



## The International Collective of Women Visual Artists

### FemLink-Art (FL'Art)

#### What is FL'Art ?

FL'Art is an artist collective. It's a women artists' initiative. It was founded by the visual artists C.M. Judge (from USA) and Veronique Sapin (from France/Canada), in 2005. This cross-cultural project set out to explore new forms of artistic networking and transnational cooperation.

Since the creation of FL'Art, they invited 145 artists from 63 countries (from the 4 continents) for creating common art-works which can include women-artists from everywhere in the world.

#### Why did FL'Art be created ?

Every artist aspires to universality, but, as everybody knows, women were not allowed to do so for centuries; not only were they forbidden to access to creation but also to training and teaching. Either female artists were overlooked by history or for those who transgressed the rules they were regarded as inferior and relegated to what was derogatorily called "female art."

Today, many women feel still ostracized in too many parts of the world and of course not only female artist. The FL'Art's "video collages" will speak to women in this situation. As artists, we must be acknowledged -- this forms a major component of their mission.

**FL'Art** wishes to gather the grand, encompassing power of culture and art to serve human values, create dialog, promote peace and acknowledgment of others. Liberating the powers of culture and art entails reinventing life; and in doing so FL'Art participates for changes in this world, changes that make our world more human.

For a long time, aesthetics were imposed upon by boundaries and dominated by questions of limitation, exclusion, legitimacy and hierarchy. This served to defend compartmentalized territories, legitimate the boundaries kept by some, and safeguard the sovereignty of one kind of art against all the others.

**FL'Art** was created to in opposition to speech exclusion, boundaries between the works and the world so that other views, other ways to comprehend the world might be allowed.

*"In order to live in a different world, a world open to others -- no matter who -- we value paying attention to other forms of expression, other relationships and other experiences. Resisting uniformity, we prefer for FL'Art to convey the flow of energy between these multiple "territories." To make this dynamic multicultural dream come true, our voices are multiple, multiplying our connections to others."*

#### **Problem of frontiers : why do you recreate frontiers in your artwork ?**

*Answer from Véronique Sapin : "I often have to answer a question concerning the borders. Why to recreate them by inviting one artist by country in every video composition. Crossing borders to breakdown barriers is at the heart of our initiative. It has been necessary to use national boundaries imposed by human beings as a starting point — a geographical tool. If we want to transcend borders, it is necessary to consider they exist. As Umberto Eco suggests in his notion of "crossing" ; it's to say : every barrier is immediately damaged and crossed. "*

### **Why do they invite MALE ARTISTS ?**

*Answer from Véronique Sapin : "From the beginning of our project, CM and I wished to include male artists in our international fight for the equitable inclusion of women artists on the world art stage. Because this fight must be the fight of every artist, in 2007, we invited male artists to join our «artists chain», as man says «human chain». At this moment 8 male artists created videos in their own topic which is still in progress. Their topic is : «Portrait of a Woman Visual Artist»."*

### **How are chosen the artists who take part to one topic ?**

Participation in FL'Art is by invitation only. Veronique Sapin is in charge to invite the artists. Her primary focus is to bring together different points of view around a common topic in the purpose that the videos complement and mutually reinforce each other to become pieces of a common artwork. Each time according to the topic, the challenge is to find the good combination amongst the different sensibilities of the artists, for creating the best synergy gathering all the videos together under the one roof (the video-composition) so that they can meet, confront and mutually enhance one another.

### **What does FL'Art create ?**

FL'Art create worldwide video compositions

A Video-Composition includes videos created by artists around a common topic.

The structure is simple: 1 video = 1 artist = 1 country / 1 common topic

The running time of each video is 2 min maximum.

Each composition = 24 to 34 videos = 45 to 60 min.

The videos are created for FL'Art.

The composition is considered itself as an artwork which is created with singular videos. It's why each video takes part definitely to the composition

### **What did video-compositions FL'Art create untill now ?**

AGGRESSION, (24 artists - 24 videos - 24 countries - 45 min.)

FEMALE (30 artists - 30 videos - 30 countries - 60 min).

FRAGILITY (32 artists - 32 videos - 32 countries - 60 min.)

MALE (32 artists - 32 videos - 32 countries - 58 min.)

PREOCCUPATION (33 artists - 33 videos - 33 countries - 60 min.)

PROTEST (26 artists - 26 videos - 26 countries - 48 min)

RESISTANCE (32 artists - 32 videos - 32 countries - 57 min.)

VITAL, (24 artists, 24 videos, 24 countries - 42 min.)

WONDER (24 artists, 24 videos - 24 countries - 47 min.)

SECRET (25 artists, 25 videos - 25 countries - 48 min.)

Their current topic is DANGER

Their male colleagues are working on the topic "Portrait of a Woman Visual Artist"

### How does the collective work to create video-compositions?

The artists have a total freedom for the interpretation of the topic. Veronique Sapin and C.M. Judge send them only the topic itself without definition, explanations or meanings.

### Did FL'Art reach its goal ?

The question is now to know if the collective can reach its goal to make our world more humane. It can just tell you a little story, the story of the smallest bird of the world. In french, its name is the colibri. One day, in the forest of the colibri, there was a big fire. All the animals were paralyzed by the fear. There was just the colibri which took drops of water in its beak and let them down on the fire. The lion was annoyed by the round trips of the bird. He says: what are you doing colibri, do you think you are really usefull with your drops to stop the fire ?

The little bird say: I know, but I am doing my part.

It's the same for FL'Art, the collective is doing its part.

One of the reasons that FemLink exists, is to give self-confidence and self-esteem to every woman around the world who can see that women can create and be present in a high level of international wellknown.

### What is FL'Art in Art History?

Our collective is unprecedented, unique both in its scope and its longevity, in gathering so many artists from around the world with the intention of creating a common artwork.

### Screenings / exhibitions

From FL'Art's premiere in the US in February 2006 to November 2019, the video-compositions have been welcomed by more then 150 art centers, museums, galleries, and festivals ... in 42 countries. Each video-composition can be presented as single-channel and as installation.

Thus **FL'Art** travels around the world to create a network which, far from imitating the Web, aims at tying real bonds between the women of the association. Such a network can live only through living connections: aesthetic connections between works, artists and public. Their hope is their video-compositions may, as they are broadcast and widely exhibited, contribute positively in a just way to the diverse world.

## How does the collective work to find venues

Veronique Sapin and C.M. Judge are not alone to be in charge to find venues. The most of time, the artists themselves find places to welcome FL'Art. They are free to organize exhibitions in the way they wish. Veronique Sapin send them the links to download the videos. Freely of course.

## What does FL'Art organize ?

- We organize visual arts activities on an international scale, offering alternatives to commercialised and closed art circuits around the globe : Since our premiere, in February 2006, our compositions has been welcome by more than 140 Art-Centers, Museum, Galleries... from 34 countries
- In 2007, we organized training in video art for artists from countries where it's difficult to find opportunities with new medias' training. We associated with Unesco to train 4 women artists from 4 african countries (Congo-Brazzaville, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo).
- We develop the research about art-therapy with video; we organised art-therapy sessions in the Philippines inside a humanitarian organisation to stimulate bonds of attachment to the mother-teenager and their children.

## The association : legal statement

To have a legal statement and to have the possibility to organize events for FemLink and around the video-Art, Veronique Sapin created a legal association in France : VADIA (Video Art Development International Association).

This organization is based :  
In France, in Cugnaux (next to Toulouse).

There is a Board : (the name is in France "Association law 1901") with a President (Laurence Gaubert) and with a Secretary/Account manager (Martin Capel). The both are volunteers.

We try to rent the video-collages when they are screening. However, it's difficult because the most of the time, the art-centres wish to use freely the art-work.

## Money ?

C.M. Judge, Veronique Sapin and every artist are all volunteers.  
FL'Art never received funds, except with the Unesco programm in 2007.  
Also, we received found to edit our first book on FL'Art for its Anniversary of 10 yo.  
Because FL'Art never fit with a specific programm which are offered by international institutions.  
The Institutions have funds for European projects, Asia/Europe projects, Latin America/Europe projects, African / Latin America... but not for international project like ours.

## Funds from Unesco

The funds from Unesco Programm was obtained in 2007 to organize training in video for women artists from african countries. The training took place in the Videofemmes Centre, in Quebec (Canada). 4 women artists from 4 african countries (Congo-Brazzaville, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo) were trained in video art.

### **PROJECTS - What are the FL'Art projects ?**

- To continue to offer training in video for women artists from countries where the access to new technologies are limited (as we did with the found of Unesco; now this program no longer exists).
- To organise screenings and exhibitions of the FL'Art's compositions wherever women need still to demonstrate that they have the same abilities as men in Art. We would like present FL'Art inside and outside the official structures. For example, organize in villages or towns where people never seen art-video.
- To create a Women's Caucus for Art with a Conference and panelists as a biennial which takes places each time in different countries in Africa, Asia and South America. The objectives would be to know more about the historical place of women in Art in every country. We could edit a book after each Caucus which could become a reference in the History of the place of women in the art around the world.
- To create professional video editions of single artists.
- To edit our second book for the 20 years of FL'Art.
- To create an art-video-library from women video around the world...