PART 1 Reconfiguring Domestic Life

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The Aesthetic Labour of Protest, Now and Then

The Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common (1981-2000)

Alexandra Kokoli

Alexandra Kokoli explores visual and material strategies used by women protestors against nuclear proliferation during the Cold War, interventions that took the form of performances as well as craft works on the periphery fence of the women's peace camp at Greenham Common. While focusing on the threat of nuclear war, the protestors' own living arrangements as well as their visual activism simultaneously troubled constructs of patriarchal domesticity, as her exploration reveals. Kokoli views the Greenham women's activism as blurring boundaries between not only the realms of aesthetic and activist intervention but also private and public space. Focusing on mother-and-child iconographies in particular, she explores how activists experienced disruptions to their work through the demands of motherhood but indicates that their caring roles were nevertheless also often used to motivate and shape their anti-nuclear protests.

The Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common, which lasted an unprecedented 19 years, from 1981 to 2000, was a women-only camp established in protest against nuclear proliferation and the Cold War ideology of deterrence that fuelled the arms race. It occupied the periphery of the US military base at RAF Greenham Common in Berkshire, England, which thus came to be known as USAF Greenham Common, where nuclear Cruise missiles were kept and from which they were deployed.[1] Consisting of separate encampments across the different gates to the airbase, the peace camp also initiated a series of performative protest actions on and off site and maintained a network of occasional participants, visitors, and allies regionally, nationally, and internationally, through campaigns such as "Carry Greenham Home". In lieu of any single feminist "mistress-piece" from Britain, this chapter proposes the performative activist strategies of women protestors at Greenham Common and their craft-based interventions on the periphery fence of the airbase. Taking stock of feminist art historical critiques of the monographic approach as well as the post-medium materialist emphasis on (art)*work* as labour rather than artefact, I suggest that a virtual archive of diverse documentation (visual, material, textual, oral historical) is better suited to represent the aesthetic, political and ethical legacies of the feminist 1980s in Britain than any single artwork or project. Protesters at Greenham Common showed a precocious aptitude for visual activism, knowingly mobilising women's crafts with all their ambiguous connotations as a form of intensely anti-militarist and anti-masculinist resistance.

Greenham Common as Mistress-Piece both deserves and resists canonisation. It is hybrid, encompassing artistic and visual activist practices. It is difficult if not impossible to contain, spread across archives, both public and personal, some more accessible than others, and so rich in materials that no single study can cover. Finally, its status as a research object is in a state of flux, mutating in ways that both benefit and inhibit research. What started as the analysis of a historical object (the art and visual activism of feminist anti-nuclear activism) has gradually morphed into something more complex: the Greenham Common women's peace camp and its Berkshire site are in the process of acquiring the ambiguous status of English (and Welsh) heritage with a transnational reach. Through my scholarly work, I aim to consolidate and further promote this recognition, while also troubling the notion of "heritage" with the tool kit of feminist art history.

"Like it or not, We are History Now":[2] The Peace Camp Lives on

When I first started working on the range of visual activist and artistic practices at, in reference to and/or in support of the women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common in 2015, the project fitted in

my established research interests in the art and visual cultures of second-wave feminism but did not seem particularly topical or pressing. In the beginning, I found myself on the familiar ground of a feminist "minor mode" (cf. Solomon-Godeau HYPERLINK "36" \o "36=Ref   Solomon-Godeau, Abigail. 2006. " 2006), in which failure featured prominently if tacitly, before its queer reclamations (e.g. Halberstam HYPERLINK "17" \o "17=Ref   Halberstam, Jack. 2011. The Queer Art of Failure. Durham, NC: Duke University Press." 2011).[3] A sympathetic history of Greenham Common by journalist David Fairhall (HYPERLINK "11" \o "11=Ref   Fairhall, David. 2006. Common Ground: The Story of Greenham. London: IB Tauris." 2006) who covered the peace camp as *The Guardian* newspaper's defence correspondent during the last years of the Cold War, included a straw poll with the question "What did the Greenham women's protest achieve, and what difference, if any, did it make to the outcome of the Cold War?", to which most responses were dismissive if not damning. Predictably, Andrew Brookes, last operational RAF commander at Greenham Common, 1989-1991, not only dismissed off hand any impact that the Greenham peace camp and anti-nuclear protests had on the end of the Cold War, but also quantified the damage that the women inflicted through the protest tactic of cutting into the perimeter fence, for the repairs to which he claimed to have been given an annual budget of £750,000 (in Fairhall HYPERLINK "11" \o "11=Ref   Fairhall, David. 2006. Common Ground: The Story of Greenham. London: IB Tauris." 2006, 173). Journalist and nuclear disarmament proponent Polly Toynbee was only slightly more generous in her appraisal:

> I never went to Greenham. My sister did, with her six-year-old son, but she was sent away because he was a boy. I think it had no effect at all on the Cold War, but had some galvanising effect on the women's movement in the Thatcher years.
>
> (in Fairhall HYPERLINK "11" \o "11=Ref   Fairhall, David. 2006. Common Ground: The Story of Greenham. London: IB Tauris." 2006, 202)[4]

Whether and to what degree Greenham helped end the cold war is hardly measurable (at least not from an art historical perspective), whereas its more diffuse impact and its significance as a network of visual and other feminist activist practices cannot be doubted. In any case, the fortunes of Greenham changed fast, with the completion of a new oral history project Greenham Women Everywhere (Kerrow and Mordan 2020),[5] and a buoyant programme of exhibitions and events at the Control Tower at Greenham Common, re-opened in September 2018 as a cultural centre, including an exhibition of prints and drawings in reference to the peace camp by Pam Hardman (2019) and a series of photographs from the Blue Gate of the camp by Wendy Carrig (2018). In 2019, the arts festival Reading International chose the legacies of Greenham Common as its focus and, among other projects, commissioned a performance by Nina Wakeford, *"an apprenticeship in queer I believe it was"*. Wakeford's performance, which was dedicated to sociologist and Greenham woman Sasha Roseneil, takes its title from Roseneil's formative sociological writing on Greenham (2000), exemplifying the close dialogue if not confluence between art and scholarship in this unfolding revival. Yet as Greenham appears to be shedding the charge of failure, it is important to remember that amateur aesthetics and, to some degree, an amateur approach to organising, were defining features of this and other women's peace camps. In the words of Ann Pettitt (HYPERLINK "31" \o "31=Ref   Pettitt, Ann. 2006. Walking to Greenham: How the Peace-camp began and the Cold War ended. South Glamorgan: Honno." 2006, 309), Greenham pioneer:

> In my view, it is thanks to the millions of people in the western world for whom protest was a relatively easy option, and to a brave few in the East for whom it wasn't, that the arms race ended with a whimper […] and not with a bang (the end of the world as we know it). […] We did this […] not because we were good at campaigning, but because we were bad at it; not because we went about things in a professional way, but because we were amateurs; not because we were clever, but because we were naïve.

Whether a failure or a success, by whatever criteria, the place of the Greenham Common peace camp in collective memory in Britain and globally has never been in question. At the time of writing (2020), Greenham is actively revisited from multiple quarters, including my own art historical research, often with activist intentions. Some hope of re-activation shadows commemorations and memorialisations of Greenham, while visual culture has emerged as a privileged signifier and crucial platform for the evaluation and dissemination of anti-nuclear, anti-war activism inspired and motivated by feminism. With its visual impact often identified as one of its most influential and defining features (e.g. Paul Rogers cited in Fairhall HYPERLINK "11" \o "11=Ref Fairhall, David. 2006. Common Ground: The Story of Greenham. London: IB Tauris." 2006, 201),[6] Greenham's re-activations often take place within contemporary art practices. Discussing her project *The Fence and the Shadow*, first shown at the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, in 2017, painter Sally Payen (HYPERLINK "30" \o "30=Ref Payen, Sally. 2020. The Fence and the Shadow. https://thefenceandtheshadow.wordpress.com/about/" 2020) notes:

> It's not a legacy project or an archival project, even though I am interviewing some Greenham Women and researching archives. It is a project about how that contested landscape touched my life back then and the experience of what is still alive and vital today.

> (**Fig. 1.1**)

Payen approaches the peace camp as both a physical site and an imaginary realm where individual, public, and conflicting memories intersect, and the camp itself as both a studio and exhibition space, comparing the perimeter fence, host to so many visual activist interventions, to a loom (Payen and Fowler HYPERLINK "29" \o "29=Ref Payen, Sally, and Mandy Fowler.2017. " 2017, 22).[7]

Figure 1.1 Sally Payen, *Fence and Shadow, Invisible Woman and the Telephonic Tree*. 2017, oil on canvas, 160 x 200 cm.

Source: Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 1.1

This oil on canvas painting depicts the shadow of a helicopter on the top half of the format and, on the bottom half, a mesh fence with red flowers.

The prevalence of the camp and its site in the collective imagination, particularly but not singularly in Britain, has made it unusually difficult for me to decide how and in how much detail to introduce the history of Greenham Common. This is complicated further by my own positionality as a first-generation immigrant to Britain, whose history or story this is not. While Payen captures the pervasiveness of Greenham into public consciousness as well as in her biography, my own experience of it remains retrospective and largely scholarly. My Mistress-Piece is not only diffuse, extending into contemporary art practices like Payen's, but also intricately interwoven into social, political and military histories, including notably the history of women's movements, partly overlapping but not fully coinciding with anti-militarism and pacifism. An expanded or rather exploded artwork, or possibly a virtual feminist museum (Pollock 2007), Greenham Common remains dizzyingly interdisciplinary and presents a curatorial conundrum as well as an art historical provocation.

Rarely have I presented my research on Greenham Common in Britain without having a least a few of my listeners identify as Greenham women (or male day-time visitors), and offering their own insights and information. Judging from the numbers of visitors, "campers", and "stayers", the peace camp appears to have been a radically inclusive space in which committed activists freely mixed with inexperienced supporters. The camp encouraged contributions of all kinds and

engagement in wildly varying degrees to suit different abilities, availability, social groups, and situations. It would be apt to frame visits to Greenham as a kind of secular pilgrimage, if pilgrimages are to be understood as "movements of people that loosen the hold of institutional, structural descriptions in the creation of liminal spaces" (Lugones HYPERLINK "26" \o "26=Ref Lugones, María. 2003. Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield." 2003, 8, drawing on Victor Turner). By all accounts, spending any amount of time at the camp was personally and politically transformative (Roseneil HYPERLINK "32" \o "32=Ref Roseneil, Sasha. 1995. Disarming Patriarchy: Feminism and Political Action at Greenham. Buckingham: Open University Press." 1995). The peace camp helped map the world anew, literally and metaphorically, by making the spatial dimension of military-patriarchal oppression both obvious and concrete, and fostering the development of protest methods that deliberately trespassed against it. In the work of decolonial feminist philosopher María Lugones (HYPERLINK "26" \o "26=Ref Lugones, María. 2003. Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield." 2003, 12), "trespassing […] violat[es] the spatiality and logic of oppression". The camp created plentiful opportunities for both enacting and reflecting on border violations as a form of eloquent resistance, from the *détournement* of the perimeter fence into a gallery, a loom, and a screen through which protesters and the military viewed and interacted with one other, to actual breaches of the fence by the Greenham women with wire cutters.

Angela Dimitrakaki (HYPERLINK "9" \o "9=Ref Dimitrakaki, Angela. 2013. Gender, ArtWork and the Global Imperative: A Materialist Feminist Critique. Manchester: Manchester University Press." 2013, 7) coins the term "artWork" as a means of "tak[ing] further feminist art history's partial displacement of the delivered artwork as the exclusive origin of meaning and rethink[ing] what 'process-based work' can possibly describe". Greenham Common stretches this definition beyond artistic process to shed light on the labour of activism and particularly of the total commitment that staying at the peace camp involved, even for short periods of time. Furthermore, this work involves the "post-production" labour of documentation, its archiving and preservation, including crucially the maintenance and management of its accessibility of which I am a beneficiary, among many others. Such work is a labour of commitment and the hope of transmissibility, if not love. The persistence of the Mistress-Piece "Greenham Common" is a hybrid of Warburgian "afterlife" (Didi-Huberman HYPERLINK "8" \o "8=Ref Didi-Huberman, Georges. 2003. " 2003), a survival through transformation, of feminist commitment, and the burden as well as promise of transmission (Pollock 2007; see also Chidgey HYPERLINK "7" \o "7=Ref Chidgey, Red. 2018. Feminist Afterlives: Assemblage Memory in Activist Times. London: Palgrave." 2018).

Artistic and Activist Strategies: From Pre-emptive Mourning to Sticky Time

Art informed by 1970s feminism often cast domestic space as a site of ambivalence if not unhomeliness, inspired by anti-patriarchal dissent (Kokoli HYPERLINK "21" \o "21=Ref Kokoli, Alexandra. 2016. The Feminist Uncanny in Theory and Art Practice. London: Bloomsbury Academic." 2016). A focus on the art and activist practices of feminist anti-nuclear activism expands this repertoire to include the performativity of die-in demonstrations, the protest tactics and site-specific interventions of the Greenham women on the periphery fence of the airbase, and the recreations of this fence by Margaret Harrison, among others, in which domesticity is thrown into crisis anew: here living space becomes untethered from the nuclear family home to retain its character as haven but is also transformed into the site of cruelly premature, violent death by total nuclear disaster. The present contribution seeks to blur the line between artistic and activist interventions just as it challenges the distinction between private and public space. In their spatial mappings, the public and the private are neither directly opposed nor completely separate: if the personal is indeed political, domesticity needs to be considered as a microcosm of widespread

ideological operations, a lab for world-making and, in this case, a feminist reclamation of the militarised commons.

Although in retrospect Greenham Common is not only feminist but an important chapter in the history of British feminism, it is also crucial to acknowledge that despite Greenham's challenge to patriarchal, bourgeois and heteronormative domestic ideals, it also sat awkwardly within some of the most dominant feminist discourses of their time. Women's anti-nuclear activism often emphasized its rhetorical and critical difference from the systems they opposed (militarism, nuclear deterrence, etc.) by embracing the archetypical affinity between femininity and nurturing, even while those same archetypes were challenged and deconstructed in emergent feminist analyses. The germinal work of Sasha Roseneil (HYPERLINK "32" \o "32=Ref Roseneil, Sasha. 1995. Disarming Patriarchy: Feminism and Political Action at Greenham. Buckingham: Open University Press." 1995, p. 4) grapples with some of these contradictions between a feminist dismissal of "maternalist peace activism" as "false consciousness" on the one hand, and on the other, the recognition that "maternal thinking" stems from "maternal practice", which is both materially and ideologically opposed to war. However, it is difficult to determine whether and to what degree the "three main discourses within which women have critiqued and protested against militarism: [namely] maternalism, materialism and feminism" (Roseneil HYPERLINK "32" \o "32=Ref Roseneil, Sasha. 1995. Disarming Patriarchy: Feminism and Political Action at Greenham. Buckingham: Open University Press." 1995, 7) are distinct, and Roseneil's later work on Greenham appears to highlight the subversive inclusivity of the camp, describing it as "the radical, anarchic edge of feminism" (Roseneil HYPERLINK "33" \o "33=Ref Roseneil, Sasha. 2000. Common Women, Uncommon Practices: The Queer Feminisms of Greenham. London: Continuum." 2000, 320). The peace camp's undeniable strength lay in pushing doctrinaire considerations aside (or, in any case, allowing them to be organically negotiated) in favour of a shared commitment to protect all life on earth.[8] Roseneil (HYPERLINK "32" \o "32=Ref Roseneil, Sasha. 1995. Disarming Patriarchy: Feminism and Political Action at Greenham. Buckingham: Open University Press." 1995, 7) also concedes that each of these three discourses "framed, at different times, both the public voice of Greenham and the motivations of individual women".

Teacher and CND press and publicity officer Alison Whyte (HYPERLINK "40" \o "40=Ref Whyte, Alison. 1983. " 1983, 85) notes that "some [women] see themselves as having a very distinctive role to play in the peace movement", while also making note of the sexist deployment of gendered language by the conservative media. In the press, "the peace movement is stripped of masculinity – full of women, children, priests and long-haired youths – and embodies all the characteristics which hold no sway in our society" (Whyte HYPERLINK "40" \o "40=Ref Whyte, Alison. 1983. " 1983, 88). Women's "distinctive role" was most succinctly articulated in their role as mothers, even if motherhood more often than not disrupted the contribution of those already involved in activism. This bind is addressed by Tamar Swade who describes the arrival of her baby as both an interruption to her involvement in anti-nuclear activism, since demand feeding interfered with the collaborative work of researching and writing an anti-nuclear booklet, and an opportunity for its revitalisation and reframing as a specifically maternal issue: "Those of us who had been involved before often feel an added urgency to our desire for peace after having a child" (Swade HYPERLINK "37" \o "37=Ref Swade, Tamar. 1983. " 1983, 65). Caring for an infant transformed Swade into "a different kind of social being" with new social needs as well as a newly gained consciousness, more alert to the vulnerability of non-combatants, particularly very young ones, across the world. Originally called "Mother and baby anti-nuclear group", the name of her newly founded group was eventually shortened to the punchier "Babies against the Bomb". This new consciousness, which she admits is not necessarily nor exclusively feminist, is shaped by the labour and joys of mothering as well as personal grief over global crises, however remote they may be. Swade's statement is illustrated with a black and white photograph of three generations of protesters (Swade HYPERLINK "37" \o "37=Ref Swade, Tamar. 1983. " 1983, 64), the youngest of whom is nursing in his mother's arms; the older two are shown engaged in passionate conversation behind a

hand-written sign reading "Babies againsts [sic] the BOMB" and piles of clothes with busy patterns in boxes and bags. This unattributed photograph of Chanie Gluckstein, Tamar Swade, and Dario Swade, taken around 1981, is compositionally accomplished, an updated and repurposed variation of mother-and-child iconography: the nursing mother's bare leg forms a V with the stick on which the sign is nailed; her patterned dress drapes over and merges with the assembled donations. The three figures are shown in intimate and intense engagement with one another: nursing and being nursed, and absorbed in conversation.[9]

Although not generated at Greenham, this photograph of Babies Against the Bomb activists gradually emerged as a visual but also conceptual navigation tool in the knotted intersection of the maternal, pacifism, and feminism.[10] If one accepts Nancy Fraser's invitation (2013) to untether the work of care from systems of social reproduction that have successfully exploited and co-opted it as a feminine capitalist supplement, simultaneously essential and marginalised, and propose it instead as a genuinely feminist alternative to the explicit misogyny and barely veiled misanthropy of capitalism in its neoliberal inflections, then both representations of and practices of care will need to be rethought beyond the framework of prescribed gender roles.[11] Following Kristeva (HYPERLINK "24" \o "24=Ref   Kristeva, Julia. 1980. Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. New York: Columbia University Press." 1980, 237-270), art and visual culture are approached as both source material and methodological tools for negotiating the psychosocial meanings of care in its maternal manifestations. Kristeva mobilised the work of two Renaissance masters, Giovanni Bellini and Leonardo Da Vinci, to interrogate descriptions and proscriptions of care work and maternal subjectivity through the idealised maternity of the Madonna. Despite its well-documented normative patriarchal limitations, Kristeva found in the maternal the potential for a woman-to-woman sociality: in becoming mother, one becomes reconnected with one's own and joins a society of fellow mother-workers as well as maternal subjects. Considering such observations, it is surprising that Kristeva did not home in on Da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* (c.1503 – 1519), which, alongside *The Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist,* aka *The Burlington House Cartoon* (c.1499-1500) portrays three generations together: Mary with her own mother St. Anne and baby Jesus, with both grown-ups engaged in mothering work. Interestingly, the Louvre painting *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* was a key focus in Freud's speculative and widely disputed case study on the artist of 1910, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood". While a comprehensive critical evaluation of this much debated body of work falls outside the remit of the present text (see notably Bersani HYPERLINK "4" \o "4=Ref   Bersani, Leo. 1986. The Freudian Body. New York: Columbia University Press." 1986 and Kofman 1988), my intention is to introduce documentation of feminist anti-nuclear activism into the long-standing and wide-ranging art historical preoccupation with mother-and-child iconography, of which the Virgin and child is an idealised manifestation. The disparate scales of the private and the public, the sacred and the profane, kaleidoscopically shift and meld into one another: the maternal ethical and political orientation of anti-war, anti-nuclear women protesters, inspired by but not exhausted in mothering work, updates and remobilises (grandmother-and-)mother-and-child iconographies in defence of life and in celebration of the work of care that makes it liveable.

Da Vinci's unusual experimentation with this three-figure composition on the one hand breaks with the dualism of the mother-and-child iconography yet on the other continues to be read in light of multiple dualities (Herding HYPERLINK "18" \o "18=Ref   Herding, Klaus. 2000. " 2000): it is said to represent two immaculate conceptions; it shows two mothers, reflecting, according to Freud, Da Vinci's own two mothers, his birth mother and the wife of his father who eventually adopted him. Mary and St. Anne are portrayed as being of similar age and very alike each other, especially in the Burlington House cartoon, which also includes St John the Baptist as a young child, engaging with his nearly double, a slightly younger Jesus. In the painting, Jesus is shown in the process of being gently checked by his mother: we see Mary performing mothering work, socialising the human side of her baby by encouraging him to be gentle to the lamb that he is innocently

manhandling. The lamb is, in turn, also her child's double, and its small distress a mild foreshadowing of his own future sacrifice.

Beyond such established iconographies, networks of routinized intimacy and care-giving are evoked in many works of feminist anti-nuclear activism, even non-representational ones. Active between 1981 and 1984, the artists' collective Sister Seven produced a series of consciousness-raising events, posters and performances, including notably the performance *Premature Endings* in Huddersfield in 1984. The collective originally consisted of seven women but eventually came down to six (Evelyn Silver, Mary Michaels, Liz Hibbard, Shirley Cameron, Gillian Allnutt and Monica Ross) and then five members. Their work is inflected by the paradox of much pacifist and particularly anti-nuclear activism, in which a pre-emptively mournful sense of impending doom by complete nuclear annihilation invites urgent action. John Timberlake (HYPERLINK "38" \o "38=Ref   Timberlake, John. 2014. " 2014) describes visions of nuclear catastrophes as collective "false memories": not only did a nuclear world war never take place but its multiple evocations and representations, including visual ones, are in themselves an effect of the traumatic fallout of the Cold War. Rather than false memories, however, which suggest a mass delusion sparked by real trauma, anti-nuclear art practice seems motivated by pre-emptive mourning for premature, abrupt and violent death on a mass scale, death which is entertained and to which diverse visual and other forms are given, while politically campaigning against it. Shirley Cameron's contribution to Sister Seven's anti-nuclear exhibition is haunted by the spectre of her dead loved ones. She vividly describes her prematurely born children sleeping peacefully in their beds, whose premature deaths she cannot bear to imagine. A Sister Seven poster offers guidance for a simple DIY performance using a single prop in the shape of a nuclear missile, the "end-of-the-book mark" (Sister Seven HYPERLINK "35" \o "35=Ref   Sister Seven. 1981. Sister Seven Poster. Monica Ross Archives, Phoenix Studios, Brighton." 1981):

How to use End-of-the-Book-Marks

1. Choose a book (a novel or story book)
2. Place bookmark in any page near the centre of the book
3. Read from beginning of book to the bookmark and STOP!
4. THROW THE BOOK AWAY
5. And think about premature endings – the nuclear weapons exploding at any time – just when we had done the shopping or maybe when we were in the middle of reading a good book …

The final instruction, which retroactively sets the scene of sudden and unjustified killing in treacherously familiar, ordinary and even relaxed circumstances reveals a fundamental dimension of anti-nuclear feminist practice and forms an accented addition to feminist dystopian domesticities: the nuclear version of uncanny domesticity does not stem from a critique of a patriarchal division of labour but from the recognition that no place is safe from total war. Striking in their frequency and affective weight, such evocations of strategic uncanniness include the delivery of a child-sized coffin with the inscription "HUMAN RACE" to a guarded gate of the base and songs such as "Four minutes to midnight", written by Rebecca Johnson and the women of Greenham, a countdown to nuclear Armageddon in four stanzas.[12]

The Mistress-Piece proposed in this chapter is composed of a sprawling network of returns and (re)activations, while the camp was in existence and since its closure. Originally created in 1989 during a one-month residency at New York's New Museum, Margaret Harrison's installation *Common Land Greenham* was "a reconstruction and reinterpretation" (a-n HYPERLINK "1" \o "1=Ref   a-n. 2013. " 2013) of the perimeter fence of the Greenham Common base bearing the protesters' personal and largely domestic additions, including photographs, children's clothing and toys, and kitchen implements. The installation included a mural, an empty pram, and a quotation from Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*: "We can best help you prevent war not by repeating your

words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods." Harrison's installation was recreated for her solo exhibition *Preoccupy* at Silberkuppe, Berlin (2012), with the initiative of the gallery curators who saw in it and, by extension, in the original perimeter fence of the base itself, an influential precedent for contemporary artistic activisms. In 2013 the fence became *Common Reflections* with the inclusion of mirrors, which had multiple meanings and effects (**Fig. 1.2**). Harrison's exhibition for the Northern Art Prize exploited reflection literally and metaphorically, reflecting on the politics and aesthetics of looking and being looked at as stock feminist concerns, while also exploiting the disorienting effect of differently angled mirrors on the viewer.[13] Just as importantly, Harrison references one of the biggest demonstrations at Greenham, "Reflect the Base" in December 1983, which involved 50,000 women and resulted in a record number of arrests. In the words of Rebecca Johnson: "Surrounding the base, we faced thousands of armed soldiers and police as we held up our mirrors so that they could see their own faces, guarding these nuclear weapons of mass suffering" (Johnson cited in Graham HYPERLINK "15" \o "15=Ref Graham, Sarah. 2003. " 2003). The disorientation of the gallery viewer is not merely visual but extends to Harrison's approach to the history of feminist activism. By recreating the fence anew, Harrison revisits earlier work on the same topic in 1989 but also invites the viewer to reflect on the meanings of repetition, return and history of and within feminism.

Figure 1.2 Margaret Harrison, *Common Reflections*, 2013, installation view, Northern Art Prize 2013, Leeds Art Gallery.

Source: Courtesy of the artist and Leeds Art Gallery. Photograph by Simon Warner.

Fig. 1.2

The photograph shows a close- up view of a wire mesh fence which Margaret Harrison installed in the Leeds Art Gallery. Attached to the fence are garments worn by an adult (including a graduation gown) as well as items worn by children, including shoes and boots. Also attached to the fence with pegs and hooks are photographs, toys such as a teddy bear, cooking utensils such as a pan, box grater and sieve, and family photographs of a female child.

When I started working on Greenham in June 2015, an American-owned factory on the outskirts of the city of Lyon became the target of what at the time was thought to be a terrorist attack (BBC HYPERLINK "5" \o "5=Ref   BBC. 2015. " 2015). Following multiple small-scale explosions (larger ones were planned as it transpired but did not pan out), reports emerged of a decapitated body found on the scene and a severed human head "stuck" on the fence of the Air Products facility. Before forensics investigators were able to identify the head as belonging to a manager at the factory, there was speculation that the head may have belonged to one of the attackers and may have been severed and caught on the fence by accident, as the result of an explosion. The exact meaning of the French verb *s'accrocher* was debated: it means to hang from, to hook on but also to catch (Larousse 2020). I made a concerted effort to avoid seeing visual documentation of the factory fence. While grappling with Harrison's work on and with Greenham, I could not take the image of the severed head on the fence out of my mind, not seen but imagined; it stuck. Looking at Harrison's fence again, I blanked out the pegs holding up the assorted objects. The object placement could be accidental, the result of extreme force; unlike what has been often repeated, they consist of both precious mementoes and everyday objects, essential to the business of living but not precious, such as pots and pans – the gear of everyday life more than memento boxes. *Common Reflections* joins a canon of works relating to Greenham Common but also offers the flickering suggestion of something that few other works do: a literally exploded view of the alternative domesticities of the peace camp.

Like the subversively decorated perimeter fence of the Greenham Common USAF base, Margaret Harrison's recreations demand an embodied approach from the viewer. The fence becomes "sticky", a term repurposed by Mieke Bal to describe contemporary works of art that promote an

enhanced experience of time in the act of viewing, without deploying time-based media but by manipulating the experience of the viewer through an engagement of her senses and sensibilities. To be precise, sticky images do not so much engage as they transfix the viewer, thus conveying something of the trauma that informs their making.

> They slow down to the extreme; they make you dizzy from the back-and-forthness between microscopic and macroscopic looking where no eyeglasses or contact lenses will quite do the job. Looking itself becomes tortuous, almost tortuous. […] these surfaces, whose structure of microscopic detail conjures up such massive violence as to make it impossible for any historical or journalistic account to encompass it, so foreshorten time as to enter the viewer's life-time, breaking its linearity and regularity. They stick to you, long after the intense experience of time has faded back into everyday life.
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> (Bal HYPERLINK "2" \o "2=Ref Bal, Mieke. 2000. " 2000, 99)

Stickiness inflects time for Greenham Common in at least two ways: then, on the Common, due to the stretches of apparent inactivity that staying at the encampment involved (Baraitser HYPERLINK "3" \o "3=Ref Baraitser, Lisa. 2017. Enduring Time. London: Bloomsbury Academic." 2017, 95); and since then, now and then, thanks to its persistent resurfacings and returns, notably in visual art practice (Baraitser HYPERLINK "3" \o "3=Ref Baraitser, Lisa. 2017. Enduring Time. London: Bloomsbury Academic." 2017, 113; Roseneil HYPERLINK "33" \o "33=Ref Roseneil, Sasha. 2000. Common Women, Uncommon Practices: The Queer Feminisms of Greenham. London: Continuum." 2000; Kokoli 2017).

Coda: Baby-to-Baby Combat

In *The Psychoanalysis of War*, originally published in 1966, Franco Fornari reviews psychoanalytic approaches to conflict to make a special case for nuclear war and its prevention with the help of psychoanalysis. Fornari's (HYPERLINK "12" \o "12=Ref Fornari, Franco. 1974. The Psycho-Analysis of War. Translated by Alenka Pfeifer. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday." 1974, 199-236) proposals, which involve the foundation of the Omega Institution, a global defensive and judicial organisation whose purpose would be to prevent all future wars, never came to fruition and are less important than his analysis of the problem of war in its nuclear mutation. Defending the role of psychoanalysis in the examination of war phenomena, he notes a series of "symbolic peculiarities" through which "the emergence of an all-destructive reality is associated with the symbols of procreation and preservation of the species, through a primary love relationship such as that between mother and child". For instance, Colonel Paul Tibbets named the fighter plane that would drop the bomb on Hiroshima after his mother, Enola Gay; and the "father" of the atomic bomb General Leslie Groves, on completion of the first successful experiment, messaged President Truman that "Baby is born" (Fornari HYPERLINK "12" \o "12=Ref Fornari, Franco. 1974. The Psycho-Analysis of War. Translated by Alenka Pfeifer. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday." 1974, ix).

From a psychoanalytic perspective, maternalism in anti-nuclear pacifism exceeds the assumption or imposition of the work of social reproduction on women, gendered divisions of labour, birth, or childcare. For theorists like Julia Kristeva (HYPERLINK "24" \o "24=Ref Kristeva, Julia. 1980. Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. New York: Columbia University Press." 1980) and Bracha Ettinger (HYPERLINK "10" \o "10=Ref Ettinger, Bracha. 2006. The Matrixial Borderspace. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press." 2006), the maternal opens up a space for re-imagining subjectivity and inter-subjectivity beyond clear-cut divisions between self and other, and against the potential weaponisation of such divisions. These feminist theorisations inflect the reclamation of maternal practice in pacifism as a political and

ethical philosophy of being in the world otherwise, for others and for each other. While Fornari (HYPERLINK "12" \o "12=Ref   Fornari, Franco. 1974. The Psycho-Analysis of War. Translated by Alenka Pfeifer. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday." 1974) unpicks the repressed aggression behind "pantoclastic" (all-destroying) war-mongering, the strategic deployment of maternal practice at Greenham Common, in performance and representation, constitutes a sorely needed counter-strike.

In 2016, government documents from 1983 were released to the National Archives in Kew, London, revealing serious worries over the impact of anti-nuclear activism on public opinion and possible erruptions of mass civil disobedience. In addition to the chilling recommendation that, should it become necessary to shoot at protestors, the task must be performed by British and not US forces, to avoid an international incident, Margaret Thatcher's press secretary Bernard Ingham circulated a list of suggestions for distracting the public's attention from the Easter Monday anti-nuclear march in London on 4 April 1983. His suggestions included the promotion of what he considered to be traditional British Bank holiday pastimes, such as "pigeon or whippet or tortoise racing", and photographs of the then newly appointed Secretary of State for Defence Michael Heseltine's visit to the Berlin Wall, the one material manifestation of the metaphorical iron curtain in Europe. Another suggestion, which is confirmed to have implemented, was originally redacted from the documents: pictures of baby Prince William, then aged ten months and on his first visit to Australia and New Zealand, were released to the press and widely published.[14] The royal baby was extensively photographed with his parents and staff, including nannies and security detail. This really was baby-to-baby combat.

Acknowledgements

Notes

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[1] Cruise were deployed from Greenham in military exercises monitored and disrupted by Cruisewatch, an anti-nuclear initiative separate from but overlapping with the peace camp. In addition to Roseneil (1995 and 2000) and Pettitt (2006), a brief and comprehensive history of the peace camp can be found in the online database of the Women's Library, LSE Library Collections, https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=5GCC&pos=315

[2] This is a quote from a short text by Jill Truman (2019), former Greenham woman and playwright, which reflects on the crucial moment of transformation from collective memory to shared heritage that the peace camp has been undergoing, consolidated by the designation of the formerly hostile Control Tower as a visitor centre, museum and community café.

[3] I am here referring to Abigail Solomon-Godeau's appropriation of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's idea of "a minor literature" exemplified by the work of Franz Kafka, "a Prague Jew writing in German" for the field of visual arts and specifically art informed by and committed to feminism (Solomon-Godeau 2006, 371). Solomon-Godeau argues that "minority or outsider" cultural producers such as LGBTQ+ women artists of colour are afforded some advantages despite and, paradoxically, thanks to their exclusion: outsider positionalities bring forth novel opportunities for expression and for the creation of another consciousness.

[4] David Fairhall's straw poll (2006, 191-202) is more balanced than my text here indicates; I am simply pointing out that the fates of Greenham have changed radically even since the publication of Fairhall's supportive book.

[5] Many oral histories of Greenham Common came before *Greenham Women Everywhere* (such as the collection at the Imperial War Museum) but the distinctive feature of Kerrow and Mordan's project is that interviewees responded to an open call rather than being selected by the interviewers on account of their prominence in the camp. For this reason, *Greenham Women Everywhere* comes the closest to adhering to the leaderless commitment of the peace camp.

[6] The centrality of visual activism at Greenham is noted in virtually all academic writing on the topic, as well as publications from the camp and its supporters, such as the richly illustrated pamphlet *The Greenham Factor* (Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp c.1984).

[7] Photographs of the decorated perimeter fence can be found online, including those by Sigrid Møller, scanned by Holger Terp, June 2006. See: The Danish Peace Academy Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp's Songbook, www.fredsakademiet.dk/abase/sange/greenham/sigrid/sigrid11.htm.

[8] 'Women for Life on Earth' was the name that the original group of women who marched to Greenham and ended up setting up a camp there gave themselves (see esp. Pettitt 2006).

[9] I would like to thank Tamar Swade for identifying the people in the photograph and for also giving me permission to reproduce it, although my scan was deemed of too poor resolution to print here.

[10] It is not easy to summarise the richness and diversity of motherhood and feminism as a field but Lisa D. Brush (1996) makes a good attempt, drawing on a variety of historical and sociological scholarship that encapsulates much of feminist thinking from the 1980s, principally from Britain and the US. On maternalist pacifism see Liddington (1989, esp. Chapter 5, 87-106).

[11] The Covid-19 pandemic has seen a surge in activist thinking on care. The Care Collective (2020) proposes "promiscuous care" as an alternative to the labour of social reproduction often performed by women within the family. "Promiscuity" in this context alludes to HIV AIDS activism by ACT UP while also reflecting the Collective's aspiration for "experimental and extensive" networks of care beyond kinship (Care Collective, 2020, 41).

[12] The lyrics of this song can be found here: www.fredsakademiet.dk/abase/sange/greenham/song22.htm

[13] On Margaret Harrison's practice in general and this work in particular (61-62) see also Munson (2015).

[14] For a summary see Higham (2016). The relevant documents can be found in PREM19/1846: DEFENCE. Policing of demonstrations at military bases: activities of anti-nuclear demonstrators; part 1 (1983-1986), National Archives, London.