene. "Womanhouse." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 48-65.
- Reckman, Lidewijn. "Samen sterk: Voorbeelden van samenwerking in de feministische kunst." In *Feministische Kunst Internationaal*. The Hague: Gemeentedrukkerij, 1979, 56-8.
- Rickey, Carrie. "Writing (and Righting) Wrongs: Feminist Art Publications." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 120-129.
- Rosen, Randy and Catherine C. Brawer. *Making their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-85*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1989.
- Rosen, Randy. "Moving into the Mainstream." In *Making their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-85*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1989, 7-25.
- Rose, Barbara. "Vaginal Iconology." *New York Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 6 (11 February 1974): 59.
- Ulrike Rosenbach: Foto, Video, Aktion*. Aachen: Stadt Aachen, Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig, 1976.
- Rosenbach, Ulrike. "Feminismus und Kunst: Auszüge aus einem Gespräch mit Amine Haase, 1982." In Ulrike Rosenbach. *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, Feministische Kunst*. Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982, 131-5.
- _____. "Interview." In *De Vernietiging van het valse vrouwbeeld (The Destruction of the False Image of Women)*. The Netherlands: Openbaar Kunstbezit, 4 December 1978, television program on Nederland 1 on the occasion of the Feministische Kunst Internationaal exhibition at De Appel in Amsterdam with performances from 8 to 16 December 1978. Tape in the collection of Montevideo, Amsterdam.

- _____. "Interview with Gisland Nabakowski." *Heute Kunst*, no. 16 (October-December 1976): 3-5.
- _____. Interview by Kathleen Wentrack, via email. 27 September 2005.
- _____. Interview by Kathleen Wentrack, via email. 30 September 2005.
- _____. Interview by Kathleen Wentrack, via email. 1 October 2005.
- _____. "Isolation is Transparent." *Avalanche Newspaper* (May/June 1973): 10-11.
- _____. Ulrike Rosenbach video collection, 235 Media, Cologne.
- _____. *Ulrike Rosenbach: Videokunst, Foto, Aktion/Performance, Feministische Kunst*. Cologne: Ulrike Rosenbach, 1982.
- _____. *Schule für Kreativen Feminismus: Beispiel einer autonomen Kulturarbeit*. Cologne: Schule für Kreativen Feminismus, 1980.
- _____. "Untitled Statement (1975)." In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 757.
- _____. "Venusdepression (1977)." In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Peter Selz and Kristine Stiles. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 757.
- Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters." *Art News*, vol. 51, no. 8 (December 1952): 22-23, 48-50.
- Rosenberger, Sieglinde Katharina. "Politics, Gender, and Equality." In *Women in Austria, Contemporary Austrian Studies, Volume 6*, ed. Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, and Erika Thurner. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998, 104-19.
- Rossi, Paola. *Tintoretto: Le Opere Sacre e Profane*. Milan: Alfieri, 1982, vol. 1 and 2.
- Roth, Moira. "The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America." In *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance in America, 1970-1980*, ed. Moira Roth. Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983, 14-41.
- Sander, Helke. "Rede des Aktionsrates zur Befreiung der Frauen." In *Frauenjahrbuch 1*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Roter Stern, 1975, 10-15. An excerpted English translation in *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach, et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 307-310.

- _____. "Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Kunst und Politik." In *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn*, ed. Silvia Eiblmayr, Valie Export, and Monika Prischl-Maier. Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1985, 89-92.
- Sandler, Irving. *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Later 1960s to the Early 1990s*. New York: IconEditions, 1996.
- Saslow, James. *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts*. New York: Viking, 1999.
- Sayre, Henry. *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Schapiro, Miriam. "The Education of Women as Artists: Project Womanhouse." *Art Journal*, vol. 31, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 268-70.
- Schimmel, Paul. *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art and Thames and Hudson, 1998.
- _____. "Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object." *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979*, ed. Schimmel. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art and Thames and Hudson, 1998, 17-119.
- Schlaeger, Hilke. "The West German Women's Movement," translated by Vicki Williams Hill and Carol Poore, with an introduction by Nancy Vedder-Shults. *New German Critique*, vol. 13 (Winter 1978): 59-68.
- Schneede, Uwe M. *Joseph Beuys, die Aktionen: Kommentiertes Werkverzeichnis mit fotografischen Dokumentationen*. Ostfildern-Ruit bei Stuttgart: G. Hatje, 1994.
- Schneemann, Carolee. *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards*. Beuningen, Holland: Brummense Uitgeverij Van Luxe Werkjes, 1977.
- _____. *Cézanne: She was a Great Painter*. New Paltz, NY: Tresspuss Press, 1975.
- _____. Email correspondence with Kathleen Wentrack. 4 October 2005.
- _____. Email correspondence with Kathleen Wentrack. 29 September 2005
- _____. "Feminist Issues [Carolee Schneemann]." *October*, 71 (Winter 1995): 5, 40-41.
- _____. *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002.

- _____. "Interview." In *Reclaiming the Body: Feminist Art in America*, produced and directed by Michael Blackwood, ed. Julie Sloane. PBS documentary of the *Bad Girls* exhibition at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, Michael Blackwood Productions, 1995.
- _____. "Interview with Andrea Juno." *Angry Women* (1991): 67-77.
- _____. "Interview with Carl Heyward." *Art Papers*, vol. 17, no. 1 (January/February 1993): 9-16.
- _____. "Interview with Kate Haug." In Schneemann. *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002, 21-44. This interview was originally published in *Wide Angle* 20, no. 1 (1977): 20-49.
- _____. Interview by Kathleen Wentrack. New York, 21 September 2001.
- _____. Interview by Kathleen Wentrack, via telephone. New York to New Paltz, 2 October 2005.
- _____. "Introduction to 'Erotic Films by Women.'" In *Deciphering America, a Traveling Collection Assembled by Michael Gibbs*. Amsterdam: Kintexts Publications, 1978, 108-11.
- _____. *More than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, ed. Bruce R. McPherson, 2d ed. Kingston, New York: McPherson, 1997.
- _____. "Notes on Fuses" (1971). In Schneemann. *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002, 45.
- _____. "The Obscene Body/Politic." *Art Journal*, vol. 50, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 28-35.
- _____. *Parts of a Body House Book*. Cullompton, U.K.: Beau Geste Press, 1972.
- _____. *Carolee Schneemann*, vol. 1. New York: Max Hutchinson Gallery, 1982.
- _____. Carolee Schneemann Papers, 1959-1994. Research Library, Getty Research Institute (Accession no. 950001).
- _____. "Carolee Schneemann: Disruptive Consciousness." Lecture at "Performance: A Photographic Perspective," The 2001 National Graduate Seminar, New York University, New York, 7 June 2001.
- _____. "Schneemann Proposal II, Installation of *Museum Series—Forbidden Actions*." Statement sent by Schneemann via fax to this author, 10 October 2001.
- _____. *Up To and Including Her Limits*. Performance pamphlet, n.p.

- Schneider, Rebecca. *The Explicit Body in Performance*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Schüssler, Alexandra. "Austria im Fleischnetz. Gewalt und Obszönität in österreichischer Gegenwartskunst. Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 1998.
- Schwarzer, Alice. "A Salary for Housewives?" In *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 251-253.
- Semmel, Joan and April Kingsley. "Sexual Imagery in Women's Art." *Woman's Art Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1980): 1-6.
- Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan. Garden City, New York: Archer Double Day, 1984; reprint, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996.
- Sjöö, Monica and Barbara Mor. *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.
- Spike, John T. *Caravaggio*. New York: Abbeville Press, 2001.
- Stefan, Verena. *Häutungen*. Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1975.
- Steinem, Gloria. *Wonder Woman*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, and Warner Books, 1972, n.p.
- Stiles, Kristine. "Schlagt Auf: The Problem with Carolee Schneemann's Painting." In *Carolee Schneemann: Up To and Including Her Limits*. New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996, 15-25.
- _____. "Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions." In *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979*, ed. Paul Schimmel. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art and Thames and Hudson, 1998, 227-329.
- Stone, Merlin. *When God Was a Woman*. New York: Dial Press, 1976.
- Studio International* 192, no. 982 (July/August 1976).
- Taylor, Simon. "The Women's Movement: From Radical to Cultural Feminism, 1969-1975." In *Personal & Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975*. East Hampton: Guild Hall, 2002, 9-31.
- Tickner, Lisa. "The Body Politic: Female Sexuality & Women Artists since 1970." *Art History* 1, no. 2 (June 1978): 236-251.

- Toepfer, Karl Eric. *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- “Transformer”: *Aspekte der Transvestie*. Luzern: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1974.
- Tröger, Annemarie. “Summer Universities for Women: The Beginning of Women’s Studies in Germany,” translated by Beth Weckmueller. *New German Critique*, vol. 13 (Winter 1978): 175-179.
- Turner, Kay. “Contemporary Feminist Rituals.” *Heresies*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 20-6.
- Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit*, ed. Gabriele Dietze. Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1979.
- Vergine, Lea. *Il Corpo Come Linguaggio (La “Body-art” e Storie simili)*. Milan: Giampaolo Prearo Editore, 1974. A new edition was published as *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*, rev. ed. Milan: Skira Editore, 2000.
- Vogt, Evon. *Tortillas for the Gods*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Wacks, Debra. “Subversive Humor: The Performance Art of Hannah Wilke, Eleanor Antin, and Adrian Piper.” Ph.D. diss., Graduate School and University Center, The City University of New York, 2003.
- Wark, Jayne. “The Radical Gesture: Feminism and Performance Art in the 1970s.” Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1997.
- Webster, Paula. “Pornography and Pleasure.” *Heresies 12*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1981): 48-51.
- Weinzierl, Erika. *Emanzipation? Österreichische Frauen im 20. Jahrhundert*. Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1975.
- Wentrack, Kathleen. *Double Trouble: Carolee Schneemann and Sands Murray-Wassink*. Rotterdam and Amsterdam: Cokkie Snoei Gallery, 2001.
- _____. “The Body Fragments of Kiki Smith: Object of Society or Society’s Abject.” Master’s thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1995.
- Werlhof, Claudia von. “The Proletarian is Dead, Long Live the Housewife.” In *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature*, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984, 254-264.
- “Where are the Great Men Artists?” *ARTnews*, vol. 79, no. 8 (October 1980), especially “Women Artists ’80,” 58-88.

- Whitford, Margaret. "Irigaray's Body Symbolic." *Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 97-110.
- Wilding, Faith. "The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts, 1970-75." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 32-47.
- Winckelmann, Johann. *The History of Ancient Art*, translated by G. Henry Lodge. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1856.
- Withers, Josephine. "Feminist Performance Art: Performing, Discovering, Transforming Ourselves." In *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994, 158-73.
- Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. New York: Perennial, 1991.
- Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art, 1730-1970*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin. New York: Newsweek, 1972.
- Womanhouse*. Valencia: California Institute of the Arts, Feminist Art Program, 1972.
- The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Mary Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.
- Wooster, Ann-Sargent. "Up To and Including Her Limits." *Artforum* 14, no. 9 (May 1976): 73-4.
- Zabunyan, Elvan. "Anatomy/Autonomy," translated by Paul Buck and Catherine Petit. In *Keep This Sex Out of My Site*, Elvan Zabunyan et al. Paris: Dis Voir, 2003.
- Zehethofer, Brigitte. "Inszenierte Körperlichkeit und das Medium Video. Analyse ausgewählter Videoarbeiten von Valie Export und Ulrike Rosenbach." Ph.D.diss., University of Salzburg, 1991.
- Zöllner, Frank. *Botticelli: Images of Love and Spring*. Munich: Prestel, 1998.

Websites Consulted

- "Facts about Pregnancy Discrimination." United States Government, available from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-preg.html>, Internet, accessed 16 April 2003.

- Guerrilla Girls website. <http://www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/venicewallf.shtml>, Internet, accessed 16 October 2005.
- “An Issian Circle Casting.” <http://ladyoftheearth.com/circles/casting-01.txt>, Internet, accessed 26 August 2005.
- “Issian Circle Casting.” http://wiccanet.net/wicca/reading_room/wicca17.htm, Internet, accessed 26 August 2005.
- James, Peter. “Warehouse Eyes: The Recorded Works of Bob Dylan.” <http://warehouseeyes.net/firms.com/blonde.html>, Internet, accessed 30 March 2005.
- “Magic Circle (Wicca).” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_circle_\(Wicca\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_circle_(Wicca)), Internet, accessed 26 August 2005.
- “Marilyn Monroe.” www.marilynmonroe.com, Internet, accessed 11 October 2005.
- “Must Curators Self-Censor.” *Censorship News Online*, no. 88, website of the National Coalition Against Censorship. http://www.ncac.org/cen_news/cn88curators.htm, Internet, accessed 22 October 2005.
- n.paradoxa*. Website of this international feminist art journal: <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/>.
- Selective Service System Web site, available at <http://www.sss.gov/FSwho.htm>, Internet, accessed 21 April 2003.
- “Seventies Dance Music Page.” <http://www.70disco.com/brickh.htm>, Internet, accessed 11 October 2005.
- “STLyrics.” <http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/undercoverbrother/brickhouse.htm>, Internet, accessed 11 October 2005.
- Scaruffi, Piero. “Bob Dylan.” <http://www.scaruffi.com/vol1/dylan.html>, Internet, accessed 30 March 2005.
- “Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” last updated with the Civil Rights Act of 1991. United States Government, available from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/vii.html>, Internet, accessed 16 April 2003.
- Wilcox, Robert A. and Emma M. Whitham. “The Symbol of Modern Medicine: Why One Snake Is More Than Two.” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, vol. 138, issue 8 (15 April 2003): 673-77, accessed online at <http://www.annals.org/cgi/content/abstract/138/8/673>, 28 August 2005.