“ACTION, NOT CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING”: GUERRILLA GIRLS AND PERFORMANCE AS THEIR ARTISTIC STRATEGY

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PREFACE

The initial spark for the topic of this thesis occurred in 2018 in my hometown of Helsinki, Finland. I visited the Helsinki Art Museum's (HAM) exhibition "Graffiti", which exhibited graffiti culture and street art from both New York and Helsinki, discussing how the street art manifested in a Finnish cityscape. It was there when I first saw the poster "THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST" (1988) by the Guerrilla Girls, where the group list so-called advantages women artists face in their work. At first, I laughed, as the tone of the poster was so sardonic. But after a while it made me think, made me a little worried, even. If the themes of "working without the pressure of success" or "not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius" were current for women in the 1980s, what is the situation in the 2010s? I wanted to find out. Now, a postcard version of the poster on my fridge door reminds me of the adverse circumstances women face in the arts and that something should be done to change it. I think we all could benefit of some guerrilla girl state of mind.

I would like to thank my odd but loving, feminist family for the everlasting support they provide me with. Mom and Risto, you took me to demonstrations when I was just a kid and still hold on to my demonstration poster. Because of you two I have such a thirst for knowledge. Dad, whose sarcastic and playful humor I inherited, I still miss your laugh and our conversations every day. Sanna, you ignited my enthusiasm for art in the first place and I cannot thank you enough for that. Kukka and Alli, my ever-achieving and ambitious sisters, your capabilities know no bounds. My friends: Kaisa, you have been a constant support in my life since high school, you are simply irreplaceable. Maija, my favorite museum companion, your hilarious messages helped me to get through the writing process of this thesis. Leiden friends, also known as the Intervention Gang, in your company I never felt lonely and you were always up for something, even on Sundays.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. A.K.C. Crucq, for his help and encouragement in this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

It is no secret, that the museum field and art institutions of the United States have been grappling with issues such as lack of diversity and inequality between the sexes when it comes to their staff, but also with the representation of diversity in their collections.[1] This lack of diversity in museum collections is evident in a recent study done on eighteen major U.S. art museums, where the museums' collections were investigated in order to find out the range of diversity of the artists. What the researchers found out was not necessarily unanticipated, proving that 85 percent of the collected artists are white and 87 percent of them are men.[2] This lack of representation of women and minority artists is something Guerrilla Girls have been fighting against since they started in 1985 in New York, aiming their scrutiny towards institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

And if we gaze back to the early 1980s, to the time in which the Guerrilla Girls emerged in, has there been any change? The MoMA has done archival work in order to investigate the statistics of female representation concerning its exhibitions and staff. The timeline of the survey spans over the first sixty years of the museum, from 1929 until 1989. The percentage of exhibited artists changed every year: female representation was lowest in 1935, with only three percent, and in 1983, the percentage of female artists had grown to seventeen percent. The survey also reveals a gender discrepancy when it comes to the number of exhibitions: the top male artist between 1929-1989, Pablo Picasso, was exhibited 234 times while the top female artist, Berenice Abbott, was exhibited 43 times. In general, the top male artists were exhibited four to six times more often than their female colleagues. The data gives only one year, 1981, when the amount of female and male solo exhibitions was equal, six solo shows being hosted per gender.[3]

One of the most prominent agents in the New York art scene since the 1980s has been Guerrilla Girls, a group of anonymous women artists equipped with gorilla masks. Their emergence between the second and third wave of feminism, caught people's attention in

[1] When mentioning the concepts such as inequality between the sexes or gender inequality in this thesis, I refer to the rights of women compared to men in that particular time period. As the times have changed, I recognize that there are, in fact, more gender identities to identify with than the two traditional ones of man and woman. I also recognize, that all people have a fundamental right to identify themselves as they choose.

[2] Topaz et al., 1.

[3] Jacobson, "Women at MoMA: The First 60 Years." Accessed October 30, 2019. https://medium.com/berkeleyischool/women-at-moma-the-first-60-years-383d6b98f4f

SoHo and East Village neighborhoods (see figure 1),[4] where fact-based posters with a sardonic tone and mockery started to appear on the walls.[5] The posters were visually simple, black text on a white background and called New York museums and galleries out on their lack of representing women artists. One of the first posters posed the question of "How many women had one-person exhibitions at NYC museums last year?" The answer was only one, in the Museum of Modern Art. The areas these posters were sighted in were largely inhabited by artists and Guerrilla Girls, self-identifying themselves as the "conscience of the art world" in their posters, promised more "public service messages" in the future. It did not take long for the group to gain notoriety and attention, but already by 1988 the group was invited to speak at various conferences, universities and even guest-curated exhibitions, continuing their activist work all at the same time.[6] They certainly were not the first or the last feminist artist group in the city, but adopted different tactics than their predecessors.

The first posters were aesthetically simple: black text on a white base. But they generated conversation: should they be considered as art, politics or some kind of advertising? The main strategy behind making these posters was the message they conveyed: women and artists of color were excluded from art institutions, and it was time for change. The statistics behind the posters, gathered by Guerrilla Girls themselves by visiting art institutions and conducting a count, revealed a bleak picture of women having only one solo exhibition in the major New York museums in 1984. According to one of the members, "The statistics were perfect, because they were so shocking".[7] About their entrance into the art world, art educator Elizabeth Hess has later stated: "[Guerrilla Girls were] as a militant feminist clan with nothing but disdain for a system that has oppressed women for centuries". Guerrilla Girls adopted features from their predecessors of the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) and the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), which will be further discussed in chapter one. Guerrilla Girls based their performative nature on the work of conceptual performance artists of the previous decades and their ideological base to their

[4] East Village and SoHo, abbreviated from "South of Houston Street", are neighborhoods in New York. SoHo was the center of artists in the 1980s, and still features many galleries. East Village, on the other hand, was the center of American punk in the 1970s and 1980s. See https://www.nycgo.com/boroughs-neighborhoods/manhattan/soho/ and https://www.nycgo.com/boroughs-neighborhoods/manhattan/east-village/ for further information.
[5] Albeit referencing to feminism as "waves" is contested by feminist historians such as Linda Nicholson, I will be using these terms in order to place the Guerrilla Girls in a larger context of 1970s and 1980s feminism. See Linda Nicholson, "Feminism in 'Waves': Useful Metaphor or Not?" in *New Politics,* https://newpol.org/issue_post/feminism-waves-useful-metaphor-or-not/ for further information on the matter.
[6] Withers, "The Guerrilla Girls", 285-286.
[7] Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power: Why the Art World Needs a Conscience", 314.

1970s feminist role models.[8] The group's artistic strategies, such as anonymity, satire and institutional critique[9], all add to their role of 1980s political activist artists opposing discrimination.

Guerrilla Girls was established as a group in the spring of 1985, as a result of anger towards the MoMA and its curator Kynaston McShine's comments in the media. McShine had remarked, that every artist who was not included in the museum's new exhibition, "*An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture*", should ultimately re-consider *his* career. As a response to McShine's comments, a group of anonymous artists met in a loft in SoHo and established Guerrilla Girls. They began to dress in gorilla masks, both to irritate people and to protect their individual artistic careers from criticism, and adopted pseudonyms referring to past women artists. One of the members, "Gertrude Stein", remarked: "Not all of our projects were posters". Guerrilla Girls produced satirical billboards, collaborated with other feminist groups of the time, such as the Women's Action Coalition (WAC), organized letter writing campaigns and performances, curated exhibitions and published a newsletter. They grew in number, although did not disclose their exact number of members, and along with the growth, issues started to emerge. One of the main issues from the start was the lack of diversity within the group, the other being inner schisms between the members, as the older participants considered their status as original members to be superior to the newer members. As a consequence, in March 2000, some of the girls were fired by two original members, "Kahlo" and "Kollwitz". The break up then led to legal actions, as the members argued on the intellectual property and the use of the name. Today, the original group has divided amongst different activist groups. "Kahlo" and "Kollwitz" are still leading the original Guerrilla Girls and the fired members are working as Guerrilla Girls BroadBand. Most of them are still working anonymously using their gorilla masks.[10]

In addition to having been impacted by the political and feminist activism of the 1960s and 1970s America, where the role and rights of women began to be questioned and the patriarchal structures of society were challenged, they were also affected by the

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[8] Ibid., 327.

[9] Institutional criticism gained popularity in the work of late 1960s artists such as Hans Haacke. The objective was to criticize the institutions' as places of "'cultural confinement'" and artists attacked them politically. Leading up to the 1990s, institutional criticism took the form of critical conversation inside museums, where curators took part in the discussion. As an institution, museum was seen both as the problem and the, producing an interesting dilemma. See https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/i/institutional-critique for more information on the matter.

[10] Stein et al., "Guerrilla Girls and Guerrilla Girls BroadBand: Inside Story", 89, 91, 93, 97-98.

counterculture[11] of New York and the city's art scene, which will be discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. However, Guerrilla Girls proved to be more lasting than many their contemporaries. Guerrilla Girls are still active in exhibiting their art and have gained global influence through their art being exhibited globally. During the course of their over thirty years of existence the group has evolved in many ways and has not been spared of criticism. The main critique the group has faced concerns their credibility of being activist artists: can they be credible activists if they have their work exhibited in the same institutions they have long criticized? The paradox of rebelling against art institutions and simultaneously being exhibited by these institutions will be further elaborated on in the chapters two and three of this thesis. This dilemma is something the group has acknowledged and discussed openly, and the group came to a conclusion that exhibiting in museums would provide more effective tactics than to stay only in the streets.

Guerrilla Girls have been of great interest for researchers, journalists and art critics alike, resulting in a plethora of material and topics ranging from the group's rhetoric to their cultural impact. Josephine Withers explains the group's early years in New York in her essay "Guerrilla Girls", when the group had been active for only three years. Withers goes on to explain in what circumstances the group emerged in the New York art scene and discusses how the group had faced relatively no criticism at this point, calling for more systematic critique both from their targets and their contemporary feminists. Anna C. Chave, on the other hand, elaborates in her article "The Guerrilla Girls' reckoning", of what kind of difficulties the group faced. These problems included internal conflict within the group, as some artists of color in the group began to feel undermined and silenced by the founding members. Anne Teresa Demo provides insight on the Guerrilla Girls' rhetoric in her article "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion", focusing on three main strategies of mimicry, re-visioning of history and juxtaposition. Demo argues, that the Guerrilla Girls utilize a method of perspective by incongruity: they poke fun on the institutions' failure of gender equality, but through their humor, also provide a counteractive measure for it. Christine Martorana has done research on the Guerrilla Girls twice, first in her doctoral dissertation "Looking Outside to Empower Within: Feminist Activists, Feminist Agency, and the Composition Classroom", where she used the group as a case study of complementary

[11] Cambridge Dictionary defines 'counter-culture' as "A way of life and a set of ideas that are completely different from those accepted by most of society, or the group of people who live this way". Accessed October 17, 2019. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/counter-culture

feminist agency. In 2016 she wrote an article “Enacting Feminist Agency: Responsible Anonymity, Visual Paradox, and the Guerrilla Girls”, where she elaborates on the group’s adoption of what she calls responsible anonymity and how their look can be understood to utilize visual paradox in their work.

When taking the literature in to consideration, it appears that most authors have so far focused on the political and societal situation in which Guerrilla Girls emerged in or their use of rhetoric and re-claiming of feminist agency. However, there are still many relevant topics left to uncover when it comes to Guerrilla Girls and their activist work. In this thesis, I will not focus solely on the activist work of Guerrilla Girls, but rather how their activism relates to artistic strategies and media in particular. Their use of performance has not been a major part of research, perhaps due to its complexity. The main question in this thesis therefore regards the specific ways in which Guerrilla Girls use performance as their artistic strategy in their activist political art. The objective is to describe and critically discuss these ways and thereby add new perspective to understanding Guerrilla Girls strategies.

To answer the main question, the first chapter of this thesis elaborates on the societal and political climate of the United States between the 1960s and 1970s, and the 1980s New York art scene. By doing this, I will be able to answer what factors motivated Guerrilla Girls to choose performance as their artistic practice. The themes will be explored through literature such as Ruth Rosen’s *The World Split Open. How the modern women’s movement changed America*, which provides invaluable history of the feminist and political movements of 1960s and 1970s America. In the second chapter I will provide definitions of performance by Jon McKenzie and Bradford D. Martin and explain performance’s various elements and its relationship with the audience. As Guerrilla Girls started as street performers, but later evolved to perform inside institutions, both Martin’s and McKenzie’s theories on performance will provide important substance for understanding this evolution. In the second chapter the different elements of satire and anonymity the group utilizes as part of their performance as activist artists will also be discussed. In the third chapter Guerrilla Girls’ relationship with museums and the possible constraints of exhibiting political activist art in a museum setting will be discussed. This will be done by using contemporary research and literature on feminist, political and activist art, as well as by discussing what is expected of museums and how we define them as institutions.

With the completion of this research, it will finally be clear how Guerrilla Girls’ use performance as their artistic strategy and what developments led the group to choose it as their artistic strategy. In addition to this, I expect to be able to evaluate their attitudes towards

museums and other cultural institutions. With the results of the study I hope to have added an important contribution to the understanding of Guerrilla Girls and their artistic practice of opposing the institutional structure and power museums hold as institutions. This exploration of Guerrilla Girls' methods will hopefully also provide new input for discussion on the dilemma of exhibiting political activist art in a museum setting.

CHAPTER I
"SLEEPING BEAUTY WAKES UP": FEMINISM AND THE POLITICIZATION OF ART

In order to comprehend the complexity of Guerrilla Girls' political activist art and its performative nature, it is necessary to look into the societal and political situation the group was born in, as well as who their predecessors were. From the 1950s onwards the political climate in the U.S. was changing rapidly with various grass-root organizations popping up and wanting to make an impact on current issues, such as war, racism and women's reproductive rights. In this chapter, I will elaborate on the historical developments of the U.S., starting from the 1960s, and how it resulted in activist groups organizing themselves to fight and change the societal system. The art scene of 1980s New York took place in a time of political and performance art, the latter of which had started to develop during the 1960s with artists such as Yves Klein, Yoko Ono and Carolee Schneemann who took up performance art as their artistic practice. RoseLee Goldberg explains: "it was in the 1960s that an increasing number of artists turned to live performance as the most radical form of art-making, irrevocably disrupting the course of traditional art history and challenging the double-headed canon of the established art media – painting and sculpture."[12] Part of the allure of performance was its multidisciplinary nature: one can utilize multiple methods and artistic practices simultaneously. For this reason, I will be exploring Guerrilla Girls' work through the framework of performance theory in this thesis. The impact of the 1960s performance and political art as well as the 1970s feminism, manifested in Guerrilla Girls' and their art, in various forms.[13]

1.1. Taking the streets: political movements in the 1960s-1970s United States

The 1960s and 1970s were politically tumultuous decades in the U.S., molded by student and black activism, anti-war notions in response to the Vietnam War and feminist activism. The feminism of the time is often referred to as Second Wave feminism. As the women's suffrage movement is regarded as the first wave, naming the 1960s and 1970s feminist movement as the second wave acted as a way to feel a connection to the feminist movement from before. However, referencing to these movements as waves, is still under debate. Uniting feminists

[12] Goldberg, *Performance: live art since the 60s*, 15.
[13] Ibid., 19.

from various backgrounds and sometimes with very different ideas together under one concept can prove to be problematic. Postcolonial and third world feminist theorist Chela Sandoval argues, that instead of Second Wave feminism, the 1970s feminist activism should be called "hegemonic feminism". This renaming would serve the purpose of explaining that the feminism of the time was mainly led by white, middle-class and academic women focusing mostly in the U.S., often marginalizing women of color.[14]

African Americans along with other minorities were still excluded and marginalized from society especially in the Southern parts of the nation, by, for example, being forced to sit in the back part of a bus when traveling, limiting their work possibilities and being exposed to racial violence. African American leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) and Malcolm X (1925-1965), began to call for equal rights and as the movement intensified with its demands, it was subsequently met with more violence, both from the general public and state-officials such as the National Guard. After John F. Kennedy's (1917-1963) assassination Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973) was able to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, giving the federal government tools to forcefully end racial segregation. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 followed soon, resulting in more violence in the South as people of color tried to register for voting. The bill did become a success, as it managed to increase the percentage of registered African American voters in the southern states.[15]

Simultaneously, women had started to organize themselves in different feminist groups, each with their own edge and theme to promote. Mary D. Garrard, an activist and art historian phrased this as "Sleeping Beauty woke up."[16] One of the major issues that led to this awakening was the question concerning women's reproductive rights. As a result of a 1973 Supreme Court decision, women gained the right to control their reproduction and early abortions became legal. The famous case of Roe vs. Wade in 1973 Texas, set a controversial but groundbreaking judicial standard for women to have the liberty to end their pregnancies if they so wanted, giving the state the right to outlaw abortions only during the last three months of the pregnancy.[17] The case was brought up by Norma McCorvey, an expecting single woman, who wanted to terminate her pregnancy safely. McCorvey, using a pseudonym Jane Roe in order to keep her privacy, accused the Texas abortion laws of being "unconstitutionally vague" and that the statutes oppressed her right to personal privacy of

[14] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 85; Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism.", 39; Hewitt, "Introduction.", 1-2.
[15] Anderson & Herr, *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice,* 340-341.
[16] Garrard, "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations", 88.
[17] Anderson & Herr, *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice,* 8, 1233; Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, 500.

choosing to end her pregnancy. The Dallas County district attorney of the time, Henry Wade, was named as the defendant.[18] The court's decision was considered a win for the feminists, as the movement had fought for equal rights for women in the workplace, where pregnancies still affected women's career possibilities. In this way, the question of equality in the labor force was tightly knitted to sexual revolution.

For some men, the idea of equality between the sexes was generally unimaginable, or at very least, unappealing. Writer Robert Arthur stated in *Esquire* magazine, that in a situation where women would be given the power, they would change the status of men to "second-class citizens". To Arthur, equality between the sexes was impossible, as power only existed in an ability for a group to dominate others.[19] This way of thinking, of course, was not shared by all men, as many took part in the women's fight for equal rights. But because individual rights of a person were considered to be such a big part of what it was about being American, giving equal rights to women was seen as something that would shake the traditional authority men held in society.[20]

In 1970, the National Organization for Women (NOW) decided to organize a "Women's Strike for Equality" to commemorate the 50th anniversary of women's suffrage amendment of 1920.[21] The driving force behind the demonstration was Betty Friedan, former president of NOW. Friedan argued, that the media was "still treating the women's movement as a joke" and thought that "women feared identifying themselves as feminists or with the movement at all. We needed an action to show them – and ourselves – how powerful we were."[22] After some discussion, feminists decided on three main demands: the right for abortion and child care, and equal opportunity in employment and education for women. These three issues united the formerly bickering feminist groups to organize the biggest demonstration held by women since the suffrage movement and therefore, molded the "feminist revolution" of 1970 to what it became.[23]

Women's movement was a part of the New Left, politically clearly associated with the Soviet Union and Communism, an ideology which was usually attached to any type of drastic critique of American society and its customs. The New Left consisted of young people

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[18] Blackmun, *U.S. Reports: Roe v. Wade 410,* 113, 120.
[19] Rosen, *The World Split Open,* 63.
[20] Ibid., 77.
[21] The women's suffrage amendment refers to the 19th amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote. The congress ratified it in 1920. Accessed October 24, 2019. https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=63
[22] Rosen, *The World Split Open,* 92.
[23] Ibid.

who had grown up in the Cold War era fearing nuclear weapons. As a result of this fear many people politically aligned with the left wing and criticized the Vietnam War (1955-1975). The women's movement supported the anti-war movement and took part in the massive demonstrations. After the March 16th 1968 My Lai Massacre, where Vietnamese civilians, mostly women and children, were killed by the U.S. troops, artists started to protest against war more forcefully, especially through posters.[24] The demonstrations came to their height in the spring of 1970, when president Richard Nixon (1913-1994) decided to invade Cambodia and the students at Kent State University decided to take action in the form of a protest. These demonstrations led to the National Guard being deployed to restore order and resulted in four people being killed and several being injured. After the incident over 400 universities and colleges went on to strike all across the United States.[25] As all war is, also the Vietnam War was bloody and president Johnson, Nixon's predecessor, desperately wanted to keep it out of the media. Johnson did not succeed in his efforts, and people began to see footage of fighting and violence, not to mention the pictures of the increasing number of civilian casualties. The daily media coverage and the youth's sympathy towards leftist ideas caused the Vietnam War to become a much more unpopular military endeavor than the previous wars, and people started to plead both to their moral and political reasons to oppose the draft. Previously this had been customary to people only with deep religious principles. The unpopularity of the war started to increase from the 1960s onwards and the peace movement started to attract people of different backgrounds, political opinions and religions. According to Anderson and Herr, the political resistance back in the U.S. forced the armed forces to retreat from Vietnam.[26]

As demonstrated here, the 1960s and 1970s was a time of social progress and political activism and it continued to the 1980s. In the 1980s New York, a significant part of activist practice was aimed towards art field and its' institutions, making artists activists in their own right. The second wave of feminism of the 1970s, or the rebirth of feminism as it is also called, was only a beginning and laid the groundwork by providing artists such as Guerrilla Girls new ambitions and effective methods to utilize.

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[24] Rosen, *The World Split Open,* 95; Anderson & Herr, *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice,* 391, 781; Garrard, "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations" 90.
[25] Zinn, *A People's History of the United States,* 481.
[26] Anderson & Herr, *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice*, 391, 781.

1.2. The uprising of discontent: social protest and New York's art scene

To outline what was happening in the arts of early 1980s Lippard states: "Before the late 1960s the art world was a safe and superior little island built on 'quality', 'esthetics', and media, having no apparent connection with the low-life outside that formed it".[27] Lippard, a feminist critic, writer and activist, participated in several activist groups from late 1960s onwards and was a member of the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), a short-lived yet impactful coalition of artists, who demanded changes in the political structures of the art world and artists' rights. The AWC started in early 1969 and continued until 1971, organizing open hearings between artists such as Wen-Ying Tsai, Rosemarie Castoro and Hans Haacke, but also critics, such as aforementioned Lippard and Max Kozloff. The group began to protest the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), as it held the most powerful position in the art scene with its influential board of trustees, such as the Rockefellers.[28] The Rockefeller family has a long history with the MoMA, and several members of the family have acted in various roles either in the board of trustees or museum committees. Nelson Rockefeller, a wealthy businessman, politician and later a vice president of the United States, was selected as the president of the board of trustees in 1939.[29]

The AWC addressed the MoMA with a list of demands, including notions such as wanting more museum workers and artists to be part of the board of trustees, to be more inclusive towards minority communities of New York, and to encourage female artists by representing them in equal measures to their male colleagues in exhibitions.[30] The AWC changed its principles of acting as an organization concerning artistic freedom and became a key organization to address issues regarding race, class and gender in arts, and later, along with Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG), also war.[31]

The AWC's formation and first protest against the MoMA was sparked by artist Takis Vassilaki's work *Tele-Sculpture* (see figure 2), and its' inadequate display in the museum's exhibition "The Machine" in 1969. Vassilakis wanted to remove the work from the exhibition and wrote an explanation discussing how he thought the work was outdated and did not see it

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[27] Lippard, *Get the Message*?, 31.
[28] Lippard, *Get the Message?*, 11-12; Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, 14.
[29] The Rockefeller family has a long history with the MoMA, and several members of the family have acted in various roles either in the board of trustees or museum committees. For example, Nelson Rockefeller was appointed as the chairman in 1957 and was succeeded by his sister-in-law Blanchette Ferry Rockefeller in 1959. In 1963, David Rockefeller took on the role of chairman in the board of trustees. For further information, see MoMA press releases from May 8, 1939; January 28, 1957; April 27, 1959 and June 9, 1963 on www.moma.org.
[30] Lippard, *Get the Message?*, 11-12.
[31] Martin, "The Theater Is in the Street", 159.

as an adequate representation of him as a current artist at the time. MoMA ignored his inquiry, so Vassilakis decided to remove the work from the display with the help of some artist friends. After the removal they organized a demonstration in the museum garden, sitting around the sculpture until the director of the museum, Bates Lowry, finally agreed to remove the work from the exhibition. MoMA's submission to the demands signified how direct protest can generate tangible results and thus, gave confidence both to the group and artists in general to make requests. The main factor behind Vassilakis' and the group's actions was to question art circulation in the capitalist market system and to defend the rights of artists to control their work and how it is exhibited in a museum setting, even if the artists have sold the work.[32] This show of demonstration and its results inspired many other groups to make demands towards institutions, and only invigorated the concept of artistic freedom and rights.

Besides removing artworks from museum displays and demonstrating in the museum, the use of posters as an artistic strategy became a popular way of criticizing the government's actions and the war effort. Artists used the government's recruitment posters as an ironic inspiration, but changed them completely to convey an antiwar message. One of these posters was the famous Second World War poster of Uncle Sam stating "I want you for U.S. Army" and pointing at the viewer (see figure 3). During the Vietnam War the original poster was re-appropriated. It now depicted Uncle Sam exhausted of war, being covered with bandages, declaring "I want out" (see figure 4). New York-based artists such as Martha Rosler and Jeff Schlanger among many others, used footage of war in their posters and contrasted them to American ideals and, for example, advertisement of beauty products for women (see figures 5 and 6). The AWC was one of the major artist groups making antiwar efforts by organizing the New York Art Strike in 1970 to protest U.S. troops in Vietnam and Cambodia, the Kent State University shootings and the racial violence of Mississippi. The strike was a success, as it shut down several New York museums and gallery spaces for a day, but also affected the U.S. representation in the 1970 Venice Biennale to become much smaller.[33]

The AWC, however, soon turned out to be too wide of an organization when it came to its' functions and members. It served best as "an umbrella, as a conscience and complaint bureau" to various groups with different interests, sometimes overlapping. The broadness of the coalition and its internal divisions caused the group to split up into smaller factions, such

[32] Martin, "The Theater Is in the Street", 166; Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, 13.
[33] Garrard, "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations.", 90.

as the Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee or GAAG.[34] The latter separated from the AWC in 1969, out of anger towards the "umbrella group's" actions. GAAG considered the AWC's reformism and actions to be too ineffective and careful, and wanted to pursue their own, more confrontational ambitions. Adopting a more radical *modus operandi,* GAAG was not afraid of risking arrest to get what they wanted, something the AWC clearly wanted to avoid. GAAG considered their public protests as their artworks, and used performance art to shed light on the issues they demonstrated against. The group published its statement of purpose in 1970, which detailed the following: "Our intention is never to impose our own point of view, but to provoke people into confrontation with the existing crises. Our methods are only a few of the possible ways to dramatize the problem." Considering themselves as "questioners", the group used methods of performance art to dramatize social and political problems of the time, in order to provoke and confront institutions of power. The group went as far as to demand MoMA to sell artworks worth of one million dollars and to redistribute the profits to the poor, all the while the group held Kazimir Malevich's artwork *White on White* as hostage after removing it from the museum walls as a political statement.[35] Martin has made clear that the AWC and GAAG differed greatly in their manner of work, as the latter took more of a confrontational and political role from the start. Even though the lifespan of the AWC was rather short, it did manage to bring up issues American artists came across in the art world, such as a lack of appreciation and how museums were driven by their business minded boards of trustees.

Another significant group to emerge from under the AWC umbrella was Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), also in 1969. WAR began to criticize the Whitney Museum's Annual of 1969 for including only eight women in a total of 143 artists exhibited. In response to that, WAR insisted the museum to change their policy. WAR made demands also towards the MoMA, requiring the museum to "encourage female artists to overcome the centuries of damage done to the image of the female as an artist by establishing equal representation of the sexes in exhibitions, museum purchases and on selection committees." The demand had a theoretical consequence as well, as the museum agreed to commit to assign a curator to research women artists not represented by major museums or galleries and to consider of housing a temporary exhibition of more obscure women artists. But alas, this agreement did

[34] Lippard, *Get the Message?,* 24.
[35] Martin, "The Theater Is in the Street", 174-176.

not result in changes, as according MoMA's own archives, there is no evidence of this being implemented in the actions of the museum.[36]

Activist and art historian Mary D. Garrard argues, that a second phase within the Feminist Art Movement had advanced from 1972 onwards. The methods of actions started to develop from guerrilla actions and expecting immediate results, such as suspending individual people from their jobs, towards more professional and organized strategies in order to change the art institutions in a more fundamental and durable way. Due to this development, WAR stopped attacking museums and focused more on consciousness-raising, and Ad Hoc Group started to focus on researching the discrimination women artists faced teaching in the academia.[37]

With the 1980s came new challenges, such as the AIDS crisis and conservative politics under Reagan's administration. One of the most influential art groups of this decade was Political Art Documentation and Distribution (PAD/D), which was founded in 1980 with a mission of bringing artists and the organized Left together, in order to "produce a truly alternative and oppositional cultural sphere."[38] PAD/D connected artists to non-art activists and operated as one of the main characters in New York's activist art scene until about 1985. One of its founding members, artist and writer Gregory Sholette argues, that "a prudent version of 'political art' became institutionally viable within the art world".[39] During the 1980s, the New York art market took inspiration from the European art market and started to emphasize the value of representational art. This caused a reaction of various art galleries and spaces to pop up, as the leftist artists wanted to steer the conversation back to social change and criticism. PAD/D wanted to provide artists with such a space and offered a "support system for activist art" during the conservative Reagan years.[40]

Lippard and artist Jerry Kearns, both active members of PAD/D, spoke out on what they wanted to accomplish in the art world. Lippard and Kearns refused the dichotomy the art market uses to classify art either as high or low culture and the juxtaposition of political versus formalist art. They went on to elaborate that PAD/D would not be a weapon for the art world to advance their work through museums and galleries, and how instead, it would aspire to develop new ways of redistributing the wealth back from the institutions to artists.[41] It

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[36] Garrard, "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations.", 90; Jacobson, "Women at MoMA: The First 60 Years." Accessed October 30, 2019. https://medium.com/berkeleyischool/women-at-moma-the-first-60-years-383d6b98f4f
[37] Garrard, "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations.", 90.
[38] Sholette, "News from nowhere", 54.
[39] Ibid., 56.
[40] Moore, "Collectivities", 102, 111.
[41] Ibid., 112.

came clear, however, that the PAD/D and other organizations, did not run an enduring practice and they started to fade in the mid-1980s, providing inspiration for other groups, such as Guerrilla Girls and Gran Fury, to grow and have an impact on the latter part of the decade. The new collectives had learned from their predecessors, and they adopted more focused agendas concentrating on specific issues such as racial and gender discrimination within museums and the government's impact on the spreading of AIDS.[42]

As mentioned before, one of the major issues artists grasped on was the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. New York was one of the first places where the HI-virus was detected in 1981, but by the end of the decade, the disease had spread all across the nation, the amount of AIDS-related deaths mounting to over 27 000. In spite of the epidemic being a serious health crisis, president Reagan did not mention it publicly until 1985, and the administration underrated the issue as it was seen to relate only to marginal groups which were regarded by certain conservatives as having no moral, such as drug addicts and homosexuals. As a result, there was no legislation implemented to find a pharmaceutical cure for the disease. The approach of the media and the government angered a small part of New York artists, called "radical outsiders", who did not want to comply with the art world. This group wanted to express their anger and began an artistic campaign to demonstrate against the government's and institutions' indifference by using their art as propaganda for the masses. As a result of the AIDS crisis, political art activism gained an even more prominent foothold in New York. Art critic and curator Tommaso Speretta argues in his book *Rebels Rebel, AIDS, Art and Activism in New York, 1979-1989*, that the activist art the AIDS epidemic prompted was separate from political art. According to Speretta, activist art is "generally the result of a collectively produced shared awareness and political analysis of specific issues."[43] As opposed to political art, activist artists challenge the notion of representation and power structures both in and outside of art field, wanting to make change by challenging public opinion.[44]

As discussed in this chapter, the 1980s were just as politically charged as the decades before it, but the activism manifested itself in a different way, especially in New York and its art scene. Guerrilla Girls were shaped ideologically and methodically by the 1970s feminist activism, but were also affected strategically by the 1980s art scene of New York. Besides the above discussed actions from activist art groups, punk and its disruptive methods, had in the

[42] Sholette, "News from nowhere", 59.
[43] Speretta, *Rebels Rebel*, 8-9.
[44] Ibid., 5-6, 7-9, 11.

meanwhile taken art to the streets in the form of community and graffiti art, but also in the form of performances and protests.[45]

[45] Cambridge Dictionary defines 'punk' as "a culture popular among young people, especially in the late 1970s, involving opposition to authority expressed through shocking behavior, clothes, hair, and fast loud music". Accessed October 17, 2019. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/punk

CHAPTER II
PERFORMING PUBLICLY AND CULTURALLY: GUERRILLA GIRLS' PERFORMANCE

After outlining the context in which Guerrilla Girls emerged and how they were shaped by both their predecessors and contemporaries, in this chapter, Guerrilla Girls' performances will be discussed through performance theory. In the 1980s, New York and its art scene had been greatly affected by the performance art of the two previous decades, during which performance became deeply connected to political activism. The connection between performance and activism resulted in artists of different genres doing collaborative work, one example being John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Their activist performance in 1969, during which they stayed in bed in their Amsterdam hotel room for multiple days, was a call for peace and thus, an anti-war demonstration.[46]

It will become clear that understanding and defining performance is no easy task, because there is no consensus on performance as a paradigm. Richard Schechner, who has acted in a key role when it comes to theorizing performance, advances performance through its connection to anthropology and rituals, arguing that performance can convey information more effectively than text, for example. Through understanding it as an activity by either an individual or a group, done in the presence of another individual or group, Schechner emphasizes the importance of the spectator. Thus, performance is interaction between performer and the audience and could be defined by the intention of the performance to be watched. Schechner defines performing in the arts as "to put on a show, a play, a dance, a concert" and performance as "ritualized behavior conditioned and/or permeated by play".[47] Schechner's notion of play will later be referred in this chapter to argue that play is a key part of Guerrilla Girls' performance and manifests in the group's satirical posters.

Erin Striff approaches performance from its simultaneously mundane and theatrical nature: she argues, that performance is largely studying people and their actions of representing ourselves. According to Striff, the concept of performance is shaped by its lack of spatial or temporal nature: it can occur anywhere, anytime. Striff further argues, that the

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[46] Goldberg, *Performance: live art since the 60s*, 19.
[47] Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 28, 52; Schechner, *Performance Theory,* 30 (note 10); Striff, "Introduction", 11.

boundaries between the performer and the audience are not as clear as they might seem and therefore, "the spectators are implicated [in the performance] as much as the performer."[48]

RoseLee Goldberg agrees with the open-endedness of defining performance art. Goldberg argues, that provocation is one of the key concepts of performance art. She argues that performance art is:

> a volatile form that artists use to respond to change – whether political in the broadest sense, or cultural, or dealing with issues of current concern – and to bring about change, in relation to the more traditional disciplines of painting and sculpture, photography, theater, and dance, or even literature.[49]

Performance provides methods for artists to expose their fears and to explore where the fear stems from. According to Goldberg, performance art has historically provided artists with an anarchistic medium of work, which both challenges and violates the norms of our society. As it has no rules to follow, it is a way of challenging ordinary views of genders, of private or public, of mundane life and art.[50] Hence, it is a method of experimenting with ever changing medias, aesthetics and with culture.

In this chapter, the focus of the inquiry will be on the public and cultural performances of Guerrilla Girls, as their work developed from activist street art performed in a public setting to activist art performed in an institutional setting. In the light of this change also satire/play and collective anonymity will be explored in this chapter, as they are a major part of Guerrilla Girls' performance.

2.1. *Public and cultural performances*

Bradford D. Martin defines public performance as a "self-conscious, stylized tactic of staging songs, plays, parades and protests to convey symbolic messages about social and political issues to audiences who might not have encountered them in more traditional venues."[51] Public performances developed in the 1960s, when politics and art started to mix together more openly, and instead of theatres, museums or other cultural institutions, the street

[48] Striff, "Introduction", 1-2.
[49] Goldberg, *Performance: live art since the 60s*, 12-13.
[50] Ibid., 13, 30.
[51] Martin, "The Theater is in the Street", 2.

became the forum where the public performance became manifest. One example of a group utilizing public performance was GAAG, which' actions of institutional critique served as inspiration for Guerrilla Girls. One of GAAG's motivations was to diminish the prestige and power museums held in the art field. They organized demonstrations to hinder their everyday conduct by challenging individuals to question institutional practice.[52]

Similar to the AWC and GAAG, the Guerrilla Girls followed their lead of action and disobedience by staging their posters outside of museum spaces, but still in the heart of New York art scene in SoHo. Martin argues, that the move away from "bourgeois cultural venues" such as museums was an effort to democratize culture and make it more accessible for the general public. This was an effective approach, as the streets offered honest conversation with a broader audience the cultural institutions were able to provide.[53] Protesting in public spaces and thus, conversing directly with the ordinary people, became an excellent method of protesting cultural institutions and the power they hold.[54] According to Jan Cohen-Cruz public street performances often appear in times of social change, whether before or after a change in *status-quo*. To Cohen-Cruz, street performance offers artists tools to create visions of how society could look like, and offers ways to criticize society's current state.[55] This criticism of society's current state became apparent in Guerrilla Girls' work.

Guerrilla Girls' posters from 1985 in SoHo are an early example of their public protest. *WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON?* (see figure 7), *THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL* (see figure 8), *THESE CRITICS DON'T WRITE ENOUGH ABOUT WOMEN ARTISTS* (see figure 9) and *HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?* (see figure 10) all represent their discussion of the art world's inequalities in a public setting and with the public. One Guerrilla Girl has later explained this calling out to these galleries, critics, artists and museums: "we wanted it to be different. We wanted action – not consciousness-raising."[56]

SoHo and the East Village, neighborhoods which had for a long time acted as areas for alternative gallery spaces, activists and artists alike, were rapidly changing in the 1980s. New York was the hub for the contemporary art market, living the "age of decadence", as one Guerrilla Girl said in an interview, considering it to be one of the main reasons why the

[52] Martin, "The Theater is in the Street", 2; Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning", 105.
[53] Martin, "The Theater is in the Street", 10.
[54] For an example of this direct conversation with the public, see fig. 1.
[55] Cohen-Cruz, "General Introduction", 6.
[56] Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power", 313.

group was established. Wall Street was thriving and the space of artists was suddenly invaded by lawyers, all the while changing the landscape from alternative spaces to high-priced condos. The business-minded people were the customers of artists, as they bought artworks to decorate their apartments with. Art and business became tightly connected at the time. Art was seen by this new class of customers as a way of elevating one's personal status. Museums received sponsoring in various ways, such as funding to expand their facilities with new galleries or receiving major artworks as donations. In return, museums named the new wings after the donors. But art was not a past time for only individuals. Corporations such as the Chase Manhattan Bank hired their own curator to buy art for them, and later changed their SoHo branch into an exhibition space. Elisabeth Hess poses a question for this particular time in the 1980s: "Art was selling. What could be better for artists?"[57] In reality, the boom of art collecting related to very few and mostly male artists, which frustrated the Guerrilla Girls. By directing their criticism to the booming Wall Street and its' male workers appropriating their space in SoHo, the group put up their poster *WOMEN IN AMERICA EARN ONLY 2/3 OF WHAT MEN DO. WOMEN ARTISTS EARN ONLY 1/3 OF WHAT MEN ARTISTS DO* (see figure 11) in 1985.[58]

The concept of street and space was critical for the institutional critique Guerrilla Girls' engaged in their early career. The space in which their early public performances took place, plays an interactive role between the performer and the spectator. In the case of Guerrilla Girls' work, the space provided both a local and sociocultural context. Not only were the spaces chosen in SoHo, where artists resided, but intentionally away from the crowded and touristy Manhattan, where the criticized museums are located. The same concerns the galleries criticized in *THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL* (see figure 8), as the posters were not glued directly on the gallery building's walls, but rather to the streets away from them, both for the artistic community and general public to view and consider. In this separation from the conventional art venues Martin's definition of public performances becomes visible. Public performance artists such as Guerrilla Girls moved away from these venues in order to gain a larger audience.[59]

Guerrilla Girls engaged also in what can be understood as "cultural performance". Jon McKenzie has theorized cultural performances as "occasions in which as a culture or society

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[57] Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power", 312.
[58] Ibid., 312; Thompson, *American Culture in the 1980s*, 65; Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning", 103.
[59] Wiens, "Spatiality", 91; Martin, "The Theater Is in the Street", 2.

we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others."[60] In this context, the main purpose of cultural performance is to spark change by challenging the norms of society, and to provide alternatives to the current stage. McKenzie lists three main functions attributed to cultural performances: one, "social and self-reflection through the dramatization or embodiment of symbolic forms," two, "the presentation of alternative arrangements" and three, "the possibility of conservation and/or transformation". When understood through its ability to change social structures, cultural performances offer a significant transformational prospective.[61]

To understand Guerrilla Girls from the context of cultural performance, the poster *ONLY 4 COMMERCIAL GALLERIES IN N.Y. SHOW BLACK WOMEN* (see figure 12) from 1986 will now be analyzed from McKenzie's three functions of cultural performances. The poster does not only declare the lack of presenting art made by black women in such galleries as Cavin-Morris or Bernice Steinbaum, but also how there is only one gallery which showed more than one. To consider women artists, and especially women artists of color, as 'quota' artists was something Guerrilla Girls fought against. Instead, the group wanted museums and galleries to utilize the Affirmative Action[62], giving women and women of color more opportunities as they already suffer of discrimination against (white) men. When approached through the framework of the three functions of cultural performance theorized by McKenzie, this specific poster underlines well how Guerrilla Girls wanted to bring on change with their cultural performance. By calling out not only the lack of women in these commercial galleries, but also the lack of representation of black women artists, Guerrilla Girls challenge the normality of race and gender-based discrimination and shame the galleries for their actions. Together, the two scathing statements of the poster result as a demand for change. Both statements of the poster, "only 4 commercial galleries in N.Y. show black women" and "only 1 shows more than 1", offer "social and self-reflection through dramatization",[63] as McKenzie has theorized as the first function of cultural performance. The galleries are

[60] McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[61] Ibid., 31.
[62] Cambridge Dictionary defines 'affirmative action' as following: "If a government or an organization takes affirmative action, it gives preference to women, black people, or other groups that are often treated unfairly, when it is choosing people for a job." Accessed November 6, 2019. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/affirmative-action
[63] McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.

challenged to self-reflect their actions and the tokenism[64] they engage in. By shaming these galleries, Guerrilla Girls offer an "alternative arrangement" as per McKenzie's second function. If the galleries would first self-reflect and then take the alternative arrangement presented to them, there would be a "possibility of transformation", which McKenzie states to be the third and final function of cultural performance.[65]

Already in 1985, Guerrilla Girls were asked to organize an all-women exhibition in the Palladium, a well-known club and exhibition space in New York. Palladium had been exhibiting male artists, but in a feminist spirit, and wanted an exhibition focusing on female artists' work solely. Guerrilla Girls discussed this opportunity and decided to proceed with the project, but the planning caused friction within the group, as they did not organize an open call for female artists to participate, but curated it by themselves. This initiated some of the members to quit Guerrilla Girls, as they felt their exhibition represented the same model of exclusion most museums utilized. The night at the Palladium and the clash it caused did, however, result in the group developing their own policy when it came to exhibitions, the main key being that they would not engage in projects where they needed to make choices between artists. When analyzed through the framework of McKenzie's three functions, the Palladium exhibition proves to be another example of Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance. The Palladium wanted to shift their focus from male artists' work to feminist work, and thus engaged both in social and self-reflection in the spirit of 1980s feminism and activist art. The exhibition Guerrilla Girls curated criticized the male-centric exhibiting of the Palladium space, and provided not only an alternative arrangement but also a change towards inclusiveness in the exhibition space.[66]

The "Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney" (see figure 13) of 1987 is another example of their cultural performance. The exhibition was organized in the Clocktower space in New York, and consisted of artworks that showed the worsening representation of women artists and minorities compared to male artists by the Whitney. It was a reaction to the 1987 Whitney Biennial of contemporary art, an exhibition "everyone loves to hate, because there is seldom any consensus on what's noteworthy or outstanding" as Josephine Withers puts it.[67] This project was one of the group's most attention-grabbing exhibitions and caused split

[64] Cambridge Dictionary defines 'tokenism' as "actions that are the result of pretending to give advantage to those groups in society who are often treated unfairly, in order to give the appearance of fairness." Accessed December 18, 2019. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tokenism
[65] McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[66] Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power", 317, 319; McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[67] Withers, "The Guerrilla Girls", 287.

opinions: the *New York Times* claimed that everyone should see it in order to understand the constructions of the art world, but the Whitney curators considered it to be factually inaccurate, suggesting that Guerrilla Girls should stick to their posters.[68] The exhibition exposed the gender and racial bias of the biennial and consisted of satirical artworks such as *CAN YOU SCORE BETTER THAN THE WHITNEY CURATORS?* (see figure 14), where the visitor could fire a dart gun toward a giant female nipple. Next to the nipple one could see the statistics of the biennials between 1973 and 1987, showing that white men were represented in 71,27 percent of the works, while non-white women only in 0,30 percent. *WELL HUNG AT THE WHITNEY: BIENNIAL GENDER CENSUS 1973-1987* (see figure 15) also represents the satirical humor the group utilizes, as the columns depicting the small number of women artists opposed to the male artists represented are symbolized as downward hanging phalluses. One of the works, *MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WHITNEY MUSEUM AND THE PRODUCTS THEIR COMPANIES MAKE: THEY KNOW WHAT WOMEN WANT* (see figure 16), criticized the business part of museum work, as many of the Whitney's sponsor companies made products such as cosmetics for women. Thus, the companies simultaneously profited of women and acted as sponsors to exhibitions where women were discriminated against. The "Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney" is a clear example of Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance and can also be analyzed from the theoretical framework of McKenzie. Firstly, the exhibition dramatized the discriminatory constructions of the Whitney museum and made them visible to the general public through the combination of facts and satire. The artworks such as *CAN YOU SCORE BETTER THAN THE WHITNEY CURATORS?* (see figure 14) and *WELL HUNG AT THE WHITNEY: BIENNIAL GENDER CENSUS 1973-1987* (see figure 15) informed the viewer through the use of satire, that there were alternative measures to take in order to rectify the situation. By challenging the visitor to point a dart gun towards a mammary gland dramatized the need for women artists and minorities to be exhibited in museums. The pointy end of the mammary gland made it impossible for the dart to grasp onto the 'breast', symbolizing the discrimination of minorities in the Whitney museum. Through these measures, the exhibition called for transformation in the Whitney and its curatorial practices: the discrimination needed to stop.[69]

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[68] Ibid., 287.
[69] Guerrilla Girls, "Guerrilla Girls survey the survey", accessed November 8, 2019. www.guerrillagirls.com; McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.

More recently, Guerrilla Girls have criticized art institutions by participating in the 2005 Venice Biennale, curated by María de Corral and Rosa Martínez. The group carried out an installation of six major banners criticizing the gender discrimination the biennale has exercised since its start in 1895. Guerrilla Girls declared this biennale to be the first feminist one, Guerrilla Girls used an image from Federico Fellini's movie *La Dolce Vita* (1960) in a banner and claimed: *Where are the women artists of Venice? Underneath the men* (see figure 17). Referencing women being underneath men was given a very literal meaning, as the group looked into the collections of historical museums of Venice and realized, that most of the artworks by women were, in fact, kept in storage in the basements, underneath the exhibited artworks by men.[70] I will discuss Guerrilla Girls' performance in the Venice Biennale and the group's institutional criticism in the context of a museum space more in depth in the third chapter of this thesis.

Separating public and cultural performance from one-another can be challenging, as performance can simultaneously consist of functions attributed to both of these concepts and both convey social issues. But whereas public performances manifest away of the traditional cultural venues such as museums, to cultural performances the aim is to bring about change. Therefore, cultural performances are not limited to institutes but seek a broader stage to reach the general public. Guerrilla Girls' work evolved to systematic institutional critique, which earns its broader platform to bring about change.

2.2. Collective anonymity

Now that it has become clear that Guerrilla Girls engage in performance as their artistic practice, the analysis will further focus on their adoption of collective anonymity. I will now discuss the issue of anonymity in the context of Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance. Furthermore, I will explore how the adoption of anonymity functions in Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance and how it produces an interesting paradox in their work.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, Guerrilla Girls adopted anonymity by wearing gorilla masks and acting under pseudonyms. A member of Guerrilla Girls acting under the pseudonym "Gertrude Stein", elaborates on how the group adopted the features they are still known for today. Taking notes from the feminist groups preceding them, Stein explains how "in contemplating the absurdity of our condition as feminist artists, we hit on the brilliant

[70] Kahlo & Kollwitz, "Transgressive techniques of the Guerrilla Girls", 207.

strategy of naming names while maintaining our anonymity, all with a sense of humor". Initially the name of the group was born out of a spelling error, one of the group members writing "gorilla" instead of "guerrilla", but Kollwitz soon saw this as an opportunity to challenge and question the binaries[71] of what is considered male and female. In addition to the mask, the attire of a Guerrilla Girl consisted of fishnet stockings and high heels. This allowed the group members to mock and play with feminine stereotypes attached to stockings and high heeled shoes.[72]

Scholar Christine Martorana argues, that Guerrilla Girls' combination of the overly feminine clothing and gorilla masks develops a "visual paradox" the group plays to their advantage. Martorana uses the definition of visual paradox by Fleckenstein, who considers the concept to consist of "contradictions among images themselves." In other words, images presented together can cause or emphasize a contradiction between them, in Guerrilla Girls' case, causing a contradiction between the masculinity of a gorilla mask and the feminine clothing.[73] Through McKenzie's theoretical framework of cultural performance Guerrilla Girls' use of gorilla masks can be understood as "social and self-reflection through the dramatization or embodiment of symbolic forms".[74] By wearing the masks Guerrilla Girls avoid of being objectified and gawked at as women based on their physical beauty, giving more room to focus on the message the group wants to convey. Therefore, staying anonymous plays into Guerrilla Girls' aim of bringing about change. The masks are symbolic forms and convey the message of discrimination of women artists in the art world: women who engage in institutional criticism have to stay anonymous in order to guard their individual careers. The juxtaposition of simultaneously taking elements from an animal and human plays with confusion and people's expectations. As the lower half of the attire consists of a woman's body, one would expect this to be reflected in the top part as well. However, this has been replaced by an animal head with aggressive features of dagger-like teeth, hairiness and defiant eyes. As gorillas can be perceived as aggressive and powerful animals, they provide a good contrast to the view of women as submissive and agreeable, changing the notion of woman as a passive object to an active and aggressive agent. The attire invites the

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[71] The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'binary' as following: "relating to the use of stable oppositions (such as good and evil) to analyze a subject or create a structural model." Accessed November 13, 2019. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/binary

[72] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning.", 105; Demo, "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion", 143; Stein et al. "Guerrilla Girls and Guerrilla Girls Broadband", 89.

[73] See K. Fleckenstein's "Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Composition Classroom" Carbondale: Southern Illinois University (2010) for further information on the matter.

[74] McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.

patriarchal viewer to look and meets the gaze with challenging and confident stare, which traditionally has been connected to be male traits in the public setting. Furthermore, the dualism of presenting oneself as both animal and human contests the traditional view of humans overriding the power of animals, and at the same time, challenges the dominancy of male over female hierarchy.[75]

The masks and names allow Guerrilla Girls to assume a "collective identity", which in turn, makes Guerrilla Girls' actions cultural. All members of the group are individual artists in their personal lives, but refrain to disclose their true identity, opting to adopt pseudonyms instead. Not only does this safeguard the women of retaliation by the general public, but also allows them to join their forces to function as a collective. Whenever they perform in public, they wear the mask, all becoming "that Guerrilla Girl", as "Kollwitz" has stated. Martorana describes the groups' use of visual representation of feminist agency as "responsible anonymity", which she defines as "anonymous action that promotes accountability and forwards justice." Martorana approaches the concept of justice from James Sterba's point of view and model of feminist justice,[76] meaning that feminist justice is attained once an individual's biological sex does not dictate their rights or obligations in society. Abandoning this behavior model would forward justice, as artists would be valued for their artistic abilities instead of their biological sex.[77]

There is a distinct difference between responsible and irresponsible anonymity, as the latter can lead to racist or discriminatory remarks in, for example, an online environment where one can act under anonymity. The responsible anonymity entails, that the individual or group promotes justice but also can be held accountable for their actions, which is evident in the performance of Guerrilla Girls. The accountability becomes visible in their speaking appearances and in the question-and-answer sessions Guerrilla Girls organize in conjunction with their exhibitions. One example of the dialogue they engage in is the 2014 appearance at the University of Tennessee. After the live performance, "Käthe Kollwitz" took questions from the audience members and discussed various topics from why Guerrilla Girls visit college campuses to and how their constant use of masks can be challenging. According to Martorana, the group does not participate in the "hit-and-run tactics" as described by Withers, but instead promotes accountability in their actions due to the open dialogue Guerrilla Girls

[75] Martorana, "Enacting Feminist Agency", 8, 19; Martorana, "Looking Outside to Empower Within", 43-45.
[76] See J. Sterba's 1994 article "Feminist justice and the pursuit of peace" in *Hypatia* for more information on the matter.
[77] Martorana, "Enacting Feminist Agency", 12-13.

want to engage in, with both their supporters and adversaries. From the perspective of cultural performance, accountability is vital, as by taking part in a dialogue with the spectators Guerrilla Girls can successfully provide them alternative arrangements. The direct engagement with the audience enhances the cultural performance's effectiveness and enforces Guerrilla Girls' aim of making change in the art world. Martorana considers dialogue to be a "prerequisite for accountability". Responsible anonymity requires, that the group does not engage only with their supporters, but also with the critique they face, acknowledging also the opposing opinions to their own.[78]

The anonymity of Guerrilla Girls provides benefits, as it makes it harder for their opponents to mute the women individually. As they work under collective anonymity, the critique cannot land on a certain individual, as the true identity of the group member stays concealed under the mask. The adoption of the gorilla masks and pseudonyms underscores the strength of unrecognizability and therefore, one cannot be exactly sure who speaks apart from the whole collective. Also, the Guerrilla Girl attire of a mask and feminine clothing cause the group to use their bodies as a rhetoric message. By wearing this "uniform" they construct a collective group identity – everyone looks the same. Martorana argues, that the use of masks and anonymity within the group enforces the equality between the group members – no one is above others. However, one could disagree with this argument to a certain degree, as "Kahlo" and "Kollwitz" clearly enjoy prominence among the group as members who established the group. This becomes visible when Guerrilla Girls are being interviewed, as the response of the group usually comes through "Kahlo" and "Kollwitz". According to "Gertrude Stein", a former member of the group, "Kahlo" and "Kollwitz" did enjoy more power than others, which resulted in some of the original members to be fired from the group.[79] Even though the use of gorilla masks does not necessarily imply automatic equality between the members, the adoption of collective group identity does enforce Guerrilla Girls' objective of bringing about change.[80]

Martorana disagrees with Anne Teresa Demo's and Josephine Withers' views when it comes to the aim of the group and the way of using anonymity and visual paradox to

[78] Ibid., 14-17; Withers, "The Guerrilla Girls", 287; McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[79] As discussed in the introduction, in March 2000, five members of Guerrilla Girls were fired by "Kahlo" and "Kollwitz", who had secretly taken legal action in order to trademark the name "Guerrilla Girls". As a result, the original Guerrilla Girls separated into various groups, such as Guerrilla Girls BroadBand, which is still active. See page 24 in "Guerrilla Girls and Guerrilla Girls BroadBand: Inside Story" by Stein et al. for more information on the matter.
[80] Martorana, "Enacting Feminist Agency", 18-19, 24; Stein et al., "Guerrilla Girls and Guerrilla Girls BroadBand: Inside Story", 97.

accomplish it. Demo argues, that instead of changing the system completely, Guerrilla Girls want to gain equal access to the museum for women. Withers agrees with this notion of the group "working with and within the system to effect change." Martorana argues instead, that accessing the patriarchal societal system proves to be too limiting for the group's political activist art, as they essentially want to change it completely. Anna C. Chave's argument of Guerrilla Girls' aim combines the two different viewpoints of gaining access and changing the system completely. According to Chave, Guerrilla Girls aim is to change the art world to gain more access for women. Chave further argues, that this aim of change implies that the group has more of a pragmatist view than utopist one: Guerrilla Girls wanted women and artists of color to get their fair share in the arts and believed that achieving this would change the art world in itself.[81] When Guerrilla Girls' performance is discussed within the context of cultural performance and its aim of making change, Chave's argument makes a convincing one. Guerrilla Girls do engage in institutional criticism and exhibit their work in museums, but feel compelled to do so because remaining outside does not proof to be effective enough. Therefore, the group works with museums and within their institutional sphere, but thrives to demolish the current constructions of art institutions which allow women and minorities to be discriminated against. The paradox of Guerrilla Girls' institutional criticism being exhibited in museums will be discussed more in the third chapter of this thesis.

Assuming anonymity through the use of masks developed some problems, however. Guerrilla Girls wanted the masks to represent their commitment to diversity within the group, some members wearing albino gorilla masks, while others wore brown and black gorilla masks (see figure 18). This unintentionally caused the masks to be connected to racial stereotypes and assumptions, which bothered especially the members of color. "Thomas" commented, that wearing the mask "becomes a physical and psychological burden at times" and that the mask makes her "look the way some people see me every day, unconsciously."[82] The humor and use of the mask started to divide opinions, as some considered it to have racist undertones, while others saw it as an effective stunt the group exploited in their performance. Hess argues, that already by the 1990s, the use of the gorilla masks hurt the ability of the group to stay current and develop further, commenting that the "girls looked, in part, stuck in the jungle, unable to metamorphose into full human beings." The search for anonymity produces a distinct paradox in Guerrilla Girls' work and makes the difference of

[81] Martorana, "Enacting Feminist Agency", 20; Demo, "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion", 152; Withers, "The Guerrilla Girls", 289; Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning", 103-104.
[82] Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power", 327; Demo, "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion", 143.

anonymity and neutrality very clear. As each mask as a cultural symbol has its own connotations, it seems to be difficult to attain true anonymity.[83] In the beginning of Guerrilla Girls' career, the masks and pseudonyms offered the group members safety when it came to their personal careers as artists, but have later proved to be challenging. The collective anonymity and the use of masks excludes the members of color due to the racial connotations attached to the masks. Like the use of blackface, symbols of racial stereotypes are being challenged and called out more publicly. Using racially charged symbolic forms and criticizing museums for their racist practices develops a conflict in Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance. Hence, the using of the masks could be considered as a "Darwinian joke about the nature of progress."[84] However, without the mask wearing, the group might not have been as successful in their feminist endeavors. This becomes apparent in "Kahlo's" comment during a 1995 performance in Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Alabama: "the funny thing is if I took off this mask none of you would listen to me. I have to wear a hot, heavy gorilla mask on this stage to get your attention."[85]

2.3. Satire, humor and play

As became clear in the previous discussion, the adoption of collective anonymity is a key part of Guerrilla Girls' performance as artists. In this chapter, I will now discuss another major strategy of Guerrilla Girls: humor and satire. The early work of Guerrilla Girls focused mainly on the aspects of public and cultural performances. As discussed earlier in this thesis, public performances convey social issues to the broader public away from traditional cultural venues, such as theatres or museums. Cultural performances, on the other hand, defined by Jon McKenzie, aspire to challenge and bring on change to the current situation in society. By 1987 the group had started to utilize satirical humor in their posters instead of only relying on statistical facts. This satirical, humorous tone became an integral part of the group's artistic strategy in their performance as activist artists. They effortlessly combined the humor and

[83] Another example of a group known for their masks and anonymity is the hacker group The Anonymous, who organize attacks against major organizations such as the CIA and Ku Klux Klan. The group uses a white, smiling mask inspired by Guy Fawkes, who was a key agent in the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. After the mask was seen in comic books and movies, the hacker group adopted it to be their symbol and it has become a symbol for anonymity in the internet. See "Anonymous: How the Guy Fawkes mask became an icon of the protest movement" by Tom Ough in *Independent*, November 4, 2019 for more information on the matter. Accessed December 3, 2019. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/anonymous-how-the-guy-fawkes-mask-became-an-icon-of-the-protest-movement-a6720831.html
[84] Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power", 326-327.
[85] Ibid., 309.

statistics in order to catch the attention of the viewer, but also to make the institutional discrimination the art world employed more visible.[86]

This combination of satirical humor and statistical data can be described as “dark play”, which Richard Schechner defines to “subvert the metacommunicative message ‘this is play’.”[87] In the context of Guerrilla Girls, they take part in dark play in the form of playing with satire.[88] This entails that the group presents something in the form of a joke, but forces the spectator to realize the disturbing facts underneath the humor. Dark play can be found in several works by Guerrilla Girls, one of the examples being the 1988 poster *THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A FEMALE ARTIST* (see figure 19), where the difficulties women artists face during their careers are listed in forms of jokes. As a spectator, one can find uncomfortable truths behind these “jokes”, as they reveal the constructional lack of appreciation female artists face in museums and other art institutions. Anne Teresa Demo considers Guerrilla Girls to use the concept of perspective by incongruity as theorized by Kenneth Burke in their “comic politics of subversion”. Through their rhetoric, the group does not only provide an image of incongruity in the art world, but also a corrective method to change it, which relates to McKenzie’s second and third functions of cultural performance. With the statements such as “not having to be in shows with men”, “not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius” and “getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit”, the poster uses strategic juxtaposition through the use of humor by teaching the viewer that these institutionalized patterns of discrimination should be noticed and challenged. By making the discrimination visible, Guerrilla Girls’ cultural performance aims to change the current constructions of art institutions.[89]

In contrast to Demo’s view of Guerrilla Girls’ use of perspective by incongruity, Christine Martorana argues, that Guerrilla Girls take a complementary approach in their satirical criticism of patriarchal ideas of women. Martorana defines this complementary approach to have three features: first, it promotes “women’s rhetorical abilities and potentials”, second, it offers “a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of feminist activist strategies” and third, it invites “communication and dialogue over antagonism and monologue”. By engaging in this complementary approach, Guerrilla Girls promote the

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[86] Martin, “The Theater is in the Street”, 2; McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[87] Schechner, *Performance studies,* 119.
[88] Cambridge Dictionary defines ‘satire’ as “a way of criticizing people or ideas in a humorous way, especially in order to make a political point” and as “a humorous way of criticizing people or ideas to show that they have faults or are wrong.” Accessed November 9, 2019. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/satire
[89] Demo, “The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion”, 134, 151.

inclusion of women by giving the general public a better understanding of the restrictions women artists face in the public sphere.[90]

The poster mentioned above and its statement "not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius", connects to other posters made by Guerrilla Girls, and to a larger issue of unappreciation of female artists in museums. The lack of appreciation for women artists was originally questioned by Linda Nochlin in her 1971 essay "Why have there been no great women artists?". In this essay, Nochlin examined the issue of naturally excepting the male artists' work as genius in the art historical canon – as opposed to the work by female artists' work. Nochlin poses a question: "Well, if women really *are* equal to men, why have there never been any great women artists?"[91] According to Nochlin, this is due to the inherent, systematic discrimination the society, and thus, also the art world, is constructed on. Nochlin explains that historically anyone who was not born as male, who was not ethnically white, and who did not belong to the middle-class, was inevitably discouraged and oppressed in their artistic talent by the social institutions. Nochlin further makes clear that the history and power of art academies, and systems such as patronage, influenced the social construction of women being subjected to serve either as a muse or a model, and as the latter, often depicted nude.[92]

Nochlin's thoughts and the discussion of female nude can be seen reflected in the Guerrilla Girls poster *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Museum?* (see figures 20, 22 and 23). The poster appropriates a famous nude, *La Grande Odalisque* (1814, see figure 21) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867). Demo argues, that the re-appropriation of this nude is an example of strategic juxtaposition: the female figure is depicted reclined in a position for traditional depictions of nudes, but wears a gorilla mask. Through the viewpoint of McKenzie's first function of cultural performance, the incongruity of the figure emphasizes the argument of challenging societal norms. In opposition to Ingres' *Odalisque*, the Guerrilla Girls' version does not depict a demure or submissive woman. She stares straight ahead, with the eyes of a gorilla. In this way, Guerrilla Girls challenged the traditional idealized view of female beauty, providing the model with more power in the form of a ferocious gorilla. To Demo, "defacing" patriarchal art is an effective method of criticism, as it "criticizes the very institutions that canonize such images" and juxtaposes the traits connected to masculinity and femininity. In this image, one can see the masculinity depicted

[90] Martorana, "Looking Outside to Empower Within", 35-36.
[91] Nochlin, *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*, 147.
[92] Ibid., 150, 158.

in the aggression of the gorilla mask. The traits linked to femininity in this image are the submissive nature of the woman, providing an image of idealized female body.[93] Hence, the re-appropriation of this famous nude can be considered as criticizing the myth of "male genius".

The re-writing of the male centric art history canon is one of the most important aims in Guerrilla Girls' artistic practice. Cynthia Freeland argues, that the group uses "'Add Women and Stir' approach", where they want to change the canon to be more inclusive towards women, and to possibly uncover women artists whose work needs to be researched and appreciated. Freeland explains, that as "ideologies", canons take on a false objectivity. In reality, they only enforce the power structures of institutions and emphasize the patriarchal dominance. To Guerrilla Girls art by women artists is always labeled as 'female', unlike art made by male artists. This labeling creates an imbalance between the sexes and needs to be rectified by re-writing the art historical canon.[94]

As discussed in this chapter, Guerrilla Girls' work can be understood both as public and cultural performance, and two major characteristics of their performance are anonymity and satire. McKenzie's theory has clearly indicated, that engaging in cultural performance allows Guerrilla Girls to challenge the norms and practices of the art world and present better alternatives to them. Together, these two functions play into the group's objective of changing museums. Combining dark humor and statistics in their posters not only gives Guerrilla Girls an opportunity to criticize institutions and the power they hold, but also communicates to the viewer that the constructions the art world is built upon should be questioned and called out. Their posters can be seen as individual performances of institutional criticism, but collectively, they make up Guerrilla Girls' larger performance of political activism. After discussing both public and cultural performances of Guerrilla Girls, in the next chapter I will explore Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance inside museums, which produces a paradox of simultaneously rebelling against museums and working in collaboration with them.

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[93] Demo, "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion", 148-149; McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[94] Freeland, But Is It Art? An Introduction to Art Theory, 132-133, 141.

CHAPTER III
GUERRILLA GIRLS AND MUSEUMS: CRITICIZING MUSEUMS FROM THE INSIDE

Now that it has become clear that Guerrilla Girls' work should be regarded as public and cultural performance, which are molded by their use of satire and adoption of collective anonymity, in this chapter, I will discuss Guerrilla Girls' political activist performances of institutional critique in museums and galleries. This will be done by exploring three examples of Guerrilla Girls' institutional critique, as major part of Guerrilla Girls' political activist art revolves around the concept of institutional criticism. Exhibiting political activist art in a museum setting comes with both difficulties and possibilities in contrast to, for example, the realm of the street, where Guerrilla Girls' actions first were carried out.

To sketch out the possible difficulties of exhibiting performance or political activist art in a museum setting, we must first discuss what is expected from museums and exhibition spaces. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) updates their definition of what a museum is regularly, as the roles of museums change over time. In the August 2007 General Assembly in Austria, ICOM defined the museum as following:

> A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.[95]

The most recent General Assembly was organized in Japan in September 2019, where the definition was again re-defined. The assembly considers museums to have changed in their practices and policies and to have new responsibilities and challenges. The new definition was phrased as following:

> Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society,

[95] "Museum Definition", Official website of ICOM. Accessed November 14, 2019. https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/

safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people.[96]

Museums are also described by ICOM as institutions that encourage public participating and that are required to be transparent in their actions. By working closely both with and for various communities, museums can discuss issues of social justice. The re-definition of 2019 recognizes how museums have evolved into more active agents within society and how their audience has diversified, therefore making it necessary for museums to respond to these changes. But alas, the ICOM definition of a museum serves only as an ideal, and cannot be enforced upon the work of museums.[97] To some, the redefinitions of the museum have changed museums towards spaces where societal discussions can take place in a democratizing[98] and inclusive manner. However, one must take into consideration, that the concept of democratizing is ideologically loaded and the emphasis of it is not shared globally.

The development of democratization in museums has in turn led to museum being considered as public space. Jennifer Barrett outlines museums as public space to be "all inclusive" and approaches public space through Rosalyn Deutsche's theoretical framework. According to Deutsche, public space is not "'neutral', but 'rather, political, inseparable from the conflictual and uneven social relations that structure specific societies at specific historical moments'". Furthermore, Deutsche argues museums as public spaces to provide an institutionalized space for criticism and discussion.[99] If one advances museum space from Barrett's and Deutsche's points of view, exhibiting political activist art and performance in a museum setting becomes more anticipated. Mary Elisabeth Williams argues, that traditionally museums have been considered as "neutral spaces" for dialogue on various issues and rather than taking sides, museums have acted as the invoker of discussion. This neutrality is even further challenged, when protest art is brought into the space.[100]

[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Lexico Dictionary defines 'democratize' as "introducing a democratic system or democratic principles to" and to "make (something) accessible to everyone". Accessed December 11, 2019. https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/democratize
[99] Barrett, *Museums and the Public Sphere*, 143, 162-163.
[100] Williams, "A Noble Balancing Act", 68.

3.1. Guerrilla Girls' institutional critique in museums and galleries

In chapter two it has become clear that Guerrilla Girls' institutional critique began in public spaces and that Guerrilla Girls approached museums and art institutions from the outsider's perspective. However, quite soon after beginning their work they were already performing inside museums and as the group engages in political activist and protest art, showing it inside museums can raise difficulties (see figures 24-26 for examples of how Guerrilla Girls' art is exhibited in museums).

To some scholars, the fact that museums aspire to be viewed as neutral spaces makes it impossible for activist art to remain political within a museum context. Paula Serafini argues, that the framework museums provide can prove to be very limiting for the full potential of activist art and the ideals it thrives for. When discussing performances, Serafini considers museums to be more than "only a site of performance and a target of critique, but also a public space, within which art activists are exercising their right to protest, and where the politics, processes, and ethics of that same space are also being challenged."[101] This is evident in Guerrilla Girls' work being exhibited in the same art institutions they criticize. However, considering museums as public space does problematize the distinction between public and cultural performances to some extent, as the two concepts are most concretely separated by the space they occur in.

This also explains why the move from the streets to museums has been a dilemma for Guerrilla Girls. Relishing the idea of seeing their work of "creative complaining" on the institution walls was tempting, and the group ultimately came to a conclusion that it would serve them well, as their activist art would reach a major audience. Their work has been exhibited in major museums all around the world from Europe to Asia and South America. Tate Modern in London, for example, dedicated a complete room to Guerrilla Girls' work (see figure 27). There have been some occasions, where museum politics became an obstacle to the work to be exhibited. This was the case in the MoMA exhibition of 1988, "Committed to Print", curated by Deborah Wye. Although the theme of the exhibition was "activist work on paper", Guerrilla Girls' posters were excluded, as they were not considered to be artistic. To "Kahlo" "it was politics".[102]

One of the most famous examples of Guerrilla Girls' institutional criticism is their *GUERRILLA GIRLS' CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART MUSEUMS* (1989) (see figure 28),

[101] Serafini, *Performance Action*, 142, 155.
[102] Kahlo & Kollwitz, "Transgressive techniques of the Guerrilla Girls", 208; Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power", 328.

which criticizes the politics and constructions of art museums. The artwork re-appropriates Christianity's ten commandments and changes them to ten satirical mandates for museum professionals. For example, the fifth commandment demands that museums should not allow major corporations to clean up their public images by sponsoring museums. The tenth commandment, on the other hand, demands that museums make their impact of using terms such as 'genius' and 'masterpiece' clear to the public, as they are applied to art by male artists and thus, have underlined the myth of a male genius and increased the value of male art. The third commandment reads: "Thou shalt not give more than 3 retrospectives to an Artist whose dealer is the brother of the Chief Curator." This was thought to be a strike against William Rubin, the curator of MoMA and his gallerist brother. Every commandment was chosen to represent certain people in the art field in order to call out their questionable actions, but abstained from naming any names. Still, these individuals were depicted in a recognizable way by drawing attention to their actions and consequently, publicly shaming them without specifically naming the individuals or art institutions. The poster is a clear example of Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance, as its' objective is to expose the current discriminatory museum practices and change them to be more inclusive towards women and people of color. When looked into from the standpoint of Jon McKenzie's three functions of cultural performance, the poster clearly challenges museums to self-reflect their current practices by the use of satire. Through this use of mockery and satire, Guerrilla Girls then present alternative measures for these practices and therefore, introduce the possibility for change in museums. Exhibiting this particular poster in museums conveys self-reflection from the institutions, but simultaneously produces a conflict as many museums do not operate through these commandments.[103]

To activist artists, exhibiting political art in a museum setting poses a risk of activist art becoming institutionalized. Curator Alain Bieber argues, that artworks molded by their autonomous and free character will contribute to the canonization and "monetary valuation of art" when institutionalized. In a museum setting, political activist art can lose its alternative nature and become a tool for museums to label themselves as "revolutionary", making activism mainstream.[104] According to "Kahlo", exhibiting Guerrilla Girls' art in museums has its consequences: "the minute you put something in a museum it doesn't have the power that it has when it's not in the museum." She does comment, however, that showing feminist art

[103] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning", 105; McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[104] Bieber, "I Revolt, Therefore I Am.", 52.

in museums has not yet made art by women institutional enough.[105] "Kahlo's" argument of the danger of institutionalization introduces another paradox in Guerrilla Girls' work. On one hand, the institutionalizing is exactly what Guerrilla Girls' seek in their activist work, as they want more women artists to gain access to major art museums. On the other hand, their activist performance which they use to achieve their goal, in fact loses its power when institutionalized. A key part of performance is its temporality: once it has achieved its' aim, it ceases its power. This temporality of Guerrilla Girls' activist performance produces an interesting question regarding the group's future. If Guerrilla Girls would achieve their objective of changing museums, would they cease their activist practice? "Kahlo's" arguments imply that Guerrilla Girls' relationship with art institutions is complex. They consider museums as institutions to be the reason for the discrimination against women and minority artists in arts, but also seem to view them as the solution for the problem. By exhibiting their art in these same major institutions, they actively criticize makes their art more accessible for the general public and hence, increases its impact.[106]

Contrary to Bieber's views on activist art in a museum setting, scholar Philipp Kleinmichel sees great possibilities in exhibiting political activist art in museums. Kleinmichel argues, that it enables us to comprehend its artistic methods and strategies, but also to gain a view of the historical framework of activist art. "As musealizations of political activism, it is possible and even necessary to compare the strategies of contemporary political activism, the carnivalesque aesthetics of protest, the use of image and form production in public space and media not only in regard to other art forms, but also to political activism in the realm of politics," Kleinmichel argues.[107]

The 1987 "Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney" exhibition at the Clocktower provides another, more poignant example of institutional criticism Guerrilla Girls engaged in (see figures 13-16). As discussed in the second chapter, the exhibition was institutional critique aimed at the Whitney Biennial. Even though the exhibition was shown in an independent gallery space and not in the Whitney Museum itself, it criticized the museum from within by utilizing statistics gathered by Guerrilla Girls themselves. In addition to the artworks of *CAN YOU SCORE BETTER THAN THE WHITNEY CURATORS?* (see figure 14), *WELL HUNG AT THE WHITNEY: BIENNIAL GENDER CENSUS 1973-1987* (see figure 15) and *MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WHITNEY MUSEUM AND THE*

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[105] Castagnini, "Why the Guerrilla Girls Don't Have to Be Naked to Get into the Met.", 31.
[106] Ibid., 31.
[107] Ibid., 31; Kleinmichel, "Artists as Activists: The Simulation of Politics and Its Value.", 17-18.

PRODUCTS THEIR COMPANIES MAKE: THEY KNOW WHAT WOMEN WANT (see figure 16), Guerrilla Girls exposed the business interests of the members of Whitney board of trustees and challenged the visitors to "Write a trustee today" (see figure 29). This was done by providing the visitors with actual addresses of the trustees. In the letter, Guerrilla Girls expose Alfred Taubman as the main stockholder at the Sotheby's in addition to his seat as a trustee. Guerrilla Girls also juxtapose Taubman's company to other major sponsor corporations such as Mobil Oil and the life insurance company Equitable, and state how these kinds of corporations sponsor art in order to clean their public image. Finally, they pose a question to Taubman: "But what does your company have to gain?" The letter has a clear connection to the first commandment of the later *GUERRILLA GIRLS' CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART MUSEUMS* poster (see figure 28), where it is stated that "Thou shalt not be a Museum Trustee and also the Chief Stockholder of a Major Auction House", clearly pointing a finger at Taubman. Another part of the Whitney installation was the "Rate the Curator", where Guerrilla Girls exposed the connection between the up-and-coming curator of Whitney at the time, Lisa Phillips and her father, Warren Phillips, who was a major sponsor for the Whitney. The exhibition had two major objectives Guerrilla Girls wanted to achieve: to protest Whitney's discriminatory practices and to demand the museum to acknowledge the social and moral responsibilities they hold to the general public, not to their sponsors.[108] All in all, the various elements of the exhibition make up a cultural performance in itself, as the main focus of it is on the institutional critique and the object of questioning museum practices and bringing about change. As the exhibition space was an art gallery, it gave Guerrilla Girls a perfect space for their institutional criticism, as one of their objectives has been to increase the representation of women and minority artists in museums and galleries.

As was discussed in the second chapter, another example of Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance of institutional criticism is their 2005 exhibition in Venice Biennale. Guerrilla Girls were invited by the two women directors, Rosa Martínez and María de Corral, to perform institutional criticism aimed at the traditional and influential art fair. Guerrilla Girls decided to make an installation of six large banners, which would greet the visitors of the Biennale. In the banners, the group surveyed the practices of the powerful art fair and Venice art institutions. In *Benvenuti alla Biennale Feminista!* (2005, see figure 30), Guerrilla Girls protested the Biennale's practices against by holding signs with positive news: "French

[108] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning", 105; Hess, "Guerrilla Girl Power", 319; Withers, "The Guerrilla Girls", 287-288.

pavilion has a solo show by a woman!", "women directors at last!", "38% women artists in the curated group shows!" and "more countries than ever before!", giving a positive impression that the Biennale was actually inclusive and had taken a feminist approach. However, the statements underneath these announcements showed a darker side of the Biennale. For example, the women directors of the Biennale were being introduces as "the Spanish girls" at press conferences, undermining their achievements and thus, labeling them as women curators instead of just curators. One of the signs revealed, that apart from the 38% representation of women in curated group shows, many of the national pavilions were still men-only. They also exposed the exclusion of African artists from the Biennale, stating satirically: "who cares that Africa, except for Morocco and Egypt, is M.I.A. (missing in art)!". The bottom part of the banner included some statistics gathered by Guerrilla Girls, where they exposed the unequal percentages of representation in the Biennale, referring to the art show as "mucho macho biennale".[109]

The mocking and criticism continued in *Where are the Women Artists of Venice? Underneath the men* (2005, see figure 17), which re-appropriated an image of Anita Ekberg underneath Marcello Mastroianni from Federico Fellini's film *La Dolce Vita* (1960). The bottom half of the banner explained, how historically, Venetian female artists have been excluded from the arts, stating that "It isn't La Dolce Vita for female artists in Venice." The statistics gathered from museums such as Gallerie dell'Accademia, Museo Correr and Ca'Pesaro showed a grim picture of female representation. From the amount of over 1238 artworks exhibited in that moment in time, only forty were by women artists. The banner speaks directly to the visitor and demands: "Go to the museums of Venice and tell them you want women on top!". The aim of the Biennale project was to criticize the discriminatory conduct of both Venice art museums and the Venice Biennale. Furthermore, Guerrilla Girls wanted to "infiltrate a venerable institution", as "Kahlo" and "Kollwitz" put it, and change it. From the framework of McKenzie's three functions of cultural performances, the Venice Biennale exhibition offered material for social and self-reflection through dramatization and satire. As the banners make the apparent discrimination and exclusion of women artists visible for both the museums and the visitors, the exhibition wanted to transform these traditional practices the powerful institution engaged in. The exhibition can be viewed as an

[109] Kahlo & Kollwitz, "Transgressive Techniques of the Guerrilla Girls", 207; Page-Lieberman, "Not Ready to Make Nice", 6.

integral part of the cultural and political performance of Guerrilla Girls, as it plays into their larger agenda of changing institutions through institutional critique.[110]

Showing Guerrilla Girls' activist art in a museum setting has its advantages and limitations. When museums are considered as public spaces where political discussion takes place in, they provide an effective arena for Guerrilla Girls and their institutional criticism. Museum space offers the spectators and Guerrilla Girls a chance of direct dialogue, through which the visitors are encouraged to reflect the current status of art institutions and society (see figure 31 for an example of this dialogue). Guerrilla Girls have gained access to institutions despite their institutional criticism, and utilize museums as their tools in order to make change. As institutional criticism considers museums to be both the reason and solution for inequality in the arts, Guerrilla Girls rather work within museums than outside. This is due to the fact that performing in institutions forces museums to self-reflect their practices more actively. However, one can see how museums also benefit from exhibiting Guerrilla Girls' activist art, as they are known globally and attract viewers with their performances. Thus, both Guerrilla Girls and institutions utilize each other.

As has become clear in this chapter, Guerrilla Girls criticize institutions through their activist performance. Some of these performances manifest as single posters and others as exhibitions revolving around institutional criticism. Since the group has been active and performed in museums for over thirty years, their activist actions can be examined through the impact they have had in the art world.

3.2. The impact of Guerrilla Girls

The institutional criticism museums in the United States have faced has made them reconsider and reflect upon themselves as institutions. Scholars Laura-Edythe S. Coleman and Porchia Moore argue, that "American museums are poised at a junction: arriving at a destination where museums are replete with the possibilities of changing the landscape of American culture and society, or remaining institutions whose values fail to mirror the equity and access that our 21st-century audiences demand."[111] Coleman's and Moore's argument underlines the power museums and other cultural institutions have in the process of making change. Furthermore, Coleman and Moore consider Guerrilla Girls to be one of the activist

[110] Kahlo & Kollwitz, "Transgressive Techniques of the Guerrilla Girls", 207; Page-Lieberman, "Not Ready to Make Nice", 6; McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 31.
[111] Coleman & Moore, "From the ground up: Grassroots social justice activism in American museums.", 91.

groups that ignited museums to open up to the possibility of change, making them one of the most important feminist groups in the art field.[112]

Not only have Guerrilla Girls achieved global popularity as activist artists through their strategies of performance, such as satire and the use of gorilla masks, but Guerrilla Girls' activist performance has indeed catalyzed change in museums to some extent. For example, museums are cutting ties with their questionable sponsors, which is something Guerrilla Girls called out in the *MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WHITNEY MUSEUM AND THE PRODUCTS THEIR COMPANIES MAKE: THEY KNOW WHAT WOMEN WANT* installation in the "Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney" exhibition of 1987 (see figure 16) and in their *GUERRILLA GIRLS' CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART MUSEUMS* poster (see figure 28). This is evident in the recent actions of the Tate Modern, the Metropolitan and the Louvre, to name a few, who are all detaching themselves with the Sacklers, their long-standing sponsors. The Sacklers, who own the drug company Purdue Pharma, have played a part in the OxyContin crisis in the U.S. and been the receiving end of massive protesting. This recent development of museums taking action indicates, that Guerrilla Girls' cultural performance and institutional criticism among other activist artists has been impactful in the art field by making the problematic nature of this kind of practice more visible. Major corporations are now being called out for their problematic business practices and museums do not want to be attached to these companies who invest in arts to clean their public image.[113]

As I have made clear in chapter two, Guerrilla Girls have achieved visibility through the use of effective strategies of satire and collective anonymity. Their use of sardonic humor and current statistics in their posters enforces Guerrilla Girls' agenda of making discriminatory practices visible in museums and offers spectators alternatives for change in an approachable manner. When the statistics are gathered from within the collection and the actions of the museum, the problems become harder for the museum not to acknowledge. Therefore, as Guerrilla Girls actively engage in institutional criticism and shame institutions, it is notable that they are invited into museums to perform and curate exhibitions.

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[112] Ibid., 92-93.

[113] Harris, "The Met Will Turn Down Sackler Money Amid Fury Over the Opioid Crisis." In *The New York Times*, May 15, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/15/arts/design/met-museum-sackler-opioids.html; Marshall, "Tate Galleries Will Refuse Sackler Money Because of Opioid Links." In *The New York Times*, March 21, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/21/arts/design/tate-modern-sackler-britain-opioid-art.html?module=inline;
Marshall, "Louvre Removes Sackler Family Name from Its Walls." In *The New York Times*, July 17, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/arts/design/sackler-family-louvre.html. All articles accessed December 15, 2019.

The collective anonymity of Guerrilla Girls has also proved to have been an effective strategy, although it has its constraints as well. Since all of the members become "that Guerrilla Girl" in their performance, they force their critics to focus on their message rather than their personal artistic careers. Not only are the masks attention grabbing, but they challenge the gender norms of what is expected to be masculine or feminine. Even if the gorilla masks have provided Guerrilla Girls with anonymity, they manifest different connotations as symbolic forms, such as racial stereotypes.[114]

The impact of Guerrilla Girls' actions is visible in the current practices of the MoMA, which has been the target of their institutional criticism since the group's emergence in 1985. To answer the backlash they faced from Guerrilla Girls and other critics, MoMA established The Modern Women's Project in 2005. Within the project scholars researched artworks by women from the museum collection, by means of making a database with photos of the artworks. The aim of the project was to implement feminism in the museum's curating. It soon became apparent, however, that many of the museum's curators did not share the feminist perspective when it came to curating. This resulted feminism to be adopted as only one of the curatorial approaches the museum uses in its work. Since the Modern Women's Project was introduced, MoMA has made inclusion of women artists a "real institutional mandate", and implements this in the museum's displays, acquisitions and public programs. By adopting inclusivity in the museum strategies, they have re-installed galleries and made sure that women are represented properly in every exhibition. Alexandra Schwartz, one of the projects co-directors, argues that since the project started, the collections have not been approached by the view of gender, but rather that feminism is an addition to the "methodological 'tool-kits' employed by MoMA's curators." In addition to the more feminist approach, MoMA has also embraced political and performance art.[115]

Furthermore, the work of Guerrilla Girls has influenced other 21st century feminist groups, such as the Pussy Riot and Pussy Galore, who have adopted similar strategies in their artistic practice. In 2015 Pussy Galore, also an anonymous artist group, continued in Guerrilla Girls' footsteps and produced statistics of women artists represented in New York galleries by reporting them in the style of Guerrilla Girls (see figure 32). Re-appropriating Guerrilla Girls' report card from 1986 which criticizes the lack of women artists in New York galleries, Pussy Galore calculated the 2015 percentages of women artists in the galleries. The

[114] Martorana, "Enacting Feminist Agency", 13.
[115] Diaz Ramos, "Feminist Curatorial Interventions in Museums and Organizational Change", 78, 81-82; Schwartz, "MoMA's Modern Women Project, Feminisms, and Curatorial Practice", 93-94, 98.

2015 report card shows that Guerrilla Girls' criticism has impacted the representation of women in New York galleries, as in some of them the percentages were almost equal or even surpassed men. Pussy Galore also seems to have adopted a similar sardonic humor as what Guerrilla Girls are known for. Whereas Guerrilla Girls served as the "conscious of the art world", Pussy Galore branded itself to be "kicking idiocy in the arse".[116]

As demonstrated in this chapter, the relationship between Guerrilla Girls and museums is complex due to the fact that a major part of Guerrilla Girls' performance is their institutional criticism. They call out museums for their unequal practices, but they also utilize museums in order to reach a bigger audience and to advance their agenda of change. The simultaneous attacking and collaborating makes their role as activist artists somewhat ambiguous. When their public performances deemed museums as the problem, their cultural performances seem to consider art institutions as tools for making change. Exhibiting their work in the museum realm has not restricted Guerrilla Girls' work as activists, which becomes evident in them being invited to curate and host exhibitions in various institutions. However, Guerrilla Girls cannot be expected to make change on their own. Their actions as activist artists have been an integral part of bringing change to museum practice amongst other museum activists, and they continue their feminist work through their performance.

[116] Reilly, *Curatorial Activism*, 19.

CONCLUSION

The impact of Guerrilla Girls is undeniably impressive, as they quickly moved into museums. Their institutional criticism has helped feminist criticism to be adopted as a new curatorial method in museums, and given many women artists the attention they deserve. By implementing feminism to all departments of museums and rediscovering the collections the museums hold, museums can help to bring change to the issue of gender inequality. With the help of Guerrilla Girls' work, feminist activism has infiltrated museums as new feminist projects and exhibitions aspire to change the patriarchal view of the art historical canon the museums have enforced for a long time.

Guerrilla Girls' performance of systematic institutional critique has not yet achieved everything they thrive for, but continues to force museums and other institutions to implement new feminist approaches to their collections. As a group, they have become well-known globally and held museums accountable for discriminatory conduct for over thirty years. Since Guerrilla Girls adopted satire and collective anonymity as part of their performance early in their career, both concepts have become an integral part of their brand as activist artists and are what they are most known for. The continuing use of gorilla masks signifies, that it is still more challenging for women artists than it is for their male comparisons to operate in the art world.

As became clear in chapter one of this thesis, Guerrilla Girls were greatly influenced by the 1960s performance and activist artists and the 1970s feminist movement. Guerrilla Girls took inspiration from artist groups such as the Guerrilla Art Action Group and their institutional critique, as well as Women Artists in Revolution and their aim of women to gain access to museums. The emergence of Guerrilla Girls in 1985 was situated right between the second and third waves of feminism, which indicates that Guerrilla Girls focused on the issue of ethnic bias more in their work when compared to their feminist predecessors. Furthermore, Guerrilla Girls were significantly impacted by the activist art that manifested in the streets of 1980s New York. As New York enjoyed the effects of the booming art market in the 1980s, only few, mostly male artists truly profited from their work. This exclusion and discrimination of women and people of color quickly became a focus for the public performance Guerrilla Girls engaged in.

Guerrilla Girls' use of satire and play in their public and cultural performances separated them from other feminist groups of the time, as was discussed in the second chapter. Satire serves both as a tool of provocation and as a way of meta-communication with

the viewer. Approaching the viewer with a sardonic and humorous message impacts the memorability of the message of change Guerrilla Girls want to convey. With their statistics the group underline the urgency for change needed in museums and how women and minorities are still being discriminated against. Combining humor and hard data plays into Guerrilla Girls' aim of attracting attention and to generate reflection. By using Demo's insights in chapter two it has become clear, that bringing awareness of the issues in a way of perspective by incongruity not only make the issues visible, but offer various ways to rectify the problems. Guerrilla Girls' performance is also impacted by their strategy of collective anonymity, which manifests as discussed in chapter two, in two different ways: by adopting pseudonyms of historical women artists and by wearing gorilla masks. By contrasting feminine attire and gorilla masks, they play with expectations of masculinity and femininity. The gorilla mask is attached to aggressiveness, which in turn is considered a masculine trait, while the high heels for example, are considered feminine. This contradiction produces a visual paradox to the spectator, and enhances the message of changing discriminatory practices in the art world. The adoption of masks gets attention, but also gives room to the message of change and helps Guerrilla Girls to avert criticism as individual artists. As I made clear in the second chapter, the use of anonymity does not guarantee Guerrilla Girls with neutrality, as masks as symbolic forms convey connotations attached to them. Furthermore, the use of anonymity is not a way of evading responsibility for Guerrilla Girls, as the group promotes for accountability and open dialogue with the institutions and individuals they criticize.

In the third chapter I have made clear how showing Guerrilla Girls' performance of institutional criticism in museum setting produces another major paradox in the group's work. Considering museums to be both the problem and a tool for change, Guerrilla Girls use the institutions to gain access for women and to reach a larger audience for their art. This utilization of museums makes the relationship between Guerrilla Girls and art institutions complex and furthermore makes their role as activist artists ambiguous. Guerrilla Girls want their art to be shown in museums, but also recognize the issue of institutionalizing activist art. Therefore, the relationship between Guerrilla Girls and museums is complex.

To conclude my thesis, I will answer the main research question of how Guerrilla Girls use performance as their artistic strategy in their activist political art. Guerrilla Girls engage in two types of performance: public and cultural performances, both of which are tools to convey social issues. The group uses both types of performance as their artistic strategy in order to address issues women face in the art world. Guerrilla Girls' performances

consist of two main elements of anonymity and satire, both of which Guerrilla Girls utilize effectively to disrupt and to achieve their objective of bringing about change. The use of anonymity and satire enforce the impact of their activist art and have made Guerrilla Girls globally famous. However, there are some constraints especially when it comes to the use of gorilla masks, as they can be interpreted to carry ethnic connotations, which separates the concept of anonymity from neutrality. The public and cultural performances of Guerrilla Girls largely revolve around institutional criticism and they criticize museums and other institutions from the inside by gathering facts of museums' unequal practices. By connecting facts to satirical humor Guerrilla Girls not only make issues such as racial bias and sexism visible to the general public, but also convey that there are alternative arrangements to consider. Their attention-grabbing institutional criticism has molded Guerrilla Girls to become key agents in feminist art, and the group uses the publicity they get as their weapon. Performing publicly and culturally gives Guerrilla Girls the freedom as artists and encourages the interaction between them and the audience.

FIGURES

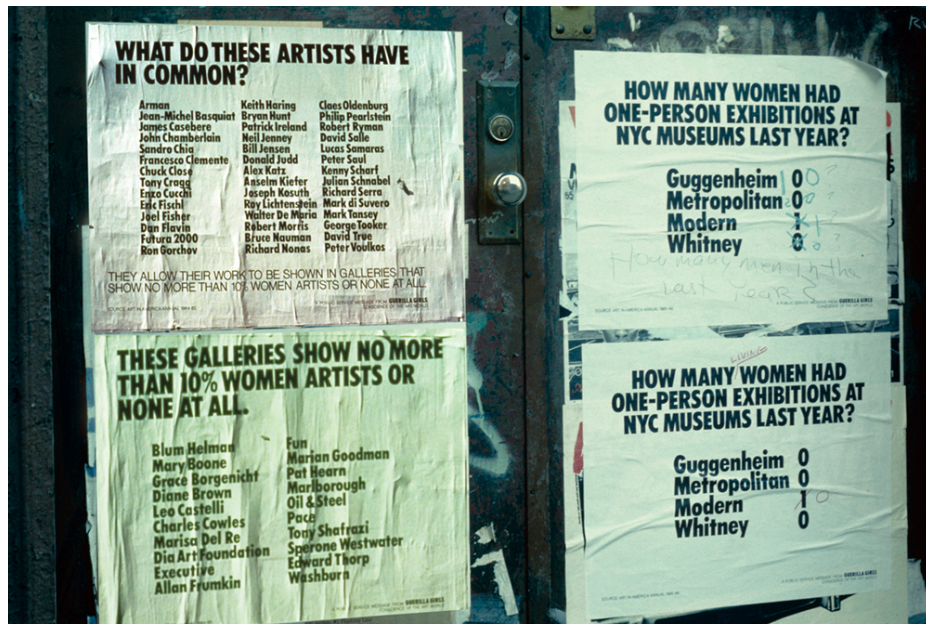


Fig. 1. Photo of Guerrilla Girls' posters *WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON?, THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL* and *HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?* 1985.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

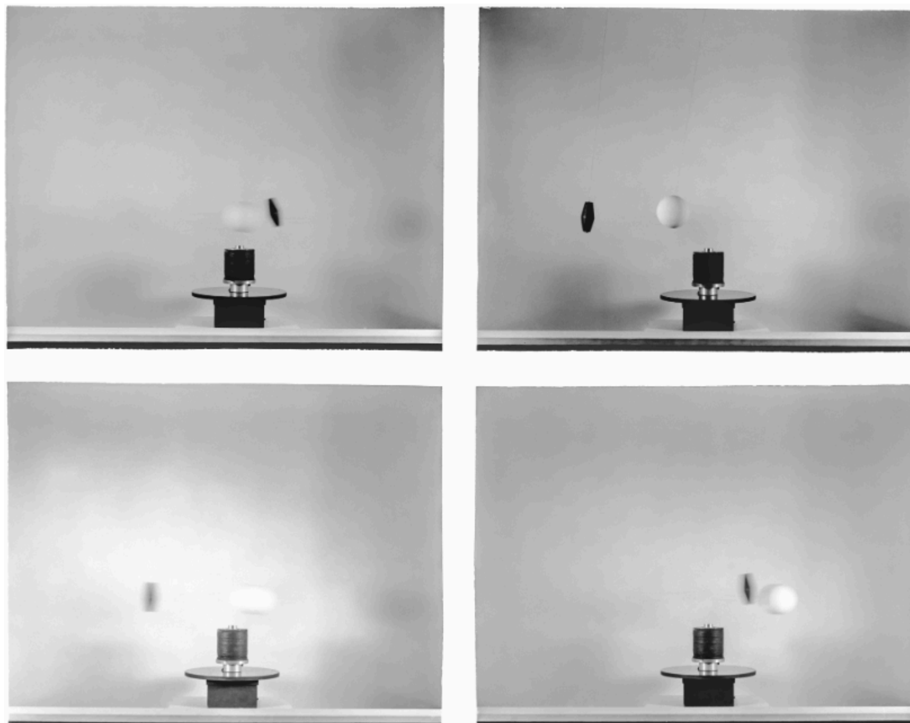


Fig. 2. Takis Vassilakis, *Tele-Sculpture*, 1960, electromagnet, wood and painted cork with magnets, motor and steel wire. Copyright: 2019 Takis / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York /ADAGP, Paris.

Fig. 3. James Montgomery Flagg and Recruitment Publicity Bureau, *I want you for the U.S. Army,* 1941, paper, lithograph, 96,5 x 64,5 cm.
Photo: Imperial War Museums

Fig. 4. John Daniel et al. *I want out*, 1971, color offset lithograph, 103,1 x 76,1 cm.
Photo: Victoria & Albert Museum

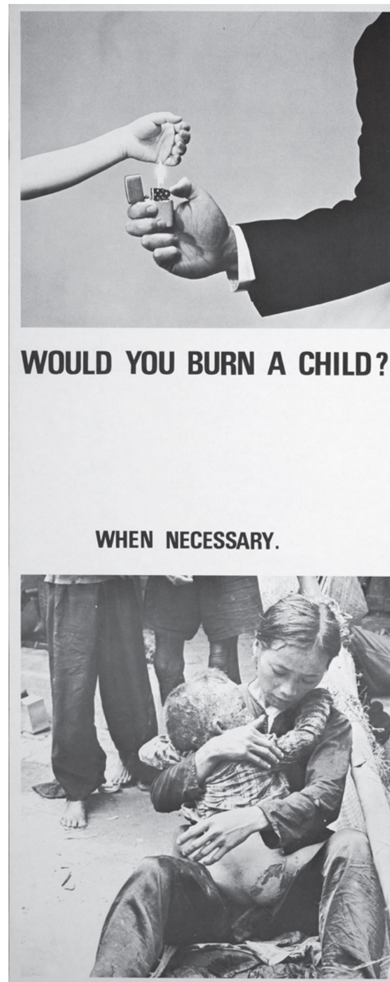


Fig. 5. Jeff Schlanger and Artists' Poster Committee, *Would You Burn a Child?,* circa 1968, offset, 54 x 21.6 cm. Courtesy of the Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

Fig. 6. Martha Rosler, *Makeup/Hands Up*. Part of the series *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful,* 1967-1972, photomontage, 61 x 50.8 cm. Copyright: Martha Rosler.

Fig. 7. Guerrilla Girls, *WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON?* 1985, poster, offset lithograph, 43,2 x 55,8 cm. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 8. *THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 105 WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL.* 1985, offset lithograph, 43.2 x 55.8 cm. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

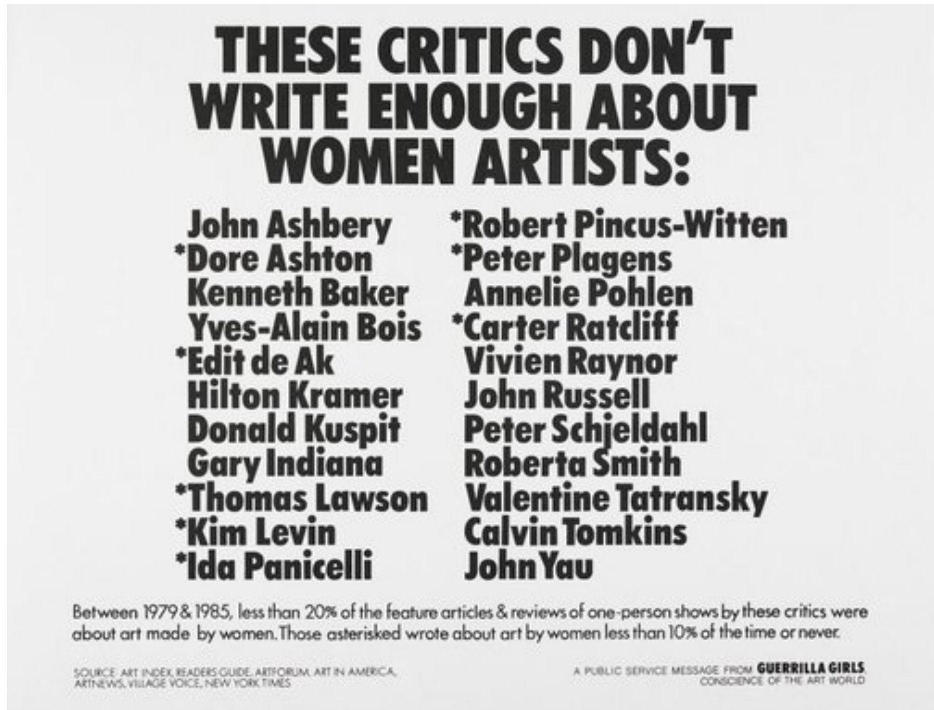


Fig. 9. Guerrilla Girls, *THESE CRITICS DON'T WRITE ENOUGH ABOUT WOMEN ARTISTS*. 1985, poster, offset lithograph, 43,2 x 55,8 cm. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

HOW MANY WOMEN HAD
ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT
NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?

Guggenheim 0
Metropolitan 0
Modern 1
Whitney 0

SOURCE: ART IN AMERICA ANNUAL 1984-5

GUERRILLA GIRLS
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

Fig. 10. Guerrilla Girls, *HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?* 1985, poster, offset lithograph, 43,2 x 55,8 cm. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 11. Guerrilla Girls, *WOMEN IN AMERICA EARN ONLY 2/3 OF WHAT MEN DO.*
1985, offset lithograph, 43,2 x 55,8 cm.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

ONLY 4 COMMERCIAL GALLERIES IN N.Y. SHOW BLACK WOMEN.*

ONLY 1 SHOWS MORE THAN 1.**

*Cavin-Morris, Condeso/Lawler, Bernice Steinbaum, Shreiber/Cutler
*Cavin-Morris

SOURCE: ART IN AMERICA ANNUAL 1986-7

Box 1056 Cooper Sta. NY, NY 10276 GUERRILLA GIRLS CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

Fig. 12. Guerrilla Girls, *ONLY 4 COMMERCIAL GALLERIES IN N.Y. SHOW BLACK WOMEN.*
1986, offset lithograph, 43,2 x 55,8 cm.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 13. Guerrilla Girls, *GUERRILLA GIRLS REVIEW THE WHITNEY*.
1987, poster, color offset lithograph, 55,8 x 43,2 cm.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

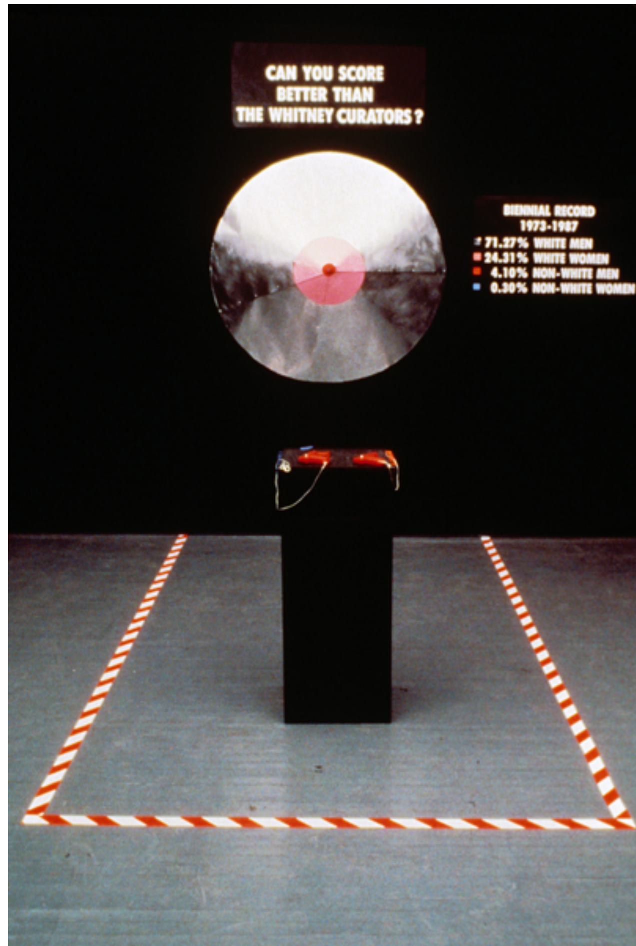


Fig. 14. Guerrilla Girls, *CAN YOU SCORE BETTER THAN THE WHITNEY CURATORS?*
1987, photograph of the artwork.
Exhibited in the 1987 "Guerrilla Girls review the Whitney" in The Clocktower.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

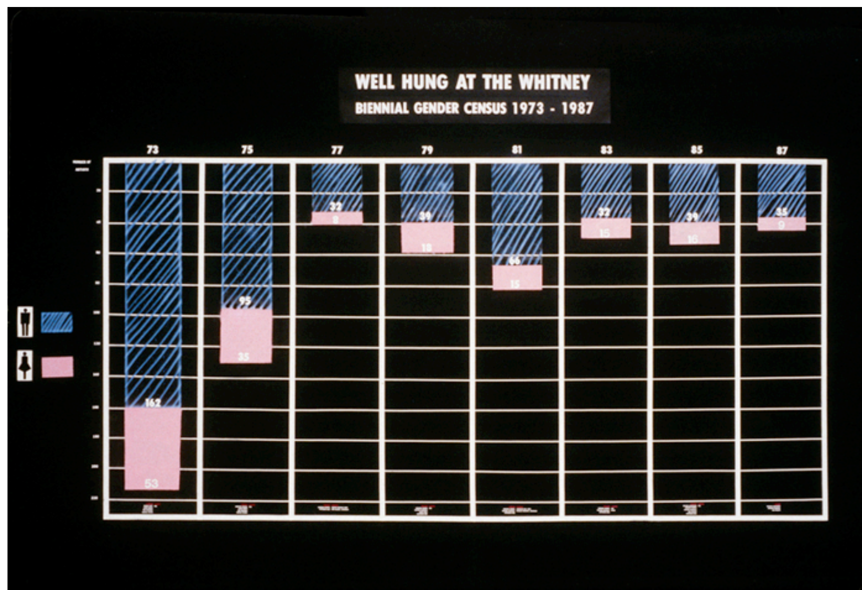


Fig. 15. Guerrilla Girls, *WELL HUNG AT THE WHITNEY: BIENNIAL GENDER CENSUS 1973-1987.*
1987, photograph of the artwork.
Exhibited in the 1987 "Guerrilla Girls review the Whitney" in The Clocktower.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 16. Guerrilla Girls, *MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE WHITNEY MUSEUM AND THE PRODUCTS THEIR COMPANIES MAKE: THEY KNOW WHAT WOMEN WANT*. 1987, photograph of the artwork. Exhibited in the 1987 "Guerrilla Girls review the Whitney" in The Clocktower.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

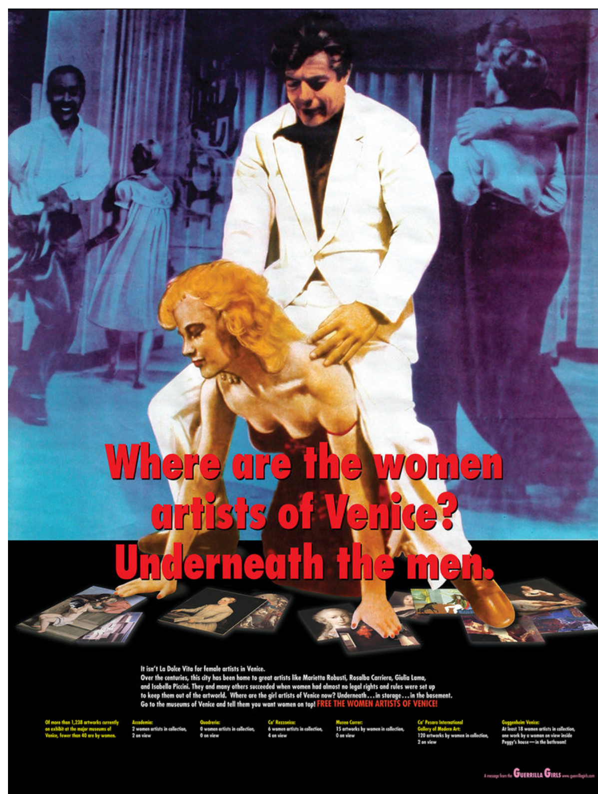


Fig. 17. Guerrilla Girls, *Where are the women artists of Venice? Underneath the men.* 2005, exhibited in the 2005 Venice Biennale "Always a Little Further", curated by Rosa Martínez. Poster, color offset lithograph, 5,18 x 3,96 m.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 18. Photo of the Guerrilla Girls, 1990. Copyright: George Lange.
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

Working without the pressure of success
Not having to be in shows with men
Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs
Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty
Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminine
Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position
Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others
Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood
Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits
Having more time to work when your mate dumps you for someone younger
Being included in revised versions of art history
Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius
Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

Fig. 19. Guerrilla Girls, *THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST*. 1988, poster, offset lithograph, 43,2 x 55,8 cm
Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 20. Guerrilla Girls, *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?* 1989, billboard. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

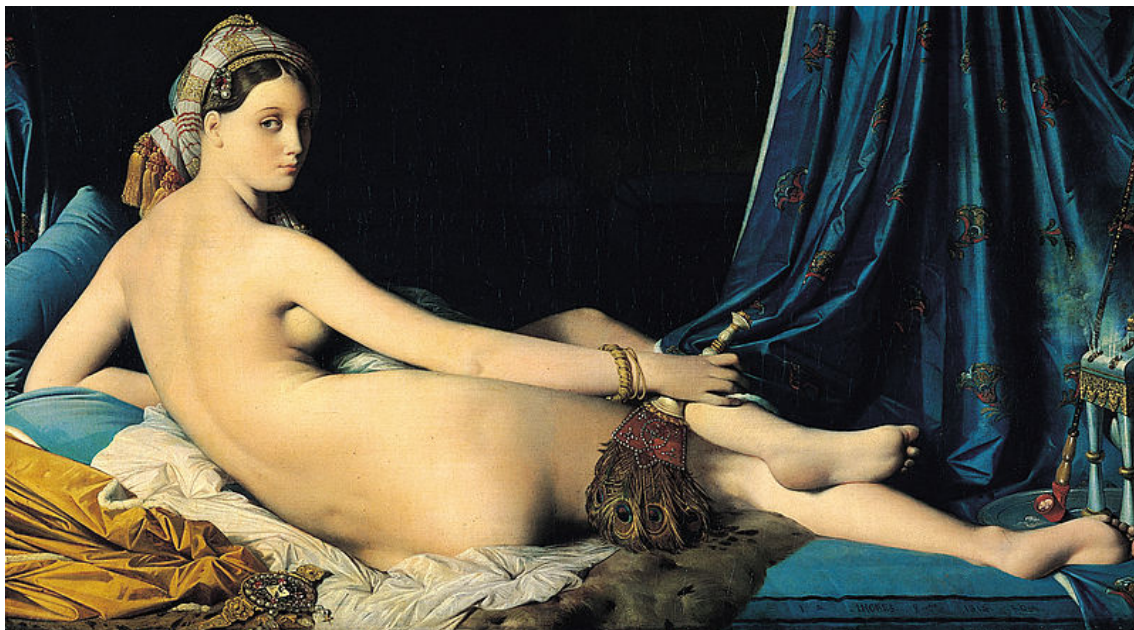


Fig. 21. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*. 1814, Oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm (Paris, The Louvre).

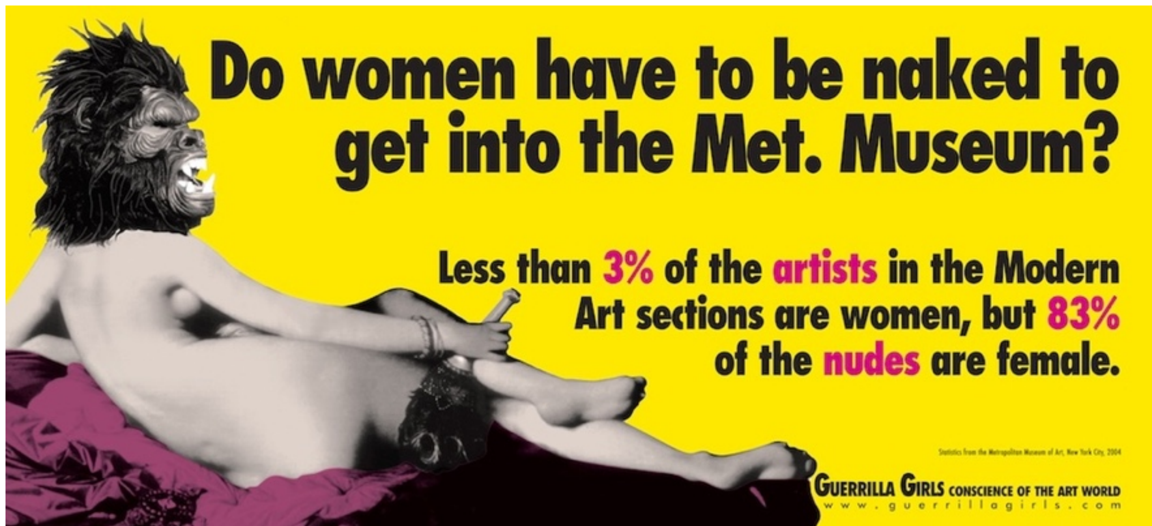


Fig. 22. Guerrilla Girls, *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?* 2005, billboard. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

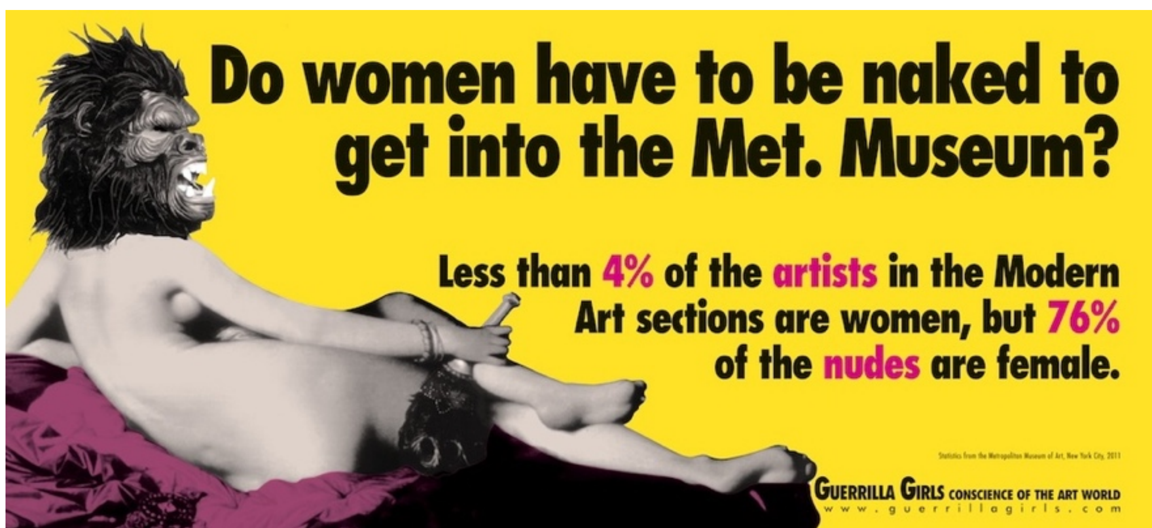


Fig. 23. Guerrilla Girls, *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?* 2012, billboard. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 24. Photo of Guerrilla Girls' work exhibited at elles@pompidou 2009-2012, in the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 25. Photo of the retrospective exhibition "Guerrilla Girls 1985-2013" in 2013-2014, Alhondiga, Bilbao, Portugal. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

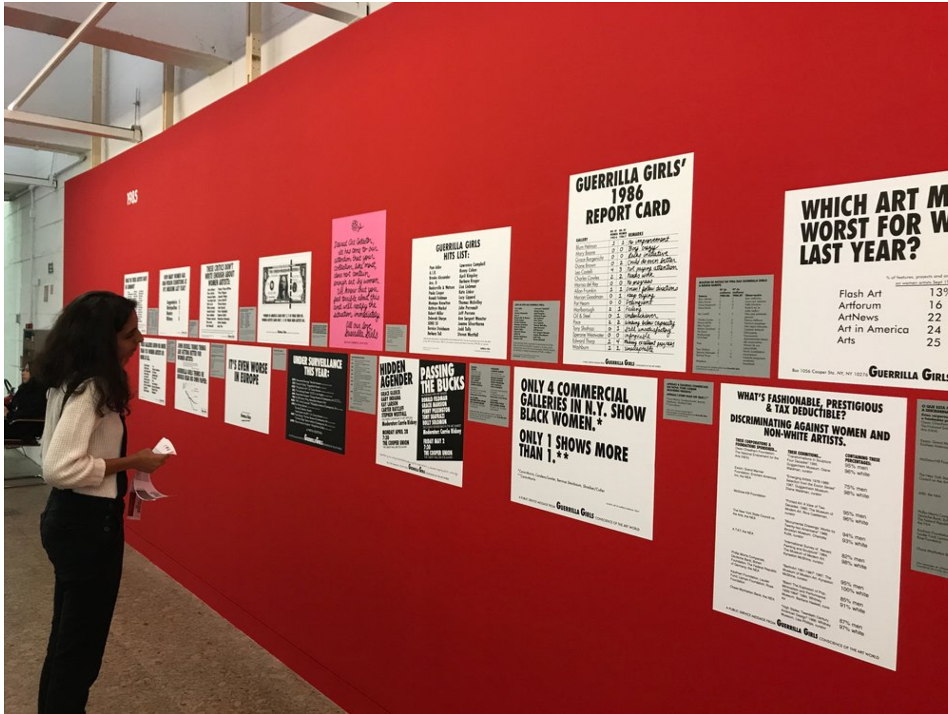


Fig. 26. Photo of the retrospective exhibition “GUERRILLA GIRLS: GRÁFICA, 1985-2017” in Museu de Arte Sao Paulo, Brazil, September 2017 to March 2018. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 27. Photo of Guerrilla Girls’ works exhibited in Tate Modern 2006-2017, London, United Kingdom. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

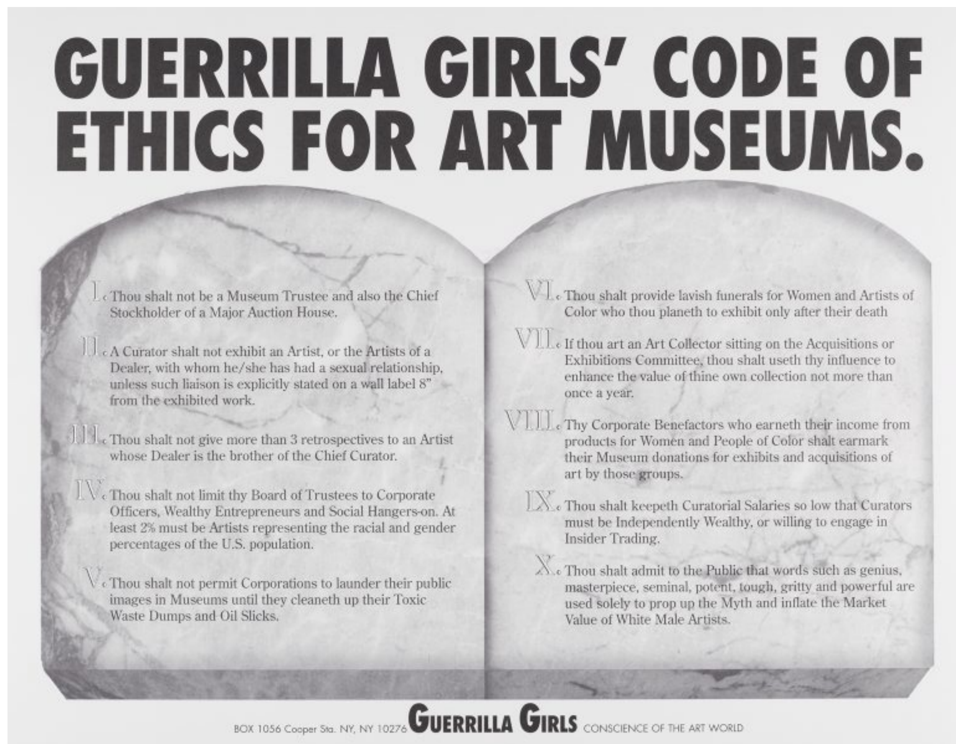
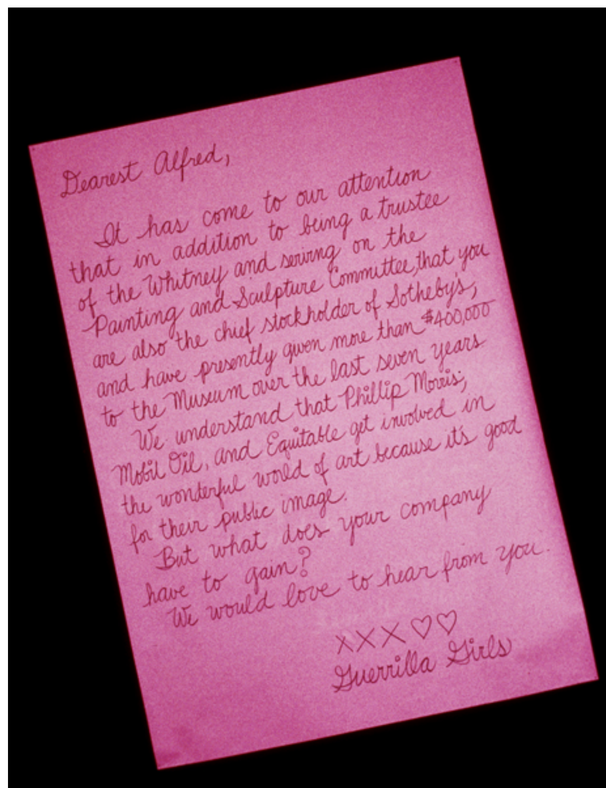


Fig. 28. Guerrilla Girls, *GUERRILLA GIRLS' CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART MUSEUMS*. 1990, poster, offset lithograph, 43,2 x 55,8 cm. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.



Dearest Alfred,

It has come to our attention that in addition to being a trustee of the Whitney and serving on the Painting and Sculpture Committee, that you are also the chief stockholder of Sotheby's, and have presently given more than $400,000 to the Museum over the last seven years.

We understand that Phillip Morris, Mobil Oil, and Equitable get involved in the wonderful world of art because it's good for their public image.

But what does your company have to gain?

We would love to hear from you.

XXX♡♡
Guerrilla Girls

Fig. 29. Photo of a letter addressed to Alfred Taubman, a Whitney Museum trustee. Exhibited in the 1987 "Guerrilla Girls review the Whitney" in The Clocktower. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 30. Guerrilla Girls, *Benvenuti alla Biennale Femminista!* 2005, exhibited in the 2005 Venice Biennale "Always a Little Further", curated by Rosa Martínez. Poster, color offset lithograph, 5,18 x 3,96 m. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

Fig. 31. Photo of a part of the "Not ready to make nice: Guerrilla Girls in the artworld and beyond" exhibition in 2012, Columbia College, Chicago, United States. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls.

GUERRILLA GIRLS' 1986 REPORT CARD

GALLERY	NO. OF WOMEN 1985-6	NO. OF WOMEN 1986-7	REMARKS
Blum Helman	1	1	No improvement
Mary Boone	0	0	Boy crazy
Grace Borgenicht	0	0	Lacks initiative
Diane Brown	0	2	Could do even better
Leo Castelli	4	3	Not paying attention
Charles Cowles	2	2	Needs work
Marisa del Rey	0	0	No progress
Allan Frumkin	1	1	Doesn't follow directions
Marian Goodman	0	1	Keep trying
Pat Hearn	0	0	Delinquent
Marlborough	2	1	Failing
Oil & Steel	0	1	Underachiever
Pace	2	2	Working below capacity
Tony Shafrazi	0	1	Still unsatisfactory
Sperone Westwater	0	0	Unforgivable
Edward Thorp	1	4	Making excellent progress
Washburn	1	1	Unacceptable

Source: *Art In America Annual* 1985-6 and 1986-7

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

532 LaGUARDIA PLACE, #237 • NY, NY 10012

fEmail: guerrillagirls@voyagerco.com

© Guerrilla Girls 1886

PUSSY GALORE'S 2015 REPORT CARD

GALLERY	% OF WOMEN	GALLERY	% OF WOMEN
303 Gallery	41%	Matthew Marks	16%
Alexander & Bonin	29%	Marlborough	16%
Mary Boone	13%	Metro Pictures	33%
Leo Castelli	15%	Pace	16%
Cheim & Read	36%	Petzel	35%
Paula Cooper	29%	Postmasters	39%
Derek Eller	15%	PPOW	53%
Zach Feuer	59%	Andrea Rosen	29%
James Fuentes	33%	Salon 94	50%
Gagosian	15%	Tony Shafrazi	5%
Marian Goodman	22%	Jack Shainman	26%
Casey Kaplan	23%	Sikkema Jenkins	50%
Paul Kasmin	11%	Sonnabend	31%
Anton Kern	21%	Sperone Westwater	8%
Lehmann Maupin	41%	Edward Thorp	50%
Galerie Lelong	61%	Tracey Williams	58%
Luhring Augustine	21%	David Zwirner	27%

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **PUSSY GALORE** KICKING IDIOCY IN THE ARSE

© Pussy Galore 2015

Fig. 32. Photo of the Guerrilla Girls' 1986 Report Card and Pussy Galore's 2015 Report Card. Copyright: Guerrilla Girls and Pussy Galore.

LIST AND SOURCES OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Guerrilla Girls, *WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON?, THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL, HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?*, 1985. www.guerrillagirls.com

Figure 2: Takis Vassilakis, *Tele-Sculpture*, 1960. https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81217?artist_id=5789&locale=en&page=1&sov_referrer=artist

Figure 3: James Montgomery Flagg and Recruitment Publicity Bureau, *I want you for the U.S. Army*, 1941. https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/9321

Figure 4: John Daniel et al. *I want out*, 1971. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O75555/i-want-out-poster-daniel-john/

Figure 5: Jeff Schlanger and Artists' Poster Committee, *Would You Burn a Child?*, 1968. http://collection-politicalgraphics.org/detail.php?module=objects&type=browse&id=1&term=Children&page=1&kv=4870&record=2&module=objects

Figure 6: Martha Rosler, *Makeup/Hands Up*, 1967-1972. https://www.artic.edu/artworks/195589/makeup-hands-up-from-the-series-house-beautiful-bringing-the-war-home

Figure 7: Guerrilla Girls, *WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON?*, 1985. https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/150.2014.1/

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Figure 10: Guerrilla Girls, *HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?*, 1985. www.guerrillagirls.com

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Figure 19: Guerrilla Girls, *THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST*, 1988. www.guerrillagirls.com

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Figure 21: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_Auguste_Dominique_Ingres,_La_Grande_Odalisque,_1814.jpg

Figure 22: Guerrilla Girls, *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?*, 2005. www.guerrillagirls.com

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Figure 24: Unknown, Photo of Guerrilla Girls' work exhibited at elles@pompidou 2009-2012, in the Centre Pompidou, Paris. www.guerrillagirls.com

Figure 25: Unknown, Photo of the exhibition "Guerrilla Girls 1985-2013" in Alhondiga, Bilbao, Portugal, 2013-2014. www.guerrillagirls.com

Figure 26: Unknown, Photo of the exhibition “GUERRILLA GIRLS: GRÁFICA, 1985-2017” in Museu de Arte Sao Paulo, Brazil 2017-2018.
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Figure 27: Unknown, Photo of Guerrilla Girls' works exhibited in Tate Modern, 2006-2017.
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Figure 28: Guerrilla Girls, *GUERRILLA GIRLS' CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART MUSEUMS*, 1990.
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Figure 29: Guerrilla Girls, Photo of a letter addressed to Alfred Taubman, a Whitney Museum trustee, 1987.
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Figure 30: Guerrilla Girls, *Benvenuti alla Biennale Femminista!* 2005.
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Figure 31: Unknown, Photo of “Not ready to make nice: Guerrilla Girls in the artworld and beyond” exhibition in Columbia College, Chicago, United States, 2012.
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