

***Women Artists and
Museums: Towards
a New Museum of
Women Artists
in Zagreb***



DANICA (DUNA)
PEKLIĆ-PEYER,
AMAZON IN
FRONT OF THE
CITY II

**International Meeting
Zagreb City Museum**

26 March 2024

9:00 – 16:00 CET

Women Artists and Museums: Towards a New Museum of Women Artists in Zagreb

Throughout their fifty-year history, women's and gender museums have significantly enriched the museum world by continually pushing the boundaries of what museums can or should be. Notwithstanding the great diversity of their concepts and contexts, women's and gender museums share a mission to restore women's heritage and to combat gender-based discrimination in traditional museums and, more broadly, in contemporary society. A specific and important subset, museums devoted to art by women, born out of the need to make women's artistic expressions visible, started opening in the 1980s and continue to be established today.

Through invited lectures and selected case studies, we aim to gain insight into the strategies and practices that have shaped them over time, as well as scenarios for their future development. We are particularly interested in exploring how different institutions balance their collection and exhibition strategies to become agents of social change as well as interrelationships and possible connections between women's and gender museums and museums of women artists in this specific regard.

Organised as part of the Zagreb City Museum's project Towards a New Museum of Women Artists in Zagreb, the meeting brings together practitioners and researchers from different disciplinary and theoretical backgrounds whose interests relate to women's and gender museums and women artists.

The aim of the meeting is to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the place of museums dedicated to the art of women artists in the landscape of art museums in general and of women's and gender museums in particular, as well as to promote cooperation and future exchanges between different institutions, practitioners, and researchers.

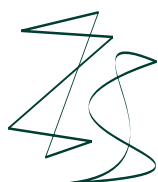
The meeting sessions are planned to last for one day; they will be open to the public and followed by a moderated discussion.

Programme Committee

Aleksandra Berberih Slana
Tihana Puc

Organising Committee

Tihana Puc
Lora Rajčić
Suzana Pandek



Zbirka ^{HR}
slikarica
z. u 19. st.



Programme

9:00 – 9:15	Welcome	
9:15 – 9:30	Introductory remarks Aleksandra Berberih Slana, director Tihana Puc, curator	
9:30 – 11:10	Chair: Tihana Bertek Elke Krasny, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria	Patriarchal Epistemic Violence and Museum Activism: Reclaiming the Public Sphere
	Meral Akkent, Istanbul Gender Museum, Turkey	A brief history of women’s museums
11:10 – 11:30	Break	
11:30 – 13:10	Chair: Leila Topić Gaby Franger, Museum Women’s Cultures Regional – International, Fürth, Germany	IAWM - Focused and Diverse. Platform and Think Tank for Gender Equity
	Darlene Clover, Faculty of Education, Leadership Studies (Adult Education), University of Victoria, Canada	Imagining the feminist imaginary: Feminist strategies of critique and possibility in the museum
13:10 – 14:10	Lunch break	
14:10 – 15:50	Chair: Vesna Vuković Bettina Bab, Bonn Women’s Museum, Germany	A Museum of One’s Own
	Harriet Loffler, The Women’s Art Collection at Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom	Negotiating spaces for women artists and collecting in the 21st century
15:50 – 16:00	Break	
16:00	Guided tour of the museum “Who is missing?”	

Abstracts

Elke Krasny
*Academy of
Fine Arts
Vienna,
Austria*

Patriarchal Epistemic Violence and Museum Activism: Reclaiming the Public Sphere

Why is the institution of the museum still a site of resistance, activism, and counteraction? Why does the museum remain a site where the display of the legacies of this modern Enlightenment institution demonstrates the far-reaching dimensions of patriarchal epistemic violence? Museums have historically constituted the modern gender system and contributed to the cultural understanding of what decolonial scholar Maria Lugones calls the coloniality of gender. Even though we now have the knowledge and the insights gained through decades of feminist, queer-feminist and transfeminist activism and struggle, the museum still remains an institution where the ordering and structuring of hegemonic definitions and understandings of gender determine hiring policies, collecting strategies, organizing principles of display and strategies of outreach, education, and mediation. The lecture looks at historical examples of suffragist attacks on museum objects that linked the struggle for women's suffrage and women's rights to the public sphere of the museum. Bringing such historical examples into conversation with today's global activism against violence and femicide as well as transnational movements for reproductive justice and environmental rights, the lecture asks how unlearning and undoing museum patriarchy can transform the museum into a valuable platform for feminist activist struggles and movements for social and environmental justice.

Meral Akkent
*Istanbul
Gender
Museum,
Turkey*

A brief history of women's museums

The presentation summarises the short but productive history of women's museums in order to provide a more general framework. Such a general framework is necessary, if not mandatory, for us to understand the dynamics that have nourished and have also been mobilised by women's museums so that they have come to occupy a prominent place in the field of culture and museology only 40 years after the term "women's museum" was coined.

Gaby Franger
Museum
Women's
Cultures
Regional –
International,
Fürth,
Germany

IAWM - Focused and Diverse. Platform and Think Tank for Gender Equity

Looking at our network of women's and gender museums, founded in 2012, we find very different histories of origin, conceptual approaches, challenges, and obstacles. What unites us is the claim to make women from all social situations and historical epochs visible, to give them a voice and to intervene in current discourses on patriarchal, hegemonic social currents in the world, gender justice and human rights issues of gender-based discrimination and persecution. Another level of discussion is whether something as banal as women's everyday life associated more with brooms and dustpans than with strategies of "survival art", is at all aesthetically and discursively suitable for museums. And what is art anyway? The separation of "elite art" and "folk art", especially in European museums, can also be seen as a powerful instrument for undervaluing women's art, which often has its origins in so-called traditional female activities or is created by rural indigenous women and is therefore not defined as contemporary art, which is connotated as urban, academic and predominantly male. Current approaches and discourses will be discussed through examples of new developments and challenges for our members.

**Darlene
Clover**
Faculty of
Education,
Leadership
Studies (Adult
Education)
University
of Victoria,
Canada

Imagining the feminist imaginary: Feminist strategies of critique and possibility in the museum

Worldwide feminists working in and with museums are (re)educating the public by (re)storying histories, deeds, perspectives and experiences long denied a public audience and intellectual credibility. Drawing on examples I will position this work as imagining a new feminist imaginary which includes both the language of critique and the language of possibility. Languages of critique uncover and render visible practices of gender inequity such as epistemic injustice, which has excluded women and the gender diverse as knowers and producers of knowledge and limited their ability to make sense of their own experiences despite it being strongly in their interests to render intelligible. Languages of possibility create a sense of agency and make a different world thinkable and actionable by making it imaginable. Feminist strategies of animation, herstorying, reframing, recentring, rescripting, gender bending and revisualising not only shatter entrenched masculine narratives but shift women and the gender diverse from the margins to the centre, transforming their experiences of oppression into critical insights and actions.

Bettina Bab
*Bonn Women's
Museum,
Germany*

A Museum of One's Own

The Frauenmuseum Bonn was founded in 1981 as a space for women's exhibitions but also to revolutionise the traditional concept of art. At the time, young female artists were trying to conquer new art genres such as video art, installations, and performances in order to gain recognition in the art world. The museum shows what is missing in conventional museums: the female gaze. It presents the art and history of women in order to make them an integral part of society. Throughout its history, the Women's Museum has developed the concept of integrating art into history, thus combining the sober world of facts with the more emotional messages of artworks. It has become a tradition for women artists to focus on an aspect of history in exhibitions and create a work of art to accompany it. An important aim is to publicise unknown female role models. Through exhibitions, catalogues, and events, we promote the rights of women and minorities, highlight discrimination and thus contribute to a more gender-equitable society.

**Harriet
Loffler**
*The Women's
Art Collection
at Murray
Edwards
College,
University of
Cambridge,
United
Kingdom*

*Negotiating spaces for women
artists and collecting in the 21st
century*

This lecture will focus on The Women's Art Collection as a case study for the development, curation and interpretation of the work of women artists. The Women's Art Collection is Europe's largest collection of art by women and is displayed throughout Murray Edwards College, an iconic Brutalist building designed by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon in 1964 as a manifesto for women's education. It remains one of two College's for women at the University of Cambridge. The Collection challenges the underrepresentation of women artists in museums and galleries. It is a celebration of women's agency and creativity, an art historical record and a living, evolving body of art. At the heart of its founding mission is the principle of collaboration and community in which women take centre stage as administrators, artists, collectors, curators and patrons. This lecture will explore the complexities of curating in a non-gallery context and will focus on the issues of presenting women artists. It will also tackle the imperatives for the development of the collection considering differing notions of feminism, gender politics and the impact of market forces.