

FEMINIST ECOLOGIES

Curated by Chloé Hazelwood - September 10 – October 3

Public Programs presented as a part of Feminist September at Verge Gallery:

Saturday September 12, 1-3pm - Panel Discussion: 'XenoFeminism, CyberFeminism and EcoFeminism' with Amy Ireland, Virginia Barrett, Prue Gibson and Jacqueline Drinkall

Saturday September 19, 4-6pm - Female Trailblazers: a social networking event.

Saturday September 26, 12-3pm - Feminist Fronts: Art Crit/ panel discussion led by Aggregate.

Saturday October 3, 1-3pm - Double Vision: curated by Del Lumanta. Knitted Abyss, James Brown and Zoe Mahoney ft. Laurence Williams.

How can curators combat the neutralisation of feminist politics within the art institution? *Feminist Ecologies* seeks to provide an alternative, experimental space that privileges diverse ways of knowing and being. Featuring female-identifying artists from across Australia, the exhibition explores articulations of identity and agency that have been strategically deployed in order to challenge the status quo. Identity and agency are then connected to themes of unpaid labour, domesticity, queerness and cultural hybridity. *Feminist Ecologies* reimagines the term 'feminism' not as a singular, monolithic category, but as a fluid and flexible concept. Further, it aims to decentralise mainstream feminism in favour of an intersectional approach, taking into account how factors of race, class and sexuality benefit some women while disadvantaging others.

An unfortunate side effect of feminist political struggle has been the sidelining of certain voices that do not fit into the white, middle-class narrative of social progression. *Feminist Ecologies* hopes to redress this imbalance by foregrounding the multiple discourses existing within feminism. The concept of "curatorial activism" (Reilly, 2011) is particularly useful in this regard, enabling arts practitioners to facilitate the representation of marginalised perspectives. An imperative political project taken up by feminist curators involves 'queering' and 'Indigenising' the art institution, signifying curatorial transgressions that break with the western art canon and conventional modes of display. The experimental nature of feminist interventions in the art world reflects the desire for an alternative paradigm – one that is focused on transgenerational engagement, critical dialogue and what feminist art historian Julie Ewington has termed "radical heterogeneity" within the exhibition.

Rather than retreading historical ground in the interrogation of binary categories such as 'man' and 'woman', *Feminist Ecologies* questions the assumed authority of mainstream feminism in relation to the actuality of women's lived experience. Given that it promotes a singular vision of political struggle, does it risk perpetuating patriarchal individualism? The artists featured in this exhibition are committed to an ethics of collectivity, fracturing the power dynamics that have undermined social activism and feminist aesthetics. Kelly Doley, Sandra Hill, Del Lumanta and TextaQueen explore embodied experience across different temporal, cultural and social settings. Doley's works function as traces of a feminist event, involving an educational exchange that took place between the artist and her participants. Hill's works reference a colonial history of enforced domesticity, while Lumanta harks back to the radical political posters and DIY aesthetic of 1970s and 1980s women's activism. TextaQueen playfully interrogates idealised notions of femininity and sexuality.

List of works (clockwise from left)

(Window) TextaQueen, *K Clubs She would say if you don't do what I want I'll cut off your hair* (Sabine), 2000 – 2002, felt tip on paper. On loan from Sullivan + Strumpf Gallery.

TextaQueen, *What Does PC Mean?* 2006, felt-tip marker and acrylic paint pen on Stonehenge cotton paper. On loan from Sullivan + Strumpf Gallery.

Del Lumanta, *Untitled*, 2015, screen print on paper. On loan from the artist.

Sandra Hill, *Home-o-genus*, 2013, mixed media. Courtesy the artist and Mossenson Galleries. \$22,000.

Sandra Hill, *Selling Assimilation – Get Your New Life Here!* 2010, oil on plywood. Courtesy the artist and Mossenson Galleries. \$7,700.

Kelly Doley, *Lesson on Feminism by Stealth* (Karen Pickering), 2012, MDF, chalk, blackboard. On loan from the artist.

Kelly Doley, *Lesson on Feminist Literature* (Kyla McFarlane), 2012, MDF, chalk, blackboard. On loan from the artist.

Kelly Doley, *Lesson on Ecofeminism* (Kate Ridgeway), 2012, MDF, chalk, blackboard. On loan from the artist.

Kelly Doley, *List of Participants, The Learning Centre: Two Feminists*, 2012, inkjet print. On loan from the artist.

Chloé Hazelwood was the recipient of the Verge Gallery Mentored exhibition opportunity and has been mentored by Verge Gallery manager Sian McIntyre in the development and production of this exhibition.

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VERGE GALLERY



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