

Title: The visibility of women in Visual Communication and rebellion, an “object rather than a creator of art” 



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Thesis statement

In this dissertation I will be exploring the visibility of women in graphic communication and protest. This dissertation will focus on the graphic communicators of Hannah Höch, Linder Sterling and Michelle Thompson; alongside the protest groups of Guerrilla Girls and Pussy Riot. I will use these to challenge my found theory of women being an “object rather than a creator of art” (Nochlin, 1988, pg.2).

Introduction

In this dissertation I will be exploring the visibility of women in graphic communication and protest. Specifically, I am choosing to focus on Hannah Höch, Linder Sterling and Michelle Thompson, to observe the change in esteem for female graphic communicators through the years. Furthermore, for my protest aspect, I have chosen to investigate Guerrilla Girls and Pussy Riot. I have chosen these two protest groups as they use different techniques to engage with an audience, whilst both using guerrilla tactics. I will use these to challenge my found theory of women being an “object rather than a creator of art” (Nochlin, 1988, pg.2). My interest in this subject began when visiting Tate Modern in London I purchased a print of the Guerrilla Girl artwork without knowing who they were. I later researched into this group, strengthening my passion for seeking rebellion in the art world, linking to my own feminist beliefs. My interest in Hannah Höch started within my ‘research in practice’ essay. In that essay I was able to

explore her work, which allowed me to associate with her satirical art style that was portrayed so beautifully in such a simplistic way. As a result, I was able to understand the link between these two artforms allowing me to build the foundation for this essay. In this writing I will only be looking at three graphic communicators and two forms of protest, I am aware that there are many other opportunities for research, however, my writing reflects my personal interests.

Chapter one- We “ought to have a little rubber to erase ourselves” (Editors, 2019)

When considering female representation in the art world, it is imperative to understand how it began, to fully understand how it's evolved. In 1897 when the Tate (one of the most famous arts galleries in the world) first opened, women were “rarely present as artists in their own right” (Foster, 2004, pg.7) instead only becoming a feature in the work throughout the variety of scenes and mediums. The visibility of women in galleries has been summarized to the sexualization of the female body. This is supported by “the imagery of sexual delight or provocation has always been created about women for men's enjoyment by men” (Nochlin, 1988, pg.138). This objectification links to the LGBTQIA+ community, as it is researched that homosexual art was created by homosexual men for homosexual men, but lesbian art was created by men for men's pleasure, further proving that art was not believed to be for female enjoyment. This is

supported by Linder Sterlings view of Punk by stating “the loudest voices in Punk tended to be male and heterosexual” (Tate, 2020) and Nochlin's statement of “The male image is one of power, possession and domination, the female one of submission, passivity and availability” (Nochlin, 1988, pg. 14) showing how women are more malleable, while men are more inclined to avoid the change that would deplete their status.

Nochlin argues that “there are no great women artists because women are incapable of greatness” and that there is a “different kind of greatness for women’s art than men’s” (1988, pg.147 and 148). When an individual justifies why male artists monopolize the space, a feminist response will always be an underappreciated female artist in retaliation. However, this statement contradicts this by stating that females have not yet reached the standard of quality shown by male artists. Reinforcing that men and women are not equals, therefore adding to societal gender roles placed upon individuals.

Nochlin states that “if women have in fact achieved the same status as men in the arts, then the status quo is fine as it is” (1988, pg.150). It is understood that to be equal genders have to be judged the same, but this doesn't consider the historical implications of this. Women had to fight harder to be seen, making it more difficult to take back the spaces already taken by men. Voices and variation are important, if all voices are from the same people; what is the point? Repetition does not advance human culture, variety does. This theory is supported by Florence Givens statement of “unfortunately, straight white men dominate our media, and the media is our cultural storyteller”. (2023, pg.39)

Cecilia Vicuña is a Chilean artist known for her work with Quipu and social commentary on “themes of language, memory, dissolution, extinction and exile” (Tate, 2017) stated in an interview;

“I remember a joke I once heard... implying that some of us ought to have a little rubber to erase ourselves... we, as women, are instructed from birth not to speak up, not to make waves, not to be angry at injustice... so even before we do art, we know that we don't belong and there is really no chance that we will ever be acknowledged as creators.”(Editors, 2019)

This statement asks, is ‘not belonging’ a feeling or a label given by ourselves or others? In this statement Vicuña not only talks about women, but female migrants, refugees and displaced peoples, stating how in society the more categories you fall within ‘not belonging’ the more important it is to be visible. Further stated by Vicuña “rebellion comes at a cost. It made my work invisible/inaudible, vulnerable to attack.” (Editors, 2019) The Cambridge dictionary defines rebellion as “action against those in authority, against the rules, or against normal and accepted ways of behaving” (“REBELLION | Cambridge English Dictionary”) without rebellion comes repetition of the same stories, proving the necessity of having a variety of artists in galleries. Rebelling against the accepted way of behaving furthers the concept that to be outspoken is wrong and not valued, making you ‘inaudible’. Given states that “the ability to defiantly resist is only afforded to those who are already privileged enough not to be ostracized if they do” (2023, pg.37). As much as I agree with this statement, Vicuña is living proof that defiance is about determination. Even while ‘not belonging’, she is able to be seen and heard, which is something rarely experienced at the same time as a woman.

In the last few years there have been movements such as #metoo, to gather women into a support system. The writer Moria Donegan, originating from an attempt to keep women safe from sexual predators in the media, built on the idea of the ‘womans whisper’. Much like a Guerilla Girl antic, she uploaded a spreadsheet for twelve hours

allowing women to add their own firsthand experiences, ranging from rape to inappropriate messages. The purpose of this list was not to condemn anyone to conviction, but to gather information to aid the safety of the women in industry. With such accusations there will always be a backlash for the credibility of this. Donegan was sued for deformation of character by one of the listed members, Stephen Elliot, in which the accused named the anonymous accusations as “inherently evil... if you find yourself defending such a thing you should ... ask yourself what happened to your integrity.” (Kay, 2024) placing the blame back onto the victims once again rather than the perpetrator. He stated that “she damaged her own [#MeToo] cause in the process. Because lists like that—anonymous lists that ambitious people use to denounce others in their field—are always full of false accusations. The list ultimately made women less likely to be believed.” (Kay, 2024) The ‘#MeToo’ movement founded in 2017 in response to the Harvey Weinstein allegations, was necessary to provide a voice to those who previously believed they didn't have one. It was a movement that made women feel safe and comforted them when they felt alone, so to claim that one piece of information could detriment to the credibility of this movement in anyway only proves the need for this movement further. The ending statement referencing ‘believability’ gives a nod to the idiom of ‘the boy who cried wolf’, giving the impression of a voice to all means a voice to none. This speaks to the visibility of women due to the fact through history women have been belittled, voiceless and now even in the 21st century they are not believed, concluding that women are still fighting to escape objectification.

Chapter two- “The personal is political” (Wallington, 2024)

Hannah Hoch was “the sole female member of Berlin’s Weimar- era Dada group” (Morrill et al., 2019, pg. 189) and was often overlooked by the male members of Dada. This supports Vicuñas statement of becoming invisible when you do not fit the specification of a given group. “Like everything in life, Dada is useless.” (Brooks, 2017) Dada is a self-proclaimed ‘useless’ artform, a place where nothing and everything can make sense. In understanding how small their impact was on the world they become ever more influential due to the nonchalant nature of their creativity. They create to express without seeking validation or fulfillment from the viewer. Their arrogant almost egotistical nature of expression is what makes it so freeing and easy to connect to. In their rebellious nature, “the emphasis was always on the *anti*, be it anti-war, anti-bourgeois, or even anti-art” (Brooks, 2017) yet the group fell victim to the male chauvinist values undervaluing Höch’s potential, gaining her the label of a “degenerate artist”(Brooks, 2017). In time she became known as ‘the mother of photomontage’ coining an art movement that is still present today. The purpose of photomontage was to “integrate objects from the world of machines and industry in the world of art” (Ades, 1986) this technique included using imagery from printed mass media to illustrate societal issues. It was heavily used to protest against the First World War in a satire,

often ridiculous way. Höch was heavily recognized for highlighting women's status in German society.



Fig 1, Bourgeois Bridal Couple, Hannah Höch, 1919

The image above is a portrayal of Höch's understanding of marriage in Weimar Germany. In the collage the image depicts two figures, the left being the bride and the right being the groom. The bride stands with strong legs on a highly feminine body, facing away from the groom with a child's screaming head, seeming to be having a childlike tantrum over the notion of marriage. It is stated that, "Höch often mutilates and removes the eyes and faces of her subjects to signify their lack of identity as they are merely playing out their social role" ,(Herndon, 2013) this supports the idea that this transaction is formed out of pure duty twisting the concept of what marriage should be. The posture of the groom is shown with his body is leaning towards the bride with legs positioned to run away, alluding to Infidelity. Höch used this piece to comment on her own relationship with fellow Dada activist Raoul Hausmann. Their relationship, formed

from adultery, was heavily controlled by Hausmann by refusing to marry Höch calling it a 'bourgeois' notion, insisting Höch was useless unless she bore his child. This furthered Höch's cynicism about society, leading to the statement "the personal is political" (Wallington, 2024), which would become the slogan for the second wave of feminism.

Linder Sterling is known for her "radical feminist photomontage and confrontational performance art" and being "former front-woman of Manchester based post-punk group Ludus" (Tate, 2024a). Sterling influenced pop culture in a myriad of ways, most interestingly by wearing a dress "crafted from discarded chicken parts" (Tate, 2024a) when performing with her band Ludus in 1982, inspiring Lada Gagas 2010 MTV Awards dress. Sterling commented on "societal perceptions of women and the normalization of pornography" (media, 2024) in showcasing a dildo strapped to her crotch at a performance. This links into the essay by not conforming to the 'quiet and submissive' stereotype and becoming the dominant figure. Sterling is known for her "visual commentary on the commodification and objectification of the female form" (media, 2024) delving into "the intricacies of female rebellion and empowerment" (media, 2024) linking into the dissertation statement by exploring the visibility of women in industry.

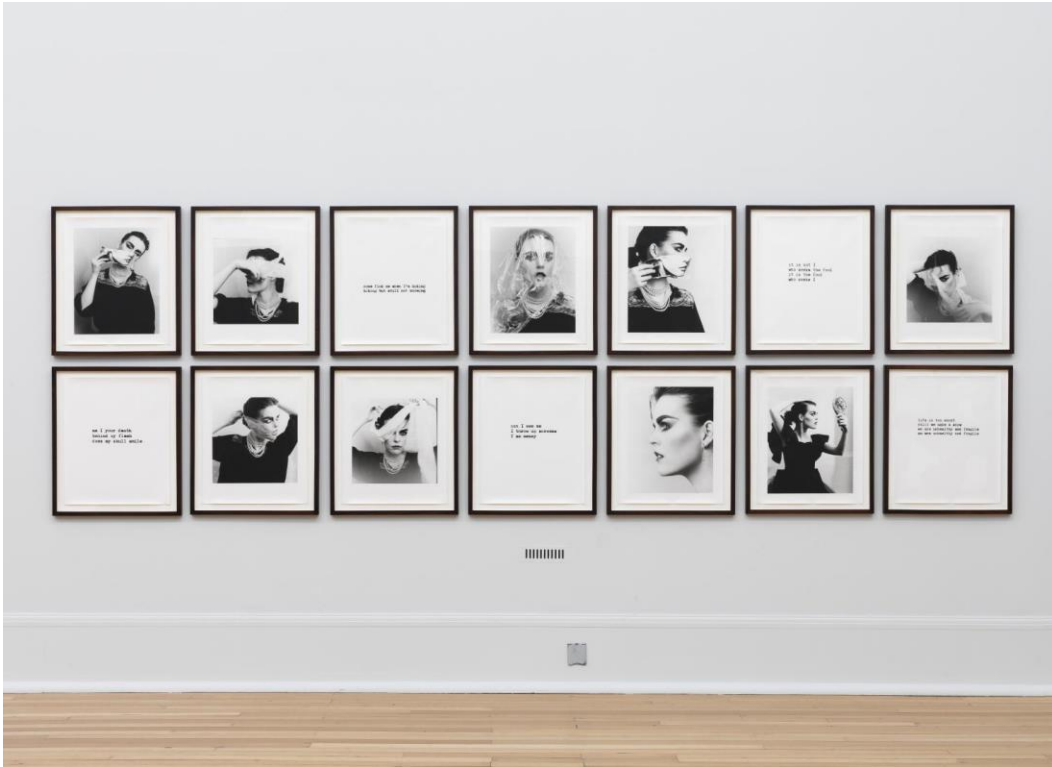


Fig 2- She/She, Linder Sterling, 1981

The artwork above consists of fourteen pieces referring to the themes of “hiding, searching and finding”. (Tate, 2024b) Sterling hides behind a torn photograph taken from a magazine presenting the element of concealment, from a malevolent force. In the piece Sterling refers to herself as “a found object’ (Sterling and Bovier, 2006) physically becoming a part of the photomontage itself. Sterling's black lace dress evokes delicacy, sensuality, purity, and femininity, while the black signifies mourning and power, challenging societal definitions of femininity. These images with her “heavy makeup and feminine dress relate to the celebrated essay ‘Womanliness as Masquerade’” (Birrer, 2020) by Joan Riviere a British psychoanalyst, creating a discussion on gender roles and the hibernation of male attributes to appear far less threatening. The idea of suffocation is shown in the use of bandages, clingfilm and a

veil. The veil links to Höch's idea of entrapment, whilst the other elements suggest injury or a lack of oxygen. This is proven by the piece being a "deconstruction of the feminine ideal represented by the media, in the home as a housewife or as a consumer object of male desire" (Tate, 2024b) allowing this to become a comment on the place of women within society. This follows Givens theory of "in the eyes of society, the more feminine we are the more 'desirable' we are, and having desirability as a woman gives us the privilege of being acknowledged and visible" (Given, 2023, pg. 158) linking to Vicuña's understanding of the repercussions of being rebellious. Sterling became more visible the more rebellious the nature of her work became, suggesting a change in the audience's acceptance of rebellious art.



Fig 3- 'Untitled', Linder Sterling, 1976 Fig 4- 'Untitled', Linder Sterling, 1976

Following the pornographic elements of Sterling's performance art, this shows two of the 'Untitled' collection of collages created from 1976-1978. These collages combined mainstream media from fashion magazine, 'Womans Own' and pornographic

publications of '*Fiesta*' and '*Men Only*', creating a powerful commentary on the difference found in gendered media. Sterling stated that in making these collections she separated magazines into two separate piles of female '*fashion*' and '*romance*' and male; '*cars*, *DIY*' and '*pornography*' which was still "women, but another side" (Tate, 2011). The purpose of this collection was to deconstruct "media representations of women as ideals of femininity in the home, as housewives, or as consumer objects of male desire" (Tate, 2011). In figure two the woman's body has been placed in the sink, bent over with the head and the majority of limbs being removed, showing a level of entrapment and submissiveness in completing the banal act of cleaning. In the only item placed in the sink it creates a contrast to the other foods, as if she has been discarded. "The juxtaposition of the giant cream cake with the naked female body emphasises the body's status as consumable object" (Tate, 2011). The piece exudes extravagance with its elegantly curving staircase, tropical plants visible through windows, and ruched curtains framing the exotic view. Figure three shows a woman bound placed within a kitchen appliance. The image of the piece taken by photographer Hans Bellmer of his partner, turns "the female body into comestible object... transforming this faceless lump of bound flesh into a desiring subject" (Tate, 2020), in being bound in string it suggests the model is being prepared just like a piece of meat would be. As said in the book '*Linder*' the possible name for these photomontages was "another housewife stews in her own juice in a different kitchen" (Sterling and Bovier, 2006, pg. 13) linking to Dada where you take a meaningless phrase and give it power through visuals. In the collage, the woman's head has been replaced with a blender and topped with a smiling face, showing her insanity. The model smiles at a jar of sausages, suggesting phallic connotations and enhancing the surreal comedy of the collage's food theme. Laura

Mulvey a feminist film theorist and filmmaker described Linder's work as being split "between active/male and passive/female" viewpoints and that "in their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to be connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*" (Mulvey, 1989, pp.19) supporting the given argument of women being an object to be displayed and positioned to fit their societal role.

Throughout Linder's work you can clearly see a link to Höch's work especially within the use of social commentary to "challenge gender stereotyping and traditional women's roles in society and in the home" (Tate, 2020), this can be evidenced by, "her legacy is keenly felt in Linder Sterling's radical feminist photomontage" (Lesso, 2024). Also with Linder stating she was inspired by the "anti-establishment spirit of Dada" (Tate, 2024b). Showing how one woman can change the course of an artform.

Michelle Thompson has worked with numerous prestigious corporations including; the Guardian, the Royal Mail and BBC. In working with these companies, she has already become far more recognized as an artist than Höch ever did in her time. Thompson reiterates the fact that being an artist isn't just about drawing, while studying at the Royal College she discovered; "art doesn't always have to look like real life" (Cusick, 2021) proving that art can simply be a form of expression like Dada. In Cusick's interview, Thompson stated how she takes inspiration from the Dadaists, in particular from Höch's work on social commentary that "juxtaposed jarring images from mass media in a protest against cultural politics"(2021). Like in Höch's work, Thompson can present heavy sometimes dark topics with accessibility and a hint of satire, an example of this can be demonstrated in the below image.



Fig 5, Three-hour brief, Michelle Thompson, 2018

This piece was set as a three-hour brief commissioned by the online platform 'Broadly'. Thompson stated that in her early work she worked face to face with clients, hand delivering the final outcome. With advances in technology, she now works primarily digitally, relying on devices, with emailed final results. This not only shows how times have changed since Höch's work but also shows the need for change with shorter brief completion times. It could be argued that to have a successful career in this field, you need to be able to be adaptable to the client's needs, not your own agenda. As stated by Nochlin "disadvantage may indeed be an excuse; it is not, however, an intellectual position" (1988, pg.176) all three artists show this by overcoming hurdles found in their own careers. Hoch does this by simply existing in a field that does not accommodate her, but Thompson does this by making the necessary adjustments to her own work to accommodate the change in pace set for given briefs. Thompsons work is known for her style of alluding to "shared memory" (About, 2009) using images in contemporary

history to reflect modern society. This piece contrasts with Höch's use of color by incorporating storytelling, with pink symbolizing women's narratives. Focused on sexual assault, the imagery of women, all turned away, suggests invisibility and silencing. It mirrors Höch's *The Bourgeois Wedding Couple*, with the wedding ring symbolizing restraint, hinting to marriage as a facade concealing sexual assault, dismissed under the guise of consent in a committed relationship. Inspired by Donegan's article "an exploration of the impact of sexual assault stories" (Hanoun, 2018), the piece instinctively reacts to power found in these stories. Thompson states how she believes 'impossibly' tight deadlines "often produce the most exciting results" (Hanoun, 2018) creating a clear divide between the artists' work by regard they are held against. One being recognized in her time, one becoming more accepted through time and one still growing in respect long after her time.

Chapter three- “The art of resistance” (Guerrilla Girls, 2024)

To conceal a rebellion, a level of secrecy must be adapted. The Guerrilla girls are known for their anonymously created guerilla tactic forms of protest, to show the injustices within the art world especially for the underrepresentation of women and people of colour. Through the use of gorilla masks, they have been able to keep their identities hidden. This female led group stated that they are only women due to the fact “is not easy to find men willing to work without getting paid or getting credit for it” (Girls, 1995, pg.15) furthering the determination shown by women to gain back the spaces occupied by men. Givens hypothesis of “real change happens when we give up power, without telling anyone we did it” (2023, pg.211) is shown here, as this group of women gave up all forms of validation for their efforts just for a chance to create a change in the world. The group was inspired by the efforts of Mary Richards who in 1914, slashed a Velázquez painting portraying a nude painting of Venus, the goddess of love, beauty and victory, with an axe. This act was done to protest the fetishization of the female body and the belief “that the vote for women could not be won through peaceful, parliamentary means” (Girls, 1995, pg.7). Following this incident, in 1989 the guerilla girls would mutate the same image to present a similar ideology that women were still facing the same issues 75 years later. In this mutation, they placed a gorilla mask in the mirror facing the woman in the painting, presenting the idea of a challenger rather than a seductress as previously shown. The spark of rebellion would be formed from a response to the MoMA exhibition, an “international survey of painting and sculpture” (Girls, 1995, pg.7) in which out of the “169 artists, only 13 were women” (Girls, 1995, pg.7) with no women of colour being shown. The curator of this exhibition stated, “any

artist who wasn't in the show should rethink 'his' career" (Girls, 1995, pg.7). In using the pronoun 'his', it reiterates the insinuation that there is no place for women in the art world, especially within this exhibition. The usage of the naked female body would be heavily used in the artwork of Guerrilla Girls in the years to come, using the predominantly male aesthetic gorilla mask to contrast against the heavily feminine physiques and clothing. The group adopted gorilla masks after a misspelling of 'guerrilla', shifting from ski masks. Their name, inspired by "guerrilla warfare" (Spanish for 'little war'), symbolizes their tactical, purposeful fight rather than a meaningless protest.

This movement was seen as a fight between a minority and a larger more powerful force, or as a critic stated, "waging what they call cultural warfare...where the main ammunition is wit"(Tate, 2016). Wit has become a big feature of how Guerrilla Girls present their manifestos, using facts coated in playful tones to create a lasting impact on the viewer, in the words of Susan Tallman from arts magazine "the posters were rude; they named names and they printed statistics. They embarrassed people. In other words, they worked" (Tate, 2016) after all no one can argue with a fact. The one word that defines the Guerrilla Girls is unapologetic, they are always loud, always bold and always with the greater power of coercion. This can be seen in the below artwork of "Dearest art collector"

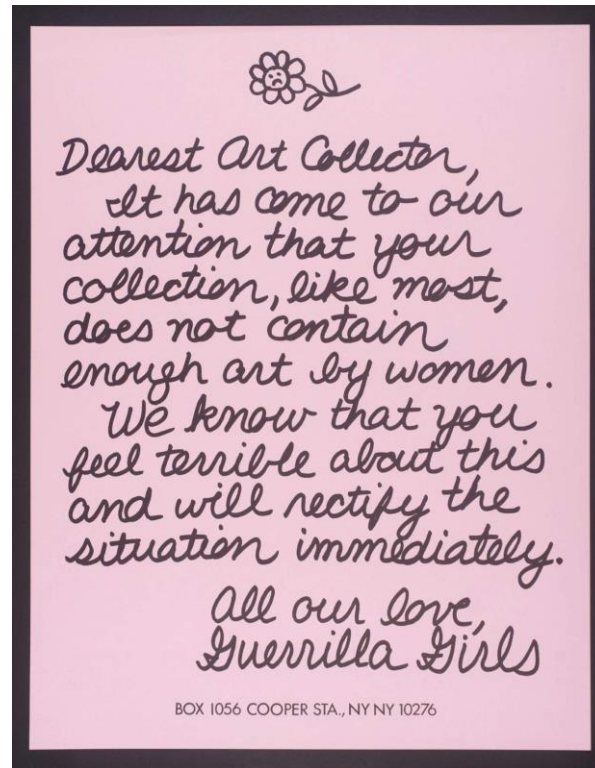


Fig 6, Dearest art collector, Guerrilla Girls, 1986

This artwork showcases the Guerrilla Girls' signature style, reclaiming the term "girl" with a sarcastic, feminine aesthetic. It contrasts aggressive messages with soft, "girl-like" elements, such as light pink, childlike drawings, cursive text, and terms of endearment like "dearest." This blend of innocence and rebirth invokes familiarity, resembling a loving conversation between friends or a love letter. At the same time, its authoritative tone, with statements like "we know you feel awful about this" and "rectify the situation immediately," demands action, creating a mix of affection and urgency. The closing "all our love" ties back to the theme of supportive female camaraderie.

As a member of the group once said in the New York times "how can you really tell the story of a culture when you don't include all the voices within the culture?" (Tate, 2016)

encapsulating Givens ideology of “how are you ever going to open your mind to other people's perspectives, if it's always filtered through a privileged gaze?” (Given, 2023, pg.39). This highlights the necessity of groups such as these, as without a diverse range of viewpoints in our media we are only able to understand a small fraction of what the world really is. Voices such as that of women and people of colour can change the way we live and how we view our experiences, which makes them invaluable to our society. This group also proves how with perseverance you can invoke change. The Guerrilla Girls only became like this due to the fact when protesting originally as a group of women with placards, no one listened. Since they have continued to seek the voiceless to make them seen and heard. In 2001 “the group split into three different organizations: the original Guerrilla Girls; Guerrilla Girls Broadband (making use of digital technologies) and Guerrilla Girls on Tour (a touring theatre group)” (“#GGBBCampus”, 2015). Below shows an example of the works of Guerrilla Girl broadband;

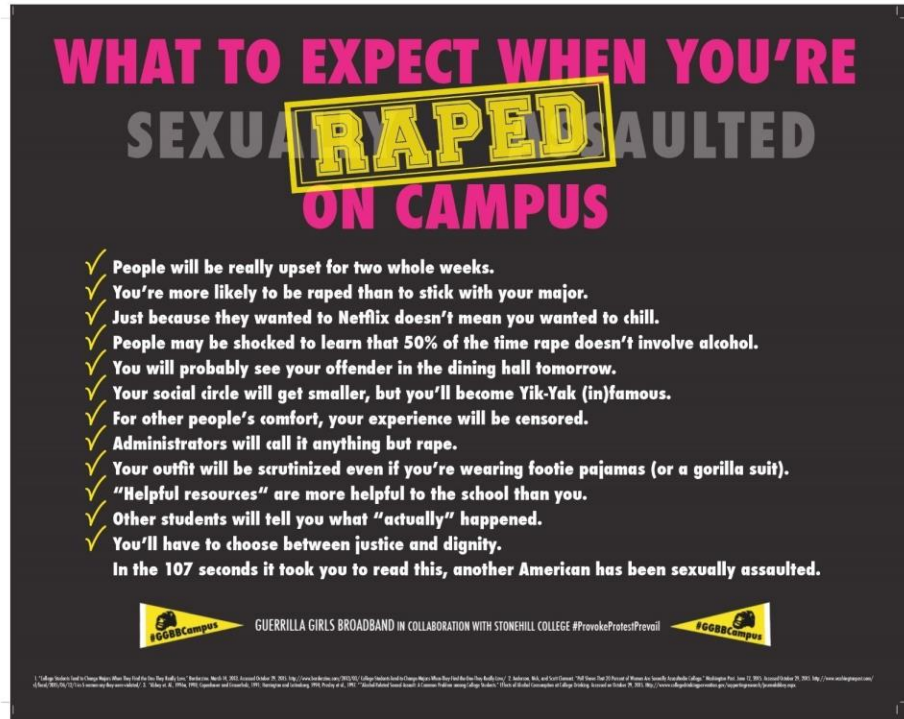


Fig 7, #GGBB campus initiative, Guerrilla Girls broadband, 2015

This infographic follows the infamous style of the Guerrilla Girls while tackling an issue outside of the art world. Acting upon big subject matters with a hint of relatability, shows the diversity of groups such as these to offer support to women in all situations, just like in the #metoo movement. Pieces like this are imperative, especially to vulnerable young people as, although it has been put in a satirical way, it shows you the facts you need. The ending line feels like nothing can be done to relieve the vicious cycle, linking to guerilla tactics by creating a lasting effect. The piece contrasts the usual pink backgrounds with the use of black instead, this lends itself to the idea of doom symbolizing a sinister topic. This, however, has an element of satire with the 'raped' stamp look alluding the common college style of type, grounding the viewer in where the scene is set.

The Guerrilla Girls work has led to a change in the industry, due to a changed perspective from the curators of exhibitions. This can be shown by the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist. Obrist stated that "I've always thought that my job is... about togetherness... I visit artists who just haven't had the visibility they deserve for their work"(The Talks, 2022) showing a clear change between the ignorance shown by previous curators. In having this stated by one of the most influential curators, it shows how collectives are never truly voiceless.

Pussy riot began in 2011 to rebel against the reelection of Vladimir Putin, for the third time. The members within the group consist of artists, activists and independent filmmakers, however as a group, they are most known for their visual art, theatrical and musical performances. The protests started in 2012 with their performance of 'Punk Prayer' in Moscow's cathedral leading to the imprisonment of two members for acts of 'hooliganism'. The members are known for their controversial balaclavas, keeping their identities anonymous, bringing forwards the ideas of aggression like seen committed crimes. Since being unmasked after the arrests, the group still wear the balaclavas as a "symbol of anonymity" (Berlin Art Link, 2024) rather than the original presentation of protest. The main message of the movement is to encourage all passivists to become activists. Simply existing as they do is dangerous as "performing femininity and desirability isn't always a choice for marginalized women, its often an act of survival" (Given, 2023, pg.34). In not fulfilling their given female typical role, they are openly defying the restrictions placed upon as marginalized women linking back to the artists of Höch and Vicuña. This band, created in protest against a powerful leader, embodies guerrilla tactics similar to the Guerrilla Girls, showing that united women can confront any adversary, no matter their power, to drive meaningful change.



Fig 8, This art is created by a criminal, Nadya Tolokonnikova, 2023. Fig 9, Putin's ashes, Nadya Tolokonnikova, 2023

Nadya Tolokonnikova, is the founding member of Pussy Riot, and was arrested for the 'Punk Prayer' stunt. Whilst in prison Tolokonnikova was forced to sew Russian army uniforms, due to this she used the skills they taught her, against the regime to create the collective 'Putin's ashes'. The above image titled 'this art is created by a criminal', features the elements from her stay in prison. In an interview Tolokonnikova stated "at night, I would dream that I'd get new sets of needles and parts of sewing machines...In reality you never had enough and you had to injure yourself while sewing. So, this is my blood." (The Art Newspaper, 2023) In having blood on the art itself it reinforces Höch's statement for the second wave of feminism, with the inclusion of "this art is too political" (The Art Newspaper, 2023) on the walls of the exhibition. The artwork contains a fluffy pink border, hinting back to the Guerrilla Girl's 'innocent' look, furthermore, the layout of the piece is very simplistic, presenting the products of her entrapment. The idea of entrapment is brought forwards with the lace in the background, hinting to the marriage, linking to Höch's 'Bourgeois Bridal Couple', further suggesting the ideas of innocence or

naivety. This is challenged by Nochlin in “the problem lies not so much with some feminists’ conception of what femininity is, but rather with their misconception... of what art is” (1988, pg.149) this statement reinforces that women cannot be renowned artists without firstly becoming more masculine.

To understand more about the group, I conducted an interview with Jonathan Williams, an attendee at Pussy Riot concert. In the interview he stated that he already knew about pussy riots existence, exceeding expectations for a male audience member. Williams also stated that the concert included elements of participation, turning passivists into activists. Williams believes their approach is ‘brave’ by “putting themselves in danger in order to express opinion” (2024), this links back to Vicuñas argument of ‘rebellion coming at a cost’. Reflecting on the crowd's reaction, he states it was “strong and emotional”, (Williams, 2024) this proves how rebellion with the highest risk comes with the biggest rewards. Considering Williams offers a male viewpoint, it offers up an interesting insight to how the band are perceived by people the issues do not necessarily affect, allowing a sympathetic viewpoint rather than an empathetic outlook. His response of “although I am probably a long way from their target audience and not qualified to comment on their life experiences, nevertheless I support it and everything it stands for” (2024) encapsulates William's viewpoint showing it costs nothing to have compassion. He states that “I think their manifesto is powerful and empowering, especially for young females” (2024) proving that this style of empowerment has potential to be passed down to generations below us, due to its acceptance, especially from male audience members.



Fig 10, Haunted!, Nadya Tolokonnikova, 2023

This piece evokes childlike innocence, like the Guerrilla Girls, but physically represents it with a child's toy, symbolizing lost childhood. In having the melted pill bottles melted across the piece, it suggests a loss of control. In having the only controlled placement of the pills being on the doorstep with the door open, it shows intrusiveness and vulnerability due to this piece being about “the medication I have to take ever since I got out of jail because I was diagnosed with PTSD and depression” (The Art Newspaper, 2023). With the pills covering the entire piece like an “invasive species” (The Art Newspaper, 2023) it presents the idea of an uncontrollable illness, destroying the house in the process. The title of the piece, ‘haunted’ means “obsessed with or

tormented by something” (Vocabulary.com, 2024) further provoking the insinuation of torment, leading on from the imprisonment. In having art in an exhibition done by a convicted criminal, it challenges how society views artists. These two forms of protest linked by their animosity in being outspoken proves that women are more than just objects to be studied or painted.

Conclusion

In summary, women have moved in history from the voiceless to the boisterous, having outlets to channel their expressions to society norms. Women are not just objects, but are creators of great art. However, research has allowed understanding that not all people believe that women can achieve such a status. Moreover, it has provided the understanding that rebellion comes at a cost and is not always afforded to everyone so

easily, but the more you put on the line the better the rewards can become. For my practical project I wish to develop the guerilla tactics found within the Guerilla Girls extend the outreach for the organization such as this following on from their brief pop up of 'the complaints department' to create the 'Guerilla Girls hotline' that will be available continuously.

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Appendix 1

Interview conducted via email between Sophie Lewis and Jonathan Williams BA (Hons)
on 10/11/2024- 12/11/2024

Williams , J. (2024). *Pussy riot audience member*. 12 Nov.

Question 1

**Why did you choose to attend the event? / Did you already know about pussy
riots**

existence? And, what did you take away from the event?

Yes, I was already aware of Pussy Riot and had seen a documentary about them previously, when I heard that they would be performing in Cardiff I booked tickets immediately.

The event was a powerful experience, it was not just them performing music, there was a video playing and they depicted the arrest of members, imprisonment and interrogation, strong stuff with interactive elements, engaging with the audience, throwing water into the crowd etc.

Question 2

Do you think their approach is an appropriate way to get their manifesto across?

I think that they are fully committed to the cause and believe the approach is correct. I think they are incredibly brave taking on the government this way and putting themselves in danger in order to express their opinion.

Question 3

What was the crowd's reaction to them? - including your own thoughts.

The crowd was fully behind them, it was strong and emotional, I have been to many, many gigs over the years, especially Punk and as you can imagine they can be fully charged and chaotic, this perhaps because of the location in the Millennium Centre and the crowd was perhaps a little more restrained, not quite the Ramones circa88, but good.

Question 4

Did you find them offensive in any way?

No, definitely not, I have huge admiration for what they do.

Question 5

Do you consider yourself a supporter of pussy riot and/or their manifesto?

I think their Manifesto is powerful and empowering, especially for young females. Although I am probably a long way from their target audience and not qualified to comment on their life experiences, never the less I support it and everything it stands for.

Supporting imagery



Fig(11) Lady Gaga Meat dress, MTV music awards, 2010, Fig (12) Linder Sterling,
Chicken parts dress, 1982



Fig (13), What I Do To Please You I Do, Hannah Höch, 1920



Fig (14), Dada- Ernst, Hannah Höch, 1920



Fig (15), Indian Dancer, Hannah Höch, 1930



Fig (16), Untitled, Hannah Höch, 1930



Fig (17), What I Do To Please You I Do, Linder Sterling, 1981



Fig (18), Untitled, Linder Sterling, 1977



Fig (19) , The Goddess Who Removes the Shortcomings Caused by Planets, Linder Sterling, 2017



Fig (20), *It's The Buzz, Cock!*, Linder Sterling, 2015



Fig (21), *The German institute*, Michelle Thompson, no date



Fig (22), Guardians of the galaxy, Michelle Thompson, no date

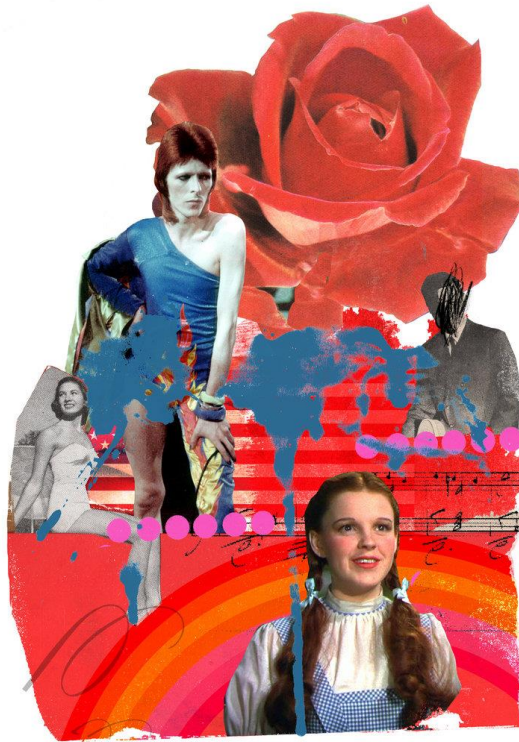


Fig (23),Financial times, Michelle Thompson, no date



Fig (24), Museum of London, Michelle Thompson, no date



Fig (25), *Do women have to be naked to get into Boston museums*, Guerrilla Girls, 2012

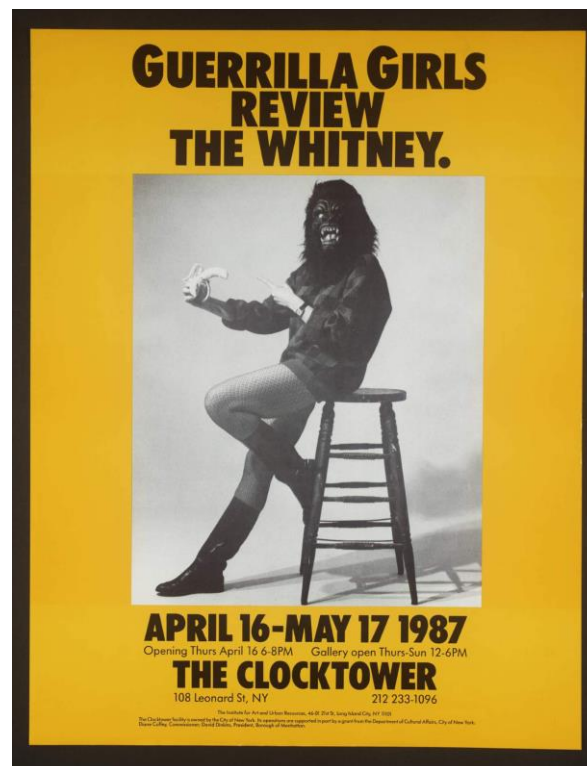


Fig (26), *Guerrilla Girls Review The Whitney*, Guerrilla Girls, 1987



Fig (27), Pussy Riot members, Pussy Riot, 2012