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esad-gv.fr •Valence

D^{te} Du 27 au 30 avril 2015 •

Obj. Intervention d'Alex Martinis Roe

Réf. Workshop *Genealogies and generations. Affirmations of difference in artistic and political practice*

Enseignants : Simone Frangi et Katia Schneller.

Étudiants concernés : workshop ouvert aux étudiants en 3^e et 5^e année à l'ÉSAD

•Grenoble et à la Session 24 de l'École du MAGASIN.

In this workshop, participants will develop new propositions for political art practice. The group will undertake relational experiments based on a number of historic feminist practices. This will be a kind of embodied research, where the group will explore these situational formats by partially re-enacting them. For example, the group will revisit the "practice of relations" developed by the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, where relationships become a site for rigorous political work. There will also be experimentation with the practice of criticizing interpretations of each other's speech from the Parisian group *Pschanalyse et Politique*; the "double track" approach to institutional politics as practiced by those in Women's Studies at Utrecht University in the Netherlands; and the practice of "dissolving the image" from women involved in the Sydney Filmmakers Co-operative.

These experiments will then inform projects which adapt, extend and depart from these existing formats. These adaptations, extensions and departures will be informed by reading and discussion of ideas from a particular strand of contemporary feminist theory. This strand engages with both the arts and sciences in order to interrogate the political implications of the nature/culture binary. In particular, the workshop will involve reflection on their new approaches to time and biology, and the implications of these ideas for feminist politics.

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This workshop will be a time and place for those who participate to develop a consciousness and working relationship with a political genealogy – the migration of a particular current of French feminism in the 70s to join with other feminist currents in various other times and places where a particular branch of contemporary “feminist new materialist” theory has developed. Exploring the generative connections between these different generations is a way to find solutions to the increasing fragmentation of feminisms, which threatens to fossilize the legacy of the women’s movement. In particular, feminist theory and art practice has been distanced by a pervasive “post-feminist” rhetoric since the 1990s. The workshop will be a space within which to find ways of affirming the feminist past as an active force, and at the same time accommodate the differences that have caused these rifts and disconnections between feminist groups and generations.

The new engagements with these histories in the workshop will redirect these existing political languages. This process of re-enacting and re-working will also be examined as a form of artistic practice, which can itself be historically contextualized using Craig Owen’s writing on appropriation art. Appropriation will be explored as a potentially affirmative artistic strategy that reshapes history and in so doing performatively activates new futures.

About Alex Martinis Roe

Alex is a current fellow of the Graduiertenschule für die Künste, Universität der Künste, Berlin. She holds a PhD in Fine Art from Monash University Australia in which she developed feminist artistic methodologies that attempt to contribute to a collective politics of difference. Her current work focuses on the genealogical relationship between the practice of feminist new materialism and sexual difference feminisms, seeking to foster specific and productive relations between different generations. This involves developing research and storytelling methodologies, which employ non-linear understandings of time, respond to the specific practices of different communities, experiment with the dispositives of discursive encounter, and imagine how these entanglements can inform new political practices.

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Recent exhibitions/events include : *Their desire rang through the halls and into the tower*, commissioned by Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht and part of If I Can't Dance's *Performance Days* (solo, 2014) ; *Once I wrote the story of her life, because by then I knew it by heart*, Rongwong, Amsterdam (solo, 2014) ; *Manifestos Show: Act I, Inessential fathers*, Archive Kabinett and Berlin Art Week (2014) ; *Affirmative Practices*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (solo, 2014) ; *Making Room : Spaces of Anticipation*, ar/ge Kunst Galerie Museum, Bolzano (2014) ; *A story from Circolo della rosa*, Archive Kabinett, Berlin (solo, 2014) ; *NEW13*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (2013) ; *Collective Biographies*, Bibliothekswohnung, Berlin (solo, 2012) ; *Post-planning*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne (2012) ; *non-writing histories*, Artspace, Sydney (solo, 2012) ; *Genealogies ; Frameworks for Exchange*, Pallas Projects, Dublin (solo, 2011) ; *HaVE A LoOk ! Have a Look !* FormContent, London (2010).

About *To Become Two*

To Become Two is an aesthetic and political storytelling project, mapping the relations between and within a number of feminist collectives and currents who produce and distribute feminist ideas in Europe and Australia, and who share a common genealogy to the thought-practice of "sexual difference" in France and Italy in the early to mid 1970s.

Exploring the entanglements between the work of these different generations is urgent as there is a real danger that feminist histories will become disconnected from future gender-political work due to generational rifts. Some important work being done in "feminist new materialist" philosophy forms an important bridge between the estranged "2nd and 3rd feminist waves", but this bridge is currently too abstract and cloistered within academia to be of use to feminist activists in other social spheres. *To Become Two* explores the untold social history of this otherwise abstract bridge, and through an artistic process, attempts to draw it into other forms of political practice. The importance of describing this genealogy is to make it visible as a kind of trans-generational solidarity – a continuation of the women's liberation movement.

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This genealogy is narrated as a social history, focusing on specific, lived relations and collaborations as a way to explore the migration of these political theories and practices. Each of the videos in the series explores the organisation and practices of a particular group and its connections to those in the other videos. Martinis Roe is working directly with these groups and a younger generation of feminists around them to performatively bring about new collective practices through the act of storytelling using various methods, including oral history interviewing, archival research and collaborative social practices.

Video download

<https://vimeo.com/120999841>

password: alex

Excerpts from two videos from the series *To Become Two*

It was an unusual way of doing politics: there were friendships, loves, gossip, tears, flowers... (2014)

An exchange of letters. Two mother tongues. Two ways to tell a story. What happened at the week-long meetings in 1972 of Psychoanalyse et Politique (which formed in 1968 in Paris) and some of the women who went on to found Libreria delle donne [Milan Women's Bookstore Collective] ? These encounters gave rise to a series of practices that continue to distinguish the Italian and French movements. Tracing the diffracted ripples of these meetings into the past and future, this two-channel video installation brings moving images and voices together to explore a genealogy of political practices that build a culture of gathering.

I worked with a group of young people from Nantes, France, who are all involved in feminist and queer projects and arranged for us to meet at a summer camp in La Tranche sur Mer, where these meetings in 1972 took place. None of them knew of this local history, and so the day was one of discussion of this history, which I had learned

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about through interviewing people from these historic movements. The group re-enacted activities that took place in *Psychanalyse et Politique* meetings and in so doing they embodied the history of this place, which became a way for this new group to come together.

A story from Circolo della rosa (2014)

The video is narrated by my voice and is addressed to a close colleague in the form of a letter, telling a story about two women. The video weaves together fragments from my recent oral history research with members of the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective and my experiences of their collective activities and exploration of related spaces, archives and texts.

The video traces the story of two experimental historians who began working together on feminist pedagogical experiments in the late 1980s and explores the nature of their relationship, which can be described as one of *affidamento* (entrustment).

Affidamento is a social-symbolic practice exercised and theorized by the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective and is a reciprocal relationship of entrustment between two adult women. By referring to one another, each gives the other authority in her spheres of political practice by acknowledging her desires, competences and differences. This practice of acknowledgement involves a commitment to one another; a commitment to each other's uniqueness and difference. Working with the differences between women affirms the difference, the singularity, of each member of the collective, which becomes its actual mode of organisation. I explore the lived history of this practice as a way to narrate my own political relationships, and as a way to imagine feminist futures located in networks and affiliations across different times and places.

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