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This book is both a record and a theoretical expansion of the exhibition _All Men Become Sisters_, held at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź in 2015-2016. Taking the form of an essay, the exhibition proposed a genealogy and a manifestation of sisterhood as present in art from the late 1960s until today. The creation of this show was guided by art that resonates with feminist perspectives on work, production, and reproduction. Sisterhood is an imagination machine; built on the foundations of second-wave criticism of patriarchal exploitation of women, it proceeds to pose questions about future social and economic relations from the standpoint of planetary ecology.

The book comprises a curatorial introduction, a _catalog of artistic practices_ that made up the exhibition, and a series of theoretical essays. The introduction, titled “Imagination Machine,” is a kind of guide to the exhibition and the questions it posed. In it, I propose sisterhood as a category that can be applied to feminist theories of social reproduction, feminist artistic practices of the 1970s (approximately), and contemporary artworks that address issues of the global transformation of labor and ecological awareness.

In the introduction, I employ the metaphor of resonance to describe a curatorial method that involves staged encounters between works of art made at various times and in various spaces: encounters that in fact never occurred. This resonance can spark movement—a kind of commotion in which the rejection of women’s exploitation expressed through feminist art can ring loudly as an objection to other forms of exploitation. This movement opens up sisterhood to a future of ecological care work unshackled from patriarchy.

In “Origin Stories: Feminist Theory and the Sources of the Sexual Division of Labor,” Joanna Bednarek analyzes the concept of gender and its attendant social systems, means of naturalized domination, and unequal division of labor. She discusses the relationship between class and gender, and examines the theories of social reproduction proposed by the Marxist-feminist analyses produced by second-wave feminism, particularly in the realm of autonomous feminism. Bednarek recalls debates over the key role played by “non-economic,” naturalized patriarchal relations in reproducing capitalism. While criticizing the naturalistic sociobiological and anthropological narratives of human evolution, she poses questions about the role biological reproduction plays in our understanding of gender. The purpose of this story is to transcend the sex-gender dichotomy and move beyond our understanding of nature as an immutable set of data points and hard-coded patterns of behavior. Nature—understood as a product of science in dialog with “reality”—is malleable and displays the potential for diverse creation. In stories about the future, “female nature” may become a subversive force rather than the determinant of a ready-made, immutable identity.

In the essay titled “Feminist Econoimics: The Aesthetic Strategies of Social Reproduction in the 1970s,” Siona Wilson discusses the aesthetic strategies of feminism in the 1970s vis-à-vis labor and social reproduction. Her analysis focuses on new forms of production and the dissemination of knowledge through grassroots collaborative networks, particularly the key role played by documentary film in the feminist movement. She examines a number of cases, demonstrating how new, hitherto marginalized artistic techniques and themes articulated in feminist art, involving gender, sexuality, embodiment, and the gendered division of labor, also present in creative work, challenged the rules of the aesthetic experience and the norms of art institutions.

In her essay “A Sad Mimicry of Production: Feminist Artworks on the Social Reproduction Line,” Marina Vishmidt offers a broad-ranging analysis of the debates regarding social reproduction feminism. The author sees these discussions and their attendant artistic practices as means of denaturalizing gender and working towards the goal of abolishing gendered labor divisions. Vishmidt also recalls the role that class and racial divisions—which are associated with gender—and the separate categories of paid and unpaid labor, performed publicly and privately, have played in the naturalization of modern societies. In this context, she examines the feminist art practices that emerged in the “former West” in the 1970s (more or less), and considers their role in problematizing the ostensibly neutral, but in fact gendered protocols of artistic production and reception. As she engages with the archive of feminist thought and art, Vishmidt focuses on the current potential for resistance against the reproduction of gender relations, the articulation of which accompanies the reproduction of other social hierarchies. She calls for the creation of an interdependent movement for the abolition of (naturalized) gendered (and obligatory) labor, and proposes a revision of the autonomy of art as a model for practicing redundancy of both determinants. A radically different vision of socio-economic relations, one written from the standpoint of feminist ethics of care, is found in the essay “Care, Labor, and Robots: A Feminist Manifesto for the Future Economy,” by Zofia Łapnińska. The author offers a performative description of how care will become the leading value in the future economy. She points out that the quality of life in a society is a function of the relationships among its members, and these are fostered by mutual care, trust, solidarity, and equal conditions for development, among others. Her essay begins with an analysis of the ethics of care, based on the writings of Joan Tronto. Łapnińska links the matter of care to the psychological concept of morality and justice proposed by Jonathan Haidt, which she illustrates using selected artworks displayed in the exhibition. She confronts this perspective with questions regarding the position of women in relation to Michael Albert’s analysis of key dynamics and economic institutions and his concept of participatory economics. The essay concludes with a draft manifesto that locates these considerations within Economy 4.0 and the transformation of future female (and male) labor. The author sketches a comprehensive program for the appropriation of new technology and management methods for the equitable redistribution of wealth, combined with political decisions involving basic income, tax reform, egalitarian education, and the socialization of care.
Imagination Machine

Joanna Sokolowska

“We want and have to say that we are all housewives, we are all prostitutes and we are all gay, because until we recognize our slavery we cannot recognize our struggle against it, because as long as we think we are something better, something different than a housewife, we accept the logic of the master, which is a logic of division, and for us the logic of slavery.”

Silvia Federici, Wages against Housework, 1975

“We recognize within ourselves the capacity for effecting a complete transformation of life. Not being trapped within the master-slave dialectic, we become conscious of ourselves; we are the Unexpected Subject. […] The women’s movement is not international but planetary.”

Carla Lonzi, Let’s Spit on Hegel, 1970

From now on, everything’s going to change! These words, uttered by a little girl, announce the end of patriarchy and the becoming of sisterhood in one shot of Agnès Varda’s short film Women Reply: Our Bodies, Our Sex [Réponse de femmes : Notre corps, notre sexe], a feminist work produced in 1975 for the French public television channel Antenne 2. The reply was collectively formulated by a group of women who, taking as their point of departure a critique of the rampant sexism in the media, demanded the right to self-determination in all areas of life: from the rules governing the representation of their own bodies, through sexuality and reproduction, to education, labor, and love, and—by extension—demanded a total revolution in social relations. Referring to the subversive ambitions of second-wave feminism, the exhibition All Men Become Sisters offered a genealogy and manifestation of sisterhood in the medium of art from the late 1960s to the present day. Setting forth from its critique of the exploitation of women by patriarchy in both its capitalist and socialist forms, sisterhood poses questions about future social and economic relations, with a planetary ecology in mind. Sisterhood is a machine for working with the imagination; it spits on Hegel, dialectics, the belief in linear progress, brotherhood, the patriarchal culture of domination, and the struggle for recognition of mastery.

Resonance

In creating this exhibition, I was guided by art that resonates with feminist conceptions of labor, production, and reproduction. Its heretical tradition comprises the second wave of feminist movements and the corresponding feminist avant-garde in the “former West” in the 1970s’. Engaging with that tradition is contemporary art that problematizes the structural ties between the globalized


“I am very urgently looking for work! I am 23 years old, an ambitious and hard-working person who isn’t afraid of any kind of work. I have a valid health certificate. I don’t smoke. I am a single mother and my main motivation is my 2.5-year-old daughter. I would also like to continue my education, which I have stopped due to lack of funds. I am in a really difficult situation, so if anyone can help me by hiring me, please call 0-694 076 932.”

The embroidered text is taken from a hand-written bill Elżbieta Jabłońska found posted on a wall in Lódź while preparing for her 2003 exhibition, *Woman for the Soul [Kobieta na duszę] at the Manhattan Gallery. Describing her dire circumstances as a single mother, the unemployed author of the desperate appeal hoped that the message would help her find a job of any kind. The artist contacted the author of the ad and commissioned her to embroider the text on a piece of fabric. This one announcement became a testimony to the lack of a social safety net to protect the individual from the threat of unemployment—an often-overlooked cost of Poland’s economic transformation, and one that is frequently borne by women. *Helping* also sheds light on the structural relationship between gender inequality in the wage labor market and in care work. The *herstory* embroidered using the ad text commemorates the fate of many women who have suffered poverty and exploitation at the hands of both patriarchy and capitalism.

Elżbieta Jabłońska (born 1970) studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, where she is now a faculty member at the Department of Illustration. She lives in Bydgoszcz. Her art addresses issues of feminized care work, service work, and the invisible economy of housework. She engages with various manifestations of social exclusion and marginalization, and with informal forms of value creation. Her most recent work explores environmental care for community spaces.
Can you take a selfie at the Muzeum Sztuki? Would this be considered a creative act? If you like to dance and you go to the museum not to admire other people’s art, but to make your own, is that OK? What if you shoot a horror film in a museum just for laughs, and you use actual art as props—art that affected you—is that still OK? Why are adults allowed to do whatever they want, and if you tell them they can’t, it is labelled “artistic censorship” and “stifling creative expression”? These questions inspired a group of artists ranging from young girls to grown women and men to do whatever they wanted at the museum.

Brothers and Sisters

Having spent several years in community service, I can say with confidence that many people are eager to become involved in working for others. There are people who want to give without expecting anything in return.

Through my involvement in a number of community arts projects, I have learned that while art-adjacent activities are important, they are not as pressing as the problems many people struggle with in their everyday lives.

I decided to work with people whose daily lives centered around the courtyard at 28 Ogrodowa Street, long a familiar location for me. It is home to the children’s community center where I carried out the campaigns “Lipowa odNowa” [Lipowa Street reNEWAl] and “Lipowa Reaktywacja” [Lipowa Reactivation], as well as the project “Saśsiedzi” [Neighbors], in partnership with the Muzeum Sztuki, and “Świetlicy Artystyczne” [Children’s Artistic Community Centers], a series of art workshops.

In cooperation with the museum, I used most of the budget provided to me for my participation in All Men Become Sisters to renovate and redecorate the community center and to open a library in the facility. Volunteers were invited to help carry out the necessary labor, thus forming a community of brothers and sisters helping.

I have learned from my many years of experience that efforts such as these, if they are to be effective, must be ongoing and long-term. Seemingly minor details—a fresh coat of paint on the walls, math tutoring available whenever necessary—actually make a lasting difference. I am deeply convinced and hopeful that this will be more than just a one-off event, and will help foster lasting bonds between people.

The next stage of our efforts involved workshops held in partnership with the education department of the Muzeum Sztuki.

Marcin Polak

Brothers and Sisters [Bracia i siostry],
Children’s Community Center Squad [Świetlica Skład] from 2015

Marcin Polak (born 1973) graduated from the Łódź Film School with a degree in photography. He is an artist/community activist and cultural organizer in Łódź. He works to develop inclusive and broadly comprehensible methods of communication and civic collaboration through arts institutions. His projects are tied to specific places and groups, and are often responses to problems that have been neglected in city politics. Polak has created several campaigns to renew public and community spaces in Łódź, including “Lipowa odNowa” [Lipowa Street reNEWAl], “Punkt dla Łodzi” [A Point for Łódź], “Międz Sieniec” [Have a Place], and “Ratujej Łódzkia Murala” [Save Łódź’s Murals], and launched a series of undertakings titled “Zawód Artysty” [The Artist’s Profession], which addressed the problem of artists’ compensation, in hopes of effecting change in the city’s cultural policy. He is the founder and editor of the website Międz Sieniec, which covers urban, arts, and cultural topics. Together with Łukasz Ogorek and Tomasz Zaleski, he runs the “mobile” Czynna Gallery. He is a co-founder of the after-school arts program Świetlicy Artystyczne.
Zorka Wollny

Composition for 12 Actors and the Lido Building [Kompozycja na 12 aktorów i budynek Lido]
LIDO Textile Factory, 66 Wólczanka Street, Łódź
October 29 and November 5, 2015

performed by: Joanna Chmielecka, Małka Justyna, Anna Przybyt, Elzbieta Arab, Marta Serna, Grzegorz Mrowicki, Wojciech Droszczyński, Artur Gotz, Magdalena Kaszewska, Tomasz Kubiatowicz, Jolanta Jackowska
assistant composers: Kuba Krzewiński, Jarosław Krzemieński
co-produced with the New Theater in Łódź

The piece Composition for 12 Actors and the Lido Building composed by Zorka Wollny, comprised a series of micro-concerts, episodes, and musical-choreographic installations produced in collaboration with actors from the New Theater in Łódź and members of the Chorea Choir. Each element of the composition alluded to a different type of work. The solos, duets, and group actions performed in the defunct manufacturing space resonated with the building’s history, sonic environment, and physical structure. They embodied the collective flow of energy experienced in industrial production, and formed the micro-dynamics of the relations, alienation, and shared trajectory of today’s often atomized work structure.

Zorka Wollny (born 1980) studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków and the visual arts at Sabanci University in Istanbul. She lives in Berlin and teaches at the Art Academy of Szczecin. Wollny creates choreographic performances, sound compositions and installations, and films. Her work explores invisible power structures, the topography of affects, and the social micro-relations inscribed in architecture and various public spaces.
Feminist Economimic: The Aesthetic Strategies of Social Reproduction in the 1970s

Siona Wilson

May '68, as Julia Kristeva has put it, was "a violent desire to take over the norms that govern the private as well as the public, the intimate as well as the social, a desire to come up with new, permanently contestable configurations." This classically avant-garde description of the revolt, or the "perpetually contestable," as Kristeva puts it, must inevitably lose much of its romantic gloss as it "cleeve[s] to institutions that will realize it in the long term." Second-wave feminism, although driven by the energy and excitement of the revolt,cedes its terrain of political work from violent rupture and contestation to the grassroots labor of social change. For this generation of feminists who were also artists and filmmakers, the defining norms of artistic identity, what constitutes the labor of art making and the institutional parameters of aesthetic work in relation to patterns of social life, work, and sexuality were all subject, in the 1970s, to the urgent pressure of critical enquiry. If one of the hallmarks of previous avant-garde moments was the incorporation of manual labor into the art work or the process of art making—whether this is the politically committed Russian Constructivists or the seminal cyimnism of Andy Warhol's Factory scene—that trope is set to work anew in the 1970s by the gendered labor of social reproduction. In this essay I revisit some of the aesthetic strategies developed by second-wave feminists under late capitalism, drawing on examples from the USA and UK. It is important to keep in mind that these approaches developed out of the tumult of a profound social transformation. Moreover, the most widely received aesthetic manifestations of second-wave feminism's intensive reconfiguration of social and private life can be seen in filmmaking. Viewed by more diverse audiences than gallery-based art, film provided a particularly significant forum for the exchange of feminist ideas. Furthermore, the foregoing examples were embedded—in both their production and dissemination—in the grassroots work of feminist political activism. Take for example, The Woman's Film, the first Newwave collective film made with an all-female crew in San Francisco in 1971. The relationship between the social expectations of women within heterosexual family units—as wives and mothers—and the political struggles of public life, including issues of labor and institutional racism, are told in compelling first-person accounts. The Woman's Film avoids turning to scholarly or professional expertise, instead it focuses on five individual stories by women, two African American, one Chicanan, and two white, who come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds (fig. 1). These women's stories, examined by, and in some cases, filmed within consciousness raising and other political groups,

2. Kristeva, Revólú, She Said, 42.
3. The term "social reproduction" has now become widely used as a way of describing the imbrication of labor, sexuality, and social life that feminist practitioners during the 1970s began to address consistently in their work. For a discussion of the history of the term, see Angela Dimitriouk and Kirsten Lloyd, "Social Reproduction and Art History," Third Text, 31/1 (2017): 1–14.
4. Newwave was a documentary film collective that began in 1967 and is still working today. Although Newwave always uses the collective name on their films rather than crediting the particular individuals from the group who made the film, The Woman's Film was directed and produced by Louise Alaius, Judy Smith, and Ellen Sarris.

raise key questions that were common to many feminists of the time. Namely, how is social inequality replicated and reproduced? Or, put otherwise, what is the significance of social reproduction? Told in the authentic voices and everyday language of ordinary women, the stories nonetheless weave a complicated social fabric wherein racialized economic struggles are perpetuated through the education system and intersect with the psychological effects of cultural mythmaking about gender roles. This film offers a snapshot view onto the kind of social, political, and economic connections that arise from particular individual's stories and from the collective examination of personal experiences that were developed in sustained ways in consciousness raising groups.

It's almost impossible to comprehend in today's culture of first-person narratives and rampant individual self-promotion how refreshing and radical it was to turn the camera on ordinary people. This approach was also taken in the Berwick Street Film Collective's Nightcleaners (1972–75). Discussions about making the film began soon after the first national Women's Liberation Conference in Britain, held at Ruskin College in Oxford in 1970. Most of the footage was shot in 1971, but it took almost four years of post-production editing before it reached audiences. Like The Woman's Film, Nightcleaners depicts a diverse group of women. White and Black working class and immigrant night cleaning workers collaborate with a group of white, mainly middle class women from a local feminist group in order to gain representation by the male-dominated union. With additional diversity in the filmmaking collective, which was made up of four men and one woman, unlike The Woman's Film, while watching Nightcleaners viewers retain an awareness of divisions and differences between the different groups. This comes across less through direct narrative accounts offered in interviews and group discussions and more in the interruptions in film form. Visual and auditory fragmentation is structural to the viewing experience. So much so that every single editorial cut in Nightcleaners is marked by an extended segment of black leader tape that remains on screen for several seconds. Sound is also severely divided during part of the visual black out creating a repeated but irregularly rhythmic stutter in the flow of images, speech, and music. This proved to be an unfamiliar viewing experience for many, especially the committed middle-class feminists who were deeply invested in the campaign and had high hopes for the film's propagandistic potential. By contrast, anecdotal accounts from audiences of working class women emphasize the powerful impact of seeing ordinary women, like themselves, represented on film. The collective used these repeated interruptions in the viewing experience as a means of establishing a different relation to the scenes depicted on screen. At various points certain short sequences—amounting to isolated gestures and ambiguous facial expressions—are re-filmed in slow motion. The grain of the 16mm film stock reveals itself as a materialist texture and the ghostly remnants of these fragments of affect begin to register as filmic portraits. When it was initially released, Nightcleaners became the focus of intense theoretical inquiry amongst film critics in the UK. Certain critics understood the use of the black leader tape and the re-filmed sequences in robust materialist terms as empha-

5. The regular members of the Berwick Street Film Collective were Marc Kerlin, Humphrey Terevelyan, and Richard Mondauer. For the making of Nightcleaners the collective was joined by the artists James Scott and Mary Kelly. Kelly operated the sound boom and served as the representative from the feminist group; she also appears in the film.
6. For documentation of the film's reception by audiences of working class women, see Margaret Dickinson, ed., Angry Reels: Oppositional Film in Britain, 1945–70 (London: British Film Institute, 1999), 276.
Care, Labor, and Robots: A Feminist Manifesto for the Future Economy

Zofia Łapniewska

How does one write a feminist labor manifesto in a post-deconstructionist world? It is difficult to glimpse the true nature of women’s labor today, and to envision its future design without being blinded by philosophical and ethical veils. On the other hand, scientists claim to have access to truth through knowledge, data, and statistics; at the same time, few people are actually interested in reports, imperceptible scholarly articles, studies on the labor market, and time-use surveys. Perhaps it is worth considering different planes of thinking and action. Already Aristotle distinguished two means of perception: through the mind/reason, considered universal and immaterial, and through the senses, belonging to the realm of the body, thus more familiar, permitting the establishment of relationships with other people—through such activities as care—and enabling our sensory being-in-the-world. What we desire is a real “subject,” as the French philosopher Alain Badiou put it, or rather, in this case, a “female subject,” meaning that we want to behold and reveal the lives of women all over the world, not merely in the First World; the immensity of their work and their responsibility for the reproduction of societies; their dreams, demands, and their politics. This was precisely one of the goals of the exhibition All Men Become Sisters, at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź. The sheer distinctness of the pieces created by these feminist artists (examples of which include Helping [Pomaganie], an embroidered cover letter for a job application by Elżbieta Jabłońska, 2003, and Eyes Closed Assembly Line, by Allan Sekula and Noël Burch, 2010) provide a foothold and a stimulus for my leap of faith into a better future. This faith is indispensable to the creation of a new ontology of women in the future world, a vision of which is already being outlined in Economy 4.0. (To the benefit of all humankind? Let’s hope so.) But before this utopia can take shape, we must identify particular actions and create a theoretical project which, if it is to be accomplished, will require solidarity, courage, and passion. I will attempt to do that by sketching a manifesto in this chapter. The pages of history are full of women who have proved that change is possible by fighting for women’s suffrage, employment equality, agency, and representation. It is my belief that the guiding value of this future economy will be Care.

Care

Our understanding of the word “care” has changed rather significantly over the past few decades, shifting from plainly negative connotations such as “servitude,” “anxiety,” or “burden,” to contemporary interpretations of the term as a synonym of “guardianship,” “support,” and “duty.” The latter express the positive overtones

1. I refer to Aristotle, although I realize that due to his prejudices against women, he is not the best authority to do so. Yet, there are still some useful things to be gleaned from him.
3. All of the artworks, films, and installations mentioned in this essay were displayed at the exhibition All Men Become Sisters, at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź.
Exhibition view

Agnes Varda

Women Reply: Our Bodies, Our Sex, 1975

Jo Spence

Remodelling Photo History, 1981–1982

Collaboration with Terry Dennett

Photo: Post Tomczak

Archive of Museum Szuki, Łódź