

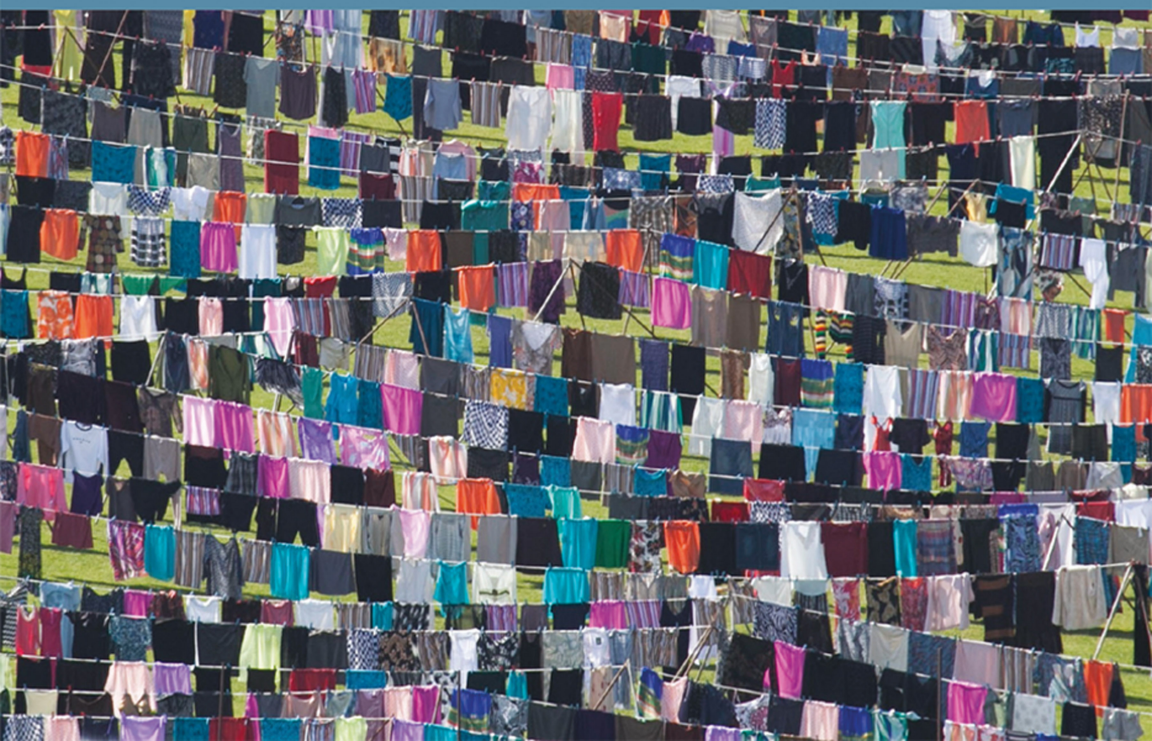
TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS AND THE ARTS:
A TRILOGY



MARSHA MESKIMMON

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS, TRANSVERSAL POLITICS AND ART

ENTANGLEMENTS AND INTERSECTIONS



TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS, TRANSVERSAL POLITICS AND ART

This book explores the critical significance of the visual arts to transnational feminist thought and activism.

This first volume in Marsha Meskimmon's powerful and timely Trilogy focuses on some of the central political challenges of our era, including war, migration, ecological destruction, sexual violence and the return of neo-nationalisms. It argues that transnational feminisms and the arts can play a pivotal role in forging the solidarities and epistemic communities needed to create social, economic and ecological justice on a world scale. Transnational feminisms and the arts provide a vital space for *knowing, imagining and inhabiting – earth-wide and otherwise*. The chapters in this book each take their lead from a current matter of political significance that is central to transnational feminist activist organizing and has been explored through the arts in ways that permit dialogues across geopolitical borders to take place.

Including examples of artwork in full colour, this is essential reading for students and researchers in art history, theory and practice, visual culture studies, feminism and gender studies, political theory and cultural geography.

The Transnational Feminisms and the Arts Trilogy

Transnational Feminisms, Transversal Politics and Art:

Entanglements and Intersections

Transnational Feminisms and Art's Horizontal Histories:

Ecologies and Genealogies

Transnational Feminisms and Posthuman Aesthetics:

Resonance and Riffing

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Entanglements and Intersections

Marsha Meskimmon

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INTRODUCTION

Knowing, imagining and inhabiting – earth-wide and otherwise

Tracing the genealogies of ecological feminisms, Chris J. Cuomo commented aptly that ‘Any piece of philosophy is merely part of a conversation’.¹ Conversation resides at the very heart of this book, and in its extension as the first volume, the opening conversation, in a Trilogy focused on creating dialogues between transnational feminisms and the arts. Simply, this book explores the critical significance of the visual arts to transnational feminist thought and activism, arguing that art’s particular affective and imaginative potential to articulate ideas and concepts through compelling visual, material and spatial forms is pivotal to effecting transformative and lasting socio-political change.

The myriad conversations opened across the pages of this book turn around the key terms of its title: transnational feminisms, transversal politics, entanglements, intersections and art. These are not empty terms. They call for intellectual response and responsibility, for situated and embodied forms of critical and creative engagement that acknowledge epistemic location – a knowing *from* somewhere that has political and ethical effects. They call for dialogues in difference that can create solidarities by forging epistemic communities beyond essence or fixed identity. And for all of their differences of topic, tone and timbre, they call for connective conversations to be unfolded in their particularity through close reading, attentive looking and vulnerable listening. They call for the end of epistemic mastery and in its place trace a compelling conceptual arc that connects transnational feminisms with the arts through *knowing, imagining and inhabiting – earth-wide and otherwise*. This is the conceptual arc of this book.

As the arguments in this volume demonstrate, the lines of this arc do not describe a singular pathway but rather make it possible to embark upon a critical journey, mapping any number of ongoing conversations in their connective, and collective, unfolding. *Knowing* is thus understood and engaged here as a practice: active, contingent, material and creative. Practices of knowing acknowledge the critical

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entanglement of knowers with the known, subjects and objects emerge through mutual intra-activity. Epistemic location and responsibility thus become more central than categorical mastery of known objects; simply, practices of knowing attend less to *what* is known, than to *how, from where, and to what ends*. Knowing, as traced through the conceptual arc of the present volume, is embodied, situated, perspectival, dialogic, intrinsically multidimensional, intersectional, entangled and contingent. It does not give the knower all-seeing, yet invisible, oversight of the world from an objective vantage point above and beyond, but rather *enworlds* knowers, as the very condition of worldmaking.

And in this it meets *imagining*. Time and again, the arguments pursued in the chapters that follow pivot around knowing differently to imagine otherwise.² This is neither a conceit nor a coincidence; knowing and imagining are deeply interwoven with political and ethical agency. Imagining here is connected materially with the possibility to compel action and drive political transformation. Imagining is the motor force of the cultural imaginary and of the shared social space of responsive and responsible solidarity, where imagination facilitates real, material bonds between diverse earth others. Knowing and imagining move beyond the categorical limits of essentialist identity politics toward building solidarities across differences. Their intimate interconnection also unravels the binary logic that pits the personal and the intimate against the political and the global. Knowing and imagining are not opponents, but partners, working toward new ways to inhabit the world, earth-wide and otherwise.

The question of *inhabiting*, of how we might live together with both human and non-human earth-others, is of profound significance to transnational feminist thought and activism. It drives campaigns focused on iniquitous geopolitical power dynamics, challenging social, economic and ecological injustices sustained between wealthy and poor nations, the developed and developing world, and the Global North and South. Likewise, it is a cornerstone of the work undertaken by transnational feminists to end global sex and gender-based inequality at all levels, along with the extreme forms of violence and abuse that so commonly underpin it. Intellectual explorations of the politics of location and belonging bring geopolitical questions related to citizenship, migration and borders into direct contact with ethical issues around hospitality, cosmopolitan responsibility and care. Inhabiting thus creates a profound imbrication between politics and ethics and, as transnational feminisms increasingly embrace posthumanist insights (particularly via Indigenous, queer and trans ecofeminisms), acknowledging that significant others can be more than human raises searching questions for any knowing and imagining that is not earth-wide as well as otherwise.

The entanglements and intersections that coalesce through transnational feminisms, transversal politics and art, thus foreground *position*, but challenge the essential authenticity of *origin*; if we all know from somewhere, we are also capable of imagining and inhabiting, with others, elsewhere.³ As I draft these lines, I am aware that my position in this project is not transparent, that I am interpellated by the arguments and conversations that weave across these pages: I am written as I write.

And if these dialogues are mine and I am theirs, then, to paraphrase the title of Kim Mahood's extraordinary account of dwelling and mapping within a small Indigenous Australian community, my position is doubtful.⁴ By this I do not invoke the now obsolete etymology that connects doubt with dread; rather I connect it more personally with the use made of the term by my brother, a social scientist who unilaterally adopted the middle name of Thomas as a personal talisman to ward against complacency and the hubris of certitude.⁵ Knowing is never finished and there are no absolute coordinates, but there are conversations to be joined.

By way of introducing the dialogues that underpin the present volume, I turn again to the central terms of the title as a series of provisional coordinates through which to map its trajectories. My introduction to transnational feminisms, art, transversal politics, entanglements and intersections is done with the awareness that, like a map of the heavens, some of the stars that I have used to mark out my path may well be gone by the time it is walked by others. But the practices of knowing, imagining and inhabiting that are materialized through these dialogues, and the chapters that lead out from them, will remain as an invitation to others to continue this act of wayfaring, creating new tools and forging new epistemic communities in future.

Transnational feminisms

Throughout this volume, 'transnational feminisms' is used both empirically, to describe political practices ranging from the development of radical pedagogies to advocacy networks, activist campaigns and solidarity-building, and normatively, to refer to decolonizing feminist thought that demonstrates fluid, non-hierarchical and non-dominative understandings of subjects, politics, ethics and agency. This dynamic and plural combination of thought and activism (theory and practice) is a key characteristic of transnational feminisms, as is their manifestation across scholarly, intellectual and activist projects.⁶ Politically, transnational feminist campaigns facilitate large-scale, cross-border coalitions and galvanize effective grass-roots engagement with such major world issues as sexual violence, poverty, ecological devastation, human rights violations and gender-based inequalities under the law.⁷ Intellectually, transnational feminist theory describes a multidimensional field of thought that commonly moves across and between disciplines, engaging intersectional, decolonizing and race-critical analysis, queer, ecological, Indigenous and 'slow' activism, and, increasingly, a vital materialist move away from solely human-centred understandings of the world.⁸

In using the term, my work reflects a growing consensus across the social sciences and humanities that specific insights mark 'transnational feminisms' as distinguishable from, but with strong affinities to, 'international', 'global', 'postcolonial' or 'Third World' feminisms.⁹ The first of these is a determined riposte to centre-periphery models of geopolitical and cultural exchange. Transnational feminisms focus upon flows and multidimensional connections that profoundly unravel the 'hub and spoke' model, and, in so doing, move beyond any binary opposition between the local and the

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global, the personal and the political. Through the strategic deployment of a 'both/and' logic that registers affinities with/in differences, transnational feminisms facilitate the articulation of plural epistemic, political and ethical positions that are capable of addressing major world issues without resorting to top-down, master discourses. Similarly, in terms of political activism and organizing, transnational feminisms are capable of facilitating large-scale coalition-building *with and through* careful attention to local, concrete conditions, replacing centre-periphery hierarchies (e.g. the 'West' and the rest) with multidimensional dialogues that take place across transnational feminist networks.¹⁰

Sensitive to differences at all levels, the premises for transnational feminist solidarity are political, epistemic and affective, rather than essential or identitarian; epistemic communities and political solidarities emerge in the recognition of heterogeneity and the formation of multidimensional coalitions that are themselves capable of profound reconfiguration. Transnational feminist solidarities are critically informed by the politics of location, but location is mobile and dynamic. This is not a 'blood and soil' logic, but a denizen cartography drawn by embodied subjects as they make and re-make worlds from within. Not surprisingly, transnational feminisms are particularly well-aligned with theoretical trajectories characterized by flexible, intersubjective and intersectional modes of thought that emphasize heterogeneity, self-reflexivity and active positioning, in combination with radical connectivity, multi-axis and horizontal analysis, and a generous criticality that seeks to establish relationships within, rather than mastery over, worlds.

Briefly outlining the intellectual valences that coalesce in and through transnational feminist thought and activism is intended neither to suggest that the term is static nor to attempt to define it here, once and for all. The parameters of the term and its use remain very open and, indeed, my interest in bringing transnational feminisms into an active dialogue with the arts in this volume, and in the wider Trilogy that it begins, is to further develop the conversations around knowing, imagining and inhabiting (earth-wide and otherwise) with which this introduction began. And here it is important to signal that I do not maintain a distant, disembodied, critical *disinterest* in transnational feminisms or the arts, but am compelled by, and invested in, the conversations their connection makes possible.

There are two particular reasons for this. First, transnational feminisms' creative configuration of theory, practice and location (thought, activism and position) posits radical imagination as a material force for political transformation. The words of bell hooks ring loud and true: 'Imagination plays a vital role in the struggle for liberation globally'.¹¹ I concur and, more strongly, am convinced that the visual arts *can and do* participate in, and materially extend, the potential of transnational feminisms to transform the way we know, imagine and inhabit the world.

In addition, if transnational feminist thought is characterized by the brilliance of its creative, imaginative and transformative politics, so too is it marked by its bravery, audacity and generosity of spirit. For me, transnational feminisms demonstrate the possibilities offered by 'embracing a politics of vision, hope and love',¹² a way of inhabiting the world in solidarity and kinship with 'other Others',¹³ a way of

living that is critical, yet hopeful, courageous, yet attentive. Embracing the strange encounters of transnational feminisms is an intrinsic part of living a feminist life.¹⁴

. . . and the arts

In recent years, a ‘global turn’ in art and art history has mirrored the rise of the global art market, and both have tended to occlude feminist theories and practices while reinstating Eurocentric¹⁵ hierarchies under the homogenizing sign of ‘globalization’. While disappointing, this kind of ‘feminist forgetting’ is neither new nor very surprising.¹⁶ However, in tandem with the mainstream global turn, a plethora of work has emerged seeking to redress the gendered legacies of western imperialism by decolonizing *feminist* art, art history and theory, and with this has come an increased level of interest in feminist and women’s art practices from the ‘marginal’ regions of the developing world/Global South.¹⁷ The movement toward a more inclusive geography of feminist work across the arts is dynamic, innovative and characterized by an exceptional commitment to feminist politics and global dialogue, but it is as yet uneven in its outcomes.

Some work in the field retains a linear narrative of the histories of feminisms (usually as ‘waves’), and maintains a typology of feminist art and theory that privileges a Euro-US centrality, a fixation on ‘national’ styles of art, or a ‘racialized’ concept of transnationalism.¹⁸ Two tendencies typify this work: an additive, multi-national survey approach (one from China, one from Brazil, one from France and so on), and the application of the term ‘transnational’ as a description of non-Western or diasporic practitioners and/or their work.¹⁹ The former serves to reinforce the Eurocentric primacy of national styles and schools, the latter relies upon essentialized models of subjectivity and biographical readings of art. In this context, it is worth remembering Elizabeth Grosz’s salient points regarding the contingencies at play in any definition of a ‘feminist text’:

no text can be classified once and for all as wholly feminist or wholly patriarchal: these appellations depend on its context, its place within that context, how it is used, by whom and to what effect. These various contingencies dictate that at best a text is feminist or patriarchal only provisionally, only momentarily, only in some but not in all of its possible readings, and in some but not all of its possible effects.²⁰

Decolonizing feminism’s approaches to art history and theory, and integrating the important insights derived from transnational feminist thought and activism, means more than bringing art from a worldwide catchment into the Euro-US marketplace. Engaging with the multidimensional intersections between gender, sexuality, the global and the local (amongst other differences) requires a profound change of direction in the production of art’s histories and theories. There is work to be done to nuance the terrain of ‘global art’ such that it does not render gender and sexual difference invisible²¹ and, in addition, to explore the ‘unmarked’ centre in

ways that can facilitate the unravelling of centre-periphery thinking.²² An increasing body of research emerging in the field deploys close readings of artworks and practices to demonstrate the entangled genealogies that coalesce in every act of art (and world) making, while other interventions consolidate the pivotal role of intersectional, multidimensional and horizontal histories in telling the stories that comprise art's migratory narrative pasts.²³ This book finds fellowship with these projects and their focus on interdependent ways of knowing, capable of articulating cross-cultural border concepts and forms of ecological thinking that challenge us to ask what transnational feminisms and the arts can *do*, rather than to seek to define what they *are*.

Transversal politics

This volume argues that transversal politics are central to transnational feminisms, and to the transformative art- and worldmaking practices explored in dialogue with them here. My use of the term 'transversal politics' derives principally from the work of sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis, and the extension of her ideas by scholars working on feminist peacebuilding, democratic solidarity-building, and redefining the political left following the rise of European nationalisms in the late 1990s.²⁴ My deployment thus has a transnational feminist centre of gravity, but in acknowledging these coordinates, I am not signalling a singular point of origin, nor did Yuval-Davis make such a claim. Feminist transversal politics, as elaborated by Yuval-Davis and others, emerged in and through a range of conversations across and between theories and practices, and this genealogy provides the term with resonances that are also of critical significance here. Tracing few of the most significant of these, we find synergies, affinities and overlapping interests that I would argue mark out an important territory of experimental political praxis that connects transnational feminisms with the arts in particularly dynamic ways.

A pivotal point in the genealogy that I am tracing resides with the history of the women's movement in Bologna. Yuval-Davis notes that her initial encounter with the term 'transversal politics' came from her interactions with feminist activists in Bologna in the early 1990s.²⁵ Feminist activists in Bologna had been using the term at least since the 1970s, to describe a form of self-organization forged through dialogues that cut across conventional social divisions and hierarchies. At least two modes of understanding transversal politics thus meet at the nexus of the feminist movement in Bologna: explorations of transversality in then current continental philosophy, most notably in the writings of Félix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault,²⁶ and the political practice of multidimensional self-organization that typified the anarchist histories of the Italian women's movement since the turn of the 20th century.²⁷ Each of these is important but neither provides an absolute or singular definition of the emergence of feminist transversal politics in Bologna. Or, perhaps it is more apt to say that the 'truth' of transversal politics is that the concept evades linear narratives and instead demonstrates the potential of concepts to be intrinsically 'both/and' – both dialogic theory and radical collective practice at once.

In positioning the concept of transversal politics within the arguments I am making in this volume, I want to encourage its multiple genealogical valences to

intertwine and enrich the possibilities for further multidimensional dialogues to emerge. For example, by the first decades of the 20th Century, Italian feminists had become ardent ‘internationalists’, working both with Spanish anarcho-syndicalists against fascism, and in the US, to radicalize migrant labour organizations. In Bologna, anarcho-feminists were central to the autonomous left actions of the 1977 Movement, as were the writings of Deleuze and Guattari. It is also useful to remember that Guattari came to explore transversality in the context of institutional critique, as a means by which to rethink care in La Borde, the psychiatric clinic in which he worked in the 1960s. And, in dialogue with Deleuze, Foucault turns to transversality to examine the political dynamics of sexuality that seem to lie beyond the realm of traditional party politics. These trajectories all describe a politics centred upon non-dominative, self-organization, radical transformations of subjectivity, and movements and forms of direct action that engender solidarities outside the limits of conventional institutional, party or identity politics. These are creative and experimental politics in which generosity and mutual benefit are central.

As feminist social scientists developed their dialogues with transversal politics during the 1990s, these resonances helped to shape their contours. Significantly, Yuval-Davis articulated transversal politics as intrinsically intersectional, transnational, situated and dialogic, focused on advocacy, rather than ‘representation’ – speaking *with* rather than *for*. And, as Anja Kanngeser argues, transversal politics are a way of refashioning the subject and the world in mutuality.²⁸ With Kanngeser, transversal politics move decisively toward the aesthetic; liberatory politics are creative, world-making, ecological and mobile. In the arguments pursued through the chapters of this book, transversal politics signal a critical link between political and ethical agency, epistemic community, collective belonging and non-domination. They are a politics that recognize the heterogeneity of subjects without sacrificing their potential to form multiple, larger, coalitions that can act materially to change the social imaginary. The significance of affect, imagination and aesthetics are also posited as central to a creative and transformative political project that mobilizes the multi-axis analysis of feminist anarchism and intersectionality, in combination with the radical connectivity of ecological thinking and vital materialist entanglement.²⁹ It is to such entanglements and intersections that this positional introduction now turns.

Entanglements and intersections

Concepts of entanglement and intersectionality underpin many of the dialogues that unfold across the pages of this volume and, in keeping with its active exploration of *positioning*, they are pivotal not so much for what they *are*, but for what they can *do*. Echoing the words of Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw and Leslie McCall, intersectionality operates here as a critical approach, or an ‘analytic sensibility’:

what makes an analysis intersectional – whatever terms it deploys, whatever its iterations, whatever its field or discipline – is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its

relation to power. This framing – conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power – emphasizes what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is.³⁰

Intersectional analysis is dynamic, flexible, transdisciplinary, multiscale and cross-categorical; it challenges normative understandings of the world premised upon iniquitous relationships of power and domination at all levels, and it ‘runs against the grain of established (and oppressive) imaginaries’.³¹ Not surprisingly, given its focus on sameness and difference, intersectionality is central to transnational feminist thought and activism and is widely deployed in decolonizing feminist scholarship and in political campaigns.³² It also overlaps in important ways with the analytic sensibilities of anarchist political theory, especially in its emphasis upon multi-axis analysis designed to ward against both essentialist notions of identity and ‘hierarchies’ of oppressions.³³ Likewise, the intrinsically connective politics of critical ecofeminisms align strongly with an intersectional analytic sensibility in understanding ‘“isms” of domination’ to be profoundly interwoven and in need of multidimensional analysis, critique and transformation.³⁴

I would argue more strongly that intersectionality is a generative theoretical sensibility and particularly, that it creates kin. The power of intersectionality emerges in transversal acts of rooting and shifting that bring sameness and difference into compelling connection.³⁵ Intersectional analysis fosters the creation of knowledges *from somewhere* that enable the possibility of forging epistemic communities *elsewhere*.³⁶ As many scholars have pointed out, intersectionality itself comes *from somewhere* – it is rooted in the visionary politics of liberatory Black feminist thought and activism – but significantly, it also *goes elsewhere*, forging conceptual connections and affective coalitions in and through difference.³⁷ As an analytic sensibility, intersectionality builds bridges, not walls; it critically unravels the naturalized certitudes of the unmarked centre,³⁸ through radical acts of plural, collective and creative interdependence.

And here intersections meet entanglements, as interdependence signals the emergence of subjectivity through visceral encounters with/in a world comprised of vital matter. Again, entanglement is a pivotal concept for the arguments made in this volume, most critically as it extends the frame of politics and ethics to include both human and non-human agency, and thus provides possibilities to engage with the material and imaginative agency of the arts and their potential to contribute to transformative acts of worldmaking. Positioning is critical; my primary encounters with the concept of entanglement came through non-dualist explorations of the bodily roots of subjectivity by feminist scholars whose insights are central to what came to be seen as a ‘material turn’ or the ‘new materialism’.³⁹ Corporeality, embodiment, performativity, agential realism and feminist explorations of bioscience and quantum physics describe a wonderfully hybrid configuration of ideas and images that profoundly rethink subject-object becomings, situated knowledges and the embeddedness of knowers within the known.

Our entanglement within vibrant material worlds raises substantive questions concerning the configuration of politics and ethics beyond a human-centred framework. Explorations of corporeal (and transcorporeal) generosity, an ethics of things, and the material and imaginative politics of posthumanism⁴⁰ are some of the concerns that unfold through this volume around the notion of entanglement and worldmaking. These are not utopian concerns beyond the frame of history, but rather they are grounded in decolonizing,⁴¹ race-critical, Indigenous and queer activisms, as well as in the politics of critical ecofeminisms.⁴² Importantly here, the material explorations of ethico-political encounters with/in worlds sustain a detailed engagement with the arts as significantly more than a mute mirror onto the 'real'. Art's agency, its material, imaginative, conceptual and affective power to make worlds, not simply represent them, is understood as generative.⁴³ Corporeal-material feminisms, shot through with the insights of decolonizing, posthuman, queer ecologies, facilitate thinking differently about the agency of art within a transformative, transnational feminist ethico-political project. Thinking differently requires the introduction of new tools, for, as Audre Lorde so eloquently wrote more than three decades ago: *'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'*.⁴⁴

Transnational feminist methodologies: on tools

All methodologies carry within them underlying assumptions that shape both how information – 'data' – is gathered and the kinds of knowledges that are constructed by and through information gathering and analysis. The marginalized and those who are committed to social justice at all levels of the research process want and need different kinds of knowledge and different and more congruent means by which to create it, or to allow previously subjugated knowledges to emerge.⁴⁵

Acknowledging that replicating formulaic knowledge production serves only to reproduce the same knowledges, categories and structures of power currently in place,⁴⁶ this volume, and the Trilogy of which it forms the first book, heeds calls to find new forms of thinking-in-making capable of creating ways to know, imagine and inhabit a world beyond 'the master's house'.⁴⁷ The important question of *how* we know, not just *what* we know, is driving an increasing number of feminist scholars to explore emergent writing methodologies.⁴⁸ The insights of these fellow travellers have helped to produce the tools used in this project as I have sought to create a dialogue between transnational feminisms and the visual arts capable of articulating the transformative potential of their vital interconnection.

An important aspect of this is dialogue. *Transnational Feminisms and the Arts* is not simply a series of three volumes on a topic, but a Trilogy, and as such, the writing materializes an extended critical dialogue, one that is materially connected to its method and argument. Dialogue is not conversation between two, but a 'speaking through', a knowing with, that can engage myriad positions. Throughout this volume, my words speak with those of many and varied fellow travellers; scholar and artist friends and colleagues, books, texts, and, importantly, artworks, share the

spaces of these pages with me, are my critical interlocutors, my ideal readers and partners in dynamic dialogues. Their presence echoes through the text, is extended through the notes and citations, rendered visible in the bibliography and in the images reproduced, which are not illustrations of ideas, but participants in critical conversations. Position is an activity, not a description of a fixed reality. It informs how we read, look, think and write – with whom, from where and why. This book starts a dialogue that will extend, and be changed, as the Trilogy's next volumes chart other courses and create different conversations between transnational feminisms and the arts.

The Trilogy proposes that the 'revolutionary power'⁴⁹ of transnational feminisms and the arts can best be materialized through an embodied, situated, yet mobile and process-led critical practice, where epistemic location is acknowledged through responsive and responsible acts of attention, performed through writing, thinking and making *with/in* the frame of the dialogic encounter. What this means in practice is that the Trilogy does not define something called 'transnational feminist art/ists' once and for all, but rather opens an intellectual and affective process of engagement with and across a range of theories and practices in order to articulate and imagine (and open the potential to *re-imagine* in future) what transnational feminisms and the arts *can do*.

To that end, the volume and the Trilogy provide an intellectual architecture, enabling the writing to mirror the modulation between a close attention to concrete specificity and heterogeneity at the level of individual case studies, while facilitating a higher level dialogue between cases, chapters and volumes, capable of addressing issues and ideas of a broader scope, on a larger scale. With a focus both personal and political, intimate and global, the volume and the Trilogy reject meta-theory and master discourse applied from on high, preferring instead, the performance of multidimensional, transversal encounters across and between diverse instances that permit affinities and solidarities of interest to emerge.

The Trilogy and its volumes are not survey texts, and while they draw from a very wide range of case studies centred on specific works of art, institutions, archives, exhibitions, collaborative projects and forms of art-writing worldwide, they do not purport to effect 'global coverage', as if that were either possible or desirable. Likewise, they do not presuppose that the transnational has a fixed abode in 'marginal' or peripheric geopolitical regions; transnational feminisms do not perpetuate the exceptionalist logic of the unmarked centre and have much to say about power in the Global North, the 'West', and the developed world. Writing the Trilogy is a creative materialization of the mobile and multidimensional ideas and meanings that transnational feminist thought and activism engenders, and, more strongly, it is an act of feminist hope and solidarity for the future.

This first volume is an opening foray focusing on transversal politics and the arts as a way to start a greater dialogue by considering the critical role that the arts can play within some of the most important challenges faced by transnational feminist praxis today. The themes of the chapters are not random; each takes a lead from a current matter of political significance that is especially central to transnational