

FALL 2004

Dear Diary,

This is the first time I am west of the Mississippi River and there's really just corn for miles. More than I thought possible. There's just so much space! So why do I live in a box on top of a stack of other boxes? The sushi, I guess.

At the junction of Route 57 and 70 in Illinois there's a 300 ft tall white corrugated steel cross – freestanding, with apparently no roads leading directly to it. It's huge, far bigger than little ol'-never-was-confirmed-agnostic-anti-faith-based-intiative-doesn't-own-a-hairbrush-feminist-ol'-me.

But the people of Illinois are so nice! The faculty at EIU is great and everyone is really on board with our performance and is willing to help. Even the head of the theater department remains calm and unconcerned when we discover that no shows in his current season were written by women. He admits that he needs to change. Score one for Guerrilla Girls On Tour.

The workshop was awesome - just to watch young people latch onto things they cared about enough to want to change - ideas like the location of the women's center (in a basement) to the gender biased bathroom signs. I also loved interacting with the students. In my mask, I am anything they want me to be, whatever they assume I am, any which category they put me into. I'm in their club and it's cool.

After the show, a woman approached me. She had asked a question about Kerry earlier, so I don't expect this to be a "Nice work" and a pat on the back. She shares with me some of the experiences in her life, and then she begins to cry. I don't know what the heck to do, and I realize with the mask I'm like a bartender or priest or cab driver or even a priest in a confessional - a non-judgmental faceless set of ears. I'm touched she's telling me her story. She goes on to say that she used to do all that feminism stuff, but she's not really into the bra burning (neither am I, ahem) and she likes being a mom. I remind her that she can still be a feminist that it's all about choice.

Remedios Varo

Illinois - September 2004

Dear Diary,

To be able to collaborate with a feminist group from South Korea was an honor. When we found out that we had been chosen for the Busan Biennale 2005 in South Korea the curator suggested that we address the issue of sex trafficking of women and girls in Asia with IPGIM and hooked us up with them. Our collaboration began via e-mails where we decided to collect stats about the issue. Then both IPGIM and GGOT took the stats and honed them down into one or two text ideas. We both came up with visuals and in less than one month of back and forth e-mails had 4 posters finished. These posters were incorporated into a performance on the opening day of the Biennale. We have been made aware of an important and pressing issue for women in Asia and we are grateful for the knowledge and the collaborative spirit our partners, IPGIM and the Busan Biennale, gave to us. The world gets smaller and smaller as we continue to meet our sister feminists in each corner of the universe.

Aphra Behn - August 2004

Dear Diary,

Protesting the RNC was an invigorating experience -- much like the March for Women's Lives in Washington DC. It was amazing to see how many people turned out to speak out against the Bush agenda. It was, I believe, the longest march in the history of New York. We began marching at noon, up Seventh Avenue, turned down 34th Street, turned again on fifth avenue and ended up in Union Square. At 4:30 when we were walking back to the subway we crossed

back over seventh avenue and the street-- 4 1/2 hours later was still a sea of people. There were, of course, some ugly reminders of the oppressive administration we were protesting throughout the march. At Union Square there was an old man standing with a small speaker and microphone, and he was quietly speaking about the atrocities being committed in Iraq. Out of nowhere came 20 or so police men in full riot gear-- they picked him up by his arms and legs and dragged him off to who knows where. He didn't resist, and still they violently dragged him out of sight. All the people witnessing this unbelievable event were booing, and some deliberately got in the way of the police and they were slammed to the ground. This is the kind of thing you hear about -- but never actually see. It was scary. But the crowd yelled and chanted-- and it only fed the fire behind our cause. Another revealing, (yet typical for this administration), moment was when I was marching and the body guard for some media people, gently touched my back and says "Excuse me, honey" I replied, " Don't call me honey." He quickly apologized!!!

All in all, it was an amazingly peaceful demonstration-- there is probably more violence on a regular day in NYC than there was on this day with millions of people marching in the streets-- however, all we saw on the news was the dragon that was set on fire by some pranksters!!

Alexander Exter - August 2004