

Helena Bonett

Modelling a Method: Contesting Patrimonial Legacy Structures in the Art Museum

My research focuses on the legacy of the sculptor Barbara Hepworth, using the construction of her legacy through her estate and the national art museum Tate to demonstrate how understandings of artistic legacy are rooted in questions of ownership over knowledge that have embedded within them patrimonial lines of descent. In this paper, I will outline my PhD methodology which unpicks the seemingly natural and given structures that privilege patrimonial knowledge systems in the art museum, and which offers a model for alternative understandings of an artist's legacy that does not necessitate its conformity to the legitimised patrimonial narrative of male, white, heterosexual and able-bodied potency.

Focusing on an object of Hepworth's bequeathed legacy, my research highlights how and in what ways an artist's legacy contains both the dominant narrative and the potential for this narrative's contestation. The methodology brings into the foreground this marginalised material legacy, revealing how it queers and contests the master narrative, what it offers for understanding legacy (and artistic genealogy) differently, revealing legacy to be a hybrid, discursive, processual *practice* made and remade in the relational encounter between people and things. It does so through a synthesis of methods from artistic and philosophical practices that brings questions of the curatorial to bear.

Biography

Helena Bonett is a curator, writer and lecturer in the final stages of completing her collaborative doctorate with Tate and the Royal College of Art on the modernist sculptor Barbara Hepworth.

Making Women's Art Matter: New approaches to the careers and legacies of women artists

Time Passes: Performing Virginia Woolf's Landscapes

For the Making Women's Art Matter conference I propose to introduce Time Passes; a performance project that employs feminist strategies for subjectively engaging with the philosophical landscapes of Virginia Woolf's novels. The development of Time Passes will begin in January 2017; at this conference I will present a selection of performative writings and critical reflections, which have emerged from my research on the project to date.

Time Passes will use the process of making a large-scale performance installation to explore the phenomenological landscapes of Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*. In the making of Time Passes I will appropriate, write into, and perform with Woolf's work and in doing so critically engage with her legacy as a female artist. I understand this process as a feminist strategy for inhabiting Woolf's textual landscapes, which I read as inherently phenomenological in character. My performance making strategies are underpinned by an understanding that phenomenological thought and phenomenologically motivated activity entails an intimate attention to sensuous worlds. My approach to making Time Passes is shaped by the ontologies that Woolf demonstrates in her own work. Through my feminist performance practice I engage with Virginia Woolf as a mentor, muse, ally and an enabling space for the development of my own philosophical thought. Time Passes builds upon previous work, in which I have engaged with the poetry of Stevie Smith and the texts of Susan Sontag.

In reading Woolf I also look to Friedrich Nietzsche's narrative landscapes and Martin Heidegger's poetic writing on 'things'. With a focus on her landscapes, I will argue that Woolf's writings constitute a significant contribution to phenomenological thought; Her contribution sits outside of the philosophical cannon due to its being subject to patriarchal, disciplinary demarcations, which dictate not only how philosophy is written but also who writes philosophy. To date female contributions to phenomenological thinking and to philosophy in general have remained unexamined or primarily understood in relation to gender. In my presentation I will draw on François Laruelle's 'non-philosophy' as a framework for understanding how artworks and art practices manifest philosophical thinking. In doing so, I will suggest that an anti-disciplinary approach to the work of female artists can support a process of recuperating the philosophical bearing of their work. Time Passes as a project, as well as my contribution to this conference, will address Woolf as a significant phenomenological thinker who has been misconceived due to her status as a female and as an artist. My work will do this through performative, feminist strategies for inhabiting the worlds she created.

Tess Denman-Cleaver is an artist and researcher based in Newcastle upon Tyne. She is artistic director of performance company Tender Buttons and programmer at The Northern Charter. She is currently completing a PhD on performance, philosophy and landscape at Newcastle University.

**Abstract: Matters of Text: The Use of Language as Material by Feminist Artists in 1970s
Critiques of Conceptualism
By: Kim Dhillon
Institution: Royal College of Art**

US and UK group exhibitions surveying text as material in contemporary art since 2009 have attempted to address the ways contemporary artists are using text as a material, a subject, and a conceptual device in recent years since 2009. Within their curatorial strategies, and independently from one another, these exhibitions have drawn a binary for the genealogy of text in art practice as emerging from either the international avant-garde movement of concrete poetry of the mid-1950s to 1971 or from conceptual art of the mid-1960s-early 1970s. They have subsequently overlooked the importance of materiality of text to feminist artists in the US and the UK, in the mid-1970s through the early 1980s, who introduced subject matter which looked outward from art, and made a material consideration which included text in their critique of conceptualism. For these artists, language was not presumed natural, and the materiality of text was essential in order to engage an art audience in questions of power, representation, and gender. The impact of these artists' work, its position outside of the discourse of conceptualism in the 1970s, and outside of the discourse of text in art today, is the subject of this paper. (196).

Emma Fitts

Talking through textiles / New structures of support

From Anni Albers light reflecting and sound absorbing walls to Beatrice Tinsley's cosmological discoveries on how we measure galactic distance and time, this talk will look at the need for new structures of support to aid the visibility of women's art practice. Using the subjective and empathetic research strategy of *feeling* in her recent work, Fitts will address the medium of textiles to establish a new support structure that weaves together women artists and their legacies within contemporary practice.

Recently on residency at the Icelandic Textile Center, Fitts drew upon the educational setting of the residency (a former women's college from 1879 to 1978) and used the lunar like landscape (practice moon landings were staged in Iceland in 1965 & '67) to think through some of Tinsley's research in a very material and felt way. The resulting work quite literally forms a new fabric that felts together the support of other women that Fitts' research uncovers, who like Tinsley have also gone largely unrecognised. Through using *feeling* as a research strategy, a new space is created that offers the multiplicity needed to support women's art practice.

Eliza Gluckman

New Hall Art Collection: Feminist strategies v. Collection building

This paper will look at that moment in the early 1990s and the current attention on women artists' representation in institutions. The collection as a reflection of the neglect women artists have faced in representation, and as a collection based on gifts throws a light on the hierarchy of collections. It will question how feminist strategies might challenge the notion of Curator as gatekeeper, and the corrosive system of professionalism at a point when the collection moves to a place of formal accreditation.

The New Hall Art Collection is the largest collection of art by women in Europe and housed in a college for women at the University of Cambridge. The work that was the catalyst for the collection, by American conceptual and feminist artist, Mary Kelly, led to a moment of 'collective giving' in the early 1990s that can only reflect a deep frustration and a desire to create new platforms outside the mainstream. Ironically Kelly's own strategy in producing art was with market and museums at the core of her production.

Carol Jacobi

Missing links and legacy

This short paper offers a strategy to enhance the legacy of women artists by challenging gendered models of influence. Major artistic reputations have relied on distance from all but the most unimpeachable influences, and few, if any, survive an acknowledged debt to a woman colleague. Women artists are linked to family, lovers and teachers, but not co-workers, rivals or disciples. This erasure of connections leaves even well-known, illustrious and influential women's careers as apparently without lasting issue or impact, even self-indulgent, and easy to set aside. This incomplete map also leaves wider art histories half-finished. A dialogic method which re-writes canonical narratives as it writes women's narratives can provide more integrated, inclusive and permanent stories. It offers especially exciting possibilities for artists termed OWAs (Old Women Artists), currently to the fore in scholarship and displays. This paper takes as its case-study the changing historiography of one of these, Isabel Rawsthorne (1912-1992), from her fall from view in 1968 to her prospects in 2017.

Elke Krasny

Feminist Assembly: Live Art History

In 2013, artist Suzanne Lacy's participatory performance *Silver Action*, hosted by Tate Modern and later continued at the Southbank Centre, brought together hundreds of women aged over 60 to share their knowledge and their memories of past activism with each other in live and unscripted conversations. The public was invited to witness this large-scale feminist assembly that turned the cultural institutions into an Arendtian space of appearance.

Silver Action was made possible through a huge organisational effort bringing together Tate Modern, the Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project, the Gender Studies Institute of the London School of Economics and the Southbank Centre.

Artist Suzanne Lacy used one of her earlier works, the 1985-1987 Crystal Quilt, as a conceptual model for this 2013 project. *Silver Action* employed the strategy of a large-scale public feminist assembly to bridge commemoration, conversation-based oral history, and intergenerational knowledge exchange.

Krasny is interested in working out how art historical and curatorial methods can adopt such 'live methods' in order to connect transhistorically and intergenerationally with earlier feminist art and in order to establish models of inter-institutional alliances and collaborations.

Combining feminist art historical materialism and political thought, Krasny will seek to explore how the specific artistic strategy employed by Suzanny Lacy could be put to use for new methods of live art history.

Nicola McCartney

The Guerrilla Girls: A case-study in how anonymity and collectivism, as a methodology, might promote women artists' visibility

The Guerrilla Girls are an all female, anonymous, collective who employ individual pseudonyms, which are the names of deceased female artists. Anonymity, collective practice and the pseudonym all serve as political tools to challenge traditionally inherent concepts pertaining to authorship: gendered notions of genius, singular attribution, biographical narratives of melancholy or madness and the scarcity model, all of which are perpetuated by the art market in order to strengthen the (male dominated) canon.

The Guerrilla Girls continue to 'gig' and lecture, promoting women's art, have released several publications and exhibit internationally. However, their methodologies are often critiqued, and even by members of their own group. This paper explores the following questions with reference to particular works by the collective: What does it mean to decontextualise a deceased female artist's name and use the epithet 'girls' which previous feminists fought against being called? How does anonymity strengthen the group's message or does it imply a form of cowardice? Does writing a parallel history of female artists raise awareness or fortify the star-system of the male canon? How does anonymity defy a biographical reading, inherently related to gendered notions of genius?

Biog: Nicola McCartney is currently an Associate Research Fellow in the Department of History of Art, Birkbeck, University of London, and an Associate Lecturer in Culture Studies, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts.. She is currently writing Death of the Artist (IB Tauris, forthcoming).

Sarah Milroy

Cracking the Mould: Vanessa Bell at Dulwich Picture Gallery

For women modernist artists from Frida Kahlo to Georgia O'Keeffe, the terms of fame are often compromising, with undue emphasis being placed on personal narratives regarding love, marriage, family, and the oft-recurring tales of influences imbibed (rather than generated), sacrifices made and solitudes endured. In 2014, Ian Dejardin and I co-curated the exhibition *From the Forest to the Sea: Emily Carr in British Columbia* (Dulwich Picture Gallery and Art Gallery of Ontario), in which we challenged the received stereotype of this much beloved Canadian artist as an eccentric, reclusive, pet-loving adventuress, instead positioning her as a diligent, intellectually courageous, principled and progressive citizen of her historical moment, possessed both of a sophisticated art training (in Paris and London) and a pioneering understanding of the chauvinism of her own British colonial culture vis-a-vis Canada's indigenous peoples. Strategies for exhibition display and catalogue design and content enabled us to provide audiences in Canada, and abroad, with a clearer and less sentimental view of a figure whose artistic legacy has been much obscured by affectionate nostalgia and the cherished lore of her life.

In treating the art and career of British modernist Vanessa Bell for our forthcoming exhibit at the Dulwich Picture Gallery (like Carr, Bell was at her artistic peak in the first decades of the 20th century), we are attempting a commensurate reframing of a pioneering artist who has been better known to the general public for her romantic entanglements, freewheeling lifestyle, legendary hospitality and striking good looks than for her bold accomplishments as a visual artist and designer. How to present this artist in the round, acknowledging the contiguities that existed between her domestic experience/values and her art making while defending a clearer perception of her most radical contributions to the history of both figurative and abstract painting, and design? As Christopher Reed has argued in his landmark study *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture and Domesticity* (Yale, 2004), Bell and her colleagues challenged the rubric by which *avant garde* practice was to be judged, refusing the masculinist values of many of her contemporaries, and insisting on the domestic as a suitable realm for modernist invention.

Sarah Milroy is a leading critic and writer on Canadian art, and has been a contributor to many scholarly museum catalogues, including publications on the art of Jack Chambers, Ed Burtynsky, Gathie Falk, Mary Pratt, Emily Carr, Greg Curnoe and Fred Herzog. From 2001 to 2010, Milroy was the chief art critic of *The Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper. Milroy was editor and publisher of *Canadian Art* magazine, from 1991 to 1996, and co-founder of the Canadian Art Foundation in 1991. Currently, she is a trustee of the Canadian Art Foundation and the Arts Canada Institute, and a member of the Canada Committee of Human Rights Watch. In 2014, she co-curated *From the Forest to the Sea: Emily Carr in British Columbia* for the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, and is the co-curator of the forthcoming exhibition *Vanessa Bell* (Dulwich Picture Gallery Feb 6 to June 4), and *Aftermath: War and Peace in the Art of David Milne* (Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2018). She lives in Toronto.

Mora J. Beauchamp-Byrd

Lubaina Himid's *Fashionable Marriage* of 1986, William Hogarth and the Uses of the Canon: A Case Study

Lubaina Himid is perhaps best known for satirical, large-scale paintings and installations that reflect a heightened theatricality shaped by the artist's studies in Theatre Design at the Wimbledon School of Art in London. These works, stylistically influenced by the work of David Hockney and others, often positioned women of African descent in starring roles within seminal art historical narratives. Himid has also gained increasing attention for strategically organizing exhibitions, developing publications and other curatorial and administrative efforts that ensured the visibility of women artists of African and Asian descent during the 1980s Black Arts Movement in Britain. Such efforts included her curatorial development of the groundbreaking *Thin Black Line* exhibition at The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London, the first mainstream presentation of the work of women artists of African, Asian and Caribbean descent in Britain.

Himid's frequent engagement with canonical works of art may be exemplified by *A Fashionable Marriage* (1986), a large-scale installation that drew from William Hogarth's narrative, satirical series called *Marriage-a-la-Mode* of 1743-5. My 2011 dissertation, entitled *Hogarth's Progress: "Modern Moral Subjects" in the Work of David Hockney, Lubaina Himid and Paula Rego*, discussed how contemporary artists, in critical postmodernist fashion, employed Hogarth as a kind of "ally in subversion" while simultaneously making use of Hogarth's stature within British art historical canons. As outlined in my dissertation, Himid re-worked Scene Four of Hogarth's *Marriage-a-la-Mode* (1743-45), producing a humorous yet biting satirical work that critiqued exclusionary, racist and sexist practices of the 1980s London art world. In addition, the installation

pointedly outlined social, cultural and economic parallels in both Hogarth and Himid's time. For example, Himid supplanted Hogarth's adulterous 18th-century countess and her lover, the lawyer Silvertongue, with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, critiquing Thatcher's focus on privatization at the expense of social programs in Britain during her tenure as PM.

This lecture examines Himid's uses of the canon (as critique, as homage, etc.), and proposes this enquiry as a case study that offers several key strategies for highlighting the work of women artists, particularly in terms of British art historical scholarship and studies of global, late twentieth-century, feminist-fueled art-making practices. In so doing, I will briefly explore the following question: How might we, and should we, define an expanded canon of British art that examines the role of British women artists (and art-based activism) with greater depth and intellectual rigor, and that accounts for complex issues involving race, class, gender and sexuality, for example?

Gill Park

The 'Feministing' Of Photography In The Work Of Jo Spence

'Then there is the other word 'feminist' that gets tacked on, i.e. feminism as a style of photography, and one could spend the next hundred years trying to explain that it isn't a style but to do with a body of ideas.' Jo Spence, 1985.

In the 1970s and 80s, educator/ photographer/ artist Jo Spence made a series of photographic works that together can be read as offering a gendered critique of capitalism. In her work Spence was not addressing photography as a fine art form, but rather was taking up photography as a tool of inquiry, radically intervening in, and unfixing, the photographic image. The project of artists, such as Spence, who identified a 'feminist' but not 'feminist artists', is undermined when 'feminism' is described as a style of art. Instead, I propose that Spence should be read as an example of the 'feministing' of photography in which she was exploring the potential of the camera to investigate and analyse structures of power and to mobilise her own subjectivity. Having recently been acquired by a number of major institutions including Tate Britain, I argue that it is necessary to make visible the way in which Spence's project poses a challenge to the modernist divisions and classifications of art and art history.

Gill Park is Director of visual arts commissioning organization Pavilion, which was established in 1983 as the UK's first Women's Photography Centre. She is currently undertaking doctoral research at the University of Leeds into the organisation's founding moment and the convergence of feminism and photography in the 1980s.

Jeanine Richards & Fiona Fisher

Fiona Fisher is curator of the Dorich House Museum, a studio house built by artist Dora Gordine in 1936 next to Richmond Park.

Jeanine Richards is an artist and academic working in the Fine Art Dept. at Kingston University (Dorich House is owned by Kingston University). I am half of Cullinan Richards with the artist Charlotte Cullinan, working within a socially engaged practice founded on painting.

Dorich House Museum recently created a new fellowship in 2015 dedicated to womens' art practice - the first fellow is artist Hilary Lloyed.

[\(https://www.dorichhousemuseum.org.uk/research-archive/dorich-house-museum-fellowship/\)](https://www.dorichhousemuseum.org.uk/research-archive/dorich-house-museum-fellowship/)

We would be interested to present a short paper exploring this as a new model: how the legacy of Gordine and the studio house she created could be re-evaluated through the new fellowship, contemporary art practice and vice versa. We are currently developing a new 'publication in series' titled DORA, with the DHMuseum director David Falkner as a platform to promote and support this new relationship between the legacy of Gordine and contemporary womens' art practice and thinking. This publishing platform is based on the show of the same name - 'DORA' at the Stanley Picker Gallery in 2015 proposing mutually beneficial collaborations from both historical and contemporary positions in womens' artistic practices.

[\(http://www.stanleypickergallery.org/programme/dora/\)](http://www.stanleypickergallery.org/programme/dora/)

Cleo Roberts

The ties of wives: the problematics of British female artists working in India

The long British colonial period in India engendered a moment of new visual awareness and placed importance on art as a means of communication, and engagement with the continent. Analysis of this visual encounter has, however focused on male artists and their legacies, leaving female artists perceived as 'wives of' and hobbyists, if visible at all. This paper will present the work of sculptress Clara Quien working in Kashmir during the 1940s in order to discuss how we can challenge this paradigm, establish the political power of these female artists, and consider their familial relationships as an integrated and positive part of their practice.

Katie Schwab

Performance description:

This performative presentation will take the structural form of a textile sampler to explore ideas of dedication through a genealogy of female artists, writers and designers. Samplers are textile works that were historically passed through generations as a record of experiments in stitching and pattern making: their threads held shapes, colours and letters for future generations to copy, alter and rework. Taking the form of a live sampler, this presentation will explore how quotation, repetition and adaptation can be used to acknowledge creative influences, and to connect with female voices, both past and present.

Laura Smith

Thinking back through our mothers...

I am developing an exhibition centred on the practice of Virginia Woolf, exploring her relationship to feminism, and her considerations of biography and the canon as patriarchal.

Woolf argued that biography 'has been appropriated as a political tool by which to enforce patriarchy,' and advised women to redefine the terms by which they joined the 'procession of the intellectual class.' I will follow this impulse, breaking away from any emphasis on personal life, rehabilitation, or recuperation that is often accentuated in biographies of female writers/artists. Rather, fostering a study of female practice that simultaneously deconstructs patriarchal privilege and, in its place, looks to a matriarchal heritage in which we 'think back through our mothers'.

Woolf's endeavor was toward a multiplicity of narrators in place of one unified authorial voice. She understood this idea of 'collective experience' as feminine, and its opposite as masculine and egotistical. The exhibition, and this paper, will build on this thinking and strives to problematize, or pluralise, the art historical canon towards new models of understanding. In doing so it seeks to build vital and fluid historical legacies that re think and re-configure the work of women.

Laura Smith is a Curator based at Tate, where I am currently curating an exhibition based on the literary practice of Virginia Woolf to open in January 2018. My proposed paper for this conference draws a great deal on my research for the exhibition and I would be thrilled to have the opportunity to present my thoughts.

Catherine Spencer

Thinking through the Matter: Women Artists, Entropy and Reuse

This paper draws on current research into the artists Prunella Clough, Rita Donagh, Veronica Ryan and Sandra Blow to think more widely about how tracing strategies of reuse and the recycling of materials, imagery and techniques, in relation to practices of self-citation, might enable us as art historians to move beyond, or at least critically interrogate, the model by which cycles of discovery, followed by abeyance, then 're-discovery', get encoded into the lives and works of women artists (often effecting the structural elision of these two areas). I am interested in how attention to material processes, such as entropy and decay, but also salvage and reproduction, might complicate notions such as 'late' work, and the sociocultural assumptions and stereotypes built into the aging process, particularly in relation to gender. I speculate that this could enable us to use materialist feminist strategies to analyse artworks by women in the mid-late twentieth century who did not identify directly with feminism or the women's liberation movement, while acknowledging the tension of this paradox productively. In this respect, the paper will also make some provisional reflections on how concepts of abstraction might enable us to construct alternative frameworks for thinking through 'women's work'.

Amy Tobin

Record, Recover, Repeat: Feminist Approaches to the Histories of Women Artists

This presentation will consider feminist approaches to the histories of women artists working in the 1970s. While I have previously argued that women artists in this period – particularly those directly involved in the organised politics of the Women’s Liberation Movement – offered an unprecedented challenge to the form and content of creative practice by constructing an alternative art world, this paper will reflect on the unsecure legacies of these artists in the present moment. This is despite the imperative of many women artists to archive their work, as well as their interest in the history of women artists, canon formation and personal histories in their artistic practices. This paper will think through this contradiction, testing out the relationship between recovery and recuperation against the politics of exclusion. It will examine re-presentations of these radical histories by artists and art historians to ask: how might the researcher retain the power of women artists’ radical challenge to the art world and art history, while attempting to make that work visible, legible and durable in the future?