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Annina Rüst and Micol Hebron: Data As Feminist Protest

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> *So, the data is there. I'm just talking about it. If you don't see something, say something. If you see someone who is absent, a demographic that is absent, say it. Talk about it.*   - Micol Hebron

Peggy Weil: Tonight Micol Hebron and Annina Rüst will discuss their respective data visualization projects, the history of feminist art, feminist protest in art, and women's underrepresentation in creator roles in art, technology and culture. Annina and Micol will take questions from the audience. After the talk, we'll have a chance to look at Annina's installation, "A Piece of the Pie Chart".

Annina Rüst is artist, feminist, and arts organization who's lived in Los Angeles for 23 years. She received a BA and MFA from UCLA in New Genres, and has also worked as a curator, gallerist, writer, and was once an art conservator right here at LACMA. She's a happy feminist who passionately uses social media to advocate for artists and to engage communities in crowdsourced projects and consciousness raising. Micol is the found of the Gallery Tally Project. I encourage you to go on her Tumblr and take a look

at that and the Situation Room Project space in Eagle Rock. She's an Associate Professor of New Genres at Chapman University.

Annina Rüst, who's a current lab grantee, is an angry feminist who produces electronic objects and software art. She has a diploma from the University of the Arts in Zurich, an MFA from UC San Diego, and an MS from the MIT Media Lab. Since 2009, she's worked as Assistant Professor in the Computer Art program in the Department of Transmedia at Syracuse University. (A few of her Syracuse cohorts are here in the audience.) Living in upstate New York, she writes, has made her more resistant to cold temperatures than most of you will ever be. And I wonder if that contributes to the angry, as opposed to happy, adjective.

Annina Rüst: Thank you, Peggy. "Data As Feminist Protest" is our title tonight. And my project is over there. It's called, *A Piece of the Pie Chart, LACMA Art & Tech Edition*. What it does is it puts pie charts onto pies. You can put a pie into the machine. You see one over there. The thing with the flowers on it is the pie. It has a bit of white chocolate on it. First, you pick a pie chart that depicts a gender ratio. Then you click: "I want this pie chart on a pie." And then you put the pie in the machine. The pie goes into the machine, and the chocolate covering gets heated up a little bit by the heat gun over there. And then, the robot arm puts the pie chart onto the pie. And then, it goes to a camera, and the camera takes a picture for Twitter. And then, you can take your pie. You can either mail your pie to the place where the data originated, (there's a label that gets printed) or you can take it to work. Or to wherever you want to talk to people about women's underrepresentation in art and tech.

Recently, I had a parental leave. I had a baby. And I and my partner also made another robot that draws directly onto the pie. It uses a food marker to draw onto the pie. That's supposed to be a W for women. And that's supposed to be an M for men. So, yeah. I

did this together with my partner while I was on parental leave. Which was just recently. So, this is the kid. And, yeah. I knew that would be probably the highlight of my talk.

But it gets much worse. Actually, this project, in case you're wondering. The project with the pies, not the kid. It was inspired by the original cover of the Art and Technology program's catalogue. The original Art and Technology program was back in the seventies. Sixties and seventies. And as you can see, it's a perfect data visualization of the gender makeup - not just of the gender makeup - but let's say also of the gender makeup of this group. It's only men.

And at the time, obviously, this didn't go unnoticed. There was a protest movement. The Los Angeles Council of Women Artists issued their own report. And it was lot less like multimedia. It featured just data and demands. They counted the women and the men represented in exhibitions at LACMA. And they demanded that henceforward, half of the artists in exhibitions be men, and half of them be women. Or at least half of them be women. Because, already in 1971, there was gender parity in art schools. That's something that they mention also in this report. So, this came out in 1971, in response to the original Art & Technology program.

And it wasn't an oversight that there weren't any women in the original Art & Technology program. There was one woman whose proposal was featured. Her name was Channa Horwitz. And her proposal was featured in the catalogue. And she said that - later on in 2007. She said- quoted in an exhibition catalogue, that although Maurice Tuchman, the curator of the show, included her proposal in the catalogue because he thought it looked pretty, he did not feel that it was appropriate for a woman to discuss an engineering project with the male industrial scientists involved with the show. Her proposal was not allowed to be seen by anyone in the industry.

So, for my project, I asked, "What does the intersection of art and tech look like today, in terms of gender ratios?" I'm just going to briefly explain what these pie charts are and what the categories are that I looked at. On this side we have art and technology exhibitions, then it's prizes and grants, then it's festivals. And then, that connects to tech events and technology companies. It's a gradient. And up top, the pink one is the Art and Technology program; the gender makeup of this year's group of art and technology grant recipients. This diagram is a type of "You are here" kind of coding.

How do I count? This is important. I count mainly on the computer. I look at a tech event or at an exhibition. And I just hit the 'one' key repeatedly. And then, later on I count how many 'ones' I have. And then, I enter it into my database. And it's called "A Piece of Inequality." This is my database. It has a URL. If you want to use it, you can use it, too. You can make lots of virtual pies. It's not necessarily restricted just to gender data. It can be any data you collect.

I do realize that there are many underrepresented groups in art and tech. Basically, men and women are very easy to count. Gender ratios are easier to count. There are other ratios that I cannot see. Or cannot discern from exhibition artist listings and so forth. These are too difficult for me. And therefore, I don't count them, I just count men and women. That's the limitation of the project, that it just counts men and women.

However, I don't think that the project should not be made just because it only counts men and women. I also have a category which is "unknown," which I use when I really cannot figure out what the data is, for example, what the gender of a person is. Or if it's a group and how many members there are. So, there's a subjective margin that goes into this. What's interesting, in terms of economics for example, is that this data I selected is fairly subjective. I select galleries, and festivals, and so forth that I know. So, these are two galleries in New York. And what's interesting is that one of them only has two women, whereas the other one has four. And it's just different gender ratios.

And you know, if this gallery claims that it's not possible to find any women, then this pie chart can say well, "it's possible to find women." It's also possible to have - I'm also trying to show that it's possible to have, in certain rare cases it's possible to have, more women than men. Then there are other pie charts that are ironic, that I didn't include. I think it's because this exhibition didn't have it, or isn't very current. But this is ironic, because it's an exhibition at Ars Electronica Center called "New Views of Human Kind". And it has one woman artist in it and twenty-one men and a bunch of research labs and companies where it was difficult (and this represents the margin of error) to figure it out. But there are also some, what I would call, ironic pie charts. Where the title forms a weird contrast with the gender ratio. This also shows that there's one woman in this. One person, a single creator of an artwork.

What I would like to talk about next is women's access to creator roles. In art, it's pretty obvious, women artists are the creator of their art and men artists are the creator of their art. Or it's a group. But if you're a technologist, you're not necessarily seen as a creator. However, creator roles in tech are actually very coveted. And it seems that women in tech do not necessarily have such great access to creator roles. Or, what connects art and technology is that women in tech also would like more creator roles, but are, in a way, kept away from them.

So, in focus groups that were part of a larger study called "The Athena Factor: Reversing the Brain Drain in Science, Engineering, Technology," that was done by the Harvard Business Review. In focus groups, women from science, engineering, and technology repeatedly told the people holding the focus groups that men occupy the creative and the producer spaces, while women are pushed into execution role, meaning, for example, taking notes at a meeting and getting a project going. Does that make sense? Yes. Execution meaning sort of project follow through. And some people

have developed strategies against being put into those spaces. So, they just proclaim that they're really bad at taking notes.

One thing that connects art and tech is the lack of availability of creator roles for women. However what I'm interested in is studying art and technology at the same time. And looking at what one can learn from the other. So, for example, art does not have the oft-cited pipeline problem that technology has. In technology, not that many women graduate from, let's say, engineering, or computer science programs. But in art, actually more women graduate from art schools than men. So, art does not have the pipeline problem that engineering or other technical fields have. However, somehow at the top, when we look back at data like this, we can see that later on the access to the creator roles is just as dismal as in engineering.

Another feature of tech is also that it's better studied than art. And that's why Micol's work is so valuable. It's because I think it's really important to look at neither tech or art in isolation. I think that both fields can learn a lot from each other. And I'm just trying to get into this, I have a lot more studies here. However, I wanted to talk about a lot more things. For example, protest robotics.

This is one of the early protest robotics. It's called *Tipu's Tiger*. It's an 18th century automaton commissioned by Tipu, the Sultan of Mysore. It's on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum. And it shows a tiger that is on top of a British soldier, and is in the process of eating the British soldier. And the British soldier has an arm that is going like this. And the tiger has a pipe organ inside, and it's making noise. So, protest robotics has a long history. And I also see my work as protest robotics. I can talk a little bit more about the tech in my work, or why I use the vacuum cleaner.

The project over there is a kind of a mash-up of robotics kits and household and office efficiency tools. For example, the conveyor belt is a repurposed kit for making a tank-

like robot. And the vacuum, obviously, there is a vacuum involved, and baking involved. This is obviously symbolic because I believe that technical advances can only be made if we bring all of the household tech, and what's seen as high tech and the low tech, together.

I can also talk briefly about inverse kinematics. Do you really want to know about inverse kinematics? Another aspect of what I was developing this year is a better way of controlling robotic arms. Previously, I used to hard code every angle where the robot would go. And recently I've learned about inverse kinematics. It's an algorithm that takes an xyz coordinate as well as the length of arm segments as parameters. And then returns the angles of the arm joints. People also use this in animation, for example, and obviously in robotics.

Basically, you give the robot an xyz coordinate. Well, not the robot, the algorithm. And the algorithm comes up with the angles of the arms. So, that's another aspect of the robotics. This is not my math. You can read all about it in a blog post that I recently wrote. Or, recently wrote together with my partner. We'll go back to feminism now.

Micol Hebron: Great. Thank you. Hi. Thank you very much for being here. I'd like to thank Joel and Peggy for helping organizing this. And especially to Annina for having me. It's been really great talking with you over Skype. We've been planning for several weeks, and sharing data and research. And Annina's research has opened my eyes to possibilities for expansion in my own projects. And hopefully, vice versa. Maybe we'll work up to a data trade and I'll start making posters from pies. And you can make more pies from our posters.

For the last year and a half, I've been doing a project called *Gallery Tally*. And the *Gallery Tally* is a crowdsourced, social media, public practiced, protest project in which

artists collect data and make posters pertaining to the ratios of male and female artists in contemporary commercial art galleries.

The entire project has been populated on Facebook. Social media has been incredible for this. It's self-populating. I invited a few people to join in the beginning. And since then, it has just been ongoing and completely self-generating. I initiated a Facebook group. Now, we have almost 1700 who are participating in the group. And they're from around the world. I think we've got ten countries now involved. And we have produced over 400 posters that visualize the gender ratios at contemporary art galleries. And there are several poster makers here tonight. Thank you very much for being here.

There have been several exhibitions of physical posters, and the posters are online also on a Tumblr account. So, we've had four exhibitions in L.A., one in Orange, one in Irvine, one in Puerto Rico, one in Columbus, Ohio. And then, this year upcoming are exhibitions in Chicago, Santiago, and hopefully New York. That's in the works right now.

How it works: This is the behind the scenes. Seventy percent of our wizards are women. The whole project is generated through, as I mentioned, Facebook. We aggregate the data on a Google doc that is shared. And there are now 26 tabs for different cities that we're tallying data for. That data gets visualized in the form of posters. The posters get posted on Tumblr. And then, the physical posters are presented in exhibitions. And we rely on press and additional social media to hopefully continue the word.

The little Twitter bird is just emerging, because I haven't gotten to Twitter yet. But I'm trying to bring it into the picture. I'm getting better. Here are the numbers. Here is the data for *Gallery Tally:* 1678 members, ten countries, 400 posters, nine exhibitions, thirty cities, and 500 galleries tallied. The average percent of artists in L.A. and New York City galleries, that we found after tallying over 4000 artists, were- What would you guess? What's the ratio? What do you think is the ratio of male to female?

Audience Member: 30/70.

Micol Hebron: 30/70? Such a good guess. 68 percent male. And this ratio actually comes up over and over and over. The 70/30 split. It's approximately twice as many males as females And it comes up in tech, too. And I think there's an additional study there, that probably is going to involve a lot more data and analysis. But, if you ask me, that's too much male. Art world, we have a problem. So, it's approximately 32% – this is a poster that one of the artists made – 32.3% full. That's the number of women in the galleries that we tallied in L.A. and New York. And 70/30 is not 50/50. Women comprise 51 percent of the global population. And as Annina cited, they comprise between 65 and 85 percent of BFA and MFA programs, respectively.

So, I began counting everything, when I started to notice that the project actually started because I was counting ads in Art Forum. Single, full-page ads for one artist in Art Forum. And then, I began counting everything. So, from awards, to exhibition compositions, to ads. When I first started, the summer Art Forum issue had 91 ads for male artists, full-page ads for male artists, and 26 for female artists. And these ads cost between six and ten thousand dollars each. So, they're indicating where galleries are putting their money. Like, which artists they're investing in to promote and push forward in the market, in the eyes of the writers and the critics, and the museums.

This was a recent visualization. Last month, I actually tallied all of the Art Forum covers from 1962 to 2014. There are 526 covers. 93 of them featured female artists. That's not that much. The inspiration for this project actually came when I saw Mary Beth Edelson's collage at the Wack! show at MoCA in 2007. It's the first artwork that I ever cried in front of. And I sat there looking at this collage, initially thinking, "It's kind of janky, it's feminist stuff from the 70's. I don't totally get it." And I decided I was going to

look at it until I got it. And all of a sudden, it hit me. She revisualized Leonardo's *Last Supper* with all women. And it's called *Some Living American Women Artists*.

So, it's all the members of the *Last Supper* and then some, and the entire image is surrounded by women artists. And it occurred to me that, if every time I had seen an image from art history, if every time I had seen a male pictured instead I had actually seen a female pictured, in all eight years of schooling in studio art and art history, my sense of capacity, and capability, and opportunity would be radically different. Just imagine. Imagine if every time you have seen an image, a historical image, of someone who was successful or famous in their field. If every time you saw that that person was just like you, how would that change your sense of what you could do in the world, and what your history was? It would be incredible. It would be totally different.

I knew my sense of my capacity as a female artist now would be radically different. I was also inspired by the consciousness-raising sessions of the 1970's, where women would get together. And I initially was interested in the sessions where they would look at each other, look at their own vaginas and talk about what they saw. Because, from the 50's onward, and probably before, women were not encouraged to know their own bodies. Right? You'd rely on a doctor to tell you if everything was okay down there or not. And so, consciousness-raising sessions had women sitting around, looking at it, and talking about what they saw and experienced. And this brings a certain solidarity. This, to me, is protest art. This is data as protest. This is information as consciousness raising.

I thought this idea of a shared experience, of talking about what we see, of talking about that which has not yet been spoken, as a radical act, seemed like a really interesting and intriguing model to me. As far as posters, I was inspired by many different sources, from socialist realism in the Russian Revolution, to Chinese propaganda posters, to punk posters of the 1970's. Thinking about, how a certain generation had bedrooms

plastered with rock band posters. Not anymore. We've got Pinterest walls, instead, but there is something really seductive, and awesome, and radical, and punk about posters on the wall.

And then, thinking, as I got into art school in the '90s, I also grew up in the 70's in Northern California. And Victor Moscoso was one of our family friends. And so, we had these really great psychedelic rock posters all over the place. I think, in the back of my mind, those were really influential in my interest in posters. In the 90's, Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer were really influential. And they were among the first women artists that I learned about in school. And of course, the Guerrilla Girls, who began their kind of data protest art in the 80's.

And sadly, it's not that different now. That's something that people like to say. Like, "Oh, but it's so much better now." It's actually not, at all. The wage gap is about the same, unfortunately. And if you look at auction sales, our sales of art by women versus art by men. The latest auctions, the last three years of auctions at Sotheby's and Christie's averaged twelve cents to the dollar for women, in sales. That's obscene.

The Guerrilla Girls made posters, and bus bench ads, and billboards. And we're looking at this sort of inequity not just with gender, but also with race. And we're really the first group of artists who say, "Hey, there's something really wrong here. We need to pay attention and start counting not only who's present, but really also counting and articulating who's not present." So, that's something I'm really interested in, and interested in encouraging people to think about is, who's not here.

I worked, for a little bit, at the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, which is based in Los Angeles and has an incredible repository of political posters. If you've never been, I encourage you to make an appointment and go. There is an unbelievable history of protest art there. That was an inspiration, as were the works of Andrea Bowers, who

uses posters to advocate to for workers' rights, feminist rights, immigrant rights. And she uses historical posters as influence in some of her original designs.

I was also inspired by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, whose posters seem like a radical act to me, in that they're defiant in the face of an art world that privileges a very patriarchal, modernist notion of the singular object of ingenuity. He'd have a stack of posters that you could just take, as this totally irreverent kind of gesture against capitalism. And in the spirit of wanting the information to be disseminated, wanting everyone to have that in their home to look at and think about what it meant.

There were, of course, several groups of women in the 70's in L.A. that inspired me, including women from the Women's Building and from the Collective XX, or the Double X, who had just had a show at Chapman University. And many of whom were responsible for the protest against Maurice Tuchman in 1971, where they showed up to LACMA wearing Maurice Tuchman masks, and with balloons that said, "Where are the women and minorities?"

I'm also inspired by visualization of data, by artists such as Josh Callahan who is an L.A. artist. And he made these really great sculptural graphs. The one on the left is "Very Concerned, Somewhat Concerned, Not At All Concerned." On the right is "Global Tobacco Production From 1950 To Present." And if you think about how popular these Buzzfeed-type quizzes are, and about Big Data, and infographics, and data visualizations, that also encouraged the launching of the project.

The title of this talk, of course, is "Data As Feminist Protest." And I want to point out, there's some really great women on both the West Coast and East Coast who have historically, and are currently, doing kind of data collection in the art world in particular. But there are also collectives around the world who have been counting numbers in the art world. So, East London Faucet is a group, ELF is a group in London that's looking at

gallery stats. Countesses in Australia are looking gallery stats there. Jennifer Dalton in New York has an entire practice based on kind of statistics and data. As art, Brainstormers is a group in New York City that do a gallery tally count.

I wanted to offer you some of the deductions that I've been making, or that I think we can make from the numbers gathered by the *Gallery Tally* project. One, galleries are representing more male artists than female artists. Fact. Galleries are representing more white artists than artists of color. Museums are showing and collecting more male than female artists. Collectors are buying more art by male artists than female artists, and paying more for it. There are more female students than male students in BFA and MFA programs. Male artists are represented more frequently in the press and media than are female artists.

The implications of this data are as follows, in part: There are more men than women in the art world wanting to be artists. Not fact. Art by women isn't as marketable or valuable. That's a lengthy debate. There is an aesthetic to art made by males that is more desirable to that of art made by females. Can you categorize or quantify this idea of a gendered aesthetic? I think that's also something we could spend the entire evening talking about. And I'm reciting these as things that have been told to me by way of explanation by a gallerist, or curators, as when I ask them why their numbers are the way they are.

We do not place the same prestige value on work, in all sectors of culture really. If you look at architecture, film, engineering, politics, writing. We don't place the same the prestige value on this work by women as by men. Not as many women come to the attention of gallerists, and collectors, and curators as do males.

And here are some further comments that have come up: "Well, we don't curate by quotas." "Well, there are more women curators. So, it's their fault." Right? I get that a lot.

"Oh, but come on. Now there are lots of women gallerists." "If with women gallerists there's still an imbalance of male and female artists, then it's not our fault." Right? "Well, who's responsible? I'm not a sexist. Right?" That's what I get a lot. "We don't look at gender. We just look at what's good." But they still end up with seventy percent art by men. So, there's an uncomfortable implication there. "Collectors buy art as an investment. And art by women just isn't worth as much." I think, unfortunately, that's true in the market. Is it intrinsically true, or culturally true? No. But that's what our capitalist market has reinforced.

"Well, I'm not a sexist." I get that one a lot. "Well, it's a lot better than it used to be. So, we don't have to worry about it, right?" Wrong. And I get asked a lot, "What can we do about it? What can we do about these numbers?" So, my strategy, first and foremost, has been to count. This is articulating that which has not been articulated. Secondly, talk about it. If you don't see something, say something. Like, if you see someone who is absent, something who is absent, a demographic that is absent, say it. Talk about it. Hold people accountable. Support women artists and artists of color. If it means going to their shows, helping them make their work. Write about it. If you have the capacity, buy their work.

And demand accountability from the institutions that should be- that are in a position of power. Like, if you come to a museum and you realize that it has been five years since you saw a monographic exhibition by a woman artist, say something to the museum. I mean, as our museums are funded by our money, too. Same thing with gallerists. If you go to a gallery, you'll notice that they never have solo shows of women artists. Or they consistently have shows that don't have any artists of color. Ask them why not. I think just asking them, they might make excuses, or deny it, or not want to talk about it. But asking them means that it's going to be in the back of their minds the next time they go to curate a show. Right? They're going to be like, "Oh, yeah."

I now go into galleries in L.A. I'm like the gallery police. I go into galleries. And before I even say hello, they'll say things to me. I went into Diane Rosenstein the other day and I reintroduced myself. And she said, "Oh, I know who you are. I just added two women to my roster." I went, "Great. Awesome." If it means that I have a name as the gallery police, that's totally fine with me if it leads to more equity

Collect art by women and people of color. Write about art by women and people of color. Exhibit art by women and people of color. Exhibit art by women and people of color. And be patient and be persistent. The UN Council on Women just came out with a report that anticipated that it will take 81 years before we have employment parity internationally. Be patient, be persistent. Be the change you wish to see. That's all I have. Thank you.

Annina Rüst: Okay. Thanks. So, Micol, the women in our L.A. Women's Council back in the 70's, as part of the report, they didn't just count, they demanded quotas. So, how do you feel today about this, would you also demand quotas?

Micol Hebron: Quotas, I think, make people uncomfortable, ever since we had national discussions about affirmative action, and Title IX initiatives. And people feel like they're artificial. But as I see it, we've been living with an artificial quota in the other direction for years and year and years. We've had this quota of way more males than females. So, I actually don't have a problem with quotas. I think it's totally fine if it means we have to force people's hands to be a little bit more equitable and more representative and acknowledge that there's no lack of women artists or artists of color trying to be artists. Why one demographic should have twice as many opportunities as all the others seems already like an artificial quota. So, I'm in favor of inverting that quota. I don't know. How do you feel about quota in tech?

Annina Rüst: In tech?

Micol Hebron: Yes.

Annina Rüst: Yes, I'm for it. You know, our life is full of quotas. Like, for example-in Switzerland, there's currently a discussion about whether there should be quotas in board members, whether boards should be half women, half men. Or even, a third women, two thirds women, but with an aspiration of being 50/50. And one of the arguments is that there are quotas everywhere in our lives that are arbitrary. For example, we have a similar system than the US Senate.

So, like if you look at the Senate, every state gets two Senators. And nobody says that, for example, a small state Senator like Bernie Sanders is less of a Senator than let's say, Dianne Feinstein or Barbara Boxer. So, there are quotas everywhere in life that we don't question. And maybe one day we could get ourselves to not necessarily question, for example, why it requires a 50/50 gender divide on a board of a company. For example, of a tech company. Or where we don't talk about what aspects women bring to the table. And what aspects men do. Where it's just like, "Okay, we have this. And this is how it is."

Micol Hebron: I think what you're just bringing up does broach a really uncomfortable component, or implication of quotas, which is this biological essentialism. Right? Like, do men inherently behave differently than women? And if we're going to talk about that, I think we also need to acknowledge and talk about the fact that we're working and talking within a very traditional gender binary. And I hope that in looking at who is and is not represented, we can also start to break down this gender binary, and have it not be only in terms of male, female and that we start to look at a more inclusive spectrum of identification.

It's tricky territory to say things like, "Well, men think, and act, and behave differently than women." But there are countless studies that look at the way women deal with finance, for example. The way they deal with distribution of wealth when given the opportunity to be in charge of it. There are different concerns that arise more readily when the woman is charge of finance, or the head of the household, than when the male is. So, I think there is something to examine, in terms of how important it can be to have a balanced representation on boards, or in classrooms, or anywhere.

Annina Rüst: So, how would you feel to be a quota woman?

Micol Hebron: To be a quota woman? Like, I'm the gender police already?

Annina Rüst: No, no, no, no. Not like that. But if say-

Micol Hebron: Oh, that if someone hired me because they needed to fill a quota?

Annina Rüst: No, not necessarily like that. But like, let's say you're on the board of some tech company, let's say. And that company has a policy of doing 50/50. Would you feel any less worthy?

Micol Hebron: Any less than my 78 percent that I get now? I don't know, I think that it's maybe a period of awkward growth, right? Like, there's like awkward cultural growth, where we maybe do have to go through some kind of forced consciousness raising for a while, until we do so voluntarily. I mean, one of the things that blows my mind is that there aren't more people more upset about this, male or female. I would think that if we just think about the art world I would hope that more people are upset at the fact that you're only seeing predominantly one kind of production, or production from one sort of experience. Right? So, like, my entire life as an artist and an art student, I'm predominantly being asked to relate to the cultural output of hetero-normative white

males. And it leads to this identity crisis on my part. Because even though I may not think about all of that aspect totally consciously, there are many things implicit. There are aspects of privilege that are implicit, there are aspects of access that are implicit, that get integrated into the expression of one's experience.

Annina Rüst: See? You're an angry feminist, too.

Micol Hebron: Yeah, yeah. Maybe I'm a little bit angry.

Annina Rüst: But maybe everybody else is also happy. So, why are you a happy feminist?

Micol Hebron: Well, I'm a happy feminist because I think that in doing the projects that I've done, in doing the crowdsource projects, in doing collaboration, there's something really incredible about the information and experience sharing that happens. And it has been an unbelievably generous experience. Like, everyone involved in the gallery tally project has been incredibly generous. With their time, and their creativity, and their ingenuity, and their own research and perspectives.

And there isn't that much opportunity for that kind of exchange in the market model that I see in the art world. Because it's competitive. And you want to get the most exhibitions. You want to be written about the most. And you want to sell for the most. It's still sort of cutthroat. Artists still have a really hard time. There is the one percent that make a lot of money, but most artists don't. And I think there is this implicit competition in that, that leads people to be a little bit wary, or reserved.

So, the crowdsourcing and consciousness raising projects, if you will, feels like a present all the time. Every day that I'm involved and I get someone else's story, or

someone else's poster, or a visualization, it's like Christmas. And you know, and I think there's something to talk about, in terms of hospitality that I wanted to ask you about.

The project where you're including these kind of references to the domestic or the caretaker role. You're cooking sweet things for people and delivering kind of a bitter pill. And you're using the tools of a domestic environment. What do you think about the role, going back to the implication that women have certain cultural roles? What do you think about taking advantage of those stereotypes of the woman as nurturer, and including that in your robot?

Annina Rüst: Yeah. I guess it's a very complicated way of using a robot to do all of this. It's a complicated way of expressing it. I see it more as a, I don't know how to explain, yes, it's connected to this serving up the criticism with some sugar. But I also see it as part of a kind of mini-industrial production line, and producing something there. So, what I'm producing, I don't know. Some other subjectivity that isn't necessarily in these industrial production lines. I don't necessarily see myself with the apron behind the stove in this project – these pies were made by the LACMA catering so I had nothing to do with it.

Micol Hebron: You didn't cook them.

Annina Rüst: I didn't make them. And so, I see it more as something that connects to industrial production. But in this kind of really weird way. Right? Not in the way that you're supposed to do it. Actually, Ken Goldberg, one of the advisors of the Art and Tech program, was giving me a hard time about not using a real industrial robot, but using a crappy robot instead. And using a vacuum cleaner...this is not exactly how he came across. But it came across like that to me. And I think that this is part of the project, and part of what I want, to a certain extent, express. It's a certain eclectic-ness and eclectic approach to tech. You were asking, "How you're supposed to do tech?"

Micol Hebron: Yeah. How you're supposed to behave.

Annina Rüst: So, in tech, there's a lot of this. I mean, probably also in art. There's a strong kind of, "You're supposed to do it this way. And that way." And there's this rhetoric that if you don't do it this way, you're not a real technologist. As you can see, I'm not a real technologist.

Micol Hebron: Yeah. But this is something we didn't talk about.

Annina Rüst: No, we didn't.

Micol Hebron: And I have another thing that we haven't talked about yet, what about this idea of humor and punning? I feel like in feminism in particular, there's a lot of word play. And you have punning. Like, *A Piece of the Pie*. Or, *The Pie of Inequity*. And these pie charts.

Annina Rüst: *The Humble Pie*

Micol Hebron: *The Humble Pie*, right? There's this wordplay that comes in and out. And I'm curious to hear your thoughts on how that works for you. And do you use puns in your work elsewhere? And then, maybe we can't get to the complaint artist.

Annina Rüst: Oh, the complaint artist. Okay. You want to go to the complaint artist.

Micol Hebron: You want to go right there? Well, no. I want to hear about puns.

Annina Rüst:		Yeah, puns are great. Let's go to the complaint artist. So, we want to talk about complaint artists. The question is, are we just some disgruntled feminists making complaint art? So, maybe Micol, you have an answer.

Micol Hebron:		Well, that was related to my thinking of you as delivering this bitter pill with sugar. This strategy. One response that I hear a lot from gallerists, or even just people in the art world, is, "Oh, aren't you worried that galleries are going to be pissed off at you for doing this project?" As if I created the numbers. As if I made the numbers and then applied it to their gallery. Annina talked about how she does the counting. So, my process is similar. I'll go to the gallery website. I look at the roster of artists that are represented by that gallery, discern which are male-identified and female-identified. It's how they identify themselves. I don't attribute identity to anyone. And if there's any doubt, I ask the gallerist. Or I look up the artist. And I look at how they're written about, and what pronouns are used, et cetera.

So, the data is there. I'm just talking about it. And it occurred to me, that to imply that I was doing something defiant or wrong by articulating these numbers, had echoes of the language of abuse to me. And I thought, well, I'm in this circumstance of oppression. I'm in this art world where there is one group, several, but the demographic of women artists are considerably oppressed, and have been for centuries. And it's like being in an abusive relationship with the art world. And that, when I speak out against my abuser, or when I articulate that I am in an abusive relationship, and the abuser says, "Shh. Don't talk about that. You're not supposed to, don't out me," like they're angry at me for outing them.

And I think there's an interesting psychology that's happening there. So, my short answer to people is "No, I'm not worried about it, because I didn't make the numbers." But it does put me, or maybe the whole project in a position of scapegoating. Like, some of the people are mad that we've kind of pulled the curtain back on the wizard.

Annina Rüst: Okay.

Micol Hebron: But what about you?

Annina Rüst: So, should they go eat some complaint art now?

Micol Hebron: Yeah. But you have to answer, how do you feel about being a complaint artist?

Annina Rüst: How do I feel about being a complaint artist?

Micol Hebron: Or, are we?

Annina Rüst: So, I don't go out much in the world now. I see it more subjectively…

Micol Hebron: Well, are you making complaint art? Are you responsible for this information? Are you worried that people in tech sector are going to be mad at you?

Annina Rüst: No. I'm not high profile enough, I used to make art about surveillance, and how absurd it is. And that was always like, extraneous of me. And this project is much more closer to home. So, I feel a lot more defensive and a lot more angry. More subjectively angry. Or maybe individually angry. So, it's kind of different.

Micol Hebron: And so, what's next for this?

Annina Rüst: For this project?

Micol Hebron: Like, how long will you – how far will it go?

Annina Rüst: At the desktop version. Everybody can have a gender printer on their desktop. A desktop version, obviously. This is the industrial version. Yeah. Alright. What's next for *Gallery Tally*, then? Like, towards the end.

Micol Hebron: We're not going to stop until there's equity. I mean, I feel like I didn't expect it to- I had no idea how long the project would go, to be honest- It wasn't- It was something that started just because it- I was telling things that bothered me. And then, I found out that hundreds and hundreds of other people were bothered, too. And that's been encouraging to see that how many other people are concerned about it. And I hope that- I would love for it to evolve into like a yearly census. We could have the art world census, and see how everyone's doing. You could just send around a survey. Get them to fill it out.

Audience Member: I just wanted to say I really loved the part of your project where you're going to send it off to the high tech companies. Because I think that's a whole exciting part of the project. Have the pies been made, and has that process started? Or is that next to come? And if so, what's been the reaction?

Annina Rüst: I've done this project once. I don't know if anybody ever sent any pies to companies. Okay, you have to sign a waiver, by the way; LACMA does not want to be responsible for your pie. And there are a lot of warnings inside the box. It's like an artwork by itself. So, I tweeted the pies. And I got one response. And they were sort of treating it as if I was making them a present or something. They were really excited about it – this was one university that, I don't know, graduated maybe 80 percent male computer scientists and 10 percent female computer scientists. This was when I did a previous version of the project, which was more about the tech sector itself. So, they

seemed excited about it. So, I don't know, maybe I'm doing it wrong. I have no idea. So, yeah, it's possible that I'm doing it wrong.

Audience Member: It was just great to hear both of you speak. And I'm in a different field. I'm in film and television. And I went to college in the late 70's, early 80's. And there was a real awakening. I've been working for a really long time and things have been great. What I find so astounding is things have not gotten any better. If there's one creative producer on a project that's a woman, everyone kind of goes, "That's it." And that's the quota. And there can be ten men, but one woman. And women don't help other women. And that's not the way it was in the late 70's and the early 80's. So, what you both are talking about, I see it in my field radically right now. And I think we need another revolution. Things aren't good. It's an awakening.

Micol Hebron: Well, I just want to point out. Annina inviting me here to talk with here at the presentation of her project, after this incredible grant, is to me this amazing act of generosity and inclusion. Really. Because she reached out to me and said, "Hey, do you want to come and present? We're doing similar stuff." And I think we all need to do that, to say, "Oh, are there other people doing the things that we're doing?" Or, "How can our respective projects make both of us stronger?" And if everybody does that in their capacities, we're going to be a lot better off. I think it takes a lot of courage, and a lot of generosity. And a lot of self-confidence. Right? To say, "Oh, I can share the other stage with other people, because they might make-"

Audience Member: Or with another woman.

Annina Rüst: For me, I have to confess. It was mainly self-serving. I got to have really great conversations. So, you should invite Micol. She's really great.

Micol Hebron: Likewise.

Audience Member: First of all, really smart work. I'm just wondering. I come kind of from like a physics/economics background. And so, what's fascinating to me-

Micol Hebron: Physics/economics?

Audience Member: Yeah. Well, both.

Micol Hebron: Okay. That sounds amazing.

Audience Member: But what it instantly triggered for me is that you've got this wonderful time series problem, right? So, you're getting to this point of statistical significance. You've got one parameter, the 68.2 - 70%. And beautifully, you've got this wonderful point of pretty much the opposite. Like, what was the figure you put in? 70/30 women to men, or 85, you know. And you've got this wonderful kind of time evolution series. And I'm wondering if you're considering mobilizing the data, since it's getting quite large as a dataset, to hand off to economics. And beautifully, you've got a lot of hypotheses and theories to test, as to- I'm wondering if you're considering beginning to map this dataset to those gallery openings, and start trying kind of theorize around it. It's quite exciting.

Micol Hebron: Please give me your card.

Audience Member: Yeah, certainly.

Annina Rüst: So, are you trying to predict in advance how many women and men are going to be in a gallery show?

Audience Member: Well, I think you've got this beautiful thing where you can begin to have some sort of complex economics time series models surrounding these data points, that becomes a really powerful, super actionable, and super empirically driven bottom up kind of thing. That's really exciting, right?

Micol Hebron: You're totally right. I've actually this year started working with and consulting statisticians. One, at the university where I teach, and one who's a Ph.D. in complexity theory at UCLA. And it's really exciting and totally daunting to think about how massive this can be. And I heartily welcome any contributions, or insights, or help you want to give to us. Because it is bigger than it initially was. And you're right, we see these kind of patterns, and the more data we collect, I think the more implications there are. The thing that I think is so great about using the data as feminist protest, and that's, I think, especially highlighted in Annina's project, is that it is empirical. Right? That the numbers are undeniable. What implications they have on sociological patterns and behavior is something that we could spend the rest of our lives looking at, I think.

Annina Rüst: But are you trying to calculate how long it would take until there is 50/50?

Audience Member: Or more interestingly, identifying this half-life problem from grad school to mature artists.

Annina Rüst: Oh, okay. Yeah. Makes sense. Okay.

Micol Hebron: Well, and there are things like you were pointing out. The dropout rate. Right? Like, of women in tech. And I think that should be looked at in the art world, too. Like, how many of these majority of women, who are in the MFA programs, actually don't even try once they make it into the art world. Right? Or of the ones that try, and maybe get representation, how long do they stay in the art world? You're right. This time

problem is really interesting. It's also important to think about that a lot of the galleries represent artist who were were becoming artists before MFAs even existed. Right? So, you can't really... using the schools as a predictor is also time-based. You have to look at generations of artists.

Audience Member: Thank you so much.

Micol Hebron: Thank you.

Audience Member: I'm curious about the origins of the word complaint art, or the term. I hope that's not self-assigned. It made me think of Picasso's *Guernica*, which would be classified as complaint art. One of the most celebrated artists of our time. One of the most beautiful and impressive paintings. It makes me think of the term *liberal media*, which has been assigned to the media. It's supposed to be progressive. It's supposed to evolve culture. And I feel like complaint art is another one of those terms that gets attached to something to keep your from doing the thing.

Micol Hebron: That's a you term.

Annina Rüst: That's a new term?

Micol Hebron: You. You came up with that term, right?

Annina Rüst: I invented it?

Micol Hebron: No, I don't know. Where did you get it?

Annina Rüst: I think it's because I teach undergrad. I don't know. They may call it complaint art. Or maybe in trying to explain something, like why something is not

complaint art, that's why I use 'complaint art' as kind term that they may think of this. Do you know what I mean?

Micol Hebron   Well, to me it has echoes of this idea that the vocal woman is bitchy or complaining. You know, it's like, "Oh, you're just complaining." Or the assertive woman is bossy. You know like we tend to convert things into negative terms when it comes to women asserting themselves. For the Picasso analogy, it reminds me of a story I read. I have no idea if it's true or not. But there is this anecdote whereby the Nazis come into Picasso's studio and see *Guernica.* And they're like, "Who did this? Did you do this?" And he calmly looks at them and says, "No, you did." And I think that's the same with our work. Right? Like, we're presenting these charts for this data, and gallerists are saying, "You did it." And, "Well, no. Actually, you did that." We're not making it up.

Audience Member: Hi. Thank you. This has really been fascinating. I'm a screenwriter. And I think our numbers are worse. It's like 88/12, or something. One of the explanations is kind of the same as the curators; There are a lot of women executives." But one of the explanations for why there aren't more films that might appeal to women, or more female screenwriters is that they just don't want to be seen as the woman's executive. They want to absolutely be one of the boys, and to show that they can do the action films or whatever, too. But the final bottom line in screenwriting is economic. The average moviegoer is a 14 to 22 year old male. Not a 14 to 22 year old female. Because guess why? The girls will go with their boyfriends to see whatever they want. So, that's the demographic that we're fighting against as female screenwriters, as why there aren't more films being made. It's who's buying the tickets. So, my question is, in looking at the people in the art world (and maybe I missed it, there were so many great figures in here). Have you done a study of the percentage of buyers that are male versus female? And what would that number be?

Micol Hebron: Not yet. It's coming.

Audience Member: Great.

Micol Hebron: I think you're absolutely right. I think at the base of it, it comes down to capitalism. Not valuing women's production. Not valuing female labor in all sectors. And it makes me think of the inquiry, "How do you feel about all women shows?" Which is a quota question. And I think that there is this stereotype, "oh, the all-female art show." It's going to be lots of crochet and glitter. And like, you know, crafty stuff that is somehow subpar. I would love to see those attitudes inverted.

Can you imagine if women's art was valued more than men's? It inconceivable to us. But to me, that indicates how radial the disparity is. Like, if instead, you had people raving. Like, "Oh my God, there's an all-woman art show coming up at LACMA," and were so excited to go see it. Conversely, we know there are all-male art shows all the time. But no one calls it that. And there isn't this stereotype, "Oh, it's going to be lots of like, macho art." It's just the status quo.

And someone made this analogy when talking about mothers in the art world. I heard a talk given by Natalie Loveless, who's a really amazing artist and writer in Canada. We were talking about the problem of women in the art world or in the labor sector being discriminated against because they leave to raise families. That's something else I heard a lot about why women aren't artists more often, "Oh, they leave to have families." As if men don't have families.

But Natalie said, "What if becoming a mother made your art more desirable or more valuable?" What if instead of dropping you, galleries would say, "Oh my God, now we can charge more for your work, this is great – this experience of bringing a human into the world, or being responsible for another human, made you more valuable." Imagine

that. It's so funny because we know, economically, that's not the case. But what if it were? And what if we inverted the paradigms that are extant now?

You're giving us the "We need to eat pie," look.

Peggy Weil: Soon. But I have another question. When I was here Sunday, you both discussed a variation of the "What's next?" question which had to do with whether your next work, you'll always be feminists, but whether your next works, or your work over the next years will be as explicitly, in the subject, about feminism. Of course, it'll be informed by feminism. And you were both talking about that in terms of identity. Do you have any comments about that?

Annina Rüst: So, yes. My main interest is feminist technology. It's not necessarily making projects about representation of women in art and tech, it's also about making actual technology. So, that's woman specific. Or looking at technology that's woman specific.

Peggy Weil: So, we might possibly see more vacuum cleaners?

Annina Rüst: No vacuum cleaners. Breast pumps.

Peggy Weil: Breast pumps. Because of your experience bringing a child into the world.

Annina Rüst: No, I'm pumping. And I listen to the sound of it. And it's just this minimalist tech note that's very inspiring. I'm very serious.

Peggy Weil: No, no. That's a serious question. You also spoke about it.

Micol Hebron: Wow. I don't remember what I said the other day. You do? I have two parallel practices. And one is the social practice, collaborative practice. And these projects seems to define themselves. I feel really lucky in that over the last ten years, I have been involved in various crowdsourced projects that just arise as the cultural need arises. And I'm lucky enough to have somehow provided a framework that allowed them to proliferate. And I don't really know what the next one will be. They have been kind of self-defining.

In my own work, I deal with female experience a lot. I'm a performance and video artist. And I do a lot of work that explores what the female body can and cannot do, just inherently. And what my body can and cannot do. I'm working on a project – it's crowdsourced again – I'm working on a project that is resuscitating the idea of the consciousness raising groups and Tee Corinne's coloring book. And I've been inviting women to draw themselves, and send me pictures of their drawings. And then, those get converted into glitter paintings and copper paintings. And they're going into a show at the New Mexico Museum of Art in the fall.

Peggy Weil: Great. Thank you. Okay. I think we're ready for pie.

Micol Hebron: Pie time. Thank you very much.