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Social Body.
The post internet feminist art in context of Xenofeminism
Manifesto and Michel Foucault's "The History of Sexuality"

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Abstract

The socially constructed body is a form of social control and the tool of power used against those bodies. Biological differences between sexes have always been a basis of inequality in the western society. The work elaborates on those two basic issues basing on two main sources: “The History of Sexuality” by Michel Foucault and Manifesto on Xenofeminism by collective Laboria Cuboniks. The main aim of this research is to comprehend the idea of using sexuality and bodies as an essential tool of manipulation and to compare different ideas based on this topic. The second most important aspect the work contains is the context of art and art movements, mainly the movement of internet feminism. The research shows that there are many similarities in the presented theories, as well as differences but the theme of oppression is consistently appearing in all the presented sources.

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1. Introduction

The work mainly focuses on the different aspects of body based on a brief analysis of the history of body as well as the history of feminism itself. Susan Bordo defined the body as: “[the human body] is itself a politically inscribed entity, its physiology and morphology shaped by histories and practices of containment and control”¹, which is a crucial point at the beginning of this analysis. Starting with an interpretation of Michel Foucault’s theories of power and sexuality I would like to base my research on links between the philosophy and theories connected to new feminism, mostly Xenofeminism. I will start my analysis with a summary of Foucault’s outlook on the power issues connected with body. My focus will mainly be on female body and the feminist perspective of the issue. Throughout the paper I will try to draw a comparison between second wave feminist theory and new feminisms for example Xenofeminism and Cyberfeminism. The first chapter will focus on power, body and sexuality as well as broadly discussing sex and gender distinction issues. The following chapters will expand the issue of social body from the perspective of different social and philosophical movements. I decided to focus on Accelerationism, Xenofeminism as well as the *Theory of the Young Girl*², Cyberfeminism and others. What has been important whilst collecting these sources are the ideas surrounding the liberation of the body. Xenofeminism has its own idea, importantly based on the movement of cyber feminism, of the fluidity of the body and mostly the omission of its biological essence. As well as cyber feminists Laboria in their manifesto points out the place of body in so called cyber space. This might be seen as standing in opposition of Michel Foucault’s earthbound theory about the life of society³. What I try to prove is that these two different points of view have

¹ BORDO, S. (1999). *Feminism, Foucault and the Politics of the Body*. New York: Routledge.

² TIQQUN. (2012). *Preliminary Materials For a Theory of The Young Girl*. Los Angeles: Semoitext(e)

³ FOUCAULT, M. (2009). *The history of sexuality, vol.1 Introduction*. Vancouver: Crane Library at the University of British Columbia.

resemblance and have become more significant when put together. The analysis is based on the common grounds that connect all the referred sources. I tried to resolve the contemporary matters based on early twentieth century research as well as more contemporary studies such as second wave feminism. One of the most important parts of my thesis is the Xenofeminist Manifesto⁴. This has been an important source of research as well as the main influence and inspiration for the written text. To conclude I will present the art context connected to the written content. The works of art that I decided to choose are only a brief overview of what has been created regards to feminist art. As stated before, I introduced quintessential pieces for the history of art as well as contemporary examples of artists dealing with the issue of the social body.

⁴ CUBONIKS, Laboria. (2015). *Xenofeminism. A Politics for Alienation*.

2. Power, body and sexuality

“Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to an ability to hide its own mechanisms”⁵

-Michel Foucault

What is the power he talks about and how has its relationship with the body been defined and developed until now?

As defined in second-wave feminism the body has been described as a form of social control and oppression as well as a limitation and a battleground⁶ (fig.1). Virginia Woolf, not without cogency, expressed the sense of alienation so often felt by women: ‘if one is a woman one is often surprised by a sudden, splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilization, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical’⁷. The flaws of the body itself have been described by Foucault, “it is always the body that is at issue - the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission”⁸. Docile bodies are a major subject of Foucault’s analysis of power relations. His analysis is based on the idea that the body and its sexuality are socially constructed rather than a natural phenomenon; this contrasts the idea of gender essentialism. Social constructivism is the concept that there are many things that people know or take to be reality that are, in fact, socially constructed⁹. Furthermore, “social constructivism is an account of reality produced collaboratively

⁵ FOUCAULT, M. (2009). *The history of sexuality, vol.1 Introduction*. Vancouver: Crane Library at the University of British Columbia.

⁶ KRUGER, B. (1989). *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*. Photographic silkscreen on vinyl, 284,5 x 284,5 cm

⁷ WOOLF, V. (1929). *A room of one’s own*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

⁸ FOUCAULT, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage Books.

⁹ BERGER, P. & LUCKMANN, T. (1967) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin.

by a community of knowers,”¹⁰ as explained by Marecek, Crawford and Popp. Then again, looking at the beginning of second wave feminism movement there are similar points to be found, for instance, they claim that oppression towards women is not reducible to women’s biology or nature in comparison to other oppressed bodies¹¹, women’s situation is strongly connected to power and culture.

To further understand new feminist theories, this work will mainly focus on the Xenofeminism Manifesto¹², firstly we need to understand the background of the study. In 1949, French existentialist Simone de Beauvoir published her most well-known book “The Second Sex”¹³, this moment is considered as a main starting point of second-wave feminism. Significantly, de Beauvoir raised the essential question “what is woman?”, as well as this she argued that the very concept of *woman* is given by men and has been thoughtlessly accepted by the patriarchal society. She analysed the sexual experiences between genders and suggested that it does not necessarily need to be a negative subject. However, De Beauvoir points out that the romanticisation of sexuality is made to attract girls and mainly emphasises the idea of courtship and gentle desire. To give an illustration, in the same book she claims: “The young girl feels that her body is getting away from her, it is no longer the straightforward expression of her individuality; it becomes foreign to her, and at the same time she becomes for others a thing: on the street men follow her with their eyes and comment on her anatomy. She would like to be invisible; it frightens her to become flesh and to show her flesh” (de Beauvoir, Simone. *Second Sex*). De Beauvoir explains the idea of embarrassment that is connected to having a feminine body¹⁴, she gives examples of situations in which a girl wants to escape her own body or forget about it for a moment, but society will bring back to her mind the uncomfortable position she is in. However, De Beauvoir admits there are moments of women’s life in which having the female body is a positive experience, like, for instance, pregnancy.

A few decades later Tiqqun, a French philosophy collective, came back to the idea of a young girl and her sexuality¹⁵. This idea will be discussed in the second chapter of the paper.

¹⁰ MARECEK, J. & CRAWFORD, M. & POPP, D. (2004). *On the construction of gender, sex and sexualities*. New York: Guilford Press.

¹¹ BUTLER, J. (1993). *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York and London: Routledge.

¹² CUBONIKS, Laboria. (2015). *Xenofeminism. A Politics for Alienation*.

¹³ BEAUVOIR, S. de. (1949). *Le deuxième sexe (The Second Sex)*. Gallimard.

¹⁴ YOUNG, I. M. (1980). *Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality*. New York: Springer

¹⁵ TIQQUN. (2012). *Preliminary Materials For a Theory of The Young Girl*. Los Angeles: Semoitext(e)

Generally for existentialists one is not born anything: everything we are is the result of our choices as we build ourselves out of our own resources and those which society has given us. We don't only create our own values, we create ourselves¹⁶. Simone de Beauvoir, although an avowed life-long existentialist, suggests limits to this central existentialist idea of self-creation and self-definition, qualifying the absolute freedom Jean-Paul Sartre posited in *Being and Nothingness*¹⁷. By contrast de Beauvoir presents an ambiguous picture of human freedom in which women struggle against the apparent disadvantages of the female body. Once gender is understood as socially and culturally constructed it is possible to understand that sex does not derive from the natural body and, perhaps, gender is a cultural meaning that is attached to the sexed body. Importantly, a concept of the body becomes a key word in analysis of the oppression of women because biological differences between the sexes are the basis of inequality. Above all, in traditional thinking, men are thought to be capable of their rational faculties while women have been seen through their physical capacities for reproduction and motherhood. In an effort to avoid the essentialists' dispute between the social category of women and the biological functioning there appeared the sex/gender distinction theory, which distinguishes social category of gender and the biology of the sexed body¹⁸.

Simone de Beauvoir's now famous and widely cited words "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" opened up the argument about human sexuality once again. In order to understand what she meant we first need to discuss what the word *woman* means in this context. As it has already been discussed, sex/gender theory establishes that one could possibly become more than woman or man. According to Judith Butler, "sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct and factual aspect of the female body whereas gender is the cultural meaning and form that the body acquires and the variable modes of that body's acculturation. With the exception of women as a biological necessity neither can we refer meaningfully to natural or unnatural gender behavior: all gender is, by definition, unnatural. Furthermore, is the distinction even necessary for becoming a given gender"¹⁹. Butler describes the sex/gender distinction as unlimited, she says it "implies a radical heteronomy of natural bodies and constructed genders with the consequence that being female and being a woman are two very different sorts of being." (Butler, J. *Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex*) Moreover, she claims gender must not be a limitation, it

¹⁶ SARTRE, J. (1992). *Notebooks for an Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁷ SARTRE, J. (1994). *Being and nothingness*. New York: Gramercy Books.

¹⁸ JOSEPH, F. (2008). *Becoming A Woman: Simone de Beauvoir on Female Embodiment*. Philosophy Now, Issue No. 69

¹⁹ BUTLER, J. (1986). *Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex*. Yale French Studies, number 72

should rather be understood as a cultural possibility, a process of understanding and interpreting bodies, as well as giving those bodies a cultural form. De Beauvoir's words state that gender is not only a cultural construction imposed upon identity, but in some sense gender is a process of constructing ourselves. It is usual these days to conceive of gender as passively determined, constructed by a personified system of patriarchy or phallogocentric language which precedes and determines the subject itself (Butler, Judith, *Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex*).

In 1970, Kate Millet, highly inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, published her first book "Sexual Politics" that has been called "one of the first feminist books of past decade to raise nationwide male ire", it definitely was an important theoretical touchstone for second wave feminism. Millett argues that "the society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance - in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands. As the essence of politics is power, such realization cannot fail to carry impact. (...) If one takes patriarchal government to be the institution whereby that half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear to be two fold: male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger"²⁰. Millett focuses on the gender role in power, however, she analyzes the aspect of one's private/public life in context of the gender role.

Michel Foucault's work on history of sexuality can be seen as a starting point of a deeper discussion about social changes toward human body and its relation to power and its functions in different social and cultural contexts. Although there are many feminist theorists who agree Foucault's writings on relations between power, the body and sexuality, his ideas have stimulated extensive feminist interest. Sandra Bartky applauds Foucault's work on disciplinary practices in modernity and on the construction of docile bodies but she cautions that his analysis "treats the body (...) as if bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life"²¹. Thus, Bartky asks: "Where is the account of the disciplinary practices that engender the 'docile bodies' of women, bodies more docile than the bodies of men? (...) [Foucault] is blind to those disciplines that produce a modality of embodiment that is peculiarly feminine"²². Furthermore, Bartky shows few more kinds of practices that contribute

²⁰ MILLETT, K. (2000). *Sexual politics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

²¹ BARTKY, S. (1988). *Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

²² DEVEAUX, M. (1994). *Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault*. *Feminist Studies*, number 20

to the construction of power through gender and reinforce a disciplinary project of bodily perfection. On the other hand, Susan Bordo, in *The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity*²³ also takes up Foucault's docile bodies thesis to show the ways in which women's bodies serve as a locus for the social construction of femininity. Bordo argues that “anorexia nervosa and bulimia are located on a continuum with feminine normalizing phenomena such as the use of makeup, fashion, and dieting, all of which contribute to the construction of docile, feminine bodies. Therefore, docile feminine body becomes, in the case of the anorectic, the ultimate expression of the self-disciplining female caught up in an insane culture” (Deveaux, *Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault*).

In his *The History of Sexuality* Foucault develops an anti-essentialist vision of the body which does not deny its materiality. At the same time he suggests that sex is not simply repressed and prohibited by power, but that complex disciplinary and regulatory forces within the social body function to produce the idea of sex itself. This idea, Foucault claims, “made it possible to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures, and (...) enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*)²⁴.

Foucault, de Beauvoir, Butler and Bordo all talk about the society in which people take matters to be reality, which are, in fact, socially constructed. The main focus is on body and gender. However, de Beauvoir draws an important picture of woman, explains dependences in her life and argues with the patriarchal oppression. She brings up an abstract concept of *woman* as opposed to Sartre's term of *essence*²⁵ which describes humans' pre-established ideal. Yet de Beauvoir describes women as a person struggling every day against humiliation and oppression. The oppression is a key word in all the described theories - Bordo, very much inspired by de Beauvoir's researches expresses that power is strongly connected to subjected bodies. She challenges Michel Foucault's theory of the relation between power and sexuality in the context of eating disorders. In other words, Foucault's work on power structures and history of embodiment has appeared as an important tool to understand the modern and contemporary feminist writings.

²³ BORDO, S. (1989). *The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity*. London: Rutgers University Press

²⁴ TARVER, E. C. (2011). *Feminist Subjects and Feminist Action: pragmatic post-structuralist account of oppression and resistance*. Tennessee.

²⁵ SARTRE, J. & MAIRET, P. (1948). *Existentialism and humanism*. London: Methuen.

3. Xenofeminism

“*Nature* shall no longer be a refuge of injustice, or a basis for any political justification whatsoever! If nature is unjust, change nature!”

-Laboria Cuboniks Collective

Michel Foucault’s later work on sexuality might be seen as a starting point for further writings on changes to social attitude towards sexed bodies and their role in social, cultural and historical contexts. Across the decades the idea of sexed bodies and gender has been discussed in many ways, third wave feminists have been criticised and the democracy has been in crisis. Meanwhile, over the same half of the century, the accelerationists movement²⁶, almost ignored by all media, proposed a new way of thinking about the contemporary world and its potential. Accelerationists state that there is no other alternative to move the humanity forward. They argue that technology, particularly computer technology and capitalism, particularly the most aggressive global variety, should be massively sped up and intensified. Accelerationists have been focused on many of the most important questions of the late 20th and 21st centuries like artificial intelligence, the rise of China, what it means to be human in an era of electronic devices, the power of capitalism, the resetting of our minds and bodies by ever-faster music and films, the complicity, revulsion and excitement so many of us feel about the speed of modern life²⁷. Naturally, Accelerationism has caused a lot of controversy. Srnicek and Williams end the manifesto with the words: “The future needs to be constructed. It has been demolished by neoliberal capitalism and reduced to a cut-price promise of greater inequality, conflict, and chaos. This collapse in the idea of the future is symptomatic

²⁶ SRNICEK, N., WILLIAMS, A. (2013). #ACCELERATE MANIFESTO for and Accelerationist Politics. Critical Legal Thinking.

²⁷ BECKETT, A. (2017). *Accelerationism: how a fringe philosophy predicted the future we live in*. TheGuardian.com

of the regressive historical status of our age, rather than, as cynics across the political spectrum would have us believe, a sign of sceptical maturity. What accelerationism pushes towards is a future that is more modern — an alternative modernity that neoliberalism is inherently unable to generate. The future must be cracked open once again, unfastening our horizons towards the universal possibilities of the Outside.” (Srnicek, Williams. *#ACCELERATE MANIFESTO for an Accelerationist Politics*).

Highly similar statements are to be found in the Xenofeminist Manifesto by Laboria Cuboniks, which marks the most visible cyber- and techno-oriented insurgence in contemporary feminist theory since Donna Harway’s influential *A Cyborg Manifesto*²⁸ and Sadie Plant’s work²⁹ with the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit in the 1990s. Xenofeminist Manifesto has been published by a collective of six women who created the theory and the whole concept of Xenofeminism. Patricia Reed, Amy Ireland, Helen Hester, Lucca Fraser, Katrina Burch and Diann Bauer inspired the collective’s name by Nicolas Bourbaki, Laboria Cuboniks is an anagram of the French group of mathematicians who worked in the early twentieth century. As the the most important keywords of the Manifesto they mention: “technomaterialist, anti-naturalist and gender abolitionist form of feminism. Similarly to accelerationism, it is technomaterialist, because it explains critically that the technologies of 21st century are not practically beneficial, mostly in the aspect of accessibility. The Manifesto states that biology is not destiny, Anyone who’s been deemed ‘unnatural’ in the face of reigning biological norms, anyone who’s experienced injustices wrought in the name of natural order, will realize that the glorification of ‘nature’ has nothing to offer us—the queer and trans among us, the differently-abled, as well as those who have suffered discrimination due to pregnancy or duties connected to child-rearing. XF is vehemently anti-naturalist. Essentialist naturalism reeks of theology—the sooner it is exorcised, the better.” (Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism. A Politics for Alienation 0x01*) This part, as well as the whole manifesto, states that humanity needs to push its limits as far as possible to discover what is beyond it and to redefine the idea of emancipation. Helen Hester in her book explains: “Xenofeminism seeks to anchor that which has been frequently mischaracterized as free-floating and disembodied within its infrastructural requirements and within the obstinate physicality of its users and producers (including those workers engaged in repetitive and poorly paid labour on electronics assembly lines around the world)”³⁰.

²⁸ HARAWAY, D. (1991). *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*. Free Association Books.

²⁹ PLANT, S. (1997). *Zeroes and ones: digital women and the new technoculture*. Doubleday.

³⁰ HESTER, H. (2018). *Xenofeminism*. Cambridge: Polity Press

The prefix *xeno* reclaims the idea of the alien, stranger, culturally unnatural, refers to the term of alienation. It was Karl Marx who first made the concept of alienation central to politics within the capitalist mode of production. He argued that there are three main types of alienation in the capitalist system: workers are alienated from other human beings, workers are alienated from the products of their labor, workers are alienated from the act of labor. In other words, Alienation is the process whereby people become foreign to the world they are living in³¹. Then again at the beginning of the manifesto xenofeminists, towards Marx, argue: “XF seizes alienation as an impetus to generate new worlds. We are all alienated – but have we ever been otherwise? It is through, and not despite, our alienated condition that we can free ourselves from the muck of immediacy. Freedom is not a given—and it’s certainly not given by anything ‘natural’. The construction of freedom involves not less but more alienation; alienation is the labour of freedom’s construction. Nothing should be accepted as fixed, permanent, or ‘given’—neither material conditions nor social forms. XF mutates, navigates and probes every horizon.” (Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism. A Politics for Alienation* 0x01) According to this statement, alienation could be an impulse to generate the whole new reality, system or even entirely new worlds. However, Laboria Cuboniks explains alienation as the relation between widely understood human and everything that is inhuman, primarily technology as well as nature which is seen as a main cause of all injustice. Unlike Marx’s theory, according to which alienation is something that’s rather forced, in xenofeminism it is potentially liberating. The statement is clear - humans have always been alienated and, most likely, they will always be and it is not necessarily a drawback. People can, they claim, use it as a tool to emancipate themselves and understand the freedom that is indubitably given nor natural. On the other hand one of the most influential feminist philosopher, Sandra Lee Bartky disagrees with Marx’s theory. Professor Bartky finds Marx’s theory of alienation inadequate to express women’s special alienation which shows itself in the male domination of culture, in sexual suppression, sexual objectification, and estrangement from bodily potential³². “The fragmentation of the person and prohibition against expressing human creativity that these forms of estrangement express present a paradigmatic case of Marxian alienation. Using body parts and functions to represent and evaluate women is parallel to representing, by products and activities of coerced production, the value of laborers. Women, as genitally sexualised bodies, and workers, as machines for production, are equally prevented from realising their full humanity (Marx’s species-

³¹ MARX, K. (1974). *Economic and philosophical manuscript of 1844*. Moscow: Progress Publishers

³² EHRENREICH, B. (1975). *Speech delivered at the National Conference of Social Feminism*. *Socialist Revolution* 26(4)

being), from producing freely and reciprocally, for their own needs”³³. Furthermore, Simone de Beauvoir presents a similar approach to the problem of alienation. In her *Second Sex*, she specifically explains alienation as a term strongly connected to the feminine. De Beauvoir is interested in the normality which could be connected to the statements found in the Xenofeminist Manifesto as well as stand in the opposition to it. She writes: “we will pose the problem of feminine destiny quite differently: we will situate woman in a world of values, and we will lend her behavior a dimension of freedom. We think she has to choose between the affirmation of her transcendence and her alienation as object; she is not the plaything of contradictory drives; she devises solutions that have an ethical hierarchy among them. Replacing value with authority, choice with drives, psychoanalysis proposes an ersatz morality: the idea of normality. This idea is indeed highly useful from a therapeutic point of view; but it has reached a disturbing extent in psychoanalysis in general. The descriptive schema is proposed as a law; and assuredly, a mechanistic psychology could not accept the notion of moral invention; at best it can recognize less but never more; at best it acknowledges failures, but never creations. If a subject does not wholly replicate a development considered normal, his development will be seen as being interrupted, and this will be interpreted as a lack and a negation and never a positive decision. That, among other things, is what renders the psychoanalysis of great men so shocking: we are told that this transference or that sublimation was not successfully carried out in them; it is never supposed that perhaps they could have rejected it, and perhaps for good reasons; it is never considered that their behavior might have been motivated by freely posited aims; the individual is always explained through his link to the past and not with respect to a future toward which he projects himself.” (De Beauvoir, *Second Sex*)

De Beauvoir, Bartky and Laboria Cuboniks both have similar aims, they both strive to the full emancipation. Although they present seemingly different visions, resources and concepts, there are many connections and similarities. Most likely, they present the same story from the inconsistent time-history perspective. The analysis shows that they all claim the oppression should stop, but they all have different ideas on how to achieve this will. Laboria Cuboniks collective almost magnify the ideas found in *The Second Sex*, they talk radically - as in their opinion extending the theory onto its very edge is the only solution.

The Manifesto ends with another strong statement about the alienation and nature. The main claim seems to be, at the beginning of the analysis, the anti-naturalism in the context of alienation. Laboria Cuboniks explains that nothing is distinguishably natural, nothing is truly congenital. Thus, it might be seen as a more

³³ SLAGTER, J. (1982). *The Concept of Alienation and Feminism*. *Social Theory and Practice*, 8(2).

contemporary and developed version of previously described theories of socially constructed bodies. However xenofeminists, similarly to accelerationists, push those theories onto its very limits in order to create the newer, the unknown, the better system of consciousness about the emancipation through fighting nature. They claim there needs to be a radical change (new logic, as they call it) in order to create real freedom and to prevent the injustice. The closing point of the whole manifesto seems to resume: “Xenofeminism indexes the desire to construct an alien future with a triumphant X on a mobile map. This X does not mark a destination. It is the insertion of a topological-keyframe for the formation of a new logic. In affirming a future untethered to the repetition of the present, we militate for ampliative capacities, for spaces of freedom with a richer geometry than the aisle, the assembly line, and the feed. We need new affordances of perception and action unblinkered by naturalised identities. In the name of feminism, ‘Nature’ shall no longer be a refuge of injustice, or a basis for any political justification whatsoever!” (Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism. A Politics for Alienation* 0x01A).

Despite this, xenofeminism frames nature and a natural as a space for contestation. As many other feminist theorist Laboria Cuboniks claims that being anti-naturalist is not the same thing as being against the natural world or denying the shaping influence of the biology. The biological essence of human’s certain embodiments is obvious but what xenofeminism dispute is that certain matters are fixed or predetermined simply because they are biological. However, it acknowledges the role of socially constructed ideas about the body as well as recognises the history of feminist thought and the ideological perception of gendered bodies. Helen Hester repeats the second wave feminist slogan and says that biology is not destiny but at the same time she emphasises that it is, nowadays, because biology itself could be technologically transformed³⁴. What is even more important is that the manifesto argues that not only gender but any structures, that might possibly be the basis of repression, shall be acknowledge. Laboria Cuboniks highlights race and social class system as subjects of wide inequality. Then again, they point out a bourgeois fantasy about sexless and raceless that has been mistaken as the white male (Eurocentric universum). Xenofeminism wants a new society where “traits currently assembled under the rubric of gender, no longer furnish a grid for the asymmetric operation of power” (Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism. A Politics for Alienation*). Moreover, they claim: xenofeminism understands that the viability of emancipatory abolitionist projects—the abolition of class, gender, and race—hinges on a profound reworking of the universal. The universal must be grasped as generic, which is to say, intersectional. Intersectionality is not the morcellation of collectives into a static fuzz

³⁴ Helen Hester’s speech at the Question of Will discussion in Bratislava

of cross-referenced identities, but a political orientation that slices through every particular, refusing the crass pigeonholing of bodies. This is not a universal that can be imposed from above, but built from the bottom up – or, better, laterally, opening new lines of transit across an uneven landscape. This non-absolute, generic universality must guard against the facile tendency of conflation with bloated, unmarked particulars—namely Eurocentric universalism—whereby the male is mistaken for the sexless, the white for raceless, the cis for the real, and so on. Absent such a universal, the abolition of class will remain a bourgeois fantasy, the abolition of race will remain a tacit white-supremacism, and the abolition of gender will remain a thinly veiled misogyny, even—especially— when prosecuted by avowed feminists themselves. (The absurd and reckless spectacle of so many self-proclaimed ‘gender abolitionists’ campaign against trans women is proof enough of this). (Latoria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism. A Politics for Alienation* 0x0F). Xenofeminists endeavor to create a universal, which, in fact, means the abolition of division. However, they disagree with the idea of labeling as well as judging or concluding. The collective wants to build up a new ‘non-absolute generic universality’.

Simone de Beauvoir claims “woman is enticed by two modes of alienation. Evidently to play a woman is also a delusion: to be a woman would mean to be the object, the other - and the other nevertheless remains subject in the midst of her resignation. The true problem for woman is to reject these flights from reality and seek self-fulfillment in transcendence.” (de Beauvoir, *Second Sex*). Once the abolition of class and gender will be created, the delusion of playing certain role shall disappear. Xenofeminists’s universality seems to be equal to what de Beauvoir calls self-fulfillment in transcendence. On the other hand, gender abolition shall stop woman’s fear to become objectified, towards xenofeminists, hundred of sexes would appear and the distinction will not be needed or witnessed.

Susan Bordo claimed: “another major deconstruction of the old notion of ‘the body’ is in the area of sociopolitical thought. Although Karl Marx initiated this movement in the middle of the nineteenth century, it did not gain momentum until the last twenty years due to the work of the late Michel Foucault. Marx argued that a person’s economic class affected his or her experience and definition of the body. Foucault carried on these seminal arguments in his analysis of the body as the focal point for struggles over the shape of power. Population size, gender formation, the control of children and of those thought to be deviant from the society’s ethics are major concerns of political organisation—and all concentrate on the definition and shaping of the body. Moreover, the cultivation of the body is essential to the

establishment of one's social role"³⁵. This points out another important issue connected to power. The question of the cultivation of body and its dependence on one's social role seems to be crucial in the discussion of power issues. The bodies in power are to take control over the weak ones but the most essential question is - what makes these bodies so fragile? Butler and Foucault talk about the society that shapes the perceiving and brings one to power. However Sartre, and existentialists, focus on the decisive role of one in establishing itself, yet both conclusions are well-proven and complement each other. It is the matter of what oppression is and how it became an every day struggle to fragile (docile) bodies.

³⁵ BORDO S. (2004) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press

4. The romanticisation of body

“In the Spectacle, the Young-Girl is, like woman was in the primitive world, an object of Advertising. But the Young-Girl is, furthermore, a subject of Advertising, who buys and sells herself. This division within the Young-Girl is her fundamental alienation. Added to that is this drama: while exogamy effectively maintained permanent relationships among tribes, the Young-Girl’s manna spills away between her fingers, her Advertising fails, and it’s she herself that suffers the consequences.”
-Tiqqun³⁶

Who is the young girl and where is her place among this analysis? The Young Girl is everyone. Everyone is her, as Tiqqun claims at the beginning of the book, The Young Girl is obviously not a gendered concept. A hip-hop nightclub player is no less a Young-Girl than a beurette tatted up like a pornstar. (Tiqqun, *Preliminary Materials For a Theory of the Young-Girl*). Tiqqun is inspired by Michel Foucault’s late work, however the theory of the Young-Girl is rather a critique than, as it might be read, a literal pure misogyny. Young-Girl is a figurative term and, obviously, a metaphor, as Tiqqun says, could possibly be read as a powerful man of capitalism and a consumerist. This concept is highly connected to Foucault’s biopower, a term he first described in *The Will to Knowledge* which is the first volume of his *The History of Sexuality*. Before the term biopower the term biopolitics appeared during one of his lectures in the College de France. In short, biopolitics can be understood as a political rationality which takes the administration of life and populations as its subject: “to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order.” (Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality Volume 1*). Biopower thus names the way in which biopolitics is put to work in society and involves what Foucault describes as ‘a very profound transformation of [the] mechanisms of power’ of the Western classic

³⁶ TIQQUN. (2012). *Preliminary Materials For a Theory of The Young Girl*. Los Angeles: Semoitext(e)

age. In *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault writes of “a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations”³⁷. At the end of his analysis, Foucault claims that the biopower influenced without a question the development of capitalism as well as proved that the control over social bodies through phenomena such as birth, death, health, sexual regulations and so on. Not only he states the body is a direct target of power itself, but also describes the constraint or repression of something that has already been embodied. To put it another words, in *History of Sexuality* Foucault depict how in the eighteenth and nineteenth century sexuality and bodies have been used as essential tools of manipulating and controlling the life of society. He claims: “this power over life evolved in two basic forms; these two forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted rather two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. On of these poles - the first to be formed, it seems - centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterised the disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological process: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1).

In Tiquun’s *Preliminary Materials For a Theory of the Young-Girl* the perspective seems to be radically different, but not deprived of similarities. However, once the Young-Girl is not seen literally, as mentioned before, she becomes the man in power. Instead, she refers to the idealisation of youth and points out the stereotypes about the femininity by the apparatus of consumerism. The critique of capitalism, social media and, somehow, through the Young-Girl’s ignorance for the last century’s feminism. They claim: “Biopower is available as a cream, pill, and spray. Seduction is a new opium of the masses. It is the freedom of a world without freedom, a joy of a world without joy. (...) Historically, the Young-Girl appears, in her extreme affinity with Biopower, as a spontaneous addressee of all biopolitics, the one whom THEY address.” (Tiquun, *Preliminary Materials For a Theory of the Young-Girl*). That is to say the Young-Girl appears as a metaphor of most of the capitalist’s social roles could be possibly thought of. She is a prisoner as well as a prison itself.

³⁷ ADAMS, R. (2017). *Michel Foucault: Biopolitics and Biopower*. Critical Legal Thinking

Above all, the Young-Girl is presented with the extreme violence of gender normativity. That is, however, crucial, while analysing it in the context of power-through-body issue and Foucault's biopower theory. "The youth and femininity of the Young-Girl, in fact her youthitude and femininitude, are that through which the control of appearances extends to the discipline of bodies." (Tiqqun, *Preliminary Materials For a Theory of the Young-Girl*). For Foucault, once power takes control over life and death, it becomes an attempt to make life itself turn to the forces of power relations. For him the body becomes a focus of the relations of power and oppression. Thus, Foucault claims in the modern regimes the bio-power of system operates to make us become subjects that are both the oppressed ones and the vehicles of power. Similarly, Tiqqun describes the Young-Girl as an oppressor and the one who is being oppressed. Young-Girl is powerful and weak at the same time.

Then again, the book has been printed, the statements from Tiqqun's thesis seemingly bring to mind the expressions in social media platform. They might be seen as an original and authentic template of consumerism in the age of Instagram. The Young-Girl sells herself, they claim, she is a product as well as, without a doubt, the beneficiary. She becomes "a picture and a picture is mainly a social rite, a defense against anxiety, and a tool of power. (...) Photographs, which cannot themselves explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy"³⁸. Thus where does the metaphorical Young-Girl stand among social media?

To understand the way social body is represented in the contemporary media, it is important to once again mention the basis of feminism and history of body representation. Perhaps, Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*³⁹ (fig.2) was not only the most famous representation of ideal human, but also ableist, in the sense of standing against any disabilities, it was a demonstration of the elite and normative human bodies. These natural differences among bodies, that has been ignored since Renaissance, helped to build the hierarchical system of oppression. Andrea Dworkin in her early work says that "standards of beauty describe in precise terms the relationship that an individual will have her own body. They prescribe her motility, spontaneity, posture, gait, the uses to which she can put her body. They define precisely the dimensions of her physical freedom. And of course, the relationship between physical freedom and psychological development, intellectual possibility, and creative potential is an umbilical one. In our culture, not one part of woman's body is left untouched, unaltered. No feature or extremity is spared the art or pain of

³⁸ SONTAG, S. (1977). *On Photography*. New York: Picador USA

³⁹ DA VINCI, L. (1490). *Vitruvian Man*. Pen and ink with wash over metalpoint on paper. 34.6 cm x 25.5 cm

improvement. From head to toe, every feature of a woman's face, every section of her body is subject to modification and alteration. This alteration is an ongoing and repetitive process. It is vital to the economy, the major substance of male-female differentiation, the most immediate physical and psychological reality of being a woman. From the age of 11 or 12 until she dies a woman will spend a large part of her time, money and energy on binding, plucking, painting and deodorizing herself. It is commonly and wrongly said that male transvestites though the use of makeup and costuming caricature the women they would become, but any real knowledge of the romantic ethos makes clear that these men have penetrated to the core experience of being a woman, a romanticised construct⁴⁰. However, romanticising of body has its own, long history. Not only has it once become part of tradition through the well known phenomena of women's hysteria but has also served as a tool of manipulation in the patriarchal culture. Romanticisation of the feminine body is, in fact, part of the authoritative paradigm of the oppression and power on behalf of the dominant masculinist culture.

At this point, it is impossible not to mention the representation of the body in social media. Susan Bordo argues that the body is a text of culture⁴¹ as well as a point of social control. Social media, such as Instagram creates a new role for a body which is to establish a new mode of expression. However, it allows the use of new language and tools to control and to oppress these bodies. The critical discourse of the body-mind diversity has become forgotten. Social media has made body even more of a product and has commercialised what is left non-commercialised. The materiality of the body has been reduced to its minimum however it has been objectified and made less real. The eternal essence and individuality of body has been taken over by the repressive apparatus of power with bilateral acceptance. On the other hand, a body, rather than a matter of shame, became a tool to emancipate and to fight from the patriarchal culture. In 2015 Audrey Wollen coined a term of selfie-feminism (also called the Sad Girl Theory). It has been described as an act of resistance and social activism against patriarchy. Women started to use the stereotype that has been created against them to fight the inequality way before the movement of the Sad Girl Theory started but as Instagram has been seen as a tool of oppression from its very beginnings, in fact it has been an important tool for artists to express their defiance. Although Instagram is not a, so called, permanent tool, it became highly influential in the sense of social aspects. Women have been called contributors of their own oppression through few decades. Helen Hester, in her essay wrote: "Given that there

⁴⁰ DWORKIN, A. *Woman-Hating*. New York: Dutton

⁴¹ NIKANDAM, R. (2013). *Eating, Starving and the Body: The Presentation of Self*. *Asian Culture and History*, 5(2).

are a range of gendered challenges specifically relating to ‘living in the condition of virtuality’ (Hayles, 1999: 18) – from sexual harassment via social media to privacy and the protection of online images – there is still much to gain from engaging with pre-millennial cyberfeminist thought. However, not only have technomaterial conditions changed considerably over the past twenty years or so but the theoretical underpinnings of some cyberfeminist endeavours appear in critical need of an update⁴².

On the other hand social media allows the unformed or formless to become a conventional. In other words, as *Xenofeminist Manifesto* says: “Our lot is cast with technoscience, where nothing is so sacred that it cannot be reengineered and transformed so as to widen our aperture of freedom, extending to gender and the human. To say that nothing is sacred, that nothing is transcendent or protected from the will to know, to tinker and to hack, is to say that nothing is supernatural. ‘Nature’— understood here, as the unbounded arena of science—is all there is. And so, in tearing down melancholy and illusion; the unambitious and the non-scaleable; the libidinated puritanism of certain online cultures, and Nature as an un-remakeable given, we find that our normative anti-naturalism has pushed us towards an unflinching ontological naturalism. There is nothing, we claim, that cannot be studied scientifically and manipulated technologically.” (Latoria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism. Politics for Alienation*). Technology, including social media, described as a tool of oppression and power over bodies, according to xenofeminism, while accelerated and pushed onto its very limits, might become a tool of protection. Above all, nature does not induce normative, Latoria Cuboniks claims, once again, nature could, and should be, adjusted and manipulated technologically. The collective bases their manifesto on the main idea of cyber feminism and tries to rewrite it and adjust to make it follow the newest technologies and new ways of oppression over bodies. They are interested in scrapping the divisions and restrictions between gender identity, in other words to try to avoid seeing the only separation as the separation between male and female or feminine and masculine. Despite this, they understand sexual diversity beyond the, so called, binary.

⁴² HESTER, H. (2016). *After the Future: n Hypotheses of Post-Cyber Feminism*. London: Res

5. Cyberfeminism

“The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. In a sense, the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense⁴³”

Donna Haraway

Cyberfeminism is a term that was first used by Carolyn Guertin in 1992. During the same year Canadian artists Nancy Paterson wrote an article entitled Cyberfeminism. The new version of feminism takes a utopian perspective of cyberspace and the Internet as a space of freedom from social constructs such as gender differences. Cyberfeminism presumes that the dissolution of sex and gender is possible only in the cyberspace. However the Old Boys Network, an international coalition of cyberfeminists established in 1997 in Berlin, claims that cyberfeminism shall intentionally stay undefined in order to keep it open. They, in fact, tried to think what cyberfeminism is not, instead of what it stands for. Written in a combination of English, Croatian, Serbian, Dutch, Spanish and German the anti-theses continue to define cyberfeminism as not for sale, abject, a picnic, caffeine-free, anti-male or a banana. The anti-theses are telling us of the importance of both international networking and playful irony in cyberfeminism. In fact, irony became something of a cornerstone of cyberfeminism from Haraway’s ironic cyborg figuration to VNS Matrix’s ironic art projects, the ironic practices of grrrl zines⁴⁴. The First Cyberfeminist International published The 100 anti-theses of cyberfeminism:

⁴³ HARAWAY, D. (1991). *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*. New York: Routledge

⁴⁴ PAASONEN, S. (2011). *Revisiting cyberfeminism*.

“cyberfeminism is not ...

1. cyberfeminism is not a fragrance
2. cyberfeminism is not a fashion statement
3. sajbrfeminizm nije usamljen
4. cyberfeminism is not ideology
5. cyberfeminism nije aseksualan
6. cyberfeminism is not boring”⁴⁵

Other sources brings up the group of four artists Virginia Barratt, Julianne Pierce, Francesca di Rimini and Josephine Starrs, known as VNS Matrix, as the first to use the term cyberfeminism. In 1991 they displayed their first manifesto on a large billboard (fig. 3):

“We are the modern cunt
positive anti-reason
unbounded unleashed unforgiving
we see art with our cunt we make art with our cunt
we believe in jouissance madness holiness and poetry
we are the virus of the new world disorder
rupturing the symbolic from within
saboteurs of the big daddy mainframe
the clitoris is a direct line to the matrix
VNS MATRIX
terminators of the moral code
mercenaries of slime
go down on the altar of abjection
probing the visceral temple we speak in tongues
infiltrating disrupting disseminating
corrupting the discourse
we are the future cunt”⁴⁶

Their version of cyberfeminism was playful and often defined as a futuristic cyberpunk version of feminism. VNS Matrix was interested in digital arts, critical appropriation, irony and playful exploration. As a main source of inspiration they

⁴⁵ OLD BOY’S NETWORK. (1997)

⁴⁶ VNS MATRIX. (1991). *Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century*.

used *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, an essay published in 1984 by Donna Haraway, this was the inspiration for the new movement. Haraway's cyborg was a creature in the post-gender world that was free from the memory of social and historical events and concepts. She describes it: "the cyborg skips the step of original unity, of identification with nature in Western sense (...) is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. (...) Unlike the hopes of Frankenstein's monster, the cyborg does not expect its father to save it through a restoration of the garden. (...) The cyborg would not recognise the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust." (Haraway, *A Manifesto for Cyborgs*). Haraway created her manifesto based on the non-existent creature through which she explains her point. She develops the relationship between those metaphorical cyborgs with culture and nature, in fact, Haraway describes the divisions made between culture and nature in feminist theories. However, Donna Haraway is not writing on cyberfeminism herself, she formulates a critical feminist position in relation to natural sciences and new technologies.

Xenofeminism might be called an updated, accelerated cyberfeminism, or, what Helen Hester proposes in her essay, "Post-Cyberfeminism, Cyberfeminism 2.0". (Hester. *After the Future: n Hypotheses of Post-Cyber Feminism*). Since The First Cyberfeminist International during Documenta X in Kassel⁴⁷, the technology has developed as well as the idea of cyberfeminism has been adjusted to it. Cyberfeminism has always been seen as a global idea, a movement that would connect all that is excluded. This idea seemed not to succeed, as cyberfeminist met a lot of critique from other feminist groups, they judged cyberfeminism for being empty and exclusive while the idea established the exact opposite. Maria Fernandez and Faith Wilding criticised early cyberfeminists: "For example, although cyberfeminism presents itself as inclusive, cyberfeminist writings assume an educated, white, upper middle-class, English speaking, culturally sophisticated readership. Ironically, this attitude replicates the damaging universalism of *old-style feminism*. There is little mention of the crucially different conditions — be they economic, cultural, racial or ethnic, geographic, or environmental — under which women worldwide experience sexuality and pleasure, aging, menopause, motherhood, child rearing, ecology and the environment."⁴⁸ Cyberfeminism has tried to connect women all over the world, it has seen web as a crucial tool in the war with oppression and patriarchal culture, is has tried to overcome the inequalities using the

⁴⁷ The First Cyberfeminist International. (1997). Documenta X. Kassel, Germany.

⁴⁸ FERNANDEZ, M.; FAITH, W. (2002). *Domain Errors: Cyberfeminist Practices!* New York: Autonomedia.

advantages of the, in fact still democratic, Internet. It seems as, everything that the first cyberfeminists failed at, Xenofeminism picks up and present in the newer and more liberated form. As they state in the Xenofeminist Manifesto: “Why is there so little explicit, organized effort to repurpose technologies for progressive gender political ends? XF seeks to strategically deploy existing technologies to re-engineer the world. Serious risks are built into these tools; they are prone to imbalance, abuse, and exploitation of the weak. Rather than pretending to risk nothing, XF advocates the necessary assembly of techno-political interfaces responsive to these risks. Technology isn’t inherently progressive. Its uses are fused with culture in a positive feedback loop that makes linear sequencing, prediction, and absolute caution impossible. Technoscientific innovation must be linked to a collective theoretical and political thinking in which women, queers, and the gender non-conforming play an unparalleled role.” (Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism. Politics for Alienation*. 0x02).

Xenofeminism evolved from the main cyberfeminist assumptions and accelerated them as well as made them more accessible. The main catchword: ‘let the hundred sexes bloom’ refers to total equality and emancipation. Laboria Cuboniks has built its narration on the basis of second wave feminism and foucauldian discourse analysis as well as, most importantly, cyber feminism and internet feminism. It almost seems like an techno-utopian idea of release from the oppressive capitalism.

6. Body and sexuality in art after 1960s

“Computers and computer programming, it hasn't changed the perception-or reality-of women's condition in the new technologies. Being bad grrls on the Internet is not going to change matters much either, nor challenge the status quo, though it may provide refreshing moments of iconoclastic delirium. But if grrrl energy and invention were to be coupled with engaged political savvy and practice... Imagine!”⁴⁹

Faith Wilding

Feminist artists have tried to transform the stereotypes and rewrite the male-dominated art history since the mid twentieth century. Before feminism, women were nearly invisible in the public eye. During the second wave of feminism that begun in early 1960s, the production of feminist art work began to be more visible. Feminist art, mostly created by women, confronted the patriarchal culture with contained imaginary dealing with sexuality, body, personal experiences and gender based stereotypes. Lucy R. Lippard said: “it is useless to try to pin down a specific formal contribution made by feminism because feminist and/or women's art is neither a style nor a movement, much as this may distress those who would like to see it safely ensconced in the categories and chronology of the past. It consists of many styles and individual expressions and for the most part succeeds in bypassing the star system. At its most provocative and constructive, feminism questions all the precepts of art as we know”⁵⁰

Photography became one of the most commonly used medium by feminist artists. While not so popular among male artists mediums like video, performance or photography itself helped them to represent their ideas to be as ‘realistic’ as possible. Thus, in 1974 an American artist Hannah Wilke used the medium of photography to

⁴⁹ WILDING, F. (1998). *Where is Feminism in Cyberfeminism?* Kassel: The First Cyberfeminist International.

⁵⁰ LIPPARD, L. R. (1980). *Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s*. Art Journal

create her significantly popular series called *S.O.S - Stratification Object Series* in which she used herself as an object (fig.4). Wilke stuck a chewing gum all around her body and photographed herself in pop-up girls' poses. While mentioning women in photography it is crucial to talk about Cindy Sherman, one of the most significant female photographers in the twentieth century. Her self portraits were certainly groundbreaking as they depicted most of the stereotypes and inequalities towards women at her times. Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* (fig.5) consists of sixty nine black-and-white photographs on which the artist poses in different roles and settings. She points out the inequalities in the representation of women in the film industry.

Women in art since the very beginning used their, often naked, body to express their statements. The performative acts were more and more radical. While Ana Mendieta, a Cuban American artist, used her own blood and her own body in performances, Yoko Ono let the audience cut her clothes off her body, and Carolee Schneemann pulled a scroll from her vagina. Those acts have been seen as a radical statement as well as a hysterical need to get the attention. Later on, in 1974, Marina Abramovic horrified the audience during her performance *Rhythm 0* (fig.6). Artist has pushed not only hers but also the viewers' limits. Abramovic became an object and let the audience use seventy two different tools to do whatever they wanted with her body. Eventually people became wilder and started to use violence against her. After the performance artist admitted at one point she was sure she was going to be killed by the violent public. Marina Abramovic depicted a powerful statement about the objectification of female body at the same time uncovered human instincts and inability to control themselves in certain situations. Another performance artist, Carolee Schneemann explored her body during the performance at the Women Here and Now conference (fig.7). She undressed, wrapped herself in the sheet and climbed onto the table. She informed the audience that she would read from her book, *Cezanne, She Was A Great Painter*,⁵¹ dropped the sheet and applied black paint on her naked body. At the end she slowly drew a narrow scroll of paper from her vagina.⁵² By this experimental, at that time, act she wanted to break the taboos against the vitality and sexuality of the body. Schneemann explained that she wanted to give the body back to the ones it belongs to- women - and express her discord to the sex-negative society.

The Guerrilla Girls art group was one of the first ones to openly fight against sexism and racism in the art world. They uncovered the institutions that have been ignoring women for decades. As well as taking feminist art to new directions by

⁵¹ SCHNEEMANN, C. (1975). *Cezanne, She Was A Great Painter*. New York: Tresspuss Press.

⁵² MANCHASTER, E. (2003). *Summary on Interior Scroll*. London: Tate Modern

placing political posters all around New York (fig.8). Guerrilla Girls pointed out the lack of female artists during the show in Museum of Modern Art in New York. Out of one hundred and sixty nine artists only thirteen of them were women.

In 2007 *WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution*, the first major retrospective of international women artists only, took place in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. The show was supposed to show what feminists and freed female artists to do. *WACK!* generates an important question of why do women in art still not share the equal rights with male artists. Works, that have been shown during the exhibition, include a broad range of media - including painting, installation, sculpture, film, photography, video, and performance. The show included approximately hundred and twenty artists, which helped exploring ethnical as well as geographical differences of feminism issues.

Above all, when talking about contemporary visions of feminism, such as cyberfeminism and xenofeminism, there needs to be contemporary art included. The post-internet age has no rules. Everyone can become part of it as the Internet has become a common tool. One of the well-known artists is Petra Cortright (fig.9). She works around the concept of gender and femininity mostly using the medium of video but also works with photography and painting. Cortright uses new technologies and the medium of the Internet as a tool to express the body. In her, so called, selfie videos that she uploads on YouTube she plays with the stereotypes around femininity and the general idea of gender. Another artist who has to be mentioned is Tabita Rezaire. In her piece *Peaceful Warrior* (fig.10) which she calls a 'healing tutorial' she shows how to change from an angry warrior to a peaceful warrior. Rezaire says: carying for myself is an act of political warfare! She uses her own body and performs a spiritual statement half laughing and half crying in front of the viewer.

Signe Pierce is another artist using the Internet as a tool to fight inequality. She ironically uses the term of 'reality artist' and uses her body and mind to incite the self-reflection among her viewers. As many internet artists she states that art does not belong in the gallery anymore, it exists anywhere with a wifi connection. (fig.11)

The last, but very important, contemporary artist that should be introduced in this chapter is Anicka Yi. She is a conceptual artist who's installations are well known for its relation to the senses, mainly smell. She cooperates with biologists and chemists in order to develop an intersection between art and science. During her shocking show *You Can Call Me F* (fig.12), Anicka Yi presented work based on cheek swabs from a hundred women that became a collective bacteria that grew for the duration of the show. As the curator explained: "For *You Can Call Me F*, The Kitchen's gallery will function as a forensic site in which the artist aligns society's growing paranoia around contagion and hygiene (both public and private) with the

enduring patriarchal fear of feminism and potency of female networks. Anicka Yi's new works will gather biological information from one hundred women to cultivate the idea of the female figure as a viral pathogen which undergoes external attempts to be contained and neutralized. Employing the visual language of quarantine tents which allow limited transparency and access while aiming to protect their fragile ecosystems within, Yi's humanist approach foregrounds the politics and subjectivities of smell and its impact on our empathic understanding of each other."⁵³

What is undoubtedly a crucial connection between all the described artworks is the relation between artist and body and the relation that artist build between the viewer and body. The early feminist artist emancipated their bodies through pain and suffer to tame the struggle they went through. They focused on physical pain, pornography and division between (mainly) female and male. Artist who worked later on present a slightly different approach, they work with the idea of unjust beauty and sexual standards, and the image of women in mass media. What links all these artist is the perpetual need for full emancipation and equality. They all try to connect with their bodies and ultimately create a specific kind of reclamation.

⁵³ the curatorial text written by Lumi Tan, exhibition was shown in The Kitchen gallery in New York City.

7. Conclusion

Social body in this work is simply understood as a body which functions in various social situations. The most important aspect is its function in relation to power. Body has always been a form of social control - that might be the first statement of this analysis. This is supported by Michel Foucault and his book on the history of sexuality, second and third wave feminism, and the ideas of cyber feminists and the Laboria Cuboniks collective. They all reiterate the importance of social control through bodies and sexuality. Each source, even if they have slightly different ideas on ways of emancipation, agree that a woman's situation is connected to the issues of power and culture. Existentialists on the other hand state that one is not born anything and that everything we are is the result of our choices. This idea is strongly related to the previously described statement it further supports the statement and leads to another important issue that is relayed in this work - that the biological differences between the sexes are a basis for inequality. This claim divides the described movements and collectives but, as proved in the analysis, that there are also many similarities to be found. Even in his description of the situation in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Foucault depicts how bodies and sexuality have been used as an essential tool to control life in society. The text also elaborates about sex and gender distinction and how those two things are being socially constructed. In this particular case the most important view belongs to Laboria Cuboniks and their manifesto which talks about the anti-naturalistic perspective. They claim that being anti-naturalist is not the same as standing against nature as well as that certain roles are fixed or predetermined because they are biological assigned. This leads to Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" and the whole movement of Cyber Feminism that might seem different from the predecessors for instance second wave's feminists' ideas or Foucault's approach to docile bodies, but in this analysis I tried to state that there are many resemblances in these theories. At the end I tried to briefly go through

the most important pieces in the history of feminist art, as well as new concepts, for example, post internet or cyber feminist art, and refer them to the analysis of theoretical work.

In fact the combination of described theories and art work brings the important result of this research - body is an important and meaningful subject of common life and art. Feminist and post-feminist art has brought it to a primary place and deprived its shame. The selection of artworks deliver the examples of issues concerning women's experiences of their embodiment. Despite the earlier mentioned power over bodies, the important aspect that has been concluded in this text is the issue of corporeal subjectivities. Bodies that are unambiguous are still being lambasted in the mass media society. Xenofeminism, supposedly feminist version of accelerationism, announces that the end of capitalism is the only way of ending this obsession of inequality and oppressive control.

To further explore this it would be interesting to look at more theories and sources especially in context of social media issues. This research is merely an example of all the studies that have been done on this topic by feminists throughout the decades as well as focusing on the combination of contemporary theories with long-established studies that are not always connected and corresponding. Through analysis of contemporary and secondary sources it seems that the body is still very much oppressed and that a force in society is working to keep the body repressed and it is visible specifically in the case of social media as it has become a new tool of oppression. Although there are new movements appearing and trying to fight the stereotypical way of conceiving gender and redefining the idea of emancipation. Inequality still exists.

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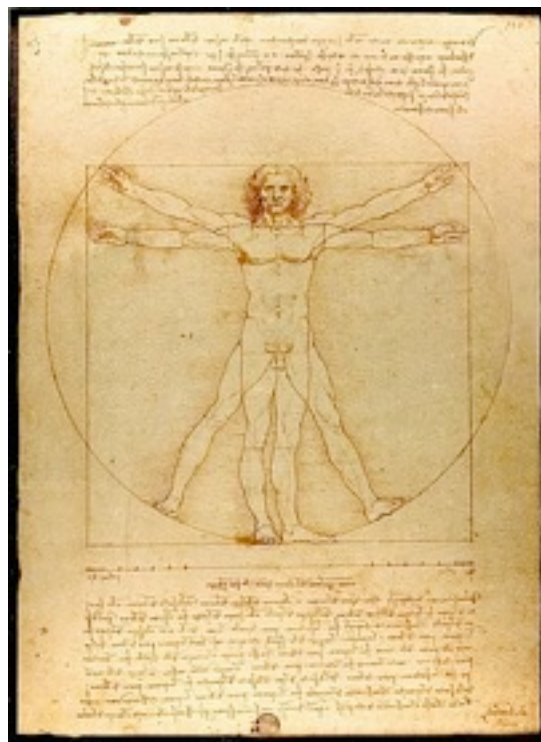
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9. List of reproductions



(fig. 1)

KRUGER, B. (1989). *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*.
Photographic silkscreen on vinyl, 284,5 x 284,5 cm



(fig. 2)

DA VINCI, L. (1490). *Vitruvian Man*.
pen and ink with wash over metalpoint on paper. 34.6 cm x 25.5 cm



(fig. 3)

VNS MATRIX. (1991). *Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century*. poster



(fig. 4)

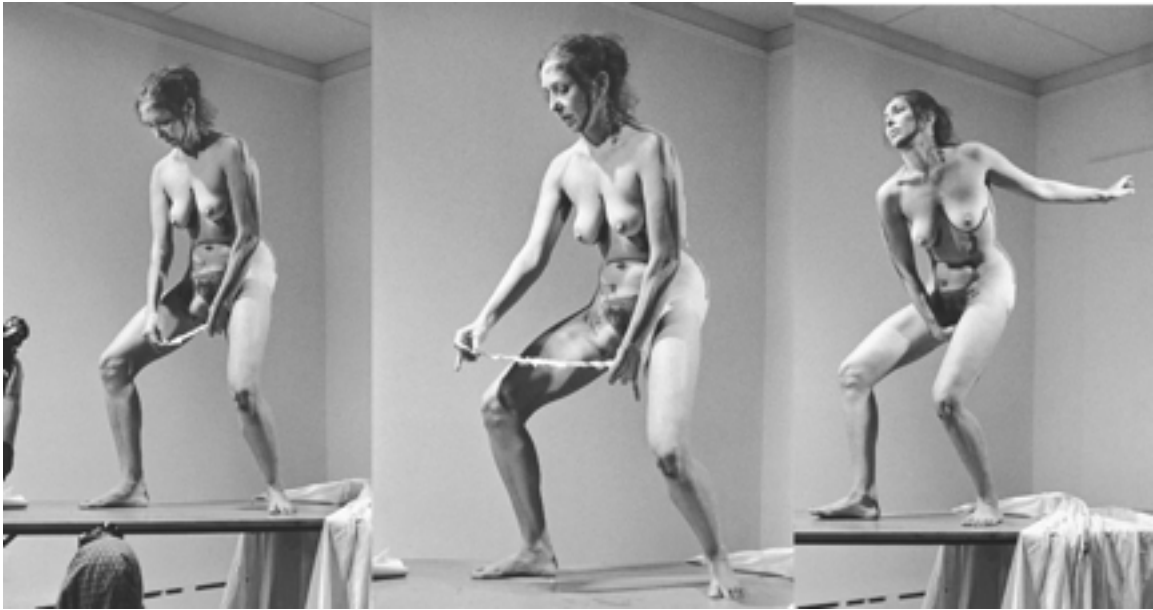
WILKE, H. (1974-82). *S.O.S. - Starification Object Series*. gelatin silver prints with chewing gum sculptures 101.6 x 148.6 x 5.7 cm



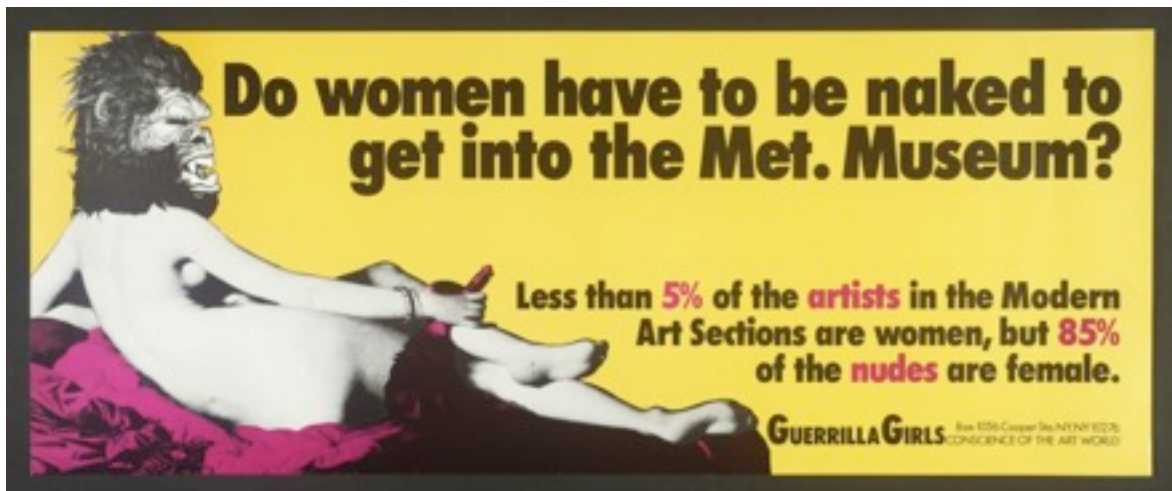
(fig. 5)
SHERMAN, C. (1978). *Untitled Film Still #21*.
gelatin silver print 19.1 x 24.1 cm



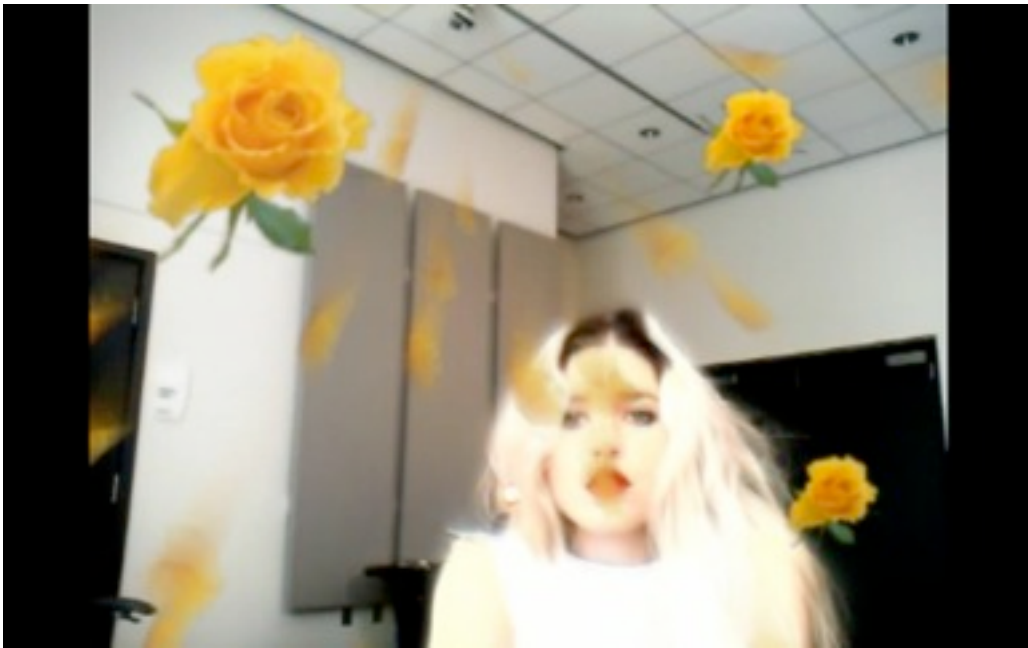
(fig. 6)
ABRAMOVIC, M. (1974). *Rhythm 0*.
still from the performance



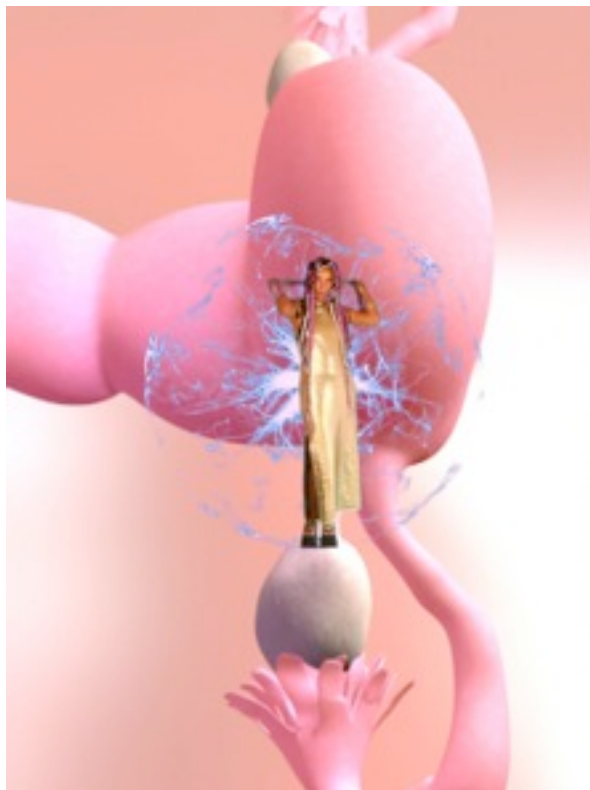
(fig. 7)
SCHNEEMANN, C. (1975). *Interior Scroll*
still from the performance



(fig. 8)
Guerrilla Girls. (1989). *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?*
poster



(fig. 9)
CORTRIGHT, P. (2013). *bridalshower_w_rose*.
webcam video



(fig. 10)
REZAIRE, T. (2015). *Peaceful Warrior*.
digital video



(fig. 11)

PIERCE, S. (2016). *Reality Is A Porno and Life Is But A Meme.*
video installed on an iPhone 6



(fig. 12)

YA, A. (2015). *You Can Call Me F.*
installation view