

***Generating Feminisms: Italian Feminisms and the “Now You Can Go” programme***

Helena Reckitt

*Carla Lonzi’s thinking can therefore be regarded as a weapon that spares nothing—including its own author—and whose unsettling power still remains intact and contagious today.*

Claire Fontaine, “We Are All Clitoridean Women,” e-flux, 2013<sup>i</sup>

*It is so important that contemporary practitioners are able to contribute to feminist futures by affirming, citing and respeaking feminist genealogies without appealing to their similarity, or identity with those genealogies. In this way, they are able to obtain the authority to speak simultaneously through their own singularity, their irreducible (sexual) difference, and also through their common participation in a transgenerational political project – a common desire for a culture of difference.*

Alex Martinis Roe, “Dedications #2: The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective,” 2013<sup>ii</sup>

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In 1980 Carla Lonzi, the poet, feminist and former leading art critic, published a dialogue between herself and her lover of almost twenty years, prominent avant-garde sculptor Pietro Consagra. After a four-day discussion of how love, creativity, work and career played out in their relationship, Lonzi concludes that she must choose love for her autonomy over that offered within romantic partnership. She ends by terminating their relationship with words that lend the book its title: “vai pure” [now you can go].<sup>iii</sup> This withdrawal is just one of several renunciations that Lonzi enacted throughout her life. In 1970 she resigned her position within what she had come to regard as the “inauthentic profession”<sup>iv</sup> of art criticism. In 1975, having spent the previous five years channeling her energies into Rivolta Femminile [Female Revolt], the Milan collective she cofounded with artist Carla Accardi — and which itself constituted a form of separatist withdrawal — Lonzi renounced feminist leadership. Even while active in Rivolta Femminile Lonzi

distanced herself from women artists in the group, rejecting the prospect that she would become “the Lucy Lippard of the situation.”<sup>v</sup> Instead of wanting greater recognition for women within the art world, she renounced that system and its means of attributing value altogether.

These various iterations of what Lonzi termed “deculturation”<sup>vi</sup> formed the starting point for a thirteen-day long events series that I developed in 2015 with six feminist curators, artists and researchers — Angelica Bolletinari, Giulia Casalini, Diana Georgiou, Laura Guy, Irene Revell and Amy Tobin — dedicated to exploring resonances of earlier moments of feminist thinking, art and activism, particularly those from 1970s and 1980s Italy. Staged across four London visual arts venues, the programme comprised film screenings, performance, talks, workshops, and a meeting of the “Feminist Duration Reading Group.” Inspired and challenged by Lonzi’s withdrawal and renunciation tactics, we called the programme “Now You Can Go.”<sup>vii</sup> In addition to Lonzi and Rivolta Femminile, other touchstones were the practices of the Libreria delle Donne di Milano [Milan Women’s Bookshop] collective, Diotima in Verona, Cooperativa Beato Angelico in Rome,<sup>viii</sup> international Wages for Housework, and the work of feminist thinkers including Adriana Cavarero, Silvia Federici, Lea Melandri and Luisa Muraro.

### **Hidden from Herstory**

A degree of speculation underscored the programme’s focus, given that Lonzi’s *Vai pure* has never been translated into English. Indeed, little of Italian feminism’s rich literature has been disseminated within Anglophone contexts, if translated at all.<sup>ix</sup> Most Italian feminists with an international profile have worked in the US. Silvia Federici, for instance, whose activities with Wages for Housework and subsequent articulations of feminized labour, social reproduction and the commons have enjoyed a recent resurgence of interest, did her PhD at the University of Buffalo and has taught at Hofstra University, Long Island, New York. Philosopher Adriana Cavarero, while based in Verona, has taught at US institutions including University of California, Berkeley, and New York University, and has an ongoing dialogue around ethics, politics and relationality with Judith Butler. Even when translated into English, Anglophone commentators have often

dismissed Italian feminist texts as essentialist in their articulation of ‘sexual difference.’ As Teresa de Lauretis, another prominent US-based Italian scholar, and herself a key mediator between Italian and North American feminisms, notes, positive qualities of strength and autonomy with which Italian feminists associate separatist tactics are not shared in US contexts, where separatism’s negative connotations link to feminists’ fears “of loss of professional status, loss of heterosexist privilege, or loss of community identity.”<sup>x</sup>

Italian feminisms’ rejection of equal rights and mainstream assimilation also prevented the movement’s easy acceptance within Anglophone circles. Rivolta Femminile’s polemic “Sputiamo su Hegel” [“Let’s Spit on Hegel”] declared, “Equality is what is offered as legal rights to colonized people. And what is imposed on them as culture.”<sup>xi</sup> This rejection of equality, coupled with forging links between theory and practice, posed “both a radical challenge to feminism as the struggle for equality with men, and to the notion of politics understood as the struggle for power,” Susanna Scarparo asserts.<sup>xii</sup> In Linda M J Zerilli’s view, it is Italian feminisms’ understanding of freedom as “a creative and collective practice of world-building, fundamentally inaugural in character, which establishes irreducibly contingent, politically significant relationships among women as sexual beings who otherwise have none apart from their place in the masculine economy of exchange” that so diverges from liberal democratic US definitions of freedom in terms of individualism and constitutional rights.<sup>xiii</sup> Italian feminism is not just little-known internationally, in Italy it is also often overlooked. Several Italian women who participated in “Now You Can Go” remarked on the irony of travelling to London in order to explore Italy’s feminist legacies.<sup>xiv</sup>

Italian feminism’s virtual absence from English language anthologies of feminist art and visual culture is particularly notable, and problematic, given the high number of artists and arts professionals participating in the movement.<sup>xv</sup> Committed to inventing new forms of expression, Italian feminists also attacked the art world’s sexual division of labour and its gendered assumptions about creativity. This critique remains compelling today when female versus male artists’ work is under-priced, under-exhibited, and under-

collected,<sup>xvi</sup> and the industry is dominated by female employees carrying out supporting, poorly-paid roles. Lonzi, in *Vai pure*, expresses her frustration at being expected to take a supportive role in relation to her partner, and at the value placed on male creativity over female immanence and complementarity implied by that assumption. While Consagra depends on Lonzi's affective labour and consoling company, he prioritizes the time that he spends working in the studio and promoting his career, putting "art" and production above "life."<sup>xvii</sup>

My introduction to Italian feminisms came via artist Claire Fontaine<sup>xviii</sup> when I included her work in an exhibition that I organized called 'Getting Rid of Ourselves.'<sup>xix</sup> To my invitation that she give an artist's talk Claire Fontaine replied that she would prefer to speak about practices that informed her work: 1960s, 1970s and 1980s Italian feminisms. Italian feminist legacies have been important for Claire Fontaine's practice in key ways, including contributing to her formulation of the Human strike. Drawing on tactics of affective resistance developed by Italian feminists, Human strike is a protest without fixed goal or mission. Resonating with Bartleby's stance of "I would prefer not to,"<sup>xx</sup> and with the Italian feminist political principle of "la pratica del partire da sé" ["starting from the self"], Human strike resists conventional social roles and expectations, practising negation in order to activate subjectivity and produce socio-symbolic change.<sup>xxi</sup>

The feminisms that Claire Fontaine cited, which rejected equality in favour of developing autonomous feminist practices, values and cultures, feel urgent and necessary in light of feminism's current co-option by corporate and commercial agendas. Clearly feminism's radicalism has been diluted in an era when the UK Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May claims to belong to a Tory sisterhood, devoted to entrepreneurship and putting women in the boardroom, and Charles Saatchi's gallery organizes an all-women show, 'Champagne Life,' that purports to "celebrate the rich and diverse practices of female artists without making a feminist point."<sup>xxii</sup> Following Claire Fontaine's talk, I formed a reading group in London focused on Italian feminist texts that she had recently published in the French/English journal *MAY*.<sup>xxiii</sup> The reading group informed a two-day symposium called "Feminist Duration in Art and Curating."<sup>xxiv</sup> The symposium's name

borrowed from Amelia Jones's account of the durational work entailed in maintaining queer feminist histories, which "reactivates them by returning them to process and embodiment — linking the interpreting body of the present with the bodies referenced or performed in the past [...]".<sup>xxv</sup> The notion of "duration" highlights the ongoing work of caring for feminist pasts, by curating, archiving, and maintaining those records, processes that dovetail with feminist revaluations of housework and social reproductive labour.<sup>xxvi</sup>

### **Curating Feminisms, Curating as Feminists: Now You Can Go**

Following the symposium, a planning team formed, comprising MA and PhD researchers, artists, and institutional and freelance curators, dedicated to continuing the reading group and developing a public programme outside academia. While I worked as overall coordinator and primary fundraiser, each group member contributed something from her practice — from curating a film screening to running a workshop, proposing a speaker, finding a venue, raising funds, or hosting a meal. My role in creating a framework within which women could realize their energies and desires has echoes with an approach that the Milan Women's Bookshop collective termed "the practice of authority," wherein group members had the authority to pursue their own trajectories as part of the collective, without obtaining prior approval or consensus. This practice sought to affirm women's capabilities, and recognizes their different and divergent talents and contributions.

In a related practice of 'affidamento,' or entrustment, women in the Milan collective entered into relationships with one another. Rather than follow feminist understandings of relations between women as horizontal and equal, they acknowledged the existence of disparities and differences between women. By so doing, they aimed to free up one another's desires, realize their potential, and engender self-actualization. They took as examples affidamento relationships between women writers, as well as literary characters, such as that between HD and Bryher who tells HD, "without hesitating, 'Go ahead.'"<sup>xxvii</sup> Thus, instead of being treated as objects of patriarchal exchange, affidamento positions women as subjects of mutual symbolic transaction, a reorientation that enables them to discover their value as a collective resource that they rely on in each other.

“Now You Can Go” emphasized embodied experience, intimacy, dialogue and participation above spectacle and representation. Workshops ranged from Nina Wakeford’s “Feeling Backwards,” which revisited oral history and interview methods from a lesbian herstory archive, to Kajsa Dahlberg and Laura Guy’s “Intimate Acts,” exploring collective acts of annotation, translation, and recontextualisation. As part of The Showroom’s Communal Knowledge programme, Carla Cruz devised a workshop on group behaviour at King Solomon Academy, while Andrea Francke drew on social reproduction theory for a session with Justice for Domestic Workers. Foregrounding Italian feminisms’ prioritization of group activities and intimate relations, and what the Milan collective called “practica del fare” [practice of doing], Alex Martinis Roe led a workshop designed to stimulate new feminist generations. Aptly titled “Our Future Network,” exercises emphasized the political role of narration in creating what Adriana Cavarero calls “a shared space of reciprocal exhibition,”<sup>xxviii</sup> positing the collective’s world-making practices as pedagogic tools with contemporary relevance.

The politics of citation, both on the literary level of whom and what we read, translate and reference, and broader socio-political questions regarding to whom and what we orient our energies and commitments, underscored the programme. A reading group session led by Laura Guy reflected on processes of translating feminisms across time, place, context, and language. It started with Gayatri Spivak’s “The Politics of Translation”<sup>xxix</sup> which warns, “If you are making anything else accessible, through a language quickly learned with an idea that you transfer content, then you are betraying the text and showing rather dubious politics.”<sup>xxx</sup> Spivak asserts that the translator must immerse herself in the language and culture of the original text, what she calls its rhetoricity. Spivak’s concern about the potential violence enacted when literature is incorporated into a tradition from which it was once excluded, and the dangers of “a too quickly shared feminist notion of accessibility,”<sup>xxxi</sup> sounded a valuable note of caution for our enterprise. Turning to translations from Italian into English, we read de Lauretis’s introduction to the Milan collective’s group-authored book, *Sexual Difference*. Emphasizing “the dense substratum of connotations, resonances, and implicit references that the history of a culture has sedimented into the words and phrases of its language,”

de Lauretis characterizes translation as a process of rewriting, reconfiguration, and interpretation.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Tactics of disidentification and withdrawal, inspired by Lonzi's example as well as those advocated by Rivolta Femminile, the Milan collective and Wages for Housework, informed the discussion "Don't Believe You Have Any Rights." The title drew from the original name of the book *Sexual Difference*, the more elaborate (and revelatory) *Non credere di avere dei diritti: La generazione della liberta Femminile nell'idea e nelle vicende di un gruppo di donne* [Don't Think You Have Any Rights: The Engendering of Female Freedom in the Thought and Vicissitudes of a Women's Group<sup>xxxiii</sup>]. It opened with a screening of Martinis Roe's film *A story from Circolo della rosa*, 2014, which concerned an entrustment relationship between two members of the Milan collective.

Throughout "Now You Can Go" neglected historical ideas, texts, and artworks were revisited in the present, opening up questions about their latency and potential. The "Autoritratti" film screening drew on processes of collage and self-portraiture performed in Lonzi's innovative book of interviews with artists, *Autoritratto* [Self-Portrait], 1969, (itself the focus of a teach-in by Teresa Kittler). The screening staged an intergenerational dialogue between experimental films from Italy, most of which had not screened in the UK before, and those by UK-based feminists.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Questions of belated potential were especially pertinent for a presentation of single channel works by Marinella Pirelli, which took its starting point from Pirelli and Lonzi's meeting in 1965 and subsequent dialogue.<sup>xxxv</sup> One of the few women active in the 1960s/1970s Italian avant-garde, Pirelli had withdrawn her films from circulation, and they had remained stored in dark basement for over forty years. Conscious of her responsibility, Lucia Aspesi, screening co-curator and head of Archivio Marinella Pirelli, had been careful to find an appropriate context in which to stage Pirelli's belated, posthumous, English-language debut.

The "Rescue Missions" panel, which also took place at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, highlighted the art world's "rediscovery" of women artists – often when they are ending their careers or already dead, thus leaving potentially lucrative estates – and the

terms on which such revivals occur.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Speakers discussed a range of issues concerning the care of female artists' legacies and careers. Sonia Boyce recalled her effort to make histories of black female singers visible in the "Dedications Series." Lisa Panting suggested that commercial art galleries can provide a level of long-term support for artists that public art institutions cannot. Lois Keidan, who led the ICA's Live Art programme from 1992-1997, outline her ongoing work supporting and archiving feminist live art. Yet the elimination of Keidan's ICA programme by a subsequent Director on the grounds that the medium of live art lacked "cultural urgency"<sup>xxxvii</sup> went unremarked. Meanwhile, the participation of art collector and philanthropist Valeria Napoleone, known for supporting female artists and feminist-oriented arts organizations, rather too neatly illustrated private patronage's influence on the UK public art sector.

A further panel, "On Social Reproduction," picked up Italian feminists' critique of how Marxist labour analysis devalues social reproductive work – which ranges from giving birth and raising children, to feeding, clothing, supporting and protecting the male worker's wellbeing – in order to maintain daily survival activities, and guarantee labour power's production.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Speakers discussed the failure of the family wage, and highlighted current artworld activism based on boycotts and refusals. Melissa Begonia from Justice for Domestic Workers discussed the transnational struggles of migrant workers who often entrust their children into others' care while they raise families and manage homes of wealthy people overseas. Picking up panelist Dawn Foster's reports on female-led UK anti-austerity housing activism, speakers explored how assumptions that women are "naturally" predisposed to carry out socially reproductive labour has shifted the burden of austerity cuts and capitalist crisis onto women's shoulders.<sup>xxxix</sup>

An "interruption" by artist Pablo Pakula gave bodily form to the panel's themes of socially reproductive labour. Riffing on tasks usually handled by front-of-house and janitorial staff, Pakula welcomed audience members, tearing their tickets and endowing each stub with a lipsticked-kiss. Inside the auditorium, he dusted the stage and poured water for panellists. Pakula then moved into the foyer where, with his hands tied behind his back and a feather duster in his mouth, he cleaned the reception desk, bookshop and

lobby. As these activities took place while the panel was underway they were invisible to audience members and speakers. Returning at the panel's close, Pakula recited the names of all support employees who had worked on the event, including cleaners, box office, technical and administrative staff. As audience members applauded, a live feed from Pakula's laptop computer projected images of them behind him onscreen.

Wearing a cleaners' apron over his naked torso, rubber gloves and stilettos, with a dog collar round his neck leashed to a mobile bucket, Pakula's appearance and actions put a queer spin on low-paid service labour, linking – in this viewer's mind, at least – gallery jobs support roles with sex work.<sup>x1</sup> We had initially invited Pakula to make a piece that highlighted the poor work conditions of ICA support staff, many of whom worked on zero-hours contracts in a non-Unionized workplace. Yet once some of these very employees expressed concerns that Pakula's performance would exacerbate their already precarious situations, and jeopardize their efforts to reinstate the Trade Union, Pakula changed his plans. By performing “invisible” activities with his arms bound and mouth gagged, he evoked some of the behind-the-scenes issues that his performance could not tackle head-on.

Another alteration to the planning process responded to the lack of budget originally allocated for childcare, a particularly acute oversight given the programme's focus on caring labour. Once The Showroom's Director, Emily Pethick, pointed out this omission we rejigged our budget and hired arts group Little Kunst to provide a crèche for daytime events at the gallery. This experience underscores how curatorial attention needs to move beyond the most visible programmatic aspects, to take seriously behind-the-scenes, infrastructural conditions in which curatorial activities occur, and develop long-term conversations and alliances that can inaugurate change.

### **Withdrawal and Refusal**

Questions about how to withdraw from exploitative systems and gendered roles, within the art world and beyond, resonated throughout the programme in talks by artists including Fulvia Carnevale of Claire Fontaine and scholars Teresa Kittler, Marina

Vishmidt, and Giovanna Zapperi. In the two-part panel discussion “In or Out: On Leaving the Art World and Other Systems,”<sup>xli</sup> artists, curators and activists exchanged exit motivations and strategies. They questioned how possible it is to renounce mainstream institutions, given that no “outside” exists to which one might escape, and explored the difficulties of leaving situations in which others depend on you.

Following her participation in the programme, Alex Martinis Roe invited me to take part in a workshop out of which she developed her 2015 film ‘Our Future Network.’ Drawing on Lonzi’s withdrawal tactics, Claire Fontaine’s human strike, and Luisa Muraro’s articulation of feminism as a practical philosophy “of those who think through a modification of themselves,”<sup>xlii</sup> with Martinis Roe I developed the proposition “Productive Refusals.” We proposed that saying “no” can be a productive way to change existing habits and systems. It can open up new and unexpected possibilities, and change situations for the better. We asked workshop participants to recall a time when they had said “yes,” but felt that they should have said “no,” and to consider how they might have said “no” in ways that proved productive. Participants also reflected on a time that someone had said “no” to them, and how this in turn opened up possibilities for change. They wrote up possible responses to situations in which saying “no” would be more productive than “yes” on calling cards, inspired by those of Adrian Piper, which Martinis Roe filmed them reading, direct-to-camera. Our proposition feels pertinent in today’s cultural sector where ideologies of “passionate work”<sup>xliii</sup> and sacrificial labour accompany the workforce’s feminization and exploitation.<sup>xliv</sup> It raises the prospect that withdrawing and disidentifying from stereotypical expectations and roles might pose a stronger challenge to these systems than confronting them head-on would do.

### **Generating Feminisms**

More than other curatorial ventures I have initiated, the impact of “Now You Can Go” has been generative. The “Feminist Duration Reading Group” continues meeting each month, retaining an emphasis on Italy while investigating other overlooked global feminist lineages.<sup>xlv</sup> Our desire to learn more about Italian feminisms has prompted us to produce informal “guerrilla” translations of as-yet-unpublished texts, which we read

together. A sister research group has formed in Toronto, their name, “The Amalia/Emilia Working Group,” taken from a story of entrustment between two members of the Milan collective. “Work, strike and self-abolition. Feminist perspectives on the act of creating freedom,” a follow-up public forum organized by Claire Fontaine, took place in Paris in October 2016.<sup>xlvi</sup> The event took place in tandem with second issue inspired by Italian feminisms of the journal *MAY*, which included essays by “Now You Can Go” contributors alongside new voices. There Claire Fontaine reflected on the impact of “Now You Can Go” in her editorial,<sup>xlvii</sup> and went on to expand on her concept of the human strike and the “contract of subtraction” within Italian feminisms in the essay “Human Strike Between Foreignness and Responsibility.”<sup>xlviii</sup>

In the reading group, rather than expecting participants to digest texts in advance, we read together, paragraph-by-paragraph, as we make our way round the circle. Originally adopted as a means to encourage people to attend, even if they hadn’t read assigned texts, this approach creates an atmosphere of collective exploration, stimulated by curiosity and excitement, rather than by expectation and duty. Participants are encouraged to focus their observations on the text, not in a conservative return to formalism, but in order to remove the idea of “experts” and “novices.” This format has affinities with Paulo Freire’s militant pedagogy, which rejects traditional banking theories of education, wherein teachers impart information to passive students.<sup>xlix</sup> Bell hooks discusses Freire’s influence on her development of critical teaching models based on desire and politicized self-actualization.<sup>1</sup> Paola Melichiori describes a similar sense of activation-through-politicization in her account of housewives who gained feminist consciousness studying in the 150 Hours Schools in late 1970s-early 1980s Italy. “The first striking event, in terms of emotional setting, is the reawakening of desire, a ‘sparkly feeling.’ As one woman defined it, like an awakening.”<sup>li</sup> Having a place where feminist history, ideas, and endeavours are regularly explored helps me to reconcile working in the corporate, neoliberal academic world with my feminist values: if only by directing institutional resources (library loans, photocopiers, scanners, office time) towards feminist ends.<sup>lii</sup>

Rather than treating the Italian feminist movement as an object of static study “Now You Can Go” approached it as a living archive of practices that resonate in the present. The programme tried to evoke “what it means to feel as well as look backwards, as well as the question of what counts as evidence of the past,”<sup>liii</sup> as Nina Wakeford described her lecture/workshop. Curatorially, the concern was less with presenting artworks – though performance and film featured centrally – than in creating an atmosphere that engendered collective exploration, discussion and subjective awakening. Characterizing the programme’s ambience as laboratory-like, Claire Fontaine suggests that it abolished hierarchies between the visual and conceptual, enabling “the question of the life-form to naturally in the debates: to create artworks, thoughts, modes of existence, agencements [...]” The act of staging convivial, discursive events has a strong female-oriented history, ranging from the salons organized largely by women, especially Jewish women, in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, to consciousness-raising groups that formed a cornerstone of second wave feminist culture. Viewing the creation of ephemeral conversational gatherings as curatorial efforts offers an alternative, feminized historiography of curating than one focused on objects and exhibitions, argues Elke Krasny.<sup>liv</sup>

Revisiting Italian feminist practices in a spirit of shared discovery equipped programme participants and contributors with tactics with which to contest their complicity with systems that celebrate high status cultural production while simultaneously disavowing the feminized labour and collective efforts that sustain it. The process of developing “Now You Can Go” has stimulated the energy to nurture feminist values and build feminist culture, to look outside and interrogate Anglophone traditions in order to revisit tools from earlier periods with which to devise new tactics, with which to generate feminist futures.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am indebted to Fulvia Carnevale of Claire Fontaine who introduced me to Italian feminisms, with whom I have enjoyed a generative conversation over the past two years,

and who encouraged me to “go ahead,” and to members of the “Now You Can Go” Planning team whose collective efforts continue to inspire me.

## Images



Figure 1: Jacqueline Vodoz, Venezia, inaugurazione casa, 1976  
Members of Rivolta Femminile gather for a party in Jacqueline Vodoz's new Venice flat. from left: Carla Lonzi, Renata Gessner, Laura Lepetit, Adriana Bottini, Liliana Padovani (standing), Maria Grazia Chinese, Anna Jaquinta, Maria Veglia.



Figure 2: Claire Fontaine, *Taci, anzi parla brickbat*, 2015. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 3: Participants in 'Feeling Backwards,' a workshop led by Nina Wakeford, Raven Row, London, as part of 'Now You Can Go,' 8 December 2015. Photo: Christian Luebbert



Figure 4: Photograph of Carla Lonzi's book *Autoritratto*, 1969, during 'Carla Lonzi Teach-In,' led by Teresa Kittler, Raven Row, London, as part of 'Now You Can Go,' 10 December 2015. Photo: Ehryn Torrell.



Figure 5: Photograph of pages from Carla Lonzi's book *Autoritratto*, 1969, during 'Carla Lonzi Teach-In,' led by Teresa Kittler, Raven Row, London, as part of 'Now You Can Go,' 10 December 2015. Photo: Ehryn Torrell.



Figure 6: 'Now You Can Go: Rescue Missions: Women's Art Recovered,' Amy Tobin (speaking), chairs a discussion with (l-r) Valeria Napoleone, Lisa Panting, Sonia Boyce, and Lois Keidan, ICA, London, 9 December 2015. Photo: Ehryn Torrell.



Figure 7: 'On Social Reproduction,' panel discussion and performance featuring (l-r) Pablo Pakula, Emma Dowling, Dawn Foster, Larne Abse Gogarty, Marissa Begonia (out of frame) and Nic Beuratt (on Skype), ICA, London 5 December 2015. Photo: Christian Luebbert.



Figure 8: 'Don't Think You Have Any Rights: The Challenges of Italian Feminisms,' panel discussion featuring (l-r) Francesco Ventrella, Zach Blas, Maria Drakopoulou, Fulvia Carnevale of Claire Fontaine, and Giovanna Zapperi, The Showroom, London, as part of 'Now You Can Go,' 12 December 2015. Photo: Helena Reckitt.



Figure 9: 'Don't Think You Have Any Rights: The Challenges of Italian Feminisms,' panel discussion featuring (l-r) Francesco Ventrella, Zach Blas, Maria Drakopoulou, Fulvia Carnevale of Claire Fontaine, and Giovanna Zapperi, The Showroom, London, as part of 'Now You Can Go,' 12 December 2015. Photo: Ehryn Torrell.



Figure 10: Alex Martinis Roe, *Our Future Network*, high definition video, film still of the proposition *Productive Refusals* developed with Helena Reckitt, 54:34, 2016.



Figure 11: 'A Feminist Chorus for Feminist Revolt,' a spoken distillation of texts from the Feminist Duration Reading Group, gathered into a score by Lucy Reynolds, *The Showroom*, London, as part of 'Now You Can Go,' 12 December 2015. Photo: Ehryn Torrell.

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<sup>i</sup> Fontaine, Claire, “We Are All Clitoridean Women: Notes on Carla Lonzi’s Legacy,” *e-flux*, no. 47, September 2014. [http://www.laznia.pl/uploaded/user/LAZNIA\\_1/eflux/booklet\\_47.pdf](http://www.laznia.pl/uploaded/user/LAZNIA_1/eflux/booklet_47.pdf). Accessed October 17, 2016.

<sup>ii</sup> Martinis Roe, Alex, “Dedications #2: The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective,” 5, Handout to participants in “Open Reading Group,” Amsterdam, If I Can’t Dance I Don’t Want To Be Part of Your Revolution, 2013.

<sup>iii</sup> Lonzi, Carla, *Vai pure. Dialogo con Pietro Consagra*, Milan: Scritti di Rivolta Femminile, 1980.

<sup>iv</sup> Zapperi, Giovanna, “Challenging Feminist Art History: Carla Lonzi’s Divergent Path.” In *Feminism and Art History Now*, as yet unpaginated. Edited by Victoria Horne and Lara Perry, London: IB Tauris, forthcoming 2017

<sup>v</sup> Ventrella, Francesco, “Carla Lonzi’s artwriting and the resonance of separatism.” *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 21, 282-287, 2014

<sup>vi</sup> see Fontaine, Claire, *ibid*

<sup>vii</sup> See <http://nowyoucango.tumblr.com/about>. Accessed October 17, 2016.

<sup>viii</sup> See Katia Almerini’s talk on the Cooperativa Beato Angelico during “Herstories from Italy,” panel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryqrrSD4nFY>. Accessed October 17, 2016.

<sup>ix</sup> English translations of key texts from the movement include *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*, Edited by Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991; *The Lonely Mirror: Italian Perspectives on Feminist Theory*, Edited by Sandra Kemp, London and New York: Routledge, 1993; The Milan Women’s Bookshop Collective, *Sexual Difference: A Theory of Social-Symbolic Practice*, trans. Patrizia Cicogna and Teresa de Lauretis, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990; *Italian Feminist Theory and Practice: Equality and Sexual Difference*, Edited by Parati, Graziella, and West, Rebecca J., Cranbury, London and Mississauga: Associated University Presses, 2002.

<sup>x</sup> de Lauretis, Teresa, “The Practice of Sexual Difference and Feminist Thought in Italy: An Introductory Essay,” in The Milan Women’s Bookshop Collective, *ibid*.

<sup>xi</sup> Rivolta Femminile, “Let’s Spit on Hegel.” In Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp (eds), *Italian Feminist Thought*, 41, Oxford: Blackwell, Oxford, 1991

<sup>xii</sup> Scarparo, Susanna, “In the Name of the Mother: Sexual Difference and the Practice of ‘Entrustment’.” In *Cultural Studies Review*, 37, volume 11, number 2, September, 2005

<sup>xiii</sup> Zerilli, M G, “Feminists Make Promises: The Milan Collective’s Sexual Difference and the Project of World-Building,” in *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, 93-94, Chicago and London: University of California Press, 2005.

<sup>xiv</sup> Alex Martinis Roe’s long-term artistic research project *To Become Two* (2014–2016) maps the relations between and within various collectives and currents who produce and distribute feminist theory in Europe and Australia, and who share a genealogy to, or were part of, early-mid 1970s sexual difference feminism.

<sup>xv</sup> For instance, Italian feminisms do not feature in Amelia Jones’s *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, Second Edition*, New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2010; Hilary Robinson’s *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology, 1968-2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015 - (apart from Suzanne Santoro’s “Towards New Expression”, 1974); or indeed my *Art and Feminism*, London: Phaidon Press, 2001.

<sup>xvi</sup> See Reilly, Maura, “Taking the Measure of Sexism: Facts, Figures and Fixes,” *ArtNews*, 2015. <http://www.artnews.com/2015/05/26/taking-the-measure-of-sexism-facts-figures-and-fixes/>. Accessed October 17, 2016.

<sup>xvii</sup> Melandri, Lea, “Autonomy and the Need for Love: Carla Lonzi, Vai pure.” In *MAY*, 73–77, 4, 2010

<sup>xviii</sup> Fulvia Carnevale and James Thornhill established Claire Fontaine as a “readymade artist” in 2004.

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<sup>xix</sup>“Getting Rid of Ourselves,” Onsite [at] OCAD University, Toronto, July 16 – 11 October 11, 2014.

<sup>xx</sup> Claire Fontaine refers to Melville’s character of Bartleby, the Scribener, in “Existential Metonymy and Imperceptible Abstractions,” in *Human Strike Has Already Begun & Other Writings*, 56, PML Books, 2013.

<sup>xxi</sup> See also “Sonnogram of a Potential,” a text written by Tiqqun, a collective of which Fulvia Carnevale of Claire Fontaine was a member, which cites Italian feminist thinking around reproductive politics and subjective liberation.

<sup>xxii</sup> See “Champagne Life,” Saatchi Gallery, London, October 1-29, 2016,

<http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/champagne-life/>. Accessed October 18, 2016.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The “Italian Feminisms Reading Group” explored texts by Carla Lonzi/Rivolta Femminile, Lea Melandri, Antonella Nappi, The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, and Claire Fontaine, in March 2015, at Goldsmiths, University of London. In June 2015, under the name “Feminist Duration Reading Group,” the forum moved to the public art gallery and workplace/studio complex, SPACE in Hackney, East London, where it continues to meet each month.

<sup>xxiv</sup> “Feminist Duration in Art and Curating” took place at Goldsmiths, University of London, on March 16 and 17, 2015. Organized by Andrea Phillips and myself, contributors were Nella Aarne, Kajsa Dahlberg, Lisa Busby, Giulia Damiani, Dimitra Gkitsa, Claire Fontaine, Melissa Gordon, Catherine Grant, Laura Guy, Shama Khanna, Nina Power, Helena Reckitt, Cristina Thorstenberg Ribas, Emily Rosamond, Louise Shelley, Amy Tobin and Rehana Zaman. See <http://www.gold.ac.uk/calendar/?id=8498>. Accessed October 16, 2016.

<sup>xxv</sup> Jones, Amelia, “Queer feminist durationality: time and materiality as a means of resisting spatial objectification.” In *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts*, 174, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012

<sup>xxvi</sup> For an elaboration of social reproduction’s relevance for art history and curating, see Victoria Horne and Lara Perry’s introduction to *Feminist Art History Now: Radical Critiques of Theory and Practice*, London: I. B. Tauris, forthcoming in 2017, and the discussion between Victoria Horne, Kirsten Lloyd, Jenny Richards, and Catherine Spencer, “Taking Care: Feminist Curatorial Pasts, Presents and Futures,” in *On.Curating*, Issue 29 (2016). <http://www.on-curating.org/index.php/issue-29-reader/taking-care-feminist-curatorial-pasts-presents-and-futures.html>. Accessed October 18, 2016.

<sup>xxvii</sup> The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, 115, *ibid*.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Cavarero, Adriana, “A Politics of Voices.” In *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, 196, Translated by Paul A. Kottman, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005

<sup>xxix</sup> Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, “The Politics of Translation.” In *Outside in the teaching machine*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993

<sup>xxx</sup> Spivak, *ibid*, 191

<sup>xxxi</sup> Spivak, *ibid*, 191

<sup>xxxii</sup> de Lauretis, *ibid*, 21

<sup>xxxiii</sup> The phrase “Don’t think you have any rights” itself comes from a quotation from Simone Weil, which forms the book’s epigraph.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Curated by Giulia Casalini and Laura Leuzzi, “Autoritratti” took place on December 11, 2015, featuring work made between 1972 and 2013 by Anna Valeria Borsari, Cinzia Cremona, Elisabetta di Sopra, Catherine Elwes, Tina Keane, Ketty La Rocca, Federica Marangoni, Maria Teresa Sartori and Elaine Shemilt, and readings by Diana Georgiou. See <http://www.ewva.ac.uk/now-you-can-go.html>; <http://www.theshowroom.org/events/now-you-can-go>. Accessed October 16, 2016.

<sup>xxxv</sup> “Marinella Pirelli,” curated by Lucia Aspesi with Irene Revell, ICA, London.

<https://www.ica.org.uk/whats-on/now-you-can-go-marinella-pirelli-screening>. Accessed October

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17, 2016.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Chaired by Amy Tobin, “Rescue Missions: Women’s Art Recovered, Re-enacted, and Recuperated” took place on December 9, 2015, and featured Sonia Boyce, Lois Keidan, Lisa Panting, and Valeria Napoleone. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml\\_yac4CMa8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml_yac4CMa8). Accessed October 18, 2015.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Lynne Gardner, “Ekow Eshun and the ICA’s death blow to live art,” *The Guardian*, 23 October 2008. [www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/oct/23/ica-live-arts-closure](http://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/oct/23/ica-live-arts-closure). Accessed 8 February 2017.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Chaired by Emma Dowling, “On Social Reproduction: Transforming the Labour of Care and Love,” took place on December 5, 2015, and featured Larne Abse Gogarty, Marissa Begonia, Nicholas Beuratt (by Skype), and Dawn Foster, with an interruption by Pablo Pakula. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3n5vJndZQw>. Accessed October 18, 2016.

<sup>xxxix</sup> See Dowling, Emma, “Love’s Labours Cost: The Political Economy of Intimacy,” Verso, 2016. <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2499-love-s-labour-s-cost-the-political-economy-of-intimacy>. Accessed October 18, 2016.

<sup>xl</sup> Although he does not object to my making this connection, it was not part of Pakula’s intention, which he describes as employing a queer aesthetic, in line with his practice as a solo live artist. Email correspondence with the author, 20 February 2017.

<sup>xli</sup> The first of the two-part panel “In or Out? On Leaving the Artworld and Other Systems,” took place on December 12, 2015. Chaired by Catherine Grant, it featured Carla Cruz, Andrea Francke and Caroline Russell. The second, chaired by Gabrielle Moser, featured Karen Di Franco, Karolin Meunier, Raju Rage, and Frances Rifkin. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYIP59ca9e4>. Accessed October 16, 2016.

<sup>xlii</sup> Scarparo, 41, *ibid*

<sup>xliii</sup> for how the ideology of passionate work plays out for workers in the creative industries, especially for women, see McRobbie, Angela, *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016

<sup>xliv</sup> For further discussions of how we have learnt and internalized the ideologies of “labours of love”, and how we might start to unlearn and collectively withdraw from them see Child, Danielle, Reckitt, Helena, and Richards, Jenny, “Labours of Love: A Conversation on Art, Gender, and Social Reproduction,” *Third Text*, 2017, forthcoming.

<sup>xlv</sup> See Feminist Duration Reading Group, Space, London, [www.spacestudios.org.uk/news/feminist-duration-reading-group-feb/](http://www.spacestudios.org.uk/news/feminist-duration-reading-group-feb/). Accessed 10 February 2017.

<sup>xlvi</sup> [www.monnaieedeparis.fr/en/nuit-blanche-2016](http://www.monnaieedeparis.fr/en/nuit-blanche-2016). Accessed October 18, 2016.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Fontaine, Claire, “Weed and the Practice of Liberty.” In *MAY*, 16, 2016, 18-20

<sup>xlviii</sup> Fontaine, Claire, “Human Strike Between Foreignness and Responsibility.” In *MAY*, 16, 82-89

<sup>xlix</sup> Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Seabury Press, 1970.

<sup>l</sup> hooks, bell, *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

<sup>li</sup> Melchiori, Paola, “The ‘Free University of Women.’ Reflections on the Conditions for a Feminist Politics of Knowledge.” In *Gender and the Local-Global Nexus: Theory, Research, and Action (Advances in Gender Research, Volume 10)*, edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal, 125 – 144. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2006. Available at [http://www.universitadedelldonne.it/english/paola\\_melchiori.htm](http://www.universitadedelldonne.it/english/paola_melchiori.htm). Accessed 18 October 2016.

<sup>lii</sup> for a discussion on appropriating institutional time and resources, see Kent, Eddy, “Wasting Time: Finding Refuge While the Tenure Clock Ticks.” in *Reviews in Cultural Theory* 2.3 (2012):, 33-42

<sup>liiii</sup> See “Feeling Backwards,” 2015,

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[www.ica.org.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/Now%20You%20Can%20Go%20Full%20Programme.pdf](http://www.ica.org.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/Now%20You%20Can%20Go%20Full%20Programme.pdf). Accessed 8 February, 2017.

<sup>liv</sup> Elke Krasny, 'The Salon Model: The Conversational Complex,' in *Feminism and Art History Now*, as yet unpaginated. Edited by Victoria Horne and Lara Perry, London: IB Tauris, forthcoming 2017