

PARIS

Dear Diary,

Paris was like dying in your sleep and waking up in heaven. The weather was spectacular-sunny clear blue skies, 60-65 degrees... indeed we experienced "April in Paris". Conditions could not have been better. The old perception about the French being cold to Americans is about 20 years outdated but I was still surprised when the French were exceptionally warm and welcoming to us. Many of us were quite frightened on the eve of the second Gulf War and had second thoughts about traveling abroad at this time. We were especially leery about going to France where we knew that the French did not support America's involvement in the war (neither did we) and we were told by our media that they were very angry with us. The State Department said on their website that they had grave concerns about Americans abroad and did not recommend travel at this time. They could not vouch for our safety. But, we decided to be brave and forge ahead, and I am so glad that we did.

In Paris, not only did we have some fabulous sightseeing, we also had a wonderful reception at the Palais de Tokyo for our exhibit and performance. During our Gig, the audience sat, stood and crowded in every which way they could so that the place was so packed that a security guard had to clear a center aisle so that we could enter! There must have been over 400 people there. A film crew from the BBC filmed us before and after we entered the room. Now I know what rock stars feel like.

Apparently Paris is doing rather well in terms of doing theatre productions by women playwrights. 40% of current plays there are written by women. Also, solo show by women artists are up. Those are some of the best stats we have ever run across, so it was interesting to hear from my American-French friends that they were very surprised at this info. Their experience was that France was very behind in the quest for equality between the sexes. I've also heard this from the many women who came up and spoke to us after our performance.

After a wonderful dinner and party thrown by the museum we are off to Poland. I knew that we would have a great time in Poland because of an omen that we experienced on our last afternoon on Paris. As we walked up the Champs Elysee, who did we see running towards us-but Roman Polanski! What a coincidence. He had just won the Oscar for Best Director for his film The Pianist which takes place in Warsaw. I knew it was a good sign. I was right.

Before I sign off I want to mention how thrilling it was to be on a talk show for France Channel 3 – public television in Paris - as a Guerrilla Girl On Tour. Funny, I've always fantasized about being a guest on a talk show, but I never dreamed that it would be in France... or that I'd be wearing a mask! Onward to Poland and our world premiere!

Love,
Diana Sands
Paris, France April 3, 2003