Guerrilla Girls Checklist

**Dearest Art Collector. 1986**

**Bus Companies. 1986**

**The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist. 1988**

**Do Women Have to be Naked? 1989**

**Missing in Action. 1991**

**Return to Traditional Values on Abortion. 1992**

**10 Trashy Ideas about the Environment. 1995**

**Sundance Stickers. 2001**

**Birth of Feminism movie poster. 2001**

**Anatomically Correct Oscar billboard. 2002**

**Trent L'Otis's Billboard. 2003**

**Women's Terror Alert. 2003**

**Banvenutti alla Biennale Feminista. 2005**

**Where are the Women Artists of Venice? 2005**

**Unchain the Women Directors billboard. 2006**

All works from the portfolio Guerrilla Girls’ Most Wanted: 1985-2006. Purchased through the Anonymous Fund #144; 2006.83.1-2006.83.30

**Selected Bibliography**


A Space for Dialogue was founded with the support of the Class of 1948, and is made possible with the generous endowment from the Class of 1957.


**Guerrilla Girls, Do Women Have to Be Naked? 1989.**

A Space for Dialogue. Founded in 1991, A Space for Dialogue is an international, non-profit arts and educational organization that seeks to enhance the understanding and critique of the role of art in society through exhibitions, publications, and public events. It is a project of the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.
Guerrillas don’t always need guns to start a revolution. The Guerrilla Girls and the riot grrrls used art and music to combat sexism, racism, and homophobia within the art and music worlds. Both movements began small, in crowded rooms after gallery openings and girls’ bedrooms after concerts, but soon spread like wildfire. Through these movements, women and girls built an alternative feminist culture that simultaneously exposed historical discrimination and created feminist-oriented protest art.

In June 1985 the Museum of Modern Art in New York City opened an exhibition titled An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture. Out of 169 artists, it showcased the work of only thirteen female artists. Furthermore, all of the artists were white and either from Europe or the United States. Irritated by this disparity, a group of women picketed outside the venue the day of the opening, their signs reading “Museum of Modern Art opens, but not for women.” After the protest, dissatisfied by the lack of support from the public, a group of artists and activists founded the Guerrilla Girls.

A self-proclaimed “terrorist, subversive organization,” the Guerrilla Girls have since then become a leading voice in protesting male supremacy in the art world (Corrigan 161). The members choose to remain anonymous by wearing gorilla masks, joining a long tradition of masked avengers like Batman and Zorro. They also take up the names of dead women artists, such as Käthe Kollwitz and Frida Kahlo, as their pseudonyms, reinforcing these artists’ presence in history.

United under the mission of exposing discrimination in all sectors of the art world, the Guerrilla Girls are not afraid of directly targeting curators, museums, galleries, and art critics. In one of their most famous posters they pose the question: “Do women have to be naked to get into U.S. Museums?” The question is followed by the declaration that “less than 3% of the artists in the Met. Museum are women, but 83% of the nudes are female.” The poster portrays the figure of the famous Ingres nude painting Grande Odalisque wearing a gorilla mask, transforming a passive female nude from the nineteenth century into an aggressive feminist activist.

During the early 1990s, many women and girls began to notice disparities in the punk movement that were similar to those that the Guerrilla Girls had exposed in the art world. Soon after the founding of the Guerrilla Girls, a new feminist youth movement was sweeping America: riot grrrl.

Punk emerged in the 1970s out of an ideology of anti-authoritarianism and individual freedom. However, most women and girls remained on the sidelines as girlfriend, zine writers, and photographers (Downes 16). The riot grrrl movement was born out of a need to create a space for women to make their own art within a masculine medium. It was a movement without official leaders or a centralized ideology, that instead made leaders out of anyone who chose to carve a cultural space for themselves (Monen 7).

One of the main goals of riot grrrls was to make feminist ideologies accessible to girls and teenagers through simple song lyrics. In the song titled “Double Dare Ya” by the quintessential riot grrrl band Bikini Kill, the lead singer and feminist icon Kathleen Hanna begins the song by screaming “We’re Bikini Kill and we want revolution Girl-style now!” She then sings, “Dare ya to do what you want, Dare ya to be who you will, Dare ya to cry right out loud.” The song concludes by encouraging girls to stand up for their rights.

Both the Guerrilla Girls and the riot grrrls not only encouraged women to make art but sought to create venues for them to exhibit their art. Soon after protesting the opening at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guerrilla Girls decided to curate their own review of contemporary women artists. The show was titled “The Night the Palladium Apologized” and was held at the Palladium nightclub. It included artwork from over one hundred women artists and created a subversive space for women artists to socialize and feel a sense of community. “It was a great night, because instead of seeing all this young male energy, there were all these great paintings by women, and everybody was dancing, and it was that heaviness of the club scene and it was like women’s art, instead of art by the bad boys... It was a thrill!” (Richards, Guerrilla Girl Rosalina Carriera 154).

Similarly, one of the first manifestations of the riot grrrl movement happened at K Records’ International Pop Underground (IPU) convention in 1991. The IPU opened with a “girl’s night,” where many first-generation riot grrrl bands played together for the first time.

The concert was an extremely memorable experience for riot grrrls who had never attended all-girl concerts. “It was the first time I saw women standing on a stage as though they truly belonged there. The first time I had ever heard the voice of a sister proudly singing the rage so shamefully locked in my own heart. Until girls’ night, I never knew that punk rock was anything but a phallic extension of the white middle class male’s frustrations” (Downes 29).

The Guerrilla Girls and the riot grrrls created an alternative feminist dialogue through their art. They inspired women and girls across the world to become artists and musicians and fought tirelessly to transform previously male-dominated spaces into welcoming spaces for everyone. They created a cultural movement that rebelled against elitist traditions in the art and music world and made feminism available to a wide and diverse audience: “Riot grrrl was by far one of the most undeniable effective feminist movements, turning academia into an accessible down-to-earth language, making feminism a trend for the first time in history” (Beth Ditto from Gossip). The movements not only inspired women and girls to rebel against discrimination within the art worlds but allowed them to take that positive feminist energy to every aspect of their lives: “I have heard people say that I am a force to be reckoned with. I know that happened by being a Guerrilla Girl. It really, really empowered me” (Richards, Guerrilla Girl Rosalina Carriera 155).

Julissa Llosa ‘10
Homna Family Cunctorial Intern

Dearest Art Collector,
It has come to our attention that your collection, like most, does not contain enough art by women.
We know that you feel terrible about this and will rectify the situation immediately.
All our love,
Guerrilla Girls