

SEMINAR ACTS PAS ÉTERNEL

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OPENING: JAVIER CUEVAS DEL BARRIO AND ELO VEGA

Beauty canons are constructs that have been evolving through both art history and culture, and their impact is of a remarkable grade on body perceptions. The exhibit *Pas Éternel* and the seminar that follows it, intend to bring forward an interdisciplinary debate about how the above-mentioned beauty canons have evolved and extended through time.

ANA NAVARRETE: DEEDS, NOT WORDS! NOT ONE LEFT, NOT ONE MORE DEATH!

Two mottos of the feminist movement divided by 90 years between them constitute the title of this lecture. The first one: *Deeds Not Words!* (¡Hechos no palabras!) was coined by the first suffragist and it established that neither a pacifist approach nor self-reflexion were enough to achieve their mission, thus a series of demonstrations were put into action that more often than not ended in public vandalization. An example of this can be observed in 1914 when Mary Richardson stabbed Rokeby Venus several times as an act of protest for the incarceration of Emmeline Pankhurst. The second slogan Not One Left, Not One More Death! (¡Ni una mujer menos, ni una muerta más!), was coined with the objective of bringing attention to the systematic disappearance of women in Ciudad Juárez. Susana Chávez (a key figure for the feminist movement in Latin America), coined the slogan during the 90s, Susana was murdered in 2011 and her legacy still influences the Latin American feminist movement to this day.

In this lecture, Ana Navarrete explores different feminist movement protests originated by the violence against women. The lecture centers around two cases, one in Spain, which adopted the motto “No es abuso, es violación” (Is Not Abuse, is Rape), a motto adopted after the La Manada rape case. The other case refers to the performances of “Un violador en tu camino” (A Rapist In Your Way), initiated in Chile and later replicated in the rest of the world. The second case introduced new elements in the street performances, elements such as directly pointing at the rapist and to march around the streets. The aforementioned marches are a direct influence of posterior marches, such as the street march performed in Mexico City in 2019. These street marches are characterized by acts of violence and vandalization towards monuments.

These events are related to the issue of how to approach sexist violence in the present and whether to tackle it with even more violence or through other methods. Among those methods, there are performances that are able to tackle the concepts of memory and trauma and that are also able to confront those very concepts to make it possible to overcome them. A clear example of this can be observed in the photograph *Rape Scene* by Ana Mendieta or in the manner in which the public space is conquered as the artist Fina Miralles does.

The anger generated by the heinous acts of violence committed against women is one of the tools used for social reform. The issue lies in whether this reform can be manifested through violent means, through education, or through other means leading to critical consciousness and radicalization.

ANNA CESTELLI GUIDI: KIDNAPED BODIES, RAPED BODIES

Elo Vega's work delves into symbolic violence and what role do both art and culture play when spreading said violence. Vega's work also delves into the concept of masterpiece and how it is used as a tool to conceal the dominant masculine narrative

Using the Rape of the Sabine women (key story of both Rome's and the West history) as a starting point to study the deep violence towards women hidden in plain sight, Anna Cestelli analyzes the different power spaces in which the rape is represented. Cestelli uses Rome's Palazzo of the Conservators (Palazzo dei Conservatori) as a case study to analyze the normalization of the scene in one of the most important parts of the city of Rome. The Palazzo of the Conservators is a place of both national and international interest, as it is where official documents such as the European Constitution was signed in 2004, an act only written by men.

The aforementioned scene of violence is far from being the only example within art history and especially the Borghese Gallery (Galleria Borghese), one of Rome's most important galleries, which gathers several similar mythological works in which erotism plays a key role. Examples of the aforementioned works include: *The Abduction of Europa*, *The Rape of Proserpina*, *Apollo and Daphne*... Works that downplay brutal violence against women in favor of presenting the scene as something natural and virtuous.

This portrayal of violence is always followed by hush, as after the violence has been enacted the women are transformed into passive subjects to mute them. This notion is present in Elo Vega's work and can be further examined in other cultural manifestations as analyzed by Adriana Cavarero. Through similar cases like the evolution of the mythological figure of the siren, the role imposed on women can be examined, as only men were allowed to have the *logos*, and women were only relegated to having the sound. This idea of logos and sound is represented by Elo Vega's needlework *It is for men to talk* among other examples

This lecture engages with Elo Vega's work and delves into the violent imagery and the normalization that conforms both to the art history of the West and the underlying ideologies that perpetuate male dominance over women's bodies and voices.

CELIA GARCÍA DÍAZ: FROM DISCOMFORT TO INTERNMENT: CONSTRUCTIONS ABOUT WOMEN MADNESS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Revolving around the study of Ward No.20 of Málaga's provincial mental asylum, Celia García Díaz gives a lecture that brings forward subaltern and muted voices of women secluded in those wards. Related to the aforementioned lecture, the philosophical theories of Foucault of biopolitics and resistance were used as a lens to analyze the cultural perception of madness in women. The lecture focuses on the manners in which resistance was exerted in order to prevent women's repression by culture, having this notion as the base pillar of the lecture, Díaz then analyzes the vision of women victims of that oppression bringing forward their untold stories and making them active protagonists.

The main theme of the lecture is inherently interdisciplinary, and as such, the lecture makes a historical tracking following the stories of women who inhabited mental asylums starting from feminist theories developed by female authors such as Donna Haraway, Kate Millet or Phyllis Chesler who analyzed the historical construction of women's madness during the 1970s.

The above-mentioned historical construct is composed of two scientific theories that sometime after their conception converged into a single one, these theories were the studies related to the illnesses and ailments associated with women and the study of psychological medicine.

The first study began as a result of studies performed during the 17th century about chlorosis, an illness that was used to treat other treatments such as amenorrhea or as means to control female sexual desires which was paired with other treatments such as bleeding or marriage. These medical practices extended and evolved through time and during the 19th century became known as the medical field of gynecology first related to the psychology field due to the fact that this field was based on the idea that the source of mental illnesses in women originated on the female genitals leading to the origin of female hysteria. These theories about female sexuality prompted the appearance of attempts to medically control female sexuality, mostly through intrusive medical interventions, pelvic massages, the removal of ovaries...

The second study is based on related theories that attempted to medically prove through physiological studies that women were mentally inferior to men. These notions were supported by authors of the time such as Moebius in his book *On the Physiological Idiocy of Women (Über den physiologischen Schwachsinn des Weibes)*, Paul Broca's craniometry, and Benedict Morel's theory of degeneration.

This type of studies perpetuated the medication of women, as they pathologized all the aspects of women that distance from what was considered normal. Most of the time these aspects were related to internal factors such as menstruation or pregnancy as opposed to external factors. These theories persisted through time and were the main reason why many women were interned in mental asylums making their bodies the reason for mental instability.

After being Stripped of their subjectivity and diagnosed with psychopathy in mental asylums, the female patient's testimonies were invisibilized. These testimonies are studied today as resistance to doctors and families... constructions that are being studied thanks to the feminist questioning of imposed cultural structures and the violence to which women were subjected (main topic of this seminar).

ROUND TABLE MODERATED BY MAITE MÉNDEZ BAIGES

All the lectures are linked with the relation and the reflection proposed on the violence directed at bodies as biopolitics. This exemplifies why feminism matters, as it discusses ways in which resistance can be enacted through the use of those very same bodies to which violence is subjected.

The final reflection of the seminar revolves around how to react to constitutional and historical violence performed against women's bodies through images in a day and age dominated by visual culture without letting anger give way to a greater grade of violence.