

## **feminist elsewheres. A Making(-)Of Three Festivals in the Making**

---

**ABSTRACT** *feminist elsewheres* takes the question of an elsewhere of feminist film history as a foundation of its engagement with two events that took place at the Arsenal cinema in Berlin: the *First International Women's Film Seminar* in 1973, which is considered the starting point of the feminist film movement in West Germany, as well as its 1997 revisitation titled . . . *the point is to change it. Films, Festivals, Feminism*. In 2023, *feminist elsewheres* celebrated over fifty years of feminist film work with a film program, workshops, and an exhibition. This text is collectively authored by *feminist elsewheres* and its objective is twofold: introducing the historical present of these events while at the same time reflecting on feminist modes of collaborations as central strategies in shaping film history. No film stands alone, No history is stable, *feminist elsewheres* is many. **KEYWORDS** Activist media, collectives and collaboration, feminist film history, festival studies, film distribution and exhibition, Women's Film Seminar

---

The year 2023 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the *First International Women's Film Seminar*, which was neither a first nor a seminar but nonetheless a major event for the German-speaking feminist film world.<sup>1</sup> Recognized and historicized as a pivotal turning point, the event was revisited in 1997 by a group of curators and academics asking: what does the event mean now under the ambitious title . . . *the point is to change it. Films, festivals, feminism*.<sup>2</sup> Another twenty-five years later we ask: if the point was to change it, what has changed since 1973/97 regarding collective filmmaking and programming in Berlin and internationally, our personal lives and relations, our dreams and working conditions? 2023 *feminist elsewheres*, a festival and yet another round of revisitation, took place between November 7 and 13, 2023, at Arsenal Cinema, Berlin.<sup>3</sup>

---

*Feminist Media Histories*, Vol. 10, Number 2-3, pps. 180–197. electronic ISSN: 2373-7492 © 2024 by the Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/fmh.2024.10.2-3.180>

## WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *elsewhere* denotes both a location and a direction, in another place and to another place.<sup>4</sup> Where do we want to go if this elsewhere is not a place to dwell but from which to start and head toward? Elsewhere is a direction for thought, but it also means that the present location we are speaking from is not where we want to be. The elsewheres of our presents serve as reminders of the not yet fulfilled promises, and dreams of liberation at the heart of global feminist thriving—the plural form multiplies its possible dreamscapes. They decenter national borders as well as a linear idea of time. In the sense of Trinh T. Minh-ha’s “elsewhere, within here,” the Other is always present/absent and cinema is one possible space for this transitional subject, dependent on borders while always transgressing them. With Trinh we understand elsewhere as a constant process of relocation: “A becoming is not a resemblance, an imitation, identification or an evolution by descent. It creates nothing other than itself since its order is never that of filiation but of alliance. Thus, becoming always involves at least a double movement, for what one becomes also becomes.”<sup>5</sup> To understand cinema as a “boundary, seen both as a material and immaterial event,” is to consider the experience of a movement that is hard to grasp.<sup>6</sup> Pointing to an elsewhere, in between here and there, Trinh drafts a transitional space between places, bodies, and languages. Following her poetic-political proposal for possibilities of change through new modes of knowledge production, we situate elsewheres between continuities and breaks of feminist struggles, relationships, and film histories.

The objective of this text is twofold: introducing the historical present of these events while at the same time reflecting on feminist modes of collaborations as central strategies in shaping film history. The foundation for this text is historical material, research, and three interviews: one with the 1997 organizing team we conducted with Madeleine Bernstorff, Regina Holzkamp, Birgit Kohler, and Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, the second one with one of the 1973 organizers, Claudia von Alemann, and a third one in which we posed a written set of questions that each of our group members answered. This text is collectively authored by *feminist elsewheres*, which consists of five curators, artists, and researchers, all born in the 1990s, who have been friends and colleagues for different periods of time. By now we see each other online several times a week. Elena Baumeister, Fiona Berg, and Charlotte Eitelbach come together in Berlin apartments, Arisa Purkpong is based in Düsseldorf

and Oslo, Sophie Holzberger is based in New York. By putting three groups in conversation with one another, we hope to provide insight into different feminist strategies of working and curating together. Asking ourselves the simple question of why we do what we do, one of the first answers is to continue what others are doing and have been doing before and next to us because these stories are what shaped our bodies and thinking. Making and preserving history is a political act. In case of minoritarian cultural production, taking up that task out of personal interest and investment is oftentimes the only way of making sure things are preserved. Materials and films stored under beds and kitchen tables are found because someone asks for them.

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM SEMINAR, ARSENAL BERLIN,  
WELSERSTRASSE, NOVEMBER 15-18, 1973**

“Maybe everything started here”<sup>7</sup>

For the feminist film movement that emerged as part of the women's liberation movement in West Germany adjacent to the student movement of the 1960s, the 1973 Women's Film Seminar marks the starting point for a process of institutionalizing feminist politics. At the center of the political upheaval were a strong opposition to the leftist centering of labor issues over politics of reproduction; the so-called §218 debate around abortion laws, child care, and consciousness raising; as well as a turn toward historical research and research on women's experiences more generally. The two filmmakers and activists Helke Sander and Claudia von Alemann were active parts of different political groups, including the Socialist German Student's League (SDS) and its Action Council for the Liberation of Women, the *kinderladen* movement, and the Second Women's Council (*Weiberrat*). They had no material to draw on, no distribution network or a film/address register when they began researching women filmmakers in and outside Europe. But they already had international contacts and had met other feminist filmmakers at film events around the globe—Claudia, for example, visited the First Anti-Imperialist Women's Conference in Toronto in 1971. She also met with the Black Panthers Kathleen and Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers in 1970 and both of these experiences became the basis for two of her films.<sup>8</sup> Erika Gregor supported the four day long film festival in West Berlin at Arsenal Cinema (see figure 1) by facilitating the cooperation with



FIGURE 1. In front of the Kino Arsenal location in Welserstraße in West Berlin's district Schöneberg, November 1973, credit: bpk / Abisag Tüllmann

the cinema. The festival was also supported by Friends of the German Kinemathek (Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek e.V., since 2008 named Arsenal—Institut für Film und Videokunst), Municipal Cinema Frankfurt (Kommunale Kino Frankfurt, today German Film Museum) and funded by the Foundation of Protestant Journalism (Gemeinschaftswerk der evangelischen Publizistik, GEP) where Claudia conducted archival research and worked as a freelance critic.<sup>9</sup> Both shared a salary of 9000 DM (around 16,500 Eur today), which they considered to be a minimum wage for three months of work and had additional 7000 DM for everything else (around 13,000 Eur today). Overall, they worked for around nine months, researching and contacting feminist filmmakers and studying sexist structures of the media industry. Due to the low budget they could only invite fifteen filmmakers and writers from abroad, including Vibeke Løkkeberg from Oslo; Danielle Jaeggi and Nurith Aviv from Paris; Claire Johnston, Francine Winham and Barbara Evans from the London's Women Film Group; and Annabella Miscuglio from Colletivo Feminista di Cinema, Rome; Women Make Movies cofounder Ariel Dougherty attended from the United States.<sup>10</sup> Over two hundred women and a few men attended overall. Due to the size of the cinema, it was a closed event. Therefore, the organizers invited “multipliers,” as Helke recalls, including journalists and women working



FIGURE 2. Discussion inside Finow school, located across the street of Kino Arsenal, November 1973, credit: bpk / Abisag Tüllmann

in media as well as students to promote and distribute the films later.<sup>11</sup> They formed working groups and held discussions in the Finow School across the street where an exhibition also took place (see figure 2).<sup>12</sup> The low budget not only limited the attendance but also became visible in the selection of films and videos. The GEP had conditions for funding, including drafting the program with an educational purpose, which led to the didactic form and tone of the brochure. Printed in retrospect as documentation of the event, the brochure was used as a model to organize similar programs among women's groups all over Germany. Claudia's and Helke's programming would only consider films and videotapes with a straightforward political approach to feminist issues, meaning a direct form of agitation. They selected films containing what they considered useful information on women's topics and showed films by women about women that would not victimize them.<sup>13</sup> Later subsumed under the genre "Zielgruppenfilm" (target films), they all had a clear political agenda.<sup>14</sup> The film program was divided into four sections: housework and industrial work, abortion rights and women's sexuality, media representation, and women's movement in Europe and the United States.<sup>15</sup> While Madeline Anderson's 1970 *I Am Somebody* is an example of a successful strike of Black hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina, *La lotta non è finita* (The Fight Is Not

Over Yet, 1973) by Collettiva Feminista di Cinema provides insights into consciousness-raising and organizing in the Marxist women's movement in Italy. In line with the agitatorial style of the early West German film school productions at dffb (German Film and Television Academy Berlin), *Kinder für dieses System* (Children for This System, 1972) by Ingrid Oppermann and Gardi Deppe openly criticizes the illegalization of abortion and analyzes anti-abortion legislations as means of the reproduction of capitalist society. Most of the films screened at the seminar are low-budget, oftentimes collectively produced, and playfully expand genre conventions to seek out new forms to narrate and convey their subject and politics to a filmic public. According to Claudia, the funding requirement for didactic material dictated what films were printed in the catalog afterward, which coincided with the programmatic approach of the activist-organizer. Material that deviated from that strict educational goal was not included.<sup>16</sup>

Even though there was a lack of reaction and negative press reception, the “snowball effect” of the event was felt even decades later.<sup>17</sup> After the event at Arsenal, the program traveled in different variations and personal constellations throughout West Germany, to small villages as well as to big cities, to local women groups or to community colleges (Volkshochschulen). Directly after the event, Claudia screened some of the films at Kommunales Kino Frankfurt.<sup>18</sup> During the festival itself the first feminist journalist association was founded. A year later the magazine *frauen und film* was launched by Helke, and in 1978 the association of women film workers (Verband der Filmarbeiterinnen) was established.

### Care, Chaos, and Precarity

The proximity of working in a group results in the knitting of relationships with all of their complexity. Being close means being in trouble, bringing each other in trouble and sometimes not knowing how to take trouble off someone's chest. It also means getting infected by the others' joy, by their skills, by their emotions, by their stress. Closeness means exposing yourself to otherness, which can be a source of delight and remorse.

Why isn't more attention paid to the singular needs of each participant and why don't we use each other's strength more explicitly? I feel like a lot of times different women fall out. Why did they take a step back? I think we should have done a better job at accepting and using our differences. That it became a bit chaotic, and it didn't result in a feeling of solidarity is because each of us did her own thing, maybe.<sup>19</sup>

How do we make space for weaknesses and failures? Strengths are oftentimes easy to recognize; weaknesses are better hidden. Collective work is emotional work. It forms trust and is built on the foundation of trust and support. It builds and dismantles friendships, it adds layers and it makes things messy from time to time. Not only the relationships inside the group but also the ones you're forming with filmmakers are haunted by all sorts of emotions. For Madeleine, the filmmakers' pain of being forgotten, misremembered, or misrepresented and the curator's pain of remembering the filmmakers' work but also their own history and relationships are closely linked:

So there is something for me that I cannot look back to in a simple harmonic or nostalgic way, but which also holds something very painful. That is also my experience with filmmakers, so to excavate them, which is a stupid term by the way, always comes with a lot of pain. That's how I see it and I also felt in anticipation of our meeting. It is not just a wonderful, fun thing that we did there. [laughs]<sup>20</sup>

Some things about working in a group can be quite wonderful though: the possibility of complementing each other and growing together. The warmth of working shoulder to shoulder, and the lightness of trusting one another, which means knowing deep down inside someone always has your back. How do you work as a group horizontally? What to do with hierarchies that grow out of respective responsibilities and that sometimes develop without us intending to? Are we a group or a collective? We are not an institution and so far we have no desire of becoming one. But where does an institution begin?

None of us are employed full time. We either work part time in institutions, are finishing our degrees, earning money on the side with diverse jobs, or hold stipends from academic institutions. The most long-term financial prospect held by someone in our group is three years. Beyond that everything is open. The question how these kinds of collaborations can exist is always an economic question.<sup>21</sup> In 1997 Stefanie was employed full time at Arsenal Cinema, the members of the independently organized feminist cinema association Blickpilotin (female gaze pilot) most likely did the work on a voluntary basis even though they emphasized that in other projects they usually budgeted money for the person in charge of a specific event.<sup>22</sup> When asked what they would do differently today, the first thing Stefanie said was: "Of course I would pay all of you today," which was met with loud laughter.<sup>23</sup> We built in a budget for our positions in the festival, but it does not nearly pay to compensate for the hours spent on it, a fact that was clear

to all of us when we wrote the budget. Do we keep undervaluing our own work because it is closer to the heart than other basic needs? The idea for this festival was born much earlier than funding was acquired. We are eager to pay everyone involved a fair share, but we also do know that a feminist always works more than what pays off. At what point does an idea refund itself? We are not in it for the money, but you still need to pay rent in the meantime. How do you find a rhythm between paid and unpaid labor? How to avoid being overwhelmed by the pressures of the neoliberal restructuring of cultural work and the feminized anxiety of simply never being and doing good enough? Even though some of us enjoy chaos, we are also stressed out by it, or as Helke called one of her early texts for *frauen und film*: “i like chaos, but i don’t know, whether chaos likes me.”<sup>24</sup> Projects like this also come at specific times in individual lives. They can be markers of transition and horizons of future work contexts, which oftentimes means they fall into periods of personal and economic insecurity and instability. Feeling a new momentum building from a project close to your heart can take place simultaneously to the anxiety-inducing state of not knowing what your professional future looks like.

**... THE POINT IS TO CHANGE IT. FILMS, FESTIVALS, FEMINISM,  
ARSENAL BERLIN, WELSERSTRASSE, SEPTEMBER 19-25, 1997**

The festival . . . *the point is to change it. Films, Festivals, Feminism* took place in 1997 at Arsenal Cinema at the same location as the 1973 event (see figure 1). It was organized by Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, Madeleine Bernstorff, Birgit Kohler, Silvia Hallensleben, and Regina Holzkamp with a budget of 30.000 DM (around 24.000 Eur today) in between two infrastructures: Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek, the nonprofit that ran Arsenal Cinema and Blickpilotin. Stefanie was employed full time at the nonprofit, the others were freelancers.<sup>25</sup> It was funded by the female artist program of the senate department for science, research, and culture Berlin. Stefanie was responsible for the budget, and the finances were handled by Arsenal Cinema. It was also she who initiated the revival based on her graduate thesis, which she submitted in 1995 to Free University Berlin and that we consider to be the first extensive research on the 1973 event. In her thesis Stefanie analyzes the 1973 event through a poststructural feminist lens, asking what it means to work with women’s film today when the term “woman,” following Judith Butler’s arguments on antiessentialist understandings of gender, does not hold



a political subject out of question anymore. The thesis also contains an extensive appendix, and before Fiona Berg's updated and annotated filmography included the most complete list of films shown in 1973 that we were aware of.<sup>26</sup> What becomes legible in Stefanie's writing on the event is an affinity to the insights of gender theory and the loss of the coherent subject of "woman" for political thinking at the time. The complicated question at the heart of the event seems to be: how to curate feminist film history without essentializing it? The event's emphasis on political filmmaking in relation to the film's content and agendas also needs to be contextualized in relation to the formal politics of structural film that Stefanie worked intensely on for a previous project, *Phantom Practice* (Übung am Phantom). To her, this approach felt like a failure because "we subsumed the films under theory and were not thinking from the films."<sup>27</sup> Returning to the activist material from an earlier period offered an answer to these previous events.

The group for the festival met in different contexts. Blickpilotin, of which all but Stefanie were members, already existed for about eight years when the festival took place and they drew on their own networks to publicize the event. Stefanie and Birgit recall that the "first meeting [for the festival] took place in Silvia's apartment, and we all sat on the floor. I also remember that Birgit was leaning against the radiator, don't ask me why but I just still remember it."<sup>28</sup> Most of the organizing for the event took place all over Berlin and at the archive of the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek—their own programming was based on Arsenal's broad archive that they screened at night in the small distribution room.

The festival consisted of three main sections and concepts: *Films with Heart and Arrow*, *no(wo)mansland*, and five European feminist film festivals that were invited to Berlin to present their work and a program they curated.<sup>29</sup> Its goal was to pay tribute to the 1973 event as well as to question its meaning in the present day. The accompanying program next to the screenings of more than eighty films consisted of talks and discussions at the cinema and the same school across the street that the seminar in 1973 also used in order to initiate a similar atmosphere.<sup>30</sup> The selection and naming of *Films with Heart and Arrow* was based on a principle of excitement and joy that arose in the innumerable screenings the group held during which they realized how many more films besides the historical program they would like to include.<sup>31</sup> "Instead of sorting the films through a numerical point system we assigned hearts and the highest of feelings was when you also assigned an arrow [laughs]."<sup>32</sup> There were lots of differences in tastes, and they disagreed

on lots of films. Three films they all recall wanting to have in the program were the experimental shorts *Susan through Corn* (1975) by Kathleen Laughlin, *The Go-Blue Girl* (1978) by Juliana Grigorova, and *Hand Tinting* (1967) by Joyce Wieland. In a 2000 text Stefanie compares their curatorial approach to 1973 and comes to the conclusion that “in contrast to the *First International Women’s Film Seminar* we did not have trouble with locating films and addresses but to sort, select and minimize them.”<sup>33</sup> This assessment speaks to a major shift in feminist film production as well as archival availability even though Stefanie notes that accessing some of the films was still complicated for some of the work.

The section *no(wo)mansland* was mainly initiated and organized by Madeleine and answered to the Western European focus of the 1973 curation as well as the rise of right-wing politics and attacks after reunification by explicitly foregrounding feminist migrant filmmaking from and in Germany. The program included early works such as the experimental short *A Lover and Killer of Color* by Wanjiru Kinyanjui that centers a Black woman painter who is shown straying around a hazy Berlin at night as well as working and painting in her studio. The evocative voice-over hints at accounts of racist violence—painting over the white canvas becomes a form of speaking back while also insisting on her power of interpretation as an artist. The work that provided the title for the series *Obneland* (*no(wo)mansland*, 1995) by Hatice Ayten evolves around talking heads of two young German-Turkish women who reflect on the meaning of home next to images of empty and gray metropolitan spaces and recordings of a snowy backyard. The refusal to accept the right-wing violence that denies their belonging to the nation-state is intertwined with an excerpt of Thomas Mann’s *Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*).

In the catalog Madeleine summarizes the politics behind the program as follows: “feminism is here formulated as a rewriting of culture, as an intercultural readiness to question boundaries and as a step beyond liberal humanist representative fantasies, binary opposition, identity traps and essentialism.”<sup>34</sup>

The five feminist festivals were invited for the whole duration in order to create the seminar atmosphere, which the curators recall as difficult. Fewer people came than in 1973 (numbers seem to have varied between thirty and sixty for single events), and the invited festivals did not stay for the whole time or were not as present as imagined leading to a feeling of failure.<sup>35</sup> Discussions after the films still took place, often outside of the cinema, in

the little foyer, in front of the door, or in the café close by.<sup>36</sup> The idea was to build a network of feminist film festivals in Europe, which was nonexistent at that point but it was not easy to establish or maintain a continuous exchange at the event itself.<sup>37</sup> What the catalog offers instead is a collection of the innumerable initiatives of feminist filmmaking, which the organizers consider a “network of informal contacts.”<sup>38</sup> Similar to the memory of the group the newspaper reviews of the event emphasize the insider atmosphere on the one hand and the ambitious and overwhelming idea of bringing all these different groups together on the other.<sup>39</sup>

### Reworking History—Attention and Confrontation

The contemporary perspective on historical material needs to be carefully questioned by all means in order to avert naive nostalgia. What are we hoping to find? What are our investments? “What is this present perspective? To what extent is it really about the attempt to recover or to revive and understand history and where is it about something that is completely anchored in the present and which will effectively transform the historical films compared to how they would have been 25 or even 50 years ago?”<sup>40</sup> The questions need to be repeated every time you revisit. “What does it mean to actualize? There was a specific excitement for activism in ’73. And the question is: where and what is it now?”<sup>41</sup> That also includes making visible the networks you exist and thrive in and asking who is doing similar work elsewhere. Who has been doing the work and where and why did others stop doing the work? It starts by “paying attention to the fact that we are not the only ones.”<sup>42</sup> It also includes paying attention to the contradictions and gaps of the histories you are reworking, which can necessitate confrontation: “Why did it take place the way it took place? Would there maybe have been other possible lines of action?”<sup>43</sup>

Working on feminist film history can also result in finishing unfinished business. Løkkeberg, whose film *Abort* was shown at the 1973 event, shot footage of the seminar, but her producer withdrew funding, so the documentary was never finished. Recently, archivists at National Library Norway located the film and soundtrack under the working title *Myter og Media* (Myths and Media), which played a central role at the 2023 festival, after an experimental silent and live-commented screening at *Archival Assembly* in June 2023.<sup>44</sup> The goal is and was not only to finish the film but also to bring former attendees together. Film here quite literally becomes a catalyst for relations, commemoration, and history-making.

**FEMINIST ELSEWHERE'S, ARSENAL BERLIN, POTSDAMER PLATZ,  
NOVEMBER 7-12, 2023**

*feminist elsewhere's* took place between November 7 and 12, 2023, at Arsenal Cinema Berlin at its current location at Potsdamer Platz. It was organized by Elena Baumeister, Fiona Berg, Charlotte Eitelbach, Sophie Holzberger, and Arisa Purkpong. Each of us has a distinct relationship to the event even though none of us are currently affiliated with Arsenal Cinema. The festival was funded by the Capital Cultural Fund (HKF Berlin) with a budget of 115.000€, including a salary of 6000€ for each of us. The program consisted of twenty screening slots that are divided between historical and contemporary material, and most films were subtitled in English and/or German. The event was simultaneously translated in English and German for all talks and panels. Two podium discussions were livestreamed, which focused on sister projects and the importance of feminist curation and revisitations as well as feminist networks of distributions and the politics of the archive. Next to that we hosted introductory talks and three workshops on restoration, antiracist curation, and an archive-based writing exercise with Wikipedia activists. The foyer of the Arsenal showed an exhibition around Evelyn Kuwertz's artwork that was exhibited at the 1973 event and that dealt with mass media representation of women and their role in society. Next to drawing on our already existing networks for the program we invited film workers to submit their material via an open call that we distributed widely. All the films described in this text in more detail were also part of the program. The view from elsewhere is, on the one hand, an attempt to respond to the histories discussed in this text, and, on the other, to envision a future. Elsewhere is a direction in which we want to head and a space that does not yet exist. Our goal was to reach out for filmic fantasies and histories of a not yet present feminist world.

**What Is Our feminist elsewhere?**

The past years seem to have led up to this project. It feels like a closure and a new beginning at the same time. It touches on so many anxieties and struggles of inner and outer constraints—economically, monetarily, temporally. Learning from each other is made difficult because the past, if accessed from the here and now, often feels like a ball of wool that is difficult to untangle for the ones who were not part of its development and complexity.

Learning is only made possible through common action and conversation. Ideally it is mutual. What are the others' threads? Where are intersections? What forms of relations were established? What was ready to dissolve and what grew stronger? We are always afraid it's not going to be enough—enough time to do what we should be doing, enough attention to do it well, enough material to actually know what you're talking about. What bodies are allowed breaks and what forms of social relations are built to prioritize rest next to all the making? What does it mean to always have to do more than what is required to be able to make space for what you want to do and what is important? How “to see what the eye hears, and hear what the ear sees”?<sup>45</sup>

Creating does not merely consist of deforming or inventing a character within a situation, but rather of drawing new relationships between people and things as they exist. Everything is in the differing, displacing and rearticulating of intervals. . . . Filmmaking thus thrives on the desire to see with and beyond the fragment; to envision what is left out or remains necessarily undone; hence, to sustain infinite surprises in a finite frame.<sup>46</sup>

Elsewhere also becomes present in artistic or filmic work that forms a distinct relation to the existing world, that aims to transcend, reflect, analyze, agitate, and invent new forms. It somehow makes you hope for something that is not yet here or reminds you that there are other possible ways. It is on the one hand very far away, at a utopian place without patriarchy and capitalist modes of production, without the violence of the binary system of gender. And on the other hand, it is very close. By that we mean quite concretely in friendships and relationships that are exciting, caring, supportive, and based in solidarity—through them elsewhere points beyond the state of society and its burdening presence. Elsewhere can be found in moments in the present where we let go of presumptions of productivity and norms and are able to be with the movies, ourselves and each other, whatever fleeting shape that resistance to making might take. An ice cream on a park bench, finding your body moving along the rhythm of bodies on screen, a hug from a good friend, a thought that you can sit with, not having to turn it into something, or the tingling feeling of losing ground after coming out of the movies. It is a present and a future of relations without restraint, feelings of joy and pleasure, and love. It is relational, always in the making. ■

ARISA PURKPONG is an artist working with film collages, photography, installation, and publications. Based on research on the *First International Women's Film Seminar*, Arisa Purkpong organized several film programs, for example, at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westphalen in Düsseldorf. Arisa Purkpong currently lives and works in Düsseldorf and Oslo.

SOPHIE HOLZBERGER is a PhD student at the Martin Scorsese Department of Cinema Studies at New York University. Their PhD project examines the politics of collaboration in feminist film history and is specifically interested in films and videos from activist contexts. Next to their academic work, they also curate.

CHARLOTTE EITELBACH is an artist. In her work, she engages with music culture and architectural history. She works in formats such as guided tours, lecture performances, as well as sound and video projects. She is also involved in curatorial and publishing activities.

FIONA BERG researches and writes on film. Most recently, she was in charge of managing the film prints at Zeughauskino and co-curated retrospectives on Gisela Tuchtenhagen's and Claudia von Alemann's films. Her current research interests include infrastructures of feminist film work, collaborative forms of film mediation and activism, and nonfictional filmmaking.

ELENA BAUMEISTER is a film researcher. She conceptualizes film programs, most recently with films by Helke Misselwitz at Haus der Kulturen der Welt as part of the exhibition *No Master Territories: Feminist Worldmaking and the Moving Image* and the film series *I've Seen the Wall* in cooperation with MINSK Kunsthaus Potsdam. She is cofounder of the cinema collective Top Girl and lives in Berlin.

## NOTES

1. The *First International Festival of Women's Films* in New York City, and the *Women's Event at Edinburgh International Film Festival* in 1972 are usually considered the first women's film festivals. Many of the retrospective accounts by the 1973-event organizers emphasize that it was indeed a festival and not only a seminar, see, e.g., Claudia von Alemann, "Wir wollten alles und das sofort," in *Wie haben Sie das gemacht?: Aufzeichnungen zu Frauen und Filmen*, ed. Claudia Lenssen and Bettina Schoeller-Bouju (Marburg: Schüren Verlag, 2014), 37.

2. This well-known Karl Marx quote is also the title of one of Claudia von Alemann's films . . . *es kommt drauf an, sie zu verändern* (. . . the point is to change it, 1973), which was screened at the "seminar."

3. Detailed information on the program can be found on the website <https://www.arsenal-berlin.de/en/cinema/film-series/feminist-elsewheres/>.

4. "elsewhere, adv." OED Online. March 2023. Oxford University Press, accessed February 15, 2024.

5. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Elsewhere, within Here: Immigration, Refugeism and the Boundary Event* (London: Routledge, 2011), 69.

6. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Elsewhere, within Here*, preface.

7. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, ". . . es kommt drauf an, sie zu verändern." Oder: wie man sich an etwas erinnert, das man selbst gar nicht miterlebt hat," *Frauen und Film*, no. 62 (2000): 150.

8. See 1. *Internationale Antiimperialistische Frauenkonferenz Toronto 1971* (First Anti-Imperialist Women's Conference Toronto 1971, 1971) and *Kathleen und Eldridge Cleaver in Algier* (Kathleen and Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers, 1970).

9. The nonprofit nationwide media company of the Protestant Church in Germany, GEP, with its central editorial office, still publishes one of the two leading religious magazines for film criticism *epd film* (see the Catholic counterpart *filmdienst*); see Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, "Das 1. Internationale Frauenfilmseminar 1973 in Berlin als Ausgangspunkt feministischer Filmarbeit. Eine Neubewertung" (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 1995). The thesis is unpublished and only available in the German language. It is available on request as a file from the author herself. Claudia von Alemann, interview with Fiona Berg, May 14, 2023.

10. Von Alemann, "Wir wollten alles und das sofort," 37.

11. Helke Sander, "Das 'Fräuleinwunder' im deutschen Film," in *Wie haben Sie das gemacht?: Aufzeichnungen zu Frauen und Filmen*, ed. Claudia Lenssen and Bettina Schoeller-Bouju (Marburg: Schüren Verlag, 2014): 28.

12. *Die Situation der Frau in der Familie und Gesellschaft* by Evelyn Kuwertz, Antonia Wernery, and Brigitta Mauch, which was prohibited because of its critical and provocative imagery of representations of women in the media (see <https://evelynkuwertz.berlin/frauen-kunstaustellungen/>).

13. Schulte Strathaus, "... es kommt drauf an, sie zu verändern," 154.

14. Schulte Strathaus, "Das 1. Internationale Frauenfilmseminar 1973 in Berlin," 2.

15. Claudia Alemann and Helke Sander, *Zur Situation der Frau. Modellseminar; Film- und Literaturverzeichnis*, ed. Freunde der deutschen Kinemathek (Berlin: Eigen- druck im Selbstverlag, 1974), 1.

16. The brochure lists forty-five titles while Stefanie Schulte Strathaus's research lists fifty-eight. Among them *Eltávozott Nap* (The Girl, 1968) by Hungarian filmmaker Márta Mészáros and the suffragists feature *What 80 Million Women Want* (1912). This expands the program's range enormously.

17. See Von Alemann, "Wir wollten alles und das sofort," 37. The only explicitly negative review known to us is written by writer and later antiabortion activist Karin Struck; see Schulte Strathaus, "Das 1. Internationale Frauenfilmseminar 1973 in Berlin," 14.

18. See Claudia von Alemann, interview with Fiona Berg, May 14, 2023. The reconstruction of the circulation and distribution of the program is not finished yet. Prominent was the Frauen-Filmseminar in Munich organized by Angela Haardt, who would later become the head of the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen.

19. Regina Holzkamp, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

20. Madeleine Bernstorff, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

21. Dennis Vetter concludes: "Even as care—in the contexts of class, race, gender, and more—becomes increasingly relevant to cinematic representation, the actual work of making cinema, from film festival programming to below-the-line production jobs, lags far behind." Today's cultural workers share the precarity analyzed in detail in

relation to art/film production and gender and/or race. According to Bojana Kunst artistic subjectivity is at the core of neoliberal subjectification in its dismantling of clear lines between work and life but not recognized as a place of value production in its monetary form: “The more the pleasure of capital is projected into the artist’s way of life—in other words, the more artistic life represents an obscene excess of economy—the more the artist is excluded from this economy (and thus from life)” (150). This often leads to multiple jobs at the same time, something Romi Crawford has noted as a common strategy of Black women experimental filmmakers who oftentimes “found careers in the teaching sector as a way to work around the limitations of big-budget filmmaking and the aesthetic codings that result from it” (32). Numerous researchers have been analyzing that relationship, which often becomes a subject of the artwork or film itself, e.g., Marion von Osten’s analysis of precarious working conditions of the mother/artist/filmmaker in Helke Sander’s *Redupers*.

See Romi Crawford, “Amateurism and Auteurism: Contrary Instincts in Black Women’s Experimental Film Forms,” in *Cinema Remixed and Reloaded: Black Women Artists and the Moving Image since 1970*, ed. Andrea Barnwell Brownlee and Valerie Cassel Oliver (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum; Atlanta: Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, 2008), 29–35; Bojana Kunst, *Artist at Work: Proximity of Art and Capitalism* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2015); Dennis Vetter, “Who Cares about Cinema?,” *Film Comment*, October 1, 2022, [www.filmcomment.com/blog/who-cares-about-cinema-film-festivals-film-workers-dennis-vetter/](http://www.filmcomment.com/blog/who-cares-about-cinema-film-festivals-film-workers-dennis-vetter/); Marion von Osten, “Irene Ist Viele! Or What We Call ‘Productive’ Forces,” *E-Flux Journal* 8 (2009), [www.e-flux.com/journal/08/61381/irene-ist-viele-or-what-we-call-productive-forces/](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/08/61381/irene-ist-viele-or-what-we-call-productive-forces/).

22. Blickpilotin, founded in 1989, organized their last event in 2003 and was officially dissolved in 2007. Their politics are rooted in the autonomous squatting scene as well as feminist activism in West Berlin. Over the course of fourteen years they curated numerous feminist film programs, hosted roundtables, published a monthly feminist film newsletter between 1991 and 1993, published research, and collected gray literature, posters, academic publications, and material on over 1,400 feminist directors and film workers. Their archive is hosted at Deutsche Kinemathek and is open to the public. Their website provides an overview of their extensive collection: <http://blickpilotin.de/seiten/archiv.htm>. Madeleine Bernstorff and Regina Holzkamp, “Wir brauchen das Kino jeden Tag!”—Das Berliner Projekt Blickpilotin e.V. (1989–2007),” *MAP* 8 (March 2017), [www.performap.de/map8/archiv.-geschichten-2013-reinszenierung-und-praesentation/das-berliner-projekt-blickpilotin-ev](http://www.performap.de/map8/archiv.-geschichten-2013-reinszenierung-und-praesentation/das-berliner-projekt-blickpilotin-ev).

23. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

24. Helke Sander, “feminismus und film: “i like chaos, but i don’t know, whether chaos likes me,” *Frauen und Film*, no. 15 (1978): 5–10.

25. Birgit would be employed by Arsenal from 1999 on.

26. Fiona Berg, “Die Filme des Ersten Internationalen Frauenfilm-Seminars 1973,” *Filmblatt* 82/83 (2023): 25–37; Schulte Strathaus, “Das 1. Internationale Frauenfilm-seminar 1973 in Berlin.” Other research and texts on the event include: Fiona Berg and Maja Roth, “Das Erste Internationale Frauenfilm-Seminar 1973. Vorarbeiten, Filme,



Folgen," *Filmblatt* 82/83 (2023): 2–23; Erika Gregor, Ulrich Gregor, and Monika Treut, "Regisseurinnen und das erste internationale Frauenfilmseminar," in *Kino, Festival, Archiv. Die Kunst für gute Filme zu kämpfen. Erika und Ulrich Gregor in Gesprächen und Zeitzeugnissen*, ed. Claudia Lenssen, Maike Mia Höhne (Marburg: Schüren, 2022), 153–63; Elena Baumeister, *Kino, Kunst, Feminismen: kuratorische Strategien seit 1970* (Marburg: Büchner-Verlag, 2020); Christina Gerhardt, Marco Abel, eds., *Celuloid Revolt: German Screen Cultures and the Long 1968* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2019); Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Chronik des Deutschen Films, 1895–1994* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995).

27. Part of the project was the exhibition "when tekkno turns to sound of poetry," which included a film program under the title "Count me in" in Zurich, 1994, and Berlin, 1995. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

28. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

29. The invited festivals included *Feminale International Women's Film Festival*, Cologne; *femme total* Dortmund; *International Women's Film Festival*, Minsk; *Nordic Glory Festival*, Finland; and the *Festival International de Films de Femmes*, Créteil. The group recalls that these invitations were the initial idea that put the festival into motion and were initiated by Stefanie; see interview with authors.

30. Christina Tilmann, "Die totale Frau. Blickpilotinnen: das Arsenal zeigt feministische Filme," *Tagesspiegel*, September 20, 1997.

31. Regina Holzkamp recalls the experience of screenings and the free access to the archive as luxury and very special. Regina Holzkamp, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

32. Birgit Kohler, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

33. Schulte Strathaus, "... es kommt drauf an," 155.

34. Madeleine Bernstorff, "No(Wo)Mansland or the Other Side of the Other Side," in ... *the point is to change it. Films, Festivals, Feminism. Catalogue in German and English*, ed. Silvia Hallensleben and Madeleine Bernstorff, trans. Giti Thadani (Berlin, 1997), 16.

35. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

36. Regina Holzkamp, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

37. Riki Kalbe et al., "Weibsichtig," *Freitag*, October 10, 1997, 42.

38. Birgit Kohler, in "Weibsichtig" *Freitag*, 1997.

39. See Tilmann, "Die totale Frau," 1997, on the ambitious idea and Gudrun Holz, "Wer sich nicht wehrt," *Taz*, September 26, 1997, on the atmosphere.

40. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

41. Madeleine Bernstorff, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

42. Birgit Kohler, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

43. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, interview with Fiona Berg and Sophie Holzberger, May 10, 2023.

44. Ingrid S. Holtar, "Out of the Margins of Feminist Filmmaking: Vibeke Løkkeberg, Norway, and the Film Cultures of 1970s West Berlin," in *Nordic Film Cultures and Cinemas of Elsewhere*, ed. Anna Westerstahl Stenport and Arne Lunde (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 85–93.

45. Trinh, *Elsewhere, within Here*, 2.

46. Trinh, *Elsewhere, within Here*, 92.