

Women's Museums: Feminist Art

How is feminist art impacting political and social norms today? Feminist artists have had a profound impact on society, informing artistic practice, challenging commonly held assumptions and by making art that reflects women's unique lives and experiences. Contemporary women artists are pushing the boundaries of what is expected from women in the arts, helping to inform and expand definitions of how we view art. CWI's March meeting will focus on how women's museums support female artists, the challenges they face, and the impact women's museums have in advancing feminist art. Speakers will also share observations about support for the arts by the Obama administration.

We are pleased to have three accomplished speakers: **Susan Fisher Sterling**, Director of the National Museum of Women in the Arts; **Jennifer Krafchik**, Director of Collections for the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum and home of the historic National Woman's Party; and **Joan Wages**, President & CEO and founding board member of National Women's History Museum.

Date/Time: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 / 12 noon sharp to 1:30 pm.

Open to the public, no reservation necessary.

Place: One Dupont Circle, 8th Floor, Washington DC

Bring brown bag lunch, soft drinks available from a machine.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

A photo ID must be shown at the security desk of One Dupont Circle.

Please allow time to go through the sign-in system.

In case of bad weather and closing of government offices, the CWI meeting will be cancelled.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 27, 2010

Rights and Wrongs: The LGBT Experience

The speakers at the Clearinghouse February meeting were **Laurie Young, Ph.D.**, Interim Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and **Captain Lory Manning (USN, Ret.)**, Director of the Women in the Military project at the Women's Research & Education Institute. They both discussed issues facing LGBT citizens in the US.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) people and their issues are often invisible to the general political community. **Laurie Young**, expressed how important it is for the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues to remain informed about and support LGBT issues. After all, Young said, the L (lesbians) and T (trans-women) are women of our community.

Young brought up the Hate Crimes Protection Act, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on October 28, 2009. It gives the Department of Justice the power to investigate and prosecute bias-motivated violence — where a perpetrator has selected a victim because of the person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

LGBT people are twice as likely to age alone and four times less likely to have children, Young informed the room. They are also twice as likely to live in poverty (with a yearly income below \$10,000 per person). In a national survey of more than 6,000 transgender respondents, 97 percent noted they experienced harassment and job discrimination in the work place.

She went on to discuss the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would provide basic protections against workplace



Laurie Young



Lory Manning

discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Such legislation will finally provide protection for LGBT people from employment discrimination on the federal level.

Young also announced that the Task Force put together a briefing book in 2008, which was to be given to whomever became president. The New Beginnings Initiative lists 80 federal policies that are detrimental to LGBT individuals that can be changed without the use of the legislative process. In addition, the Census Bureau has announced that starting in 2010, they will report same-sex married couples as married couples. Many people do not realize that between five and ten percent of the US's population is LGBT. They reside in 99 percent of counties in the U.S. and their needs should not be ignored.

The Administration on Aging plans to develop a technical assistance research center for LGBT elders. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will redefine "family" to make it more equitable for LGBT people to obtain housing vouchers and supported living arrangements. They will make sure states that have LGBT protections that these are enforced.

For more information, Young can be reached at lyoung@thetaskforce.org. You can find a new report she distributed "Outing Age 2010: Public Policy Issues Affecting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Elders" at www.theTaskForce.org. Go to search at the top of the page.

Captain Lory Manning discussed the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy and how it affects women in the military. She explained that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) represents a 1993 com-

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promise between President Bill Clinton and Congress. At the time, military regulations forbade homosexuals from serving in the military. Clinton intended to issue an Executive Order that would allow LGBT people to serve openly in the military.

Unfortunately, Congress did not allow Clinton to do this and instead the Executive Branch and Congress came to a compromise that allowed homosexuals to serve in the military as long as they did not engage in any homosexual conduct. Homosexual conduct covered a broad range of activities including telling anyone that you were a homosexual.

The compromise was put into the 1994 Defense Authorizations Bill that prevented anyone who “demonstrates a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts” from serving in the military because their service “would create an unacceptable risk to high standards of morale, good order & discipline and unit cohesion.” This “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” compromise put into federal law what had previously just been in military regulation. While before, members and recruits could be asked about their sexual orientation so they could be “outed” and prohibited from serving, the compromise allowed homosexuals to serve as long as they did not “out” themselves.

This law affects all homosexuals in the military, but in some ways it affects women much more than it does men. For some reason, women make up a substantially higher percentage of those discharged for homosexual conduct than their percentage in the service. For example, women made up 20 percent of the Air Force but 61 percent of Air Force personnel discharges for homosexuality were women. Women comprised 14 percent of the Army yet received 36 percent of the Army’s discharges. For the Navy, the respective figures are 14 percent and 23 percent and for the Marine Corps, 6 percent and 18 percent.

One reason for this disparity could be that ever since 1943, when there was a large increase of women entering the military during World War II, people have been questioning the morals

and sexuality of women in the military. Femininity standards were enforced including make-up, grooming, and deportment requirements. Women in the military still bear the burden of proving their sexuality. There have been large numbers of sexual harassment cases where men threaten to report women for being lesbians if they did not sleep with them and prove they were heterosexual. Both homosexual and heterosexual women have been affected. A British study revealed that when the British military allowed homosexuals to serve openly, the number of sexual assault cases dropped.

If DADT is repealed then a different issue arises. As of now, getting married to a same-sex partner is considered telling and a service member could be discharged. Once DADT is repealed, homosexual members will be able to get married in states that allow same-sex marriage. The question becomes if a homosexual member of the military gets married, will the same-sex spouses be able to receive benefits under the federal government? This is similar to what women had to deal with in the 40s when their husbands could not receive benefits unless they could prove that they were dependent on them for more than 50 percent of the family’s income. It was not until 1973 when the Supreme Court ruled in *Frontiero v. Richardson* that benefits given by the United States military to the family of service members cannot be given out differently because of gender.

A question was asked about how we can account for turn around by high ranking officials such as General Raymond Odierno, General David Petraeus, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mike Mullen and Collin Powell claiming that homosexuals serving in the militaries is “no big deal.” Manning answered that this is no surprise because it has never been much of a big deal. She claims that a higher percentage of the high ranking military officials than we think do not take much offense to it. She knows officials that had known people were gay since military school and they had no problem with it. The main problem the military is worried about is

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parents in the South not letting their children join the military if they knew they would be serving along side homosexuals.

Manning has high hopes that the act will be repealed. She believes that if it is repealed there will be no serious repercussions. According to the Palm Center of the University of California, Santa Barbara, studies of gays in the military internationally have found that in similar countries such as Canada, Great Britain, and New Zealand, unit cohesion did not go down, recruitment numbers did not reduce, and members did not quit.

For more information, Captain Manning can be reached at lmanning@wrei.org. You can find a report on “Women in the Military, Where They Stand” Sixth Edition at www.wrei.org.

As a followup to this presentation:

By Anne Gearan, Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon has moved to lift a decades-old policy that prohibits women from serving aboard Navy submarines, part of a gradual reconsideration of women's roles in a military fighting two wars whose front lines can be anywhere.

President's Message

We need your input. We are considering changes in the newsletter and want to know how important it is to you. Do you read the summary from the previous meeting? Are the articles informative? Do you use the calendar? Any comments and suggestions would be helpful. You can email me at cwi-info@womensclearinghouse.org or call 301-493-0002.

Barbara J. Ratner

Workforce Investment Act

Federally-funded training may reinforce sex segregation according to a recently released Institute for Women's Policy Research briefing paper, *The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Women's Progress: Does WIA Funded Training Reinforce Sex Segregation in the Labor Market and the Gender Wage Gap?* (WIA was enacted in 1998 and will probably come up for reauthorization in this congressional session.)

According to the briefing paper:

- Women on average earn \$1500 to \$2000 less per quarter than men after federally funded career counseling or training. After completing services, women earn 79.5 per-

cent of what men earn among adult participants and 74.1 percent of what men can earn among dislocated workers.

- The wage gap is not due to less training: on average women received more weeks of WIA-funded training than men.
- WIA-funded services primarily train women for female-dominated, typically lower paying occupations and men for male-dominated, typically higher paying occupations.
- Fewer than 3 percent of WIA exiters received training for non-traditional occupations, occupations where the opposite sex accounts for at least 75 percent of workers.
- Previous IWPR research suggests that women typically are not made aware of the difference in potential earnings during career counseling, and that, with better information on earnings; they might have entered different training programs.

WIA includes 'self-sufficiency' as a stated objective of training services... Unless greater attention is paid to the causes of the gender earnings gap after WIA services, that goal will remain elusive for many." To view the Briefing Paper, see www.iwpr.org/pdf/C372WIA.pdf

Gender Parity in the Corporate World

The www.forbes.com business page carried an article entitled, *Why Women Don't Make it Up the Ladder*, by Julie Coffman and Orit Gadiesh. The authors say that "The corporate quest for equality for women management is a lot like motherhood: Everybody is for it..."

"Many businesses recognize that retaining more women as they ascend the corporate ladder will add diversity of experience and perspective and also will help them understand women as buyers and influencers. Higher retention rates will also save companies millions in recruiting and retraining costs. There's only one problem: The mechanism for getting women into leadership positions is flawed.

"Women constitute 50 percent of the workforce in America, but they represented only three percent of the chief executives of the country's 500 largest companies in 2009. The female-to-male ratio rapidly dwindles at almost every rung of the ladder upward, across organizations and across industries. It's the biggest disappearing act on earth, and it arises from two significant blind spots that most companies seem to have..."

"The first has to do, literally, with motherhood. Companies have responded to parents' demands for more flexibility by letting them go part-time or take time off to raise their children, but they haven't figured out how to bring them back onto a viable career path when they're ready to return to the workforce. The reality is that in any group of equally competent and talented men and women of the same tenure, women who have taken time off or worked part-time for family reasons lack equal experience, by definition. That matters a lot when they are considered for promotion. Result: Men usually get the job.... The second blind spot is inattention to how gender-parity initiatives are actually done. Most employees find their companies' efforts disjointed, underfunded and lacking in strong communication and leadership.

"At a minimum companies need to have a systematic approach that's at least as rigorous and thoughtfully executed as a major product launch or a business merger. Employees know when top management is serious about a goal."

UN Commission on the Status of Women

The 5th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women met early in March and announced they will conduct a fifteen-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The study will focus on "the sharing of experiences and good practices, with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenge... Member States, representatives of non-governmental organizations and of UN entities will participate in the session. A series of parallel events will provide additional opportunities for information exchange and networking... Ongoing national and regional review processes are feeding into the global review process."

The commission was established in 1946. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice, and Ambassador-at-large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer are included in the US delegation to the meeting. For more information, contact The Division for the Advancement of Women at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/.

Women/State Legislatures

From WomensENews

According to a recent report from the Center for American Women and Politics, located in Rutgers, NJ, political parties, organizations and women themselves are being encouraged to get more women elected to state legislatures. The report, called *Poised to Run: Women's Pathways to the State Legislatures*, says that "more can be done to get women into state legislature offices and looks at the way women's pathways to public office have changed over time." Highlights include the following: women are more likely than men to be recruited for office rather than deciding on their own to run; female candidates who reach the legislature usually have the support of their parties; the pool of female candidates is larger than is commonly believed.



Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMING EVENTS

March 2010 marks the 30th anniversary of:

- **the Older Women's League (OWL)**
- **Women's History Week, now Women's History Month**
- **the National Women's History Project**

**Wednesday,
March 17**

Pearls for Success in Business, 12-2pm, investment banker Carla Harris, Sumner Museum, 1201 Seventeenth St. NW, information at www.nataliecofield.com.

**Tuesday,
March 23**

An Evening With Cokie Roberts, 6:30-8:30pm, Sewall Belmont House. Talk, book signing and reception \$10. RSVP to rsvp@sewallbelmont.org or (202) 546-1210, x23.

Photos: D.Anne Martin; February meeting summary draft by Mariel Kirschen and Ilona Globa, FMF interns. Production: Letterforms Typography & Graphic Design.

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