

Foreword

This anthology grew out of a research project and has gone through many different visions, stages, and forms of collaborations. The idea of this book was developed within the research project “Feminist Media Production in Europe,” which was started at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and then moved to the Department of Communication at the University of Salzburg, Austria. A warm thank you goes out to Elisabeth Klaus, the department head in Salzburg, who has been very enthusiastic about the project. The project was funded by the Austrian Science Fund (P21187) from December 2008 until November 2012. The study was conducted by a team: Elke Zobl, as the project leader, post-doctoral researchers Rosa Reitsamer (2009–2011) and Jenny Gunnarsson Payne (2008–2009) and doctoral student Red Chidgey (2008–2010), with research support from Stefanie Grünangerl (2010–2012). In the context of this project, we have been interested in such questions as: What are the content, forms, processes, and functions of feminist media production in Europe today? How far are these media used as sites of feminist news, activism and engagement? How can media produced by women at the grassroots level be a means to foster participation and civic engagement? What are the implications of women as active media producers for civic society? What is the potential of feminist grassroots media in Europe for cultural, social and political changes? Discussions of these and other questions can be found in this book (esp. see the research report by Elke Zobl and Rosa Reitsamer).

At first, an open call to contribute to this anthology with academic essays and case studies, as well as activist reports, practitioner interviews and visual commentaries, was issued in 2008 by Red Chidgey, Jenny Gunnarsson Payne and Elke Zobl. We received many contributions from various countries for which we have been very grateful, and we would particularly like to thank everyone who contributed at this stage. However, due to the difficulty in finding a publisher willing to publish a mix of theory and practice, as well as project personnel changes, we had to make the decision to focus the current volume on academic essays. At that stage Rosa Reitsamer and Elke Zobl were able to secure transcript Verlag as the publisher. We thank the editors of the Critical Media Studies series for their immediate enthusiasm for the book and their productive collaboration. As Rosa Reitsamer left the project for another job posting, Elke Zobl teamed with Ricarda Drüeke at the Department of Communication in Salzburg to edit the present anthology. As the project leader, Elke Zobl would like to thank all team members warmly and deeply!

The information that has been collected during the project has been continuously documented at the digital archive *Grassroots Feminism: Transnational archives, resources and communities* (www.grassrootsfeminism.net), which was set up in December 2008. By providing an interactive network portal and research platform for researchers, activists and media producers, this Web 2.0 archive makes contemporary feminist, queer and antiracist media and cultural practices more broadly accessible. The site is organized and maintained by Elke Zobl in collaboration with Rosa Reitsamer, Stefanie Grünangerl and Red Chidgey. Above all, we would like to thank everyone who continues to contribute to a diverse, engaging and critical feminist media landscape – and consequently to this website. At the end of this book you will find a selected list of feminist media projects in Europe for further consultation.

Another important impetus for this book were the annual Civil Media Conferences organized by Radiofabrik in Salzburg, where from 2008 to 2011 we invited feminist media producers from various countries to present their work and engage in discussions around media, social change, participatory culture, networks and cultural citizenship. We are deeply indebted to everyone who accepted our invitation and came to Salzburg, as well as to Radiofabrik!

Such an anthology is dependent on the help and enthusiasm of many: It would have not been possible without the patience of the contributors who revised their articles according to our input. For the detailed proofreading, we thank Jason Heilman (USA), and for the layout, we are greatly indebted to Brigitte Geiger (Austria). At transcript Verlag we would like to thank Anke Poppen for being our competent contact person.

In short: the development of this book has involved many people in various countries. We cannot name them all, but we would like to thank them from our deepest hearts!

We are looking forward to feedback and further discussions!

Elke Zobl & Ricarda Drüeke

Introduction

Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship

Ricarda Drüeke and Elke Zobl

Feminist Media

Women have always played an important role in movements for social justice. Using media to transport their messages, to disrupt social orders and to spin novel social processes, feminists have long recognized the importance of self-managed, alternative media. In the past two decades an increasing number of women have taken the tools of media production into their own hands. With the rise of new media and communication technologies, women have started to use these technologies for the production and distribution of feminist media. These demographics are often described as part of 'third wave feminism', 'pop feminism' or 'do-it-yourself-feminism'. We understand feminist media as any self-identified feminist and/or women's media project engaged in processes of social change. Feminist media – in this broader understanding – encompasses text production, e. g. zines, magazines and flyers, as well as practices of performance, graffiti and art. For this reason, we are interested in how feminist media producers create and engage in participatory spaces, networks and cultural practices, and how they assume a cultural citizenship and initiate processes of social change. Questions arise such as: What kinds of processes, strategies and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are at work in feminist media production? How does one assume a cultural citizenship within feminist media? How do feminist media producers engage with feminism, anti-racism and social change? Can we identify a 'new feminism' in feminist media – one that creates a new participatory culture?

The present volume offers several components for the analysis of feminist media in relation to participatory spaces, networks and the theoretical concept of cultural citizenship. The articles in this volume clearly illustrate the complexity and diversity of the issues that arise in this constellation concerning the character of the involvement and participation by feminist public spheres as well as reinterpretations of the hegemonic gender relations. In doing so, the articles incorporate approaches and findings from various humanities and social science disciplines, thus showing at the same time