

Editorial

n.paradoxa seeks to explore the paradoxes of critical writing on women's artwork on the cusp of the 21st century in relation to the body of feminist critical theory which has proliferated since the 1970s.

n.paradoxa offers a forum for international exchange and dialogue about contemporary women's art practice embracing both new technologies and traditional media. **n.paradoxa** offers new paradigms for reading the feminine as feminist and to link Cyborgs, cyberrgirls and 'Bad Girls'; new genre public art, 'artworld' feminists and feminist activist art in a critique of the changing definitions of what constitutes feminist art practice today. Most of all, **n.paradoxa** aims to encourage research and debate on women's art practice from feminist perspectives.

The paradoxes within feminism today are in need of both analysis and renegotiation in a new international context. Feminism, itself, cannot be thought of in the singular as it has developed into many forms. Simultaneously, feminism embraces:-

- grassroots activist movements about women, for women and by women on many social issues,
- equal rights campaigns on behalf of women seeking equality before the law and in employment
- and a set of constantly developing theories and perspectives exploring the position of women written both inside and outside the academy.

Feminism is a political movement, which rewrites the definitions of the personal as political. Feminism has developed critical theories and perspectives in every academic discipline, producing new and surprising forms of interdisciplinary connection. The disciplines of fine art, art history and art criticism, are no exception in this respect. Feminist scholarship seeks to research the work of women artists both past and present. This attention to the work of women has revised and fundamentally undermined the notion of a canon of great (male) artists and encouraged a fundamental revision of art's categories and distinctions. Yet things are slow to change.

Attention to gender, leads to and intersects with attention to class, race, ethnicity, hetero/homosexuality as these are equally embedded in the power divisions of all cultural, social-economic relations. Feminism has sought to critique many dominant orthodoxies in contemporary knowledge, revealing their masculinist bias, and opening up a critical space for the re-examination of women's contribution to culture. Feminism draws distinctions between the feminine and feminist but constantly explores the tense relationships and conflicts between the two.

The feminine also has many paradoxes. Femininity is embraced by some women as defining their understanding of feminism. Such qualities are, however, frequently drawn in a binary opposition to qualities more highly-valued as masculine. Is an inversion of a patriarchal society's value systems, a sufficient condition of feminist resistance? The feminine is repeatedly invoked as the sign of elusive Otherness in the texts of male writers. Imagined and idealised femininities like a spectre haunt the frameworks of thought and discussion of the contradictions of contemporary women's work. Feminist critique seeks to untangle the weave, to analyse differences, real and imaginary, political and economic, social and experiential. Feminism has succeeded in emphasising simultaneously both a difference in sameness and a sameness in difference. We live, however, in the face of an indifference to difference.

Recognition of the differences between political positions within feminism is becoming important and defining these differences matters: activist feminism, socialist feminism, liberal feminism, U.S. third world feminism, even conservative feminism. As the paradoxes of late twentieth century life keep multiplying for all of us, in our lives, in our work, in the social and political spaces in which we make our existence.

n.paradoxa is a space to explore these paradoxes.

n.paradoxa, as a not-for-profit magazine, is itself a product of the contradictions of a commitment to socialist feminism and feminist art practices in a patriarchal capitalist world marketplace.

If you want to contribute, please write to the editor.