

GLOBALISING HISTORY OF ALL-WOMEN ART EXHIBITIONS

All-women art exhibitions, i.e. collective exhibitions in which only women artists take part, have been organised since the beginning of the intensification of the process of professionalisation of women's art in the late 19th century until today. They were organised as national and international undertakings. The research conducted to date has concentrated almost solely on national projects. This project aims to examine a very important yet under-researched aspect of the phenomenon – its international dimension. The research will concentrate on the transnational circulation of women artists and—above all—ideas about women. This project understands all-women exhibitions as medium and/or catalyst of this circulation.

The histories of women's art and women artists have been written predominantly from an inner perspective, that of women's efforts. Without undermining and underestimating the significance of the agency of women, this project shifts the focus to analyse how their activities are embedded in geopolitics and even the extent to which they are dependent on it. It will demonstrate all-women art exhibition activities as a global phenomenon that is related to the geopolitical order of the (art) world.

The discussion on how to globalise the history of all-women exhibitions should be perceived as an element of a wider debate on undermining the hegemony of the discourse of art history created in the Western world. This project joins the debate with a conviction that globalising art history is an ongoing process that requires constant rethinking.

In this project, the starting point of an analysis of transnational circulation of ideas about women through the all-women exhibitions will be situated in Poland, and three groups of exhibitions will be studied: international all-women art exhibitions in which Polish women artists took part (organised outside Poland and in Poland), group exhibitions of Polish women artists organised abroad and group exhibitions of foreign women artists organised in Poland. The research will cover a relatively long period, from 1918 until today, thus including different historical periods. It is one of the most important assumptions of the project that the geographical scope of the research is not determined in advance but will result from the research conducted during the first stage of the project.

The project will give an insight, from a certain perspective, into the global history of all-women exhibitions. It is believed that it will demonstrate unexpected orientations and alliances. It is also assumed that a mode of global art history research demonstrated and testified during this research, on the example of history of all-women exhibitions, will be applicable to other similar research projects.