Otherwise
Imagining queer feminist art histories

Edited by Amelia Jones and Erin Silver

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Introduction: sexual differences and otherwise

Amelia Jones

Why choose as a title for this introduction a phrase referring to a key trope from 1980s feminist discourse (sexual difference) for a book that my co-editor, Erin Silver, and I hope resides several generations beyond such designations? Simply put, the book title – Otherwise – is an oblique reference to the ways in which queer theory and feminism are ‘otherwise’ to each other, as well as to art history, but also to the ways in which they both deal with the ‘otherwise’ of sexual and gender identifications in relation to (in this case) visual culture. The title of this introductory essay brings this open concept down to earth, more specifically signaling our commitment to honoring theories of past feminist art history and visual theory while opening the project to queer theory’s radical new ways of experiencing, thinking, and understanding the sexual subject in relation to visuality and visual culture: hence, ‘sexual differences and otherwise.’ Furthermore, the book’s subtitle, ‘imagining queer feminist art histories,’ we deliberately phrase as a leap of faith or of creative thought (even leaving the door open for some of our contributors to argue against aspects of what ‘queer feminism’ seems to imply).

This book was initially sparked by conversations I was having with my brilliant and provocative students at the University of Manchester (2003–09) and McGill University (2010–14) about the relationship between feminism and queer theory vis-à-vis the visual arts – at McGill, Erin Silver was a PhD student and Jackson Davidow (whose chapter is included in this volume) an undergraduate; both rightly interrogated the limits of my particular generationally defined view of queer theory and feminist art history. Erin has been one of my sharpest interlocutors on this topic, with an impressive breadth and depth of knowledge on feminist and queer art activisms since 1990 in both Canada and the USA. At one point, it made perfect sense for our conversations to coalesce into a project. We decided a book was the way to go, given the need to solidify provisionally a moment of intersection between the two key discourses. My Manchester University Press series (co-edited with feminist art historian Marsha Meskimmon) ‘Rethinking Art’s Histories’ seemed the perfect site for this project given the goal that Marsha and I have, supported well by
MUP editor Emma Brennan, to explore and promote intellectual projects that interrogate the writing of art history either through new modes of research, exposition, and theorizing, through introducing modes of art-making or aspects of visual culture not normally considered the province of art history, or both. It is in this context that Erin and I present this volume of essays that, collectively, provide a range of suggestions for a ‘rethinking’ of art’s histories.

Key to what Erin and I hope to do with this volume is to establish in a provisional way a range of essays and dialogues with contributions by scholars, artists, curators, and theorists from various generations and geographies exploring the ever-fluid and politically productive relationship between feminist and queer theory in relation to the visual arts. We were initially motivated by the lack of discursive space allotted for and the lack of coherent discourse cohering a queer feminist art history up until now. While examples of queer feminist practice exist (for example, we would argue, by contributors to this volume), we have wanted to ask: why has queer feminism not been established as a clear polemic or subdiscipline in art history and curating? This is a notable lack.

In the past decade in the Euro-American context (and in some cases beyond), the art world and art historians have shown renewed interest in feminist art, resulting in a number of international exhibitions, conferences, essays, and books on the topic. Since the early 1990s, queer feminist theory, particularly in the Anglophone contexts of the US, UK, and Canada, has played a major role in fields relating to the visual arts, such as film studies, cultural studies, and performance studies. And, for the past two decades, a growing number of art historians and curators, from Kobena Mercer to Jonathan D. Katz, have developed theories of gay male desire in relation to the visual arts and (in Katz’s case) have organized exhibitions redressing the erasure of art by gays and lesbians from standard narratives. As well, LGBTQI art and performance practices by artists from Harmony Hammond, Cheri Gaulke, and Terry Wolverton in the 1970s and 1980s to Cathy Opie, Sharon Hayes, Zoe Leonard, and (contributing to this volume) Del LaGrace Volcano, Tina Takemoto, Vaginal Davis, Kris Grey, Deirdre Logue and Allyson Mitchell, Emily Roysdon, A.L. Steiner, and Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz from the 1990s to the present have pioneered thoughtful ways to explore gender and sex relationships and identifications through a broadly and incisively articulated feminist politics. As well, maverick figures such as our contributors Wolverton and Catherine Lord have worked in various modes across art and academic institutions to articulate a queer feminist creative approach to making, curating, writing histories, and even to administering art programs.

Despite these developments – which have often been at the margins of ‘official’ art history practice – and despite the crucial contribution of considerations of ‘queer’ to feminism in other disciplines of the humanities (notably
philosophy, women’s studies, performance studies, film studies, cultural studies, media studies, communication studies, and literary studies), a visible and influential queer feminist art history remains elusive. The same could be said of a queer feminist curatorial practice, art criticism, and visual theory, although key figures such as Jennifer Doyle have crossed over into visual theory and art criticism from the domains of English and Comparative Literature, while scholars such as Judith ‘Jack’ Halberstam and José Esteban Muñoz have written highly influential queer feminist works coming from a performance or visual culture studies perspective. As well, queer feminist curators Pawel Leszkowitz, Juan Alicia Aliaga, and Xabier Arakistain (all contributors here) have made huge inroads in organizing effective queer feminist exhibitions in Continental Europe.

The question that lingers and that interests us is this: what might account for the strange occlusion of queer methods and ways of thinking in feminist art history, and of a direct acknowledgment of debts to feminist art histories and feminist visual theories in queer approaches to visual culture? Is there a conflict in play between the two discourses?

On the one hand, the institutional position of feminist art history, relatively secure in the UK and partly so in US and Canadian universities – a discourse (it must be stressed) that has been articulated since the 1970s largely from a middle-class, urban, white, and heteronormative point of view – has perhaps sidelined a consideration of the nuances and radical undecidability of LGBTQI methods and theories. This sidelining or even outright rejection of the tenets of queer theory by some feminist art historians – who focused in the 1970s through the 1990s largely on projects such as the recuperation of lost women artists into the canon and the articulation of a sophisticated visual theory to examine fetishizing, sexist images of women – raises the question of whether feminist visual theory and feminist art history might be incompatible with the processual and anti-essentializing thrust of queer theory.

On the other hand, queer theory and queer studies of visual culture have tended to ignore or bypass significant theoretical achievements and historical developments in feminist visual theory, feminist art, and feminist art history and to steer clear of the perceived essentializing thrust of these discourses, which, apparently of necessity given the coalitional drive of feminism, are based on identifying (whether women artists or women’s art). In turn this refusal raises its own set of questions: is queer theory itself myopic or even ‘masculinist’ in some of its forms, failing to acknowledge the significance of feminist politics and theory, and its emphasis on actual inequities and oppressions experienced by people identified as women in the world? (Let’s just say it: the art world and art history departments are populated by more women than men; however, most of the really powerful positions are ‘manned’ by people who at least seem to be men, some of them gay identified, a few of
them queer, although many of them apparently straight. This might cause some of the resistance to acknowledging feminism as a key politic, and as an absolutely central component of post-1960 art production and analysis – see my dialogue with Jonathan Katz in this volume for more on this knot of interests and disavowals.) Also at issue is the apparent hypocrisy of the way in which some queer discourses argue against essentialisms as they relate to coalitional identity politics while implicitly identifying latent or hidden sexual orientation or object choice as a basis of queer theory itself. Is queer theory in its cultural studies or visual culture studies forms adequate to addressing feminist concerns in relation to the visual arts and visual culture – in particular the need to redress the exclusion of women artists from art institutions and the marketplace (including exhibitions) and the importance of understanding how images of women function in relation to other forms of gender oppression?

Feminist art history was founded initially in the 1970s out of debates about whether there is a determinable feminine experience that is perhaps recognizable through artistic form, out of an idea of identity as a ‘positionality,’ and/or on the basis of rigorous psychoanalytic models of sexual difference, themselves linked to Marxist critical formulations of the relationship of art to culture and structures of commodification (these particular positions are extensively examined in the following chapter). Given this trajectory, the key question remains: can feminist histories and theories of art as they currently exist accommodate the basic premises of queer theory – its at least stated refusal to accept identity as a static or singular aspect of subjectivity, its insistence on ‘perverse’ desires as potential political forces, and its tendency to dwell on trauma as the source of queer identification? And further questions arise from this one. Is there something incompatible about queer, as it is currently being thought in relation to visuality, and feminist art and art historical models? Can a queer feminist art historical method help to reconcile this perceived incompatibility? Or will it simply provoke conflicts and further misunderstandings? (And a side question: could these misunderstandings, in turn, be productive if provoked?)

This book addresses these historiographic and political questions. Collectively all of the chapters examine in an array of ways the relationship between art history (broadly speaking, including art criticism, curating, and visual theory), feminism, and queer theory (including LGBTQI concerns and contributions) in order to help map these exclusions, to refute their connection, and/or to offer models or examples of a new queer feminist art historical, artistic, or curatorial approach in a North American context and beyond. Key goals of the book as a whole, which motivated our choice of contributors, have been to historicize the development of feminist art history, queer theory, and related interdisciplinary initiatives such as queer feminist discourses in film.
theory, media studies, and performance studies – starting from the question of why a queer feminist art history has been slow to cohere – and to provide possible models for how to move forward with a nuanced and open-ended, but politically and historically sharp, queer feminist art historical method. (It was a founding assumption of this project that a queer feminist art history would in fact be desirable in some form, even as an imaginary pressure placed on current practices; however, after commissioning and reading the essays following, which outline many of the tensions and conundra arising from such a conjunction, we no longer insist on this assumption.)

Chapter summaries

For such a pointedly political and polemical project it is best to let the contributors speak for themselves. That said, it will be useful to outline the contributions of the volume briefly here by way of identifying the authors and our logic in inviting them to join us in completing this project. Transparency carries more than simple use value, however; it is an essential aspect of what we collectively imagine to be a queer feminist polemic. At the same time, by ‘identifying’ authors we run the risk of all labeling practices: that of essentializing. Let my descriptions, then, be seen for what they are, self-conscious attempts at categorization while simultaneously exposing the assumptions behind our choices.

Following this prologue, the chapter by myself and Erin Silver, ‘Queer theory and feminist art history: an imperfect genealogy,’ takes the form of an extensive, more or less chronological outlining of the interrelated development of feminism and queer in relation to the visual arts. The genealogy, based on Foucault’s theory of retrieving aspects of the past through archival remnants rather than by attending to individual subjects as agents of historical change, is intentionally posed as ‘imperfect’ through this model. Remnants (from old programs in archives, to the shreds of memory evoked through interviews with artists and scholars from the past, to the stories already told in exhibitions, exhibition catalogues, and art history books – to our own memories) are in effect all we have, and none provide a complete picture of the past (least of all perhaps our memories, which are fragmented and colored by biases and subsequent experiences). Hence the story we tell of these developments must itself be provisional – this in itself is a queer feminist recognition, and we evoke Foucault (who came to queer activism late in his life) deliberately to call up the political implications of writing histories in this way (Alpesh Patel’s and Nizan Shaked’s contributions also pose a similar reworking of art historical method in relation to texts and archives).

After the introduction, the book unfolds through dialogues and essays, all of which emphasize the state of debate, historical issues, and questions of
practice in relation to queer feminist art. The essays unfold complex scholarly and theoretical arguments, while the dialogues tend to give voice to artists and curators as they interact with one another and with art historians. In relation to this observation, it is notable that both kinds of contributions, whether directly or not, tend to emphasize the richness of queer feminist art practice, in contrast to the lack of fully articulated queer feminist art history or theory, although some enact or examine the latter in various forms.

The book begins in earnest with the contribution of a scholar whose work has been central to a queer feminist visual theory and analysis, Jennifer Doyle, who offers here an essay, 'Between friends: on the making of Pop Out: Queer Warhol,' ruminating on her early development of queer feminism in relation to the visual arts: she co-organized the conference and book project Pop Out: Queer Warhol in the early 1990s while a student of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s with José Esteban Muñoz (a co-organizer of the conference and book) at Duke University. Doyle’s contribution, which is an homage to the work of Muñoz and to what she calls the ‘centrality of queer of color critique to queer feminist art history,’ could be thought of as the plush rabbit hole of the book, an entry point that loops us back through her and our own memories and desires to a key earlier moment in the articulation of queer feminist methods. As with all of her work, she enacts the method as she explores it, spinning it out here and there specifically in relation to the visual arts (allowing art to inspire her theory, rather than the other way around). Doyle’s chapter marks the crucial importance of the work of Sedgwick as well as Muñoz in inspiring the co-articulation of queer and feminist theory in relation to visual cultural studies.

If Doyle represents the cross-disciplinary approach to queer feminist visual analysis, Jonathan D. Katz, as mentioned above, has been a key figure in the very public claiming of a space for gay, lesbian, and queer art histories. In chapter 3, ‘Our maiden aunt, lesbianism, or the limits of queer,’ he engages in separate dialogues with Erin Silver and myself, making use of our different geographical and generational perspectives to address the tensions among ‘lesbianism’ and ‘queer’ and ‘feminist’ in curating exhibitions and writing art histories (where, he argues, against the grain of queer theory, one must make material choices among objects and to some degree instrumentalize gender and sex identifications to write accurate histories).

The fourth chapter, ‘Improper objects: performing queer/feminist art/history,’ is by Tirza True Latimer, a visual culture scholar and curator who has been a key figure in articulating quite directly a queer feminist curatorial practice. Drawing on queer feminist art works by Millie Wilson, Deborah Kass, Tammy Rae Carland, Emily Roysdon, Ulrike Müller, and Patricia Cronin, Latimer explores the historical tensions as well as the shared political and aesthetic commitments of queer and feminist art discourse and practice.
Introduction: sexual differences and otherwise

Following Latimer’s chapter is the incisive essay by Julia Bryan-Wilson, a younger generation art historian also important to the establishment of what we might call a nascent queer feminist art history. In ‘Queerly made: Harmony Hammond’s Floorpieces’, Bryan-Wilson plays off of the groundbreaking artwork of self-identified lesbian artist Harmony Hammond from the 1970s, specifically her Floorpieces, to argue strongly that the door opened by such radical practices, which assert ‘the place of lesbian desire within feminist art history,’ must be kept open.

Another pioneering figure who has been thinking queer and feminist theory and art history together for several decades (one is tempted to say through a ‘seminal’ melding of curatorial and writerly practice, if it weren’t for the implications) is Catherine Lord, as noted a queer feminist curator, artist, teacher, administrator, and art writer. Lord’s typically lyrical and autobiographically rich rumination on queer (and) feminist archives and libraries, ‘Ink on paper, again,’ offers an elliptical approach – itself a queer feminist method – which can be applied to this relationship between the queer and the feminist in the logic of art’s histories. Lord looks at overtly or covertly queer publications from these archives and libraries to excavate hidden or publicly proclaimed intimacies through ruminating on the friendships and amorous connections signaled on their dedication pages.

For chapter 7, mid-career interdisciplinary visual culture scholar Dore Bowen contributes an equally poetic essay entitled ‘On the site of her exclusion: strategizing queer feminist art history,’ mobilizing the sometimes anti-sometimes radically pro-feminist work of French queer or gay activist Guy Hocquenghem to elaborate a queer feminist art historical method, which she plays out in relation to works such as Yael Bartana’s video installation work examining identification and diaspora in relation to European nationalism, and Europe will be stunned (2007–11). Through this conjunction Bowen is able to explore with sensitivity and subtlety the conflicts and pleasures developing between queer and feminism with a focus on desire as it plays a role in each discourse, shedding light on each through its relationship to the other.

A dialogue entitled ‘Dyke talk, or “political lesbianism” and queer feminist art (history): Amelia Jones in dialogue with Cheri Gaulke, A.L. Steiner, and Terry Wolverton’ follows Bowen’s contribution. I specifically invited lesbian/queer feminists from two different generations other than my own to debate and discuss what ‘queer feminism’ might mean in the making and study of the visual arts – Terry, Cheri, and I were acquainted before the dialogue (which took place over Skype), but Steiner had at that point not met any of us in person. This lively exchange, collegial and boisterous, proves the importance of sharing wisdom across generations – rather than provoking an obdurate tension, the different views we hold on the politics of identifying ourselves as ‘lesbian,’ ‘straight,’ or ‘queer’ sparked valuable dialogue about how to join forces.
across time, space, and (most importantly) identifications. It is fitting that our
dialogue took place in the ether provided by Skype, in between spaces: New
York (where Steiner often works and was located at the time), Los Angeles
(where Gaulke and Wolverton live), and Montreal (where I was living at the
time; since the dialogue took place, I have become a colleague of Steiner’s at
the Roski School of Art and Design at University of Southern California).

Similarly, chapter 9, ‘Notes from backstage: a dialogue among Pauline
Boudry/Renate Lorenz and Jon Davies,’ provides proof of the power of camaraderie
across disciplines and categories of identification. Canadian curator Jon
Davies introduces and guides a rich discussion with influential queer feminist
artist/writers Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, who work collectively and
are based in Berlin. Davies is able to draw out the way in which the performative
visual arts practice of Boudry/Lorenz, which makes careful use of queer
feminist archival histories and re-enacts them, in this way ‘breaths’ the air of
queer feminist art history.

While not presuming to cover art discourse outside of the Anglophone
centers of contemporary art and feminist and queer debates, the editors wanted
very much to include essays that provided glimpses into other cultural situations.
To this end, in chapter 10, ‘The male nude as a queer feminist iconography
in contemporary Polish art,’ Polish art historian and curator Pawel Leszkowicz
provides a provocative study of collaborations between feminist artists and
gay male models (many of whom are also artists and intellectuals) in Poland
from the 1970s to the present. Leszkowicz argues that these collaborations
produce transgressive queer feminist works that solicit a range of disruptive
desires and identifications, including those of gay men as well as feminists.
Through his deep knowledge and experience of the Polish context, which has
become increasingly and openly homophobic with the re-establishment of
a visible and powerful Catholic Church since the collapse of the Soviet bloc
in the 1990s, Leszkowicz points out the importance of acknowledging this
context in order to understand how the works were made and are received in
Poland – and to comprehend how radical these works, with their putting in
play of a fluidity of ‘polymorphous’ longings across male/female and hetero/
homosexual subjects, are in that context.

Nizan Shaked, an emerging scholar based in Los Angeles but originally
from Israel, was invited to contribute to this volume due to her fearless exami-
nations of the reactionary and queer/feminist-hostile assumptions still built
into much of the reigning art history and curating being practiced today.
Her chapter ‘Is identity a method? A study of queer feminist praxis’ looks at
radical queer feminist art practices that interrogate the links among sexism,
homophobia, racism, and classism – in particular the curatorial and art work
of Nicole Eisenman and A.L. Steiner (in their collective Ridykeulous). Shaked
uses this analysis to assert the importance of rejecting the modernist project of
dismissing identity as irrelevant to art, a project that, she points out, continues in much of the reigning contemporary art discourse up to the present day.

In chapter 12, ‘Are we still trespassing? A trans-Atlantic conversation between Emily Roysdon and Xabier Arakistain,’ artist Emily Roysdon (active in New York and Stockholm) and curator Xabier Arakistain (active in Spain) explore their varied and sometimes conflicted relationship to feminism as well as to the complex political positionality proposed by queer theory. Both enter the discussion with ruminations about their own development, exposures, and beloved influences. Roysdon and Arakistain are key figures in the radicalization of feminist art and art discourse – and the latter effectively moves the feminist inquiry irrevocably toward a queer domain while acknowledging its past insights and insisting that ‘feminist art’ must be retained as a political imperative. Roysdon in contrast questions whether this category need be retained at all – while noting the importance of ‘nam[ing] it, collect[ing] it, [and] lov[ing] it.’ Ultimately, as Roysdon argues, the debate comes down to a question not of ‘foundations, but of orbiting and commitments,’ itself arguably a queer idea applied effectively to the field of feminist art history.

Further expanding the book’s international purview, in chapter 13 the Spanish queer feminist curator Juan Vicente Aliaga offers a history of transfeminism in the Spanish context: ‘And the altar started to moan and groan! Transfeminist artistic practices in Spain, a taxonomy.’ Aliaga defines and historicizes transfeminism in the Spanish context, and provides extensive examples of performative public projects in which queer feminists enact it as a means of radicalizing a feminism based on the idea of biological womanhood. At the same time he pulls out instances of the artists’ and intellectuals’ insistence on retaining the political insights and power of coalitional feminism. In relation to the public sphere in Spain, these transfeminist efforts have radicalized both the art world and to some degree the political world.

In chapter 14, ‘Thinking archivally: curating WOMEN 我們,’ Alpesh Patel, an emerging American art historian who has extensively studied South Asian diasporic artists’ works through a queer feminist framework, also goes beyond standard anglo-feminist and queer contexts to examine a case study, specifically an exhibition on contemporary Chinese women’s art, of which he co-organized one part for the Miami Beach Urban Studios Gallery in Florida. Patel draws on postcolonial, feminist, and queer theory as well as a critical approach to how archives are used to form the background histories and materials for exhibitions – queering the archive becomes a feminist as well as queer approach to questioning what is included and what is left out in curatorial contexts.

For ‘Striking reverberations: beating back the unfinished history of colonial aesthetic with Jeannette Ehlers’ Whip it Good,’ Mathias Danbolt, an emerging queer feminist art historian from Norway, also focuses on a case study, in this
Otherwise

case Jeannette Ehlers’ 2014 *Whip it Good* performance and video presented at the Nikolaj–Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center in Denmark. Danbolt’s chapter strategically ‘whips’ us (the text is interrupted periodically by ‘Crack!’; the sound of a whip) to provoke thoughts on the way in which the pressures and effects of colonialism and slavery interrelate with sexual/gender identifications. In this way Danbolt uses the work by Ehlers, a Caribbean-Danish artist, to provoke his readers into realizing how often we forget to consider the role of racialized dimensions of nation- and self-identification on questions of gender and sexuality in the modern and contemporary eras.

Following this logic, Tina Takemoto (a performance artist and teacher at California College of the Arts) and Jennifer Gonzalez (a professor of art history at the University of California, Santa Cruz) were introduced to each other through this project and encouraged to stage a dialogue on queer feminist art history. In chapter 16, ‘Triple threat: queer feminist of color performance art,’ Gonzalez questions Takemoto on the inclusions and exclusions of art history and collectively they provide a nuanced understanding of how artists who are ‘intersectionally’ identified (by themselves as well as potentially art historically and by the marketplace) put pressure on traditional art history, art institutions, or even feminist art history.

Activating a number of theoretical concepts, which spiral together into a tightly woven queer feminist method, art historian Jackson Davidow contributes chapter 17, ‘Beyond the binary: the gender neutral in JJ Levine’s *Queer Portraits*.’ Focusing on the work of Montreal-based artist JJ Levine, in particular Levine’s series *Queer Portraits* in which he depicts his subjects with neutral expressions, Davidow argues through Roland Barthes’s concept of ‘the neutral’ that these portraits call for the development of queer feminist art historical methods. While Barthes explicitly argued that ‘the neutral is a question of gender,’ Davidow argues through Levine’s project that the neutral is ultimately a question of queerness – suturing together the queer and the feminine/feminist.

Davidow’s nuanced theorizations open the door for the following chapter, ‘Trans*feminism: fragmenting and re-reading the history of art through a trans* perspective,’ an inspired dialogue between art historian Jennie Klein and genderqueer artist Kris Grey (aka ‘Justin Credible’). Here, Grey’s work provides an opportunity for both to ruminate on what the ‘trans’ (or in their locution ‘trans*; to emphasize the fluidity and the multiple terms that could follow the prefix) offers for a radical critical approach to gender/sex identifications in relation to the visual arts. The radical fluidity of trans* bodies and trans* artwork, they argue, calls for radical trans* approaches to visual and performance cultures – possibly but not necessarily queer feminist.

As an interesting contrast to Klein and Grey’s dialogue, in chapter 19 performance artist and scholar Lisa Newman (an American based in the UK)
engages Vaginal Davis (an American performance artist based in Berlin) and Del LaGrace Volcano (an American photographer based in Stockholm) in a discussion about how their work has or has not been addressed by art history, and feminist art history, or queer theory. The chapter, which is appropriately entitled “What have you done for me lately?” The institutionalisation of queer feminist art histories – Lisa Newman in Dialogue with Vaginal Davis and Del LaGrace Volcano, casts an appropriately harsh light on these discourses, asking how much in actuality they function to promote the work they champion in theory.

Focusing on Volcano’s trans or queer feminist portraiture practice, Dominic Johnson forges a queer feminist method in his contribution (chapter 20) entitled ‘Transition pieces: the photography of Del LaGrace Volcano.’ Johnson, a British scholar trained in art history but also a practicing performance artist and performance studies scholar, is uniquely positioned to point to the limits of histories of art to address ‘transgender and transsexual body narratives and their representations,’ as epitomized in the work of Volcano. Drawing on the genderqueer theory of Beatriz Preciado, he uses Volcano’s works to address the question of how transgendered representations trouble aspects of feminism, exposing his own complex desires as a viewer of the photographs as a way of suggesting the importance of self-reflexivity in such a practice. This self-reflexivity, his essay implies, opens us sexual/gender identification as a kind of ‘becoming,’ itself leading to a nascent revolutionary complex of processual gender/sex identifications.

Last but definitively not least of the primary chapters, chapter 21 is a dialogue entitled ‘Not at the beginning and not at the end: a conversation among Deirdre Logue, Allyson Mitchell, and Helena Reckitt.’ Here, Mitchell, a Toronto-based artist and curator who works in collaboration with Logue, first addresses Reckitt, a curator and art writer formerly based in Toronto and now in London, by asking her a question initially sent the trio by Erin Silver in setting up the dialogue; the question is how the three relate to histories of art, ‘be they queer, feminist or not,’ and the ensuing discussion plays out this issue of influences, past and present. The three discuss the ways in which queer feminism is kept out or nurtured in various parts of the art world and art discourse, segueing into a poetic discussion of emotional valences attached to various modes of institutional curating as knowledge production.

Mitchell and Logue’s own FAG project (Feminist Art Gallery), based in Toronto, exemplifies the kind of practice – which merges creation with the organizational and historicizing impulse of curating – which, in Mitchell’s words, explores ‘the concept of feminist or queer description, of describing an object as feminist or queer.’ This could be thought of as one of the core questions posed by the book as a whole. In following the Mitchell, Logue, Reckitt dialogue, Erin Silver, in her ‘Epilogue: Out of the boxes and into the
Otherwise streets: translating queer and feminist activism into queer feminist art history, extends their ruminations in posing a series of final questions – explicitly avoiding making a final statement.

Returning at the end of this prologue to its title, suffice it to say that, while I am identified as a feminist art historian and have made efforts over the past decade to claim and articulate an anti-racist queer feminist method across art history and performance studies, and Erin Silver is a queer feminist activist and art historian, by publishing this book we both urgently wish to create exactly the kind of space many of these authors call for. Rather than cohering ‘queer feminist art history’ in some final way, we hope to open further debates around this constellation of terms.

We hope with the first part of the title, ‘sexual differences and otherwise,’ then, to honor the complexities and political moxey of feminist visual theory and art history, as noted, but also to put the final stress on the otherwise – the main title of the book as a whole. It is my firm belief that we do not know what we mean any more (if we ever did) when we say ‘woman,’ ‘lesbian,’ ‘queer,’ or ‘feminist’ – and that this is a good thing. At the same time such uncertainty calls for increasingly energetic and public debates around what needs to be done and how best to do it in activist, academic, and art contexts, whether fully institutional or not. I hope that this book provides one among many openings to such discussions and activities geared toward an ‘otherwise’ of sex/gender identification which is nonetheless pointed toward attempting to bring about change, a sex/gender identification and feminist orientation that knows something needs to be done to create a more equitable field of play for all ‘kinds’ of artists, curators, and historians, and for a range of art, exhibitions, and histories, and is open to proposing how, when, and why this might take place.

Notes

1 By ‘generations and geographies’ I am intentionally referring to Griselda Pollock’s now classic anthology Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings (New York: Routledge, 1996). This volume gives space to the new feminist work on visual art and culture emerging at that time.

2 Most notably in recent years, Katz co-organized the exhibition Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture for the National Portrait Gallery with David C. Ward; see the catalogue by this title (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2010).

3 LGBTQI – standing for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, Trans-, Queer, Intersex – is the going acronym to cover the range of potential sexual identifications in the queer spectrum.

4 Wolverton ran queer feminist initiatives through the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles and published a history of these efforts in Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at
Introduction: sexual differences and otherwise

The Woman's Building (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2002); in the 1980s Catherine Lord was Dean of the School of Art at California Institute for the Arts (CalArts), Valencia, and from 1990–95 ran the Department of Studio Art at the University of California, Irvine.


Quote from an email to the author, 26 September 2014.

Her most ambitious recent publication is the book she co-edited with Richard Meyer, Art and Queer Culture (London: Phaidon, 2013). The book, importantly, is presented as a survey of artworks that have ‘constructed, contested, or otherwise responded to alternative forms of sexuality,’ not ‘exclusively’ a book ‘about art by artists who identify themselves as gay or lesbian; see the press available at Amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Art-Queer-Culture-Catherine-Lord/dp/0714849359/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1411755588&sr=8-1&keywords=Catherine+Lord+and+richard+meyer (accessed 26 September 2014). This text is partly taken from the jacket copy of the book.

Most notably the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at the University of Southern California, where in 2012 Lord organized an exhibition entitled To Whom It May Concern, relating to this essay; see below chapter 1, ‘Queer feminist art history, an imperfect genealogy,’ n. 71.

Bowen poses the important question of whether he was either or neither. Hocquenghem's work at the very least risks offending by taking firm stands in relation to nuanced positions within gay, lesbian, queer, and feminist debates. On Hocquenghem's complex identifications, see Bill Marshall, Guy Hocquenghem: Beyond Gay Identity (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

By ‘generation’ here I mean time of professional and creative emergence, not ‘generation’ based on birth date per se. Wolverton and Gaulke were active in the Los Angeles feminist art movement from the late 1970s onward; I emerged on the professional scene around 1990 (in Los Angeles at the time); Steiner has become a major figure in queer feminist art-making, writing, and curating since the late 1990s.

See Renate Lorenz's Queer Art: A Freak Theory (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2012), which is to my knowledge the only book in the world that actually proposes a queer feminist theory of visual art as its primary objective.
1  Queer feminist art history, an imperfect genealogy

Amelia Jones and Erin Silver

The traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled.

Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,' 1977

The French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault famously developed a model to enrich and complexify the practice of understanding histories of human knowledge. In *The Order of Things* (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), he proposed an archaeological method of tracing rules and patterns in discourse (based in European culture, from Classical philosophy through the modern period) as a means of moving away from historical writing that depended on the actions and expressions of individual subjects as fully conscious agents of meaning and historical change. In later works such as *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault further nuanced his arguments, introducing the concept of genealogy. Through this method, Foucault's analyses aimed at establishing genealogical interconnections among and developments in discourse focusing on broad cultural, political, and social shifts in Western European-based (or, as we will shorthand, 'Euro-American') cultures. Through the combined methods of archaeology and genealogical analysis, Foucault established rich histories of, for example, ideas about and practices associated with sexuality (in his 'history of sexuality' series).

This book begins with a Foucauldian appreciation for the urgent political importance of tracing genealogies of prior discourses informing the present, even in the face of an acknowledgment of the impossibility of fully knowing or understanding the past. This point cannot be overstated in a project that proposes to explore the intersections but also the resistances between feminist discourse and queer discourse in relation to the visual arts. (Here, per Foucault’s example, it is important to note that ‘discourse’ can include written texts, exhibitions, artworks, and even institutional structures in particular contexts – for example, the spaces of an exhibition site can shape the ways in which the works are understood; hence the institutional spaces are, in this case, discursive, or at least relevant to a genealogical tracing of discourse.)
If the point of any feminist and/or queer theory and practice is, at the very least, to create an awareness of the ways in which gender and sexuality inform discourse and determine structures of individual as well as collective social, cultural, and economic power, then we can say that both are inherently political. In turn, both must be understood always within particular contexts (material or social) and specific historical matrices (networks of discourse). It is in this sense that Foucault’s model provides a productive framework as it is a historiographic method, but one always oriented toward the progressive goals of understanding and working from contemporary structures of belief; Foucault’s method is thus often deployed toward the ultimate aim of intervening in the latter to create change in these structures where oppressions exist. Most to the point of this project on queer feminist art histories, Foucault’s sexuality study provides crucial background history for the otherwise often superficial, polarizing, and ahistorical claims put forth in the raging public debates about gender and sexuality and the horrors of the AIDS crisis that were occurring as he was writing the series— a project that itself was never completed, with terrible irony, because Foucault himself died (in 1984) of AIDS-related causes.

In the second and third volumes of his history of sexuality series, Foucault looks closely at Greek and Roman views on same-sex relations to detach these beliefs from their subsumption into modern views, wherein homosexuality came to be identified as such, and culturally prohibited or directly outlawed. Foucault’s work implies that, without an understanding of the nuances of how same-sex relations were understood differently across historical moments and within different micro-cultures within Europe, there can be no effective political assertion of rights for those people excluded or oppressed by current structures of belief, laws, and institutions. Gay rights in relation to the AIDS crisis, then, must be articulated in relation to this discursive history, which, in fact, explains the way in which (for example) the US government at the time responded with hostility or largely ignored the crisis. The same can be said of feminist activist and theoretical assertions. Without at least attempting to understand how women defined and situated themselves in relation to past versions of Euro-American culture, it is impossible to articulate effective strategies for countering current oppressions and exclusions. As Foucault’s entire corpus of work makes clear, without at least an attempt at historical understanding, in this case through tracing genealogical links, shifts, and interrelations rather than establishing causal origins and final endpoints of events, political strategies are at best naïve and at worst pointless.5

A caveat: we leave aside in this volume the crucial and massive problem of how to understand issues of sexuality and gender in non-European-based cultures, although several of our authors explore non-European-American artworks or curatorial efforts addressing non-European-American art (Alpesh
Patel in fact interrogates the limits of the Euro-American art system to accommodate Chinese queer feminist art). Our expertise as co-editors is based in US, Canadian, and, to a lesser degree, British visual cultures, with some familiarity with Australian and New Zealand visual cultures; due to the need for a sharp focus on key moments and issues in the interrelated field of queer and feminist issues in the visual arts, even the discourses elaborated within the latter two contexts are unfortunately under-represented here. It is safe to say, then, that our framework parallels the location of dominant feminist and queer discourses, which have largely emerged in Anglophone urban centers such as London, New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto, and (productively mixing or in tension with Francophone culture) in Montreal. Perhaps it is somewhat of a paradox, then, given that we met at McGill University in the latter center of the Francophone province of Quebec, that this history privileges Anglophone developments, particularly in the UK and the US. We do this because these were the dominant sites for the development of activist as well as academic queer and feminist art discourses. This is not to preclude the importance of other sites of emergence and expansion (some of which have productively challenged the assumptions of these dominant discourses), but of necessity, given our aim to produce a historiography of key aspects of the relation between queer and feminist goals and strategies in art discourse, we focus on the ‘central’ rather than (often innovative and important) ‘peripheral’ developments.

Returning to Foucault’s method, it is with these connections in mind that we provide in the following a necessarily partial and incomplete yet we hope compellingly descriptive narrative genealogy of the interrelated and sometimes co-extensive development of feminist and queer methods, theories, and practices in relation to the visual arts in the context of contemporary Euro-American culture. One thing we do have as co-editors is two very different generational perspectives (Jones born in 1961; Silver born in 1983), which we hope provides a crucial historical spread to our genealogy. While Jones came of age intellectually with the consolidation of feminist film and visual art theory in the late 1980s (most of which represented white, middle-class, and straight values), Silver’s work has developed out of queer feminist activism among artists and theorists representing a broader range of ethnic, class, and cultural backgrounds born in this same period.

Feminist/queer cultural histories: before AIDS

While many important earlier precedents in the history of queer feminist art and discourse could be examined here (from Oscar Wilde’s queer persona at the end of the nineteenth century and Magnus Hirschfeld’s early twentieth-century work in Germany to redefine homosexuality and transsexuality as
socially acceptable, to ‘new women’ in France, the UK, and Germany during and after the First World War, to Romaine Brooks, the Baroness von Freytag Loringhoven, and Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore making queer feminist performative and visual art works in the 1910s and following, we will begin our story in the mid-twentieth century. This is the point at which feminism took on a new urgency and formed a ‘second wave,’ and the notion of queer began to coalesce, developing out of the early twentieth-century legacy of lesbian literary and artistic developments and out of a burgeoning and increasingly visible urban gay male culture, particularly in centers in the US such as San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles. (Bi- cultures were part of both of these developments, as many ambiguously identified characters moved in and out of circles of exclusively gay and lesbian socializing.)

Just after the Second World War ended and out of the ashes of European progressive culture a method for theorizing identity began to develop, one that would inform all subsequent models of identity politics in activist but also cultural realms from the 1950s through the 1980s. In particular, the publication in French and English of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) and the postcolonial critique of Frantz Fanon in his books of the 1950s (such as his highly influential descriptions of being racialized and sexualized – or *othered* – by the probing gaze of white people in Paris in *White Skin, Black Masks*, first published in French in 1952) were epic events in the development of theories of identity. These theories developed in tandem with the activist activities of the Civil Rights and other rights movements burgeoning in the US in the 1950s and 1960s and the leftist movements in Europe during the same period. Beauvoir’s and Fanon’s method was loosely Hegelian, per their attachment to the model of difference as intersubjectively oppositional, based on a politicized view of Hegel’s ‘master–slave dialectic.’ While their theories are generally deployed singularly for feminism (Beauvoir) or postcolonial and anti-racist theory (Fanon), both Beauvoir and Fanon show at key moments a recognition of the interrelation between oppressive binaries relating to race, class, sexuality, gender, and other modes of identification.

As is explicitly clear in Fanon’s work, which in fact inspired some anticolonial movements, these theoretical developments went hand in hand with Europe’s withdrawal of direct political and military control from its colonies in Algeria (France), India and Pakistan (the UK), and elsewhere. As well, and particularly relevant in the case of the US, the Cold War (generally dated from 1947–91) marked a period of sustained political tensions between western European/North American governments and communist countries (the Soviet bloc and Yugoslavia). In the US, this moment was defined as well by a wholesale capitulation not only to capitalism and consumerism, but also to the cultural values associated with it, leading intellectuals in the US in particular to take sides in relation to the perceived social conformity and uncritical
patriotism of the time.10 In this American context, the implementation of anti-communist committees and loyalty review boards included the House Committee of Un-American Activities, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The House Committee on Un-American Activities was the most prominent of these, and was known for its investigations into the Hollywood film industry and for its posing of the question: 'Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?'11

Concurrent to this 'Red Scare' in the US, and paralleling its hysterical, reactive, and paranoid tone, the lavender scare referred to the persecution of homosexuals during a time when homosexuality was still largely considered to be a mental illness. The common argument was that gays and lesbians were vulnerable to being blackmailed and were thus considered a security risk due to the belief that homosexuals facing the threat of exposure by communists would supply them with information (Joseph McCarthy hired the closeted Roy Cohn, and the two of them were responsible for firing gay men from government employment and ensuring their silence through the use of rumours of homosexuality).12 The term 'lavender scare' is believed to be derived from the phrase 'lavender lads,' used by Senator Everett Dirksen who, in 1952, hoping to see the Republican party regain control of the executive branch of the State Department, promised to expunge the 'lavender lads' from office.13 Lillian Faderman has written that in the 1950s 'homosexual' became 'not only a choice of sexual orientation, but of social orientation as well, though usually lived covertly.'14 Following the Second World War and with increased urbanization, more and more gays and lesbians were taking part in homosexual subcultures in US metropolises, and early underground gay and lesbian liberation groups, including the Mattachine Society (founded in 1950 in Los Angeles) and the Daughters of Bilitis (founded in 1956 in San Francisco), were formed, building on Hirschfeld's earlier theoretical work.

In terms of aesthetics at the turn of the twentieth century, as suggested above, there had been early articulations of the elusive strategy or mode of being – camp – which served as a cloaking strategy, a 'homosexual lingo, a way to communicate among those “in the know,” while (for survival reasons, both legal and psychological) excluding those whose “normality” couldn’t be let into this outlaw, and yet proximate community.”15 Although the term has been complicated in contemporary scholarship by its multifaceted cultural and aesthetic uses, the element of camp that is useful here is its relevance to style: from the French slang se camper, meaning ‘to pose in an exaggerated fashion’16 or, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘(of a man or his manner) ostentatiously and extravagantly effeminate; deliberately exaggerated and theatrical style.’ This stylistic aspect of camp also conjured images of early twentieth-century literary depictions of underground nightclub drag
Queer feminist art history

queens and of the nineteenth-century concept of the dandy, the troubling and yet seminal figure of camp studies. The dandy could be said to have culminated in the more or less openly gay sexual affairs and flamboyant persona of Oscar Wilde at the turn of the twentieth century. As Susan Sontag famously wrote, ‘as the dandy is the nineteenth century’s surrogate for the aristocrat in matters of culture, so Camp is the modern dandyism. Camp is the answer to the problem: how to be a dandy in the age of mass culture.’

If ‘creative’ men had camp during this earlier period, ‘creative’ women – such as the phalanx of lesbian or bisexual women associated with Bloomsbury in London or the cadre of radical literary lesbians based in New York (including Margaret Anderson, who, with Jane Heap, her lover, and Ezra Pound, co-founded and ran the avant-garde literary journal Little Review, supporting lesbian or bisexual writers such as Djuna Barnes and the Baroness von Freytag Loringhoven) – had a range of butch to femme personal styles and modes of creative expression to adopt and explore, albeit only if they stayed within their coteries of supporters in cities such as New York or London. Nonetheless, as with the queer men developing alternative cultural and aesthetic modes and styles, women who loved women (and sometimes loved men as well) began to establish ways of living and inventively performing themselves that set the stage for the rise of explicitly queer cultures in 1960s metropolises across the US and UK.

In the British context (where art history cheerfully mingles with visual culture studies), nuanced methods of exploring sexuality in relation to the visual arts developed out of feminist film theory and art history, beginning in the 1970s. This development paralleled the rise of increasingly open queer cultures in Euro-American cities: the secretiveness and enforced ‘closets’ of earlier periods of nascently queer subjectivities gave way to the explosion of free love, discourses of eroticism, and overtly queer expressions and practices in the 1960s and following. In 1996 Irit Rogoff published ‘Gossip as Testimony: A Postmodern Signature’, in which she developed a provocative theory of the role of gossip in exploring the past works and careers of women artists. Rogoff’s colleague at Goldsmiths, University of London, Gavin Butt, developed this theory toward an understanding of gay male art culture in New York in his 2005 study Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World, 1948–1963. Butt examines gossip’s value in chronicling the homosexual lives of several well-known gay or bisexual male artists, including Larry Rivers, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg, working in New York City in the mid-twentieth century (key to the study is the understanding that, while the art subcultures fully acknowledged these artists’ homosexual identifications, art history and the larger art world persistently ignores or suppresses this knowledge to the present day). Within the art world, too, there was a divide between artists such as Johns and Rauschenberg, who
straddled the line between the rugged masculinity of the AbstractExpressionist artists and the ‘queer silence,’ in Jonathan D. Katz’s words, of their experimental intermedia work, and the more brashly defiant and more or less openly queer work and personae of artists such as Jack Smith and Andy Warhol.23 (This divide was marked and at least indirectly acknowledged; for example, Johns and Rauschenberg purportedly kept a distance from Warhol because, as Warhol himself put it, he was ‘too swish.’)24

As Butt has commented, ‘in the two decades in American art which preceded the Stonewall riots [in 1969 in New York], discussions of sexuality, and particularly of homosexuality, were habitually bracketed off into “lesser,” quotidian modes of communicative activity, positioned outside the circuits of art critical meaning and exchange.’25 Butt has contributed to an opening and surfacing of these discussions and to a broader recuperative queer art historical project, one that has been also initiated and carefully tended to by art historians, including, most notably, Jonathan D. Katz, who has, for over two decades, excavated hidden histories of gay male art and artists and has recently turned his ‘queer feminist’ attention to the work of Agnes Martin. As well David Getsy has more recently developed art critical methods to explore formalism and materiality in relation to trans studies.26 Collectively, these revisionist queer art historical studies have cast into relief the often hidden connections to non-normative sexualities present in postwar American art; by doing so, they make the crucial point that attention to such otherwise veiled sexualities in itself challenges the disembodied, yet implicitly male, heterosexual structuring previously dominant in forms of art criticism and art history, such as Greenbergian formalism and its legacy developments.27

The 1960s, of course, are often viewed retrospectively as having been dominated by the rise of the rights movements (especially in the US), though, as noted above, earlier writings and activisms – including those of the pre-Second World War period and, in the 1950s, the Civil Rights movement, the founding of the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis, Beauvoir’s feminism, and postcolonial theory in the work of Fanon and others – had set the stage for radicalized views and enactments of non-normative identities of all kinds. While this view of the 1960s as the origin period of radical identity politics is not entirely untrue, it is thus vastly oversimplified, veiling connections to important earlier developments sketched briefly here. What did change in the 1960s were attitudes about difference and strategies of theorizing and foregrounding various modes of ‘otherness.’ In terms of feminist and queer politics, key developments contributing to this included the rapid opening up of ideas about sexuality and women’s roles therein due to the publication of the Kinsey reports on sexuality in the 1940s and 1950s and the public release of the birth control pill around 1960, and modes of activism, which became increasingly aggressive and public.28 Relating to these developments were broad shifts
in conceptions of art, away from the idea of art as a static object produced by a particular kind of subject (usually straight, white, male, middle class, Euro-American) to an understanding of art as a process that could involve all sorts of bodies and modes of agency.

Coalitions, coalescences, and limitations: the late 1960s and 1970s

In the late 1960s, gay and lesbian liberation burgeoned. The Mattachine Society staged its first public demonstrations and picket lines in support of homosexual rights. The homophile movement developed out of the Mattachine Society as a discourse promoting the open expression of gay identity, although the term homophile was ultimately abandoned for a new set of terminology in the 1970s and onward. Across the US in the late 1960s, women’s liberation (or women’s lib), the Black Power movement, and the Chicano movement marked the development of increasingly sophisticated theoretical and activist approaches toward demanding rights for women, African Americans, and Chicanos. The rights movements paralleled and intersected the explosive New Left and youth rights movements across the US and Europe in the late 1960s, which included, most notably, Mai ’68 in France, a massive wave of student protests which almost succeeded in overthrowing the increasingly conservative de Gaulle government and which radicalized the professoriat, including scholars such as Foucault.

By the late 1960s the promise of the sexual revolution had become tarnished for many women, however, as they began to realize that the birth control pill did not free them from misogynistic attitudes even from within the various rights movements (for example, Stokely Carmichael, the leader of the radical black rights movement the SNCC, in 1964 notoriously stated ‘the only position for women in the SNCC is prone’). The Euro-American second wave feminist movement, inspired by Beauvoir’s Second Sex and by other feminist literature such as Betty Friedan’s 1963 exposé of the oppressive experience of suburban (white middle-class and American) women, The Feminine Mystique, exploded in the late 1960s with street protests, radical literature, and the founding of alternative institutions – in the art world, these took the form of art schools or programs, galleries, and cultural workshops. In the UK a sophisticated body of feminist visual analysis and practice developed around the work of key psychoanalytic theorists such as Juliet Mitchell (whose 1974 Psychoanalysis and Feminism became a classic) and artists, filmmakers, and visual theorists such as Mary Kelly (an American artist who lived in London in the 1970s and early 1980s), Laura Mulvey (a filmmaker and writer whose 1975 article ‘Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema’ became central to feminist visual theory in the following decades), and Griselda Pollock, who pioneered a rigorous feminist, marxian, psychoanalytic revisionist art history.
The late 1960s version of the gay liberation movement, dominated by the concerns of urban, white, middle-class gay men, aligned itself with the radical strategies of women's liberation and Black Power rather than with the older homophile movement or with feminism (women's lib and feminism, as many — such as the black lesbian feminists comprising the Combahee River Collective — pointed out even at the time, were themselves dominated by the interests of white, middle-class, and mostly straight women). Histories of the radical gay and lesbian movements suggest an origin story based in the 1969 Stonewall Riots, the violent demonstrations that occurred in New York City's Greenwich Village as a response to the police raid on the gay bar, the Stonewall Inn (though there had been raids across the United States in preceding years, including at the Black Cat Inn in Los Angeles in 1967). Nights of altercation between the Stonewall's gay patrons and the police led to the mobilization of activist groups who concentrated their efforts on securing safe spaces for LGBT individuals — notably, those who could not ‘pass’: individuals who were visibly non-gender conforming at a time when ‘cross-dressing’ laws (and the requirement, should police raid a gay bar, that patrons be wearing gender-appropriate clothing and be dancing with members of the opposite gender) were slowly being lifted.

The Stonewall Riots are widely regarded as the first instance of gays fighting back against oppressive and homophobic institutions and attitudes, with concerns over social space — from access to it, to what can be done in it — developing into a central aspect of queer activism. Sociologist Alan Sears has argued that, following Stonewall, the pursuit of public space became a primary focus of gay liberation:

The early post-Stonewall gay liberation movement developed an intensely eroticized bawdy politics. The gay liberation sexual politics that emerged represented a kind of sexual utopianism, which cast the erotic as a realm of liberation. These politics were utopian in that they located the spaces of sexual practices as sites of freedom in which the oppressive relations of the everyday, and particularly daytime, world were overcome. The gay liberation movement combined demands for the right to privacy, getting the state out of our bedrooms and our sexual lives, with the right to bring sex out from behind closed doors into spaces defined as public and therefore asexual. Bawdy politics, in short, sought to bring sexuality itself out of the closet.

Revisionist histories, interestingly, show the Stonewall riots as having been largely fronted by transsexuals and drag queens (some of color), complicating conventional readings of this early period of the gay liberation movement as largely white- and male-dominated. Recognizing the role of figures such as Sylvia Rivera, a trans Latina woman who participated in the riots, thus complicates dominant narratives. At the same time, it should be noted that it
was not unusual for people like Rivera to be moved to the ‘front’ of possibly dangerous demonstrations, and then to be moved to the back so that more ‘straight’-appearing leadership, at a time where legitimacy was equated with assimilation, could assume the public face of the movement.

Some of these discrepancies in historical accounts also play out in common ways of identifying different points of origin for gay liberation and lesbian liberation, with gay liberation considered to be based in the Stonewall riots and lesbian liberation seen as based largely in the second wave feminist movement of the late 1960s. In relation to the marginalized communities that formed around the early gay liberation movement that was building momentum around the same time, women continued to be relegated metaphorically to the background. However, historically speaking, women (including, in the US, poet Audre Lorde, cultural theorist Gloria Anzaldúa, the black lesbians in the Combahee River Collective, and radical activist and writer Shulamith Firestone) were central to the development of the early versions of queer activism and queer visual theory – making queer practice take on feminist concerns while making feminism queer as well as class conscious and anti-racist. In the same way, some men, particularly on the London scene (including film theorist Peter Wollen, artist Victor Burgin, and film theorist Stephen Heath) were key to the development of a feminist (albeit in these cases not particularly queer) practice and visual theory. These key nodes of intersection must not be forgotten in the tendency to sketch separate histories of each rights movement.

Furthermore, feminism and queer theory – as is the premise of this volume – have crucial insights to offer each other. Just as the term ‘queer’ can be regarded as posing a crucial challenge to feminism’s occasional lapses into certainty, to trouble, as Amelia Jones has written elsewhere, ‘the idea that we can know what we see,’ so too can feminism be regarded as demanding of queer that it examine its occasional tendency toward abstractions (where sexual identification is so fluid we are not sure how it functions in the world or what it has to do with the necessary coalitions that must be formed to produce social change) and its own lapses into the normative, though often unchallenged, binary structures of gender it claims to evade. These mutual limitations have been addressed in writings on lesbian feminism, for example, in Amy T. Goodloe’s 1994 ‘Lesbian Feminism and Queer Theory: Another “Battle of the Sexes”?’; in which she calls on lesbian feminism – a key subcategory of 1970s feminism – to confront the critical disconnect between feminist theory and queer theory. To the point of queer theory’s tendency toward abstraction, Goodloe offers feminist theorist Arlene Stein’s argument that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the then emerging field of queer theory failed to compensate for real, persistent structural differences in style, ideology, and access to resources among men and women.
Within art history, debates as to the legitimacy of women’s art or lesbian art as categories of analysis have long haunted feminist discourse as well as queer theory and activism; such debates circle around the usefulness of essentialism, which posits ‘essential’ differences in the way women or lesbians experience the world, and separatism. From a queer point of view in particular, the idea of lesbian art is argued to evoke a separatism no longer deemed productive to a broader queer political activism. In separatist arguments, lesbian artists are considered to be differentiated from the overall group of women artists, a separation that has been attributed to several factors, including the conflict in opinion regarding heterosexually identified women members’ desire and choice to live and be in relationships with men and, on the other hand, the belief that lesbian visibility undermined feminism’s credibility and appeal. Art historian Jennie Klein has been concerned to address the distinct history of lesbian art, which, she argues, has been mostly absented from the official record (even from the most accepted feminist art histories) due to these reservations about defining a ‘lesbian’ art practice. She notes, ‘[c]ritics and artists influenced by the tenets of queer theorists dismissed much of the art work made in the 1970s from a lesbian feminist perspective. This has resulted in very little being known or written about this pioneering work.’

Feminist art discourses, however, have always been enriched by the presence of queer women, just as feminism in general has benefitted from radical lesbian politics as well as anti-racist points of view, as is clear in our examples of important 1970s radical feminists (from Lorde to Anzaldúa) noted above. For example, early lesbian art groups such as the Lesbian Art Project (LAP), founded in 1977 out of the Woman’s Building by Arlene Raven and Terry Wolverton, have been given short shrift in histories of feminist art (and, it is worth adding, they have been completely ignored in more mainstream histories of contemporary art). As Klein has written, members of LAP ‘engaged in a performative relationship with both lesbian feminism (as they understood it in the late-1970s) and heterosexual norms in the art world and the feminist art community to which they belonged in order to assert their identities as lesbians, feminists, and most of all artists.’

Members of LAP were interested in understanding what lesbian art might be, and in 1977 Raven and her then partner, the art historian Ruth Iskin, published the article ‘Through the Peephole: Lesbian Sensibility in Art’ to address this question. Raven and Iskin were responding to one strand of feminist art discourse dominant in Los Angeles and crystallized in the influential series of lectures and 1973 article ‘Female Imagery’ by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro – wherein the two artists and teachers famously assert that women tend to make art with centralized imagery echoing our ‘central core, a secret place which can be entered.’ Following on the points made in Chicago and Schapiro’s article, Raven and Iskin note that feminist artists at the
time were looking at abstract art for what it provided to the idea of a uniquely female aesthetic. Paralleling the earlier article’s argument, Raven saw lesbian art as conveying a ‘positive woman-identified sensibility’. More recently Harmony Hammond, an important lesbian artist and historian of lesbian art, has argued that 1970s lesbian sensibility was to be found in the aesthetic and tactile qualities of the object itself; for Hammond, this sensibility was defined by an ability on the part of the artist to work ‘on the edge between abstract form and political content’.

Klein writes about the advocating of ‘lesbian sameness,’ and introduces Jenni Sorkin’s characterization of ‘ethical lesbianism – women advocating for social change, creating activist works and championing social causes through the visual and performing arts,’ both strategies informing the work of the LAP and which implied interactions among collective groups of creative people with similar political goals. The idea of shared lesbian sensibility seemed evident in the 1970s, but was still vague in its articulation, perhaps the result, as Margo Hobbs Thompson argues, of ‘trying to account for the diversity of individual lesbian experiences and perspectives, and by reluctance to allow lesbian experience to be reduced to sexual preferences and activities.’

Tensions arose in lesbian feminist art discourse of the 1970s and 1980s around ideas about community, cultural feminism, and shared experience as a means of forming a coalition to fight for lesbian rights. In terms of the latter, the drive to define a shared lesbian experience actually caused a dissolution, for the issues often included different sexual politics and the politics of desire common to the time – which stressed openness to sexual experiences rather than loyalty and monogamy – often contradicted the tenets of lesbian feminism.

Other tensions existed in discourses about lesbian feminist art. The idea of a ‘hierarchy of oppression’ in relation to different women (for example, straight versus lesbian-identified) was identified and debunked Lorde in the early 1980s:

[T]here can be no hierarchies of oppression [in relation to…] sexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all the others and thereby its right to dominance) and heterosexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby its right to dominance). [...] Both arise from the same source as racism – a belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby its right to dominance.

There is no question, however, that the most influential feminist initiatives in the US and British art worlds in the 1970s through at least the mid-1990s were clearly dominated by the concerns of heterosexually identified, white, middle-class women mostly from urban areas – a situation reflecting the vastly different relative positions of power of differently identified women within the
overall oppressions of patriarchy: white, middle-class women who were not visibly lesbian simply had more of a chance to attain an education and to assert a public voice or to have access to artistic training than poor women, black women, or openly queer women.

At the same time, it is important to note that, even within these relatively normative communities of feminist artists and theorists, many were aware of and in some cases explicitly attempted to embrace lesbian concerns as well as to critique the racism and classism inherent to patriarchy. In London, for example, Mary Kelly, along with Kay Hunt and Margaret Harrison, produced an installation based on extensive sociological research into class and gender divisions in labor practices in postwar Britain entitled *Women and Work: The Division of Labour in Industry 1973–75*. Women of color, including important black and Latina artists such as (in Los Angeles and New York) Bettye Saar, Judy Baca, Senga Nengudi, Lorraine O’Grady, and Howardena Pindell, were included in exhibitions and in some cases embraced by white feminists at alternative institutions such as the Woman’s Building.47 And, in terms of queer cultures, in Los Angeles, the presence of Raven at the heart of the Los Angeles feminist art organizations sited at the Woman’s Building in the 1970s testifies to the at least provisional embrace of lesbian concerns by the mainstream movement, as does the inclusion of exhibitions of ‘lesbian art’; lesbian curatorial initiatives such as the 1973 ‘Lesbian Week’ of performances, films, and dialogues at Womanspace in Los Angeles and Wolverton and Tyaga’s epic 1980 *Great American Lesbian Art Show* (GALAS, which sprang out of the dying embers of the LAP initiative); and the publication of special issues of feminist art journals such as *Heresies* (New York) and *Chrysalis* (Los Angeles) on lesbian art and related topics.48 Arguably, however, these initiatives could be said to testify more to the marginalization of queer issues in relation to mainstream feminist art discourse than to their fully integrated inclusion: they mark the necessity of establishing ‘special’ add-ons to existing discourses (per the ‘special issue on lesbian art’ concept), rather than the full incorporation of an understanding of gender as *always already* interconnected with sexual orientation.

Queering feminism, feminizing queer: performance theory and the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 1990s

All of the above developments (and more) provide background to the rapidly shifting strategies and responses called forth by the AIDS crisis, emerging around 1980 with particular force in cities in the USA. By 1990, the crisis had forced the explosive emergence of *queer* in activism and theory, a term that had circulated within discourses about gay male sexuality since the late nineteenth century but which now became a signal of a new urgency and radical politics
in gay activism. With the AIDS crisis, gay activism began to aim at re-sensitizing the public to the plight of queers dying of AIDS-related causes—a public swayed by the homophobic rhetoric and politics of the Reagan administration. In 1990 the formation of Queer Nation, a queer activist group, in New York (with other chapters formed across the country and in Canada) solidified the trend away from the still binarizing rhetoric of homosexuality or gay/lesbian to queer: key to this move was the embrace of those identified sexually as women, men, and otherwise within the queer project. The sexual subject was no longer either homo- or hetero-, no longer simply gay or lesbian. At a 1990 Pride march in New York City, the still nascent group distributed a rage-filled and eloquent text on a flyer, which stated in part:

Queers are under siege. Queers are being attacked on all fronts....
Queer!
Ah, do we really have to use that word? It's trouble. Every gay person has his or her own take on it. For some it means strange and eccentric and kind of mysterious.... And for others 'queer' conjured up those awful memories of adolescent suffering.... Couldn't we just use 'gay' instead? .... Well, yes, 'gay' is great. It has its place. But when a lot of lesbians and gay men wake up in the morning we feel angry and disgusted, not gay. So we've chosen to call ourselves queer. Using 'queer' is a way of reminding us how we are perceived by the rest of the world....

Queer, unlike GAY, doesn't [necessarily] mean MALE.
And when spoken to other gays and lesbians it's a way of suggesting we close ranks, and forget (temporarily) our individual differences because we face a more insidious common enemy. Yeah, QUEER can be a rough word but it is also a sly and ironic weapon we can steal from the homophobe's hands and use against him.

During the first decade of the AIDS crisis tens of thousands of gay men, mostly in urban areas, as well as groups identified as high-risk for contracting HIV (the virus responsible for AIDS), including what was referred to derogatorily as the '4-H Club' (homosexuals, hemophiliacs, heroin-users, and Haitians, before knowledge of how the virus was spreading among heterosexuals as well), suffered and died. The horror and urgency of this crisis lent a rage-fuelled but also melancholic cast to queer politics and theory. Discourses of mourning, a concern with temporality and trauma, and sharpened activist strategies developed out of the AIDS crisis, affecting both explicitly queer as well as feminist activism and theory.

At the exact same moment at which queer was being defined by street activists, a pointedly queer feminist theory emerged with ebullience, edge, and moxie in the work of American scholars such as, most notably, literary theorists Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, philosopher Judith Butler, and film and
literary theorist Teresa de Lauretis, the latter of whom, it is generally agreed, invented the term ‘queer theory’ in 1990 for a conference she organized at the University of California, Santa Cruz. This radical new body of queer feminist theory was informed by French feminist theory, Foucault’s model of discourse analysis, British cultural studies, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and poststructuralist philosophy, as well as, of course, queer politics and feminist activism. Paralleling these scholars, a group of feminist philosophers and cultural theorists from Australia, including Elizabeth Grosz, Rosi Braidotti, Rosalyn Diprose, Moira Gatens, and Genevieve Lloyd, have established a radical practice of re-reading works by Western male philosophers such as Spinoza and Deleuze through a feminist politics. This work has been influential in less direct ways to queer feminist visual theory, not the least in expanding rigorous models for articulating a de-essentializing feminist theory that, like American queer theory, insists on the fluidity of identification. The confluence of queer activism and these refreshed modes of feminist theory – clearly queer in their interests and claims – exposed the heteronormativity of previous feminisms.

If a separation has existed between feminist art history and queer theory (less so, it should be stressed, between feminist art history and gay/lesbian sensitive art history) this was a clear dividing point, with the former attending more to questions of institutional and discursive modes of sexism and exclusion, and thus by necessity starting from categories such as ‘women artists,’ and the latter oriented more toward theories that allowed for, even discursively produced, mutable sexualities that thwarted such categorization. This is not in any way to erase interconnections and mutual support among members of the movements and articulators of the theories but to indicate general trends in the 1990s. These trends lead productively to the increasing questioning of the narrowness of feminist concerns – by queer activists and theorists, by feminists of color such as Gloria Anzaldúa and bell hooks, who pointed to the whiteness of mainstream feminism, as well as by artists and art writers and curators concerned with other modes of identification such as race, ethnicity, and class.

The two emerging strands of what would become a queer feminist cultural theory in the 2000s began to coalesce in the later 1990s: a queer theory and activism tinged with melancholy and aimed at addressing the trauma of the AIDS crisis; and a coalescence of queer and feminist concerns in cultural studies (not – or not yet – in art history). Many examples of this new queer feminist cultural theory could be cited, from José Esteban Muñoz’s 1999 Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics to Jennifer Doyle’s 2006 Sex Objects: Art and the Dialectic of Desire to Heather Love’s 2007 book Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History. In the latter, Love writes that ‘[a] central paradox of any transformative criticism is that its dreams for the future are founded on a history of suffering, stigma, and
violence.” This foundation, it can be argued, has long stood as the impetus for queer as it came to be adopted as an identity category in the 1990s in a radical re-appropriation of a term once loaded with derogatory connotations. As Love points out,

[when] queer was adopted in the late 1980s it was chosen because it evoked a long history of insult and abuse – you could hear the hurt in it…. The emphasis on injury in queer studies has made critics in this field more willing to investigate the darker aspects of queer representation and experience and to attend to the social, psychic, and corporeal effects of homophobia.

As we have seen, politically activist gay and lesbian communities came together in the late 1980s and early 1990s to respond not only to the first devastating decade of the AIDS crisis, but also to its intersections with pervasive forms of homophobia. In the US context, the Reagan government’s inaction in the face of the epidemic showed the depths of social and political ignorance and hostility toward queer sexualities and ignited the formation of a new ‘Queer Nation,’ to borrow the name of the activist group, committed to radical political action. Within this context, the history of queer art – that is, visual art practices produced from a self-consciously queer theoretical position and politics (rather than the earlier concept of focusing on visual art by people identified as gay or lesbian by art historians) – is also rooted in explicitly activist concerns. Queer art has its foundations in early graphics produced in the late 1980s and early 1990s to combat media misrepresentations during the AIDS crisis and as a call to government and social action by such activist art collectives as Gran Fury (the ‘art’ wing of ACT UP [AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power]), as well as Group Material, Testing the Limits, and DIVA TV. Most influentially, the rallying call of the iconic broadside poster SILENCE = DEATH borrowed from the media tactics of feminist activism and Civil Rights direct action, as well as from the avant-gardist art strategies of 1980s feminist artists, including Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer, deploying graphic arts design and appropriated popular culture imagery to interrogate popular media practices and the detrimental representations of people living with AIDS. The on-the-ground cultural activism ignited by the AIDS crisis in major urban centers across North America produced a queer art that was explicitly political, of course, and largely public, as well as publicly accessible: drawing on strategies from the work of feminist artists such as Kruger and Holzer, Gran Fury and other artists and activist groups used instruments of the media and the structures of the city, such as billboards and LED signs, to gain visibility.

These interrelations point to a web of potential coalitional affiliations between feminist and queer artists, art critics, curators, and art historians. The longtime AIDS activist and chronicler Sarah Schulman argues that it was
the advent of AIDS that bridged the gap between feminists, lesbians, and gay men, culminating in a larger, more political, and more radical queer collective identity, writing:

Men became endangered and vulnerable. They needed each other and women to intervene with the government, media, and pharmaceutical and insurance industries. They needed intervention in all arenas of social relationship. They needed women’s political experience from the earlier feminist and lesbian movements, women’s analysis of power, and women’s emotional commitments to them. They needed women’s alienation from the state. As men became weak, they allowed themselves to acknowledge the real ways that women are strong, particularly recognizing our hard-won experience at political organizing. There was more room for women to be seen at our level of merit, to occupy social space that we deserved to occupy, even if the reason was that men were disappearing. Like Rosie the Riveter, gay women gained more equality within the queer community, more social currency and autonomy because men were threatened, wounded, and killed.59

Regarding lesbian feminist involvement in the early years of AIDS activism, queer feminist activist Amber Hollibaugh has written, ‘[f]or some of us it was the shared gay identity we felt with gay men which brought us forward early in the epidemic: for some of us it was the dramatic increase in the already devastating daily occurrences of homophobia and gay bashing which occurred because of the government’s misrepresentations of AIDS as a gay disease.’60

Indeed, perhaps more politically powerful than the theory that preceded it were the on-the-ground politics of queer activism, which, as Eve Sedgwick argued in 1991, were inarguably inspired by the political agency of feminism:

The contributions of lesbians to current gay and AIDS activism are weighty, not despite, but because of the intervening lessons of feminism. Feminist perspectives on medicine and healthcare issues, on civil disobedience, and on the politics of class and race as well as of sexuality, have been centrally enabling for the recent waves of AIDS activism. What this activism returns to the lesbians involved in it may include a more richly pluralized range of imaginings of lines of gender and sexual identification.61

Through the work of scholars such as Sedgwick, Butler, and de Lauretis, queer theory emerged in the 1990s in various humanities departments in universities across the US and the UK in tandem with shifts in feminist theory and a turn, in politically radical and marginalized communities, toward political action inspired by identity politics and seeking to dissect conventionally fixed or at least narrowly defined notions of identity. Entering the arenas of gender and sexuality, Butler, Sedgwick, de Lauretis, and other queer feminist theorists picked up Foucault’s social constructivist work on sexuality, merging it with
elements of psychoanalysis, a Marxist attention to class critique, and performance theory, and put these to work to destabilize gender and sexuality studies as they had developed to that point. Key to Butler’s and Sedgwick’s insights was the notion of the performative, developed first in the 1950s lectures at Harvard by British linguistic philosopher J.L. Austin and published posthumously in 1962 as *How To Do Things With Words*.62 Butler, who had written her dissertation and first book on Hegel’s reception in French philosophy (including the work of Beauvoir), organized her hugely influential 1988 article ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution’ around the Austinian idea of performativity, applying this idea to gender and sex identification, writing, famously:

> Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.63

Butler solidified a queer feminist notion of gender as performative and thus fluid and unfixable, although, with her background in Hegelian philosophy, it is not surprising that gender is still relatively binary in her model. It was thus Sedgwick who most expansively played out performativity as defining a queer feminist politics explicitly against the grain of binarism. In her 1993 *Tendencies*, Sedgwick argued against the binarisms of previous models of identity politics, including many forms of feminism:

> The binary calculus I’m describing here depends on the notion that the male and female sexes are each other’s ‘opposites,’ but I do want to register a specific demurral against that bit of easy common sense. Under no matter what cultural construction, women and men are more like each other than chalk is like cheese, than ratiocination is like raisins, than up is like down, or than 1 is like 0. The biological, psychological, and cognitive attributes of men overlap with those of women by vastly more than they differ from them.64

Sedgwick is clear on articulating a feminist theory that insists on gender as performative, queer, and never fully determinable: ‘That’s one of the things that “queer” can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically.’65

With a point of departure of gender being performative, this radical new ‘third wave’ theory, which was simultaneously and structurally queer and feminist, responded critically and creatively to the essentializing understandings of and approaches to sex, gender, and sexuality that had prevailed in
Otherwise much of second wave feminism. However, it is important to stress here that second wave feminism (as these queer feminist theorists themselves would probably agree) had tended toward fixities and essentialisms for good reason. We hope to suggest through this volume that the most productive third wave feminism is not about ‘killing the mother’ (or for that matter about killing the ‘fathers’ of previous theories articulated by male theorists, gay or straight) by producing oversimplified versions of supposed past ‘errors’ such as these. Ideally, we stress here that third wave feminism – which is by definition a queer, transnational and anti-racist, class-critical feminism – must be about honoring the previous need to form coalitions via provisional essentialisms, for example the idea of ‘women’ in general, while theorizing the need for new, non-binary and open-ended understandings of how we identify in terms of our gender and sexuality.

The inception of queer theory – which as the cases of Butler and Sedgwick show, emerged in part out of or as feminist theory – helped to identify what could be regarded as an assault on individual sexual and gender expression and delineated the ways in which this occurred, as well as examining how queer consciousness mobilized against this injustice. Butler’s theory became hugely influential in feminist art historical attempts to begin to address the performativity of gender as it had already been articulated in photographic and performance practices in the visual arts – for example, Claude Cahun’s 1920s–30s, Hannah Wilke’s 1970s–90s, and Cindy Sherman’s late 1970s–80s gender performative self-images, which seemed to beg for (and perhaps actually inspired) Butlerian analysis.66 Sedgwick’s work, in turn, has become foundational to much present-day performance studies scholarship – most of which is either explicitly queer feminist or is articulated at the least from a queer feminist ‘friendly’ position – not the least that of her now also hugely influential former students such as José Muñoz and Jennifer Doyle.67

Many other key feminist scholars and theorists from fields as diverse as law, sociology, and anthropology were also busy interrogating the lingering essentialisms of feminism from the point of view of race, ethnicity, class, and nationality, and this work has also been hugely influential in what exists today as queer feminist visual theory or art history. For example, American feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw’s articulation of intersectionality developed in the early 1990s as the culmination of debates about identity politics and around the question of multiculturalism, which became a code word for US cultural institutions’ attempts to deal with racial and ethnic difference. Crenshaw’s theory in one of its most influential forms was published as part of Toni Morrison’s edited 1992 volume Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality, which addressed the bizarre and clearly intertwined politics of race, gender, and sexuality haunting the Senate hearings (dominated by white
faces) at which black lawyer Anita Hill was forced to confront black Supreme Court justice nominee Clarence Thomas for his sexual harassment; the case was particularly ironic given that Thomas had at the time of the harassment been head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and was thus mandated to prosecute others for such violations. Crenshaw’s theory argues for a consideration of the interrelation of forms of oppression (particularly race-, gender-, and class-related) affecting black women such as Anita Hill and troubles a belief in the shared experiences of women.

At the same time, the advent of third wave feminism, trans studies, critical race theory, postcolonial theory, and masculinity studies, all burgeoning in the 2000s, have also offered models for complicating the tendency in feminist and gay and lesbian histories of art to posit categories of gendered identity separate from intersectional identifications. José Muñoz’s *Disidentifications* epitomizes the sensitivity with which emerging scholars of visual culture began to articulate a nuanced model of analysis for visual, literary, and performance texts which refuted the certainties of earlier identity politics by noting the potential of marginalized subjects to dis-identify from cultural stereotypes (ambivalently both rejecting and melancholically incorporating aspects of them).

In more recent years, the possibilities for history writing and queer world-making have been opened up by critical approaches to temporality taken up by a handful of queer theorists, including Lee Edelman, Elizabeth Freeman, Judith ‘Jack’ Halberstam, Heather Love, Muñoz himself, and Catherine Lord whose articulations of ‘reproductive futurism,’ ‘temporal drag,’ ‘queer time,’ ‘feeling backward,’ ‘crusing utopia,’ and ‘queer archives,’ respectively, suggest not only a radical expansion and rearticulation of queer histories, but also an injection of the affective dimensions of conceptions of time, performativity, archival research, and historical preservation. The archive has, in the 2010s, come to occupy the queer imagination, in particular questions of what the archive affords queer histories and queer affect studies. To this end Ann Cvetkovich has argued that queers have had to struggle to preserve their histories. In the face of institutional neglect, along with erased and invisible histories, gay and lesbian archives have been formed through grassroots efforts [...] Forged around sexuality and intimacy, and hence forms of privacy and invisibility that are both chosen and enforced, gay and lesbian cultures often leave ephemeral and usual traces. In the absence of institutionalized documentation or in opposition to official histories, memory becomes a valuable historical resource, and ephemeral and personal collections of objects stand alongside the documents of the dominant culture to offer alternative modes of knowledge.

If archives become sites for the excavation of queer feminist histories, exhibitions can provide the interface between lost histories and public understanding.
As such, exhibitions are often the most controversial sites for the articulation of a radical queer feminist politics.

Exhibiting queer feminist art: the culture wars and curatorial practices, 1980s to the present

The censorship wars of the early 1990s in the US, sparked in part by anxieties about AIDS and the systemic homophobia brought to light by the crisis, disproportionately affected queer artists and artists whose work was seen as an affront to American Christian values, and often targeted exhibitions which made their work available for public view. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was a key target, with official uproar beginning in 1989 when Revd Donald Wildmon of the conservative American Family Association in Tupelo, Mississippi, held a press conference denouncing NEA funding of ‘anti-Christian bigotry,’ referring in particular to Andres Serrano and his 1987 photograph *Piss Christ.*\(^7^2\) Shortly after the press conference, US senators Jesse Helms and Alfonse D’Amato denounced Serrano’s work; following this 36 senators signed a letter to the NEA expressing outrage. Representative Dick Armey then sent a letter signed by 107 Representatives to the NEA in order to call attention to the upcoming retrospective *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment,* scheduled to open at Washington’s Corcoran Gallery of Art in July 1989. The protests were aimed not at Mapplethorpe’s more explicitly sexualized images of men, many of them black (while Mapplethorpe was white), but at a 1976 photograph entitled *Rosie,* of a young white girl whose genitals were visible. On 12 June 1989 the Corcoran Gallery announced that it was cancelling the Mapplethorpe exhibition, an act that was highly criticized, particularly by activist members of the art world and queer activists, who picketed the Corcoran, projecting slides of Mapplethorpe’s photographs on the museum’s façade. *The Perfect Moment* was then exhibited at Cincinnati’s Contemporary Art Center (CAC) through a grant from local businesses. Although the CAC posted warning signs about the graphic nature of some of the photographs, the show was nevertheless shut down on the day of its official opening. Nine members of a Hamilton County grand jury visited the show on opening day and decided that seven of the photographs were obscene, charging the CAC and director Dennis Barrie with two misdemeanor counts each for ‘pandering obscenity and illegal use of a child in nudity-related material.’\(^7^3\)

Other NEA-funded exhibitions that were censored or cancelled around this time included Nan Goldin’s *Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing,* organized at New York’s Artists Space in 1990 to commemorate artists lost to AIDS. Goldin asked radical queer activist and artist David Wojnarowicz to contribute an essay to the catalogue, where he first published ‘Postcards from America: X-rays from Hell,’ in which he wrote about his own experiences as a
person living with AIDS, the effect of AIDS on the poor, and the failures of the government to respond to the crisis adequately.74 NEA funding for the exhibition was subsequently revoked due to the inclusion of Wojnarowicz’s essay. Around the same time, the ‘NEA 4,’ a group of four performance artists all of whom produced explicitly queer and/or feminist work – Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller – had their 1990 NEA grants revoked by NEA Director John Frohnmayer after Congress passed the ‘decency clause,’ which stated that the NEA must consider not just artistic merit, but also ‘general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs of the American public.’75 After filing a suit in Los Angeles federal court seeking an order overruling the revocation of their grants (due to a belief that the grants were revoked for political reasons and not based on the merit of the artists’ work), the grants were eventually reinstated with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, and Frohnmayer was ultimately forced to resign.

The uncoupling of sexual and gender identifications and the politics associated with them from essentializing concepts of biological ‘gender’ (in the case of feminism) or same-sex object choice (in the case of much LGBTQI discourses, even implicitly in those considered the most radical) defines the most influential queer feminist art and curatorial practices as early as the 1980s. While the 1984 exhibition *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality*, curated by Kate Linker and Jane Weinstock for the New Museum of Art in New York, became a touchstone for what came to be called poststructuralist feminist approaches to feminist art and visual theory, the exhibition and catalogue essays arguably reinforced the narrow demographic represented by these discourses (as dominated by straight, white, middle-class, Anglophone interests). At the same time, the rigor of the theoretical arguments in essays in the catalogue by Linker, Weinstock, and others such as Craig Owens and Jacqueline Rose, drawing from psychoanalysis, Marxism, and film theory, crystallized new ways of understanding gender and sexuality as constructed in and through representation. As part of the legacy of innovations in feminist visual theory, dominated by the insightful and sharp work of British feminists such as Mulvey, Kelly, and Pollock and by the artwork of Kelly and New York based feminists such as Kruger, Holzer, and Sherman, the catalogue for *Differences* became hugely influential in the decade of feminist art history following that point. Nothing about *Differences*, however, is particularly queer. In this way the show and its catalogue exemplified the rather narrow focus of feminist art discourses at the time.

Meanwhile, during this period, two epic exhibitions addressing sexuality (rather than gender per se) shifted the terms through which visual practices could be thought to be queer (or gay, lesbian, or feminist, for that matter). These exhibitions – Dan Cameron’s 1982 *Extended Sensibilities: Homosexual Presence in Contemporary Art* at the New Museum, New York, and Lawrence Rinder
Otherwise

and Nayland Blake's 1995 *In a Different Light* at the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum – innovated ways of presenting works identified as queer without reducing the concept to art made by people identified as having same-sex relationships. The shows decoupled queer from still often essentializing assumptions about what constituted gay, lesbian, or even queer art.

Art historian Robert Atkins pinpoints these two American exhibitions as rare examples of queer curating in American museums. Atkins lauds the rejection by Cameron and Rinder and Blake of the most reductive aspects of 1970s-style identity politics, based largely on the establishment of coalitional categories of identity, and their establishment of a way of thinking about queer art based, rather, on aesthetics – as Rinder put it, the emphasis was on 'poetics rather than polemics.' Atkins posits a view of identity politics as potentially ghettoizing but also takes issue with queer exhibitions that neglect to represent queer art history and queer artists – artists dealing with or depicting explicitly queer content, concerns that form the categorical significance of queer as a conceptual springboard. At the same time, however, Atkins is intrigued by Rinder and Blake's decision to include the work of heterosexually defined feminist artists, such as Judy Chicago, Carolee Schneemann, and Ree Morton, in the Berkeley show, thereby abandoning an argument that queer art is necessarily made by artists who are identified as having same-sex object choice in their relationships and echoing Cameron's earlier argument from *Extended Sensibilities* that '[t]o assume that gay content cannot be present without a strong and clear indication that someone involved has sex with members of the same gender is to underestimate both the flexibility of the idea of content and the gay imagination.'

Blake explained the crucial role of queer activism in inspiring and making possible the *In a Different Light* project; in his curatorial essay in the catalogue he argues that '[t]he experience of opening up a place for queer identity on the street [in AIDS activism] then provided the model for doing so in the context of the gallery.' However, he notes that, due in part to the tendency among arts institutions to cut queer work down to 'sizes it could digest,' much of this activist work remains absent from the 'visual memory of the art world,' existing as though in a parallel, yet annexed, art history. This marginalization is still palpable, in spite of the groundbreaking role of these noted exhibitions. For example, in 2010, in response to agitation on the part of the Christian Family Association (which had not seen the work), the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, removed Wojnarowicz's 1987 *A Fire in My Belly*, a short video made in memory of the artist's deceased lover, Peter Hujar, from Jonathan D. Katz and David C. Ward's groundbreaking exhibition of art by gay and lesbian artists, *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*. This recent incident, a reaction based on hearsay relating to a brief moment of the film where the artist depicted a crucifix (discarded in the midst of a
Mexican street festival) being covered by ants, suggests that, as Washington Post art critic Blake Gopnik argued, we are still, at least in the US, subject to political attacks on ‘gayness and images of it,’ based on a conflation of ideas about gay sexuality and anti-Christian sentiments.81

The 1990s witnessed several key exhibitions of feminist art. In the early 1990s, a cluster of shows entitled Bad Girls played on popular culture’s marketing of a ‘naughty’ female empowerment.82 In 1996 two major exhibitions foregrounded feminist themes and feminist art: Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse in, of, and from the Feminine, a lyrical show proposing a new theory of how to imagine ‘the feminine’ in relation to art by women across the twentieth century, curated by Catherine de Zegher for the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston; and Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History, organized by Amelia Jones at the UCLA/Hammer Museum in 1996 and oriented toward exploring the discursive debates around Chicago’s controversial large-scale installation piece The Dinner Party (1974–79).83

A surge of renewed interest in feminist art in the mid to late 2010s resulted in a relatively large number of exhibitions in the Euro-American art world on historical or contemporary feminist art. While some of the shows, such as Global Feminisms (curated by Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin and originating at the Brooklyn Art Museum in 2007), addressed transnational feminisms and multiculturalism in contemporary feminist art practice, others, most notably the historical overview Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution (initially shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, in 2007 and organized by Connie Butler), were more focused on dominant developments in feminist art since the 1970s. In neither show were queer or lesbian issues foregrounded. In this regard it is worth noting the achievements of our contributor, Tirza True Latimer, who has worked independently and with important feminist curators and art historian colleagues such as Whitney Chadwick on feminist art history books and exhibitions and is a member of a curatorial collective that organizes the annual National Queer Arts Festival exhibition at SomArts Gallery, San Francisco.84 Most important in relation to the reignited interest in feminist art in the early 2000s was the expansion of its purview – exhibitions spread across Eastern and Western Europe and even further afield, documenting to that point little-known histories of radical feminist and queer art practices that had occurred in countries such as Poland, the former Yugoslavia, and Spain: see for example Pawel Leszkowicz’s Love and Democracy: Reflections on the Homosexual Question in Poland (for venues in Poznan and Gdansk, Poland, 2005–06);85 Juan Vicente Aliaga’s Gender Battle: The Impact of Feminism in the Art of the 1970s (Contemporary Art Center of Galicia in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 2007); and Bojana Pejic’s Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe (Museum of Modern Art, Vienna, 2009–10), which focused on ‘gender in the
art and social history of Eastern and Southeastern Europe; as Pejic put it in an interview at the time.\textsuperscript{86}

Of great interest here, in the former two exhibitions, Leszkowicz and Aliaga – then emerging art historians and curators invested in queer politics and informed by feminism – were able to foreground the interrelated histories and aesthetics of queer and feminist practices in these cultures, Poland and Spain, themselves marginalized from mainstream art histories dominated by Anglophone US and British interests. Leszkowicz’s show, with its accompanying catalogue (co-authored by his partner Tomasz Kitlinski), \textit{Love and Democracy}, while necessarily essentializing in order to make a space for gay and lesbian culture in an increasingly conservative, homophobic, and anti-feminist post-Soviet-bloc Poland, enacted a feminist and queer approach to curating that, particularly in this context, is both politically urgent and courageous.

Aliaga’s \textit{Gender Battle}, similarly, included work by women and men artists; as with \textit{In a Different Light}, the show focused not on work by ‘women’ or ‘men’ but on art practices inspired by feminism, ‘without which it would be impossible to understand the present,’ as Aliaga perspicaciously notes, and which address sexuality, exploring its mutability and questioning gender categories altogether.\textsuperscript{87} In the end, the \textit{Gender Battle} show was both political (pointing to key issues in feminism and the impact of the feminist critique on women and men as well as cross-gender identified artists) and historical (raising at least the mainstream art world’s consciousness of lesser-known central European works that preceded or paralleled the now market-legitimated and hence mainstream feminist work of Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman).\textsuperscript{88}

As with the two continental European shows, a number of smaller exhibitions across the US and UK, but with particular force in California, also forged a new path in an explicitly queer feminist curating: for example, the sharp-edged \textit{Aqui No Hay Virgenes: Queer Latina Visibility}, organized by Jennifer Doyle and Raquel Gutierrez for the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center Gallery, the \textit{Shared Women} show highlighting queer feminist relations at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, both in the spring of 2007, and Latimer’s organization of the queer feminist exhibitions noted above. In this case, both shows were mounted in response to some of the exclusions perceived in the \textit{Wack!} exhibition at the more mainstream Museum of Contemporary Art, which as noted staged a broad overview of more or less mainstream (predominantly straight, white, middle-class identified) feminist art from the Euro-American context. In this sense queer feminist curatorial and art historical strategies can be said to have emerged out of frustrations with the normativity of mainstream feminist art discourse as well as with the male-dominated tendencies in some queer theory and curating.

Where does this leave us with queer feminist art history?
Sexualities in motion, thoughts toward an ending

In following this genealogy to its current moment (roughly, January 2014 as this book heads toward going to press) – in some senses an impossibility, since we cannot see our moment’s discursive patterns clearly – we want to end by noting the volatile and productive incursion of trans-discourse and politics into both queer and feminist discourse as well as into broader cultural understandings of sexual subjectivity. Forty-five years ago, with the explosion of the feminist art movement, no one could have anticipated that feature films about trans- or at least confusingly sexed subjects and even television/internet series (such as alternative films Paris is Burning [1990], The Crying Game [1992], and Boys Don’t Cry [1999], and the Amazon.com series Transparent [2014–15]) and debates about same-sex marriage would be common fare on mainstream screens, and would even win awards (Transparent won best television series from the Golden Globes in January 2015). These tropes dovetailed with earlier traces of radical gender theory, which allowed for complex and non-binary feminisms to emerge through the exploration of figures such as the cyborg (Donna Haraway’s 1991 ‘Cyborg Manifesto’), the diasporic nomad (from Rosi Braidotti’s 1994 Nomadic Subjects), the Deleuzian subjects in Elizabeth Grosz’s feminist works (such as the 1995 Space, Time, and Perversion), or the transnational queer feminist interspecies subject (Jaspir Puar’s 2007 Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times and, co-edited with Julie Livingstone, the 2011 book Interspecies). In combination with Sedgwick’s fluidly performative gender-queer subjectivities, these theories and alternative visual culture models of open-ended sexualities dovetailed with the increasingly open-ended enactment and experience of gendered and sexed subjectivity made possible by medical (hormonal and surgical) techniques in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Younger generations coming of age in the 1990s and 2000s experienced a world in which television included gay, lesbian, or even queerly ambiguous characters; public high schools have LGBTQI support groups and clubs; and younger and younger children are (in some privileged cases) given the opportunity to reshape themselves hormonally and surgically to attain alternatively gendered selves – albeit not always in non-traditional or non-binary ways. However, while some transsexual discourses and practices thus tend to reinforce essentialist and binary concepts of gender (that is, those that ascribe to the idea that one is born either essentially – if not anatomically – male or female and these techniques are necessary to bring the self into conformity with one’s ‘natural’ gender/sex), it is more and more the case that gender and sexuality have become mapped on to a complex extended continuum, most often neither at one end of the binary or the other. Accordingly, what it means to talk about a coalition of women, as feminist discourse has long presumed to do, no longer seems self evident nor even necessarily desirable.
Yet we would contend that the tools, rigor, outrage, and cleverness of feminist visual theory are still more than necessary in understanding how visual culture works to produce axes of sexed behavior and appearances that affect us all. In turn, we have invited a number of key authors with an eye toward including a range of generational voices, desiring to complicate feminism’s tendency to assume we know what we mean when we say ‘women,’ ‘the feminine,’ or for that matter ‘the male gaze.’ In thinking about how to negotiate structures of identification in the visual register, queer is necessary to feminism in this way, just as feminism’s rigorous methods and strategies are necessary (in our opinion) to queer theory, which otherwise can tend toward extreme abstractions or even covert returns to the patriarchal binary.

Globalization and rapid advances in understandings of race and ethnicity – in the best cases, these are detached as well from ‘essential’ or ‘genetic’ bodily characteristics and seen as performative and constructed – are accompanied by devastating entrenchments and returns to fundamentalist, often religiously expressed, concepts of the ‘proper’ subject (of gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc.). Still, the current situation, attached as it is to the complex previous genealogies of feminism and queer theory and practice, affords space for cultural theorists such as Judith ‘Jack’ Halberstam, whose explorations of modes of embodiment and self-display across visual cultural examples in works such as *Female Masculinity* (1998) and *In a Queer Time and Place* (2005) have radicalized feminist visual analysis as well as queer theory, and Beatriz Preciado, a radical queer feminist theorist – neither clearly male nor clearly female – who has joined a keen attention to the political uses afforded by opening out affect and autobiography to a rigorously researched history of ‘technosexuality’ (the medical technologies that are shifting and changing hormonal and anatomical sexual selves) in works such as *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (2013). Providing a brief history of Euro-American beliefs about and research on sexuality in the twentieth century, Preciado then goes on to take apart the ‘pharmacopornographic control of subjectivity,’ pointedly critiquing the way in which medical science conspires with consumer culture to promote a newly fashionable ‘autopornographic body’ as the site of ‘minute governmental and industrial management.’ The author’s deep research (which included Preciado’s own self-subjection to hormone treatments) exposes the continuity between medical and visual regimes of gender and sexual identity formations and points a way forward – highly personal, yet rigorously historical and theoretical – to examine critically modes of ‘sexual difference and otherwise’ in the twenty-first century.

We can only hope that the rich and expansive essays and dialogues in this volume, produced as they are across generational and geographical points of view, also provide such an opening. As Preciado puts it, we are now in a zone
where radical enactors of a range of gender/sexual modes of being – from Del LaGrace Volcano to Sandy Stone – are ‘master hackers of gender, genuine traffickers of semiotic-technological flux, producers and tinkers of copyleft biocodes.’

Let us, then, present this book as a compendium of texts that might be viewed as written by ‘master hackers’ not only of gender/sex norms but of the vast array of theories of visual analysis that have led from explicitly binary gender theory (important to break the codes still oppressing gendered subjects in the 1960s) to the numerous more fluid methods of analysis across fields addressing the visual in the twenty-first century. We are hackers, but we recognize the importance of these genealogies of thought to our development of hacker tools – after all, one must master the substratum of coding in order to know how to infiltrate and shift the codes. This in itself is an act of feminist perspicacity and generosity toward our forebears, which also requires a queer curiosity toward some of the blind alleys and mistaken fixities of these previous theories.

Notes

5 This is particularly clear in comparing his lively and explicitly political commentary in late interviews, where he expressed the views of an activist for queer rights, to the earlier work’s articulation of methods for historical understanding. See, for example, his interview on homosexual rights: Michel Foucault and Jean Le Bitoux, Interview: ‘The Gay Science,’ trans. Nicolae Morar and Daniel W. Smith, Critical Inquiry 37 (Spring 2011), 385–403.
6 Hirschfeld, a German doctor and a key figure in developing the field of sexology (centered in Germany in this period), founded the Institute for the Science of Sexuality in Berlin (1919–33, closed down by the Nazis) and organized the ‘Congresses for Sexual Reform,’ which took place in the 1920s and early 1930s in various European cities.
7 On these historical points, see Jonathan D. Katz and David Ward, Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2010).
8 See Simone de Beauvoir, Le deuxième sexe (Paris: Gallimard, 1949); The Second

9 See Jones, ‘Art as a Binary Proposition.’ It must be noted that Fanon’s writings show moments of homophobia and misogyny, and Beauvoir’s clear signs of class, racial, and ethnic privilege. Still it is remarkable that they were both in different ways able to recognize the complexity of modes of oppression based on identifications – at a time when few were willing even to acknowledge basic flaws in Euro-American systems of ‘democracy.’

10 See the classic books of the period such as William H. Whyte’s Organization Man (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956) and David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney’s The Lonely Crowd (1950) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

11 The question was asked by J. Parnell Thomas, the chair of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, to the Hollywood Ten, ten Hollywood screenwriters and directors who, in 1947, were subpoenaed to testify about charges that communists were infiltrating the movie industry. The Ten were cited for contempt for refusing to testify.


13 Stephen J. Whitfield, The Culture of the Cold War (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 44.


Butt, *Between You and Me*, 3.


Such as, arguably, the art discourse associated with the New York based journal *October*, which has (as the chapter of Shaked in this volume makes clear) repudiated attention to identification or identity politics within the purview of art criticism, art practice, or art history.

The Kinsey reports were published in 1943 (*Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*) and 1953 (*Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*).

The term ‘homophile’ was used throughout the 1950s and 1960s and was taken up in the names of organizations such as the University of Toronto Homophile Association, formed in 1969, whose first chair was Charles C. Hill, longtime Curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery of Canada. See April Kemick, ‘Heritage plaque honours Ontario’s first gay and lesbian rights group,’ *U of T [University of Toronto] News* (3 November 2011), available online at http://www.news.utoronto.ca/heritage-plaque-honours-ontarios-first-gay-and-lesbian-rights-group (accessed 3 August 2014).

According to some women who knew him, he was supportive of women and this comment was a joke; see Mike Miller, ‘Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael): Memories’ (1999), available online at http://www.crmvet.org/mem/stokely.htm (accessed 22 July 2014). Nonetheless it sparked resistance on the part of women
– mostly black but also of other ethnic identifications – who otherwise wanted to support the SNCC.

31 See Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963). Key institutions founded by feminist artists, curators, and art critics during this period include those originating out of the Feminist Art Program in Southern California (founded in 1970 by Judy Chicago and her students at California State University, Fresno, and moved to California Institute of the Arts to be co-run with Miriam Schapiro in 1971), such as the Woman’s Building (Los Angeles), which housed various feminist art institutions; and A.I.R. Gallery in New York (founded 1972). For a brief history of developments in the UK, see Amelia Jones, ‘An “Other” History: Feminist Art in Britain Since 1970,’ in Contemporary Art in the United Kingdom, ed. Phoebe Adler (London: Black Dog Press, 2013), 176–85. This cluster of feminist art initiatives in London, New York, and Los Angeles is proof that the institutionalized forms of feminist art, theory, and criticism were largely based in Anglophone cultures. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also had feminist institutions by the mid-1970s – such as, for example, La Centrale/Powerhouse Gallery in Montreal (founded in 1974 as a more or less straight, white, feminist – albeit bilingual [French/English] – institution, it has metamorphosed with the times into a radical alternative space supporting LGBTQI feminist work of all kinds). See also Erin Silver’s PhD dissertation, ‘Sites Unseen and Scenes Unsighted: Histories of Feminist and Queer Alternative Art Spaces, ca. 1970–2012,’ McGill University, June 2013.

32 See, for example, the Combahee River Collective’s ‘A Black Feminist Statement,’ 1974, where they note: ‘One issue that is of major concern to us and that we have begun to publicly address is racism in the white women’s movement. As black feminists we are made constantly and painfully aware of how little effort white women have made to understand and combat their racism, which requires among other things that they have a more than superficial comprehension of race, color, and black history and culture.’ Available online at The Feminist eZine, http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/modern/Black-Feminist-Statement.html (accessed 15 August 2014). The Combahee River Collective was a radical lesbian feminist group of black women based in Boston; importantly, for them not only race but sexual orientation had to be centrally considered as part of any feminist politics.


38 The separatism in some arms of feminism and lesbian feminism was extreme. For example, according to Joseph Hawkins, the Director of the ONE Archives and Foundation at the University of Southern California (where Amelia Jones now teaches), until it was acquired by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the June Mazer Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles prohibited men (or those identified as such) from visiting or using the archive. The connection with a major university obviously made such exclusions impossible and the Mazer was forced to change its rules. From a conversation between Jones and Hawkins, October 2014.


42 Raven in Raven and Iskin, ‘Through the Peephole: Lesbian Sensibility in Art,’ 22.


47 On this point, and the fact that attempts to include some work by black, Asian, and Chicana artists were inadequate at institutions such as the Woman’s Building, see Senga Nengudi’s remarks from an interview with Amelia Jones in October 2009, an excerpt of which is published in Jones, ‘Lost Bodies: Early 1970s Los Angeles Performance Art in Art History,’ in Live Art in LA: Performance in Southern California, 1970–1983, ed. Peggy Phelan (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 126–7.
48 See Amelia Jones’s interview with Terry Wolverton for ‘Lost Bodies,’ 12 May 2010, the full transcript of which is held at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, and Wolverton’s important history, *Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at the Woman’s Building* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishing, 2002). Both *Heresies* (1977–92) and *Chrysalis* (1977–81) included articles and content relating to ‘lesbian art.’

49 See Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1987), in which Shilts, a journalist, criticizes the way in which Reagan and his administration refused to take action and lays the groundwork for the nationwide AIDS activism movement, as noted by an AIDS health activist David R. Fair, cited in Don Sapatkin, ‘AIDS: The Truth about Patient Zero,’ *Philadelphia Inquirer* (6 May 2013), available online at http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/05/06/aids_the_truth_about_patient_zero.html (accessed 11 September 2014). Controversially, as this article outlines, Shilts (pressed by his publisher) also promoted the ‘Patient Zero’ theory of AIDS (pinpointing a single Canadian flight attendant as having spread AIDS across North America, labeling him, with racist language, as ‘the Quebecois version of Typhoid Mary’) as a way of gaining publicity for his book.

50 ‘Queers Read This: A leaflet distributed at pride march in NY,’ published anonymously by Queers, June 1990; available online as a manifesto, http://www.qrd.org/qrd/misc/text/queers.read.this (accessed 27 July 2014).


53 José Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Jennifer Doyle, *Sex Objects: Art and the Dialectics of Desire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). Notably, Muñoz and Doyle were students of Sedgwick’s at Duke University and their work sustains the subtlety and fierceness of Sedgwick’s meshing of queer and feminist politics. This work of Sedgwick and her students has formed an increasingly strong and identifiable strand in queer theory, some of which is feminist. There have even been rumors abroad of a ‘Duke mafia’
dominating queer and queer feminist theory, comprised not only of the work of Sedgwick and her students but also the work of other authors publishing under editor Ken Wissoker’s guidance in a vibrant strand of queer theory books at Duke University Press – if anything this phrase points to what we have noted earlier as the dominance of a particular strand of US-based queer theory in these discourses.


55 Love, Feeling Backward, 2.

56 DIVA TV (Damned Interfering Video Activists), a video-documenting affinity group of ACT UP, was founded in 1989. It documented public events including ACT UP protests, actions, and demonstrations, political funerals, and AIDS conferences. More information on DIVA TV can be found on the ACT UP NY website, http://www.actupny.org/divatv/index.html (accessed 11 September 2014).

57 Although the SILENCE = DEATH poster has been associated with Gran Fury, it was actually produced by The Silence = Death Project, which predated the formation of Gran Fury, as well as ACT UP. As Avram Finkelstein, one of the six members of this early AIDS collective, has written, ‘Silence = Death was designed by six individuals who felt alone, but raised their voices anyway and discovered they were surrounded by a community. Gran Fury came out of this community and was anointed spokesperson by an institutional framework hungering for a voice on this issue. Future generations might find it helpful to know that while communal responses have exceptional potency, power also resides with individuals.’ See Finkelstein, ‘AIDS 2.0,’ POZ (10 January 2013), http://www.poz.com/articles/avram_finkelstein_2676_23355.shtml (accessed 24 February 2013).

58 As with queer theory, AIDS activism (driven by queers) was dominated by US-based models, not surprisingly given the concentration of the syndrome in American cities with large populations of gay men. Nonetheless, other places hosted key activist groups. In Canada, AIDS ACTION NOW! was founded in Toronto in February 1988 and, like their American counterparts in ACT UP, members of the group focused their early efforts on acquiring access to experimental treatment and having a voice regarding standards of medical care. While the group has been active since the late 1980s, there has been a recent resurgence due to the energies of a younger generation of AIDS activists and the development of a contingent devoted to activism through art and graphic means, the POSTERVIRUS project, begun in 2011. This is organized by Alex McClelland and Jessica Lynn Whitbread, and has commissioned new broadside posters by local artists which have been wheat-pasted in cities across Canada and the US. See the AIDS ACTION NOW! website, http://www.aidsactionnow.org/ and the POSTERVIRUS tumblr, http://postervirus.tumblr.com/ (both accessed 11 September 2014).
Otherwise


65 Ibid., 8.


67 See the sources in note 54, as well as Doyle’s more recent *Hold It Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).


72 For a history of the culture wars in relation to the art world, see Jonathan D. Katz, ‘“The Senators were Revolted”: Homophobia and the Culture Wars,’ in *Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 231–48.

73 Steven Dubin, *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions* (London and
New York: Routledge, 1992), 185. Barrie and the museum successfully appealed later that same year (1990) and the charges were repealed.


76 Lawrence Rinder, ‘An Introduction to In a Different Light,’ in In a Different Light: Visual Culture, Sexual Identity, Queer Practice, ed. Nayland Blake, Lawrence Rinder, and Amy Scholder (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995), 1.


78 Nayland Blake, ‘Curating In a Different Light,’ in In a Different Light, 24–5.

79 Ibid., 26–7. The 2012 exhibition This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s, curated by Helen Molesworth at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, suggests that historians and curators are increasingly turning their attention to the art work of the 1980s, which, in Molesworth's opinion, must necessarily include the influence of feminist thought and the AIDS crisis on cultural production; see Molesworth, This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago/New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012). This is a nascent historical project and surely more work on the subject will be forthcoming; however, it should be noted that Amelia Jones's 1996 exhibition Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History attempted to lay the groundwork for rethinking the ‘sexual politics’ of the 1970s and 1980s in relation to feminism – albeit with little attention paid to the AIDS crisis or links between feminism and queer theory; see Jones, ed. Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).


81 These included the 1993 Bad Girls exhibition co-sponsored by the Institute of Contemporary Art, London and the Contemporary Arts Centre, Glasgow and the Bad Girls exhibition at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and its ‘sister’ show with the same title at the Wight Art Gallery, UCLA, in 1994.

82 See Catherine de Zegher, ed., Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of Twentieth Century Art in, of and from the Feminine; a smaller version of the show was organized initially for the Beguinaing of Saint-Elizabeth in Kortrijk, Belgium in 1994–95; and Jones, ed., Sexual Politics.

83 Examples include her organization of the exhibition Becoming/Unbecoming Monochrome: Harmony Hammond (RedLine Center for Contemporary Art,


Aliaga has noted of the show: ‘This project attempts to examine feminism’s contributions, during the seventies, brought to light and served as a platform to launch a series of approaches, without which it would be impossible to understand the present. Without denying the pioneering character of the many proposals that sprouted in the United States, The Gender Battle goes a step further. It addresses the problematic of the egalitarian policies emerging in countries like France, Spain (during the years of dictatorship and transition to democracy), Great Britain, Austria, including some individual figures worldwide, especially Latin American, Africa and Asia.’ See press release, http://www.undo.net/it/mostra/58836 (accessed 12 September 2014).

Other significant international feminist art exhibitions in the 2010s included the 2005 Venice Biennale, curated by María de Corral and Rosa Martínez and with a strong feminist slant; the exhibition of feminist art at the Migros Museum in Zurich in 2006, *It's Time for Action (There's No Option)*, curated by Heike Munder; the ambitious *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang: 45 Years of Art and Feminism* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Bilbao (2007), curated by Xabier Arakistain; and *Off-Center Femininities: Regards from Serbia and Montenegro*, organized by Jovana Stokic at Robert Else Gallery, California State University, Sacramento in 2007.


Ibid., 395.