
SUMMARIES

► *Anouka van Eerdewijk*

GM 2.0

The *On Track with Gender* trajectory has created a space for academics, policy makers and practitioners to reflect on the policies, practices and theory of gender mainstreaming in Dutch development cooperation. The promise of gender mainstreaming as a transformative strategy is scrutinized by looking at the way gender mainstreaming has taken shape in Dutch development organizations, the international development arena and academic institutions. Gender mainstreaming has proven to be vulnerable to technocratization and de-politization. Moreover, the role of activists and the women's movement has paradoxically been weakened in the same period that gender mainstreaming strategies have taken shape. There also seems to be a disconnection between the overall and abstract gender objectives and the actual policy priorities in framings at lower policy levels. This explains the phenomenon of policy evaporation and the resistance to gender mainstreaming instruments and strategies. This review calls for more context and organization specific gender mainstreaming strategies in order to guarantee its transformative potential, to be more inclusive towards women's organizations, and to generate positive energies and creative tensions.

► *Louis van den Hengel*

Skin deep? Feminism, bio art, and Orlan's *Harlequin coat*

In a career spanning over four decades, French multimedia artist Orlan has produced a rich and remarkably consistent body of work. Using her own flesh as her primary medium, Orlan has radically explored the limits and possibilities of the body against the shifting background of the Western history of art, science, and technology. Recently, she has turned to *bio art*, a 'genre' which uses contemporary biotechnologies to create artworks that are as artificial as they are organic. This article focuses on Orlan's *Harlequin coat* (2008), whose main element is a bio-reactor in which cell types of various origins are co-cultured in a process of potential hybridization. The aim is to explore the critical potential of this 'living installation' both vis-à-vis Orlan's explicitly feminist oeuvre, and in the larger context of today's interrelations between art and biotechnology. Staging an encounter between *Harlequin coat* and feminist theories on (non)human embodiment in the age of 'technobiopower', the article argues that this artwork may be seen as an ambivalent feminist 'figuration'. On the one hand, *Harlequin coat* forms an imaginative 'cartography' of the impact of biotechnology on contemporary embodied subjectivity. On the other hand, the Harlequin's 'hybrid' techno-skin is directly implicated in the 'colonisation' of social and embodied differences such as gender, 'race'/ethnicity, and species. This ambivalence accounts both for the work's provocative dimension and for its aesthetic and conceptual force.

► *Emy Koopman***Fatal women. Natural or unnatural?**

In order to provide insight in stereotypical associations between femininity and nature as well as between femininity and artifice, this article explores the discourse concerning gender and nature in French decadent literature. Three decadent literary works are discussed: Octave Mirbeau's *Le jardin des supplices*, Barbey d'Aurevilly's *Les diaboliques* and Joris-Karl Huysmans' *A rebours*. Decadent writers deliberately subverted the traditional values of the bourgeois, and it is argued that the inversion of gender roles within these novels should be seen in this light. Moreover, it is argued that the *femmes fatales* of Mirbeau, d'Aurevilly and Huysmans expose a fear of 'feminine nature' rather than a genuine concern for female empowerment. These decadent writers offer their readers perverse fantasies that attract and repel simultaneously. However, their works also show a great ambivalence when it comes to choosing whether to associate women with nature or with artifice, and the authors appear unable to decide whether nature or artifice is the more dangerous force. The specific ambivalences in these works point to a more general confusion in late nineteenth-century society concerning gender roles as well as moral issues. Ultimately, it can be argued that these ambivalences helped pave the way for the deconstruction of dominant norms and binary oppositions.

► *Aagje Swinnen***Making good use of the fear of flesh that moves**

In western popular media, ideals of female bodily perfection are epitomised in the tight skin of the young, while uncamouflaged ageing female bodies are rendered invisible. This article examines how 'experienced' bodies of elderly women are made visible in the work of Erwin Olaf, a Dutch photographer who works both in the arts and the advertising industry. Two case studies are analysed: the *Antique dirty denim* advertisement for Diesel, and an independent photo series, *Mature*, that consists of ten revealing portraits of elderly women in overtly sexualised poses. Olaf's oeuvre can be characterized by a playful rewriting of powerful cultural scripts. The photographer seeks to counter common signifying practices through rather surprising and sometimes shocking visual representations. As such, the question arises which scripts concerning women's ageing and the older female body are repeated and/or critically adjusted in these particular case studies. A thorough analysis of the *Antique dirty denim* advertisement and *Mature* by means of interpretative tools taken from visual, gender and age(ing) studies results in a nuanced view of the photographer's artistic practice.

- *Marijke de Valck and Maryn Wilkinson*
'Real' women do not want makeovers!
A close reading of the critical anti-makeover manifest *Over the hill*

In 2007, the Dutch documentary *Over the hill* (*Beperkt houdbaar*) caused upheaval and public debate in the Netherlands. The documentary maker, Sunny Bergman, criticized cosmetic surgery, the use of Photoshop, and our contemporary makeover culture at large. She linked her film to a foundation and a website that called upon people to join her in a battle of 'The people versus the beauty industry'. The media hype that followed the documentary's success, paved the way for anti-cosmetic surgery makeover programming on Dutch television. This article offers a close reading of *Over the hill*. We compare the documentary's critique with the critical academic discourse on female beauty, makeover culture and makeover television, drawing particular attention to the complexities and contradictions that arise from its reliance on recognizable narratives and images.

- *Marta Zarzycka*
Madonna's of warfare, angels of poverty.
Images of women in contemporary press photography

Press photography often transforms geopolitical conflicts from local or regional political disasters into isolated, transient, and safely communicable spectacles of atrocity, which are subsequently taken up into the global circuits of humanitarian intervention. Images of women in particular connote a general disorder, degeneracy and hopelessness of the oppressed, obscuring their social and political subjectivity. The representations summoned by such photographs often operate along a West/other axis of power, and are too easily reduced to sentimental pathos, commercialization and the expiation of guilt. Rather than engaging with the main road of scholarship on the empathic response of Western audiences to such photographs, this article focuses on the institutionally distributed image-making of press photography as a pivotal factor in the production of contemporary notions of identity, (non)citizenship and sovereignty. Analysing two of the common tropes describing women in press photography – the image of a mourning woman and that of a young girl – this article nuances the general category of 'trauma photography', in which the homogenization of suffering tends to flatten out claims about political responsibility. It points out how the over-visibility of female bodies is linked to their increasing de-contextualization, which makes the images under discussion available for an ethical response rather than evoking statements about their mediated nature.
