

Statements (1965-79)

My body is the intention, my body is the event, my body is the result. [1965]

For the performance, I act like a beforeman.

I think that art is always a declaration which contradicts the complacent way of the world.
Scandal is sincerity when it is not programmed.
Sincerity is scandal when the wise world officially runs up against it.

Abstraction in more recent art ended with the Aktion.

From this point on no dogma which for about the last 70 years had claimed any form of validity could any longer be used as a base.

From now on the laws of the wonder world hold sway.

Art is hope, prayer and the possession of the individual.

Whoever wants to partake of this sinful secret may join us in confession.

Art is beautiful but it is hard, like a religion without a purpose.

The little song is gentle
To life I say yes!

VALIE EXPORT Women's Art: A Manifesto (1972)

THE POSITION OF ART IN THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IS THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN THE ART'S MOVEMENT.

THE HISTORY OF WOMAN IS THE HISTORY OF MAN.

because man has defined the image of woman for both man and woman, men create and control the social and communication media such as science and art, word and image, fashion and architecture, social transportation and division of labor. men have projected their image of woman onto these media, and in accordance with these medial patterns they gave shape to woman. if reality is a social construction and men its engineers, we are dealing with a male reality. women have not yet come to themselves, because they have not had a chance to speak insofar as they had no access to the media.

let women speak so that they can find themselves, this is what I ask for in order to achieve a self-defined image of ourselves and thus a different view of the social function of women. we women must participate in the construction of reality via the building stones of media-communication.

* Günter Brus, excerpts (1965-79) from Arnulf Meifert, "Stundenbücher des Entblossten Herzens" (Books of Hours of the Heart Laid Bare), in *Günter Brus: Bild-Dichtungen* (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1980), 7-61. Translation by Dennis Clark. By permission of the author.

** Valie Export, "Women's Art: A Manifesto" (March 1972), *Neues Forum* 228 (January 1973): 47. Translation by Resina Haslinger. This piece was written on the occasion of the exhibition *MAGNA, Geminism: Art and Creativity*, organized by Export. By permission of the author.

this will not happen spontaneously or without resistance, therefore we must fight! if we shall carry through our goals such as social equal rights, self-determination, a new female consciousness, we must try to express them within the whole realm of life. this fight will bring about far reaching consequences and changes in the whole range of life not only for ourselves but for men, children, family, church . . . in short for the state.

women must make use of all media as a means of social struggle and social progress in order to free culture of male values. in the same fashion she will do this in the arts knowing that men for thousands of years were able to express herein their ideas of eroticism, sex, beauty including their mythology of vigor, energy and austerity in sculpture, paintings, novels, films, drama, drawings etc., and thereby influencing our consciousness. it will be time.

AND IT IS THE RIGHT TIME

that women use art as a means of expression so as to influence the consciousness of all of us, let our ideas flow into the social construction of reality to create a human reality. so far the arts have been created to a large extent solely by men. they dealt with the subjects of life, with the problems of emotional life adding only their own accounts, answers and solutions. now we must make our own assertions. we must destroy all these notions of love, faith, family, motherhood, companionship, which were not created by us and thus replace them with new ones in accordance with our sensibility, with our wishes.

to change the arts that man forced upon us means to destroy the features of woman created by man. the new values that we add to the arts will bring about new values for women in the course of the civilizing process. the arts can be of importance to the women's liberation insofar as we derive significance—our significance—from it: this spark can ignite the process of our self-determination. the question, what women can give to the arts and what the arts can give to the women, can be answered as follows: the transference of the specific situation of woman to the artistic context sets up signs and signals which provide new artistic expressions and messages on one hand, and change retrospectively the situation of women on the other.

the arts can be understood as a medium of our self-definition adding new values to the arts. these values, transmitted via the cultural sign-process, will alter reality towards an accommodation of female needs.

THE FUTURE OF WOMEN WILL BE THE HISTORY OF WOMAN.

MILAN KNÍŽÁK *Aktual Univerzity: Ten Lessons* (1967–68)

Lesson One: On Conflict

Conflict is the most direct method of communication but (alas) sometimes (especially now when technology is so prevalent) it is impossible to solve big problems through conflicts and other ways are looked for.

But there are territories where it is possible and necessary to use conflict to clarify something which is impossible to clarify any other way. Often we must kick to be heard. Often we must caress to get a kick.

Conflict has wonderful and dangerous property: we must be on one side or the other. We must believe in something.

* Milan Knížák, "Aktual Univerzity: Ten Lessons" (1967–68), previously unpublished. By permission of the author.

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