

# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE SISTERHOOD

BY JENNIFER ALLEN



Lynda Barry, *What Happened to the Women's Movement?*, 1990s. Courtesy: the artist and Adam Baumgold Gallery, New York

“Jews don’t paint very well. It’s a fact.”

Would this shocking and unacceptable utterance still cause outrage if we replaced the human category of Jews with that of women? As things stand, the answer would seem to be no: no one has expelled the works of Georg Baselitz, who has stated just that (in the second version), from public museum collections. Misogyny still meets with widespread tolerance, and while certain works strive to maintain

awareness of sexism, there is no network of vigilance to counter violence—also on the digital front, today—against women. Jennifer Allen takes a tour of the most interesting current artistic operations in this field, but also of the state of the art of feminism in general, from the birth of individual feminisms—nanofeminisms—to the resurfacing of “identity politics.”

## FEMINISM: YAWNORAMA...

I remember getting my textbook for the English literature course in my final year of high school in 1984 in Toronto. The cover of the classic *Norton Anthology of English Literature* featured 30 postage-stamp-sized portraits of some of the “major authors,” from Chaucer to Auden, inside the book. There was not a single woman: not on the cover, not in the book.

A similar experience may lie behind the collaborative exhibition project *About: The Blank Pages* opened in April this year by the artists EvaMarie Lindahl and Ditte Ejlerskov at Malmö Konsthall in Sweden. Lindahl and Ejlerskov faced art history instead of English literature, in particular the popular Taschen “Basic Art Series.” Out of the 97 artist monographs in the series published to date, only five feature women artists.

Five is better than none, but moving from 0% to 5% women is not a spectacular increase in the 30 years that have passed since 1984, especially in light of women’s advances in literature, art and society overall. Even the once-sexist *Norton* has since improved, not only with an expanded two-volume edition (approximately 25% of the 260+ writers are women), but also with *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, already in its third edition.

My response to the *Norton Anthology* in 1984? I cut out 30 little pictures of women from magazines and glued their faces over the men’s on the cover of my *Norton*. Lindahl and Ejlerskov took a deeper tack with Taschen. Working with historians, researchers, librarians and art critics, over the past four years the two artists compiled a list of 100 women artists and presented them in the Taschen format. While the book covers feature women artists, the pages inside remain empty—hence their show’s title, “The Blank Pages”—with the hope being that Taschen will fill them, publishing these mock-ups as books some day soon.

## CORRECTING THEIR STORY

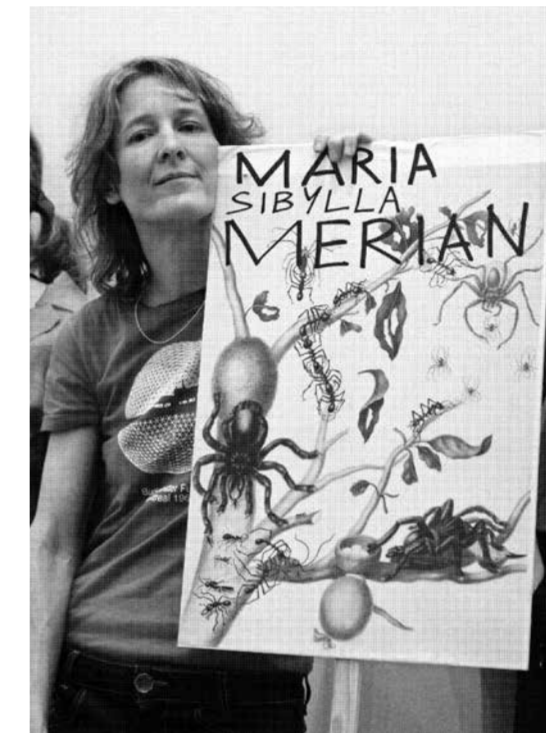
Lindahl and Ejlerskov seem to be part of a growing global movement to make art history more egalitarian, less sexist—even less misogynist, if one views the dearth of women as a manifestation of a gender-based hatred, driven by a number of factors, from envy to fear. Consider the Art+Feminism campaign to increase the number of women artists on the website Wikipedia, especially the historical artists who are not alive to make their own websites today, with collective “edit-athons”. On Wiki, contributors and editors are still overwhelmingly male (a whopping 87% according to a 2010 survey of the website).

In the light of these kinds of figures, it should come as no surprise that women artists in particular, and women in general, are under-represented on Wikipedia. As a corrective, last February Art+Feminism organized a global edit-athon—with 600 volunteers working at over 30 sites around the world, all emanating out of New York’s Eyebeam—and added 101 women artists to Wiki, including the contemporaries Cosima von Bonin, Mequitta Ahuja and Frances Stark. The next Art+Feminism edit-athon will start on June 4 at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto.

Other art historical initiatives abound. In the UK alone, the Tate produced the short film *Where are the women?* (2014) for its “Unlock Art” online film series with Jemima Kirke of HBO *Girls* fame, who

confirms not only the presence of women artists throughout history but also how their contributions have been systematically ignored by the male scholars who wrote art history books. And this spring, BBC2 aired the TV series *The Story of Women and Art* (2014), which begins with the Italian Renaissance sculptor Properzia de’ Rossi.

As *The Guardian*’s Lucy Mangan explains in her report on the series, de’ Rossi was the only woman among the 142 artists featured in the *Vite (Lives, 1550-68)* by Giorgio Vasari, who lamented: “If only [de’ Rossi] had had as much luck and support as she had natural talent [...] she would have equalled in fame the most celebrated workers in marble.” Yet another historical corrective is the artist Annie Kevans’s series *Women and the History of Art* (2014) at London’s Fine Art Society Contemporary gallery until June 6: 30 portraits of women who had been written out of male art history, like Angelica Kauffmann and Giulia Lama.



Katrin Plavcak during *The History of Painting Revisited / an evening with ff* at Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle, Berlin, 2013. Photo: Mathias Schormann / Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle, Berlin

Over in Berlin, the feminist collective *ff* also took a historical approach to a controversial contemporary show about painting: the men-only group exhibition “*Painting Forever!*” last fall at the Neue Nationalgalerie. The collective—17 women, including artists Christina Dimitriadis, Antje Majewski and Jen Ray—organized the evening event *The History of Painting Revisited* at the neighbouring Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle. Revamping the cover of Ernst Gombrich’s classic *The History of Art* (1950), *ff* presented female painters of past centuries and then invited guests for a “walk to a nearby art institution to call attention to the insufficient representation of female painters within Berlin’s public collections.”

Given centuries of patriarchy, we can expect history to look bad for women, but the present doesn’t look that great either. Indeed, *ff* works not only on correcting history but also on changing the present through a host of collaborative events with various partners, institutional and other, beyond Berlin. Last March, *ff* joined forces with the art journal *n.paradoxa* for a London-Berlin feminist art salon linking women artists, writers and curators working in those cities. This October, *ff* will create *Temporary Autonomous Zone 3* with the Teatr

Studio in Warsaw, a performance-exhibition in collaboration with Polish artists, musicians and theoreticians, curated by the formidable Barbara Piwowarska.

The present doesn’t hold much promise for women outside art, at least if one judges from a host of interventions. Consider this spring’s American media campaign to end the use of the term “bossy” to describe women, female teenagers and girls (and thus to stop thwarting their leadership aspirations, especially among the younger generations). Prominent women and men took to the camera for the campaign: from Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, whose *Lean In. Women, Work and the Will to Lead* (2013) has become a manifesto for professional women, to entertainer Beyoncé, who has affirmed a feminism that includes racial, social, political and economic equality as well as sisterhood, motherhood, marriage, career and—contrary to some feminist critics—sex appeal and sex.

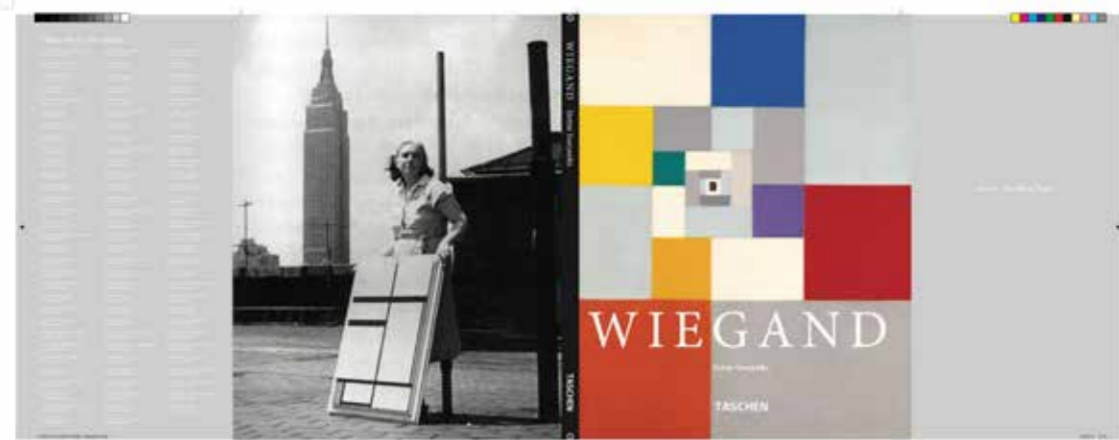
“Everyday Sexism” projects—from Laura Bates’s website to Twitter hashtags—provide examples of the disparities women face daily. Or consider the abrupt termination of Jill Abramson from *The New York Times* and Natalie Nougayrède from *Le Monde*. “Bossy” or not, these top editors ultimately confirmed statistics collected by the consultancy firm Strategy&: women CEOs are more likely to be fired—and fired earlier—than their male counterparts. Most recently, #YesAllWomen starting amassing tweets about sexual harassment and misogyny after Elliot Rogers’s shooting spree in May at Isla Vista in Santa Barbara, California.

## FROM “FEMINISM” TO VIGILANCE: TOWARDS A TRANS-GENERATIONAL MOVEMENT

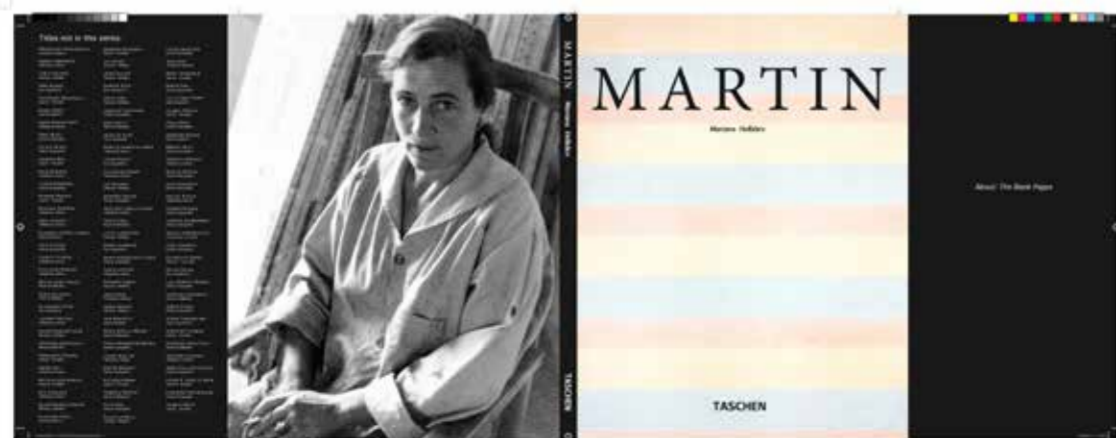
Why now? Such efforts—from historical correctives to contemporary movements—are often described as 4th, 5th or even x-wave feminism, after the pioneers of the 1960s, although feminist political struggles started much earlier. According to this reasoning, every successive generation of women coming of age finds its own axes to grind, although many women today do not call themselves “feminist” for a host of reasons: from a critique of feminism to the belief that gender equality is so self-evident that it should not require any label.

Indeed, the artists Lindahl and Ejlerskov never use the word “feminism” when they are describing their *About: The Blank Pages* exhibition-publication project in an open letter, which they presented with their books, to the Taschen editor of the Basic Art Series. Instead, they describe *The Blank Pages* as a simple, evident rectification: “In close communication with artists, scholars, art historians, art critics and librarians,” the artists write, “the Basic Art Series is now checked for errors and we hereby send the edited list back to you for correction.”

Bossy or not, feminist or not, I would argue that the current struggles among women to change the past and present are not a new “wave” of feminism but a trans-generational one. This trans-generational effort towards greater gender equality has to do with the fact that the struggles to end sexism, harassment and misogyny—along with racism and homophobia—are on-going battles. Alas, feminism was not a historical revolution that brought about a permanent change: equality from now on. Women’s liberation seemed to bring new roles for women, but with these roles came new forms of oppression.



Above and Below - Ditte Ejlerskov & Eva Marie Lindahl, *About: The Blank Pages*, 2014, installation views at Malmö Konsthall's bookstore, Malmö, 2014. Courtesy: the artists and Sommer & Kohl, Berlin



Older generations of women, from earlier “waves,” are living witnesses and proof that equality was never reached, despite the spread and visibility of feminism. Already way back in 1991, the American journalist Susan Faludi penned her unsettling study *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991), which documented the systematic political, social and economic erosion of the hard-won gains of feminism in the United States. Cartoonist Lynda Barry’s humorous *Excuse Me... What Happened to the Women’s Movement?* (c. 1990) suggests that women were part of that backlash because they did not identify with feminism.

If the struggle for equality persists, then *vigilance* seems to be required. Yes, it’s really too bad that some women keep on going on about feminism, about the problems of inequality, sexism and harassment, but that’s because these problems have not gone away. It’s unfortunate, perhaps even boring, to be talking about gender equality in 2014, but think how unfortunate and boring it is for the women who still earn less than men in their jobs, work more than their male partners at home and face daily discrimination, harassment, even violence.

Vigilance—always keeping a careful watch out for discrimination—suggests that gender inequality and oppression are a constant, chronic reality, not a passing, lamentable mishap. It’s a fundamental element that is structured into every woman’s daily life and lifetime, not a stray sexist comment coming from some stranger on the street. With vigilance, the absence of discrimination becomes the welcome surprise.

#### FROM FEMINIST TO VIGILANT ART

Two works of art, almost two decades apart, show the persistence of gender inequality in art. A few years after Faludi’s *Backlash*, Elin Wikström created the performance *Rebecka is waiting for Anna, Anna is waiting for Cecilia, Cecilia is waiting for Marie...* (1994) for the Moderna Museet in Stockholm: one woman would sit inside the museum and wait until another woman arrived to take over her “shift”—and so on—during the museum’s opening hours. Nothing was said or done, but this piece manifested feminist concerns, without mentioning the term: women’s solidarity, their ability to find time, their interchangeability and their act of waiting—waiting, waiting, waiting—for equality. Waiting until women *and men*—not just women among themselves—are interchangeable and indistinguishable, on social, political and economic levels.

A more recent performance by Annika Ström confirms that women, especially women artists, are indeed still waiting. After two decades—two generations, two “waves”—socio-economic relations have not improved along with the increase in women artists. Ström’s *The Seven Women Standing in the Way* (2011) features seven women casually chatting, drinking and blocking a gallery or museum entrance during the opening when the work is performed. Oblivious to other members of the public who are trying to enter the show, the women are instructed to persist in blocking the doorway and, only if pressed, to identify themselves as the title of the performance.

To me, the respective performances of Wikström and Ström treat inequality as a chronic reality. These works seem to be about cultivating *vigilance*: not quite saying anything in particular—there are no feminist slogans here, only women—but

at the same time not going away, and sometimes even getting in the way. Since these problems do not go away, these works must be re-performed. Wikström’s *Rebecka is waiting for Anna...* was done again at the Stockholm Moderna in 2011 (tellingly with volunteers), while Ström’s *Seven Women* will be performed for the eighth time at the Malmö Moderna on June 13th.

#### THE DIGITAL TURN

Asking “why now?” implies considering not only trans-generational awareness but also newer factors, such as the unprecedented rise of digital culture. As Jemima Kirke confirms in the online Tate film *Where are the Women?*, when men write history they leave women out of their narrative. If women have been missing from art history books over the last centuries, then it’s not surprising that they are also missing from Wikipedia, precisely because 87% of



Annika Ström, *Seven Women Standing in the Way*, 2011-ongoing. Courtesy: the artist

Wikipedia’s editors and contributors are men. While perpetuating inequality, digitization has brought frightening new forms of sexism, harassment and misogyny, from revenge porn to threatening “rape” tweets, from women and men alike. If legal systems have failed to protect women’s rights and equalities, and even their lives in the past, they have been generally unprepared to prosecute and to control manifestations of digital violence against women, teenagers and girls.

Globalization has also given a new impetus to fight for gender equality, which has proven to be a worldwide phenomenon. Gee, it’s not just in your head... Injustices near and far gain new global visibility, a recent case being the kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls from their school in Chibok, Nigeria. Economics plays a crucial role. Writing in *The Guardian* about her manifesto *End of Equality* (2014), Beatrix Campbell denounces “neoliberal neopatriarchy.” While neoliberalism erodes the social welfare state, neopatriarchy accepts a few token women in positions of power but resists collective labour reforms. Like taxes, reforms can be thwarted by corporations in the search of the cheapest labour markets. Plus, what profit-minded firm wouldn’t want to keep on paying half of the workforce less?

#### STATISTICAL FEMINISM

There’s another side to feminism and digital culture. Digitization, with its dependency on numbers, from algorithms to hits to retweets, has reinforced what I would call “statistical feminism”: the tendency to measure gender inequality through numbers and percentages alone, as I myself have done here. In *Where are the Women?* Kirke also begins with the statistics collected by the Guerrilla Girls as they formed in 1985 to protest New York’s MoMA exhibition *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture* which included 13 women among the 169 artists (that’s 7%).

On the one hand, statistics have the advantage of being perfectly objective. Who can argue with 0%, 5%, 7% and 25% women versus, respectively, 100%, 95%, 93% and 75% men? The figures simply don’t come close to equality. While citing statistics, the Guerrilla Girls wore their masks, which may suggest that their protests had to remain anonymous, otherwise they would be considered partial, a question of women artists fighting for their *own* increased visibility. Accusations of private bias may increase women’s reliance on cold facts and dry numbers, although the move to increase women artists is about a *collective* inclusion for all genders—not just women’s inclusion or the personal advancement of one woman artist, or a few women artists.

On the other hand, statistics should not be the end of a complaint about inequality, a QED, but the start. If you argue in statistics, the solutions come in numbers, too: from quotas to tokenism. Yet the solution is not just about equal quantities—50% men, 50% women in textbooks, shows and other realms—but also about *quality*. About variety, complexity and comprehensiveness.

Indeed, the men-only *Painting Forever!* at Berlin’s Neue Nationalgalerie was not only sexist but also, well, dull: a rehash of the tired split between “figurative” and “abstract” painting, just as painters like Katharina Grosse and Monika Baer are developing new paradigms between visibility and invisibility, which take on canvas and frame. Plus, isn’t art about heterogeneity? Doing a show with only men artists, or a show by predominantly one gender, seems as outdated as doing a show with one medium, like “Sculpture Today,” with one nationality like “Canadian Photographers” or with a monolithic theme like “Bathtubs in Art.” It’s just too simplistic.

#### BE YOUR OWN GURU

Perhaps the reliance on statistics serves another goal: uniting women who might otherwise not join forces. As Lynda Barry’s comic makes clear, many women remain reluctant to identify themselves with feminism, despite being on the losing end on so many levels due to their gender. Perhaps they fear that they will lose even more by aligning themselves with other women...

Yet all women—whatever they choose to call themselves—will always be lumped together statistically. It is tempting, especially for misogynists of all genders, to claim that women don’t get ahead because they can’t get along with each other and with others. So *bossy*, my goodness! Yet the splintering of the women’s movement has occurred in other socio-economic-political movements, if not mass movements in general, through digitisation. Social media not only connect, they also divide.

Speaking about digitisation and the end of popular culture to the *New York Times* in 2010, the Canadian



Wang Taocheng, *Untitled (sketch drawing for Reflection Paper No. 5)*, 2013. Courtesy: the artist

author Douglas Coupland argued that “everyone is able to customize their own lives with the images they want to see and the words they want to read and the music they listen to. You don’t have the broader trends like you used to.” Asked about phenomena like Harry Potter, Coupland countered: “They’re not great cultural megatrends like disco, which involved absolutely everyone in the culture. Now, everyone basically is their own microculture, their own nanoculture, their own generation.” And perhaps every woman is her own women’s movement.

On a related note: “Identity Politics” seems to be resurfacing—at least that’s my sense after a recent visit with the resident artists at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. But I’m not sure what that means for feminism. Or “micro-feminisms” and “nano-feminisms.” Those old enough to remember the previous Identity Politics from the 1970s-90s will recall how the movement was capable of bringing together not only specific differences—like gender, race, sexuality—but also of uniting these different groups, often by necessity for individuals who belonged to multiple categories of difference.

The old Identity Politics was not without its internal conflicts; one superb example remains bell hooks’ *Ain’t I a Woman* (1981), which shows how black women have been marginalized, not only by white female feminism but also by black male nationalism as well as class issues. Whatever its failings, Identity Politics faded in the 1990s—I would argue due to the rise of the Internet, which effectively created an equal platform for all differences: the screen. Identity Politics was about equality and visibility: adding different voices and faces to the old, white, male, Western narratives and institutions.

The bubbling revival of Identity Politics doesn’t seem to have the same cohesion of the old Identity Politics, most likely because of the impact of digital culture, where everyone has a voice and visibility online. Visibility has shifted from a right to an imperative; every person is pushed to create an online identity. With this individualistic drive—Be Your Own Guru!—contemporary Identity Politics may get splintered in terms of “offline solidarity”: from political activism to legislative change. Plus,

today’s identities are performed and mediated, many times over, through various media, digital and other, rather than affirming an oppressed identity.

Just to be clear: the artist-residents at De Ateliers did not align themselves overtly with Identity Politics, old or new. Yet from my perspective, when I saw certain works, I couldn’t help but think of Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), which shows that gender is not natural but performed. Taocheng Wang’s impressive performance-installations combine drawings of bearded (and breasted) boys with delicate silk drawings, craft-like paper sculpture with porn videos. Tanja Ritterbex mixes painting and performance, and performs gender onstage with drag queens at a popular Amsterdam club. On another identity note, Anthony Nestel created a host of works around an alter ego “Chaim” which turns Nestel’s Orthodox past into spirituality for all, inspired by his rules but for your pleasures.

#### DISASTER FEMINISM: FROM VIGILANCE TO VIGILANTISM

If popular culture and Identity Politics become customized, is it possible to identify the current revival of feminist concerns as a truly collective movement? Unfortunately, it seems that things have to get *really* bad—schoolgirls kidnapped, a misogynist shooting spree—for women to join each other and to join men in solidarity against gender inequalities. Perhaps we are entering a model of “disaster feminism.” Just as natural disasters can overcome social divisions to unite citizens, even beyond the disaster zone, it seems that horrific acts against women can consolidate people and movements, whether they call themselves feminists or not.

Yet I don’t think anyone, whatever their gender or beliefs, should wait for disasters to strike. I was a student at the Université de Montréal when the École Polytechnique Massacre took place on December 6, 1989, at the university’s engineering school. The assassin separated what he called “feminists” from the male students and shot the female students, eventually murdering 14 women

and injuring more women and men in his killing spree, though falling short of the 19 other Québec “feminists” he had listed as targets in his suicide note. Watching that long parade of hearses winding through the streets was one of the city’s saddest moments.

Perhaps that’s another reason why I advocate vigilance. Equality has not yet been reached, and I learned how any woman could be perceived as a feminist just for living her normal life, and how she could be shot for simply existing. Just as feminism can take on many guises, so can “anti-feminism”: an argument about bras, a sexist gesture, a violent misogynist incident or, alas, a massacre. One must remain vigilant because one cannot know where another person’s perceptions and beliefs lie on this unfortunately broad spectrum.

Moreover, there seems to be too much tolerance for gender inequality, especially in the art world. Last month, I was at a dinner with a prominent Berlin art patron who told me that men are better artists than women. And wanted me to agree. The artists Lindahl and Ejlerskov began their *About: The Blank Pages* after a similar conversation with a Taschen editor. According to *Kunstkrüikk* critic Amalie Kristine Frederiksen’s report, their project started after the artists called Taschen in 2010 to inquire about the unequal representation of the gender. An unnamed employee reportedly stated: “Female artists cannot be geniuses.” That position goes well with Georg Baselitz’s comment last year to *Spiegel* online: “Women don’t paint very well. It’s a fact.”

It’s hard to believe, especially in light of Germany’s horrific past, that similar comments about religion, race or origins would be tolerated. But let’s try to see how they sound when I replace the women in these quotes above with other persecuted peoples: “Whites are better artists than blacks” or “Turkish artists cannot be geniuses” or “Jews don’t paint very well. It’s a fact.” How can a man who believes that men are better artists be a public patron of the arts? Why no public boycott of Taschen? Why aren’t Baselitz’s paintings removed from public collections?

My point is not to compare persecution but, again, to show that the tolerance for misogyny remains high, at least in Germany. Vigilance is crucial because inequality, sexism and misogyny occur with impunity. For me, my dinner conversationalist was not only a sexist with incorrect opinions but also a total misogynist because he was imploring me as a woman to condone the denigration of my own gender. To participate willingly in my own oppression. Whatever I said, his hatred trumped, because I ended up thinking: if I were not a woman, this would not be happening to me... I would not be having this stupid conversation.

What is to be done? Should we wait until the “innocent little” sexist comments turn into massacres? I mean, they have already produced a broad socio-economic inequality between women and men artists along with way too many exhibitions with way too many male artists. Perhaps we need not only vigilance but also vigilantism to turn over impunity. Donald Sterling, the owner of the Los Angeles Clippers professional basketball team, was given a fine and a lifetime ban from the NBA for his racist remarks (made and recorded in private and then distributed publicly). Too bad I didn’t have my phone at that dinner! One thing is for sure: gender inequality has been going on for centuries, so it’s not going to go away in a few decades, not even a century.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE SISTERHOOD

di Jennifer Allen



n.paradoxa’s Feminist Art Salon, London-Berlin, 2014. Photo: Mathilde ter Heijne

**“Gli ebrei non dipingono molto bene, è un dato di fatto”. Questa frase scioccante e inaccettabile apparirebbe ancora tale se alla categoria umana degli ebrei sostituissimo quella delle donne? Allo stato attuale, pare proprio di no: nessuno ha rimosso le opere di Georg Baselitz, autore dell’affermazione (nella sua seconda versione), dalle raccolte dei musei pubblici. La tolleranza alla misoginia resta alta e, se nel mondo dell’arte alcuni lavori si adoperano per tenere alta la guardia sul sessismo, non esiste una vigilanza capillare che limiti la violenza, oggi anche digitale, contro le donne. Jennifer Allen compie un excursus sulle operazioni artistiche attuali più interessanti ma anche sullo stato dell’arte del femminismo in generale, dalla nascita dei femminismi individuali – i nanofemminismi – alla riemersione della “politica dell’identità”.**

#### FEMMINISMO: CHE LAGNA...

Ricordo ancora il libro di testo del corso di letteratura inglese usato all’ultimo anno delle superiori, nel 1984 a Toronto. In copertina la *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, un classico, esibiva trenta ritratti formato francobollo di alcuni tra i “principali autori”, da Chaucer a Auden, presenti nel libro. Non c’era nemmeno una donna, né in copertina né dentro.

Un’esperienza simile potrebbe aver dato vita al progetto dal titolo *About: The Blank Pages*, la mostra inaugurata ad aprile di quest’anno dalle artiste EvaMarie Lindahl e Ditte Ejlerskov alla svedese Malmö Konsthall. Lindahl ed Ejlerskov avevano davanti la storia dell’arte, non la letteratura inglese, e in particolare la nota Basic Art Series della Taschen. Delle 97 monografie di artisti pubblicate finora dalla collana appena cinque riguardano donne.

Cinque è meglio di niente, ma passare dallo zero al cinque per cento non è un aumento eccezionale nei trent’anni trascorsi dal 1984, specie alla luce dei

progressi complessivi realizzati dalle donne nella letteratura, nell’arte e nella società. Da allora persino la *Norton*, un tempo sessista, è migliorata non solo con un’edizione in due volumi (il 25 per cento circa dei 260 autori e passa è rappresentato da donne), ma anche con la *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, giunta già alla sua terza edizione.

La mia reazione alla *Norton Anthology* nel 1984? Ho ritagliato trenta piccoli ritratti di donne dalle riviste e li ho incollati sui volti degli uomini in copertina. Con la Taschen, Lindahl ed Ejlerskov sono andate più a fondo. Negli ultimi quattro anni, insieme a storici, ricercatori, bibliotecari e critici d’arte, hanno compilato un elenco di cento artiste per poi presentarle nel formato tipico della Taschen. Le artiste compaiono in copertina, mentre le pagine interne sono vuote (ecco spiegato il titolo della mostra “pagine bianche”) con la speranza che la Taschen riempia e che presto pubblici come libri questi facsimili.

#### CORREGGERE LA LORO STORIA

Lindahl ed Ejlerskov sembrano appartenere al crescente movimento mondiale che ambisce a rendere la storia dell’arte più egualitaria, meno sessista, addirittura meno misogina, se la penuria di donne è interpretata come l’espressione di un odio che si fonda sul genere ed è mosso da una serie di fattori, dall’invidia alla paura. Si pensi alla campagna Art+Feminism che mira a dare visibilità alle artiste su Wikipedia, soprattutto a quelle storiche che, non essendo più in vita, non possono farsi il proprio sito, con “edit-a-thon” (maratone di contributi) collettive. I collaboratori e i redattori di Wiki sono ancora in prevalenza maschi (secondo un sondaggio del 2010, un esagerato 87 per cento).

Alla luce di questi dati non dovrebbe sorprendere che le artiste in particolare, e le donne in generale,

siano poco rappresentate da Wikipedia. Per correggere tale tendenza lo scorso febbraio Art+Feminism ha organizzato un *edit-a-thon* mondiale con seicento volontari che hanno lavorato in più di trenta siti, tutti collegati al centro artistico e tecnologico new-yorchese Eyebeam, aggiungendo 101 artiste a Wiki, comprese le contemporanee Cosima von Bonin, Mequitta Ahuja e Frances Stark. Il prossimo *edit-a-thon* di Art+Feminism partirà il 4 giugno all’Ontario College of Art and Design di Toronto.

Le iniziative sulla storia dell’arte abbondano. Nel solo Regno Unito, la Tate ha prodotto il cortometraggio *Where Are the Women?* (2014) per la sua serie online “Unlock Art” con Jemima Kirke, nota per il ruolo interpretato in *Girls* della HBO, che conferma non solo la presenza di artiste nella storia, ma anche la sistematica esclusione del loro contributo dagli studiosi uomini autori dei libri di storia dell’arte. La scorsa primavera, inoltre, la BBC2 ha mandato in onda la serie televisiva *The Story of Women and Art* (2014), che parte dalla scultrice rinascimentale italiana Properzia de’ Rossi.

Come spiega Lucy Mangan del *Guardian* nella sua recensione della serie, de’ Rossi è l’unica donna che compare tra i 142 artisti presenti nelle *Vite* (1550-68) del Vasari, il quale lamentava: “Se solo [de’ Rossi] avesse avuto una fortuna e un sostegno pari al suo innato talento [...] avrebbe eguagliato in fama i più rinomati marmisti”. [in realtà questo è l’epitaffio citato dal Vasari, ma non fu scritto da lui] Un’altra retifica storica è rappresentata dalla serie dell’artista Annie Kevans, dal titolo *Women and the History of Art* (2014), esposta alla galleria londinese Fine Art Society Contemporary fino al 6 giugno: trenta ritratti di donne escluse dalla storia dell’arte maschile, come Angelica Kauffmann e Giulia Lama.

A Berlino, anche il collettivo femminista ff ha adottato un approccio storico nei confronti della contro-versa mostra contemporanea sulla pittura “Painting

