

MONTEHERMOSO CULTURAL CENTRE
January 25th–May 4th

THE FURIOUS GAZE

In January 2008, the Montehermoso Kulturunea Cultural Centre initiates a new project directed at the production, exhibition and dissemination of art and contemporary thought in line with its key strategy of working on the “art, culture and society” triad.

This innovative project is a pioneer in Spain in the application of gender equality policies to the field of culture and contemporary art and the production of projects and specific research to be included in the Centre’s annual programmes.

This new proposal will be launched on January 25th with the opening of *La Mirada Iracunda / The Furious Gaze*, a group exhibition curated by Maura Reilly and Xabier Arakistain.

In order to promote the understanding and dissemination of feminist thought and art practice, the exhibition will be accompanied by a conference / course in which various women theorists, artists and cultural and political actors will analyse the issues outlined above.

25 JANUARY –
4 MAY

LA MIRADA IRACUNDA THE FURIOUS GAZE



Mireia Sallarés. “Las muertes chiquitas”, 2008. Courtesy of the artist

La Mirada Iracunda / The Furious Gaze

Curated by Maura Reilly and Xabier Arakistain.

Lida Abdul, Pilar Albarracín, Alice Anderson, Txaro Arrazola, Andrea Bowers, Kathe Burkhart, Loulou Cherinet, Dorothy Cross, Lara Favaretto, Coco Fusco, Chitra Ganesh, Caron Geary, Cristina Lucas, Tracey Moffat, Yurie Nagashima, Itziar Okariz, Mireia Sallarés, Charlotte Schleiffert, A.L. Steiner, Sophie Whettnall.

The Furious Gaze seeks to consider feminism as a source of knowledge that is vital for understanding the world we live in and an essential framework for analysing visual works dealing with the situations of inequality that women, particularly women artists, experience at the beginning of this twenty-first century.

This international group exhibition offers pieces by twenty artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, who express their views on the fallacy of sexual equality and on a fury that has no possibility of being displayed. The show is connected with the artistic events held in 2007 on both sides of the Atlantic to explore the relationships between art and feminism, all aimed at incorporating avant-garde feminist works into the history of art and at furthering the objectives that remain pending in the feminist political agenda. Although it is difficult to believe at the beginning of this twenty-first century, these objectives still include achieving true equality between men and women.

The exhibition title refers to an issue raised in 1996 by the philosopher Amelia Valcárcel in *La Política de las mujeres – The Politics of Women*. For Valcárcel, this furious gaze is the reaction shown by those women who, having reached the age of thirty and having interiorised “the mirage of equality”, undergo the unpleasant experience of discovering that the equality they thought they enjoyed is actually shattered into smithereens when it hits the unexpected “glass ceiling” that prevents them from climbing any higher on the professional ladder, a “glass ceiling” that also covers the field of art and a barrier that women artists encounter throughout their professional careers.

Sexual and gender-based social inequality was interpreted in the past by resorting to the hypothetical “natural inferiority” of women, an interpretation that successive waves of the feminist movement, and particularly that of the late nineteen sixties and the seventies, proved to be politically and theoretically invalid. From that time onwards, and in line with the large-scale incorporation of more women into fields of activity, such as art, from which they had hitherto been materially and symbolically excluded, the notion of the “mirage of equality” was coined. This mirage is the assumption that inequality between men and women is a thing of the past, which is in stark contrast to all the available information that clearly shows that this inequality persists even today in each and every area of activity. In art, for example, the persistence of this “mirage of equality” threatens the pending feminist agenda specifically concerned with it, an agenda that is often labelled as old-fashioned, thereby placing human rights on the same level as mere questions of “fashion”.

In order to promote the understanding and dissemination of feminist thought and art practice, the exhibition will be accompanied by a conference / course in which various women theorists, artists and cultural and political actors will analyse the issues outlined above.

Xabier Arakistain & Maura Reilly

Curators:

Xabier Arakistain, director of the Montehermoso Cultural Centre.

Maura Reilly, curator of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Centre for Feminist Art of the Brooklyn Museum.

Artists:

Lida Abdul. Kabul, 1973. Lives and works in Kabul.

Pilar Albarracín. Aracena (Huelva), 1968. Lives and works in Madrid.

Alice Anderson. Londres, 1976. Lives and works in London.

Txaro Arrazola. Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1963. Lives and works in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

Andrea Bowers. Wilmington (Ohio), 1965. Lives and works in Los Ángeles.

Kathe Burkhart. Martinsburg (West Virginia), 1958. Lives and works in New York and Amsterdam.

Loulou Cherinet. Gothenburg, 1970. Lives and works in Stockholm.

Dorothy Cross. Cork, 1956. Lives and works in Dublin.

Lara Favaretto. Trevino, 1973. Lives and works in Turin.

Coco Fusco. Nueva York, 1970. Lives and works in New York.

Chitra Ganesh. Nueva York, 1975. Lives and works in New York.

Caron Geary. Londres, 1970. Lives and works in London.

Cristina Lucas. Úbeda (Jaén), 1973. Lives and works in Madrid.

Tracey Moffatt. Brisbane, 1960. Lives and works in New York.

Yurie Nagashima. Tokio, 1973. Lives and works in Saitama (Tokio).

Itziar Okariz. San Sebastián, 1965. Lives and works in New York.

Mireia Sallarès. Barcelona, 1973. Lives and works in Barcelona.

Charlotte Schleiffert. Tilburg, 1967. Lives and works in Rotterdam.

A.L. Steiner. Miami. Lives and works in New York.

Sophie Whettnall. Bruselas, 1973. Lives and works in Brussels.

A Selection of Works in the Exhibition

Pilar Albarracín



“Furor latino”, 2003. Video, 2’ 27”

Courtesy of the artist

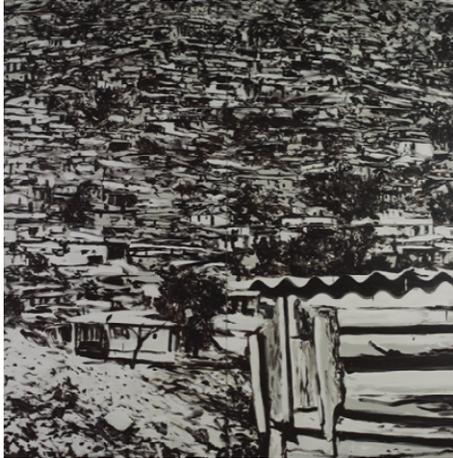
Alice Anderson



“Prompt book”, 2005. Video, 14’

Courtesy of the artist and Yvon-Lambert, Paris.

Txaro Arrazola



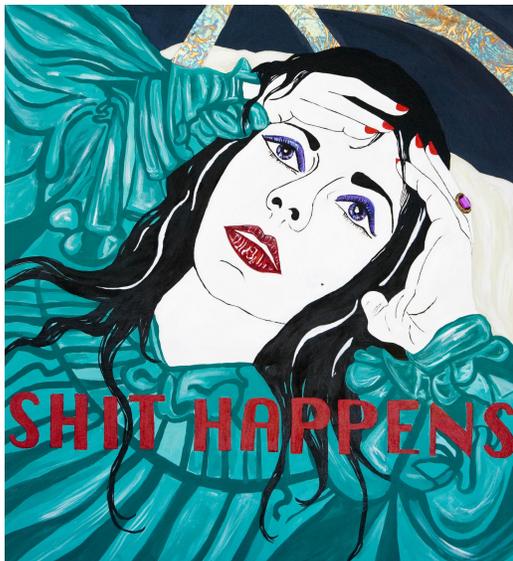
“Favela Negra (Serie Target)”, 2005.
Mixed technique on cloth. 270 x 270 cm
Courtesy of the artist

Andrea Bowers



“Letters to an Army of Three”, 2005. Drawing on paper
Courtesy of the artist

Kathe Burkhart



“Shit Happens”, Liz Taylor Series (Night Watch), 2007
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas. 106x116cm
Courtesy of the artist.

Loulou Cherinet



“White Women”, 2002. Video, 52’
Courtesy of the artist

Lara Favaretto



“Prima”, 2005. Installation

Courtesy of the artist and the Franco Noero Gallery, Turin.

Coco Fusco



“Operation Atropos”, 2006. Video, 59´

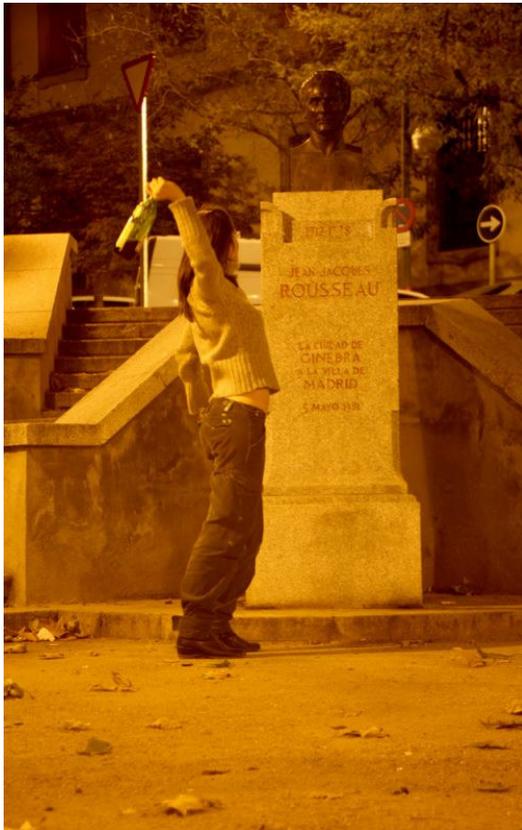
Courtesy of the artist and The Project Gallery, New York.

Caron Geary



“Close-up View No.1 of White British Female, UK Born”
“Feral”, London, Self portrait, 2007. Photograph. 100x80cm
Photographer’s Assistant: Ayoung Kim.
Courtesy of the artist

Cristina Lucas



“Rousseau y Sophie”, 2007

Video, 9'30”

Courtesy of the artist and the Galería Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid.

Tracey Moffat



“Love”, 2003. Vídeo, 21’

Courtesy of the artist and the Stefan Stux Gallery, New York.

Yurie Nagashima



“Untitled”, 2001

Colour photograph on panel. 175x218cm

Courtesy of the artist and SCAI, Tokyo

Itziar Okariz



“Irrintzi. Repetition 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96”, 2006

Video, 6'25”

Courtesy of the artist

A. L. Steiner



“The Patriarchy is a Pyramid Scheme”, 2008

Site-specific installation

Courtesy of the artist

COURSE: La Mirada Iracunda / The Furious Gaze

21-24 February

Although the first demands for gender equality date from the seventeenth century, and despite the fact that since then, struggles for women's political and civil rights have continuously marked Western history, three centuries later, this is still a pending issue.

This course highlights the discrimination against women in all fields in order to delve further into the specific field of art. Thus, from the viewpoints of art, philosophy and culture, it aims to approach the issues tackled by the women artists and curators participating in the group exhibition *La mirada iracunda / The Furious Gaze*. Concepts such as “the mirage of equality” and “the glass ceiling” will be among the themes covered in the lectures, which will also examine various strategies adopted by contemporary feminist artists.

21 February

Feminist Philosophy and Numbers

- Inequality in Numbers. Izaskun Moyua.
- The Glass Ceiling. Carme Adán.
- The Mirage of Equality. Françoise Duroux.
- Round Table Discussion

22 February

Art and Feminism (Theory and Criticism, Artistic and Curatorial Practices)

- Inequality in Art (revising the *ARCO 2005 Manifesto*). Lourdes Méndez and Xabier Arakistain.
- Theory and Criticism of Feminist Art. Lourdes Méndez
- Theory and Criticism of Feminist Art. Katy Deepwell
- The Creative Act as a Feminist Action. Françoise Collin.
- Round Table Discussion

23 February

Art and Feminism (Theory and Criticism, Artistic and Curatorial Practices)

- Feminist Curatorial Practices. Uta Meta Bauer, Maura Reilly.
- Feminist Art Practices. Ulrike Rosenbach, Suzanne Lacy, Monica Bonvicini.
- Round Table Discussion

24 February

Recent Feminist Publications

- Book presentation. *Femmes artistes, artistes femmes*, with Catherine Gonnard.
- Book presentation. *Antropología Feminista*, with Lourdes Méndez and Tere Maldonado.

Conclusion

- The Furious Gaze. Amelia Valcárcel.

Speakers: **Carme Adán** (philosopher and Secretary General of Equality, Xunta de Galicia); **Xabier Arakistain** (director of the Centro Cultural Montehermoso Kulturunea, Vitoria-Gasteiz); **Monica Bonvicini** (artist, Italy); **Françoise Collin** (feminist philosopher and professor at the Centre parisien d'études critiques; co-director and founder of *Les Cahiers du GRIF*); **Katy Deepwell** (writer and art historian; founder and editor of the international feminist art journal, *n.paradoxa*); **Françoise Doroux** (full professor of Philosophy, University of Paris VII); **Catherine Gonnard** (essayist and activist; together with Elisabeth Lebovici, she has recently published *Femmes artistes, artistes femmes*, ed. Hazan. Paris, 2007); **Suzanne Lacy** (artist, essayist and director of the Art Department at the Otis College of Art & Design, Los Angeles); **Lourdes Méndez** (full professor of Art Anthropology, University of the Basque Country / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea; she has recently published *Antropología Feminista*); **Ute Meta Bauer** (associate professor and director of the Visual Arts Programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, U.S.A.); **Izaskun Moyua** (director of Emakunde, the Basque Women's Institute); **Maura Reilly** (curator of the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, New York and co-curator of *The Furious Gaze* exhibition); **Ulrike Rosenbach** (artist, Germany); **Amelia Valcárcel** (member of Spain's Council of State; vice-president of the Prado Museum's Board of Trustees and full professor of Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of Oviedo).

In collaboration with the French Embassy in Spain

**25 JANUARY-
18 MAY**

CONTRASEÑAS / PASSWORDS

NEW REPRESENTATIONS
OF FEMININITY. CYCLE 3

**The Problematisation of Femininity:
Feminist Art Practice and New Body Representations**

The CONTRASEÑAS / PASSWORDS project comprises twelve four-month cycles curated by twelve Spanish and international professionals and will take place over a period of four years. PASSWORDS aims to show and document the many lines of criticism and artistic creation based on feminist viewpoints that have been developed in an audiovisual format since the nineteen sixties. The project's goal is to reveal, question and refute the sexist mechanisms and undercurrent present in mainstream artistic iconography concerning women and femininity.

The various stages that the feminist movement in the West has undergone since its enlightened origin in the eighteenth century up until today were used as a starting point for designing the PASSWORDS project. The feminist struggles that had been expressed in different historical periods by demands for political and civil rights (the rights to education, to vote, to paid employment, to reproduction, etc.) crystallised at the end of the nineteen sixties in demands for social justice for women that, for the first time, began to be expressed in art, producing a group of works that now belongs to what a growing number of experts term "feminist art". The "sexuated body", understood by these artists as a cultural artefact loaded with social significance, is very present in this group of works.

Feminist art to date has become increasingly focused on the body as a metaphor for the pending political and social agenda. Visual works belonging to "feminist art" reveal that sex, gender, sexuality or race are not "natural" products but social constructs that support – and are nourished by – hegemonic sexual and racial ideologies. Artists who feel challenged by feminist struggles denounce in their works the asymmetrical relationships between the sexes and emphasise the fact that femininity (and masculinity) are cultural artefacts that should be analysed because they transmit and maintain stereotypes about sex, gender,

sexuality and race. These stereotypes help perpetuate the oppression of women and other historical groups looked down upon due to their sex, “race” or sexual practices.

The sum of the works and artists who have followed this path since the sixties and have been self-defined as “feminist art” is now considered the twentieth century avant-garde movement that has most deeply revolutionised art as an institution (or what we usually refer to as Art with a capital A). This is because they question both hegemonic socio-sexual codes and those pertaining to Art as an institution from their own perspective, bringing the problem of representation to the fore. This means asking themselves who represents whom, from what standpoint and how, without overlooking the various systems of visual representation (art, cinema, advertising) that continue to build and convey the sex, gender, “race” and sexuality stereotypes that contribute to maintaining inequality.

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Cycle 3. The Problematisation of Femininity : feminist art practice and new body representations

Curated by ERREAKZIOA-REACCIÓN

The proposed selection of video works was made with the intention of provoking interest in the biological or essential idea of the term “woman” and the combination woman / femininity.

Simone de Beauvoir said, “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman.” Likewise we could add, “One is not born, but rather becomes a man.” Teresa de Lauretis used the expression “gender technologies” to define the group of institutions and techniques, ranging from cinema and the art world to law, and including public bathrooms, that divulge the “truth” about masculinity and femininity.

The Feminist Art Movement arose in the United States during the nineteen sixties, and since then, the body has become a field of experimentation and knowledge used as the starting point for many women artists’ work. Within this process, a new idea of the body facilitates further identifications that contribute to creating the imaginaries empowering these artists.

The impetus for its creation has largely been feminism. Nonetheless, Laura Cottingham has pointed out that feminism’s nature as a central driving force has often been denied or trivialised. As a consequence, she asserts that something similar happens with women’s art contributions, whether or not they are feminist and whether or not the work is directly related to feminist concerns. Cottingham calls for extreme caution upon classifying and studying feminist art. The Feminist Art Movement should be seen as just one more movement within the history of art, at the same level as other existing movements.

Not For Sale: Feminism and Art in the USA during the 1970s is a 1998 video essay by Laura Cottingham that reflects on such key issues in the art world and the development of a feminist art practice. Her recovery of documents from that period enables us to learn more about all the creative and political energy produced simultaneously by the Women’s Liberation Movement and the art movement in the United States during the sixties and seventies through interviews with artists, conferences, workshops, self-awareness sessions, sculpture, painting, performances, videos and films.

This practice of revising history from a feminist perspective should continue at the present time, since it is still necessary. Following this discourse, we could say that just as a series of common problems exists for many women, including women artists, their ways of doing

things, demands, struggles and responses are repeated often, although there are obviously imbalances caused by the specific historical and social reality of each country. Therefore, some works by women artists share formal similarities and creative methods that resemble those of their predecessors. On the one hand, these similarities can be attributed to a desire to establish genealogies and, on the other, to the result of work produced under similar circumstances and not so much to a previous direct knowledge of what earlier artists had already created.

Erreakzioa-Reaction offers a series of works in which the differences among women, recorded on their bodies by gender, age, social class, race or sexuality, invite us to reflect on their representation, as well as on invisibilisation processes and the meaning of the term 'citizenship', when difference turns into inequality and illegality as, for example, in the case of sex workers or undocumented immigrants.

The Sluts and Goddesses, by Annie Sprinkle and Maria Beatty, and *The 60s*, by Yolanda de los Bueis, develop issues concerning post-pornography. Post-pornography, which is neither anti-pornographic nor abolitionist, reformulates policies on the dominant look and pornography. A series of projects submitted as performances, videos or texts will be the result of this critical view of pornography and the gender and sexual stereotypes it creates.

Manola coge el autobús (Manola Takes the Bus), by Gabriela and Sally Gutierrez Dewar, confronts us with women's old age. We see a representation of abject femininity, which cannot be assimilated by society, but is strengthened by its struggle for continuation. Terre Thaemlitz questions identity policies and the socio-economic conditions in which cultural production is created. In *25'05'' diarios* (25'05'' daily), Carme Nogueira offers a tour, camera in hand, through the inside of a house, showing us its spaces and objects and how they "appear" before our eyes. The title alludes to the time erased from the original recording. The body has been represented in the same way. Among these "found objects", the book *Bodies that Matter*, by Judith Butler, leads us to reflect on the artist's body, which "appears" to be absent and paradoxically empowered. In *Casting: James Dean (Rebelde sin causa)* (Casting: James Dean [Rebel without a cause]) by Cabello/Carceller, masculinity is also problematised. Adrian Piper said about her 1974 work, *The Mythic Being*, that the performance transforms the natural experience in some way. Masculinity and femininity antagonisms do not exist as such. The group Zer@ playfully questions a female representation provided by the mass media and the extent to which it adjusts or not to their own bodies.

One of the aims of a feminist art practice has been to set a vanishing line around essentialist approaches to sex and gender. Thus, the creation of new representation codes that denature

femininity and masculinity will provide us with identification spaces for a wider range of corporal possibilities.

Erreakzioa-Reaction

ERREAKZIOA – REACCIÓN

A group created in 1994 by Yolanda de los Bueis, Estibaliz Sadaba, and Azucena Vieites as a space for reflection on art and feminism, based on various projects such as publications, lectures, exhibitions, videos, workshops and seminars. Outstanding among these projects is the creation of ten fanzines (1994-2000); the coordination for Arteleku of the workshop-seminar *Sólo para tus ojos: el factor feminista en relación a las artes visuales* (For Your Eyes Only: the feminist factor in relation to visual arts) in 1997; the seminars *La repolitización del espacio sexual en las prácticas artísticas contemporáneas* (Repolitisation of Sexual Space in Contemporary Art Practices) in 2004, directed in collaboration with Maria Jose Belbel and *Mutaciones del feminismo: genealogías y prácticas artísticas* (Mutations of Feminism: genealogies and art practices) in 2005, directed in collaboration with Maria Jose Belbel and Beatriz Preciado. In 2007, the group took part in the *Periferiak* (Peripheries) project, which dealt with publishing and the art practice and created the video *La lucha por la liberación del cuerpo de las mujeres* (The Fight for Liberation of the Female Body) for the *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, 45 años de arte y feminismo* (45 years of art and feminism) exhibition at the Bilbao Museum of Fine Art.

Laura Cottingham

Lives and works in New York.



“Not for Sale. Feminism and the Art in the USA during the 1970s”, 1998.

Video, 90’

Courtesy of the artist and ARTELEKU, San Sebastian.

