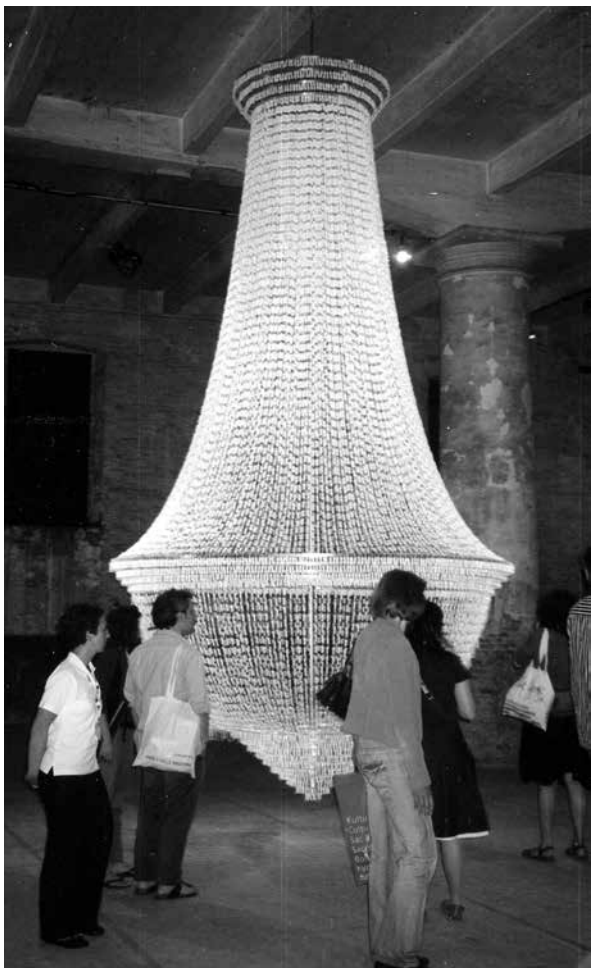
On appropriation and craft: considering the feminist problem of de-politicization

Márcia Oliveira and Maria Luísa Coelho

In 2005 that most famous, well-publicised and ubiquitous artistic event, the Venice Biennale, was, for the first time, curated by two women, Rosa Martínez and fellow Spaniard María de Corral. It even became known as the "***feminist***" Biennale, for Martínez and Corral summoned a not so common number of women artists[1] for the curated exhibitions held in the traditional pavilions of the event. In the Arsenale, where Rosa Martinez' part of the exhibition *Always a Little Bit Further* was held, large posters by the Guerrilla Girls marked the entrance and surrounded a sculptural work by Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos (b. Paris 1971). *A Noiva* / *The Bride* (2001) was a giant chandelier made of thousands of small white tampons and these everyday feminine hygiene products were transformed into a grand-scale decorative object. The tampons appeared as useless objects, their practical essence converted into aesthetic content; they jumped out of a life of secrecy into the spotlight of public exhibition, separated from their function inside women's bodies and put on display as contemporary art. This work looked really promising in terms of feminist meanings and the dialogue it initiated with feminist art history, metonymically represented by the Guerrilla Girls.

Vasconcelos thrived after participating in this event, her works became famous and her solo exhibitions became major popular events, expensive experiences and even occasions for national commemorations. In 2012, she held an exhibition at Versailles Palace (outside Paris) that became a blockbuster and paved the way for her entrance into yet another historical site in 2013: a mega exhibition at the neo-classical National Palace of Ajuda, (near Lisbon), the former official residence of the Portuguese Royal Family after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. Here, her work instigated a dialogue with national culture, with reference to her redeployment of Portuguese iconography and styles such as Fado or traditional filigree. Vasconcelos was by now very successful, and in 2013 she went back to Venice, this time as the national representative of Portugal to the 55th Biennale. The Portuguese Pavilion was a ferryboat similar to those that daily cross the river Tagus, connecting Lisbon to the Southbank. The project, called *Trafaria Praia*, was not only a mobile exhibition



Joana Vasconcelos *A Noiva/ The Bride* **(2001-2005) in** *Always a Little Bit Further* **Arsenale,Venice Biennale (2005)**

Joana Vasconcelos View inside *Trafaria Praia* **(2013) Portugese Pavilion, Venice Biennale (2013)**

roaming the Venetian channels, but also a window for Portuguese products and crafts such as the traditional blue and white ceramic tiles that covered the boat, or the cork used inside, and the pavilion included a store with traditional Portuguese products on sale. The artistic project presented inside the floating pavilion consisted of an installation, or "environment" (as designated in the official website[2]), made of textiles and blue light, reminiscent of other textile works by Vasconcelos such as the *Valkyries* (2004-ongoing). Memory and its relation with identity was then identified as one of Vasconcelos' main approaches to art because of the way that the artist had recuperated Portuguese traditions and traditional ways of making with a post-modern twist. This was visible in other earlier works, such as *Coração Independente Vermelho* (2005) quoting Portuguese filigree, or *Donzela* (2007) a piece built with handmade crochet. Knitting and assemblage, as well as local pans, pots or brooms are some of the materials most commonly used by Vasconcelos in the production of a body of work that actually relies on the labour of others, the anonymous people who produce many of her works, but also on quotations from other artists. These include figures from the popular, iconic and humorous Portuguese ceramist Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1846-1905), who Vasconcelos quotes in a series of ceramic animals, which were then covered with crochet with the objective of questioning the traditional relationship between high and low culture and tradition and modernity.[3]

Most certainly too, when looking at such a body of work, a feminist tradition, or historical background, automatically comes to mind, from *femmages*[4] to seminal works such as Faith Wilding's *Crocheted Environment (Womb Room)*, Niki de Saint Phalle's textile sculptures, Faith Ringgold's quilting, as well as more contemporary examples like Annette Messager and Phyllida Barlow's environments, Ghada Amer's stitched paintings and Rosemarie Trockel's knitted pictures, among so many others. This legacy has become well known and is extensive and the political reach of such practices is not without recognition, bringing women and the history of these 'feminine-ascribed' practices into a relationship with the politics of art. Judging from the many examples available, the contemporary art world seems to be recuperating those practices that also rely on a collective and participatory nature, as the book, Martha Buszek (ed) *Extra/Ordinary. Craft and Contemporary Art* (2011)

clearly demonstrates,[5] as well as showing an increasing interest in the work of women artists,[6] many of whom explore the coalescence of art and craft. Craft has become a highly politically charged vocabulary since feminist artists started using it in their works and feminism started questioning the hierarchies of art; and the fact is that since the 1960s and 1970s the use of craft has been recuperated and re-appropriated many times. There is actually a revolutionary potential in the ways in which craft as a popular art form, generally ascribed to the production of the working class, has provided inspiration and offered resistance to dominant forms of power: '**Embroidery has a long history as a peasant art**', states Rozsika Parker when mentioning the use of this work by Russian constructivist artists such as Liubov Popova and Olga Rozanova.[7] And this '**naturally revolutionary art**'[8] has been continued by artists exploring craft as a way of re-connecting avant-garde art with society. It seems to us that it is impossible for any woman artist from the 1990s onwards to use such practices without being aware of their historical background as politically embedded. In fact, de-historicizing the use of craft in the field of plastic arts is what leads to its de-politicization. The more historically grounded practices seem to be, indeed, those that still have something to tell instead of merely being something to show off.

Vasconcelos, for example, uses crochet and is quoted as recognizing it as a universal language that '**has to do with women all around the world**'[9] ; she also assumes it to be analogous to the interior expression of women. However, she denies that any feminist discourse exists in her work: '**I'm talking about the lack of interest of feminist discourse; what I do is to eradicate it, teaching women that there is no sense in continuing to talk about it**'.[10] In other words, Vasconcelos denies the importance of such a background to her work and is not keen on it being seen as politically engaged. She does appropriate the cultural symbolism of craft's association with feminism as a woman artist (benefiting from the fact that the art mainstream is assimilating the high/low cultural divide) and she also appropriates women's labour, reinforcing her own status as creator, the one with the idea, and a genius! Her practice returns us to old models of studio production where the anonymous condition of those who produce the objects are presented as the work of a single creative author.[11] And here, curiously enough, anonymous is still a woman.[12] But why is this pernicious for women artists and for feminism altogether? Is it not true that craft entering the mainstream of art world is a good thing, given the status and visibility of these practices?

As Roszika Parker recalls, ascribing activities such as sewing, knitting or embroidery to women served to solidify a certain construction of femininity: '**the conviction that femininity is natural to women (and unnatural to men) is tenacious. It is a crucial aspect of patriarchal ideology, sanctioning a rigid and oppressive division of labour**'[13]. Even though today craft artists are no longer the others, as Shapiro and Meyer have noted,[14] the Other still exists and is somehow embedded in every piece of fabric and in every laboriously and anonymously made object. Unlike the artists who made *femmages*, who were considered inferior by historians and the general art establishment,[15] Vasconcelos' presentation of her artwork as the work of a single artist makes the labour of those that produced her work anonymous, neglecting their identity and artistic qualities, and becomes a typical part of a capitalist economy constructed along gender, racial and class divides. However, what appears to us is that now the neglect comes from the artist herself, at the same time that the work appears to the public eye as having a feminist substrate of meaning. It seems impossible not to recall the division of labour that has assaulted women throughout the ages and that still persists as an effect of neo-liberal economies and even of globalisation. To sum up, can an art practice such as the one followed by Vasconcelos be seen otherwise in terms of a different recognition of the past and of women's culture or in some ways as a surprising insertion of traditionally labelled low, feminine art into mainstream art? Or is it merely an act of riding on top of a wave of feminism, depleting its political content and impact? What kind of appropriation is this? What type of mediation exists between these contemporary works and pre-existing practices?

This kind of conundrum is expressed by Kirsty Robertson, when she argues that, on the one hand, the current resurgence of knitting implies the eclipse of identity politics, which, in turn '**made its incorporation into an apolitical art world a *fait accompli***';[16] and, on the other hand, whether the artists themselves and the art establishment want it to or not, the insertion of craft in the sphere of high culture awakens the ghosts of textile artists and workers '**who were shut out of those**

same vaunted establishments'.[17] Such ambivalence is also reflected in the dilemma lying at the heart of the seizure of authoritative spaces for display (major art galleries, museums of modern and contemporary art, international art biennales) by women artists such as Joana Vasconcelos, and even feminist art (or at least an *ersatz* version of it). As summarised by Joanne Heath: '**has feminism now achieved one of its ostensible aims – that of getting women artists into the museum? Do these exhibitions thus perhaps confirm the suspicions of those who now consider feminism to be a faintly outdated mode of analysis? Or are they in fact to be characterised by a near-total negation of feminism as a potential framework through which to read the work of women artists?**'[18] Robertson offers Tracey Emin, her use of textile and craft processes and the popularity enjoyed by this British artist since the 1990s as an exemplary case of these tensions. We highlight Emin again here because there is an interesting rapport not only between Emin's and Vasconcelos' use of traditional, domestic and neglected techniques and materials but also in relation to the fame both have secured and the way these two artists seem to personify aspects of their national identity.

Emin is part of the group of artists that came to be known in the 1990s as the Young British Artists (yBAs), along with Sarah Lucas, Damien Hirst and others who participated in the Royal Academy's 1997 *Sensation* exhibition (an appropriate title for an event that caused a furore in Britain at the time), curated by and from the collection of the advertising-guru-turned-art-collector/dealer Charles Saatchi. She has become a contemporary cultural icon, newly elected to The Royal Academy, visible in tabloid magazines like *The Sun* and London's *Evening Standard* and in the popular imagination (in the same way that Vasconcelos saw her name and reputation inscribed in Portugal, through the success of her exhibition at Palácio da Ajuda). Emin's flirtation with the media, an ingredient determinant to the contemporary promotion of a few artists to stardom, as well as with the fashion industry (she was one of the faces of Marks and Spencer's advertising campaign in 2013 and regularly features in style magazines) is something that can also be found in Vasconcelos' rise to fame, for she too often shows up in style and gossip magazines such as *Caras* and *Nova Gente* and has developed a growing number of projects with fashion and design companies, partnerships that explore the commercial potential of the artist and her work. The media and a range of commodity industries have certainly provided visibility to both Emin and Vasconcelos and are, as Rosemary Betterton mentioned in 2001 in relation to the yBAs, '**symptomatic of their ambition to succeed within the terms of the art market**'[19], and even in relation to the political status quo, as in the yBAs co-option by New Labour in their pursuit of a Creative Britain[20] and, in the case of Vasconcelos, her on-going affair with the political *appareil* (rather than with politics), leading critic Augusto M. Seabra to refer to her as '**the artist of the regime**'.[21] But Betterton also reminds us that this hypervisibility of a few invariably results in the exclusion of the rest,[22] creating a fabricated sense of identity, which in relation to both artists is even ancillary to their associations with particular national identities. Both Vasconcelos and Emin have represented their countries at the Venice Biennale and if Emin's credentials as representative of a national identity come from her inclusion in a generation of artists precisely defined by their Britishness, with Vasconcelos they originate from references in her work to elements commonly recognised as representative of Portuguese identity (the filigree hearts, the crocheted statuary, fado music, etc.). However, what Vasconcelos encapsulates, appropriates or merely quotes is more a certain way of being Portuguese, and one that originates from stereotypical images of national identity, produced through gendered, albeit anonymous, manual labour.

The participation of her work in the forms of production favoured by globalisation and the market economy at the same time that it paradoxically affirms the singularity of its location and position is made clearer when set against other artistic ways of engaging with the social in Portugal, even if they are excluded from public visibility due to the lack of media coverage. Take for example, feminist artist Carla Cruz and the project *Rastilho* (2012-2013). Resulting from a collaboration between the artist and members of a small community of the North of Portugal, the emphasis on a collective, shared endeavour is present in Cruz' description of the project: '**Rastilho is a spontaneous, informal and experimental group, not for profit and that aims to promote culture that is collectively created.... Rastilho was born of a common desire to expand to the community and to the public space their mutual**

Old Primary School, S. Jorge de Selho, Pevidém, used by the group Rastilho, December 2012. Courtesy, Carla Cruz.

RASTILHO Self-portrait, **December 2012. Courtesy, Carla Cruz.**

concerns .... To be sure, Rastilho is not the space but the group; Rastilho is the movement that is going from one to the other, a movement of understanding and sharing'.[23] Sited in a primary school, rather than in the art studio, *Rastilho* created opportunities for an exchange of experiences, knowledges and affects, through activities that included craft (among the events integrated in the project there were some dedicated to embroidery, baking and decorative arts). The aim of the project was to provide group experiences that relied mostly on female participants and domestic, feminised forms of labour, but these were reclaimed and given visibility in the public sphere.

By incorporating craft in her art project Cruz is obviously establishing a relationship with her feminist foremothers, recovering the feminist dimension of this code not only in terms of style but also in terms of the politics intrinsic to it, whereas possibly in the case of Emin and, more categorically with Vasconcelos, the link with a feminist art tradition is not only much more spectacular (that is, of the order of the spectacle) but also more problematically a-political. Like Vasconcelos, Emin has expressed her disregard for the feminist politics of embroidery,[24] in what is a clue to the fraught character of her relationship with feminism and an indication that her aesthetic strategies are more based in appropriating rather than reclaiming forgotten histories and subjects of modern art, which leads Betterton to highlight what is lost in the process: '**although Emin's aesthetic strategies bear a marked resemblance to earlier feminist art, there are key differences in their practice and politics (…) what in the 1970s was a radical collective challenge to masculine formalism ceases to have the same effect when performed again by an individual woman artist in the different art world and context of the 1990s**'.[25]

The political implications of appropriation are addressed by Benjamin Buchloh in his essay 'Parody and Appropriation in Picabia, Pop and Polke': '**each act of appropriation, therefore, inevitably constructs a simulacrum of a double position, distinguishing high from low culture, exchange value form use value, the individual from the social. It perpetuates the separation of various practices, and reaffirms the isolation of individual producers from the collective interests of the society within which they operate**'.[26] Buchloh's alert to the possible gap between the individual and the social in processes of appropriation and Betterton's emphasis on the contradiction between the collective challenge of 1970s feminist art practices and the individualism of Emin's work in the 1990s are crucial aspects to an assessment of Vasconcelos' work and its (lack) of political effects. If in Emin's case the conflict arises from the fact that her craft aesthetics is part of a self-referential intention (even when considering the artist's autobiographical approach as staged and intended to promote a persona: the working class, promiscuous girl with Turkish Cypriot roots from Margate[27]), in Vasconcelos' it more questionably results from the already mentioned omission of a collective dimension intrinsic and determinant to her work, which, despite being created by an anonymous collective, a group of unidentified women artisans, only ratifies a single authorship and therefore participates in the sacred triumvirate of modern art: originality, original, origin. Despite their differences, both Emin and Vasconcelos

promote aesthetic practices that ultimately lead to the promotion and cult of the figure of the artist and, in so doing, irreversibly align themselves with the art system that the feminist art movement set up to dismantle in the first place. This is an issue central to curatorial decisions and private and public processes of collecting, as well as the phenomena of a few blockbuster exhibitions of selected women artists. For example, in the last fifteen years Tate Modern has belatedly started to put on exhibitions which have gained widespread media attention and public recognition: Frida Kahlo, Sonia Delaunay, Mira Schendel and Marlene Dumas and is about to open one on Mona Hatoum. Some collectors are also expressing their own favouring of certain types of "***women's art***"(from wealthy celebrities like Madonna to, mostly female, collectors like Valeria Napoleone) and are problematically implicated in the selective process that secures access by some women to the restricted club of high art at the expense of others who stay at the door.

Rather than fostering a collective work ethic, Vasconcelos' art practice promotes a space dominated by a corporatist logic that generates a social entity– not only the artist but also the brand Joana Vasconcelos – that exists to concentrate power independently of and distinct from the practices of other women artists on which it relies. Far from being a co-operative, the social and organisational environment underlying the execution of Vasconcelos' projects is, indeed, a corporation, with a production line built and sold under a brand. In this environment craft becomes a matter of style, which is imitated, often enlarged, and subsequently commodified. What is left outside this transformation into commodity? Certainly craft as process, very often a collective, emotionally charged process of sharing and care. According to Janis Jefferies, '**to craft is to care. *Craft* is a verb rather than a noun. As a verb, craft is active**'.[28] Hence the frequent associations between the terms craft, interaction and participation. By denying the shared, collective activity of crafting, Vasconcelos not only neutralizes the political potential of her work but also obliterates the centrality of the feminist contribution to the exploration of craft as a way of transforming the sexual politics inherent to art and its history. In addition, her manipulation of craft in merely stylistic terms reduces the possibility of the museum or the gallery to become participatory spaces for a range of communities,

a conclusion to which the sheer size of so many of her works, some of them dangling over the viewer, surely contributes. The result is thus the reinstatement of the traditional separation between artwork and viewer, which is paradoxically achieved through an aesthetic – craft – that usually invites a relational, participant setting but which, because it is employed simply as style, does not fulfil its transgressive potential.

We think this situation has also arisen as a consequence of the feminist backlash from the 2000s. It seems to us that there are many cases in which the transgressive potential inherent to craft is silenced by appropriation because of the way strategies are employed. It is true that 'all media are charged with their own history', which renders the attempt of using textiles, for example, '**as a neutral medium similar to any other in the visual arts**'[29] impossible. Moreover, appropriation as a visual strategy has itself a long history that owes much to feminist art and critique from the 1980s and 1990s, from Barbara Kruger to Sherrie Levine and Cindy Sherman, among many others. As David Evans notes, there are two central ideas to be considered when thinking of feminist appropriation: the fact '**that visual culture is one of the principal sites where gender relations are produced and reproduced; and that mainstream accounts of the modern author or artist inevitably foreground men of genius**'.[30] When Vasconcelos uses appropriation, not only the appropriation of certain material practices and a specific imagery but also its historical and cultural foundations, gender and power relations are reinforced as she rejects one part of history – the feminist history of subverting craft and challenging its meaning and the politics of production/reception – whilst reclaiming another one – the national and ethnographic history

Above: Maria Nepomuceno *Tempo para Respirar (Breathing Time)* **Turner Contemporary, Margate (14 September 2012 - 17 March 2013). Courtesy the Artist and Turner Contemporary, Margate © Maria Nepomuceno. Photo: Stephen White**
Left: Maria Nepomuceno Studio Group at work. Courtesy the Artist and Turner Contemporary, Margate © Maria Nepomuceno. Photo: Dan Bass

of traditional Portuguese and women's craft traditions within this, in order to transform it into a style marked by aspects of exoticism, which is deeply conservative and highly popular in mass produced culture and consonant with '**the fantasy and desire of consumer age**'.[31] The large-scale works by Vasconcelos are often a product of such a process and synthesize the whole problematic of the de-politicisation that we are considering here. Such is the example of *Valquíria Enxoval* (400 x 530 x 1400 cm, 2009), a piece made by a group of artisans from the Portuguese town of Nisa,[32] and comprising several elements such as local embroidery and crochet techniques. The work is a gigantic and overwhelming piece that is impossible to overlook but nevertheless its scale has the power of keeping the viewer at bay so that s/he never has the opportunity of really engaging with the work.

Many artists, and more specifically women artists, have been using this relation with historically embedded crafts to produce works in the first decade of the twenty-first century in a less problematic way. We can think of examples such as Brazilian artist Maria Nepomuceno (b. 1976),[33] who uses native, regional and traditional Brazilian crafts and a collective dimension which goes far beyond the signature of its author. But why and where do such differences lie? Why, for example, does Nepomuceno's work seem less problematic than the *Valquíria Enxoval*? We would say that the biggest difference is one related with process and with silence. There is a high level of participation required to produce these works, made by hundreds of different anonymous hands, but in the case of Vasconcelos the participation, the fragments that encompass a certain expressive character, are silenced, while the totality of the piece screams out loud. Nepomuceno's work, however, made of beads, ropes and ceramic vessels, is radically opposed to Vasconcelos' in this regard, for it lets the participative side of the process be visible as well as its historical background, which functions not only as mere quotation of exotic material but also as a foundational aesthetic, deeply rooted in the past, in the affection and involvement of those who take part in the artistic process and in the interaction with the viewer, who interferes in the installation by touching it with her body. This difference was evident when the work was shown in her exhibition *Breathing Time* (Turner Contemporary, 2013). For this exhibition, the artist developed several moments of interaction with the people of Margate by creating the Maria Nepomuceno Studio Group, where she taught them to use her techniques, in addition to exchanging materials such as previously used traditional ropes, donated by the Master Ropemakers at the Historic Dockyard Chatham, for Brazilian ropes, which were then used in Kent.[34] This process of sharing and exchange, through which the artist gives to locals and visitors as much as she and her installations take from them, radically alters the work in itself, providing it with an organic and mutable quality.

This is a collective process that also happened in Brazil with the indigenous people with whom she shared her knowledge and skills, and who in turn shared theirs. As Michael Asbury says a propos of *Breathing Time*: '**the regenerative associations that the forms evoke are made all the more coherent through Nepomuceno's subsequent collaboration with the Huni Kuin (or Kaxinawá) tribe who inhabit the remote northwest region of Acre in Brazil. Her time spent with the tribe weaving baskets and learning a little of their timeless craft is now set in conjunction with the experiences of the residents of Margate, its seafaring heritage and its distinct relation to the very same materials employed in her practice. The spiral with its symbolic associations of continuity and regeneration is doubled through the vestiges of previous collaborations**'.[35] Therefore, there is a symbolic and material energy that engages with the objects, the artist, the public and the collective hands that participate in such an exchange process. This is something we also experienced when confronting Vasconcelos' work at the Venice Biennale in 2005: with *A Noiva*, the viewer was summoned to look closer, separating the general meaning of the piece (a chandelier) so as to decode it into something intimate and deeply meaningful in terms of women's embodiment. However, this expectation was not fulfilled with most of her later pieces and with the general display of her work, which never gives way for the viewer to get inside and discover something underneath it (as it happens, for example, in the environments created by Niki de Saint Phalle and Phyllida Barlow), rather seeming quite impenetrable. Their quality is merely exterior, as market and media culture have replaced political positions and critique, and what could have transgressive and emancipatory potential ultimately becomes an issue of passivity.

Márcia Oliveira is a post-doctoral fellow at CEHUM, Universidade do Minho, Portugal, where she is developing her project '**The making of art: tracing feminist processes through Twentieth Century artists' books' (FCT grant SFRH/BPD/110741/2015). In 2015 she published 'Is this desire? Power, Politics and Sexuality in Paula Rego's Extreme Bodies'** *Journal of Romance Studies* **15: 2 pp. 22-39.**

Maria Luísa Coelho is a post-doctoral fellow at CEHUM (FCT Grant SFRH/BPD/112293/2015), Universidade do Minho, Portugal, where she is developing her project 'Portuguese Artists and Writers in Britain (1950-1986): Cultural Networks and Identities in Transit'. Her article 'The Eccentric Self-portraits of Helena Almeida' is forthcoming in Claire Williams and Maria-José Blanco (eds.) ***Feminine Singular: Women Growing up through Life-writing in the Luso-hispanic World*** **(Oxford: Peter Lang).**

Notes

1. Rosa Martinez's part of the exhibition contained 45% women, Maria de Corral's 25%. See *n.paradoxa* vol 16 (2005).

2. J. Vasconcelos *Trafaria Praia* http://www.vasconcelostrafariapraia.com [Last accessed 30.03.2016]

3. J. Vasconcelos (Ed.) *Joana Vasconcelos* (Paris: Versailles Palace, 2012)

4. Miriam Schapiro used the term femmage to define the articulation of techniques such as collage, découpage, photomontage and assemblage in a single artwork. As Norma Broude notes, the concept was coined in opposition to the formalist dialectic of the New York School in the 1950-60. See N. Broude 'Miriam Schapiro and "***Femmage***": Reflections on the Conflict Between Decoration and Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Art' *Arts Magazine* (February 1980) pp. 83-87

5. M. Buszek (Ed.) *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art* (Durham and London: Durham University Press, 2011)

6. J. Heath 'Women Artists, Feminism and the Museum: Beyond the Blockbuster Retrospective' in A.M. Kokoli (Ed.) *Feminism Reframed: Reflections on Art and Difference* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008) p. 22

7. R. Parker *The Subversive Stich. Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (1996 edition) (London: The Women's Press, 1984) p. 196

8. Ibid p. 189

9. A. P. Rubio 'Do micro ao Macro e Vice-versa. Uma conversa entre Agustín Pérez-Rubio e Joana Vasconcelos' in *Joana Vasconcelos* (Lisbon: ADIAC Portugal; Corda Seca, 2007) p. 41. For a discussion of Vasconcelo's take on feminism see also Macedo, Ana Gabriela 'O Sorriso da Gioconda: Feminismo, arte e performance' in I. Capeloa Gil e M. Candido Monteiro (eds) *Simone de Beauvoir. Olhares sobre a Mulher e o Feminino* (Lisboa, Vega, 2010) pp. 187-206

10. Ibid p. 59

11. These models of production have assumed different designations according to the criticism they raised. Judy Chicago, for instance, called the production of *The Dinner Party* a cooperative instead of a collaborative endeavour (Amelia Jones 'The Sexual Politics of the Dinner Party. A Critical Context' in N. Broude and M.D. Garrard

Reclaiming Female Agency: feminist art history after postmodernism Berkeley, The University of California Press, 2005, p. 409-433), but the fact is that this piece was both highly praised as a feminist experience (on this regard see for example Lucy Lippard 'Judy Chicago's Dinner Party' *Art in America* 68 (April 1980) pp. 114-126) and Susan Havens Caldwell 'Experiencing *The Dinner Party*' *Woman's Art Journal* vol. 1, No. 2 (Autumn, 1980 - Winter, 1981), pp. 35-37) and deeply criticized according to various formalist, aesthetic and ethical arguments. To the fact that it '**did not respect the feminist cause**', Maureen Mullarkey, for exemple, added the claim that Chicago took advantage of volunteers and their work (Mullarkey, Maureen '**The Dinner Party is a Church Supper**' http://www.maureenmullarkey.com/essays/dinnerparty.html [Last accessed 03/05/2016] by using the model of the studio workshop to produce such a gigantic and expensive piece that took six years to complete (1974-1979) and that is now permanently installed at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art (Brooklyn Museum, New York). Moreover, the allure of mass production is not a new one, which can be corroborated by numerous examples, from Warhol's Factory to Damien Hirst's industrial complex, which employs both young artists and technicians, as well as so many others workers, and has been assuming an industrial rather than an educational and collective character. Vasconcelos now runs her own foundation for her work.

12. This expression is a reference to Susan Hiller's seminal work *Dedicated to the Unknown Artist*, whose title refers to the fact that most of the unknown paintings kept away in museum basements are after all made by women artists.

13. R. Parker *The Subversive Stitch* (1984) p. 3

14. Ibid

15. M. Schapiro & M. Meyer 'Waste Not Want Not: An Inquiry into what Women Saved and Assembled – *FEMMAGE*' *Heresies* I, Winter(4) (1977-78) pp. 66-69

16. K. Robertson 'Rebellious Doilies and Subversive Stitches: Writing a Craftivist History' in M. Buszek (Ed.) *Extra/Ordinary. Craft and Contemporary Art* p. 195

17. Ibid p. 195

18. J. Heath 'Women Artists, Feminism and the Museum: Beyond the Blockbuster Retrospective' in in A.M. Kokoli (Ed.) *Feminism Reframed: Reflections on Art and Difference* (2008) p. 22.

19. R. Betterton '"***Young British Art***" in the 1990s' in D. Morley, K. Robins (Eds.) *British Cultural Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 291

20. Ibid p. 303

21. A.M. Seabra 'Tempo Velho' na Cultura. Público. (2016) [Last accessed: 06.04.2016] https://www.publico.pt/culturaipsilon/noticia/tempo-velho-na-cultura-1728263

22. R. Betterton ' "***Young British Art***" in the 1990s' p. 191

23. C. Cruz Rastilho. http://carlacruz.net/2013/collective/rastilho-2#/0. [Last accessed: 14.04.2016] For more on this project see Cruz, Carla 'Democracy: A (non) artistic intervention?: Attempts to Perform Democracy through Art' (2015) PhD thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London

24. K. Robertson 'Rebellious Doilies and Subversive Stitches: Writing a Craftivist History' in M. Buszek (Ed.) *Extra/Ordinary. Craft and Contemporary Art* p. 195

25. R. Betterton ' "***Young British Art***" in the 1990s' pp. 297-98

26. B. H. D. Buchloh 'Parody and Appropriation in Francis Picabia, Pop and Sigmar Polke' D. Evans (Ed.) *Appropriation* (London: The MIT Press/Whitechapel, 2009) p. 180

27. The combination of these biographical details, which have often been explored by Emin in her work and public persona, make her rather 'exotic' to many English men and have therefore decisively contributed to the reception and success of her work. In recent years a now older, more respectable Emin seems determined to change her earlier public image, as she proudly boasts about her celibacy and dedication to work as an 'intellectual' and newly elected member of the Royal Academy, which represents the art establishment.

28. J.Jefferies, (2011) 'Loving Attention: An Outburst of Craft in Contemporary Art' in M. Buszek (Ed.) *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art* pp. 231-32

29. R. Scheuing 'Penelope and the Unravelling of History' in K. Deepwell (Ed.) *New Feminist Art Criticism: Critical Strategies* (Oxford/New York: Manchester University Press, 1995) p. 188

30. D. Evans 'Seven Types of Appropriation' in D. Evans (Ed.) *Appropriation* (London: The MIT Press/Whitechapel, 2009) p. 18

31. Matthew Teitelbaum, quoted ibid p. 16

32. The latest Valkyrie has been commissioned by a Danish institution, ARoS, Aarhus Art Musem. The piece will be named *Valkyrie Rán* and will be presented in October 2016, when the Museum will showcase an individual Joana Vasconcelos exhibition. The same happened in 2014, when the artist produced a new Valkyrie for the Manchester Art Gallery exhibition *Time Machine*. The piece was named *Britannia*. These displays seem therefore to question a sense of Portuguese identity, which is often recognised in Vasconcelos' work.

33. We must thank our colleague Giulia Lamoni for bringing Nepomuceno's work to our attention.

34. L. A. Wright (Ed.) *Maria Nepomunceno Tempo Para Respirar/ Breathing Time* (Margate: Turner Contemporary, 2012)

35. M. Asbury 'Money for Old Rope / Presente de Graça' Ibid p. 38