

GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR GROUP VISITS



Rineke Dijkstra, *Almerisa, Asylumcenter Leiden, Leiden Netherlands, March 14, 1994*,
C-print, 62x52 cm, Courtesy of the Artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, NY

FEATURING:
Introduction to the Exhibition & Artists
Image Comparison & Discussion Questions
Tours & Activities
Resources

ADDISON GALLERY OF AMERICAN ART EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Rachel Schiller & Julie Bernson

Phillips Academy, Main Street, Andover, MA 01810

Public Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm; Sunday 1pm-5pm

Tours & Group Visits Available by Reservation: Tuesday – Friday 9am-6pm & selected Saturdays

GIRLS' NIGHT OUT IS ON EXHIBITION JANUARY 22 – APRIL 3, 2005
ADMISSION, EVENTS, TOURS, AND GROUP VISITS ARE ALL OFFERED FREE OF CHARGE!
CONTACT 978/749-4037 OR RSCHILLER@ANDOVER.EDU TO ARRANGE A VISIT!

This **Resource Guide** is designed to help you connect **Girls' Night Out** with your program, organization, or class. When visiting the Addison, your group can expect an experience customized to your goals and interests. This guide introduces the themes and artists in the exhibition, and offers examples of discussion questions, art, and writing activities to begin exploring the exhibition. Discussions and responsive activities facilitated by the Addison's education staff can complement your group's goals and allow for creative expression of personal experiences. Moreover, we are glad to assist you in developing additional ideas for your visit.

ARTISTS

Central to *Girls' Night Out* is the idea of the *girl*. Some experiences of girlhood engage experimentation, potential, and freedom, and others might stir confusion and vulnerability. While the term "girl" may most directly describe the development towards adolescence, in the exhibition it also refers to experiences of transition and self-definition, whether personal, cultural, or artistic. In contemporary culture, "girl" has shifted from a sometimes demeaning word signifying immaturity and inexperience to a term of proclamation and empowerment.

Girls' Night Out was curated by **Irene Hoffman** and **Elizabeth Armstrong** from the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach, California, to explore and promote artwork by an international and intergenerational group of female artists. These artists, sometimes called *post-feminist* artists, are no longer struggling to make a place for themselves in the world and art world but are able to freely express their unique perspectives through the mediums of film and photography.

Shirana Shahbazi (Born: Iran, 1974; lives: Zurich, Switzerland)

In her installation of photographs and paintings *Goftare Nik/Good Words* (2002-2003), Shahbazi captures new realities of everyday life in Iran as revealed in urban landscapes, children on roller blades, and women wearing white wedding gowns, scenes far from Western stereotypes of Islamic culture. Titled from an ancient Persian dictum, "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds," Shahbazi carries an optimistic view of individuals exploring new freedoms and challenging traditional expectations of their culture.

Daniela Rossell (Born/lives: Mexico City, 1973)

Rossell's series *Ricas y Famosas* (Rich and Famous, 1999-2002) portrays the uninhibited materialistic and sexualized identity of young women in Mexico City's elite class. In her glossy, large scale photographs, the women appear inseparable from their lavish environments, projecting fantastic personas comparable to celebrity icons. The portraits expose how forces such as family, social status, and the media often define self-perceptions and guide public personas.

Katy Grannan (Born: Arlington, MA 1969; lives: Brooklyn)

Bringing voice to the anonymous, Grannan chooses her subjects by placing ads in local newspapers for "artist models." She receives popular response from young women – and an occasional man – many of whom still live in their childhood homes. Their modest environments are arranged into studio spaces, and the subjects choose their clothes and posture to create these seductive portraits. Through the process, Grannan's subjects live out fantasies of becoming models while becoming comfortable with their real selves.

Elina Brotherus (Born: Helsinki, Finland, 1972, lives: Helsinki and France)

Possessing a drive for honest self-representation, Brotherus creates intimate and photographic portraits of her own life. Leaving her camera always ready, she catches herself in personal moments, such as her arrival in a foreign country or during an emotional breakdown. In other images, Brotherus removes her body from the portrait, using land- and cityscapes to convey her psychological state and experience of place.



Elina Brotherus, *Love Bites II*, 1999, Chromogenic process color photograph, 27 1/2 x 23 in., Courtesy &:gb agency, Paris

Rineke Dijkstra (Born: The Netherlands, 1959, lives: Amsterdam)

In photographic and video portraits of adolescents living in places as diverse as Israel, the UK, the Netherlands, and California, Dijkstra captures their universal experiences of change. In 1994, Dijkstra began a photograph series of *Almerisa*, a young Bosnian refugee in Holland. Photographing the girl every few years, Dijkstra captures Almerisa's physical and psychological transformation, as she becomes increasingly confident and defiant in her appearance. Likewise, in the video, *The Buzzclub, Liverpool, England/Mysteryworld, Zaandam, Netherlands* (1996-1997), Dijkstra films teenagers dancing in popular clubs, capturing their range of states from social awkwardness to carefree inhibition.

Sarah Jones (Born: London, 1959; lives: London)

Jones also focuses on the psychological complexities of teenagers. In her *Dining Room* series, begun in 1997, she photographed three teenage sisters in relation to their formal household interior. Sulking and self-conscious, the portraits show the girls' uncomfortable relationships to each other and their environment. Following the girls over several years, Jones moved outside and photographed each girl individually. In this later series, the sisters appear increasingly liberated and at ease with their bodies. Jones's work empathizes with how teenagers see themselves in relation to family and other girls.



Sarah Jones, *The Park*, 2002, C-print on aluminum, 60x 60 in., collection Darrel and Marsha Anderson, Newport Beach, courtesy Maureen Paley Interim Art, London

Eija-Liisa Ahtila (Born: Finland, 1959; lives: Helsinki)

In her video work, *Lahja-The Present* (2001), Ahtila creates five narratives of women breaking from normal routines into actions seemingly strange, such as a teenager lying down in a puddle on the way home from school. The films conclude with the inspirational phrase "Give yourself a present, forgive yourself," prompting viewers to question how individuals deal with personal propensities and distinguish between psychological inhibition and anti-social behavior.

Sally Tykkä (Born: Finland, 1973; lives: Helsinki)

Tykkä's subjects stand on the tenuous line between self-awareness and self-obsession. Her photographic series *Sick, More Sick, and The Sickest One* (1997), shows three images of a young girl's struggle with anorexia, ending with the ambiguous image of a physically anguished teenager looking down at *Girl* written on her t-shirt. Tykkä's *Thriller* (2001) is a short film showing a girl on the threshold of sexual awakening. Her parents' lack of awareness of the girl's emotional state creates a dramatic ending to the video where sexuality and violence uncomfortably converge.



Salla Tykkä, *The Sickest One*, 1997, C-Print, 23x19 3/4 in., Courtesy the artist

Dorit Cypis (Born: Israel, 1951; lives: Los Angeles)

In her exploration of looking, seeing, and being seen, Cypis uses mirrors as a way to see oneself from different perspectives. In her works made in prisons and dance studios, Cypis alternatively engages her reflection in the mirror and purposely obscures it from our vision. In the photographic series, *The Rest in Motion* (2002), a curtain blowing in the breeze acts as a metaphor for the female body – confined yet restless, domestic yet yearning for the freedom of nature. Cypis is also the founder of Kulture Klub, an art program for homeless youth in Chicago, in which she extended her formal investigations of perception into social activist projects designed to empower the teens.

Kelly Nipper (Born: Edina, Minnesota; 1971, lives: Los Angeles)

Nipper has worked with dancers, skaters, and performers in her work that deals with time, weight, balance, and motion. Her work, *Bending Water into a Heart Shape* (2003), is a four-channel video that creates interplay between the excruciatingly slowed-down motion of a skater doing a triple lutz with the melting of a mobile made of ice. The video tests viewers' patience to witness the subtle transformations that develop over time, much like the patience required to allow stages in our lives to reveal themselves.

IMAGE COMPARISON

Katy Grannan, Daniela Rossell, and Shirana Shahbazi deliberately respond to the way popular media – such as billboards, magazines, film, and television – visualize how women “should look.”

- What messages do the artists and their subjects communicate?
- How do the artists present popular or alternative views of teenagers and women?
- How do you relate to the girls or women in these images?
- What ideas do you have for presenting alternative views of teenagers and women?



Katy Grannan, *Dee, Red Hook NY, 2003*, gelatin silver print, 20x16 in., Courtesy of the artist and Artemis Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, NY



Daniela Rossell, *Untitled (Rica y Famosas), 2001*, Monterrey, Mexico, C-print edition of 5, 50x60 in., Courtesy of Greene Naftali Inc., NY



Shirana Shahbazi, from *Gaftare Nik/Good Words, 2000-2003*, detail, C-print, Courtesy Galerie Bob van Orsouw, Zurich, Switzerland

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The artists in the exhibition come from different generations and backgrounds and from countries around the world, including Iran, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Finland, Mexico, Israel, and the United States. They have been brought together through their focus on women and girls. What are your group’s common and personal understandings of the term girl?
 - Explore cultural similarities and differences presented in the images and among your group.
 - This discussion could also be used to compare girls and women, girls and boys, masculinity and femininity. (Paintings and photographs from other Addison exhibitions that picture males and females from the eighteenth to the twentieth century can also be used for comparison.)
- Through portraits and self-portraits, what are some of the ways the artists reveal the unique identities of their subjects?
- What are some ways the subjects might be showing a public or popular version of themselves? To or for whom do you think these personas are projected? Is there anything private revealed in the images?
- Self-understanding is often influenced by the context in which we live, including our geography, our society, our family, and our home. How do the young women in these artworks relate to the environments in which they are shown? In what ways have you been influenced by your environment?
- What are some of the different ways that the artists present the transition from girlhood to young adult and womanhood? Do you relate to any of these – or what would your image look like?
- Many vulnerable moments – such as an emotional breakdown, self-doubt, or social anxieties – are expressed in these images. What power can come from exploring what are often seen as weaknesses, especially in women?

TOURS & ACTIVITIES

VIEWING OF THE EXHIBITION:

Any of the above discussion questions can be used during a tour of the exhibition. You are welcome to tour the galleries on your own or with an Addison education staff member. These topics may be discussed with your whole group, in small groups, or in pairs. A tour of the exhibition can be accompanied by a writing or art-making activity in the museum or at your own site.

Please contact us if you plan to tour the exhibition on your own or with a guide from the education department, or if you plan to attend the workshop, *Make Your Own Image*, which will creatively explore ideas of self-image through discussion and activities in the exhibition, on Tuesday, March 10, 4-6pm or Saturday, March 19, 10:30-12:30pm. Admission, tours, and the workshop are free of charge.

ART-MAKING ACTIVITIES FOR THE MUSEUM OR YOUR SITE:

- Compare images from magazines and newspapers to those in the show, and make an art project incorporating original and found representations of identity.
- Create an image or film that demonstrates or symbolizes feelings of self-empowerment.
- Experiment with a medium – such as writing, painting, photography, video, or a combination – to make your own self-portraits or portraits of others. Option: Use objects, places, or other ideas to create an alternative portrait image, such as Elina Brotherus' use of landscape as a reflection of self.

WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR THE MUSEUM OR YOUR SITE:

- Explore the complexity of individuals by writing a poem, story, screenplay, or free write that imagines a person from multiple perspectives, such as social, physical, and interior.
- What is beauty? Write your personal thoughts about beauty based on one or more of the artworks. Option: Share writings among the group in front of each work selected.
- Use a first line such as, *My body is, I feel powerful when, or Beauty is when*, to produce a collective poem that your group recites in a round.

COLLABORATION:

This Resource Guide is being distributed to organizations in greater Boston and the Merrimack Valley, representing a diverse group of girl-serving agencies, youth programs, art initiatives, and media and film programs. While operating in varied ways, each group shares a dedication to empowering individuals through self-awareness and creativity, while building a sense of community. We encourage you to connect with organizations that share or complement the objectives and activities of your own.

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT ART AND WRITING:

Goddess Doll



- Created in RAW Art Works
Women 2 Be Program, Lynne

Who am I?

I have always wondered and am still wondering who I am
I went from the age of one to eight
Being me, myself, and I-
From the age of nine to thirteen
Being what others wanted to make of me
I really forgot who I really am.

- By *Silvia Lepicki*, Frost School, Lawrence

Published in Apple Sauce Literary Magazine, Volume V, Number 1, 2004, Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative

ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

This is a partial list of organizations that serve girls and youth, some with a focus on art, film, and/or media. Please contact the organizations directly or feel free to contact us for information on additional programs.

**Indicates programs specifically for girls and young women.*

ARTS-BASED

***Artists for Humanity and the Young Women's Initiative (Boston)**

www.afhboston.com

Boston Center for the Arts - Teen Program

www.bcaonline.org/youth.htm

Boston Photo Collaborative - Project Image and Teen Images

www.bostonphoto.org/programs.html

RAW Art Works (Lynn) - Real 2 Reel, *Art 4 Girlz, and *Women 2 Be

www.rawart.org

Lawrence Community Works/Movement City (Lawrence)

www.lawrencecommunityworks.org/movementcity/

***United Teen Equality Center (Lowell) - Promoting Empowering Alternative through Creative Expression (P.E.A.C.E) and Young Women's Initiative**

www.utec-lowell.org

United South End Settlements (Boston)- Arts Incentives Program

www.uses.org/AIP/arts_incentives.htm

***Reflect and Strengthen (Dorchester)**

www.reflectandstrengthen.org

Kulture Klub (Chicago, founded by *Girls' Night Out* artist Dorit Cypis)

www.kultureklub.org

FILM AND MEDIA

Institute of Contemporary Art – Fast Forward Teen Program

www.icaboston.org/Home/Education/TeenPrograms

YWCA Boston- Youth Voice Collaborative - Media Minds Curriculum

www.ywcaboston.org/programs/yvc/

Do It Your Damn Self - Teen National Youth Video Film Festival (Cambridge)

www.doityourdamnsself.org

Community Art Center (Cambridge) - Teen Media Program

www.communityartcenter.org

***Women Make Movies and The Girls Project Film Collection (NYC)**

www.wmm.com; www.wmm.com/girlsproject

Women in Film & Video New England (Boston)

www.wifvne.org

***GIRL-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS/PROGRAMS**

Girl's Coalition of Greater Boston

www.girlscoalition.org

Girls' Inc. (National organization with affiliates in Haverhill, Lowell, Lynn, and Worcester)

www.girlsinc.org

Andover Youth Services- Venture Out

www.andveryouthservices.com

The YWCA of Greater Lawrence - Girls Programs

www.ywcalawrence.org/programs/girls_center.asp

***WEBZINES & SITES FOR GIRLS**

Teen Ink

www.teenink.com

Teen Latinitas

www.latinitasmagazine.org/

Teen Voices Online

www.teenvoices.com/

Girls Inc. web site for girls

www.girlsinc.org/gc/