

***'To Suffragettes. A Word of Advice...':
Blast, Gender and 'Art under Attack'***

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Abstract: “Art under Attack” is the title of an exhibition that took place at Tate Britain in London (Oct. 2013-Jan. 2014). In this paper I will concentrate on an exemplary case of such an iconoclastic attack, which was indexed in this exhibition as political – I am referring to the attack of the suffragette Mary Richardson to Velázquez’s *Rokeby Venus*, in March 1914. My argument is that militant Suffragettes were in fact the first *Guerilla Girls* of the 20th century, largely anticipating the latter performative and anti-establishment gesture in the Museum and denouncing the institutional space of art as deeply gendered and discriminatory, and, moreover, reclaiming it as a public space of political citizenship, democratic intervention and anti-iconoclastic debate. This will be discussed in the context of and in a dialogue with the Vorticist aesthetics and the outbreak of World War I. In fact *Blast 1*, the shocking bright pink Vorticist magazine was published on the 20th June 1914, exactly three months after the *Rokeby Venus*’ attack, and roughly a month (exactly 33 days), before the first World War was declared through the invasion of Serbia (28 July 2014).

Key-words: Suffragette; Gender; Avantgarde; Art; Guerilla Girls

Resumo: “Art under Attack” é o título de uma exposição que teve lugar na Tate Britain em Londres (Out. 2013-Jan. 2014). O foco e ponto de partida do presente artigo é a análise de um caso exemplar de ataque iconoclasta, o qual foi identificado nesta exposição como sendo de índole política – trata-se concretamente do famoso ataque da sufragista Mary Richardson à não menos famosa pintura de Diego Velázquez, *A Vénus ao espelho*. O meu argumento neste ensaio é que as sufragistas militantes foram de facto as primeiras *Guerilla Girls* do século XX, antecipando o gesto e a prática performativa e *anti-establishment* destas; isto é, por um lado denunciando o carácter discriminatório e “genderizado” do museu como espaço “público” da arte e instituição de poder e, por outro lado, reclamando esse mesmo espaço como um local de cidadania, de intervenção

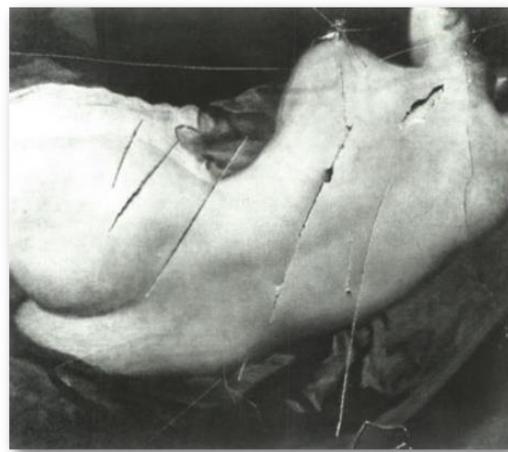
democrática e terreno propício ao debate anti-iconoclasta. Em pano de fundo, o espectro da I Guerra Mundial e o gesto de ruptura, mas nem por isso não menos misógino, das primeiras Vanguardas do século XX.

Palavras-Chave: Sufragista; Género; Vanguarda; Art; *Guerilla Girls*

1.

A recent exhibition took place at Tate Britain in London (October 2013- January 2014) strikingly entitled *Art Under Attack. Histories of British Iconoclasm*. As announced in the back cover of the catalogue, the aim of this exhibition was to present an overview of the rationale of iconoclasm in Great Britain throughout the last 500 years, with a focus on religious, political and aesthetic motivation (i.e., the zeal of religious reformers, politically symbolic actions, such as statue-breaking and attacks on cultural heritage stimulated by a moral or aesthetic outrage).

Despite the fact that all three aspects are, in my view, closely intertwined, and thoroughly deserve a close attention, I will concentrate upon an exemplary case of such iconoclastic attacks, which was indexed in this exhibition as political – I am referring to the attack of the suffragette Mary Richardson to Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* (1647-51), in March 1914.



My argument in this paper is that the suffragettes were in fact the first *Guerilla Girls* of the 20th century,¹ largely anticipating the latter performative and anti-establishment gesture in the Museum (memorably the Metropolitan in N.Y., in 1989), denouncing the institutional space of art as deeply gendered and discriminatory, and, through this gesture, their reclaiming the museum as a public space of political citizenship, democratic intervention and anti-iconoclastic debate. But before we look more closely into Mary Richardson's action, I want to call attention to my epigraph drawn from *Blast 1*, the shocking bright pink Vorticist magazine



which complete first issue was published on the 20th June 1914, exactly three months after the *Rokeby Venus* attack, and roughly a month (exactly 33 days), before the first World War was declared through the invasion of Serbia (28 July 2014). In fact Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and T.E. Hulme, major Vorticist artists, would be killed at the front, in the case of Brzeska in Verdun, a few weeks after he wrote the text "Vortex" proclaiming the aesthetics of Vorticism. Wyndham Lewis himself, the programmatic leader of the movement, would be mobilized in 1916. No wonder then the belic jargon and the aggressive punch of *Blast*. But let us go back to the main focus of my argument. I wish to call attention to the pseudo

ironical, or better, the patronizing tone of this first *Blast* manifesto (written by Wyndham Lewis assisted by Ezra Pound, and signed by Lewis, Pound, Wadsworth, William Roberts, Helen Saunders, Lawrence Atkinson, Jessica Dismorr and Gaudier-Brzeska), as well as to the disquieting tone that resonates from its words:

In Destruction, as in other things, stick to what you understand. We make you a present of our votes. Only leave works of art alone. You might some day destroy a good picture by accident. (*Blast 1*: 151)

This said, the second strand of my argument is naturally focused on the gender blindness of Vorticism and to a large extent, of most avant-garde -isms, often masked or travestied through an amiable and patronizing discourse, as illustrated above.

But let us now go back to the “scene of the crime”, 10 March 1914, as earlier on evoked. It should be clarified that the militant suffragette Mary Richardson was not a naïve or average member of the museum public, as she had a Fine Arts education, though she is reported to have said that “she did not like the painting very much, which made it easier for her to destroy (it)” (*apud* Mohamed 2013: 124).²

The episode has been frequently recalled and scrutinized at great length by many an art critic and historian, nevertheless it never ceases to fill us with awe and admiration when we pause to reconstruct the scene. For the sake of contextualization, I will quote from Lynda Nead’s evocation in her essay “The Damaged Venus”:³

On 10 March 1914, shortly after 10am, a small woman, neatly dressed in a grey suit, made her way through the imposing entrance of the National Gallery, London. It was a Tuesday and so one of the Gallery ‘free days’ (...). The woman made her way through the Gallery’s succession of rooms, pausing now and then to examine a painting more closely or to make a drawing in her sketch-book. Eventually she made her way to a far corner of Room 17, where she stood, apparently in rapt contemplation, before a picture on an easel. (...) Suddenly the tranquility of the museum was broken by the sound of smashing glass. (...) But within an instant it became clear that the noise came not from a broken skylight but from the corner of the room where the woman in grey had produced a small axe or chopper and was attacking the picture in front of her. (...) the woman, who put up no resistance, was disarmed and led out of the gallery, followed by attendants and an angry and noisy crowd of visitors and tourists. The woman in grey was Mary Richardson, a well-known and active militant suffragist;

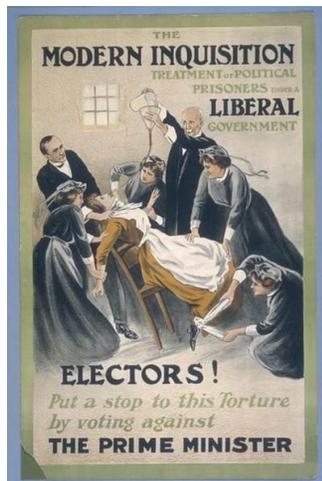
the painting that she attacked was Velázquez's Rokeby Venus" (Nead 1992: 34).

The following day Richardson's declarations, which she had sent to the headquarters of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) as a statement of her intentions, were printed in every national newspaper in the UK and defiantly read as follows:

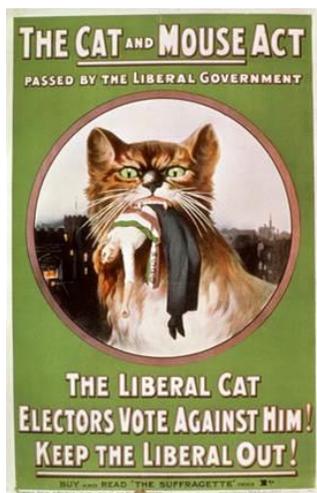
I have tried to destroy the picture of the most beautiful woman in mythological history as a protest against the Government destroying Mrs. Pankhurst, who is the most beautiful character in modern history. (*apud* Nead 1992: 35)

Linda Nochlin who also recalls this incident in one of her most influential essays "Women, Art and Power" (1991), calls this an "act of aesthetic destruction comparable in the strength of its symbolic significance to Courbet's supposed destruction of the Vendôme Column during the (Paris) Commune and greeted with a similar sort of public outrage" (Nochlin 1991: 36). Nochlin is thus putting the focus on the radical intricacy of politics and aesthetics, as a dialogical issue, in as much as the Futurist eulogy of "War the world's only hygiene" in their first 1909 manifesto signed by Filippo Marinetti, is a blindfolded aestheticization of politics.

In fact, Mary Richardson's direct action is manifold: at a more immediate level, it aims at calling attention to the violence of the force-feeding strategies that militant suffragettes (namely their leader, Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst) were being subjected to at Holloway prison in London



as a form of punishment to their unrelenting hunger strikes. This was intended as their ultimate form of confrontation of the government and the humiliation of the disempowering Parliamentary Bills such as the infamous “Cat and Mouse Act”(1913), which allowed for the sick prisoners release , the “Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health”, only to be incarcerated again when their health was recovered. A famous suffragette poster recasts this vicious circle.



Moreover, as Lena Mohamed notes in the *supra* referred catalogue “Art Under Attack”, Mary Richardson’s attack is a symbolic act of violence which involves “not only the image, but also the gallery itself”, as a public, therefore political “site of protest”. Therefore, the act gains larger proportions, becoming truly iconoclastic, as the “desecration of the image” at stake – a classic, revered and highly priced art object – signifies a “symbolic defiance of authority” (Mohamed 2013: 116) of both the state and art as an established power institution.

Other symbolic actions were committed by suffragettes in museums and galleries in the course of their protests throughout the country, namely at the Manchester Art Gallery in April 3, 1913, where the glass frames of prized Pre-Raphaelite paintings were shattered. These acts were reported by the media as acts of ‘vandalism’ rather than identified with

political protest or iconoclastic symbolism, despite the fact that the paintings targeted were not random, but mostly targeted iconic representations of beautiful, idealized female bodies, displaying an overt sexualization, [such as Edward Burne-Jones, "Sybilla Delphica" (1886) or George Frederic Watt's "May Prinsep: Prayer" (1867), as underlined by Lena Mohamed (Ibid., 117-8)].

Whether such performative acts of deliberate and violent aggression of public property can be understood as adding a new socio-political value to the targeted art objects as is reclaimed by *The Suffragette* Bulletin, and exemplified in a radical article signed by Annie Hunt on 31 July 1914, in a reference to the slashing of the Rokeby Venus, is still today thought provoking and, I would offer, open to debate on the symbiotic compromise of aesthetics and politics. And I quote Annie Hunt premonitory words from her 1914 article: "This picture will have an added value and be of great historical interest, because it has been honored by the attention of a militant [Suffragette]" (*apud* Mohamed 2013: 115).⁴

Prominent critics as earlier referred to, Nochlin and Nead amongst others, agree that these forms of performative or staged violence perpetrated by a bunch of "insignificant women", "hysterical spinsters", as usually treated with condescension and sneer by the British press, signified a humiliation and an embarrassment to the galleries, ultimately unable to control such acts and thus protect the works of art entrusted to them as public property. Moreover, the physical and costly damage they provoked, was hastily "erased as if it had never happened" through meticulous restoration procedures, in a sort of denial process that ultimately signified suffragettes were not common vandals. Undoubtedly, they did not only cause social and emotional upheaval, but also truly interfered with the paintings aesthetically, socially and politically, granting them with new "layers of significance" (Mohamed 2013: 121), which could not easily be dismissed either by their contemporaries, the public in general, or by the future generations of art scholars and historians. These acts certainly impinged upon the museum and galleries' visitors, when confronted with the meaningful blank space where the targeted paintings, which had been "honoured by the attention of a militant [Suffragette]", as Annie Hunt vibrantly claims, had previously been exhibited. A new form of discourse is here being disclosed, as these blank

spaces or 'blank pages' are subliminally made to speak and offer themselves to reflection on the socio-political motives behind such 'erasure'.

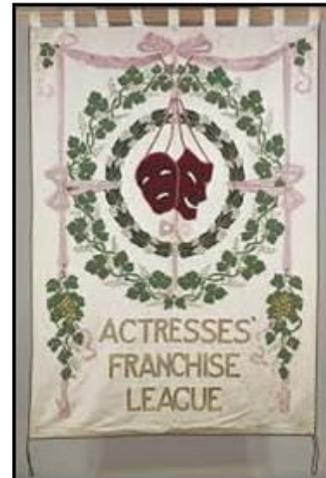
Now adding a new twist to this debate, the claim that "Suffragettes invented performance art", as pointed out by Leslie Hill in a most challenging essay,⁵ might sound "rash and intriguing" (2000: 150), however suffices only to remind oneself of the marches that took place in the very heart of London



through Hyde Park, High Street Kensington, since 9 February 1907 (the so called "Mud March"), to the "Women's Sunday" on the 21 June 1908, or the massive march in 17 June 1911 that gathered 40.000 women and became known as "Women's Coronation Procession", thus reported in *The Times* as "impossible to recall anything of comparable magnitude" (*apud* Hill 2000: 155)



Henceforth, it became impossible to pretend that these were the insane doings of “a few dour spinsters”, travestied “old maids” claiming for “shrieking sisterhood” as they were often dismissed in the press (Hill 2000:154). Instead, these women coming from all over the country in larger and larger numbers, showed an unusual and fierce spectacle: “forty thousand women marched again in their most spectacular and theatrically executed procession, a seven mile long stream of women with music, floats, hand-embroidered banners, and historical costumes worn by women representing great women in history, such as Joan of Arc” (*Ibid.*: 155), thus creating a radical festive rally and, beyond any doubt a political performance.



These colorful marches,⁶ together with the synchronized episodes of window smashing in the most pricy areas of London by “fashionable ladies who demurely produced hammers from dainty handbags with which they decorously smashed exclusive windows” (*Ibid.*), or episodes at the galleries as the reported *Slasher Mary's* (as Mary Richardson became known), among many others of identical caliber, are the embryo of the mid and late 20th century street-art performances, in that they display the “cross-fertilization of politics, theatre and philosophy”(Ibid.). These women unabashedly reclaimed *avant la lettre* that “the personal is political”, while exhibiting the focus on the body as a site of oppression and resistance and unambiguously giving evidence of the “potential effectiveness of guerilla

tactics in alternative representations of the *status quo*”, as rightly claimed by Leslie Hill (*Ibid.*).

2.

It is no wonder then, that Galleries and museums were on high alert against women attacks of this sort, to the point that “a total ban on women from certain galleries was discussed” (Mohamed 2013: 118), notoriously after the assault on the Velázquez painting. This leads us back to the *Blast* open letter to Suffragettes and the Lewisian condescending grin, which nevertheless does not erase the intranquility that it subsumes



And, as yet another symptom of the Vorticist uneasiness in such matters of female enfranchisement and gender issues, one ought to point out as another incipient contradiction of Vorticism, that in the first *Blast Manifesto* reputed suffragettes such as Lillie Lenton, member of WSPU are blessed, rather than blasted!⁷

Thus, in a similar vein, the violently symbolic gesture of Mary Richardson’s, which justified her incarceration, should be understood, as both Lynda Nead (1992: 34-43) and Linda Nochlin (1991:36-8) argue, as the imprint of an anti-patriarchal performance against ideal femininity, a powerful and desperate claim for the invasion of the private in the public space, and a powerful display of the discursive and performative upheaval of the *status quo*.

And, in this context, it feels timely to quote Leslie Hill’s caustic reminder that:

Long before Karen Finley smeared chocolate on her bottom, Annie Sprinkle showed us her cervix, or

Orlan began her course of reconstructive cosmetic surgery performances, comely Edwardian ladies were pioneering a new hybrid art form in which the personal was political, the political was performative, and the performance was public (Hill 2000: 150).

3.

Now, with our focus centered on the larger context of gender issues and the role of women artists within the context of Modernity and modernist aesthetics, I want to recall Lisa Tickner's argument in the essay "English Modernism in the Cultural Field".⁸ Here she reconstructs the intricate pattern that contextualizes the set of historical, social and aesthetic relations of Modernism, the Avant-garde, and Modernity in Great Britain, by putting in parallel the voices of reputed women artists (eg, Vanessa Bell, V. Woolf), the voice of suffragettes, and that of male members of the British modernist scene (Lewis, Pound, Fry, Nevinson, Augustus John, Frank Rutter, among others), thereby proposing a meaningful if dissonant puzzle of Modernity and its contradictory discourses, or as she argues, creating an aesthetic and cultural "assemblage" (Tickner 2000: 13).

As Tickner rightly claims, suffices only to read, if nothing else, the *Blast* manifestos (or the open letter to Suffragettes earlier on discussed in this paper) to conclude that: "Lewis reacted to what (he) perceived as the "feminization" and "bourgeoisification" of art" (Tickner 2000: 29).

And, to further substantiate her argument, she quotes Mary Lowndes, artist and suffragette, Chairman of the *Artists' Suffrage League* (1914), who unabashedly claimed:

How many times have women been reminded ... that their sex has produced no Michael Angelo, and that Raphael was a man? These facts are indisputable; and they are supposed as a rule to demonstrate clearly to the meanest capacity that creatures so poorly endowed collectively with creative genius should have no voice in ... Parliament". (*apud* Tickner 2000: 16)⁹

Further on, evoking one of Virginia Woolf's famous essays, Tickner asks, "Was it crucial or – by the late 19th century – irrelevant that women won 'the battle of the Royal Academy?'" (Tickner 2000: 24), that is, in the words of Woolf herself in *Three Guineas*, the battles fought "by professional men v. their sisters and daughters" (Woolf [1938] 1977: 73-4).

Subsequently, in the same volume, Jane Beckett in an essay entitled “(Is)land narratives: Englishness, visuality and vanguard culture 1914-18”, offers an insightful account of gendered experiences of the First World War and its avant-garde representation, where she proposes to “map the shifting relations between experiences and images of women in war with the visual representations made by vanguard women” (Beckett 2000: 196).

Here she discusses in detail the work of Vorticist women artists, most often disregarded as active artists within the movement, eg. Helen Saunders, Dorothy Shakespeare, Jessica Dismorr, Lawrence Atkinson.

On her turn, Rosemary Betterton claims in the essay “Women Artists, Modernity and Suffrage Culture”¹⁰ that women have been excluded from the cultural experiences of the metropolis which has “continued to marginalise cultural practices by women” (Betterton 1998: 19), only able to participate socially and aesthetically as *voyeurs* or “invisible *flâneuses*”.¹¹ Betterton recalls Andreas Huyssen’s argument that modernist discourse reinscribed sexual difference across the divide between high and low culture through “the gendering of an inferior mass culture (that) goes hand in hand with the emergence of a male mystique in modernism” (Huyssen 1986: 50).¹² In a similar vein, Griselda Pollock examines in an early essay, “Modernity and the spaces of femininity” (1988)¹³ the impermeability of Modernism to the spaces of femininity, only to conclude of the “historical asymmetry – a difference socially, economically, subjectively between being a woman and being a man in Paris in the late 19th century” (Pollock 1988: 55). And this “historical difference”, sustains Pollock, which is “the product of the social structuration of sexual difference and not an imaginary biological distinction – determined both *what and how men and women painted*” (Ibid.). “Why the nude, the brothel, the bar? What relation is there between sexuality, modernity and modernism”? asks the critic, offering these as central questions that define the territory of modernism, while “dealing with masculine sexuality, and its sign, the bodies of women” (Pollock 1988: 54). Now, one may ask, how different is the situation in the early 20th century? Has the avant-garde allowed women to trespass the sacred, male, territory of art, at the same time that women were timidly entering into

higher education and into the professional world? Has this newly conquered “fragile space”, opened up by those recent historical shifts, as Betterton puts it (1998: 19), allowed women to truly become *cultural producers* of modern art? Betterton makes here a strong claim, as she defends that at the turn of the 20th century “many bourgeois women” undertook a “dual form of migration into the city, one that signified not only a geographical journey, but a move from private feminine space into the public sphere of higher education and the professions and towards new social identities” (Betterton 1998: 20). In sum, women undertook the crucial shift from the private realm of domesticity into the public sphere.

In this context, it is worth recalling that roughly around this same time, in the second decade of the 20th century, V. Woolf was addressing her famous lectures in Women Colleges in Cambridge and Oxford, which gave origin to groundbreaking texts as *A Room of One's Own* (1928), and essays like “Women and Fiction” (1928) and “Professions for Women” (1931):

Lock up your libraries if you like, but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set against the freedom of my mind”. (Woolf [1929] 1981: 75)

As my final note, after this brief excursion into the gender politics and the territories of Modernism and Modernity, but surely without any intention of concluding the debate, which in fact has only been partially and recently opened, I would argue there is a much needed focus of this debate in cultures which have scarcely been scrutinized from this angle – such is the Portuguese case, for example.

Indeed, despite the fact that Vorticism was probably “the only avant-garde grouping in Western Europe before 1914 to include women among its members”, as Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry state (Beckett/Cherry 1998: 36)¹⁴, “there has been little agreement as to their inclusion” or the relevance or their participation in this (as in other) avant-garde movement (*Ibid.*). It is a fact that Rebecca West has an essay published in *Blast 1* (“Indissoluble Matrimony”), and *Blast 2*, The War Number, includes “Poems and Notes” and two prints by Jessica Dismorr, a poem (“A Vision of Mud”) and two prints by Helen

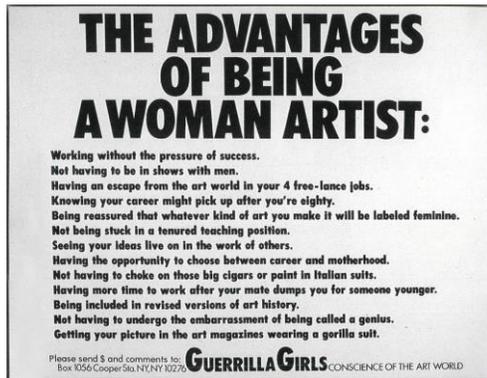
Saunders (misspelled as Sanders), and a design by Dorothy Shakespeare. Kate Lechmere, although blessed in the Blast Manifesto, who was co-director of the “Rebel Art Center” with Lewis, besides funding and living in its premises, whimsically reported on the Saturday afternoon gatherings at the RAC: “I had to do the honours because Lewis insisted that the organizing of tea parties *was a job for women, not artists*” (apud Richard Cork, 1978: 148).¹⁵ And in fact, Kate Lechmere does not feature as signatory, artist or writer in any of the *Blast* issues.

The gendering of Modernity and the labyrinthine meanders of the intersections between “mappings of sexuality” (Becket and Cherry, 1998: 41) and mappings of the metropolis of Modernity as the epicenters of its cultural life is, as has been often called upon by many a feminist scholar, art historian and critic, (Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Rita Felsi, Bridget Elliot and Jo-Ann Wallace, Elizabeth Grosz, amongst many others),¹⁶ remain both a crucial and an elusive issue to this date.

This entails, as Bridget Elliot and Jo-Ann Wallace have targeted it,¹⁷ the disclosure of Modernity as a discursive and a cultural field, “one which must be further understood as the evolving product of a continuing struggle for certain kinds of symbolic power” (Elliot/Wallace 1994: 1-2).

As was my aim to demonstrate throughout this discussion, the negotiation of power discourses and strategies is as much at stake here as the irretrievable necessity to bring into focus the variability of gender in the construction of aesthetic, social and cultural fields, whether we are reporting to the discourses and practices of early 20th century avant-garde movements or late 20th century art Guerrilla movements.





As one of the Guerrilla Girls reported in interview (under the surrogate name of Romaine Brooks) when asked “You sound surprised by your success. What did you expect?”:

We didn't expect anything. We just wanted to have some fun with our adversaries and to vent a little rage. But we also wanted to make feminism (that F word) fashionable again, with new tactics and strategies. (*Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*, 1995: 17)

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IMAGES:

Fig. I Rokeby Venus

Fig. II Damaged Venus

Fig. III Blast 1 e 2

Fig. IV Force feeding

Fig. V Cat and Mouth Act

Fig. VI Suffragette marches

Fig. VII Banners

Fig. VIII Coronation Procession

Fig. IX Lewis's grin

Fig. X Guerrilla Girls

NOTES

¹ The first *Guerrilla Girls* action famously took place at the Metropolitan Museum, NY, in 1989 and remained an inspiration for many other interventions to come. As it is well known, the GG took over the MET in carnivalesque array, holding banners which confronted the policy of the MET regarding the invisibility of women artists in the art scene: "Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Museum? Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art sections are women, but 85 % of the nudes are women". For detailed information on the events and posters, interviews with the Guerrilla artists, see *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls, by the Guerrilla Girls* (1995).

² Mary Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance: an autobiography*, (1953), apud Lena Mohamed, "Suffragettes. The Political Value of Iconoclastic Acts", (in *Art Under Attack*, 2013: 114-125).

³ For a thorough analysis of this episode see Lynda Nead's chapter "Redrawing the Lines", in *The Female Nude, Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, 1992 (34-43).

⁴ Annie Hunt's compelling words in *The Suffragette*, 31 July 1914 (p.122) are cited by Lena Mohamed in the *supra* referred to essay.

⁵For a thought provoking analysis of this debate see Leslie Hill's essay "Suffragettes invented performance art", in the *Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*, 2000 (150-156).

⁶Mary Lowndes, artist and active member of the *Artists' Suffrage League* is responsible for designing many of these colourful banners. She wrote a pamphlet, "On Banners & Banner-making" (first published in the *Englishwoman*, Sept. 1909 and reprinted as a pamphlet by the *Artists' Suffrage League*), where she proudly claimed:

"A banner is not a literary affair, it is not a placard: leave such to boards and sandwichmen. A banner is a thing to float in the wind, to flicker in the breeze, to float its colours for your pleasured, to half show and half conceal a device you long to unravel: you do not want to read it, you want to worship it" [(*Apud* Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women. Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14*, Appendix 5, 1988 (pp.262-4)), this quote, p. 262.

⁷In a previous essay I developed this topic comparing the case of Italian Futurism and Vorticism as far as misogyny and the controversial status of the women who subscribed to both movements (AG Macedo, "Futurism, Vorticism. The Poetics of Language and the Politics of Women", 1994). For a discussion of this topic in a wider context see as well Macedo, AG, *Wyndham Lewis's Literary Work 1908-1928; Vorticism, Futurism and the Poetics of the Avant-Garde* [1998; (2014)].

⁸Lisa Tickner's essay "English Modernism in the Cultural Field" is a crucial first chapter of the volume *English art 1860-1914. Modern artists and identity* (2000), as it contextualizes the main topics under discussion which will be subsequently analysed by other authors in the same volume and which are referred to in this paper.

⁹For a further contextualization of this essay, see Mary Lowndes, "Genius and women painters", *The Common Cause*, 17 April 1914, (31). [*Apud* Tickner 2000: 16)].

¹⁰Rosemary Betterton challenging essay is included in the volume edited by Katy Deepwell, *Women artists and Modernism* (1998: 18-35), and it focuses a topic very close to Lisa Tickner's in the essay *supra* referred to.

¹¹See also in this context Janet Wolff, *Feminine Sentences. Essays on Women and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. See notably the essay "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the literature of Modernity", where Wolff succinctly claims: "The literature of modernity describes the experience of men" (1990: 34).

¹²See Andreas Huyssen influential essay on the gender of Modernity, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other", in *After the Great Divide. Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, 1986 (44-62).

¹³Griselda Pollock's essay "Modernity and the spaces of femininity" is a seminal chapter of one of her most influential early volumes (*Vision and Difference*, 1988) which debates the place and the role of Feminism and femininity in the making of art History and the "Histories of art", as she puts it (50-90).

¹⁴ See Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry's influential essay on the role of women in metropolitan culture and within Vorticism, "Modern women, modern spaces: women, metropolitan culture and Vorticism", in Katy Deepwell, *Women artists and Modernism* (pp.36-53).

¹⁵My emphasis.

¹⁶ To name just a few, besides the already earlier on referred to in this essay, see, Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard UP, 1995;; Gilbert, Sandra and Gubar, Susan, *No Man's Land. The Place of the Woman Writer in the 20th Century*, (vol I, *The War of the Words*), New Haven: Yale UP, 1988; Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.

¹⁷ Bridget Elliot and Jo-Ann Wallace volume *Women Artists and Writers. Modernist (im)positionings*, (1994) is a ground-breaking volume on interarts relations, visual and literary poetics, combining it with a thorough gender analysis of the making of Modernity.