

GENDER EQUALITY: UN- GENDERING MEMORY AND MUSEUM PRACTICES

SEPTEMBER
29-30,
2023

VENUE:
SLOVENE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM,
METELKOVA ULICA 2,
1000 LJUBLJANA



Foto: Svetozar Busić, hrani: MNSZS.



SLOVENE
ETHNOGRAPHIC
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GENDER EQUALITY: UNGENDERING MEMORY AND MUSEUM PRACTICES

Museum collections have emerged from the need to organise and categorise the world, attempting to bring together incompatible and diverse practices and memories into a coherent narrative. The binary axis of female/male, which is assumed as natural, helps to perpetuate patriarchal values and marginalise people whose gender identity does not fit into this binary. Gender categorisation is fundamental both for the collection of material and its interpretation, which contributes to its perpetuation. This often means that the male perspective is privileged over the female and that other genders are not discussed or represented, which maintains gender inequality and the exclusion of gender minorities. What would it mean to question and explore gender categories in a museum setting? How do museum narratives shift when we look at objects and trace their history from a broader understanding of gender? In what ways are the strategies of care practiced in relation to the museum's communities, marginalized voices and, last but not least, internal processes of production and creation?

Through case studies of museum collections, art practices and activism, we aim to explore possible methodologies and approaches to tracing alternative narratives of gender, female empowerment and the hegemony of the essentialized gender binary. Special emphasis will be given to methods of collaboration and co-creation with various publics in order to examine how to care for gender narratives and how to build infrastructures of care in an equitable and inclusive manner. The International Workshop on Gender and Museum Practices is designed with the purpose of bringing together the international community of academics, museum curators, researchers, activists, art practitioners, and interested parties to discuss current research while providing the opportunity to share thoughts, exchange ideas, extend the network and explore current and future research directions.

The workshop is co-funded by the COST Action "Trace as a Research Agenda for Climate Change, Technology Studies, and Social Justice" (TRACTS) within the WG2 Traces and Social Justice, and Slovenian Research Agency within the postdoctoral project Z6-3225 "Emancipatory Politics of Women's Social Movements and the Postsecular Turn in Feminism".

Please note that all sessions will be conducted exclusively in English, and there will be no provision for translations or interpretation services.

PROGRAMME

29 September 2023 | Slovene Ethnographic Museum

08.45 – 09.00

Welcome

09.00 – 09.40

KEYNOTE

Moderation: Tina Palaić

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

Gaby Franger, Museum Frauenkultur Regional-International, Fürth, Germany

09.40 – 11.20

PANEL 1 | UNGENDERING MUSEUM PRACTICES

Moderation: Corinne Brenko

Be(com)ing a Woman

Urška Repar, Museum of Recent History Celje, Slovenia

Rethinking Women's Museums

Tijana Jakovljević – Šević, Museum Frauenkultur Regional-International, Fürth, Germany

Exhibition the Women's Side of Grčkoškolska Street – Discovering the Women's History of one City

Ivana Jovanovič Gudurič, The City Museum of Novi Sad, Serbia

Museum of Women – Love and Mission

Elsa Ballauri, Women's Museum, Tirana, Albania

11.20 – 11.35

Break

11.35 – 13.35

PANEL 2 | CARE AND REPAIR: FEMINIST APPROACHES TO ART

Moderation: Ewa Chomicka

1990s, Feminism and Art Institutions in Central and Eastern Europe

Wiktoria Szczupacka, Polish Academy of Sciences, Kulik-KwieKulik Foundation, Poland

From Public Space to Museums (and Back?): On Representation and Methodologies

Petra Šarin, Institute of Art History, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal

Not a Day Without Herstory

Dr. sc. Tihana Puc, Muzej mesta Zagreb, Croatia

Secondary Archive – Recent Art History Written by Women

Iga Szczepańska, Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation, Poland

Why We Need Women's Museums: Digital Platform ŽeNSki muzej

Silvia Dražić, ŽeNSki muzej, Novi Sad, Serbia

13.35 – 14.40

Lunch break

14.40 – 16.20	<p>PANEL 3 FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON DIFFICULT HERITAGE Moderation: Urška Purg</p> <p>Intersectionality in Museums: Representing the Diverse Experiences of Women Workers Dr Tamara Nikolić Đerić, Kolkrea Collective, Slovenia</p> <p>It's Not the Principle, It Is What's Going on Right Now! Hana Ćurak, Humboldt University Berlin, Collaborative Research Center "Intervening Arts", Germany</p> <p>Curating Conflict-related Sexual Violence: Museological (In)/(Hyper)-visibilities at London's Imperial War Museum Megan O'Mahony, London School of Economics and Political Science and Imperial War Museums, UK</p>
16.20 – 16.30	<i>Break</i>
16.30 – 16.50	<p>INTRO INTO A WORKSHOP Moderation: Urška Repar</p> <p>Menstrual Movements and Feminist Spirituality: The Red Tent Case Study Dr Polona Sitar, Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska, Slovenia</p>
16.50 – 17.00	<i>Break</i>
17.00 – 19.00	<p>WORKSHOP FOR CONTRIBUTING PARTICIPANTS ONLY</p> <p>Laboratory of Embroidering Movement Eliza Proszczuk (visual artist) & Monika Szpunar (choreographer), Poland</p>

30 September 2023 | Ljubljana City Center

For contributing participants only | *Optional*

LJUBLJANA FEMINIST TOUR

Jasmina Jerant, Urbana Vrana

ABSTRACTS

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

Gaby Franger, Museum Frauenkultur Regional-International, Fürth, Germany

Looking at the network of women's and gender museums, founded in 2012, very different histories of origin, conceptual approaches, challenges and obstacles are found. What unites them is the claim to make women of every social situation and from all historical epochs visible, to give them a voice and to interfere current discourses on patriarchal, hegemonic social currents in the world, gender justice and human rights issues of discrimination and persecution based on gender.

Another level of discussion is whether something as banal as women's everyday life, associated more with brooms and dustpans than with strategies of a "survival art", is at all aesthetically and discursively suitable for museums?

And what is art at all? The separation of "elite art" and "folk art" especially in European museums can also be seen as a powerful instrument of undervaluation of women's art, whose origins often lie in the so-called traditional female activities, or is created by rural indigenous women and thus not defined as contemporary art, which is connotated as urban, academic and predominantly male.

Current approaches that they are taking in the network will be discussed through examples of new developments in Africa and different approaches in Europe, Latin America and Asia.

Be(com)ing a Woman |

Urška Repar, Museum of Recent History Celje, Slovenia

In 2022, the Museum of Recent History Celje opened a temporary exhibition titled *Be(com)ing a Woman*. The exhibition was developed following a reflection on how to introduce gender awareness into the museum space, which is often overlooked when dealing with museum material and museum work in general. By doing so, the author explored ways to talk about women as well as what to say about this issue, which has re-

cently occupied a number of scientific disciplines. The author focused this exhibition on the stories of women in Slovenian society in the past decades and in the present. In moving between the individual and the collective, she illustrated the relationship between our individual experiences (which are, in turn, part of a universal one) and a particular social, political, and historical context. The exhibition was intended to stimulate reflection on intimate feelings and gender awareness, social relations, as well as representations of women in museums generally.

Rethinking Women's Museums |

Tijana Jakovljević – Šević, Museum Frauenkultur Regional-International, Fürth, Germany

Women's museums began to develop in the eighties of the 20th century as a response to the work of traditional museums and their neglect or incomplete and uniform presentation of the contributions of women in creating history, art and culture. The increase in their number, especially in Europe and America, has been recorded since the nineties, when almost two-thirds of existing women's museums were opened due to the momentum of women's and gender studies and the development of the concept of feminist and gender museology, which resulted also in the emergence of gender/gender-oriented museums. These two groups of museums appear today in different parts of the world.

As the concepts of feminism and gender have changed in relation to the heyday of women's museums, and they are today preferred to be spoken of in the plural as feminisms and genders, the question arises of the objects of women's museums, the need for their re-evaluating and the role of these institutions in society which is actively engaged in breaking the binary.

The contribution will show the work of women's museums from the inside, through examples of the exhibition practice of the Regional-International Museum of Women's Culture (Museum Frauenkultur Regional-International, Fürth, Germany). Emphasis will be placed on subjects and objects that are traditionally viewed as ethnographic/anthropological.

Exhibition Women's Side of Grčkoškolska Street - Discovering the Women's History of One City |

Ivana Jovanović Gudurić, The City Museum of Novi Sad, Serbia

The exhibition *The Women's Side of Grčkoškolska Street*, produced by the City Museum of Novi Sad in 2023, shows the process of creating a female civic culture in Novi Sad area during the last decades of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century. This process has been shown through the biographies of three women who have made significant contributions to the local female school education, literature, arts, charity work and activism – Mileva Simić, Zora Vucetić Stefanović and Vida Vulko Varadjanin. They all grew up in new urban society which, on the one hand, was influenced by European liberal ideas, and on the other hand, subject to traditional patriarchal principles. In a society in which only men were present in the public space, where the measure and model of socially acceptable behaviour was maintained by the church and the holders of political power (men), these three women formed a lifestyle that discreetly step out of the generally accepted female status. Through their own work and the development of their inclinations and talents, they created personal narratives, which was a rarity for women in that time.

Museum of Women – Love and Mission |

Elsa Ballauri, Women's Museum, Tirana, Albania

To build a museum for women, one must go through several important stages that begin with love. The love and passion to say something more about a world that remains unknown and undiscovered coincides with the challenge one sets for oneself to go further on the path of activism in defense of human rights. This has also been their main path. The museum could not be established solely as a presentation of the collection, despite the magic that the objects carry. The museum aims to reveal what patriarchy, politics, parties, and societal indifference have kept in the dark, to uncover the life and spirit of the women who sacrificed in Albania's tumultuous history. The totalitarian system established after the

Second World War introduced the infamous rule of exclusion, class war, and oblivion. The museum stands as an act against oblivion and serves as another testament to the importance of women knowing themselves.

Education on tolerance, recognition, communication, and anti-discrimination, as well as addressing taboo topics in society such as LGBTI, marginalized minorities, and violence against women, are among the many discussions that the women's museum in Tirana tackles. Combining these discussions with exhibitions on these subjects proves a fruitful endeavor. Importantly, including young people in these active conversations is a vital mission of the museum.

1990s, Feminism and Art Institutions in Central and Eastern Europe |

Wiktoria Szczupacka, Polish Academy of Sciences, Kulik-KwieKulik Foundation, Poland

In her book published in 2020, titled *Visitors. An American Feminist in East Central Europe*, Ann Snitow a feminist activist, described her experience of bringing the feminist movement from the USA to post socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Obviously, emerging non-governmental organizations and activist women played an important role in this process. Some of them also dealt with art. Among many important figures, contact-persons, Snitow recalled Barbara Limanowska – a polish art historian, who also happened to be an editor of *Ośka*. Periodical of the women's information center. Limanowska was also one of the first introducing feminism to art history in Poland. The intertwining of art and the introduction of western feminism into the region has yet to be explored.

In fact, stories of this kind, revealing trajectories of feminism and its connection to certain policies and economies, began to be told only recently. This not only allows taking a more attentive look at what happened during the systemic transformation, but also to bring back the memory of earlier feminisms, which in post-communist countries were erased from memory in the 1990s. Besides, it encourages one to question Western narratives, chronologies and interpretative methods. This issue, and the need to know and understand own

feminist genealogies, has already been taken up by historians, anthropologists, and sociologists, but it is still poorly represented in art history.

That is why the presentation will not summarize the research that has been already done, but rather will point to an area that seems to be very interesting to explore. A glimpse at the time of transformation, the 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe - the strategies of museums and NGOs, the exhibitions and collections policies, the publications – all this explains a lot about the specificity of feminism in the region. Art institutions seem to be the perfect ground to explore feminist genealogy and art in Central and Eastern Europe.

From Public Space to Museums (and Back?): On Representation and Methodologies |

Petra Šarin, Institute of Art History, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal

The author deals with problematics in art history from the point of view of feminist criticism, by analysing strategies and methodologies used by curators and (women) artists in museums and in public space, when representing women as authors or subjects of an artwork, or women's histories and experiences in different socio-political contexts. Through various case studies, mostly focused on Croatian art and art institutions, the following topics will be tackled: women's art without history; obliterated and invisible women's and worker's histories in public space; dominant narratives in public space; all-women exhibitions and possible pitfalls; etc. As feminist thought has remained marginalized within the dominant current in Croatian art history, the aim of this talk is to bring new insights to the existing situation and illuminate the positions of feminist criticism in the Croatian art (history) as well as raise questions for further reflection upon this problematics, which has been insufficiently contextualized in a theoretical sense and marginalized or completely unrepresented within academic curricula.

Not a Day Without Herstory |

Dr. sc. Tihana Puc, Zagreb City Museum, Croatia

Not a Day Without Herstory is a long-term

project in progress aimed at fostering social change by promoting gender equality, equity and justice through a participatory platform for learning, encouragement and exchange centered around the Collection of Croatian Women Painters born in the 19th Century at the Zagreb City Museum.

Unique in the Croatian, but also in the broader European context, the collection of more than thousand artworks by female painters brings into the museum setting issues of neglected women's history, struggle for women's rights, gender identity, sexual orientation, marginalization, stigmatization, inclusion and exclusion, institutional violence against women, women's mental health etc., and becomes a resource of tools for rethinking, educating and activating more gender just and compassionate society.

The project is oriented primarily at inclusion of marginalized groups, of those named as the caring classes (D. Graeber), who are at the same time traditionally the most absent from the museum collections and/or from attending them. Drawing on the collection of female artists, that have been historically excluded from the museums, the project links them to present day exclusions in an attempt to challenge them by creating a platform for participating, unlearning and learning and potentially healing.

Secondary Archive – Recent Art History Written by Women |

Iga Szczepańska, Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation, Poland

Secondary Archive: secondaryarchive.org is an online research program and database presenting the history of Eastern European art from a woman's perspective. The Archive is an international project focused on Central and Eastern Europe, created by the Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation (Poland) with partners: Tirana Art Lab (Albania), Artsvit Gallery/Goethe Institut e.V. (Belarus), MeetFactory (Czech Republic), Easttopics (Hungary), Oral History Initiative (Kosovo), Center for Cultural Decontamination (Serbia), Björnsonova (Slovakia) and Ambasada Kultury (Ukraine). The web portal secondaryarchive.org provides free access to more than 400 profiles of female artists, including newly published

texts, the result of collaboration between artists and curators, specifically for this archive. Representing three generations of women from Albania, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine, among others, the project aims to promote, discover and restore the memory of female artists and the most important phenomena in contemporary art in this region from a female perspective.

Secondary Archive brings together not at all secondary artists. Women in their work very consciously address contemporary issues, commenting on the sociopolitical complexities of the region, as well as drawing attention to the problems of minorities. Therefore, the authors believe that by uniting into a community like our initiative, they have the tools to become a relevant and loud voice, having a real, positive impact on our part of the world and possibly beyond.

As a Foundation, they are closely observing the current activities of the members of their archive, and thanks to this they have the opportunity to quickly recognize new and important phenomena sprouting in their works, which have the potential to contribute to the overall development of thought. The last noticed theme is the motif of fatigue in the age of late capitalism - this issue, however, does not go unanswered. The answer is rest, as a form of rebellion, which all of us and our world so badly need now.

Therefore, let's rebel, but calmly and through calmness.

Why We Need Women's Museums: Digital Platform ŽeNSki muzej |

Silvia Dražić, žeNSki muzej, Novi Sad, Serbia

The museum as a place of memory, i.e. as an institution for the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage, shapes our image of the past, and it also regulates our understanding of the present and our projections of the future.

At the same time, as a kind of Foucault's archive, the museum prescribes what can be shown and regulates (even if invisible) the manner of presentation. By determining what should be considered valuable in society, the museum is also the place of exclusion. Thus, the museum becomes a place of oblivion.

Women and their contribution to cultural, economic and political development are excluded or insufficiently visible in public discourse.

It was these empty places, places of silence, which filled the women's museums. We can trace their creation from the sixties to the present day. Adopting the method of feminist theory, women's museums offered a different approach in understanding the past and have a significant role as instruments of social change.

The Digital platform žeNSki muzej deals with research, digitalization, systematization and presentation of women's and feminist heritage, as well as current women's art practice in Novi Sad.

Intersectionality in Museums: Representing the Diverse Experiences of Women Workers |

Dr. Tamara Nikolić Đerić, Kolkrea Collective, Slovenia

The presentation addresses the opportunities offered by intersectionality as a theoretical framework when representing women workers in museum contexts with a view to build inclusive spaces where the under- or unrepresented are no longer ignored.

With the rise of women and/or workers' museums and exhibitions there is a risk to generate generalised and oversimplified representation of the subject, thus strengthening stereotypes and the essentialisation of people who very often have only one or two things in common: their gender and/ or profession.

Based on the case study of women workers employed in the fish and tobacco processing industries in Rovinj, Croatia, the author addresses the different positions and roles these women played throughout the 20th century. In addition to gender and profession, the individual identities are further analysed through the intersection of ethnicity, class, marital and social status, religious beliefs, politics and corporeity showing a variety of identities and challenging the often-assumed women's and/or worker's solidarity.

It's Not the Principle, It Is What's Going on Right Now! |

Hana Ćurak, Humboldt University Berlin, Collaborative Research Center "Intervening

Arts”, Germany

The presentation will look at various figurations of “partizanka”, a figure of Yugoslav Partisan woman, elaborated on especially through curatorial, archival and artistic practices and her contested positionality as both a trace of resistance and a disposition within various violent temporalities. Exploring several specific case studies which have addressed the revolutionary feminist agency of “partizanka”, the author will outline the strategies of care and knowledge production, thinking of them at the scale of political collectivity rather than individual relationships. In doing so, the presentation will explore the “translation of disposition into norms” (Ferrarese, 2022) and specifically try to touch upon counter-memory as a strategy of care.

Curating Conflict-related Sexual Violence: Museological (In)/(Hyper)-visibilities at London’s Imperial War Museum |

Megan O’Mahony, London School of Economics and Political Science and Imperial War Museums, UK

In October 2021, London’s Imperial War Museum (IWM) opened their new Second World War galleries to the public, marking the first time that an object in the permanent collection had been used to tell a story of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) as a theme of war. Despite this advancement, the assumption that the Museum does not have the capacity to address this subject prevails. In fact, material and visual culture of CRSV has existed in the Museum’s vast collection for many years, largely under-researched, mis-catalogued and obscured from public display. This paper outlines and characterises ways in which IWM curates CRSV, illustrating how curatorial practices equate to gendered and gendering arbitrations on what is ‘appropriate’, ‘representative’, and moreover what ‘counts’ as CRSV and as the material and visual culture of war. It explores how the curation of CRSV reproduces the simultaneous and paradoxical projects of making sexual violence invisible, visible and hyper-visible, as well as how it reflects the particular institutional, imperial gender politics of museums. Seeking to add nuance to discourses of mu-

seal politics, this paper argues for a form of negotiated curatorial and institutional agency, where the professional and the bureaucratic is inherently gendered and gendering.

The Political Potential of Feminist-Spiritualist Menstrual Activism in the Case of the Red Tent |

Polona Sitar, Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska, Slovenia

Menstrual blood is still regarded as taboo in many parts of the world. An important form of breaking the menstrual taboo is the Red Tent movement, founded in 2007 in the USA as part of the women’s spirituality movement. In this presentation, the author wants to better understand how global menstrual social movements question and change the social order, focusing on the Red Tent as an example of feminist-spiritual menstrual activism. In spiritual women’s groups, where women’s equality with men is a real possibility – moreover, where women’s superiority is implicitly emphasized – participants can feel empowered and compensate for the lack of power they experience in everyday life. She will try to highlight the socially transformative potential of spiritual feminism in order to understand whether the Red Tent gatherings also contain a wider political potential for structural changes in society that goes beyond the personal empowerment of women. The author will also be interested in the openness of this movement to the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people in the context of questioning the hegemony of the essentialized gender binary. The research is methodologically based on ethnographic fieldwork in the form of participant observation in Red Tent gatherings in Slovenia, semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants and hosts, and an in-depth content analysis of interactions as manifested in digital communication (websites, Facebook, etc.).

Laboratory of Embroidering Movement |

Eliza Proszczuk (visual artist) & Monika Szpunar (choreographer), Poland

An interdisciplinary workshop led by Eliza Proszczuk and Monika Szpunar will serve as a prelude to a further artistic project at the

intersection of visual arts and public debate. Combining embroidery and choreographic practices, it refers to the process of making textiles, a tradition that has been significant in many cultures and has belonged to women in particular. In this case, they draw inspiration from the tradition of collective embroidery of tablecloths. During the workshop, we will delve into this process, exploring critical and social aspects as well as individual experiences. The primary aim is to invite participants into a collaborative practice that reveals points of contact, overlaps, but also highlights the divergences and disconnections among them. To achieve this, we will use choreographic tools to draw attention to the individual and physical experience of gesticulation, which they will then attempt to translate into the practice of embroidery. Consequently, we will create an embroidered tablecloth being an archive of movement. The workshop will last two hours and it is dedicated to active participants of the event.

We recommend wearing clothes and shoes that do not restrict movements.

LJUBLJANA FEMINIST TOUR

Get ready to put on a pair of feminist glasses because you're about to read Ljubljana through a gender perspective. With a pinch of queer and non-binary interpretations, this is one of the first, if not the first regular feminist tour in the world! Join us on a journey through pre-socialist and socialist struggles for women's rights, as well as present-day gender issues in Slovenian society. This tour showcases iconic female artists, urban architects, political leaders, the Women's Anti-Fascist Front etc. (<https://ptich.si/ljubljana-feminist-tour/>)

ORGANIZACIJSKI ODBOR:

Tina Palaić, Slovene Ethnographic Museum

Dr Polona Sitar, Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska

Urška Purg, Kolkrea Collective

Eliza Proszczuk, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw

Ewa Chomicka, POLIN Museum / Culture for Climate Collective

Urška Repar, Museum of Recent History Celje

Corinne Brenko, The Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana

Tina Fortič Jakopič, Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia

Maja Hakl Saje, Slovenian School Museum – Sports Museum

Dr Tamara Nikolić Djerić, Kolkrea Collective

The workshop is co-funded by the COST Action “Trace as a Research Agenda for Climate Change, Technology Studies, and Social Justice” (TRACTS) within the WG2 Traces and Social Justice, and Slovenian Research Agency within the postdoctoral project Z6-3225 “Emancipatory Politics of Women’s Social Movements and the Postsecular Turn in Feminism”.



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