



Feminaissance

Christine Wertheim (Editor) , Bhanu Kapil (contributor) , Eileen Myles (contributor) , Chris Kraus (contributor) , Stephanie Young (contributor) , Dodie Bellamy (contributor) , Wanda Coleman (contributor) , Juliana Spahr (contributor) , more... Meiling Cheng (contributor) , Lidia Yuknavitch (contributor) , Vanessa Place (contributor) , Susan McCabe (contributor) , Tracie Morris (contributor) , Maggie Nelson (contributor) ...less

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Poetry. Fiction. Essays. Women's Studies. FEMINAISSANCE = collectivity; feminine ecriture; the politics of writing; text and voice; the body as a site of contestation, insurgence and pleasure; race and writing; gender as performance; writing about other women writers; economic inequities; Helene Cixous; monstrosity; madness; and aesthetics.

FEMINAISSANCE = Dodie Bellamy, Caroline Bergvall, Meiling Cheng, Wanda Coleman, Bhanu Kapil, Chris Kraus, Susan McCabe, Tracie Morris, Eileen Myles, Maggie Nelson, Vanessa Place, Juliana Spahr, Christine Wertheim, Stephanie Young, Lidia Yuknavitch.

FEMINAISSANCE = "If the fact that women do not say 'We' was one of the constitutive problems for 20th century feminism, the fact that women do and still clearly feel the need to say 'We' is just as rich and interesting a topic for feminism today. The writings gathered here prove feminism to be alive and more relevant to all genders than ever: not just because feminist discourse remains a political necessity, but because of its artistic and intellectual pleasures." Sianne Ngai"

Feminaissance Details

Date : Published January 1st 2010 by Les Figues Press

ISBN : 9781934254172

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Format : Paperback 125 pages

Genre : Poetry, Feminism, Anthologies, Womens, Nonfiction, Writing, Essays

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From Reader Review *Feminaissance* for online ebook

Amy says

Unidentified Flying Object

“Reading” the third-eye formal structure of *Feminaissance* gave me the opportunity to “examine” my desire: I’m most receptive to “encountering” critical theory if it formally emulates or formally “interrogates” what it is “addressing.” This is why I try to get my “news” from The Colbert Report. It’s “why” I read and write poetry. Along these “lines,” the cover of *Feminaissance* provides an entry into the project. A “non-gendered” mouth that is a “real” mouth is inside another “real” mouth that seems to have been “cut out” from another mouth, perhaps one that is “real” or not “real” but designed to look “real” and presented as “feminine” or “gendered” by its lipstick. This dual mouth seems to be in a simultaneous state of both “rest” and “scream.” There are also two “eyes” that are “real” eyes, which seem to have been placed as “real” eyes inside “fake” eye pockets. The mouth and eyes are attached to what seems to be a “real” head, which is attached to what seems to be a “real” body, which seems to be part of a “real” cloth decorated with “fake” flowers, a cloth that appears wrapped around the “woman” in a way that might prevent “freedom” of movement. The cloth extends from the “body” into the background so that it is unclear as to where the body begins “and” ends. That’s the view from the “map” that will get you to the very “top” of the mountain. On the mountain’s peak the “air” is thinner: the “bodily” but not “verbal” suffocation is combined with the “delirium” of the cloth: yellow and red overlaid with the flowers you admired on the “trail” up. The spine’s sky-blue “test-tube” tone, which reminds you of the day’s “poetry” left behind, exacerbates the cloth’s “dramatic exuberance.”

As you head down the mountain you’ll notice things have “changed.” Two contributions are placed on the same page with the “organizing essay” lining the top like a breaking-news ticker. Concurrently “reading” two contributions plus the ticker resembles spacetime operating in a “formally innovative” poem. When the contributions are not overtly engaged with the spacetime of the “page” by taking the form of “prose,” the poetry, as expressed in the project’s third-eye form, and the relative time of prose, as expressed in the essays, are activated in chorus by the reader’s “imagination,” resulting in a hyperdimensional time signature. When the contributions are overtly engaged with the spacetime of the page by taking the form of poetry or “non-linear” prose, the poetry gets Planck, resulting in a gravitational time signature. Warping time is one of the great possibilities of poetry, which, “in my opinion,” mutates toward novelty—beyond gender, beyond news. That’s why on its formal scale alone I would “call” *Feminaissance* a book of poems. No one ever expects to get “abducted” on a mountain. But I know from “experience” that anything can “happen.”

Elizabeth says

Over at the Les Figues blog, I asked authors Tisa Bryant, Allison Carter, Claire Donato, Evelyn Hampton, and Amy King to respond to *Feminaissance*. You can read them all here:
<http://lesfigues.blogspot.com/2011/01...>

Adrienne Urbanski says

I was assigned to review this, which was fortunate as it seems difficult to purchase a copy of this anthology. Basically this book takes the concept of l'écriture feminine and applies it to real life and artistic expression. Among the most compelling pieces within the anthology is Dodie Bellamy's short story "Sexspace", in which she explores the connections between language and gender and sexuality by depicting characters that enter into an internet like world in which sexuality is expressed through energy and language, rather than merely imprisoned within our physical bodies. The protagonist's femaleness then becomes something that transcends her body, and is rooted instead within her language and energy. In a day and age where much of the communication around sexuality now happens online or via text message, this concept seems highly relevant.

Ms. Online says

WANDA COLEMAN ON THE HEALING POWER OF WOMEN'S WRITING

Reviewed by: Amanda Montei

Feminaissance, a new anthology of women's experimental essays, poetry and fiction, includes the work of renowned Los Angeles African American poet Wanda Coleman. I had a chance to speak with her recently about her writing and her feminism.

MONTEI: What role do you think women's writing has played in the feminist movement?

COLEMAN: I remain a believer in the power of creative writing to change, heal and transform. Women's writing will forever remain an important resource and wellspring. At its finest, it inspires, deepens and prolongs the ongoing dialogue around issues worldwide, often immeasurably affecting social change. These changes may seem incremental—we are still counting the first woman to do this or that—and they may come too late for the majority, but they have come and will continue to come despite occasional political reversals and social upheavals. If there had not been a Sylvia Plath, an Ann Petry, a Tillie Olsen and a Joan Didion, there would be no Wanda Coleman.

M: In your poem "Rape" [included in Feminaissance:] you are unwavering in your raw depiction of a woman's abuse. It humanizes the dehumanized, which you've said is a specific aim of your writing. There's a devilish element in my selection of the crude language and graphic narrative of this poem. Some readers will have a visceral response; they will identify with the victim and actually feel raped. That was my intent. I also wanted to go against the prevailing platitudes about rape that often cause naïve women to get themselves killed—believing that trying to fight off a man who outweighs you by 50 to 200 pounds is the wisest tactic. As a young woman, I never thought twice about going blow-for-blow, toe-to-toe with a man, because I'm a big woman. But after enough busted lips and black eyes, I figured there must be more viable alternatives. Even if you're exposed to STDs, it is still better "to live to fight another day."

Do you set out to write pieces about sociopolitical issues?

C: I begin with the advice at the core of traditional writing courses: Write what you know. My content is usually inspired by the day-to-day events that go on around me as I move through time and space. They may happen to me, someone close to me, or I may observe them in close proximity. Often, a line or phrase I've saved triggers a poem in retrospection. Then I draw on the basic questions of journalism: who, what, where,

when, why and how. Style is usually my last consideration as I reshape and revise my material—using the vernacular coupled with what I know of figurative language.

M: I think many feminists often feel overwhelmed by the deep-seeded systemic oppression we face. Are there specific actions or avenues you encourage women to take to incite change?

C: Remember the phrase “support network?” Make the effort to develop or join one that addresses your needs. Such a group needn’t exclude enlightened men. Also, sustain and maintain—that is, mental and emotional health are as important as physical health. Take care with both; good health sustains activism. And don’t think about it—do it! This is something my father used to bark at me. Now I bark it at myself. The little girl inside me no longer shrinks. She understands that too much talk and the subsequent inaction it often generates may be disastrous when matters are urgent.

Opal McCarthy says

one therapist told me i had 'reverse charisma'

what is it about names that makes us want to throw them off

if she can exist in a flux of her own making, with her self-identifications flashing like scimitars

the girls [in the tent:] were both supporting and undermining the main stage performance. as girls always do. the edits were highly manipulative. as girls, they say, always are.

Michelle says

wonderful collection of writings from the Feminaissance conference.
