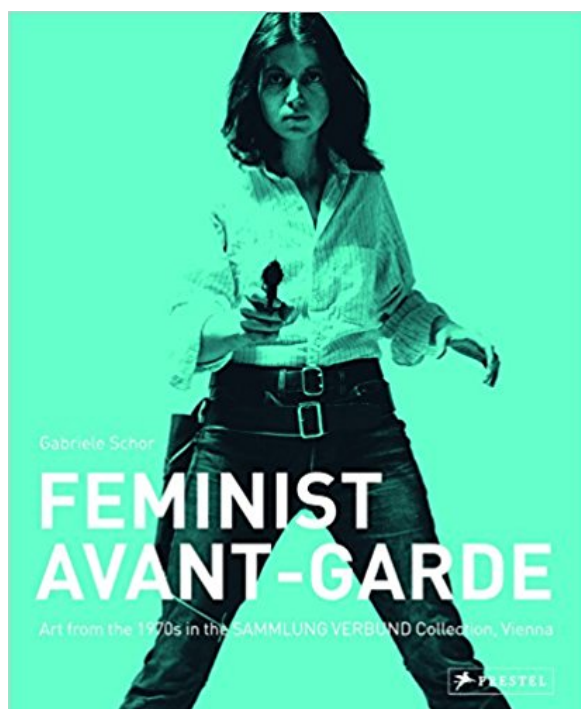


## Feminist Avant-Garde: Art of the 1970s

ed. by Gabriele Schor. Prestel, December 2016/ UK November 2016. 560 p. ill. ISBN 9783791354460 (h/c), \$75.00.

Reviewed April 2017 Heather Saunders, Manager, Digital Resources and Information Services, Nipissing University, heathersa@nipissingu.ca



The Vienna-based SAMMLUNG VERBUND collection, established in 2004, has the most comprehensive coverage of feminist art from the 1970s—a critical decade when artists moved past the restrictions of the plastic arts and the confines of formalism to echo the concerns of Second Wave feminism. 600 works are highlighted in this hefty tome to showcase recent acquisitions and to accompany an exhibition. Editor and collection director, Gabriele Schor, provides a written overview of the collection and contributes the first of four scholarly essays.

Following are texts about works in the collection by forty-nine artists, including one duo (Leslie Labowitz and Suzanne Lacy). The majority of artists are European, with nine having ties to Austria, such as Valie Export. The country featured most is the United States,

reinforcing its reputation as being key to the development of feminist art. In the United States and beyond, collective action was as much a part of feminist art as the production of works. While the latter is the focus, towards the end of the publication, a timeline of feminist art from 1968-80 acknowledges the importance of working together by featuring activist collectives.

The organization of information could be improved. The catalog begins with praise for the collection from each of the ten galleries who have hosted SAMMLUNG VERBUND's exhibitions since 2010, but dates are not included for all venues until the final page of the publication.

In the following section highlighting works by forty-nine artists, the method of organization is

unclear; it doesn't seem based on themes or accession numbers, nor is it alphabetical by name, as in the following section of artist biographies.

In the subsequent timeline, the discreteness of recurring categories (Exhibitions; Manifestos and Publications; Groups and Protests; and Society and Politics) is problematic. Sometimes there is redundancy (for 1971, *Where We At: Black Women Artists* is mentioned both in "Exhibitions" and "Groups and Protests"). Sometimes, content is included in one category when it belongs in two categories (for 1973, Anita Steckel's formation of Fight Censorship appears in "Groups and Protests," where its manifesto is referenced, but there is no corresponding entry in "Manifestos and Publications"). Additionally, bracketed International Standard for Organization (ISO) alpha-2 codes follow entries for context; while "US" is obvious, codes like "SE" (Sweden) may elude readers.

Unfortunately, there is no index.

Recommended highly for academic and museum libraries, this catalog is commendable for its quality of writing; selected bibliography of exhibition catalogs, books, and periodicals; slick design; and images (which are in black and white as well as color, with some full-page images and double-page spreads).