

## Lace and Gunpowder Thesis

While my intention for this exhibit is more about conversation than answers, I do have two opinions that were the basis for this show.

1. The time is right to understand and value the different perspectives that men and women bring into society and thereby increase the opportunity-equity along gender lines, and build a better society. I believe this to be true in art as anywhere, and believe that art can address the topic in constructive ways. There is plenty of data outlining both the inequities and the physical/emotional/mental differences between the sexes, so I won't go into that here.

Basically, I think it is a mistake to ignore the difference in perspectives because of another great mistake in human history –that of power structure inequity along gender lines. The Feminism of the 60's and 70's worked hard to break down the stereotypes and place women on equal footing. Of course this transformation is no where near finished, but things have come a long way. The breaking of stereotypes often required an assertion that there were no differences –and at a high-level I think it is true –women CEO's are just as effective as men CEO's, same for artists, etc. But this does not mean that perspectives, methods, ways of thinking, etc are the same. I believe the next step for equality will value the differences... and thereby build a stronger, richer, more equitable society.

2. Inclusive opportunities and forums are more likely to bring progress toward equity between the sexes than exclusive or separatist forums. I question the value of separatist forums (of almost any type). Women's groups are typically explicitly exclusive. Male initiated groups are often not formally exclusive, but in practice become male-dominated (you know, nine men and one woman). Obviously, not much synergy from diversity of perspectives can be developed in these situations. Separatism is good for solidarity, and perhaps emotional support, but I believe it works against the broader goal of equitable social interaction. Mature societal relationships mean figuring out ways to work together, in actual practice.

I think an art exhibition is a good place for this conversation. Art typically surrounds and helps raise consciousness and usher in social movements (ex. folk singers during civil rights movement). Lastly, I think this is a great group of artists and there are similar styles of art in each male/female pair, and thus we get a glimpse of their differences in perspective. This is by no means a definitive look at the issue, but simply a conversation starter. With only 4 pairs of artists and no look to historical pairings, this is a very small data set, but enough to think about.