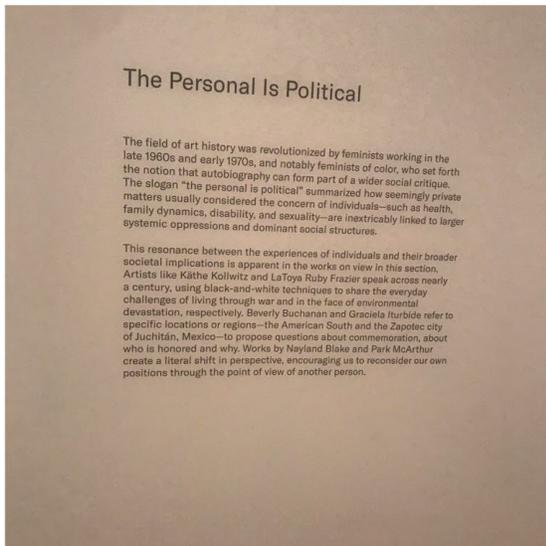


SITE REPORT #2A

Brooklyn Museum: Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art--Half the Picture: A Feminist Look at the Collection



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In the reading, audio, and video assignments for this week a number of spaces for voices of protest are discussed. The Guerilla Girls broadcast their messages across a wide variety of media and places: posters on walls and billboards, handouts on the sidewalk, t-shirts on bodies, projections on walls, installations in abandoned buildings and art galleries, magazines, zines, websites, etc. Next Epoch produces ecological art in neglected urban wastelands. Decolonize This Place conducts protests in museums, without prior permission for use of the spaces. As a group, these interventions could be described as unsanctioned or subversive events performed in spaces that were not designed or curated specifically for protest.

In response to these kinds of activities (and perhaps in recognition--aesthetically or culturally of their importance), there have been increased efforts by community leaders and cultural institutions to create spaces for critical or dissenting voices. Landers, et al, describes strategies to create sanctioned spaces for protest in libraries, plazas, and parks. Similarly, the Brooklyn Museum now seeks to create spaces for alternative, minority, and resistant cultures and voices through curation and architectural interventions.

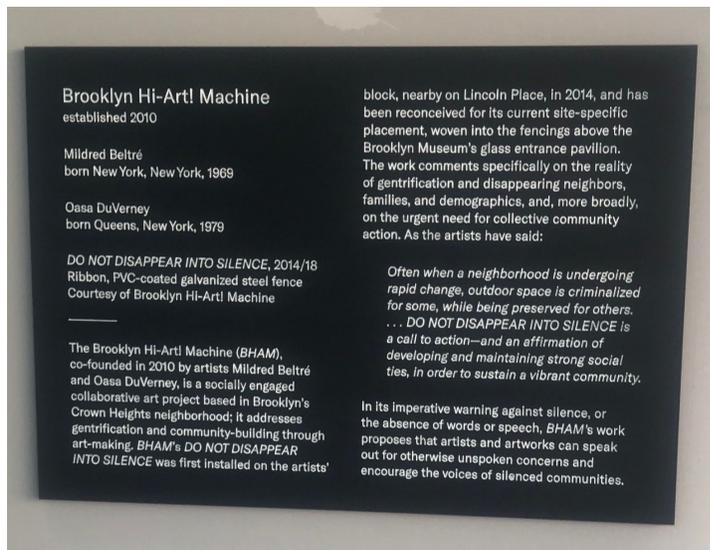
([https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/half the picture](https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/half_the_picture)) The Brooklyn Museum website explains the exhibit I visited, Half The Picture, “Featuring more than 100 works from our collection, Half the Picture: A Feminist Look at the Collection explores a wide range of art-making, focusing on enduring political subjects—encompassing gender, race, and class—that remain relevant today. The exhibition’s intersectional feminist

framework highlights artworks, in a plurality of voices, that aim to rally support or motivate action on behalf of a cause, or to combat stereotypes and dominant narratives. (This exhibition contains sexually explicit content. Viewer discretion is advised.)

Half the Picture draws its title from a 1989 Guerrilla Girls poster that declares, "You're seeing less than half the picture without the vision of women artists and artists of color." Spanning almost one hundred years, the exhibition focuses on historical and contemporary work by more than fifty artists who combine message and medium to engage with political and social issues. Often radical and inspiring, these artists advocate for their communities, their beliefs, and their hopes for equality amid popular or state-supported opposition."



- *Brooklyn Museum's Facade*



- *Brooklyn's Museum Newly Installed Hi-Art Machine.*

I chose the facade of the Brooklyn museum as the more traditional architecture piece because the museum itself is a traditional stone building resembling Greek structures with columns decorating the exterior. Except for the fact that it had a neon sign and flashing lights displaying the slogan that had been installed onto the forefront of the museum a few years ago. I chose that as the untraditional addition to the museum. I chose that image because as I read it thoroughly, I thought I had an inkling of what I was going to encounter entering the building. I thought it was going to be similar to the "Hall of Science" solely from the outside appearance and the brief description of "Hi-Art Machine." had never been to this museum and I was going in with a blind eye.

The stated *mission* of the Brooklyn Museum is "to create inspiring encounters with art that expand the ways individuals see themselves, the world and its possibilities."



- *Guerilla Girls Explain the Concepts of Natural Law, 1992. 201.26.39*

“The iconic feminist Guerilla girls collective has been at the front lines of conversations about oppression and exclusion, fearlessly and hilariously tackling sexism and racism in arts since their founding in 1985.”

I took a photo of one piece of artwork that expands the way I see the world. It expands my vision of the world because the quotes of “natural law” highlights artworks, in a plurality of voices, that aim to rally support or motivate action on behalf of a cause, or to combat stereotypes and dominant narratives. The Guerilla Girls often referred to themselves as Feminist and they only use facts, humor and outrageous visuals to expose sexism, racism and corruption in the art world, keeping the focus on the current issues and away from moral personalities. The goal for the Guerrilla Girls were to undermine the idea of mainstream narrative in a productive of visual culture by revealing the understory in turn revealing hypocrisy of cultural and political institutions. The ‘Laws’ read on this artwork described just that.

“Protecting the rights of an unborn child means precisely that, once you’re born you’re on your on.”

“Sexual harassment is man’s response to women on the job. Women who report it are upright prudes. Women who don’t are ambitious whores.”

“Women are not paid less in the workplace because they have no business there.”

“Anyone who is unemployed or homeless deserves it.”

“The people who have the most money are entitled to the best health care.”

“Aids is a punishment for homosexuality and drug abuse. Only heterosexuals, celebrities deserve a cure.”

“Life is beautiful. Artist, writers, or performers who inflict disgusting, homosexual, erotic, satirical or political images upon the public should have their ‘grants’ cut off.”

The stated vision of the Brooklyn Museum is to create a place “where great art and courageous conversations are catalysts for a more connected, civic, and empathetic world.” After a lot of consideration of the curated areas of the museum, I believe the space is, in fact, arranged in order to create “courageous conversations” In certain parts of particular sections, some work that was displayed involved controversial content, some categories being abortion, feminism, explicit images, racism, etc.



- *The Dinner Party by Judy Chicago*

“Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* is the most significant icon of 1970s American feminist art. Begun in 1974 and finished in 1979, with the help of hundreds of collaborators, the large-scale work celebrates the achievements of 1,038 actual and mythical female figures, most of whom have been neglected by history until they were reclaimed by feminist scholars. In honoring those individuals, the work at the same time pays tribute to all women who have been lost to history.

The *Dinner Party* consists of a series of Entry Banners, a Heritage Floor, and a massive ceremonial banquet, arranged on a triangular table measuring forty-eight feet on each side with a total of thirty-nine place settings. The "guests of honor" commemorated on the table are designated by means of intricately embroidered runners, each executed in a historically specific manner. Upon these are placed, for each setting, a gold ceramic chalice and utensils, a napkin with an embroidered edge, and a fourteen-inch china-painted plate with a central motif based on butterfly and vulvae forms, and rendered in a style appropriate to the individual woman being honored. The names of the other 999 women are inscribed on the hand-cast title Heritage Floor below the triangular table.

This iconic work remains important on many levels. Not only was it the first truly monumental work of American art, conceptualized by a woman, to survey the contributions of women to Western civilization over the millennia, but its feminist reclamation of several "crafts" traditionally associated with women (embroidery, needlework, china painting, ceramics), and its utilization of "central core" (or vulvae) imagery, were virtually unprecedented in artistic production at that time."

The Dinner Party is particularly fitting for the image I chose of designed space (not art objects themselves) that suggest "connection." The concept of "connection" is articulated in a way the art is arranged, especially the space the art is displayed in. This section was by fact my favorite due to the fact that it as very different from the rest of the exhibit but the same regarding the content. I thought of this section as polar opposite/inverted when I saw the sleek black walls and the triangle display that consumed room, leaving very little space for patron, whereas the entire exhibit was spacious with very good acoustics. The art is displayed was bold, especially being placed on 'china' for everyone to see and discuss the courageousness of that.





Brooklyn Museum declares that “since we see ourselves as a conduit for open sharing and learning, we accept the controversies that may accompany courageous conversations.” Considering the way art objects were arranged in space for the *Half the Picture* exhibition in relation to viewers, I would describe the arrangement of objects for viewers as fair. There were arrangements in certain sections that had plenty of artwork congregated together and others where they were dispersed and spaced out. The artwork that was in close proximity to each other disabled the patron (me) to fully comprehend and digest what I had scrutinized after moving onto the next artwork. There so much to examine and register. The artwork definitely accepted controversies regarding subject such as “Dread Scott” practicing his ‘revolutionary art to propel history forward’ to Sue Coe’s ‘Riot’ & ‘Thank You America’ artwork to Ida Applebroog’s ‘Sweet Smell of Sage Enters the Room’ displaying domestic abuse etc. These few topics alone should spark up and encourage courageous conversations amongst the visitors of this exhibit.