



Sackler CPD Programme Study Day: Women in Collections

19 October 2017 11.00—17.00

Leeds Art Gallery
The Headrow, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS1 3AA

A week after the reopening of Leeds City Art Gallery following a major refurbishment we will host a study day around the representation of female artists in public collections.

Leeds has received a significant number of works by female artists from the Contemporary Art Society in the last few years including Alison Wilding, Becky Beasley and Hilary Lloyd. This year they will also receive a video work by Martine Syms through the VN XX CAS scheme.

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee

11.30 – 11.40 Introductions

Dr Ali MacGilp, Programmes Manager, CAS

Sarah Brown, Principal Keeper, Leeds Art Gallery

11.40-13.10 Session One: Institutional collecting of works by women artists

11.40 – 11.50 Professor Griselda Pollock, Director of Research & Professor of the Social & Critical Histories of Art, University of Leeds [NB: Recorded Presentation]

Pollock's presentation addresses two key questions: what is the effect of defining some artists as 'women artists' or female artists'? How does gendering some artists and not others come about and how does its continuation sustain a hierarchy of valuation? Secondly, how do we explain the failure of modern and contemporary galleries to create equality and diversity in the first place when the key characteristic of being modern involved the massive participation of women

in the co-creation of modern and contemporary art? Why are we still merely 'correcting' such a radical imbalance with token additions? Do we need to grapple more profoundly with the structural racism and sexism of our culture and the way our cultural institutions performatively maintain whiteness and masculinity as norms?

**11.50 – 12.00 Gill Park, Director of Pavilion and Lecturer in Museology,
Manchester University**

In May 1983, the UK's first feminist photography centre opened its doors within a renovated park pavilion in Leeds. The Pavilion Women's Photography Centre was initiated by three women following their study in the unique Department of Fine Art at the University of Leeds. Against the backdrop of the miner's strikes, deindustrialisation, race riots, Thatcher's dismantling of the welfare state and the violent murders of women by the so-called 'Yorkshire Ripper', The Pavilion Women's Photography Centre was an intervention into the visual art field; a social and political project; and an important facility for women in the immediate local community. The outcome was a decade-long radical programme of photographic exhibitions that centred women's positions and experiences while investigating urgent theoretical questions about the relationship of art to the nature of social relations. Many of these art works have since been acquired by major collections of art in Britain and further afield. Lifting off from Jo Spence's statement that feminist is not a 'style of photography' but 'to do with a body of ideas,' this talk will address this Leeds-specific project, that made space for the radical convergence of photography and the women's movement.

**12.00 – 12.20 Helen Downes, Paul Mellon Centre Research Curator at UCL Art
Museum, University College London**

UCL Art Museum's Slade Collection is comprised of approximately 45% women artists. How did the collection come to have such a high proportion of work by women? What stories are revealed by researching the collection and what do they tell us about contemporary concerns relating to the representation of women artists in collections?

This presentation will look at UCL Art Museum's Paul Mellon Centre funded project, *Spotlight on the Slade Collections*, highlighting some of the research findings and looking at why the collection is such an important resource for the study of women artists.

12.20 – 12.40 Eliza Gluckman, Curator of the New Hall Art Collection at Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge

The New Hall Art Collection is the largest collection of modern and contemporary art by women in Europe, displayed throughout Murray Edwards College at the University of Cambridge. The collection began with the acquisition of a work by Mary Kelly who had been artist in residence at Kettle's Yard, staying at the extraordinary Chamberlin Powell and Bon Brutalist building of the college then known as New Hall. It has since grown in 30 years to over 500 works, a significant number of which can be viewed daily by a visiting public including works by Rose Wylie, Paula Rego, Maggi Hambling and Lubaina Himid.

The presentation will consider the unique set of circumstances, environment and ethos of the college that lead to such a collection. It's significance in the story of the visibility of women artists, and how it remains meaningful today.

12.40 – 13.10 Panel Discussion: Gill Park, Helen Downes, Eliza Gluckman

Chair: Sarah Brown, Principal Keeper, Leeds Art Gallery

13.10 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 14.30 Tour of the newly rehung and reopened Leeds Art Gallery with Sarah Brown, Principal Keeper, Leeds Art Gallery

14.30 – 15.40 Session Two: Auditing Public Collections

14.30 – 14.50 Dr. Nayia Yiakoumaki, Whitechapel Gallery Archive Curator

The Guerrilla Girls are a group of anonymous, feminist activists founded in 1985. Each member takes the name of a woman artist from the past as a pseudonym and in public their identities are hidden under gorilla masks. Combining strong facts and humour they deploy activist methods in museums and the city and produce posters, banners, stickers, billboards, projections and other projects that expose sexism, racism and corruption in art, film, politics.

Yiakoumaki will discuss The Guerrilla Girls' recent commission for the Whitechapel Gallery, entitled *Is it even worse in Europe?* and will present potential challenges that arise when the institutional modus operandi of displaying art is confronted by feminist art practice. The commission for the Archive Gallery was displayed 1 October 2016-March 2017 at the Archive

Gallery and was co-curated by the feminist curator Xavier Arakistain and Yiakoumaki, in close collaboration with The Guerrilla Girls.

14.50 – 15.10 Dr susan pui san lok, Associate Professor in Fine Art in the School of Art and Design, Middlesex University, London and artist

Dr. susan pui san lok will introduce the ongoing AHRC research project, Black Artists and Modernism (BAM). BAM seeks to address the art historical amnesia and aporia in relation to artists of African and Asian descent in Britain, and the tendency to eclipse the artwork in favour of discussions of ethnicity and identity politics. The presentation will outline the initial findings of BAM's audit of national public collections, and various museological and monographic strands of research, including study days, symposia, displays, and in-progress case studies on the work of Lubaina Himid, Li Yuan-Chia, Vong Phaophanit/Claire Oboussier and Lesley Sanderson/Neil Conroy. Key questions entwined at the core of the project are: How do we come to know – or forget – the work of 'black artists'? What connections, contentions and constellations begin to emerge between when we foreground the artwork in relation to discourses around art?

15.10 – 15.40 Panel Discussion Dr. Nayia Yiakoumaki, Dr. susan pui san lok and Dr. Alison Rowley, Reader in Cultural Theory in the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield

Chair: Dr. Ali MacGilp, Programmes Manager, Contemporary Art Society

15.40 – 16.50 Session Three: Artists and Collections

15.40 – 16.00 Anne Hardy, Artist

Anne Hardy will discuss her recent installation *Falling and Walking* (*phhhhhhhhhhh phosshhhhhh crhhhhzzz mn huaooogh*). During London's ArtNight this summer Anne Hardy presented this new large scale FIELD work, an immersive installation that incorporates sculptural structures, objects, colour, light, and audio in the former headquarters of the Nicholls & Clarke showrooms. Hardy collected sounds from the vicinity of the building, often using objects found on the street to generate noises in the locations where she found them – sliding a steel rod against a metal fence, or dropping found pieces of concrete into a hole. Composed into an abstract score the resulting audio is coupled with a delicate assembly of objects, scored light and structures which is choreographed around the space, and proposes the work as a living object that you enter into. The balance and sensuality of the components create a familiar yet disorienting environment. The work was co-commissioned by ArtNight and The Contemporary Art Society and will join the permanent collection at Leeds City Art Gallery where it will be exhibited in Spring 2018.

16.00 – 16.20 Rommi Smith, Writer and Performer

Rommi Smith will be reading poems which respond to the themes of the day: gender and art, women and art, the erasure of female contributions to culture and art and the employment of one's art form as method of justice. These are key themes in her own creative work and academic scholarship.

She will read a selection of poems which respond to the themes of the day including her recently commissioned piece: *Witness Statement in Which She Confesses*, a response to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* commissioned by Alchemy.

16.20 – 16.50 Panel Discussion Anne Hardy, Rommi Smith and Eva Frapiccini, artist

Chair: Nigel Walsh, Curator: Modern and Contemporary Art, Leeds Art Gallery

17.00 Finish