

Guerrilla Girls: Art, Activism, and the ‘F’ Word

William Benton Museum of Art

Center Gallery

March 24-May 22, 2016

Organized, Curated, and Installed by Jean Nihoul

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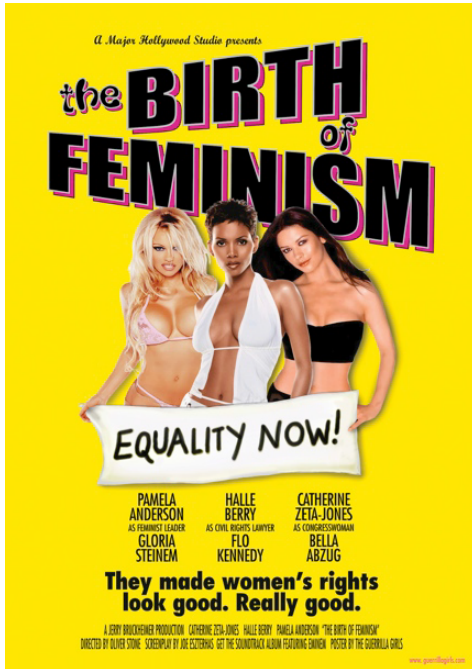
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Exhibition Checklist and Labels

Introductory Panel:

The Guerrilla Girls are a collective of anonymous women artists that focus on ending gender and racial inequalities not only in the art world, but also in all facets of our contemporary culture. Each member wears a gorilla mask and assumes the name of a deceased and neglected female artist to protect their true identity. Referring to themselves as “the conscience of the art world,” the group was founded in 1985 in response to the Museum of Modern Art’s exhibition, *An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture*, which claimed to display the most important contemporary art at the time. The problem the Guerrilla Girls had with MoMA’s *Survey* was that out of the 169 artists being featured, only 13 women artists were on display, and all the artists were white and of Western decent. With this public exhibition, the Guerrilla Girls saw an opportunity to work towards leveling the playing field, and have since been on a mission to end the systemic policies that have contributed to the ongoing discrimination in the arts.

Since then, they have become renowned for their guerrilla-style advertising tactics that they combined with humor, sassiness, and well-researched statistics to bolster their claims. By peppering neighborhoods, galleries, and museums with their imagery, they have effectively managed to place pressure on both art dealers and major art organizations, and in the process, draw some ire from these dictators of taste. Due to the subversive nature of their practice, the gorilla masks enable the Guerrilla Girls to remain anonymous and stay free of any possible retaliation, and it also helps keep their audience focused on their message, rather than on them. They have successfully initiated positive change by drawing attention to the disparities between men, women, and artists of color in the art world. Ultimately, as several posters in this exhibition demonstrate, there is much more that needs to be done, but the Guerrilla Girls have paved the way for other activists to help contribute to the necessary changes.



The Birth Of Feminism Movie Poster, 2001
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.66

“Hollywood producers have come to us over the years, saying they want to make a movie about the history of feminism in the U.S. Then, we never hear from them, again. One day, we were sitting around and we started wondering what would a Hollywood film about feminist history be like? So, we decided to make our own satirical movie poster.”

– Guerrilla Girls

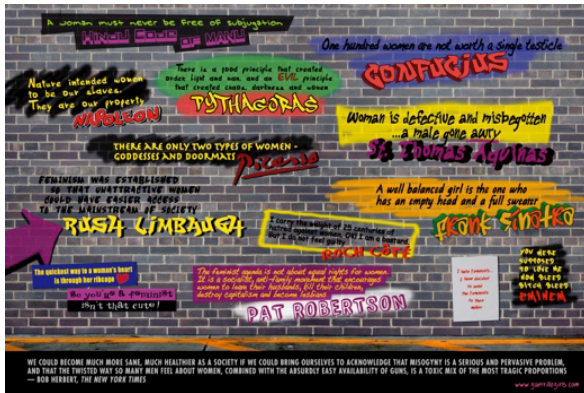
Flashy, startling, and satirical, this poster draws upon Hollywood’s seemingly constant objectification of women in the movie industry. In this fictional movie featuring three of 2001’s most alluring sex symbols who pose in a similar manner to pin-up girls, Pamela Anderson, Halle Berry, and Catherine Zeta-Jones are the leading actresses in the film, whose title refers to D.W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), an early film that positively portrayed the Ku Klux Klan. The banner the three women display over their hips references not only the name of an international women’s rights group founded in 1992, but can also be viewed as the most basic and cohesive way of describing the wide-range of activities carried out by the three American feminists allegedly portrayed in this film: Gloria Steinem, Flo Kennedy, and Bella Abzug.

Steinem, whose part is played by Anderson, is the founder of *Ms* magazine, a leading feminist publication, and is known for her undercover investigation in which she worked as a bunny at New York’s Playboy Club to see first hand how young women were treated in Hugh Hefner’s empire. The irony here is that Steinem’s part is being played by Anderson, one of *Playboy*’s most notorious cover girls. Steinem also worked with Flo Kennedy, played by Berry, and is an African-American civil rights activist who founded the Feminist Party in 1971. Finally, Abzug, played by Zeta-Jones, was a Congresswoman, a member of Parliament, and an activist in many international women’s organizations.

And it is no wonder that since the movie has such a famous cast, that they were also able to get an all-star production team, consisting of Oliver Stone, Eminem, and Jerry Bruckheimer. Stone, best known for having written and directed *Platoon*, is in this case directing a film that is vastly different from his works, some of which are the most macho and manly movies ever. Producing the soundtrack for the film is Eminem, a popular rapper infamous for his degrading and degrading lyrics about women. And lastly,

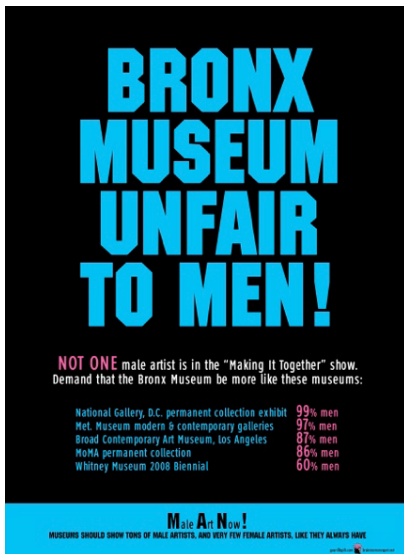
Bruckheimer was one of the leading investors of *The Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, which set the foundation for the most expensive porn film ever made: *Pirates XXX* (2005).

After creating this poster, the Guerrilla Girls “realized that maybe feminists everywhere should be thankful that Hollywood hasn’t made that film.”



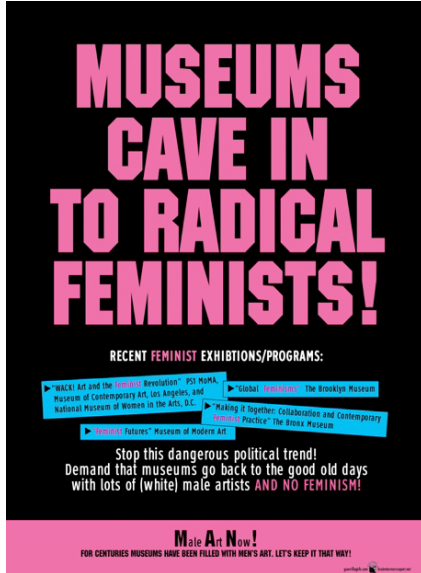
Disturbing The Peace (Street project for the University of Quebec at Montreal), 2009
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.82



Bronx Museum Unfair To Men!, 2008
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.80



Museums Cave In To Radical Feminists!, 2008
Poster

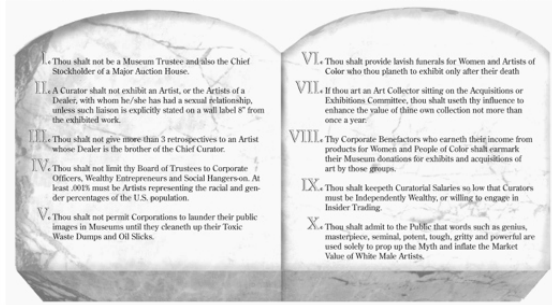
Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.81



Available Immediately: Historic Brooklyn Landmark!, 1999
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.62

GUERRILLA GIRLS' CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART MUSEUMS.



Guerrilla Girls Code of Ethics for Art Museums, 1990
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.28

“The events portrayed in this poster bear direct resemblance to real events at U.S. art museums. It’s the only poster we have ever done in Old Testament language. Copies of it have been spotted hanging in museum offices all over the country.”

– Guerrilla Girls

In a format evoking the design of the Ten Commandments—the rules given by God to Moses in the Old Testament—the Guerrilla Girls wanted to create a set of rules that enforced a fair and standard set of practices for all museums to implement. With their signature sense of humor, the Girls’ commandments criticize many of the behaviors and practices that led to the sad state of collecting that they were protesting. As they noted: “the events portrayed in this poster bear direct resemblance to real events at US art museums.” The image was produced to encourage the American Association of Museums to institute a real code of ethics to which its members could adhere, leading the Association to eventually adopting such a code in 1993.

AT LAST! MUSEUMS WILL NO LONGER DISCRIMINATE AGAINST WOMEN AND MINORITY ARTISTS.*

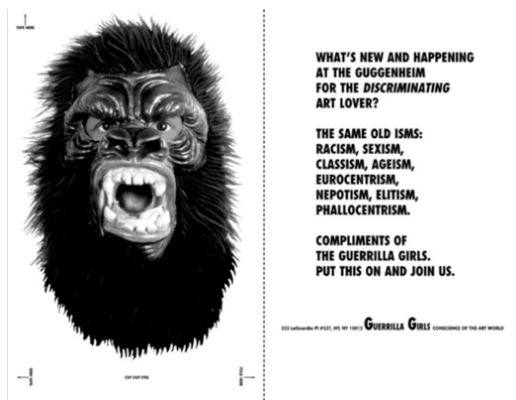
*Under the Civil rights Restoration Act of 1988, an institution that discriminates in any of its operations will be denied federal funds. We encourage women and artists of color to contact their favorite museum. THEY NEED YOU NOW!

Please send \$ and comments to: **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
Box 1056 Cooper Sta. NY, NY 10276

*At Last! Museums Will No Longer
Discriminate Against Women
And Minority Artists*, 1988
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.19

“Here we’re simply trying to enforce the law.”
– Guerrilla Girls



*What's New And Happening At The
Guggenheim for the
Discriminating Art Lover?*, 1992
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.42a

**ONLY 4 COMMERCIAL
GALLERIES IN N.Y. SHOW
BLACK WOMEN.***
**ONLY 1 SHOWS MORE
THAN 1.****

*Cavin-Morris, Condeso/Lawler, Bernice Steinbaum, Shreiber/Cutler
**Cavin-Morris

SOURCE: ART IN AMERICA ANNUAL 1986-7

Box 1056 Cooper Sta. NY, NY 10276 **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

*Only 4 Commercial Galleries In N.Y. Show Black
Women. Only
1 Shows More Than 1*, 1986
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.13

**HOW MANY WOMEN HAD
ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT
NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?**

Guggenheim	0
Metropolitan	0
Modern	1
Whitney	0

SOURCE: ART IN AMERICA ANNUAL 1983-84

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS**
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

*How Many Women Had One-Person Exhibitions at
NYC Museums Last Year?* 1985
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.3



Guerrilla Girls to Museums: Time For Gender Reassignment!

(Project for Columbia College of Chicago), 2012
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.85

Recent Statistics for Solo Shows at Various Museums in New York City between 2005-2011:

MoMA: 64% white males, 26% white females, 8% males of color, and only 2% females of color. That's backsliding: The previous five years, 17.5% of solo shows were females of color.

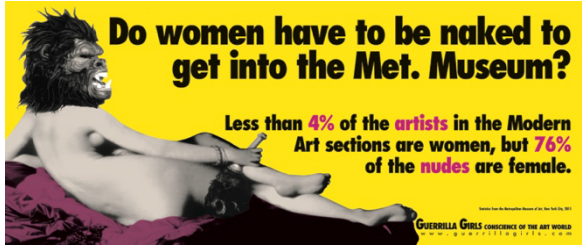
The Whitney Museum: 61% white males, 26% white females, 10% males of color, and 3% females of color. The previous five years, 50% of solo shows were white males and 20% were artists of color.

The Met: It gets more for your tax dollars than the other museums, but still shows 77% white males, only 11% white females, 7% males of color, and 5% females of color.

The Guggenheim: 54% white males, 23% white females, 18% males of color, and 5% females of color. Fewer white males than the previous 5 years, but only one of the artists of color was African American.

The New Museum: It's the most diverse with 35% white males, 38% white females, 19% men of color, and 8% females of color. Not many of the artists of color were African American. In fact, in all these museums combined, only 9 African Americans got solo shows between 2005–2011.

– The Guerrilla Girls, *The Guerrilla Girls' Art Museum Activity Book (Updated)* (New York, N.Y.: Printed Matter Inc., 2012), 11.



Do Women have to be Naked to Get Into the Met Museum? (Update), 2012
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.87



Do Women have to be Naked to Get Into the Met Museum?, 1989
Poster

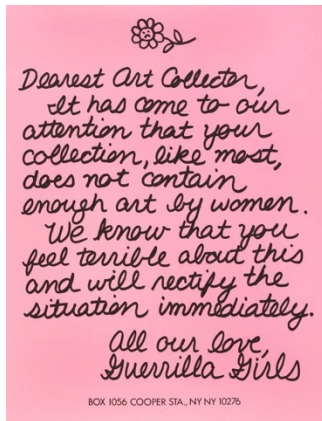
Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.24

“Asked to design a billboard for the Public Art Fund in New York, we welcomed the chance to do something that would appeal to a general audience. One Sunday morning we conducted a ‘weenie count’ at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, comparing the number of nude males to nude females in the artworks on display. The results were very ‘revealing.’

The PAF said our design wasn’t clear enough (????) and rejected it. We then rented advertising space on NYC buses and ran it ourselves, until the bus company canceled our lease, saying that the image, based on Ingres’s famous *Odalisque*, was too suggestive and that the figure appeared to have more than a fan in her hand. Maybe bus companies aren’t so enlightened after all.”

– Guerrilla Girls

The original 1989 poster was commissioned by the Public Art Fund in New York and was designed with the intention of being used as a billboard. It was, however, ultimately rejected on the basis that its message was insufficiently clear. In spite of this setback and determined to get their message out, the Guerrilla Girls decided to prominently feature their image by renting advertising space on buses throughout New York City. The image borrows its figure from Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres’ (1780–1867) famous *Grande Odalisque* (1814), who wears a gorilla mask over her face and is accompanied by facts that point to issues of gender and nudity in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Modern Art collection. While the 1989 poster highlights some troubling facts, the updated 2012 version of the image demonstrates that, despite the 23 years separating the two posters, little progress has been made.



Dearest Art Collector, 1986
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.8

GUERRILLA GIRLS' DEFINITION OF A HYPOCRITE.

(hip' o-crit) An art collector who buys white male art at benefits for liberal causes, but never buys art by women or artists of color.

Please send \$ and comments to: **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
Box 237, 496 laGuardia Pl., NY 10012

Guerrilla Girls' Definition Of A Hypocrite, 1990
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.30

By imitating the typical etymological breakdown of a word found in a dictionary, “hip’ o-crit” creates a pun around the idea that the art collector gains favor by acquiring the “right” kind of art, ultimately making him “hip” in the public’s eye.



We Sell White Bread, 1987
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.17

“Art galleries are stores, and in New York, all they sell is white bread. Hundreds of these peel-off stickers got slapped on gallery windows and doors.”
– Guerrilla Girls

First appearing as peel-off stickers that were plastered on gallery windows and doors, this image alludes to the stuffy, stale, boring, and run-of-the-mill works that were popularly sold in mainstream galleries. While there was nothing inherently wrong with the pieces themselves, it was the fact that older, white male artists created most of this art and were dominating the market at the expense of equally talented—but lesser-known—female and minority artists. In an effort to draw attention to this latter group of artists, the Guerrilla Girls used this image as a way of suggesting that galleries could increase the diversity of their collections and offer collectors the opportunity to acquire more interesting works.

THESE ARE THE MOST BIGOTED GALLERIES IN NEW YORK.

Why? Because they show the fewest women & artists of color.

GALLERY	No. of women 1989-90	Artists of Color 89-90
Blum Helman	2	0
Diane Brown	3	1
Leo Castelli	0	0
Charles Cowles	3	1
Larry Gagosian	0	0
Gemini G.E.I.	2	1
Marian Goodman	2	0
Jay Gorney	2	*
Hirschl & Adler Modern	1	0
Kent	1	0
Knoedler	1	0
Koury Wingate	1	0
David McKee	1	0
Pace	3	1
Tony Shafrazi	0	1
Holly Solomon	3	1
Sperone Westwater	1	1
Stux	0	1

Source: Art in America Annual 1990-91

*Hon Rollins and K.O.S.

Please send \$ and comments to: Box 237, 496 LaGuardia Pl, NY 10012

GUERRILLA GIRLS

CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

These Are The Most Bigoted Galleries In New York, 1991
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.33

“After years of our harping on the issue, many important galleries still didn’t get it. We had to use the most repugnant word we could think of to condemn them.”

– Guerrilla Girls

After many repeated campaigns of drawing attention to the problem of inclusion in the art world, such as with their *Guerrilla Girls' 1986 Report Card* (1986), the Guerrilla Girls were tired of having their messages ignored and decided to take a bolder approach by using harsher language. By using such a loaded word as “bigot” to describe the galleries’ exhibition history, they were essentially calling these galleries racist and/or sexist, and in doing so, were hoping to strike an emotional chord by bringing these statistics to the public’s attention.

GUERRILLA GIRLS' 1986 REPORT CARD

GALLERY	NO. OF WOMEN 1985-6	NO. OF WOMEN 1986-7	REMARKS
Blum Helman	1	1	No improvement
Mary Boone	0	0	Boy crazy
Grace Borgenicht	0	0	Lacks initiative
Diane Brown	0	2	Could do even better
Leo Castelli	4	3	Not paying attention
Charles Cowles	2	2	Needs work
Marisa del Rey	0	0	No progress
Allan Frumkin	1	1	Doesn't follow direction
Marian Goodman	0	1	Keep trying
Pat Hearn	0	0	Delinquent
Marlborough	2	1	Failing
Oil & Steel	0	1	Underachievement
Pace	2	2	Working below capacity
Tony Shafrazi	0	1	Still unsatisfactory
Sperone Westwater	0	0	Unforgivable
Edward Thorp	1	4	Making excellent progress
Washburn	1	1	Unacceptable

Source: Art in America Annual 1985-8 and 1986-7

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

Guerrilla Girls' 1986 Report Card, 1986
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.12

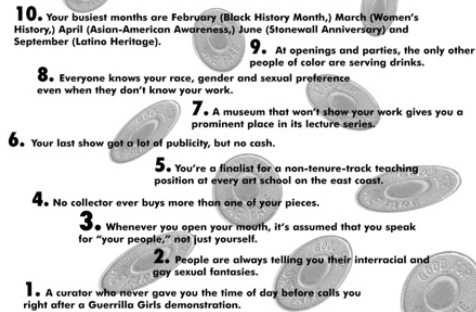
“After several years of our complaining, many galleries were just not getting the message. We began to think of them as stubborn, errant children who needed to be scolded for their bad performance. Having to point fingers at galleries a second time proved we had a lot more work to do.”

– Guerrilla Girls

After having initially drawn attention to the under-representation of both female and minority artists in some of New York City’s most prominent art galleries in 1985, the Guerrilla Girls re-evaluated the scene one year later to find that very little headway had been made. Believing the galleries to be acting in a manner similar to misbehaving kids,

this poster treats them as such by highlighting each gallery's negligible progress in the form of an old school report card that needs to be signed by their parents.

TOP TEN SIGNS THAT YOU'RE AN ART WORLD TOKEN:

- 
1. A curator who never gave you the time of day before calls you right after a Guerrilla Girls demonstration.
 2. People are always telling you their interracial and gay sexual fantasies.
 3. Whenever you open your mouth, it's assumed that you speak for "your people," not just yourself.
 4. No collector ever buys more than one of your pieces.
 5. You're a finalist for a non-tenure-track teaching position at every art school on the east coast.
 6. Your last show got a lot of publicity, but no cash.
 7. A museum that won't show your work gives you a prominent place in its lecture series.
 8. Everyone knows your race, gender and sexual preference even when they don't know your work.
 9. At openings and parties, the only other people of color are serving drinks.
 10. Your busiest months are February (Black History Month), March (Women's History), April (Asian-American Awareness), June (Stonewall Anniversary) and September (Latino Heritage).

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ARTWORLD
333 LAGRANGE PLACE, NEW YORK, NY 10013

Top Ten Signs That You're An Art World Token, 1995

Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art

Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.48

"Things are improving a little for women and artists of color. Just a little. This poster was created to help us handle our new role."

– Guerrilla Girls

Taking a sarcastic and sassy tone, the Guerrilla Girls are providing viewers with clues to determine whether or not they are "an art world token." The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a token as: "a type, emblem, or symbol of; to typify, symbolize." As such, tokenism is the mere intention of creating a façade of social inclusiveness as a way of diverting accusations of social injustice or prejudice. Ultimately, the efforts to include a token are only symbolic and do little to address the real underlying cause of initial exclusion. Simply put, no woman or man desires to be the token person representing a gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or other self-identifier.

WHICH ART MAG WAS WORST FOR WOMEN LAST YEAR?

<small>% of features, projects and one-person show reviews on women artists Sept 1985-September 1986</small>	
Flash Art	13%
Artforum	16
ArtNews	22
Art in America	24
Arts	25

Which Art Mag Was Worst For Women Last Year?, 1986,
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.14

Box 1056 Cooper St. NY, NY 10276 **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

“Art magazines are essential to the trickle down process that eliminates women and artists of color from the cultural record. We suspected some were worse than others. It wasn’t a surprise when our research shows the major European magazine *Flash Art* was the worst.”

– Guerrilla Girls

As a means of drawing more attention to the disparities between genders and races in the arts, the Guerrilla Girls designed this poster as a means of illustrating that galleries were not the only ones neglecting their social and moral responsibilities, but even the industry’s publications helped reinforce what had become the norm. By focusing on various art magazines with a global influence, the Girls are further highlighting the ways in which the art institution dictates popular aesthetic taste and has the ability to be more inclusive by shining the spotlight on other noteworthy artists who are not old white men.

ARTFORHIM

Ingrid
Editor of Artforum 1985-87

	<u>Covers</u>	<u>Articles*</u>
white men	91%	80%
white women	6%	15%
men of color	3%	4%
women of color	0%	1%

Ida
Editor of Artforum 1988-92

	<u>Covers</u>	<u>Articles*</u>
white men	72%	71%
white women	26%	22%
men of color	0%	5%
women of color	2%	2%

& Jack
Editor of Artforum 1992-present

	<u>Covers</u>	<u>Articles*</u>
white men	67%	75%
white women	28%	21%
men of color	5%	1%
women of color	0%	3%

*We counted only feature articles on a single artist, not articles about groups of artists, not reviews.

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
532 L GUARDIA PLACE, #237, NY, NY 10012

Artforum, 1994
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.47

GUERRILLA GIRLS' POP QUIZ.

Q. If February is Black History Month and March is Women's History Month, what happens the rest of the year?

A. Discrimination.

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM GUERRILLA GIRLS 533 LAFAYETTE PL #237, NY 10012

Guerrilla Girls' Pop Quiz, 1990
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.29

“Assigning commemorative months to social issues has become another form of tokenism. This poster is a favorite on university campuses where African Americans and women always get art shows in February and March.”

– Guerrilla Girls

In adopting a mock pop-quiz format, the poster is referring to the many university campuses that organize events and exhibitions specifically for Black History Month and Women's History Month. While such art shows are put together with the best intentions—in this case, to shine a spotlight on works created by artists who are not given equal exhibiting opportunities when compared to their white male counterparts. Ultimately, this proves to be another form of tokenism, as it implies that they are segregated from the “mainstream” art world during the rest of the year, and are merely used to give the appearance that the art world is striving towards total equality amongst all artists.



Sorry Sweetie, and Way To Go, Dude, 1994
2-part posters

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.46a
2016.2.46b

“At the 1994 conference of the College Art Association, where would-be art professors interview for jobs, we had Gorillas passing out fliers. For at least fifteen years, the majority of art students in the U.S. have been female, while full-time faculty has remained overwhelmingly male. One of the schools listed is a virtual harem, with 90 percent women students and an all-male faculty.”

– Guerrilla Girls



Women in America Earn Only 2/3 of What Men Do. Women Artists Earn Only 1/3 of What Men Do, 1985

Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.6

“Women have never gained economic equality by just working hard and being good girls. With this poster, we wanted to make women artists angry as hell and not willing to take it anymore.”

– Guerrilla Girls

Among the first posters the Guerrilla Girls created, this image is still as relevant today as it was then. As the piece illustrates, women in 1985 only made 66% of what men made and, while these numbers have improved to 78% in 2015, there is clearly more work that needs to be done to even the playing field and provide equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender or race.

BUS COMPANIES ARE MORE ENLIGHTENED THAN NYC ART GALLERIES.

% of women in the following jobs*	
Bus Drivers	49.2%
Sales Persons	48
Managers	43
Mail Carriers	17.2
Artists represented by 33 major NYC art galleries	16
Truck Drivers	8.9
Welders	4.8

Please send \$ and comments to:
Box 1056 Cooper Sta. NY, NY 10276 **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

*Bus Companies Are More Enlightened
Than NYC Art Galleries, 1989*

Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.21

“It was a relief to find that being an artist isn’t the loneliest occupation for a woman!”

– Guerrilla Girls

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

Working without the pressure of success
Not having to be in shows with men
Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs
Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty
Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminine
Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position
Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others
Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood
Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits
Having more time to work when your mate dumps you for someone younger
Being included in revised versions of art history
Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius
Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

*The Advantages of Being a Woman
Artist*, 1988
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.18

“This is one of our all-time favorites, which we did to encourage female artists to look on the sunny side. Women all over the world, not just artists, identified with it. One sent us \$1,000 to run it as an ad in *Artforum*, a top U.S. art magazine.”

– Guerrilla Girls

These thirteen ironic comments on the supposed advantages of being a woman artist as opposed to a male artist highlight the ridiculous “opportunities” women have over their male counterparts and point to absurd standards they are held to. The origins of this image came about, when:

“Some years ago, [Liubov Popova] was doing an artists’ residency, along with three male colleagues, in the Midwest. All of us were middle-aged (between forty and sixty) and married. Each of the three men had brought along his smartest, most beautiful (female) undergraduate student as playmate and free studio assistant. During those four months, [Popova] went from a slow burn to a raging fever, thinking about how younger women are exploited and harassed, older women devalued and ignored. When [Popova] returned to New York, she suggested [the Guerrilla Girls] do a poster about it. After much discussion, haggling, and divine inspiration, the result was *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist*.”

– Whitney Chadwick and the Guerrilla Girls, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* (New York, N.Y.: Perennial Publishing, 1995), 25.

Oh! THE JOYS OF BEING A WOMAN PLAYWRIGHT!

* You're in control! You produce your own plays because if you don't, they won't get produced!
* You're special! During Black History Month or Women's History Month your work receives at least one staged reading!
* You're hot! If you're under the age of thirty your career might last a few seasons!
* You save money! You don't have to buy evening gowns for all those awards ceremonies!
* You live in the moment! No need to obsess about your place in theatre history—you won't have one!
* You don't fear failure! Your breasts are the only things that will flop!

* 81% OF ALL PLAYS PRODUCED IN THE U.S. DURING THE 1988-89 SEASON WERE WRITTEN BY WHITE MEN.

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
1175 14TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011
TEL: 212 979 2389 FAX: 212 979 2389

Oh! The Joys Of Being A Woman Playwright,
1999
Poster

Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.61



Unchain The Women Directors!

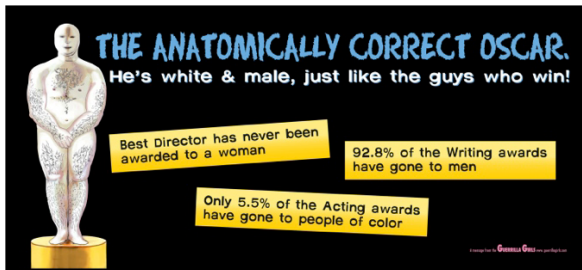
Billboard, 2006

Poster

Collection of the William Benton

Museum of Art

Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.73



The Anatomically Correct Oscar

Billboard, 2002

Poster

Collection of the William Benton

Museum of Art

Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.67

Originally featured on a billboard in Los Angeles in 2002, this image still speaks to the present-day issues surrounding diversity and inclusion in Hollywood's movie industry. In this image, the Guerrilla Girls "redesigned the old boy so he more closely resembled the white males who take him home each year!" For, as they point out:

"Did you know that no woman has ever won the Oscar for Best Director, and that only two have ever been nominated? That 94% of the writing awards have gone to men? Or that only 3% of all the acting awards—lead and supporting—have ever gone to people of color.

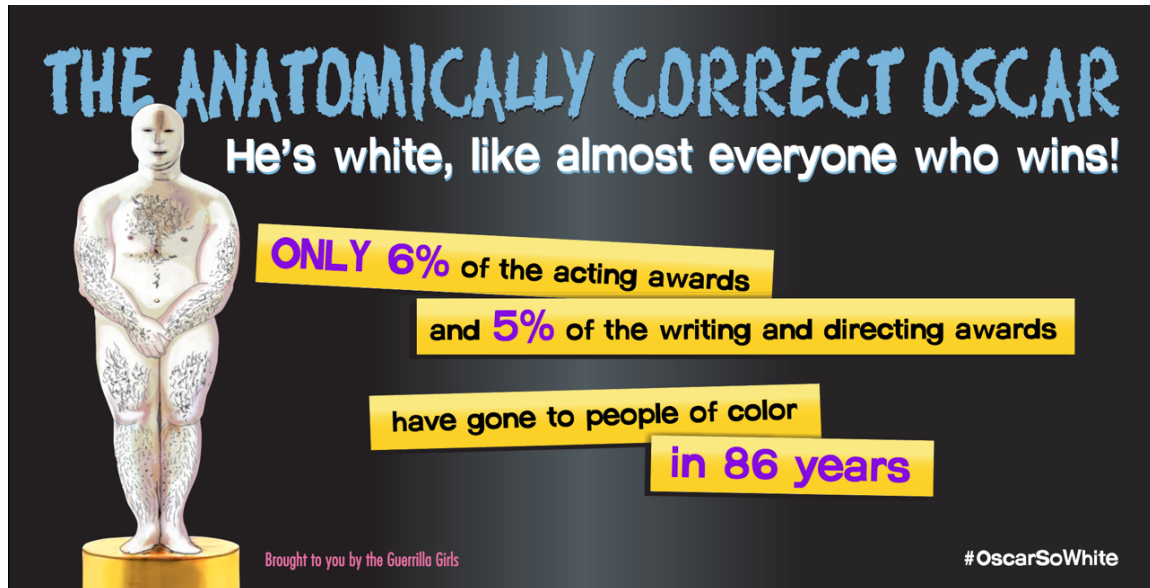
Why are women and people of color shunned by Oscar? Because they're shunned by the film industry. Hollywood likes to think of itself as cool, edgy, and ahead of its time, but it actually lags way behind the rest of society in employing women and people of color in top positions. 96% of major films are directed by males. No woman has ever won an Oscar for Cinematography or Sound. Even 85% of the make-up awards have gone to men.

Sure, it's great that three African-Americans were nominated for Acting Awards [in 2002] (for the first time in 30 years.) Meanwhile, Latinos account for only 5% of movie roles, Asians 2%, Native Americans .02%. Female actors get only 25% of starring roles."

– Guerrilla Girls Press Release, 2002

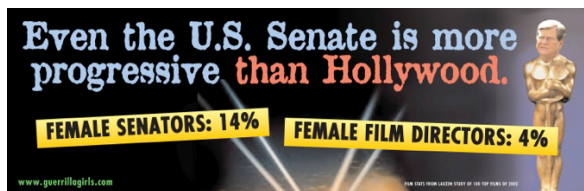
While one might think that such statistics might have improved since 2002, consider the reaction to this year's lack of diversity for the Oscar nominations, and that between 1987 and 2015, only 45 performances by black actors were nominated for the award (5 of those are held by Morgan Freeman, and another 6 by Denzel Washington), and only 16 performances by Hispanics were nominated (3 of those belong to Penélope Cruz, 3 for Javier Bardem, and 2 for Benicio Del Toro). * To comment upon this year's

Oscar controversies, the Guerrilla Girls decided to update the image to better reflect the current dilemma and recently featured it on a billboard in Minneapolis:



“Only 6% of the Acting awards and 5% of the Writing and Directing award have gone to people of color in 86 years.”

*Source: Dan Zak, “These Charts Explain how Oscars Diversity is way more Complicated than you Think,” *The Washington Post*, February 26, 2016.



Even the US Senate Is More Progressive Than Hollywood
Billboard, 2003
Poster

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.69



As Good As It Gets?, 1998
Sheet of stickers

Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.58



Sundance Stickers, 2001
Two Sheets of Stickers

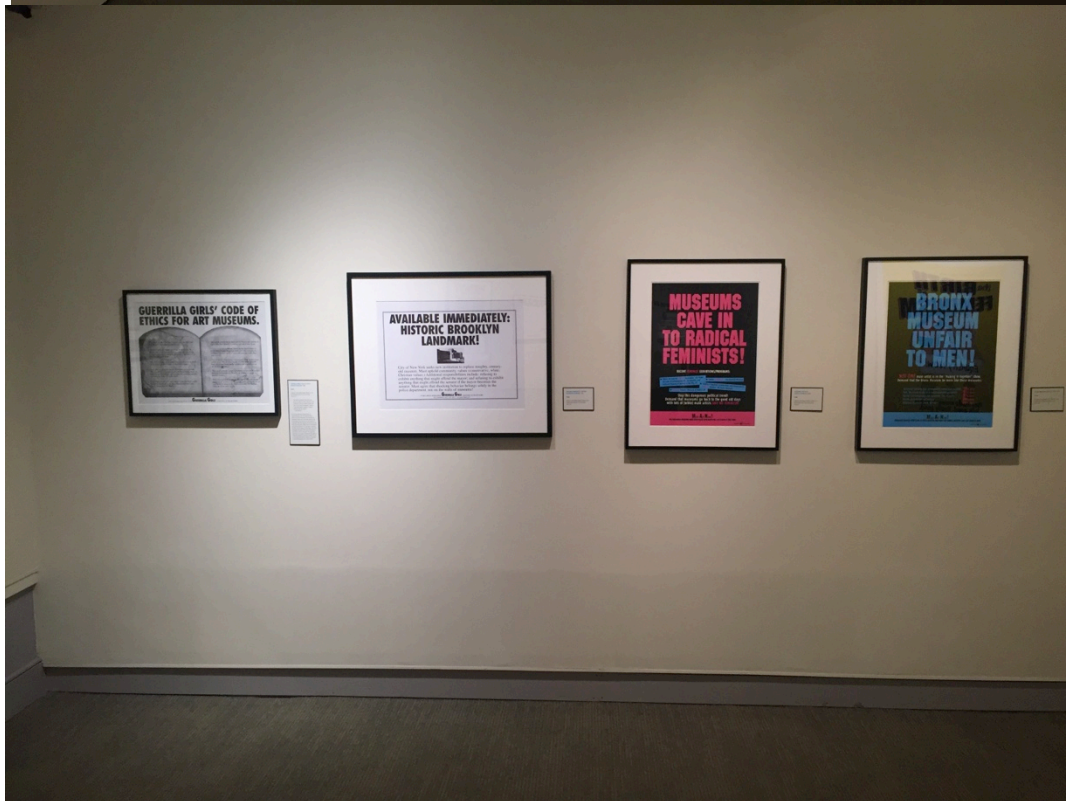
Collection of the William Benton
Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.64a
2016.2.64b

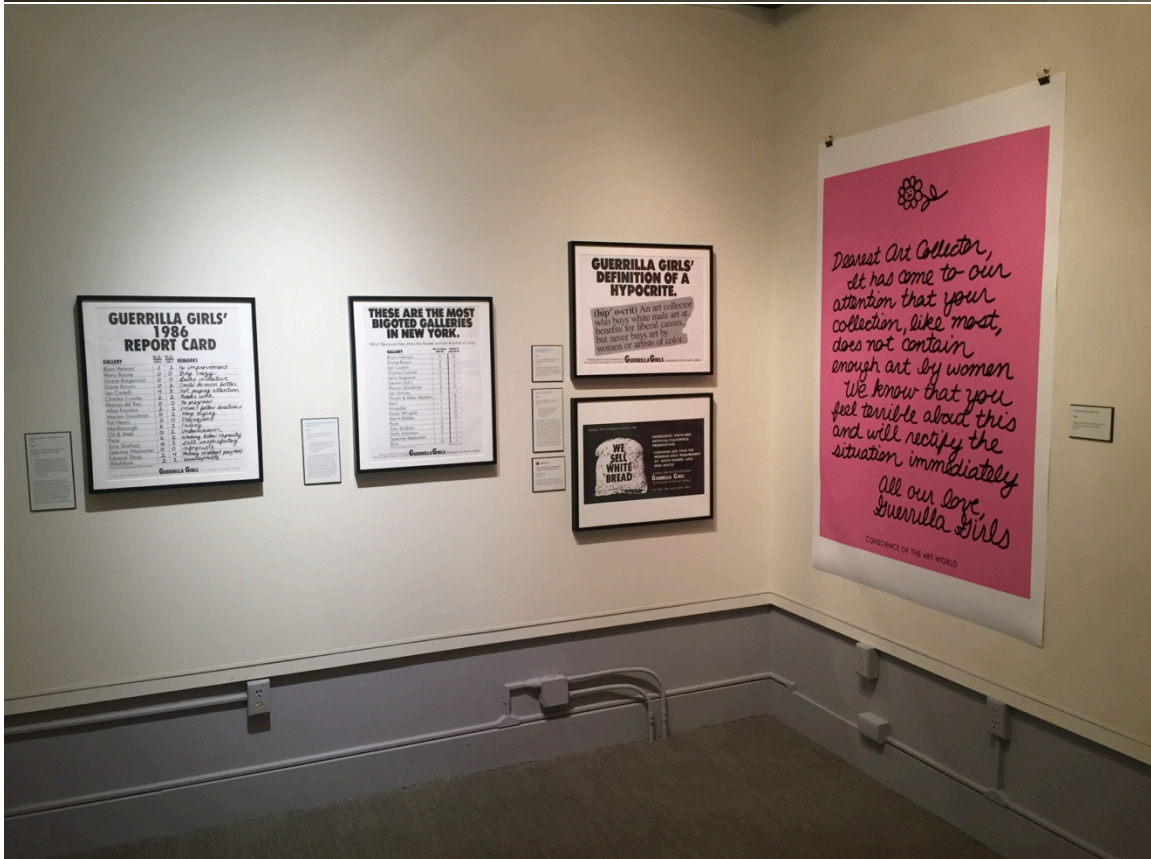


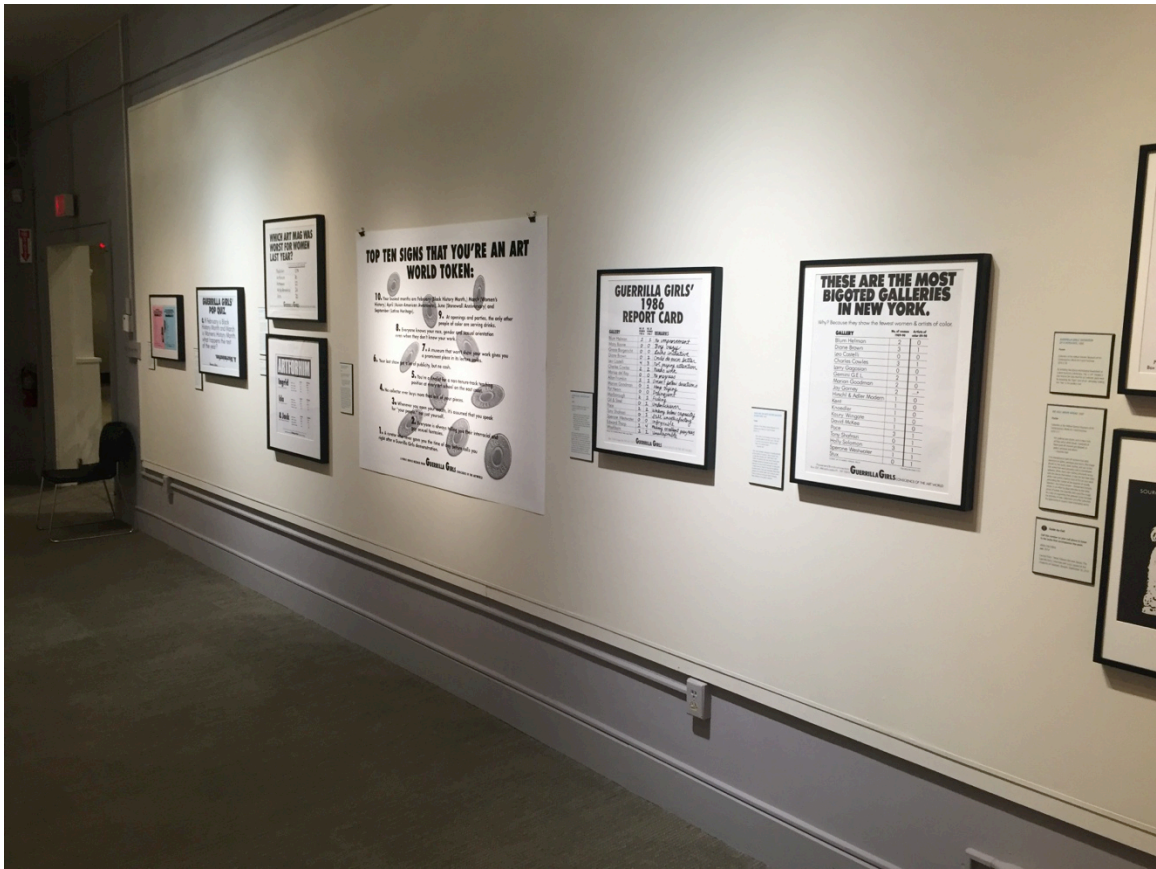
The World Needs a New Weapon: The Estrogen Bomb, 2012
Poster

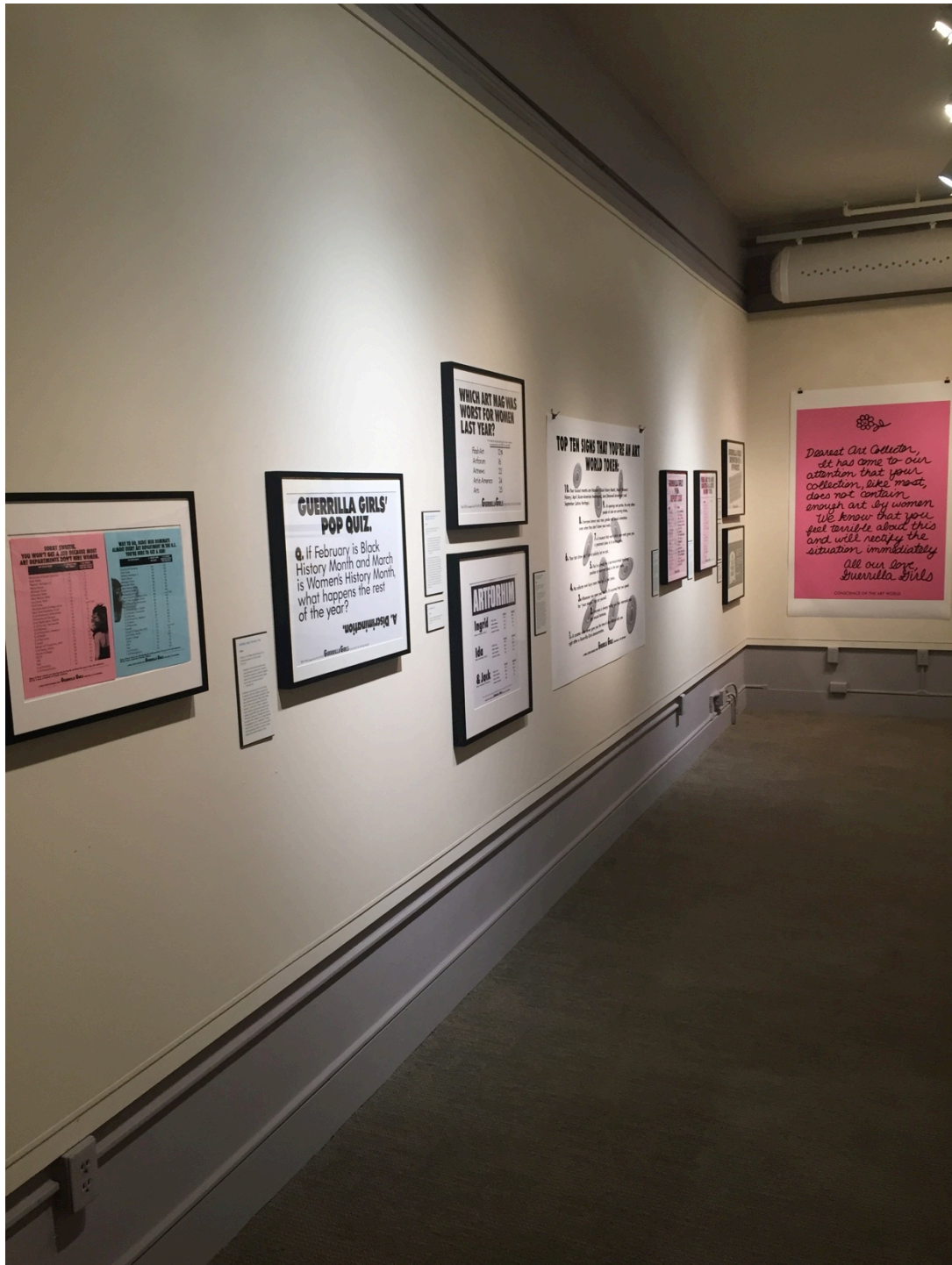
Collection of the William Benton Museum of Art
Contemporary World Art Fund Purchase
2016.2.86

Installation Photographs











Advertisements

TheBenton
THE WILLIAM BENTON

Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?

Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art Sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female.

GUERRILLA GIRLS

GUERRILLA GIRLS: Art, Activism, and the "F" Word

24 March–22 May, 2016, Center Gallery

In 1985, a group of female artists formed the Guerrilla Girls, an anonymous art activist group devoted to protesting discrimination against women in many of the world's prominent art museums. Since then, they have grown into an organization that continues to fight for gender and racial equality in the arts by exposing and questioning the status quo. Through exhibitions, demonstrations, and plastering posters, they are "redefining the F-word: Feminism!" This exhibition features works from the Benton's newly acquired *Guerrilla Girls Portfolio Compleat* (1985–2012) and sheds light on the group's revolutionary and evolving tactics that have enabled them to positively affect art her-story.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening Reception Thursday, 24 March, 4:30–7:00 pm

Guerrilla Girls Gig at the Benton Wednesday, 6 April, 5:00–6:30 pm
Come meet the Guerrilla Girls!

Salon at the Benton: Guerrilla Girls: Art Activism and the "F" Word Friday, 29 April, 5:00–7:00 pm

Art in Small Bites Wednesday, 23 March and Wednesday, 30 March
Meet in the Benton lobby at the front desk at 12:10 pm
Rarely-seen works of art are placed on view expressly for these weekly tours.

Campus Art & Architecture Walks Every Wednesday from 6 April–4 May
Meet in the Benton lobby at the front desk at 12:10 pm
Explore the public art around us with a docent!

Draw On! at the Benton Stop by anytime, grab a sketchbook, sit in front of a painting or sculpture, and practice your drawing skills in the Museum! We supply the art materials, and on Tuesdays from 1:30–2:30 pm, guided instruction will be provided. Special drawing sessions will be held on **Thursday, 28 April, 2:00–4:30 pm**; and **Friday, 29 April, 2:00–4:30 pm** to take your mind off pre-exam stress! Check our website for upcoming craft workshops.

IMAGE CREDIT: GUERRILLA GIRLS, GUERRILLA GIRLS PORTFOLIO—COMPLEAT ED. 25/30, 1985–2012

POP QUIZ: If February is Black History Month, what month is Women's History Month?

GUERRILLA GIRLS TO MUSEUMS: TIME FOR GENDER REASSIGNMENT!

GUERRILLA GIRLS ALL OUR LOVE GUERRILLA GIRLS

Even for billionaires, understand why you can't pay employees a living wage! *Guerrilla Girls*



Press

Guerrilla Girls Target Gender Bias In Exhibit At Benton

The Evelyn Simon Gilman Gallery at the William Benton Museum of Art at UConn in Storrs has 43 artworks on exhibit, some of the jewels of UConn's collection. Of the 39 pieces whose artists are known, 34 were created by men and five by women.

In the adjacent gallery is a show of work by the Guerrilla Girls. The goal of that art-activist group is to challenge the unequal representation of female and nonwhite artists in the art world.

Jean Nihoul, curator of the Guerrilla Girls' show, is aware of the irony of the two exhibits' juxtaposition. He isn't fazed by it.

"Our show here is pointing to that show. This shows that the problem is systemic and widespread and it's applicable to us, too," Nihoul said.

The side-by-side exhibits lend even more truth to the Guerrilla Girls' rallying cry, which they have been calling out since 1985: That museums, galleries and collectors give overwhelmingly preferential treatment to white male artists. Since hype and exposure translate into respect and money, the Guerrilla Girls argue that female and minority nonrepresentation suppresses art, opportunity and artists' ability to make a living.

So the exhibit at UConn levels the field, at least in that museum for now, giving a huge presence to women artists and their in-your-face message. Whether it gives a presence to nonwhite artists is unknown, because the Guerrilla Girls keep their identities secret. They wear gorilla masks when they speak in public, as they will on April 6 at UConn.

Late last year, the Benton acquired the Guerrilla Girls' complete portfolio from 1985 to 2012, 89 pieces in all. Thirty-seven of them are in the show. Nihoul pointed out that in 2016, when the Oscars have contended with charges of discrimination and some presidential candidates have been in the habit of saying sexist things, the message is more relevant than ever. "They've been doing it so long, but the issues haven't changed," Nihoul said.

One of the exhibit's centerpieces, created in 2012, is called "Disturbing the Peace." It shows a brick wall covered with misogynist statements made by famous men throughout history. Napoleon: "Nature intended women to be our slaves. They are our property." St. Thomas Aquinas: "Woman is defective and misbegotten ... a male gone awry." Random bumper sticker: "So you're a feminist. Isn't that cute!"

That piece addresses the issue of sexism in general. The rest of the pieces address sexism and racism in the art world. The piece "The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist" ironically lists all these "advantages": "Working without the pressure of success," "Not

being stuck in a tenured teaching position," "Seeing your ideas live on in the works of others," "Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius."

"Top Ten Signs that You're an Art-World Token" is both funny and maddening, with "signs" including, "No collector ever buys more than one of your pieces" and "Whenever you open your mouth, it's assumed that you speak for 'your people,' not just yourself."

One of the Guerrilla Girls' most famous pieces, the "Anatomically Correct Oscar" — which depicts the statue as a pasty, bloated white man rather than as a gold inanimate object — is in the exhibit, as well as an updated version citing the traditional domination of the awards by white men. Other movie-related pieces include a sign meant to be hung in the ladies' room at a film festival: "Wanna direct? You're in the wrong room."

Another of the group's most well-known pieces, "Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?" is in the show, pointing out that few women artists are represented in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but most of the museum's nude artworks depict women. Again, that fact is emphasized by the exhibit in the Gilman gallery. Seven of those artworks depict nudes. Five of them show women and two of them show men.

Nihoul pointed out a further irony: William Benton, the museum's benefactor, was a white man. And so is he. "As a white guy, it put me a bit on edge while I was writing the labels," he said. "I had a lot of people proofread them."

GUERRILLA GIRLS: ART, ACTIVISM AND THE F WORD is at William Benton Museum of Art, 245 Glenbrook Road, on the campus of University of Connecticut in Storrs, until May 22. Some members of the Guerrilla Girls will give a presentation on April 6 at 5 p.m. Information: benton.uconn.edu.

Copyright © 2016, Hartford Courant

Source: Susan Dunne, "Guerrilla Girls' Gender Bias Exhibit at Benton," *The Hartford Courant*, March 29, 2016, <http://www.courant.com/entertainment/museums-galleries/hc-art-benton-guerilla-girls-0330-20160329-story.html>.

Protesting Inequalities in the Art World

When a group of women artists first put on gorilla masks to protest gender and racial inequalities in the art world, their use of humor on advertising handouts and posters called attention to the paucity of works by female artists in gallery and museum exhibitions. Taking the names of dead women artists in order to be anonymous, and wearing the masks to protect themselves against possible retaliation, they called themselves the Guerrilla Girls. More than three decades later, they say there is still work to be done.

“When we started in 1985, you could hear curators and gallery people saying that women and artists of color were not making art that is part of the contemporary dialogue,” says Frida Kahlo, one of the founders of Guerilla Girls. “No one would say that now.” Kahlo’s namesake is the 20th century surrealist Mexican painter known for her self-portraits and as the subject of the 2002 Salma Hayek film “Frida.”

Thirty-nine off-beat “guerrilla-advertising” posters, advertising, and other works are part of the “Guerrilla Girls: Art, Activism, and the ‘F’ Word” in the center gallery of the William Benton Museum of Art through May 22. The exhibition is drawn from the 89-piece *Guerrilla Girls Portfolio Compleat (1985-2012)* recently acquired by the museum. Among the works in the exhibition is a 1989 billboard poster that addressed concerns at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The poster depicts a nude woman wearing a gorilla mask lying on a couch with a headline asking: “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? Less than 5 percent of the artists in the Modern Art sections are women, but 85 percent of the nudes are female.”

The use of industry statistics has fueled the Guerrilla Girls’ work since the beginning. As recently as March 29 of this year, *The New York Times* published a story addressing the issues facing women artists in describing a resurgence of women-only art shows. The article noted that “underrecognized women artists represent a buying opportunity” for art collectors, and pointed to the continuing wide gap between the representation of women artists compared to male artists in museum exhibitions.

“There still is a glass ceiling for women and artists of color,” Kahlo says. “There’s tokenism, where a museum will show one woman or one artist of color and think they are taking care of the problem. There is income inequality. If you look at what white men are paid for their work versus what women and artists of color are paid, all of the statistics in the general economy just pale, because women and artists of color make just 12 percent of what white men make at the high end at the level of auctions, which is driving museums.”

Kahlo, who along with Käthe Kollwitz is the only original member of the collective, says Guerrilla Girls has drawn new artists to the group after some veterans moved on to other interests, even as they continued to develop new projects. Guerrilla Girls are currently working on new projects with the Minneapolis Institute of Art, an animation for the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, Germany, as well as conducting workshops and

residencies.

“We’re really activists,” Kahlo says. “We’re provoking people to think about issues in our culture right now. It’s really gratifying to go from putting up a couple of posters on the streets of New York – that was about being angry – to now where we’re invited to criticize the institutions right inside the institutions. What we’ve done is to identify some really well-intentioned people inside institutions who want to change them, and empower those people. That might be a small step, but it’s a wonderful thing to have done. It’s been really fun to tweak the system.”

Guerrilla Girls will visit the Benton on Wednesday, April 6 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. to discuss their work and activities. There will also be a ‘Salon at the Benton’ panel discussion, using the exhibition as a starting-point to discuss contemporary issues, on Friday, April 29 from 5 to 7 p.m.

“Guerrilla Girls: Art, Activism, and the ‘F’ Word” continues through May 22 at the William Benton Museum of Art, 245 Glenbrook Road, Storrs. For more information, go to the [Benton Museum’s website](#).

Copyright © 2016, UConn Today

Source: Kenneth Best, “Protesting Inequalities in the Art World,” *UConn Today*, April 5, 2016, <http://today.uconn.edu/2016/04/protesting-inequalities-in-the-art-world/>.