

SUMMER 2002

Dear Diary,

On June 4, 2002 Guerrilla Girls On Tour Aphra Behn, Gertrude Stein, Hanna Hoch, Claude Cahun, Lillian Gish, Virginia Wolfe, Emily Carr, Sarah Bernhardt, Lorraine Hansberry, Hallie Flanagan, Rose McClendon and Bessie Smith marched on the 54th annual Tony awards. Twelve members of the Art Cheer Leaders and about 30 members of the public joined us at Saint Patrick's Cathedral. We passed out paper masks to all who wanted to join us and followed the Art Cheer Leaders in shouting Hey, hey, ho, ho. Racist Broadway's got to go! Hey, hey, ho, ho! Sexist Broadway's got to go! We headed for Radio City Music Hall at 5PM and were immediately greeted by several very helpful and friendly officers of the NYPD who cordoned off our own section/cage for us to protest in. They also informed us of a rule that states that no more than three people can wear masks and protest – according to them this rule dates back to Klan days when it became illegal to demonstrate anonymously. The NYPD did allow us to retain the rubber gorilla masks the GGOT were wearing but those in paper masks had to take them off.

For one hour the Art Cheer Leaders led us in cheering and chanting as we gave out our postcards and stickers.

THE TONY IS BALONEY

CUZ THE SYSTEM DOESN'T PLACE

VALUE ON THE WORK OF WOMEN

WE THINK THAT IS A DISGRACE

The Art Cheer leaders definitely lent a vocal section to our protest, one that we often lack because of being masked. They were really energetic and got tons of attention for us. The problem is that there were not many supporters or fans there and the Tony people were just annoyed by us. Cynthia Tornquist of CNN asked us to stop cheering in order for her to tape a section standing in front of Radio City and promised to interview us if we did. However, she was obviously put out by having to interview a guerrilla and was very unsympathetic to our cause.

The atmosphere was very different than last year. First of all, there were few people in the street watching as the stars pulled up. In fact we had a prime spot in front of the red carpet and no one to our left! This remained true up until 6:30PM. Last year the street was jammed from 5PM on. Also, the press were not interested in us at all. Several Tony officials came up to us, one was the producer of the PBS section of the Tony's who claimed to love us but obviously hated being the target of our protest.

At 6:30 a NYPD officer dressed in full regalia came of and said that if we did not remove our masks we would be arrested. We felt that we should leave because several of the GGOT had immigration issues and we didn't want to take any chances. We split and met downtown to watch the awards. Once again a women (three out of the four noms were women) did not win for best director of a musical.

But we did it – even if it was banging our heads against the tremendous wall of the great white way. Congrats to all who participated and thanks to all who helped

Rose McClendon

GGOT SECOND ANNUAL TONY ACTION* – June, 2002 New York City

*You can read about this action in Mother Jones Magazine September issue 2000.