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FEMINISM AND MUSEUMS

Intervention, Disruption and Change

Volume Two

Edited by Jenna C Ashton

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

EXCEPTIONAL OR EXCLUDED: WOMEN'S HISTORY IN THE NETHERLANDS

Manon S Parry and Jasmijn van Houten

THERE IS A LONG TRADITION in the Netherlands of public exhibitions incorporating women's history, beginning with the first feminist expositions of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which celebrated female accomplishments and advocated for increased opportunities (Gever & Waaldijk, 1998; Olijslager, 2015: 133-149). These projects were occasional events, undertaken by women actively campaigning for equality, and set apart from the study and presentation of history in academia and public culture, where research and interpretation remained focused on the activities and accomplishments of men. In the 1970s, in response to students' demands for more inclusive histories, university scholars began to develop deeper analyses of the experiences of women. Initially, this work made successful inroads into the presentation of the past, both within and outside of academic circles. In 1991, Dutch historian Francisca de Haan reflected on the "strong infrastructure" developed in the field, and concluded that "more than other branches of the historical discipline in the Netherlands, women's history has succeeded in crossing the boundaries of the universities and reaching a wider audience," through a series of popular exhibitions (De Haan, 1991: 259-277).

Examining the current status of women's public history in the Netherlands, however, it seems that some of those earlier gains have since been eroded. While there is ongoing attention to the representation of women in archives and museums, this attention arises from their under-representation in the permanent exhibitions of major museums and their marginalization in smaller and fleeting temporary exhibitions.¹ Public exhibitions that include women tend to emphasize only those who were exceptional in some way, or remain focused on men,

presenting “ordinary” women in supporting roles. Exhibitions that do highlight women’s experiences are more likely to be occasional rather than an integrated part of the main narratives presented by museums.²

This chapter draws on the interrelationship between academic research, teaching, and museum practice, to demonstrate how pedagogical engagement with feminism in a university, specifically on the Master’s program in Public History at the University of Amsterdam, fosters its application in museum exhibitions in galleries and online. We focus here on two examples – drawing on the master’s thesis research of one of this chapter’s authors, van Houten (2014), on the representation of women in Dutch museum exhibitions, and a class project by current and former students taught by the other author, Parry, to create audiocasts of women’s history.³ While academic researchers and museum practitioners typically consider museum practice to follow years behind new trends in scholarly research, student projects can accelerate this interaction in targeted ways. Both projects also foster feminist perspectives in future museum practice by cultivating knowledge and skills among these students as they train for their professional careers as public historians.

Curatorial context

The common assumption that the Netherlands is a progressive country is partly to blame for the current situation. As feminist and postcolonial scholars have noted, the dominant image of the Dutch represented in their own culture is that they are tolerant and egalitarian, and supportive of others less fortunate in the world. Historical interpretations also highlight these

themes, resulting in narratives of Dutch empire that celebrate this small nation’s global influence but omit the role of slavery, and an emphasis on the Netherlands as a victim of occupation in the Second World War, without attention to the country’s war against Indonesia’s independence during the same period. This self-image, encapsulated in Gloria Wekker’s recent book, *White Innocence*, is embedded in museum interpretation, although it has come under intense criticism in recent years (Wekker, 2016).

In 2002, the National Institute of Dutch Slavery and Heritage (NinSee) was founded to address the general silence on this topic in the nation’s major museums and in school curricula, leading to a series of exhibitions, publications, and educational resources. In 2013, NinSee was closed following a series of drastic financial cuts in previous years, just as preparations to mark the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Dutch colonies exposed ongoing opposition to the presentation of this history, as well as disputes over commemorative events. That year, some academic historians and museum stakeholders continued to defend celebratory histories of the Dutch Golden Age which marginalized the role of slavery, on the grounds that “reinterpretations” of the past were subjective and ahistorical because they criticized past practices based on present-day values.

Those who fought back developed an “intervention” in an existing exhibition, hosted public events examining representations of the past, and undertook new projects to bring this history to the people living in the Netherlands as well as international visitors to its museums and historic sites.⁴ MA students and graduates have been at the heart of some of these activities, as interns and early career professionals.⁵

In institutions that did tackle slavery in the anniversary year, there is often an assumption that now they can move on to other topics. Critical pressure has not subsided since the anniversary, however, and as a result, some museums are shifting their approach in line with international trends, such as the recalibration of ethnographic museums as “museums of world cultures” (which will address Dutch identity as well as the history of the nation’s colonial perspectives), and a commitment by the new director of the Rijksmuseum to break from past policy, to address the history of slavery in a major new exhibition planned for 2020 (Stöve, 2017; van Zeil, 2017).

Feminist scholars and museum practitioners have drawn connections between these trends and their work to reframe representations of gender and sexuality in the country’s cultural institutions, but this effort, in our view, has not yet been as successful. Many museum staff, as well as visitors, assume that there is no gender bias in the histories currently on display, and that furthermore, there is no urgent need to reconsider how women are treated in Dutch society or represented in its cultural institutions. In view of the profound influence of intersectional theory on feminist thought, it may seem odd to subdivide our discussion of race and gender here, but museums (and university curricula and government policy), commonly assign women and people of colour to separate categories/projects. Politicians and the general public also conflate class and race, assuming that white women are less “in need” than certain immigrant groups, and that all of those groups are better off than people elsewhere who rely on development aid (Wekker, 2016: 1-29). One indication of the influence of this view is the declaration in 2003, by the Dutch Minister of Social Affairs and

Employment, Aart Jan de Geus, that women’s emancipation in the Netherlands was successful and almost completed for white Dutch women. He argued that from then on, social policy should focus instead on women of colour and immigrants, who still experienced significant inequality (Vonk, 2010: 177).

This perception was inaccurate at the time, and remains so, as research on the gender gap in earnings, pensions, and career opportunities bears out, along with the high rates of sexual assault and lingering distrust of gender-based policies to investigate or ameliorate inequality (Portegijs *et al.*, 2004; 2016). In the context of this chapter’s focus on links between the academy, pedagogy, and the museum, it is also especially relevant to note that Dutch universities have the lowest percentage of female academics at the higher levels of the faculty (11%) than the average across the European Union (18%), which creates gender inequality in the staff profile, of course, but also in the topics taught across the curriculum, as well as in the research cited by scholars and in the agendas they focus on in their own work (van Engen *et al.*, 2011).

In cultural institutions as well as universities, some stakeholders simply underestimate the problem, as well as its significance. The assumption that the ways things are currently done is “good enough” has led some academics, museum practitioners, and cultural critics to delineate women’s history as biased (in a way that mainstream history is supposedly not), and to reject “politically correct” attempts to integrate it within traditional narratives. There is a sense that women’s histories represent special interests rather than a more inclusive past, and that the existing histories already on display are more objective. As one curator argued, proposing that women’s groups should

undertake their own exhibitions:

...they will have a very specific, subjective relation to the past. I also have a subjective relation to the past, because I have a personal background that is also a factor in this. But as a scientist, I will try to shut that personal background off as much as possible.⁶

The lessons of feminist epistemology, on the “situatedness” of all knowledge, and the importance of identifying one’s own perspective and its potential impact, are thus co-opted and then discounted. In fact, feminism, and gender as a tool of (historical) analysis (Scott, 1986), remain surprisingly controversial within Dutch universities, as well as in wider society. Despite rich and wide-ranging academic scholarship on women in Dutch history, stakeholders in museums as well as universities continue to assert the objectivity and neutrality of dominant interpretations of the past that exclude the results of such research.

The resurgence of a national canon of significant historical events and figures has exacerbated the problem in the Netherlands. First proposed in 2007, this consists of fifty “windows” on the past, which include fifteen historical figures, only three of whom are female.⁷ The project was prompted by widespread public debate about low levels of historical awareness, blamed, ironically, on the rise of post-modern scholarship, including women’s studies, and the emphasis in schools on skills-based, instead of fact-based, learning (Grever, 2008: 285-302). The canon has been intensively and persuasively critiqued, for producing anachronistic whig histories which perpetuate selective

accounts of elite individuals and isolated moments of transformation, and for ignoring the social context of longer processes of historical change (Grever *et al.*, 2006; Grever & Stuurman, 2007). Focusing primarily on political history and the history of ideas, and elevating a “public” sphere of activity whilst simultaneously obscuring its connections to a supposedly “private” realm, the approach obscures the experiences and influence of non-elite people and marginalized groups (Stuurman, 2000: 147-166; Grever, 2008: 288). As historian Geertje Mak argues, in a traditional canon, “long-term social, economic and cultural transformations are largely absent, so that women (as well as ‘ordinary men’) hardly seem to play a role at all” (Mak, 2007: 128-142).

Canonical histories are not only limited to classrooms. *NRC Handelsblad* published a supplement on Dutch history in March of 2016, titled *Big, bigger, history*, focusing solely on a grand narrative and claiming, “everything about Dutch history is ‘big’” (NRC-Special: Groot, Groter, Geschiedenis, 2016). Ten female historians at Dutch universities co-wrote a response denouncing this characterization. As they argued, the important shifts in historical research since the eighties, including more attention to the lives of ordinary people, the history of religion, changing relations between men and women, colonial history, migration and slavery are all elements of the history of the Netherlands in the world that are obscured by an emphasis solely on elites and their empire (Bosch *et al.*, 2016).

The canon also reinforces narrow approaches in public exhibitions, a problem exacerbated by the typical character of most museum collections, in which the material culture of social elites dominates (Porter, 1990: 70-83). As the curator of a

major permanent exhibition at a popular museum in Amsterdam commented:

...whether you like it or not, men are often in charge, and when we go back further in time, we see that they were in charge even more often. Our exhibition does not specifically deal with everyday life but it deals with important and political developments. The more you go into issues of everyday life, the more you might get into the sphere of women.⁸

Despite historians' extensive criticism of the canon project (and the subsequent abandonment of plans for a museum based on the approach), the model has been adopted in school curricula since 2007 (Vos, 2009: 111-124). It thus continues to inform museum activities and is likely to be especially influential in projects targeting school-age visitors. The two projects we discuss here are attempts to expand the histories represented in the canon, and in some instances, to critique the premise it is based on and the historiographical trends it represents.

Els Kloek's *1001 Women in Dutch History*

The exhibition *1001 Women in Dutch History*, held at Special Collections at the University of Amsterdam from February to May 2013, was curated by historian Els Kloek. The project was based on her encyclopaedic reference book of the same title and an extensive website, which provides biographies of women from the Middle Ages onwards.⁹ One of her aims was to verify the existence of heroic or influential women who

had been excluded from official records as well as the histories based on them. As she noted in her introduction to the book:

...if there were no official sources confirming that women had been fighting on the city walls or had rescued their cities from the enemy, such stories were passed on as fibs, legends to brush up the past. (Kloek, 2013: 6)

Historians have thus had a tendency to discount other traces of evidence regarding their activities, despite the methodological lessons from women's history demonstrating the importance of alternative sources to recover lives left unrecorded in the documentation of society's elites.

The project received extensive media attention on television, radio, and in numerous newspapers and magazines, and within six months of publication, the book had sold over 15,000 copies (Visser, 2013). Although the majority of the press coverage was positive, some reports reflected very negative assumptions and stereotypes about women's history (and the historian herself). Prominent Dutch literary historian Herman Pleij criticized the project as a form of "apartheid" for separating women's history from the rest (Drayer, 2012). His attitude is indicative of a wider ambivalence about women's history as a specialist subject of research and teaching, both in the Netherlands and internationally, where feminists have long debated for the benefits and risks of establishing feminist and gender studies as an autonomous area of academic research (Hemmings, 2008). Kloek's own approach reflects the "integrationist" alternative. Indeed, she is one of several Dutch women's historians who have argued

since the 1970s (when she was one of the first group of people to practice women's history at the University of Amsterdam), that women's history should not be seen as a separate field, and who tried instead to blend women's history with existing historical narratives. In their introduction to the collection *Writing Women into History*, published in 1990, Kloek and her co-editor Fia Dieteren emphasized that although women's historians brought new ways of reading and critically interpreting historical sources, women's history should not be defined as a specialism because women's historians pose the same questions and struggle with similar problems as historians of other social issues (Kloek & Dieteren, 1990).

In the introduction to *1001 Women in Dutch History*, Kloek goes even further, stating that when she began her research, the turn to history from below "felt like an act of justice, a way to recover the balance." She continues, however, saying:

...in women's history, the emphasis was posed too strongly on ordinary women for a long time. There was a lot of focus on women's organizations and women as a group. If women should be offered a place in historical writing, they also deserve their individuality. (Kloek, 2013)

On the same point, talking about *1001 Women* in an interview with the newspaper *Trouw*, she characterizes women's history as either "critiquing" or "catching-up" to general history. She argues that the emphasis currently lies too heavily on critique, and that history from below has created an indistinct collection of stories without much impact. Instead, she says, "if you

really want to do women justice, you should really try to grant them their individuality. If you feel women deserve a place in history, then make it happen. Show it!" (Drayer, 2012).

Yet her approach in *1001 Women* may seem like a step backwards for those trying to push public history beyond a celebration of exceptional women and their accomplishments (Stetz, 2005: 208-216). As American historian Sonya Michel has recently argued, as part of her critique of the National Women's History Museum project in the United States, women's historians there "long ago abandoned the 'add-women-and-stir' approach to women's history, whereby one simply attempted to find female parallels to prominent male figures and patterns of accomplishment" (Michel, 2014). Add-women-and-stir does nothing to explain the barriers that prevented most women from accessing such opportunities, leaves traditional historical narratives in place (by justifying additions to the main story rather than revisions of the core narrative), and reinforces problematic conceptions of gender roles and their social value, by reasserting those male "patterns of accomplishment". In his review of *1001 Women* in the national newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, for example, columnist Frits Abrahams wrote:

I soon discovered – and I hope miss Kloek does not resent me for it – that the most colourful women were to be found in the category "adventure and sensation" rather than the "poetry and writing" (the practitioners are inside too much) or "charity, care and patronage" (these women are too virtuous). (Abrahams, 2013)

With these dismissive comments he suggested that only the

women engaged in extreme pursuits are interesting enough for a public exhibition (damning literary women in a way unlikely ever to be said of a male author or philanthropist, moreover). His aside about Kloek's imagined reaction to his review also implies that she might have an emotional response to his comments, as opposed to a professional one, a claim he emphasizes elsewhere in the text suggesting that "Kloek strikes back" against criticism.¹⁰ Similarly negative as well as openly hostile reporting has also surfaced in response to other women in curatorial roles in recent years. In such a context, it is perhaps unsurprising that Kloek strives for an integrationist history of women's accomplishments.

F-Site public history practicum

While Kloek has played down the feminist implications of her work, the second project we discuss here is explicitly branded as a feminist project. The F-Site online project of audiocasts and teaching materials is named in reference to a recent book of essays on the state of feminism in the Netherlands today, *Het F-Boek: Feminisme van Nu in Woord en Beeld* (The F-Book: Feminism Today in Word and Image). The book addresses the ongoing need for feminism alongside its continuing unpopularity – especially the gap between the number of people who agree with feminist principles versus the much smaller number who would identify themselves as feminist (Meulenbelt and Römken, 2015). The F-Site addresses the underrepresentation of women in the history curriculum of Dutch high schools.

Van Gisteren, a company founded in 2014 by graduates of the MA program in Public History at the University of Amsterdam, approached one of the authors (Parry), to collaborate

on a practical activity with students in her sixteen-week course on Digital Public History, taught every September to December. The first half of the course is based on readings and seminar discussion, and the second half devoted to a practical project in which students work in small groups to develop digital products on a theme, in consultation with collaborating cultural institutions and subject experts. Van Gisteren's previous projects include the history of migrants in Amsterdam for an exhibition at the main public library on the city's 180 nationalities, and a public debate about decolonizing history. This proposal was their first to focus solely on women's history. It was inspired by the experiences of one of the members while training to be a teacher, when her lecturer minimized the importance of women's history. As she reflects, the curriculum emphasizes military and political history, "which leaves no space for women" (A. Cremers, personal communication, 16 February 2017).

Parry's previous projects with students include online exhibitions on topics related to human rights and audio tours for city walks related to the artist/activist Provo movement. The themes reflect the teacher's expertise in the history of social movements and in the practice of radical public history (or "history as activism" in the service of social change), an emphasis that has been well received by most students but which has occasionally met with hostility from a small minority. Classes addressing feminism and women's history have been, by far, the most contested, with queer history also generating some opposition, although less directly expressed. A digital project in 2015 that focused on queer histories generated unusually negative reactions, including repeated statements from students

in class that they had difficulty “finding a connection” to the topic. Over three previous years of teaching at the university, public history students had also questioned the need to address homosexuality in museums, arguing that unlike the US (where the teacher had previously worked as an exhibition curator), the Netherlands is “tolerant” towards gays and lesbians, and that highlighting queer experience would overemphasize the significance of their sexuality.

Within the university, the past year has seen a significant shift regarding the importance of addressing gender and sexuality, as well as race and disability, after a faculty-led report strongly asserted the need for greater diversity in the university community and its curriculum (De Commissie Democratiseren en Decentraliseren, 2016). While some academic staff and students still disagree on the scale of the problem and the proposed solutions, few now openly discount the principle. The launch of the women’s history project thus occurred at a time when students were more attuned to critiques of traditional histories and their narrow, and infrequent, representations of women. The popularity of the *1001 Women* project the year before may also have fostered a favourable attitude among the group. Certainly, the class as a whole unequivocally accepted Van Gisteren’s rationale for the project from the outset – that the canon included too few women. In preliminary seminar discussions based on a selection of readings about women’s histories in the Netherlands, students discussed how women’s experiences were commonly presented in mainstream histories – in relation to the men in their life (husbands or fathers); according to gendered expectations of women’s roles (as mothers and homemakers); or, when they challenged such

expectations, as exceptions to the norm.

The class was then divided into pairs, and each pair assigned one time period from the curriculum and invited to choose a second, and asked to research potential figures to focus upon. Van Gisteren suggested particular individuals who reflected themes in the school curriculum, although students were welcome to suggest other people if they wished to. Most chose from the suggested lists. The class used the free museum audio tour app, *izi. TRAVEL*, as the platform for the project, to enable teachers to access a wide range of content for no cost, and staff from the Amsterdam office of the company attended class sessions to teach students how to use the software and to share examples of some of the most engaging storytelling techniques used in other projects. Over the seven weeks of the course, students researched existing public histories of their chosen figures, searched for audio clips and images to incorporate, created their storylines, and then revised them based on feedback from the teacher and the other project partners. After recording and editing, they presented the finished versions to the project partners and Els Kloek.

The class of nineteen students produced 50 audiocasts, available online as a website or via the app for mobile devices.¹¹ In addition to their digital product and an archive of their research, the students were required to complete a “personal reflection” considering some of the lessons they learnt during the project. We draw on the comments they made in this assignment for our analysis here.¹² The audiocasts are only two to three minutes long, and each incorporates just a handful of relevant images, but the collection exhibits a range of creative strategies to capture the listener’s attention. As well as using

sound effects to set the scene, from the deck of a ship where Queen Elizabeth 1 contemplates her leadership role to a radio interview with Eleanor Roosevelt, the atmospheric narratives move between the viewpoints of these women in the past, the people of their era, and historians' interpretations of them over the years since.

Students were conscious of the double work the site accomplishes, noting both how it "brings forth the discussion of gender inequality by challenging the historical canon" and also "highlights the history of gender equality and the struggle for women's rights." This was not just because some of the figures profiled, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Angela Davis, made their view on inequality very clear as part of their own work to challenge it. Students were also able to use the example of other figures to highlight the debates about women's roles that circulated during their lifetimes. An audiocast about Catharine Egges, for example, an eighteenth-century Dutch woman who took over her husband's publishing company after his death, is set in a coffeehouse where two men of the era discuss the increasing number of women with public roles. Amidst the chatter of the other patrons, Gerrit tries to persuade his friend Jan that such a shift is a positive part of the Enlightenment! Several students decided to make the under-representation of women an element of their narrative. As one commented:

...it became clear that the lack of women in history books should not just be corrected by adding more women, but also by asking why there aren't more women in textbooks and why it is that the women included are presented in a certain way.

This student wanted to develop his group's storylines to encourage students to view contemporary ideas about gender with the same "layer of critical thinking" with which they were encouraged to view the historical perspectives.

What is most impressive is how some of these students were able to incorporate feminist perspectives on the production and validation of knowledge into these brief, but rich narratives. It is not enough, as many acknowledged in their personal reflections, to simply introduce women into histories from which they were formally excluded – it is crucial to expose the mechanisms through which such exclusion occurred and continues to be rationalized. One student commented that she is, "often sceptical about historical books or websites that only pay attention to women, because the fact that they exist can stress the marginalized role of women in history." This can serve to affirm rather than challenge exclusionary approaches if not coupled with an examination of the processes involved. As an example of how to provide such a perspective, one of the audiocasts, *Ik ben Trijntje* (I am Trijntje), demonstrates how gendered ideas frame archaeological interpretations, shaping the presentation of men as hunters and women as gatherers, which is still the norm in Dutch textbooks today. The students who developed her storylines for the project "wanted to bring a female and critical perspective... by letting Trijntje speak for herself and be critical about the biased perception that archaeologists had." Furthermore, several of the audiocasts pay specific attention to changes in the ways their chosen figure has been represented at different historical moments, reflecting the influence of contemporary concerns on interpretations of past.

The project also provided the group with new perspectives

on feminism and women's history, serving for some as their first introduction to the topic. As one male student reported:

I found our "excursion" into gender theory to be an interesting one. It's a subject matter that I'd never really touched on before during my studies and barely knew anything about. It turned out to be a lot more interesting than I presumed it to be.

Our classroom discussions on the diversity commission's report, as well as the growing attention in Dutch media to the problem of suppressing and excluding slavery from museums and popular histories also focused their attention on race. Two white students noted that they focused on the black Crimean war nurse Mary Seacole and Khadija, wife of the prophet Mohammed, in a deliberate attempt to compensate for the under-representation of women of colour in the curriculum.

For others, the project was a chance to follow their feminist ideals – one described this as an opportunity to put her "passion for feminism and gender-related issues" into action: "I think a lot of people don't really see the need for women's history getting a more prominent role in high school history classes. This motivated me even more." A fellow classmate wrote that:

...this project could not have been more in line with my interests, my principles and my aim as a public historian, namely to increase social justice and end backward, stereotyping mind-sets through (digital) history projects.

Such responses serve as an encouraging barometer of the

numbers and commitment of students interested in seeing gender analyses included in their education, and in building careers where they can use it to advance feminist goals.

Conclusion

Many in the group considered the F-Site a "radical" project, although it may seem rather timid compared to some of the other initiatives discussed in this volume. Certainly, there are some significant limitations with the approach used both in this project and *1001 Women*. Both are part of the broader trend in the Netherlands that began in 2013 with the call for greater attention to women's history. Most museums simply responded to the call for greater representation of women by presenting more of them, and usually in temporary, specialist exhibitions. This brief swell of interest was quickly surpassed by the focus on the next historical anniversary, the abolition of slavery in the Dutch colonies, the same year. Despite the prominence of gender issues in the visual and material heritage of slavery, there was little attention to these dimensions in the resulting projects.

The upsurge in women's history in museums thus resulted only in isolated stories, which sit on the outskirts of mainstream historical narratives and leave established histories unchallenged. Women's history is still assumed to be of interest primarily to women and girls, rather than a central element of the main historical narrative: at the opening of the *1001 Women* exhibition, Dutch Minister for Education Jet Bussemaker declared, "we are standing on the shoulders of giants and this exhibition reminds us that we are writing history for our daughters as well" (van de Wiel, 2013).

The situation mirrors the status of women's history in the academy in the Netherlands. The hesitancy to emphasize the more radical challenges that women's history poses to traditional narratives has left the field, and its practitioners, on the outside of historical interpretation in the mainstream, which remains largely business-as-usual. Women's history is most likely to be found in specialist programs and courses on gender issues, with general history syllabi irregularly incorporating non-white, queer, or feminist perspectives. While there is growing attention to diversity issues in the curriculum, and in the recruitment of staff and students, change within universities moves slowly and has been complicated by funding crises, as cuts often excise "specialist" courses rather than core courses, from the curriculum.

Still, the story is not over yet. Els Kloek returns to Special Collections in 2017 with an exhibition focusing on women of the twenty-first century, and a new book scheduled for publication in 2018. Van Gisteren is expanding their project to include a web portal with additional materials for educators and classroom use, including teaching tools and audiocasts about more women. Although change may be slow in coming then, it is at least underway. Most significantly, evidence of the impact of an education in feminist perspectives (and the broader issues of museums and inclusion) on museum practice, is becoming clearer, as students of the MA program discuss and analyse exhibitions and collections policies with museum staff, for example, as part of their thesis research and during internship projects. This connection between the academy and the cultural sphere should help to accelerate the pace by which the theories and conclusions of academic scholarship are taken

up in historical narratives in public exhibitions. Furthermore, despite the rather segmented manner in which black history, women's history, and queer history have been considered in Dutch museums thus far, a more intersectional perspective is gradually taking shape, as people invested in this work move within and between each group – a trend that is especially clear among the most active graduates of the program now working as public history professionals. Finally, as the assumptions of objectivity and neutrality embedded in the canon and the mainstream curriculum come under increasing pressure, students are increasingly confident in claiming that the work that they are engaged in is political (as is their opponents' commitment to the status quo). As one student concluded at the end of the F-Site project, "I feel like I have experienced what it is like to be the 'historian as activist'".

NOTES

1. Recent activities focusing on the representation of women include the debate series *Exhibiting Women* hosted by the Heritage Lab/Special Collections at the University of Amsterdam, May 2013; Sara de Jong and Sanne Koevoets (eds.), *Teaching Gender with Libraries and Archives: The Power of Information* (Utrecht, The Netherlands and Budapest, Hungary: ATGENDER and Central European University Press, 2013); the Atria conference marking the 80th anniversary of the IAV-collection (International Archive of the Women's Movement), December 2015; and "Gender and Archiving: Past, Present and Future," special issue of *The Yearbook of Women's History*, 2017.
2. Examples include "Love for Sale, 400 Years of Prostitution in Amsterdam" at the Amsterdam Museum (then Amsterdam Historical Museum), 2002 and "Chicks, Kicks and Glory," 2010-2011, "Female Hiphop," 2011-2012, and "Queering Zuidoost," 2016, by Imagine IC, <http://www.imagineic.nl/cases>
3. Parry served as the thesis supervisor.
4. Disagreements amongst curatorial staff at the Amsterdam Museum during this anniversary led to a slavery trail, "De Zwarte Bladzijde van de Gouden Eeuw" (The Dark Pages of the Golden Age), through the newly-installed exhibition celebrating the Dutch Golden Age, to address the role of slavery in the accumulation of wealth in the Dutch empire (De Wildt, 2015: 178-180). See also Mapping Slavery, <http://mappingslavery.nl/en/> and Gids Slavernijverleden Amsterdam: Slavery Heritage Guide Amsterdam (Hondius 2014).
5. Two students worked on the Slavery Trail at the Amsterdam Museum as part of their internship there, and one of them, Paul de Jong, has published his thoughts on the ongoing silence in museums since the anniversary year (P. de Jong, 2016).
6. Anonymized interview with curator (27 August 2013).
7. Aletta Jacobs, the first female physician; Anne Frank, who died in a German concentration camp in World War Two; and Annie M.G. Schmidt, an author and illustrator of children's books. Stichting entoen.nu, "De canon van Nederland," www.entoen.nu. "The Dutch Canon" is an initiative stimulated by the Dutch government and has been used in Dutch schools since 2010. The foundation which developed the specific elements describe the project as an effort to present the story of the Netherlands for all Dutch citizens and to promote the use of the Dutch canon in education and society.
8. Anonymized interview with curator (11 July 2013).
9. <http://www.1001-vrouwen.nl/> (accessed 20 February 2017).
10. He uses the example of her response to a comment in the exhibition guest book, inquiring why Anneke van Baalen was not included, to which Kloek replied, "she is in there, look more carefully," as evidence of this.
11. Museum F Site: <https://izi.travel/nl/41a9-f-site/nl> Accessed 31 Jan 2018.
12. Personal communications submitted December 2016.

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