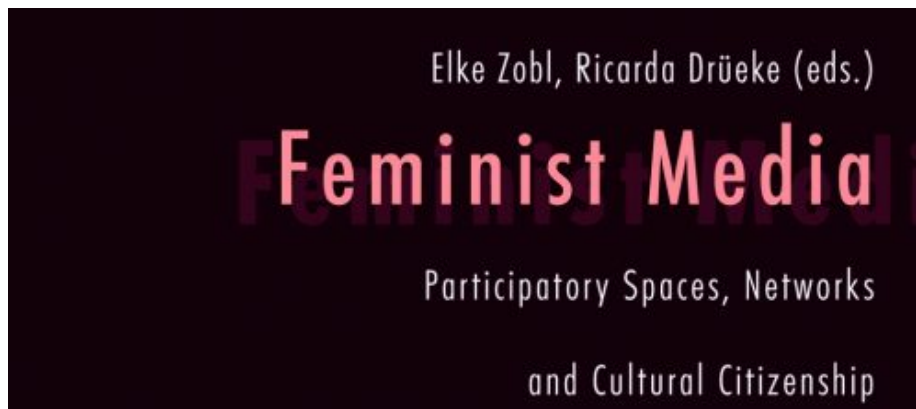


Feminist Media: Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship

An anthology edited by Elke Zobl and Ricarda Drüeke (transcript, October 2012)



While feminists have long recognised the importance of self-managed, alternative media to transport their messages, to challenge the status quo and to spin novel social processes, it has been an underresearched area. Hence, this book explores the processes of women's and feminist media production in the context of participatory spaces, technology and cultural citizenship. The English-language collection is comprised of theoretical analyses and critical case studies. It highlights contemporary alternative feminist media in general as well as blogs, zines, culture jamming and graffiti and contributes to a network via www.grassrootsfeminism.net. With contributions from (among others): Red Chidgey (UK), Jenny Gunnarsson Payne (Sweden), Anita Harris (Australia), Tea Hvala (Slovenia), Elisabeth Klaus (Austria), Verena Kuni (Germany), Margreth Lünenborg (Germany), Alison Piepmeier (USA), Linda Steiner (USA).

The common objective of all of the contributions is to analyze the broad topic of media and gender from a social-theoretical – but above all, feminist – perspective. In different ways, the articles pose questions concerning the specific production conditions of feminist media, the interplay between art and gender, the options for opening up new participatory spaces as well as for the creation of feminist public spheres. From a theoretical viewpoint, the articles are based for the most part on feminist theories of the public sphere and on the concept of cultural citizenship. Starting from different perspectives, the empirical analyses in the individual chapters place the focus on feminist activism. The book is organized in three main sections: Feminist media production and alternative economies, Participatory spaces and networks and Cultural citizenship and social change.

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 and the Program Area Contemporary Arts & Cultural Production, Focus Area Science & Art, University of Salzburg in Cooperation with University Mozarteum (funded by the Austrian Science Fund from December 2008 – November 2012, P21187). The “Feminist Media Production in Europe” study has focused on contemporary feminist grassroots media in the print and digital realm, taking into account not only more traditional media outlets but also present developments in Web 2.0. Building on our previous studies on feminist zines in the German-speaking area, the UK, Sweden

and in the international realm, independently produced magazines, blogs (web-logs) and e-zines (electronic magazines) were taken as objects of the study. The two main aims of this project have been: 1) to document and describe contemporary feminist grassroots media in Europe, in order to establish a „living history archive“, 2) to analyse the contents and discourses of feminist magazines, e-zines and blogs, so as to evaluate the agenda and techniques of feminist media production.

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 the book (for a detailed report on the study see Zobl and Reitsamer).

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