

## 8 Visual Cultures

### Feminist Perspectives

*Rosemarie Buikema and Marta Zarzycka*

The relentless increase of reproducible images often gives rise to complaints that we are being ‘bombarded’ with them. This quasi-military vocabulary echoes the alleged aggressiveness of the visual culture that is enforcing itself upon us (Sturken and Cartwright 2001). Since the 1970s, feminist art critics and scholars in particular have problematised the omnipresence of sexualised, and yet mythologised, female bodies both in the media and in artistic practice, claiming that the tradition of meaning assigned to gender, race and ethnicity is not given, but constructed, and that these constructions take specific visual forms (Nochlin 1970; Parker and Pollock 1981). The underlying conviction of feminist theory has always been that to be able to change the lives and material circumstances of women, we need an alternative imagery with which to identify, as well as alternative modes of making, seeing and interpreting visual culture and its institutions (Pollock 1999; Reckitt 2001). Today, the training in gender sensitive readings of images in general and of images representing women in particular constitutes a broad field of feminist practices. While feminist cultural theorists aimed at deconstructing the idealist concept of representation as an unmediated, transparent practice, postcolonial scholars argued forcefully against the Eurocentrism that pervades many discussions of the visual (Shohat and Stam 1994). Together they challenge traditional ways of seeing as well as the hegemonic character of dominant patriarchal and colonial canons.

Yet in an image-overloaded era, certain visual conventions have become self-evident, unquestioned and easily consumed. To be able to look at them more consciously, we need to think about the visual traditions as well as the social practices and power relations in which they are embedded. That is to say, we need to place them in the broader context of their cultural, historical and geopolitical significance. Therefore the kind of visual literacy we aim at here is not concerned with exposing images as ‘false’ or ‘untrue,’ hence engaging in a “reductive iconoclasm” (Mitchell 2005, 175), but rather with developing an understanding of the way in which images came into being and how they work on their audiences. An essential aspect of visual literacy in general, and scholarly work on images in particular, is making the visual communicable, developing the language that stretches beyond unreflective metaphors and clichés. Feminist visual literacy, for its

part, sheds light upon the often untransparent relationships of gender, race and ethnicity present in the image.

In this chapter, we map out the main concerns of feminist visual analysis, the fields of interest it covers and the methods it deploys. In order to demonstrate how gender-sensitive analysis can be practiced, we shall consider two distinct images, not coincidentally representing women. Although women are prevalent in the visual sphere, patterns of traditional gender divisions and hierarchies are still inscribed upon the female body. Both of our examples tackle the problem of the female body being simultaneously overly visible and marginalised in visual culture. The first example builds on the tensions between the portrayals of the female body in the traditional discipline of art history and in feminist art critique, while addressing the concept of the gaze. The second one comes from contemporary press photography, a field relatively new to feminist critique, and opens the question concerning a particular tradition within this genre, i.e., that of the representation of women as universal symbols of oppression in (military) conflict. Both artefacts will appear to overturn the visual traditions from which they stem.

Building upon the academic tradition of formal, semiotic, psychoanalytic and intertextual analysis, we will point out what feminist theory has brought to visual studies and the visual sphere in general. Similarly to other chapters in this part, we introduce here the range of methods that can be used to interpret images and provide literature references to develop those methods further. While we suggest various criteria for a critical approach to visual materials, we attend to certain concepts more than others, depending on their relevance to the content and context of the images at hand.

## OLIMPIA: RECLAIMING THE GAZE

The scene of Katarzyna Kozyra's *Olimpia* (1996; three large-scale photographs and a video) almost literally copies Edouard Manet's painting *Olympia*, first exhibited in Paris in 1865. However, a more detailed inspection of the photographs reveals various imperfections of that restaging. Whereas Manet shows us the black servant with flowers, the chaise longue covered with an expensive cloth, the black cat and the sensual nude woman, Kozyra puts herself in the scene, thus interrupting its traditional narrative. The artist's face is drawn and tense rather than seductive, despite the velvet ribbon tied around the neck in exactly the same way as in the canvas. The hairless body (the artist was undergoing treatment for cancer at the time) is thin and withered, the skin a pale yellow. The odd assemblage of bodies and objects has none of the intimacy of Manet's interior. The cat is obviously stuffed, emphasising the quasi-grotesque, artificial character of the arrangement. Manet's painting coming being undone.

But what exactly are the transformative aspects of Kozyra's disquieting photograph, and how can a gender-sensitive way of looking contribute to its reception? We will address these questions by delineating two concepts



Figure 8.1 Katarzyna Kozyra, *Olimpia*, 1996, courtesy of the artist.<sup>1</sup>

and two methodological tools to analyse this image: the concept of the gaze and its tradition in psychoanalytic feminist theory, and the concept of nudity/nakedness and the meanings it generates as a semiotic sign.

Let us first locate our analysis in the fields of traditional art history, visual culture studies and feminist theory, paying particular attention to the concept of the gaze. John Berger (1972), in his oft-cited book *Ways of Seeing*, states that in Western visual culture—whether in the art of painting or advertising—it is men who do the acting while women just make a passive appearance. In other words, men look and women are being looked at. The most important function of the female body in visual culture is its to-be-looked-at-ness. The feminist concern with visual analysis therefore is first and foremost aimed at exposing and differentiating this representational tradition. It was Laura Mulvey who, in writing her influential essay ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (1975),’ created insight into the gender specific practice in film and other image genres. Feminist research into images has often been based on Mulvey’s analysis of Hollywood cinema, but can be enormously significant for the analysis of still images too. Mulvey’s vocabulary is drawn from psychoanalysis and semiotics. That is to say, in thinking about the fascination involved in looking at images, she draws a connection between the medium’s formal aspects, narrative concerns and processes of identity construction on the part of spectators. A first step in a gender-sensitive reading of images is thus to examine whether men and women are systematically portrayed in different manners. The second step

involves examining the meaning of those differences: watching a film, that is, the classic situation of looking at projections on screen while sitting in darkness in a theatre has, from the start, carried connotations of scopophilia and voyeurism—the latter being linked with the desire to receive or possess something or somebody. Mulvey goes on to emphasise that in the classic cinematic tradition, the camera position inevitably enforces the spectator to gaze along with the male character towards the objectified female body that is reduced to passive spectacle. Gaze, perspective and the film's editing thus determine who can look, or whose perspective is being deployed, and what can be seen; which worlds are revealed, which concealed; which identification possibilities are within reach, which are marginalised. The male gaze embodies in fact a form of defining power. Within Mulvey's analysis of classic representation history, the female body functions as indicator of sexual difference, of the other, the deviant, the passive. If, however, women actively return the gaze or in another way threaten to become the owner of gaze or agency, then women—inevitably—until the early 1990s at least, pay for this singularity through death, as for example in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (Smelik 1998).

Mulvey's essay has been enormously influential on both feminist film theory and art criticism. However, the institutionalisation of the universal, impartial, incorporeal male gaze was widely questioned by feminist scholarship in various frameworks. Jackie Stacey (1992, 1994) demonstrated that film produces a range of gendered spectator positions, and therefore different responses to the visual pleasures offered by them. Similarly, Kaja Silverman (1996) argued that the eye can 'read against the grain' and look beyond the normative aspects of the cultural image-repertoire: the male is not always the controlling subject nor is the female always the passive object. Mary Ann Doane (1991) used Joan Riviere's (1996) concept of the masquerade (i.e., presenting womanliness as something that can be assumed and worn as a mask) to question the concept of essential femininity subjected to the masculine view. Finally, Teresa de Lauretis (1994) criticised Mulvey for not allowing the possibility of women themselves looking at women and thus erasing the specificity of lesbian desire.

We will now show how the different strands of the feminist debate concerning the concept of the gaze converge in Kozyra's photograph, which makes a harsh departure from scopophilic practices and replaces these by a visual assault of the eye/I. The deliberately disturbed pleasure of watching is the main theme of *Olimpia*. In the face of an ongoing traumatisation caused by a life-threatening disease, the viewer is confronted with an uneasy feeling of sameness and difference, the blurring of boundaries between normativity and its crisis. That blurriness defies the position of the masculine, penetrative gaze about which Mulvey writes. The refusal to cede the act of viewing entirely to others constitutes *Olimpia* as both object *and* subject of the gaze.<sup>2</sup> The artist meets the viewer's gaze, reversing it, forcing him/her to rethink and verify the settled order of values by drawing attention to the crisis of the sick, malfunctioning body. In doing so, she safeguards

her self-image. In this respect, Kozyra's conscious self-display seems to reclaim the primary narcissism which according to Irigaray was taken away from women by the representational tradition of Western culture (Irigaray 1985). Primary narcissism, the presymbolical sense of belonging, the sense of feeling one with oneself, is lost when little girls grow up and have to inscribe themselves in the heteronormative symbolic order. That order is characterised by a lack of adequate articulations for women and a lack of acknowledgement of the differences between them (which are also race-, ethnicity- and class- related).

As mentioned earlier, the artist's body, although immediately recognised within the iconographical trope, is troubling and disconcerting. Consequently, the language we might use to describe it involves certain ruptures. Whereas the body in Manet's painting could still be called a *nude* body (coded as the educated, balanced, prosperous body clothed in art, containing all that was seen as threatening and uncontrolled in women),<sup>4</sup> Kozyra's Olympia becomes a *naked* body: vulnerable, intimate, deprived of clothes and self-revealing (Nead 1992). The concept of the nude, both as a body and as a genre of painting, stems from a semiotic tradition that is centrally concerned with the construction of social differences through signs, ideological complexes and dominant codes, in relation to a broader system of meanings (Bal and Bryson 1991; Rose 2007). Posing for *Olympia*, Kozyra has written herself into a traditional economy of art—the exploitation of the desirable female body. She replicates the iconographic theme of *Venus pudica*: the gesture that both covers the female genitals, but also directs the (male) gaze to them (Broude and Garrard 1994, 2005).<sup>5</sup> *Venus pudica* has for centuries figured as a symbol of Western art in general. It functions as a Barthesian myth (1973): a structure not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it conveys meanings broadly naturalised in Western culture, legitimising social inequalities. We can challenge the concept of the nude with that of 'nakedness.' This split in language might be a process of what Bal (1996) calls 'double exposure'—not only exposing the sign itself, but also displaying the interpretations of/around it that recall the societal rules and regulations inscribed on the body of an individual (Foucault 1978). While Manet's *Olympia* was indebted to Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538) and Goya's *The Nude Maja* (1800), both showing the same pose, it was also influenced by nineteenth-century erotic photography. In this way, Kozyra's restaging of the theme through the photographic medium recalls its predecessor's sources, yet shifts it from pornographic consumption to aesthetic confusion.

The naked/nude body in *Olympia* is accompanied by another sign that reveals the constructions of social differences: the figure of a black servant. Staging the white mistress next to a black servant is part of a long tradition of representing the black female body as both serviceable and sexual. Sander L. Gilman (2003) points out that the linkage of two visual conventions of femininity—the woman of colour and the prostitute—in nineteenth-century iconography resulted in the sexuality of the black

body becoming an icon of deviant sexuality and female sexuality in general (see also Moore and Wekker, this volume).<sup>6</sup> Yet, whereas Gilman sees the black female in Manet's painting as the emblem of syphilis brought to Europe by sailors travelling beyond the continent, Kozyra stresses the staged, proplike character of the servant, the equivalent of the stuffed cat. Race and gender become the masquerade, a play that reveals their societal and ideological constructions.

What we have pointed out so far, using the example of *Olimpia*, is that a feminist literacy in reading and rereading images regardless of their generic, spatial and temporal locations, involves various signposts:

- 1) an awareness of visual codes and traditions in general (such as nudity in Western art history)
- 2) knowledge of the gendered structures of those codes and traditions (such as the gaze)
- 3) attentiveness to the gendered and racialised issues in the process of (self) representation (the self-portrait, the black servant).

These signposts are present not only within the image, but also in its discursive relations with other images. Kozyra's photograph, repeating a painting, calls for an approach that acknowledges its intertextual or intermedial character (Kristeva 1980). Media refer to other media, and images to other images. Images derive both their meaning and the effect they have from this play with the visual tradition. Such play however is no arbitrary exchange of signs but deadly serious, because it is the only means of approaching reality: through images and texts, that is, through the iconographic and discursive traditions which are at our disposal. The reality of existing images can change their meaning if new images arrive on the scene; new images inevitably bring along the echoes of tradition. Kozyra's deliberate intermediality signals a shift from the Western art history tradition of the nude to the confrontational nakedness of the photographed sick body. It demonstrates that the dialogue within the visual field is ongoing and never ending. Seeing Kozyra's *Olimpia* means that Manet's painting will never be the same again, and vice versa.

## MADONNA OF WARFARE: CHALLENGING THE TROPE

Our second case again involves a photograph of a woman. The photo we choose to present here belongs to the genre of press photography, and thus the claims and pretensions it has are different from those of Kozyra's self-critical artistic project. Nevertheless, as we will point out, press photography is indebted to the same gender/ethnicity/race constructions as art history. The gender-sensitive approach for this genre is a new branch on the tree of feminist visual analysis that needs to be developed further as, despite the multifarious presence of women in press

photography, gender and photography have mostly been kept apart in the theoretical discourses. Photography, its history and its philosophy belong to the study of visual culture, media or art history, while gender, particularly in the context of war, has been at the heart of political theory, sociology or jurisprudence (Azoulay 2008). With the exception of several iconic photographs, such as *Migrant Mother* (1936), *Napalm Girl* (1972), *Afghan Girl* (1985), and finally soldier Lynndie England in the Abu Ghraib photos (2004), the debates on gender in the context of humanitarian photographic practices have been virtually absent (Lutz and Collins 1993). With the help of our next example we will point out the relevance of gender sensitive analysis in the genre of war coverage, and we will do so by focusing on the intermediality of certain representations of femininity. That is to say, in order to understand the effect of a particular photograph, we will focus on the interconnectedness of the different media that depend on and refer to each other, both explicitly and implicitly, constructing a wider cultural environment (Ellestrom 2010). We will address this intermediality at three different levels: the dynamic between aesthetic and political powers in the photograph, the relation between the image and the accompanying caption and the incorporation of art tradition into digital photography practice.

The photograph, taken by Luiz Vasconcelos, shows a Brazilian woman desperately trying to stop a wall of policemen from evicting her from her land. It won the recognition of the jury and the first prize in the *General News* category in the 2008 World Press Photo contest.<sup>7</sup> A formal analysis of the image reveals the layered presence of colours, shapes, lines and dynamic forces. Although the photograph is still, there is a strong suggestion of movement; it is obvious that the crowd of men is progressing and the woman about to fall over. The parallel lines of shields, skyline, policemen's legs and the ground constitute a set of horizontal levels, the monotony of which is disturbed by the woman's body. There is a gap in the wall of shields, through which a stick comes, ready to fall (again?) upon the woman's head, or that of the baby she is holding. Her face is contorted in physical effort and in crying out, while the baby's body is vulnerable in its nakedness. The faces and upper bodies of the policemen are invisible, their legs covered in dark uniforms and black boots, in striking contrast to the woman's colourful clothes (her orange skirt might be seen as a *punctum* of the photograph, screaming against the monotonous greyness of the background).<sup>8</sup> The dramatic event described here is entwined with its picturesque rendition.

What are the dynamics between the disturbing content and the engaging formal composition of the image? The 'painterly' character of this photograph (increased further when highly enlarged and presented to the audience in gallery spaces or in visually elaborate coffee-table books) might result in looking at it as a bold, colourful, aesthetically pleasing *tableau vivant* rather than a testimony of social injustice. This very photograph occupies the space between historical event and fictional emotion condensed





Figure 8.2 Luiz Vasconcelos, Brazil, 2008. ©Luiz Vasconcelos/A Crítica/AE/ZUMA.

into the moment of visual eloquence, where our indignation is frequently transformed into the admiration of the sublime spectacle (Boltanski 1999). Rather than engaging with a ‘beautiful suffering’ (Reinhardt, Edwards and Duganne 2007) and this image’s aesthetic values (Barthes 1981; Sontag 1989; Baudrillard 1998), gender-sensitive analysis is concerned with the way this photograph is pivotal to the production of notions about power relations, citizenship and sovereignty (Azoulay 2008).

For that, one needs to examine the discursive context in which the photograph situates itself. While the image catches us in the aesthetics of the spectacle, the caption threatens to flatten out the factual events that originated it, as it delegitimises certain social and political actions: “A woman tries to resist police eviction of squatters on private land near the city of Manaus, in the state of Amazonas in Brazil. Eviction notices had been served on families living on the land some days earlier. The squatters, who were protesting against lack of housing in Manaus, were evicted after a clash that lasted two hours.”<sup>9</sup> The woman is a nameless representative of the ‘squatters,’ the single bearer of gendered, ethnicised and classed identity. No perpetrators are designated, no accusations of social injustice made. By critically analysing the dynamics between image and caption, we can discern that while the central point of the image is the woman herself, she is structurally withdrawn from the narrative. Image and caption are trapped in a complex, dynamic relationship with one another. Somewhere between the cryptic text and a disturbing content lies this image’s power to affect us (Zarzycka, forthcoming).



Our analysis now is geared to coming to grips with the question of why precisely this particular photograph should evoke such strong response; again we will look for answers by considering the way this image relates to other images of women in our visual culture. We argue here that the meaning and strong impact of Vasconcelos's photograph are correlated to the meaning and impact carried by certain visual conventions within the Western tradition, their wide circulation and mainstream recognition.

In order to attain a critical view on this picture, its intermedial character should be further analysed and mapped. Like many iconic images, this photograph comprises two tropes (rhetorical devices used in a figurative or non-literal sense; Bal 2002) which for centuries have been flourishing in the visual sphere. Those two tropes are highly gendered. One concerns the trope of the Madonna holding a child, a powerful representation of the nurturing, virgin-like mother (Warner 1976), whose body is a place of conflicting desires: the threshold of love; *the sacrum* and *the profanum* (Kristeva 1986); the locus of (future) pain, suffering, sacrifice, and redemption. Viewing the photograph, we immediately enter the appealing and easily consumed narrative of the primal mother defending her child and her domestic territory. Our sympathy lies with this universal mother, our concern is for her. The other iconographic trope concerns the contrast of femininity with the military (Marilyn Monroe singing to the soldiers, American mothers protesting against the war in Iraq) based on the traditional reproduction of social orders and gender roles. In photography and art, this trope often takes the form of the civilian woman facing soldiers. A famous example could be the photograph by Marc Riboud showing a young girl protesting against the Vietnam War in Washington (in 1967; Hariman and Lucaites 2007). Youth, femininity and flowers form a direct opposition to uniforms, masculinity and weapons, thus guiding our sympathy towards peace-oriented action.

Now that we have mapped the two prevalent tropes in Vasconcelos's photograph, we can deepen our understanding of this picture by trying to challenge what we have found so far: both aforementioned tropes undergo a certain shift within the picture. The settler woman is not immobile and static like the Madonna. Moving us in her enormous but fruitless effort to resist the aggressors, the woman in the photograph undermines the classic representation of the docile, graceful, contained body in Renaissance paintings. One could argue that she oscillates between the positions of two 'mothers of culture' (Bronfen 1992, 66), Mary and Eve. The transition from the pure, almost disembodied figure of the Virgin Mary, the role model of Christian de-sexualised motherhood, towards the deceptive figure of Eve, who bears children and questions the existing order, strongly negotiates female agency and its liberation from patriarchal constraints. Moreover, the biblical character of the scene is reinforced by the image of a palm tree in the background, a veritable paradise lost, like the one denied to Eve. After the act of expulsion, innocence will be destroyed; the nakedness of a child will become shameful and will have to be covered. The denial of serenity and docile motherhood changes our view of the nature of femininity represented here.

As to the second trope, the woman in the picture is neither an advocate for peace nor the supporter of brave troops; she is clearly part of the conflict. She does not mourn, granting forgiveness or absolution of guilt, nor does she advocate peace, both emotional labours traditionally ascribed to women. At first glance, one might argue that the photograph is one of the infrequent examples of the actual empowerment of women in contemporary visual culture: rather than representing the settler as the consumable object of domesticity and nurturance, she is shown as being engaged in the armed conflict. As a result, the category of ‘woman,’ rather than being an unproblematised homogenous concept, intersects with other axes of social difference such as ethnicity, class or positioning in the (armed) conflict. The key learning point here is how the intermedial negotiations between this and other images can change the spectator’s view on femininity under war.

As we have demonstrated, a gender-sensitive reading:

- 1) remains critical of the purely aesthetic approach which depoliticises and consequently universalises/marginalises
- 2) examines the context the image is placed in, acknowledging that visual culture at large is dependent on institutional practices (i.e., the newspaper’s profile, political discourse)
- 3) brings (back) the awareness that images help to form and in turn are formed by dominant and alternative understandings of intermedial conventions and tropes persistent in the visual sphere.

To recapitulate, the impact of this photograph relies on its recognisability and on its simultaneous challenge to established visual tropes. Cross-fertilisation of these tropes is a way of mapping the picture’s intermediality. By capturing the woman in an attempt (however pointless it might be) to secure some kind of agency, by tracing its iconographical roots, this photograph produces space for negotiation of the gender binaries and simultaneously lays bare how photojournalism with its implicit goals of straightforwardness and democracy often borrows from arbitrary, asymmetrical relations of power pertaining to the visual sphere. In order to exercise feminist visual literacy, one needs to acknowledge this photograph’s relation to the context in which it is embedded, as well as to many other photographs of war and conflict and paintings from centuries ago. Simultaneously, one needs to confront the discrepancy between them on all levels: cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic and aesthetic. Because the (over) visibility of female bodies (especially of women who are culturally, racially and spatially foreign) is often characterised by the narrow margin of recurrent motifs (Mohanty 2003), we need to look at them as a part of the larger system where social relations and systems of knowledge are shaped, thus moving beyond the image’s aesthetic appeal.

## CONCLUSION

Using the examples of semiotic, psychoanalytic and discursive tools in this chapter, as well as a number of concepts and tropes travelling across media and genres, such as the gaze, the nude and the naked body and the woman under war, we have pointed out that in order to develop a feminist reading that works towards productive social change, it is necessary to understand representation as a political issue. The female body—be it exposed, seductive, vulnerable, self-revealing or oppressed, fighting back, marginalised—is a space where women's agency, governance and civil status are negotiated. We have demonstrated that, in order to challenge the traditional disciplines and institutions prone to replicate phallogocentric structures, such as art practice and global reporting, we need first and foremost to cut through the proliferating representations of women in art and media and to realise that the universal character they assume frequently makes us relapse into forms of essentialism and homogeneity. To develop the language for talking about images, we contextualised them according to their historical, social, geopolitical and genre-related positioning and examined the relations and dependencies they create with other images and texts.

While Western culture is permeated with images, as they (digitally) circulate faster and faster, as their initial contexts are being left behind and new interconnections are being created, scholarly writing about/with/ across images necessarily needs to deal with not only the methods of visual analysis but also with the fluctuations of their meanings. The power of a single image always exceeds our ability to interpret it (Mitchell 2005); issues of representation are forever subject to intermedial applications and understandings. Each image may distort our habitual ways of seeing, and it may do so for a variety of purposes, bringing forth the questions of finding one's way in their constant flow and frequent slippage.

To redress this imbalance, various contexts for study are needed, which in turn call for a range of different approaches. As we have shown, these approaches can be concerned not only with the aesthetic power of images but also with the power relations that are produced and articulated by the different ways of seeing and imaging, as well as with the larger scope of knowledge production. Only then can we secure a potential for feminist visual studies and overcome the allocation of speaking positions from which we as viewers and academics engage in a conversation over the silent women to be viewed. And only then can images speak back.

## NOTES

1. Our thanks to Katarzyna Kozyra for providing the image and copyright. Katarzyna Kozyra (born 1963) is one of the most controversial contemporary

- Polish artists to date. Her performances and videos examine issues such as gender, aging, illness and religion and their social impact.
2. Self-portraiture is a technique frequently used by women artists to grant them the control over the act of showing—to counter the process of symbolic and social ‘othering.’ In her book *The Art of Reflection: Women Artists’ Self-Portraiture in the XX Century* (1996), Marsha Meskimmon shows how lesbian, heterosexual, maternal and disabled bodies come under scrutiny in women’s self-portraits and how these images are used to challenge common representational myths.
  3. For feminists, discovering that women artists were structurally omitted from the discipline of art history meant that they began to question how art history had been written, exposing its hierarchies, silences and prejudices (Parker and Pollock 1981). However, in her famous text ‘Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?’ (1971) Linda Nochlin rightly points out that attempts to try to answer that question have only reinforced its negative implications of feminine creativity: writing women artists back into the discipline only reinforces its boundaries and is not at all equal to the production of a feminist art history (Pollock 1988; Korsmeyer 1998).
  4. Manet’s painting, presenting a famous Parisian courtesan rather than an ancient goddess, is in fact seen as one of the first to begin problematising the term ‘nudity’ (Nead 1992).
  5. Another project by Kozyra, a video called *Bathhouse* (1997), is inspired by the rituals of a communal bathhouse in Budapest and makes reference to Ingres’ *The Turkish Bath* (1862) and Rembrandt’s *Susannah Surprised by the Elders* (1645).
  6. The exhibition in 1810 of an African woman named Saartjie Baartman, known as the *Hottentot Venus* (referring to her protruding buttocks and pronounced genitalia) further reinforced the conflation of a non-European female with the monstrous, the animal-like, and the abnormal. Baartman’s body parts were exhibited posthumously also at the Musée de l’Homme in Paris until 2002 and was later buried in Cape Town (Gilman 2003; Buikema 2009).
  7. World Press Photo, founded in 1955, is known for organising a prestigious annual press photography contest for professional photographers from all over the world. Each year, the pictures are awarded in eleven categories, such as Spot News, General News, Contemporary Issues and so on.
  8. Roland Barthes (1981) saw *punctum* as an emotive, affect-inducing, often incommunicable ‘piercing’ or ‘bruising’ of the subject viewing a photograph.
  9. World Press Photo, <http://www.worldpressphoto.com> (accessed August 18, 2010).

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