

Work Package 2

Description

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WP2 -Feminist Film Theories and Women's Cinema

WP2 aims to shape new feminist theories through an in-depth analysis of female productions (post-2010 US, UK, and French TV series, feature films, documentaries, shorts, and mainstream and independent productions). WP2 will examine how women filmmakers incorporate feminist film theory into their productions and question whether their films contribute to the dissemination and liberation of feminist theories or participate to the postfeminist neoliberal discourse. It will thus also call attention to anti-feminist films and critics, as well as the works of women who do not necessarily identify as feminists.

WP2 will explore women filmmakers' engagement with feminism from two coalescent vantage points: feminist film theories and feminist activism. The consortium members will examine the "counter visual right to look" (Mirzoeff 2011) of women filmmakers who have followed the call of feminist film theorists to do away with hegemonic visuality by creating new forms of filmmaking to change mainstream gender representations—Johnston's "counter-cinema" (1973), Mulvey's "new language of desire" (1975), Doane, Mellencamp and Williams's "re-vision" (1984) in the wake of Adrienne Rich's call for revision of literary canons (1971), de Lauretis's "strategy of coherence" (1987) and "guerrilla cinema" (1990), and hooks's "oppositional gaze" (1992). FEMME members will highlight the feminist turn that Anglo-American feminist film scholarship has given to the politico-aesthetic questions raised by the French New Wave, focusing on how women directors integrate different types of feminisms in their filmmaking with the underlying idea that their films may be examples of "theory in practice." Researchers will explore the militant and socially-conscious stands in the 5050 by 2020 movement in the US film industry and question the feminist constructivism at work in women's cinema.

WP2 will also examine the politics of women filmmakers' style in Western cinema as a male-dominated industry whose vision of genres (documentary, science fiction, Western, etc.) reflects and endorses patriarchal values; some women filmmakers have been working to undermine these norms by changing the Hollywood formulas of film genres. WP2 will attempt to map out the strategies of counter visuality pursued by the filmmakers through their appropriation and revisions of narrative and generic conventions. It will open new perspectives on how women filmmakers play with genre expectations to allow for alternative gender narratives

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