

FEMININE(S).

VISUALITIES, ACTIONS, AND AFFECTS

The title of this biennial poses a question that points to the tension at the core of contemporary democratic culture: participation in society on the basis of “difference” understood—as Denise Ferreira da Silva puts it—as multiplicity rather than separation. It looks as well to the questions Nelly Richard asked in her book *Masculino/Femenino* (1993) in the context of the democratic transitions in Latin America. Her questions interrogate the social place of the feminine, its constructions and gaps, and the radical departure from exclusive binary logics. These questions are as relevant as ever at a time when feminism is revisiting agendas—and still unmet goals—first formulated in the sixties and voiced again in the nineties, while also responding to a series of pressing issues: growing violence against women and LGBTT+ collectivities; rising poverty and other systems of exclusion and discrimination; and worldviews that imperil the planet’s natural resources.

This biennial attempts to devise a contract of sensibility, a zone to exchange visualities, actions, and affects, and confirm the bounties of democratic life without eliding its complexities.

Feminine(s) underscores creativity’s ability to push limits and constraints. It is inspired by the poetic words of Carolina Maria de Jesus, an Afro-Brazilian peasant, poet, and chronicler, who insisted on finding room between paid working and taking care of her children to write. She wrote in the fertile terrain of the Brazilian favela and despite the limitations imposed by (post)colonial racial violence. “Until the rain has stopped” is what she wrote on pages where words and images would create territories of potential freedom. Because the act of writing explores the limits that circumstances impose on language. Writer Clarice Lispector was likely alluding to the conditions surrounding creation when

she spoke of the task of making the way through impossibilities: “I cannot write everything I know,” she wrote, while also speaking of the “luxury of silence.” More than the obviousness of the senses, displaced at a time when they have been reduced to commonplace, to flat communication, the biennial’s exhibition layout is geared to careful reading by an interpretative community capable of tackling a complex mesh of sensibilities and discourses that embrace dissent as springboard of argumentation and deliberation. Because, as we know, we must speak and explore different ways of naming things in order to avoid blanket classifications.

Feminine(s) focuses on the proposals of female artists and of all non-binary, gender-fluid, and non-normative sensibilities, especially the ones that come out against the most varied forms of violence. It is about getting involved with the aspirations of the majorities that many works direct us toward, including artists of African or Indigenous descent whose presence continues to incite critical reflections in an art world that is still resoundingly exclusive. It is about listening carefully and taking on everything that the stereotypes marginalize. All voices, with their heterogeneous visions and revisions, constitute culture.

Feminine(s) expands with the proposals of artists, regardless of gender, who, as partners or allies, share the desire for a less gender oppressive and discriminatory social order. There are many poetics that aspire to design a new symbolic and cultural horizon, where gender differences do not translate into inequality or subalternity. Changes require cross-sectional coalitions of identities that enrich one another thanks to crossings over difference. All stories need to be told and spread so that narratives become plural.

Feminine(s) is enriched by the creations of those who work with traditionally feminine materials and techniques. The creativity at play in conceptions of the common in a set of life experiences and everyday stories that must be heard as voices of diversity without differences. Experiences that expand the expression of a community contribute to conversation and exchange, to the much-needed reconstruction of a social fabric scarred by abuse and precarity. That interaction gives rise to exchanges from which we can begin to imagine other forms of knowledge. All languages belong to us, without hierarchy of value or segregation of content.

Feminine(s) aspires to share the collective exercise of inventing new ways of doing, saying, thinking, and creating—a platform, a forum, a chorus of many forms of expression and ways to listen. It intends to act as a space where the traditionally exclusive structure that regulates the art world’s symbolic and cultural representations mutates. The biennial’s educational component is key to creating territories of exchanges and debate, gatherings of the many audiences that will create their own biennials. The biennial envisions itself as a space of collective celebration, a space to think and create together, to confront, with critical imagination, the challenge of strengthening a democratic pact that expands and diversifies the very shape of the citizenry.

Andrea Giunta

Curator

Bienal 12 - Porto Alegre

Bio

Dorota Biczel (Poland/USA) holds a Ph.D from the University of Texas at Austin. She is currently a visiting assistant professor of art history at the University of Houston. Her research, writing, and curatorial projects focus on contemporary Latin American art seen in the global context, particularly at the intersections of material experimentation, social practice, and politics. She has published articles and essays in academic journals such as *Caiana*, *Buildings & Landscapes*, *Art Journal*, *ARARA*, and *alter/nativas*, and in exhibition catalogs. She curated *Moving Mountains: Extractive Landscapes of Peru* at the UT's Visual Arts Center (2016) and co-curated *Teresa Burga's Chronology: Reports, Diagrams, Intervals* (2011, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart), among other projects.

Andrea Giunta is a writer, curator, and professor at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, where she received her Ph.D. She is a researcher at the CONICET, Argentina, and a visiting scholar at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of several books on Latin American art, including *Avant-garde, Internationalism and Politics: Argentine Art in the Sixties* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). In 2018, she published *Feminismo y arte latinoamericano: Historias de artistas que emanciparon el cuerpo* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2018, and forthcoming in translation by the University of California Press). She was a co-curator of *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985* (2017–2018, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Brooklyn Museum, New York, and the Pinacoteca de São Paulo).

Igor Simões has a PhD in Visual Arts - Art History, Theory and Criticism from the PPGAV (Graduate Program in Visual Arts) at UFRGS. Assistant professor in the *Art History, Theory and Criticism* and *Art Teaching Methodology and Practice* course at UFRGS. Member of the curating committee of the National Association of Plastic Art Researchers-ANPAP, and member of the UFRGS-MARHS Education Hub. Member of the collection committee at the Rio Grande do Sul Museum of Art-MARHS. He works with articulations between exhibitions, film editing/montage, art history, and the

racialization of Brazilian art and the visibility of black individuals in the visual arts world. Author of thesis *Film Montage and exhibitions: Black Voices in the White Cube of Brazilian Art*. Member of Flume - Education and Visual Arts Research Group.

Igor Simões é doutor em Artes Visuais-História, Teoria e crítica da Arte-PPGAV-UFRGS. Professor adjunto de História, Teoria e Crítica da arte e Metodologia e Prática do ensino da arte (UERGS). Membro do comitê de curadoria da Associação Nacional de Pesquisadores em Artes Plásticas-ANPAP, Membro do Núcleo Educativo UERGS-MARGS. Membro do comitê de acervo do Museu de Arte do RS-MARGS. Trabalha com as articulações entre exposição, montagem fílmica, histórias da arte e racialização na arte brasileira e visibilidade de sujeitos negros nas artes visuais. Autor da Tese *Montagem Fílmica e exposição: Vozes Negras no Cubo Branco da Arte Brasileira*. Membro do Flume-Grupo de Pesquisa em Educação e Artes Visuais.

English

Fabiana Lopes is a New York- and São Paulo-based independent curator, writer, and Ph.D. candidate in Performance Studies at New York University, where she is a Corrigan Doctoral Fellow. Her research centers on the contemporary production of artists of the African diaspora in Brazil and the Americas in general. Her writings have appeared in *Harper's Bazaar Art*, *O Menelick 2o Ato*, *ARTE!Brasileiros*, *Contemporary And (C&)*, and in exhibition catalogs such as *Rosana Paulino: The Sewing of Memory*, *Pinacoteca*, São Paulo (2018), *Lucia Laguna: Neighborhood*, MASP, São Paulo (2018), *Of Darkness and Of Light*, *Minnette Vári*, Johannesburg (2016), *Territories: Artists of African Descent at Pinacoteca's Collection*, Pinacoteca, São Paulo (2015).

Portuguese

Fabiana Lopes é Curadora Independente radicada em Nova York e São Paulo, e Doutoranda em Estudos de Performance pela New York University, onde ela é uma Corrigan Doctoral Fellow. Sua pesquisa está centrada na produção contemporânea de artistas da Diáspora Africana no Brasil e nas Américas. Seus textos foram publicados na

Harper's Bazaar Art, O Menelick 2o Ato, ARTE!Brasileiros, Contemporary And (C&) e em catálogos de exposições, entre os quais *Rosana Paulino: costura da memoria*, *Pinacoteca*, São Paulo (2018), *Lucia Laguna: vizinhança*, MASP, São Paulo (2018), *Of Darkness and Of Light*, Minnette Vári, Johannesburg (2016), e *Territórios: artistas afrodescendentes no acervo da Pinacoteca* (2015).