

# Art Galleries, Academia, and Women in Fur Masks: A Case Study of Using Visual Art to Promote Engaged Classroom Learning

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**Rachel K. Brickner**, Acadia University, focuses research on interest representation of women workers in Canada and Mexico. She has recently published in *Latin American Perspectives*, *International Studies Perspectives*, and *Canadian Woman Studies/ cahiers du femme*.

**Laurie Dalton**, Acadia University Art Gallery, is currently working on her PhD in Canadian Studies at Carleton University. Her dissertation examines issues of display, representation, and new media in Canadian Pavilions at recent World Expositions. Her research interests are cross-disciplinary, with emphasis on visual culture, heritage, and museology.

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## Abstract

This article describes a collaboration between a Gender and Development professor and the Director of the Acadia University Art Gallery in designing an activist visual art project based on an exhibit of the Guerrilla Girls. We argue that faculty-gallery collaboration is a critical, but underused, component of teaching and learning on campuses.

## Résumé

Cet article décrit la collaboration entre une professeure d'études sur le genre et le développement, et la directrice de la galerie d'art de l'Université Acadia, dans le cadre de la conception d'un projet d'art visuel militant, basé sur une exhibition des Femmes Guérilla. Nous argumentons qu'une collaboration gallerie-faculté est une composante critique mais sous-utilisée, des méthodes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage sur les campus.

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## Introduction

The following paper presents a case study of a creative project between a Women's and Gender Studies course on Gender and Development and the Acadia University Art Gallery. This visual art project involving critical research into course themes was designed to foster interdisciplinary dialogue, to explore an alternative approach to academic evaluation and learning, and to encourage students to think about using their coursework as a starting point for community activism.

At our university, courses in the Women's and Gender Studies program are designed to give students the tools to understand and respond to interlocking systems of oppression that structure the world around them. As discussed below, Gender and Development was specifically constructed to give students an introduction to the gendered nature of development processes, an understanding of imperialist and discriminatory discourses that inform the way development is presented to the public, and a chance to explore their relationship to the "developing" world. The Acadia University Art Gallery, through its exhibitions and programming, mounts exhibitions that move beyond viewing "art on the wall" to those that promote active, participatory viewing through tours and workshops. The Gallery provides the opportunity to engage students in different approaches to learning and to enhance the rigour of a university academic environment.

In fall 2009, an exhibition, public talk, and workshops by the Guerrilla Girls were presented at the Acadia University Art Gallery. Coincidentally, Gender and Development was being offered in the same semester. This provided an opportunity for a cross-disciplinary collaborative project that engaged students outside the classroom. This project involved students selecting an issue explored in the course, such as climate change or sex

trafficking, researching the issue, and using stylistic techniques from the work of the Guerrilla Girls to create an activist visual project. As we show, this type of assignment provides an opportunity for students to engage in a discipline in a new way, promotes critical inquiry of visual media, and directs our attention to pedagogical methods used in university classrooms and the importance of the university gallery to teaching and learning on campuses.

### **The Classroom: Gender and Development**

Gender and Development is a newly designed, upper-level course cross-listed between the Women's and Gender Studies (WGST) program and department of Political Science. It was offered for the first time in fall 2009 to a group of 23 students. As a WGST course, Gender and Development is grounded in a pedagogy which aims to give students tools to understand and act against systems of oppression and to democratize the classroom, particularly through emphasizing student discussion and drawing on student insights into academic material (Lapovsky Kennedy and Beins 2005; Sánchez-Casal and Macdonald 2002).

One issue in the literature on feminist and women's studies pedagogy is the challenge of negotiating multiple student identities and the differences of perspective rooted in those identities. It is accepted that identity and experience shape knowledge and thus should be taken seriously. However, belonging to a particular identity group does not make any student the final authority on that group, nor even guarantee they hold a particular viewpoint. In fact, as Cervenak et al. (2002) note, an emphasis on belonging to particular identity groups can also reproduce hierarchies and power dynamics in ways that stifle academic exploration. A classroom that respects student differences and debate is key to negotiating the challenges of studying inequalities (Sánchez-Casal and Macdonald 2002).

The makeup of the class can make this task more or less difficult. Describing discussions of race in her mostly white classroom, Kaye/Kantrowitz states, "negotiating bigotry is especially difficult when the class makeup is very skewed" (2002, 287). In a

class introducing students to the gendered nature of development processes that draws heavily on analysis of the Global South, it is important to avoid the trap of what Chandra Mohanty calls "third world difference," where women in the Global South are viewed as a monolithic group and, as victims of oppression, in opposition to "liberated" Western women (Mohanty 2003, 17–42). Similar to Kaye/Kantrowitz's class referenced above, the makeup of Gender and Development had the potential to skew discussions toward a discourse of third world difference. When identities are not "visible" or self-identified, the diversity of a given class can be difficult to assess. Most integral to the makeup of Gender and Development was that only one student was from the Global South, and only one other had lived outside of the Global North. It was especially important, therefore, that the content and discussion did not reproduce imperialist and discriminatory discourses to which students may have been exposed. The overall course design was geared toward engaging students so that they recognized that oppressive structures confront people globally, but also that every individual's life "is simultaneously straight-forward and full of enormous subtle meaning" (Lugones quoted in Cervenak et al. 2002, 352). With this awareness, students could engage in the study of gender and development without looking to identify problems "over there," but instead to understand the global, gendered implications of development.

Three further objectives motivated the course design. The first was to introduce students to the concept of development. A contested concept, development was originally understood as economic growth through integration in the global economy (Sachs 2000). Its meaning has expanded to include democratization, improving literacy and other social indicators, protecting cultures, and safeguarding the environment (Ahojapatel 2008). Rather than defining development in terms of these particular goals, the point of departure for the class was Sen's definition of development as a set of political, economic, and social processes whose objective is fostering individual freedom from oppression (Sen 2000). A definition focused on the

effects of development processes on individuals was appropriate for a class intended to explore the gendered nature of these processes. Moreover, it opened up the possibility of moving the discussion away from a dichotomy of “us” (Global North) versus “them” (Global South) and to explore the ways that development processes affect all societies (Mohanty 2003; Pratt 2004). And yet, Sen’s analysis of development privileges the individual and the capitalist market. So the readings and discussions allowed the class to also interrogate his analysis and ask, for example, whether we can focus on the individual outside of her community (however defined) or how economic growth through capitalism is compatible with gender equality.

The second objective of the course was to help students understand the ways that development processes affect people differently as a result of their gender (informed not only by sex but by ethnic and indigenous identity, migrant status, race, and class). Gender has long been an important category of analysis in the work of academics and development agencies, who have emphasized the importance of empowering women and girls as a key to achieving development goals (Waylen 1996; Visvanathan et al. 1997; UNICEF 2006). Even so, women’s role in development is rarely in the media spotlight, policymakers have been slow to act in support of women, and even academic analyses of development can fall into the trap of constructing women through a lens of “third world difference” (Lewis 2006; Kristoff and WuDunn 2009; Mohanty 2003). Hence, the second objective was for students to understand the complexities between gender and development and to become more attuned to global injustices and women’s role as agents in these struggles (Mohanty 2003).

The primary methods used in working towards these first two objectives were a series of lectures, writing assignments, and discussions that revolved around six books. To reflect the interdisciplinary nature of WGST, the books represented diverse disciplines, including geography (Pratt 2004), political ecology/economy (Salleh 2009; Cornwall et al. 2007), and feminist theory (Mohanty 2003). They included memoir (Maathai 2007;

Burgos-Debray 1984) in addition to academic texts in order to highlight women’s agency in different contexts and as a catalyst for discussion of epistemological questions. Finally, each book served as an opening into our discussion of a particular aspect of development: conceptual and theoretical questions (Mohanty 2003), politics (Maathai 2007; Burgos-Debray 1984), environmental sustainability (Salleh 2009), economy and globalization (Pratt 2004), and professional development work (Cornwall et al. 2007).

Students were required to write a response to each book, in addition to a longer research paper at the end of the semester and the art project described here. These assignments allowed them to explore our overarching academic questions: What does development mean? How is it gendered? What role do governments, civil society organizations, and individuals have in addressing gender injustice? Most students used these assignments as opportunities to reflect on the course content, the effectiveness of different types of analysis and theoretical approaches, their own relationship to global injustice, and the ways they could/should be involved in challenging it.

Their reflections served as a springboard toward fulfilling the final objective of the course: artistic activism. Mohanty emphasizes that global feminist activism must include everyday practices as well as larger political movements (2003, 3–4). Given this, it was important to design an assignment that allowed students to use the knowledge and critical skills gained from the course to raise awareness of global injustices. The Guerrilla Girls exhibit at the Acadia University Art Gallery provided an opportunity for us to collaborate on doing that.

### **The Gallery: Exhibitions and the Learning Environment**

Established in 1978, the Acadia University Art Gallery is the main public gallery in the area, drawing its audience from the university and wider community. Located in a rural area, it is also a venue that exposes audiences to national and international artists. The Gallery is steward of the university’s permanent collection of over 1,800 works of

art, and mounts six exhibitions annually of historical and contemporary art drawn from the collection, from outside proposals, and through invitations to artists. The Acadia University Art Gallery promotes visual literacy through its exhibitions as well as public programming in the form of lectures, gallery tours, hands-on workshops, and other events. A key objective of the Gallery is to integrate exhibitions into the wider academic experience of the university. Increasingly, universities are looking at ways in which to provide a variety of learning opportunities for students and to encourage interdisciplinary research. The university art gallery is uniquely positioned to offer new research and learning environments. As Gibson Garvey argues, "University galleries often provide the first contemporary visual art experience for some students, and that, due to the atmosphere of openness and exploration of unusual or challenging ideas, the gallery can be a positive environment for those who feel different whether in terms of their politics, their sexuality, or their cultural background" (2008, 22).

While this articulates the important role that university galleries have in the academic environment, there are few studies who fully explore the interconnected possibilities of the university art gallery, art education, and classroom curriculum.

There are some invaluable resources on challenges in art education, but the majority place heavy emphasis on curriculum and experience in elementary and secondary learning environments (Gaudelius and Speirs, 2002). Attenborough (2002) discusses two examples in which museums and galleries have developed programming linking exhibitions with class disciplines. Although her study focuses on primary and secondary education, her arguments for the need to link art with classroom learning are important in that, like others in the field of contemporary art education, she notes that the arts are not often seen as a "core knowledge" and argues that this needs to change because art can provide the "cement" linking visual art and rigorous classroom learning.

Many of the current themes stressed in art education, such as emphasis on lived experience, cultural literacy, and creating

environments for critical inquiry (Eca and Mason 2008), can also be fostered in cross disciplinary projects within a university art gallery. In fact, the university gallery provides an interesting model as it represents the opportunity for direct collaboration between curators, faculty, and students to engage in dialogue and research. Because focus is often placed on integrating art into elementary and high school classes, university-level students typically have less of an opportunity to explore critical concepts in a creative way.

An important approach in contemporary art education that could be used at the university level is an "issues based approach"; a key component of this is that "teachers ask, for example, fundamental questions about the nature of the canon and the nature of the choices we make in our curricula and our classrooms" (Gaudelius and Speirs 2002, 5). Therefore, a project that involves the university gallery, academic department, and students allows participants to explore the nature by which knowledge is constructed and provides the opportunity to present their work in a hands-on, didactic way. The following project presents a case study that can be modified for use in other university contexts.

### **Engaging the Classroom: Project Details**

In fall 2009, the Gallery presented a solo exhibition of the Guerrilla Girls, made possible with support from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage and several university sources.<sup>1</sup> The Guerrilla Girls are a collective of women artists established in 1985 in New York City. They have become internationally recognized for their use of printed media with strong text and graphics to promote awareness of women and visible minorities in the arts. Over the past few years, other projects have examined inequality in the Hollywood film industry, popular culture, and politics. Their work has been presented in such venues as the Tate Modern, the Pompidou Centre, and the Venice Biennale. The Guerrilla Girls have been influential in art history and in their continued role as practising, active contemporary artists.

One of their best known works is *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?* (see **Figure 1**), first conceptualized

in 1989. The Guerrilla Girls were asked to design a billboard for the Public Art Fund (PAF) in New York. For the project, they visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; they compared the number of nude males to nude females in the artworks on display and found a large discrepancy among the nudes depicted: most of the nudes were “of” women, but not painted “by” women. Their final work, using data from their visit and based on Ingres’ *Large Odalisque*, was rejected by the PAF; one of the reasons was because of its “suggestive” body. They then ran it on buses throughout New York City instead. Recently, the Guerrilla Girls revisited this early project: “On September 1, 2004, we did a recount. We were sure things had improved. Surprise! Only 3% of the artists in the Modern and Contemporary sections were women (5% in 1989), and 83% of the nudes were female (85% in 1989). Guess we can’t put our masks away yet!” (Guerrilla Girls website, 2005 (<[www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/getnakedupdate.shtml](http://www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/getnakedupdate.shtml)>)).

This work exemplifies some of the key design elements that have come to represent the visual rhetoric of the Guerrilla Girls. Demo explores three of the strategies used by the group: mimicry, an inventive revision of history, and strategic juxtaposition (2000). Others have discussed the use of advertising technologies, such as billboards, in their work (Bryan-Wilson, 2008). In *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?*, the group uses bold fonts, bright colours, and

a large scale format that references advertising and pop culture, combined with statistics from their “survey” at the Metropolitan Museum and humour in their “masking” of a neo-classical nude.

Another way to consider the media-centric techniques of the Guerrilla Girls is as a form of “culture jamming,” which is the “act of resisting and re-creating commercial culture in order to transform society” (Sandlin and Milam 2008, 323). According to Sandlin and Milam, culture jamming can function as an important part of critical public pedagogy because it can “i) foster participatory, resistant cultural production, ii) engage learners corporeally, iii) create a community politic, iv) open transitional spaces through a ‘turning around’” (2008, 323). While cultural jamming is often aimed at critiquing consumption and branding in society, which differs from the feminist activism of the Guerrilla Girls, the ways in which both function to create a critically aware audience is relevant to our case study.

The Guerrilla Girls remain involved in contemporary art projects throughout the world, as well as touring with public performances and workshops to engage others in creating socially minded art. One of their recent projects, *Disturbing the Peace*, was a commission by the Gallery at L’Université du Québec à Montréal in 2009 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the l’École Polytechnique massacre. The project focused on hate speech directed towards women throughout history. The group also maintains a web-



FIGURE 1 Copyright©by Guerrilla Girls, courtesy [www.guerrilla.girls.com](http://www.guerrilla.girls.com)

site as a resource for information and archive on their projects ([www.guerrillagirls.com](http://www.guerrillagirls.com)). In addition, the group has published several books on the history of art and gender stereotypes, such as *Bitches, Bimbos & Ballbreakers: The Guerrilla Girls' Illustrated Guide to Female Stereotypes* (2003).

The Acadia University Art Gallery presented a solo exhibition of the Guerrilla Girls not only to expose audiences to an important group of artists, but also to foster opportunities for critical dialogue. The presentation was an exclusive engagement of the Guerrilla Girls on view from September 17 to November 1, 2009. It was also the first time their work had been presented in Nova Scotia. There were three key components of this engagement. This first was a solo exhibition, which presented an overview of their work from 1985 to the present. Works were researched and selected by the director to present the breadth of their art practice and to provide opportunities for extended exhibition programming. All of the works from the exhibition were acquired for the permanent collection, to serve as a continued resource for students and researchers. For example, *Do Women Have to Be Naked to Get into the Met. Museum?* is now on permanent display in the arts building. Other aspects of the exhibition (see Figure 2) were installed to convey the group's public interventions, specifically, the "guerrilla" poster-ing of their art in New York streets in the late 1980s.

The second component of the presentation was a public talk and performance given by two of the founding members of the Guerrilla Girls. Each of the Guerrilla Girls takes on a pseudonym of a dead woman in the arts (for example, Käthe Kollwitz and Frida Kahlo). In addition, when presenting their work they also wear gorilla masks, which allow them to maintain their anonymity.<sup>2</sup> In the free public talk, with an attendance of close to 400, the Guerrilla Girls discussed the development of their art practice, highlighted some of their projects, and presented opportunities for interaction with the audience through skits and open dialogue.

The third component was two hands-on workshops led by the artists. The workshops were open to members of the community

and were limited to twenty-five participants in each to ensure that the artists would have opportunity to interact directly with participants. In the two-hour long workshops, the artists introduced methods and strategies used in their work that could be adapted by individuals to make their own socially minded, politically engaged art interventions. In addition, tours of the exhibition were presented to community groups, and the director worked with several departments in the Faculties of Art and Professional Studies to develop tailored pedagogical programming linking the exhibition with classroom themes.

The collaborative project between the Acadia University Art Gallery and the Gender and Development class involved several steps. Students were first required to attend the public talk. Next, students visited the gallery for an exhibition tour and discussion. The

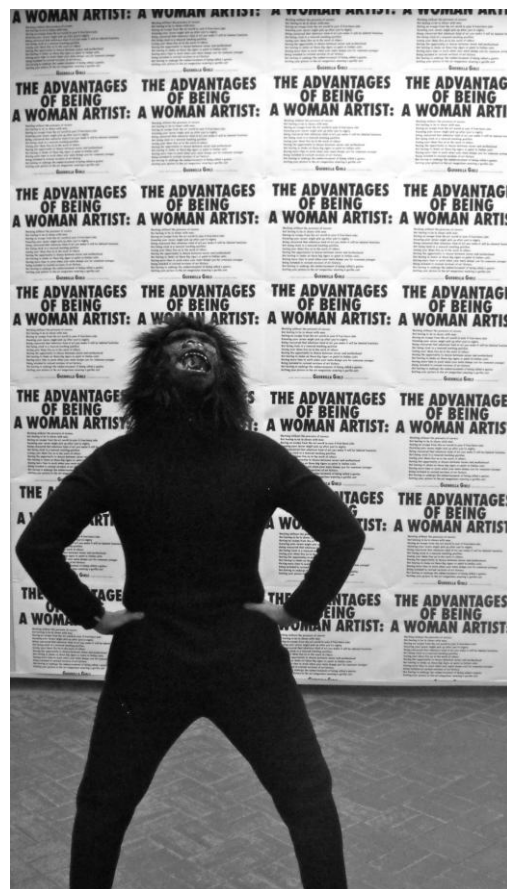


FIGURE 2 Copyright© by Guerrilla Girls  
Courtesy [www.guerrilla.girls.com](http://www.guerrilla.girls.com)

director provided an overview of the Guerrilla Girls' work but, rather than "talking at" the students, a system of questioning and dialogue was facilitated by the director to get students themselves to discuss the artwork. In particular, the discussion was focused on several of the visual strategies used in their works, such as the use of statistics, specific fonts, bold colours, humour, and irony. The work of the Guerrilla Girls was presented to the class not as a visual rhetoric to copy, but as a starting point from which the students could then frame their own creative project. To complete the assignment, pairs of students had to choose any issue related to the course content, write an op-ed piece as a means of conducting research on the topic, and present a visual work to the class. Three projects dealt with sex trafficking. Two groups presented work on women in export factories. Other topics included domestic labour, intersexed athletes, land ownership, climate change, water politics, same-sex marriage, and Canada's role in Afghanistan.

The students' visual work was evaluated on four criteria: i) how well it reflected an understanding of a process of development discussed in class; ii) how well it showed an understanding of gender and the gendered nature of that particular process; iii) how well the students employed the techniques of the Guerrilla Girls; and iv) how well the content of the poster could be understood as a stand-alone work. In the discussion that follows, we refer to these four criteria in making claims about a particular project's "effectiveness" or "success."

Taken as a whole, the students' visual work showed their understanding of several important lessons of the class. First, the diverse topics covered in their work demonstrated an understanding of development as a range of processes that move beyond economic growth. Second, projects reflected their understanding that women are not a monolithic group and that their experiences can be shaped by class and sexual orientation,

among other factors. Third, following Mohanty's (2003) focus on women's agency, several of the projects highlighted the value of women's knowledge and experience. For example, one poster focused on women as "water managers" whose input is crucial in developing water policy. Finally, four of the twelve projects focused on issues faced by women in Canada and the United States. When asked why they felt it was important to raise awareness about women in the Global North in campaigns about development, one student said that they had realized through the course that, because patriarchy continues to affect all women in Canada, we should not be so quick to call Canada "developed." Thus, we feel that a creative assignment allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of key academic concepts of the class and enabled them to think critically about the societies in which they live.

Before illustrating the way the students drew on the Guerrilla Girls techniques, such as irony, bold font, and humour, it is worth noting some of the trends of the assignment. First, it was clear that students had varying degrees of artistic ability and confidence, but that did not prevent them from creating critically engaged projects. Second, artistic projects can be done well with basic resources. While some students used this opportunity to master new software, like iMovie or Photoshop, two of the most effective posters used printed text on poster board. Most importantly, allowing students to engage in an artistic project gave them another way to shine academically. Some students in the class who struggled with writing assignments excelled when given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of academic material by researching, creating, and discussing a visual arts project. Providing different methods for students to engage with academic material is also a means of fostering a democratic classroom by broadening the ways in which knowledge is accessed and articulated.

Because the goal of the project was to use the Guerrilla Girls' work as a model for an awareness-raising campaign, it is important to show some examples of how this worked in practice. In *An Extremely Inconvenient Truth* (see Figure 3), the group builds on class lectures and readings on gender and environmental sustainability. Specifically, they critique the absence of a gendered analysis in the current debate about climate change. The poster uses statistics to emphasize the gendered nature of climate change: 85% of climate change deaths are among women; women produce 60–80% of the world's food and are disproportionately affected when climate change affects food production; and as water becomes more scarce, women have to walk farther, which puts their health and safety at risk. In addition to their use of statistics, the students employ techniques of the Guerrilla Girls through their reference to pop culture in parodying the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. In the poster, they address their critique directly to Al Gore, stating "here's an even more inconvenient truth."

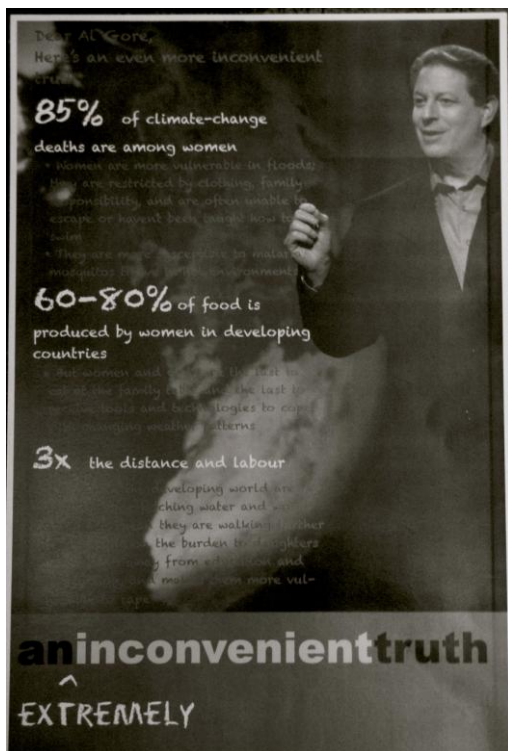


FIGURE 3 Created by students Lauren Hanna and Angela Johnston; used with permission

Another project, *Application for Property Ownership* (see Figure 4) builds on class discussions of economic development by raising the issue of land ownership. This is a critical issue for women, as the students note in the poster, because wealth and autonomy are linked to owning land and, without land of their own, women are socially and economically more vulnerable. And yet, as the statistics in the poster reveal, women own less than 5% of the world's land. The students' work emphasizes the way in which women's economic livelihood is negatively affected by the gendered nature of property ownership. They draw on several techniques of the Guerrilla Girls, such as the use of statistics and bold colours. They also use irony to highlight that only corporations, governments, and men are effectively able to own land. In *Lesbianism is Now Legal* (see Figure 5), the students build on two key issues of development. One is the discourse of gender equality that runs through the literature. Another is the point raised in readings by Mohanty (2003) and Pratt (2004) that gender

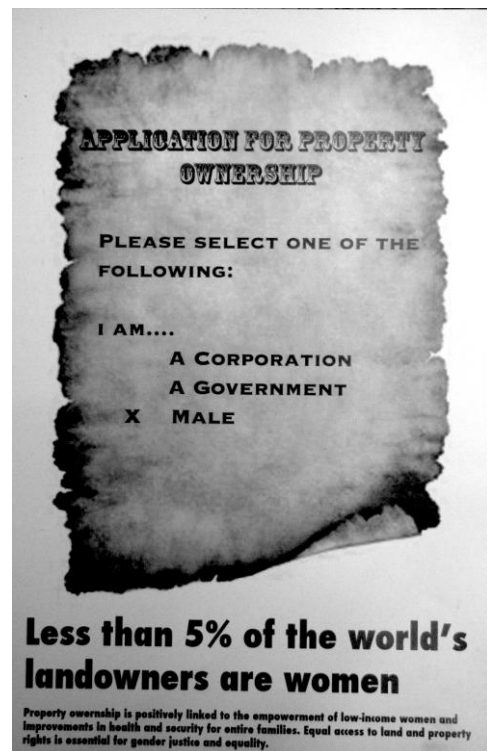


FIGURE 4 Created by student Julia Turner; used with permission



inequality exists in the Global North and is exacerbated when women belong to other marginalized groups. By raising awareness of same-sex marriage inequality in the United States, the students speak to these two issues. Again, using the Guerrilla Girls' visual rhetoric as a starting point, the students use bold colours (pink lettering on a yellow background), provocative comments, and statistics. They want to highlight the hypocrisy and injustice in the cultural and political treatment of lesbians in the US, where lesbian sex is acceptable for mass consumption in pop culture and the porn industry, but where most lesbians are still denied the right to get married. This group's work differed in important ways from the previous two. By focusing on gender inequality in the Global North, they use the work to respond to injustice in their own society. They also use construction paper, markers, and poster board instead of computers.

In the class discussion of the assignment, students noted the importance of being able to share their work with an audience beyond the professor and her "red pen." Indeed, one goal of this assignment was to move beyond the classroom and to share the work with the broader community to raise awareness about the issues represented in the projects. To achieve this, for those students who are interested in displaying their work, we are planning an exhibit in the Acadia Art Gallery annex. We also plan to reproduce some of the works and distribute them on campus and in the community. To the extent

that students get people "on the street" thinking more critically about the issues raised in their projects, they will have succeeded in the type of activism practised by the Guerrilla Girls themselves.

## Conclusion

Mohanty (2003), like others writing about feminist pedagogy, underscores the importance of engaging in everyday practices and broader social struggles that respond to systems of injustice. It was therefore important when designing the Gender and Development course to include a component that would allow students to take what they were learning in the class and use it to respond to the injustices that they perceive in the world. Visual media is one way in which students can explore class concepts. Therefore, a university gallery is an important place for academic exploration. Exhibitions not only engage students in active viewing of art-works, but extended programming can provide the opportunity for students to learn in a new environment and to make critical pedagogical links across disciplines.

For this collaborative project, we designed the assignment around the exhibit of work by the Guerrilla Girls at the Acadia University Art Gallery. For the assignment, students had to design a poster or video using the techniques of the Guerrilla Girls that could be used to raise awareness about an issue linked to the class. The assignment was a success for many reasons. As noted in their final reflection on the project in class and in their course evaluations, students overwhelmingly enjoyed the opportunity to engage in a visual arts project, even though some were nervous about it initially. Many enjoyed being able to share their work with the class instead of submitting work only to their professor. The collaboration also illustrated how students can use visual art to explore academic concepts and make critical arguments. Students who normally struggle with their writing assignments were able to demonstrate their academic skills. As such, the project further supports arguments in contemporary art education about the important role that art can play in accessing critical concepts across disciplines. Moreover,



**FIGURE 5** Created by students Gillian Lush and Jillian Muise: used with permission

it shows the importance of university galleries as an important resource in enriching academic life on campus. In short, engaging students in different venues on campus broadens the way they learn. Cultivating a different academic culture that encourages students to attend public talks, art exhibits, and student performances helps them view the entire campus and community as an extension of the classroom.

While we suggest that this project can serve as one model for faculty-gallery academic collaboration, we recognize that there are inherent challenges. We benefited from fortuitous timing in that the Guerrilla Girls exhibit coincided with the class. Obviously, class and exhibit schedules will not always be in sync. However, faculty interested in working with galleries can maintain an ongoing dialogue with the director to foster such exchanges. This type of project also requires a certain level of financial support so that galleries can bring in exhibits and engage in the development of pedagogical programming. One student in the class said, "we should bring in the Guerrilla Girls every year!" Unfortunately, this is not a financial reality for many university galleries. Finally, this type of project assumes a level of comfort in discussing art in the classroom among faculty, and in being open to using other modes for learning.

It is on this last point that we wish to conclude. Writing skills are, of course, a core component of academic disciplines. Indeed, the Gender and Development class itself was writing intensive. However, this project acknowledges that students have different ways of learning and, as we argue, a creative component can be academically rigorous and can provide students another opportunity in which to demonstrate their understanding of a given concept. This is important to take into consideration in a women's studies curriculum as well. A pedagogical project that incorporates the visual arts is itself a political statement, challenging the use of papers and exams as the only type of academically rigorous coursework. A student's academic experience should not only provide the opportunity to critically explore a discipline, but also to explore the material in new ways while questioning the very structures in which knowledge is accessed.

## Endnotes

1. Funding sources included the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Office of the Vice President Academic, Acadia University Faculty Association Women's Committee, and Members/Friends of the Acadia University Art Gallery.

2. The Guerrilla Girls wear gorilla masks both to maintain anonymity and to garner attention to their public interventions and presentations. Their name is also a wordplay—on both guerrilla activism and gorillas. The gorilla masks are not to be read as a racialized act, but one that challenges and subverts the dominance and power associated with the male gorilla. For a full discussion of their masks and anonymity see <[www.guerrillagirls.com](http://www.guerrillagirls.com)>.

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