The Threat of Women: Feminist Filmmaking and the Power of the Witch

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In 1943 as WWII axis powers were losing their footing, the Western world was plump with chauvinism thanks to 1942's *Casablanca,* directed by Michael Curtiz, which reignited the independent patriotism encouraged of young men. Winning three academy awards for its acclaim, the film is regarded as a cinematic masterpiece. However, unnoticed by Hollywood executives and mainstream media, a cult classic within independent experimental film was emerging. Maya Deren, a 26-year-old Ukrainian American, broke into the scene as a key figure of avant-garde cinema with *Meshes of the Afternoon,* which she directed and starred in. Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* follows a mysterious woman in what seems to be a transdimensional time loop nightmare, playing with perspective and revolutionary in-camera editing techniques (fig. 1). This, along with many of her works, helped build her public persona as an "artist-magician."[1] Blending the fact that she, as a young woman, was invading the male-dominated space of cinema and that she was pioneering techniques behind the camera (for example of in-camera editing that those consuming media couldn't understand at the time), she leaned into the gendered perception of herself as a witch. Reclaiming the once derogatory term "witch" as something magical, she made way for filmmaking to be taken seriously as a medium of self-expression and had a significant impact on feminist artist-filmmakers to follow.

Fig. 1 *Meshes of the Afternoon* (USA, Maya Deren, 1943) from "TEACHING *MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON" Sarah Keller.* the-cinefiles.com

[1]Judith Noble, "Maya Deren: The Magical Woman as Filmmaker" *Frames Cinema Journal*, n.d., https://framescinemajournal.com/article/maya-deren-the-magical-woman-as-filmmaker/, Accessed November 1, 2025.

Feminist film theorist Claire Johnston wrote in her seminal essay "Women's Cinema as Counter Cinema" (1973) about how the male-dominated filmmaking space will showcase women on screen for what they represent to a man: the absence of a phallus, merely an object of projection, and though woman may act as spectacle for cinema, she is undoubtedly absent from it. Additionally, she defends the abstraction of "women's cinema" as a separate space from the male domain out of which it has emerged.[2]

Feminist film theorist, Laura Mulvey, additionally focuses her writing practice on the dynamics between the depiction and use of women in cinema. Mulvey wrote her influential essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) coining the term "male gaze" in the context of the eye of the camera being that of a man's and only representing to the presumed male audiences what is deemed necessary of the feminine depictions on screen, a more often than not eroticized ideal of a woman.[3] Just as Deren subverted the conventional representation and objectification of women on screen, as well as attitudes about women behind the camera, several decades later, another artist entered the scene to further redefine a woman's place in cinema.

VALIE EXPORT, an Austrian avant-garde artist who identified as a feminist during the rise of 1970s performance art, presents a nuanced example of a woman using "film" (and her own body) as a medium for political discourse. In her piece titled *Touch Cinema* (1968-71), she roamed the public streets with a cardboard box/mini theatre attached to the front of her nude torso, featuring holes that allowed and encouraged any and all passerbys to reach in and grope her breasts (fig. 2). She altered the perception of what cinema was and could be. In a critique of participatory media that utilizes a feminine body as object, EXPORT uses herself as a physical

[2] Claire Johnston, "Women's Cinema as Counter Cinema," Edinburgh University Press (1973)
[3] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Edinburgh University Press (1975)

stand-in for the familiar two-dimensional representation of a "woman" on screen, one that a man can freely gawk at and project their desires onto.

Fig. 2 VALIE EXPORT *TAPP und TASTKINO* (*TAP and TOUCH CINEMA*) 1968/1989 from moma.org

With the invitation to "view" the piece, the audience is brought into the contested space of the woman as a concept vs. as a material reality; mindless objectification manifests into concrete presence in front of them. Within the experimental genres of both performance and film, EXPORT makes a successful attempt here to subvert the traditional, embedded male gaze. In a 1991 interview published in A. Juno and V. Vale's *RE/Search* #13: "Angry Women," EXPORT recalls her performance and the reaction from the public:

> I said that this was a feminist film, a "mobile film", and that you should come participate, and that you will be seen when you do that… The newspaper declared, "We cannot burn witches because it's forbidden now, and we cannot burn celluloid because it doesn't burn well, so **we also cannot burn Valie Export.**"[4]

In this performance, EXPORT presents herself as a woman in control of her own body, yet the public receives her as if she were wielding a weapon. The newspaper's statement implies the desire to "burn" EXPORT for her actions; the choice of words like "forbidden" and stating that celluloid "doesn't burn well" sets these reasons up more so as obstacles that won't allow the

[4] Andrea Juno and V. Vale, editors. *RE/Search: Angry Women* (1991), 188.

public to ostracise her for pointing out the misogyny within the system of cinema and the greater society, an inherently violent sentiment. The reception of women and femmes in male-dominated spaces such as filmmaking and art resembles the persecution women have historically faced as a result of transgressing expected social boundaries, such as in witch trials.

Witch Hunts, Then and Now

Women have been persecuted throughout history, from being burned as witches to present-day inequalities under patriarchy. Despite the persistent battles against the advancements of feminism, women have found solace, power, and a voice to advocate for themselves and others through various forms of self-expressed media, like filmmaking and performance. Notable women filmmakers of the 20th century have parallelled the legacy of historical witch hunts by reclaiming narratives of female power and subversion, transforming oppression into cinematic expression.

The suppression of women's autonomy is tied to the notion that there is an innate feminine connection to the natural world, one that is directly parallel to the patriarchal displacement of nature in societies. Spanning centuries, this results in barbarities like the witch trials across Europe and in New England, where women were scandalized for any expression of sexuality and adverse relationships to their gendered roles. This same effect is historically relevant to the antagonistic reception many women and femme artists have experienced over the past century; the intentional exclusion and incivility their work has been met with. Patriarchal society is designed not only to limit but to prohibit the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and influence that anyone who isn't a cis straight white man can hold. Motivated by a fear that their

own identities are at risk of losing autonomy and capability, this perpetuates a dangerous agenda that has seen a resurgence over the last decade.

The term "witch hunt" has been used countless times throughout history, generally in reference to the horrific witch trials where 40-60,000 innocent people – mostly women and children – were brutally murdered and tortured to death due to a failing economy and misogynistic European and Northeastern American societies. Interpreted thoroughly by theorist Silvia Federici in her book *Caliban and the Witch*, she dives into the hostile shift against women in an attempt to restructure family relations and the woman's role in society through the embrace of capitalism.[5] Meanwhile, there seems to be an uptick in the appropriation of the term "witch hunt" in relation to modern-day men in power, specifically politicians, claiming to be at the stake of a witch hunt when exposed for their actual crimes (i.e. Donald Trump, Benjamin Netanyahu, etc.).[6] This use of the term is a clear attempt to manipulate the public to believe that these men are being wrongly accused out of a propaganda-fueled hysteria. Not only is it ironic for not just men, but high-ranking men with excessive power and wealth, to claim that they are victims of a "modern-day witch hunt," but it's irresponsible and disrespectful to even compare the two situations. That they cling to this narrative only confirms the irrational insecurity so many men across all classes have towards the dismantling of the patriarchy.

[5] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Autonomedia, 2004), 61-132.
[6] Katie Anderton, "Male Politicians Need to Stop Using the Phrase 'Witch Hunt,'" *Medium* (June 2020)

Fig. 3 Maya Deren with Bolex 16mm camera, no date, photographer unknown. From "Maya Deren in Vivid Focus" *Sarah Rose Sharp,* Hyperallergic.com (2023)

Exposing Film

In her book, *The Cinema Coven: Witches, Witchcraft and Women's Filmmaking*, film theorist Alexandra Heller-Nicholas explores the role of women directors within the horror genre. When interviewed by Jenny Castillo for *Film International,* she mentions that, "...women filmmakers – like witches – are traditionally deemed to be interlopers or outsiders dabbling in a 'craft' (be it science, medicine or movie making) typically assumed to be the domain of men."[7]

In the 2001 documentary *In the Mirror of Maya Deren,* which details the trajectory of Deren's career and life, there are multiple audio recordings of her discussing her practice. In one, she describes the apparent differences within the creation of film between men and women, specifically how each gendered mindset has its varied and exclusive relationships to time-based media. Her belief is that her films are unmistakably films by a woman, in a way that is experientially recognizable due to the lived experience of a

Fig. 4 Maya Deren in Washington Square Park, New York City (c. 1959), photographer unknown. Deren was known for leashing her cats and taking them for walks. From "Maya Deren in Vivid Focus" *Sarah Rose Sharp,* Hyperallergic.com (2023)

[7] Jenny Castillo, "A Rich Space for Personal Expression – Alexandra Heller-Nicholas on the Cinema Coven: Witches, Witchcraft and Women's Filmmaking," *FilmInt.Nu* (January 2025)

woman in an oppressive world: "...their characteristic time quality is the time quality of a woman. I think that the strength of men is their great sense of immediacy. They are a now creature, and a woman has strength to wait, because she's had to wait."[8]

B. Ruby Rich explores in her piece, "The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism," (1980) the theme of the "missing woman" in cinema and the overvaluation of the environment of making a film. She argues that Mulvey and Johnston each overestimate the impact of specific production elements of filmmaking (i.e. genders of the crew, writers, talent, etc.) when trying to explain or give reason to the absence of women on screen and in audiences. She finds it important for the women that *are* in the audience, despite the consideration they're afforded, to create their own meaning and find their own spaces with what they can hold onto – as opposed to regrettably accepting the scraps of what we're expected to be satisfied with from male-dominated perspectives. To that idea, Rich further exemplifies the autonomy that can be reclaimed through the possession and naming of films that are made by women/femmes. The piece debates the distinction between "feminist films," "films by women," and the countless other ways to define this "other," media category; the takeaway is that regardless of where one chooses to place their work, it should be recognized as something that came out of an oppressed space with the potential to be reclaimed.[9]

These questions of authorship and autonomy were already taken up in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949).[10] The reception of her book was revolutionary – spurring the integration of radical feminist thought into the mainstream middle-upper classes of women, the feminist movement of the 1950s began to take on a new shape and build a foundation for what was to become the "Second Wave." Around this time in France, the new order of the movement

[8] Martina Kudlacek, director. *In the Mirror of Maya Deren* (2001)
[9] B. Ruby Rich, "The Crisis of Naming in Feminist Film Criticism," Edinburgh University Press, (1980)
[10] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Knopf, 1952).

was founded on the basis of social rights of equality and an end to financial, medical, and social discrimination, largely due in part to Germany's WWII occupation of France causing a ripple effect of an emasculated yet male-dominated society doomed to take their insecure aggressions out on the women who had been upholding it in their absence. Belgian-born French filmmaker Agnes Varda entered the scene in 1954, utilizing film as a tool for her social and political activism.

Her most widely known film, *Cleo from 5-7* (1962), explores traditional representations of the "male gaze" in cinema and performance, while also tackling the objectification of the female lead, through her own eyes (fig. 5). The film follows Cleo, a French singer who is grappling with the anxiety of awaiting a call from her doctor, which will determine her inevitably fatal future. Throughout the film, we see numerous fresh camera techniques, film materials, and compositional shifts that all play a part in the eventual shift of Cleo's self-perception. The film as a whole challenges typical narrative structures, in one way by taking us through the story in real time over the course of 90 minutes of Cleo's evening. Varying camera work is explored from a handheld documentarian perspective that lends itself to the immediacy of the specific story elements to more composed choices of still shots that capture action through reflections and mirrors, furthering the theme of her mortal vanity. Playing with color, we start the movie in full saturation during a tarot card scene before

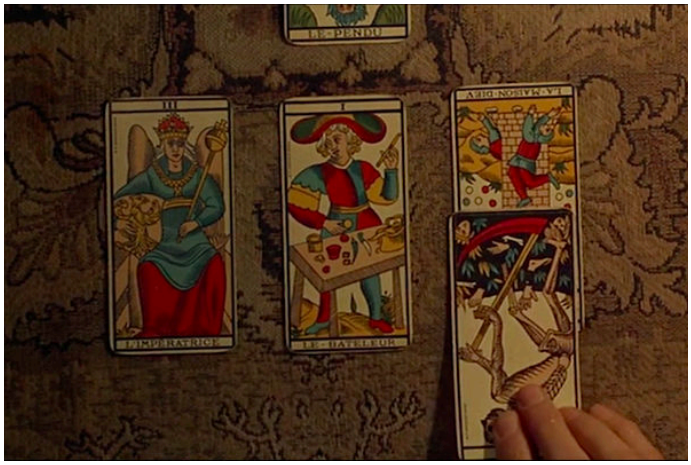

Fig. 5 "Cleo from 5-7" (1962) from The Art of the Title, *Tina Hassannia* (2017)

fully transitioning to black and white film for the remainder. In this opening dialogue, we are introduced to Cleo and a respected psychic, whom Cleo is seeking out for guidance in regard to her health and her anxiety around a recent doctor visit. The removal of color following this dialogue represents her hopelessness for life after being told her health concerns are a means to worry; as Cleo leaves the psychic's home, we see a line of other young women out the door, also anxiously awaiting the validation of their futures.

In Varda's *One Sings the Other Doesn't* (1977), we follow a more explicitly feminist storyline, one that follows the close companionship of two young women over the course of their lives. The incident that causes these two characters to connect in the first place surrounds the need for an abortion at a time in France when it was nearly impossible to safely have one. This sets up the rest of the story, and each lead's reaction to this initial plot point motivates the direction that the rest of their stories take them. One woman, Suzanne, chooses to dedicate her career to fostering a family planning clinic to provide support and opportunity to other women who find themselves in similar situations, while the other, Pomme, takes up a singing career and dedicates herself to the Women's Liberation Movement in France, writing and performing songs of protest about the experience of an oppressive society. While tackling the issues of women's liberation efforts, the plot also acknowledges that this differently affects women of different financial classes. For example, within the story, Suzanne had initially needed an abortion that she was unable to afford due to her circumstances, so Pomme came up with the funds to support Suzanne as well as finding a safe local option for her to pursue the procedure. Later on in the story, we see the hardships that Suzanne had gone through to get to the point where she could open her own family planning clinic and stably support her children, all the while Pomme has integrated her advocacy into her creative efforts of being a nomadic folk-singing performer.

What each of the women in the film goes through is integral to the uniqueness of this kind of story, one that highlights the authentic lived experiences of women in a revolution. Varda was interviewed for a Swiss TV program titled "Lucarne Ovale" in March 1978 after her recognition as a professional filmmaker of the French New Wave genre and was asked to talk about why she saw film as an important tool for women to utilize: "When women direct, they bring a perspective, a vision, a sensitivity that's quite different from that of men."[11] This "sensitivity" is evident in the natural representation of these characters as believable, multi-faceted women who change their minds, make mistakes, and are building their values through their lived experiences. Where Varda can transform political struggle into intimate, everyday moments is where the integrity of her advocacy shines.

Body Politics

The feminine figure, the idea of woman, is intrinsically tied to the medium of cinema. Thinking about EXPORT's *Touch Cinema*, it is entirely dependent on the gendered and sexual relationships that spectator and artist have toward each other. Carolee Schneemann, best known for her bodily feminist performance work such as "Interior Scroll" (a piece involving her naked atop a table, reciting from a scroll of her own writing that she pulls from her vagina), has also used film and cinema as a medium to explore her gendered perceptions. As one might suspect, her body of work was controversially received by conservative and progressive audiences alike, who critiqued her explicit bodily gestures and themes.

The erotic 16mm film titled *Fuses* (1964-67), directed, shot, and starring Schneemann, is a filmic and gestural collage of herself and James Tenny, her long-term partner at the time, having sex through the eyes of a neutral third party: the camera (fig. 6). The film itself was

[11] Agnes Varda. "La cinéma de femme", *Lucarne Ovale* (Mar. 1978)

physically altered through burns, paint, and various methods to distort and abstract the footage further from where she had started behind the camera, choosing to crop and frame parts of the naked body in an indistinct fashion. Schneemann revisited the work in 1971 in her essay "Notes on Fuses," where she reiterates the divergence of her work from that of male/masculine filmic artists such as Stan Brakhage. She describes how his infamous work *Window Water Baby Movin*g (1959), though made of and with his actively birthing wife, is nevertheless a masculine authentication of a primal act "unique to a woman." His hand on the camera as he captures the moment their child is born, thus cements this experience as his, as opposed to something shared, or even uniquely hers. Schneemann goes on to explain that her approach to "Fuses" was an attempt to place the viewer in a space of confrontation with one's attitude toward gendered bodies, especially in conversation with pornography and the traditional perception of an eroticized woman on film: "Perhaps because it was made of her own life by a woman, *Fuses* is both a sensuous and equitable interchange; neither lover is "subject" or "object."[12]

Fig. 6 *Fuses*, 1964–1967, film, 16mm, transferred to digital video (color, sound), 29:51 min from Fuses (1964-1967), *Carolee Schneemann Foundation*

This piece came out of Schneemann's performance-based practice and related desire to capture the erotic for what it physically is, separate from the societal attitudes placed upon it; she explains that the choice to jump head first into the medium of film despite having no knowledge

[12] Carolee Schneemann. "Notes on Fuses." *Carolee Schneemann Foundation* (1971)

or experience within the craft came from the same motivation that allowed her to experiment materially across all other mediums, and feel confidence in doing so. A touching anecdote about this work she shares comes from a woman expressing her gratitude towards Schneemann at a screening, claiming: "she had never looked at her own genitals, never seen another woman's … *Fuses* let her feel her own sexual curiosity as something natural…"[13]

This is just one reaction to the work, but I think it speaks loudly to the power of film as a tool for liberation and advocacy. Given the context of women having been villainized for the reclamation of our own bodies and the landscapes of our existence throughout time, film has become a weapon of defense against those who perpetuate misogyny – an unassuming weapon, one akin to the threat of a woman's mere existence in a space where she's deemed not to belong.

> Anger is an emotion which must be reclaimed and legitimized as Woman's rightful, healthy expression – anger can be a source of power, strength and clarity as well as a *creative* force.[14]

Being a Witch

For as long as I can remember, the women in my family have proudly referred to themselves as witches. Reclaiming the word as something magical and beautiful, this validated the spiritual connections they had to each other. When I started "showing signs" of being a witch – knowing what my mom was about to say before she spoke, or calling at the precise moment that she was thinking of me – I was promptly embraced as one. From seeing media portrayals of witches, I was hesitant to call myself one, but my mom was quick to comfort me, pointing out that it was a good thing for us – that it meant we were strong-willed and intuitive.

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[13] Carolee Schneemann. "Notes on Fuses." *Carolee Schneemann Foundation* (1971)
[14] Andrea Juno and V. Vale, editors. *RE/Search: Angry Women* (1991), 5.

Given how I was raised, it isn't surprising that I now align myself with left-leaning, feminist ideologies. In a way, the experience of being a witch as a child has opened the doors for me to express myself unapologetically throughout my youth and continuing today. As I've explored in this text, I'm not alone, nor am I the first modern "witch" to use my powers in an attempt to advocate for myself and other social issues. My recent bodies of work have surrounded the contradictory "liberations" of contemporary feminism, like how to reclaim your sexuality under patriarchy. I enjoy having my work occupy space alongside contemporary feminist debates, a type of grey area where things haven't been fully figured out yet. Reading and being exposed to many of the sources I used in this paper inspired me to create my own performance/video work, concerning feminist politics. I designed and printed two stickers inspired by text-based feminist art of the 1970s and 80s that read in black letters on a cautionary yellow background, "FEMINIST OR WITCH? EITHER WAY, DON'T LISTEN TO HER" (fig. 7). The text surrounds a central image of myself in both designs: one a recent photo of me in a fortune teller photo-op, and in the other photo I am 6 or 7 years old dressed up as a witch. I chose to place the stickers around local traditional "male-dominated" spaces, such as banks, an office building, a barbershop, and an auto shop. For the video documentation of this performative gesture, I've recorded the existence of the stickers

Fig. 7
Untitled sticker designs, Janessa Gauthier

in the environment after one week of public exposure, interested to observe how they've changed visually: were they taken down? Vandalized? Gone unnoticed?

My findings were specific to each location, but overall unchanged. At a bank ATM, the sticker that I had placed facing any users had been taken down, how soon after I placed it I couldn't know. When I had placed it in front of the autoshop, I immediately felt I didn't belong due to the strangely threatening environment that surrounded the place. I was only standing on the sidewalk for about ten seconds before their chained German shepherd was spitting through its teeth to bark me out of sight. Looking around, I kept awkwardly solidifying eye contact with the men working, who were intently staring at me as I reached for my unassuming sticker. Quickly placing one on the bricks in front of the shop, I knew their sharp eyes would follow my tracks to see what I had been doing the minute and a half I had spent there. As I had suspected, the following week the sticker was gone. The only other place my sticker had been taken down was from a beam supporting a tall, cold, and barren office building. However, every other sticker I placed – at the barbershop, dumpster, and a different bank – was still there one week later, only somewhat visually affected by rainwater.

Fig. 8 Still from *why bother* (2025) directed by Janessa Gauthier

When I began editing together the clips I took of this experience, I felt that it wouldn't be enough to just have that be the documentation of my work, and I wanted to reflect how I felt about this entire experience, from doing the research of this paper to the action of posting the

stickers around local businesses. Sitting with this experience, I found myself writing a poem that I wanted to incorporate into the video work so that it could provide more context into my personal narrative. The video showcases the poem unconventionally, specifically placing the lines out of the central focus of each clip, and highlighting only the stroke of each letter, forcing the words to fall into the background. By filming my initial performative act of placing the stickers, I transformed it into something new and generative. Not only did this give me a new perspective on my work, but video as a medium can also reach audiences far more capable of creating change than a passerby on the street. The title I chose, *why bother*, is in reference to a feeling I often have when creating art around social change. I find myself in situations where I'm either preaching to the choir or talking to a brick wall, but I never feel so discouraged to stop talking. Sitting with this title, it taunts me. It taunts me in the same way I find the stickers to taunt me, and it taunts me how finding each word to express myself in the poem did. This self-inflicted torment I regularly find myself in is not a product of an unaffected mind, I know that it's a result of a misogynistic society that's conditioned me into believing that what I have to say isn't important or worth hearing. This realization that I consistently find myself in when creating artwork is paralleled in every step of this piece – from the stickers, to the poem, to my own insecurity even publishing my video. However, my own recognition of this pattern in my practice affirms my drive to continue exploring these ideas of authorship and artmaking.

The common definition of a witch is "a woman who is believed to practice usually black magic often with the aid of a devil or familiar."[15] Over time, the witch's caricature has narrowed into an ugly, green-skinned hag with impure and selfish intentions. Simultaneously, women across all practices have been degraded by being named witches for their attainment of status and control over their bodies. Notably in the contexts of film and performance, a woman with a

[15] "Witch." Merriam-Webster.com, Accessed November 28, 2025.

camera has become analogous for a woman with a weapon. Reclaiming the legacy of a witch, then, becomes a magical approach for women and femmes alike to recover their voices and influence within the male-dominated space of cinema and filmmaking.

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Claire Johnston is an influential writer in the genre of film theory, specifically in regard to women's cinema and feminist filmmaking. This piece was made with the artists and theorists in this field alike to discuss and consider, given that it's a critique and analysis of the, at the time, current standings of feminist filmmaking and reception of cinema by and for women. Anyone working and who has a practice within this field would be a target audience for this work. The bias present within this source would have to do with the fact that Claire Johnston is a woman writing about the politics of women's cinema and how it can be used at the benefit of women's advocacy. This source was published in 1973, which was the rise of the second wave of feminism in society. This influences and contextualizes the language and points of view in the writing, as well as being an indicator of the time it was written. This, though only discussing the topic of women's cinema as a tool against traditional forms of media, is quite broad in terms of the facets the text explores when speaking of the various factors that have an effect on the reception of film. This source is a valuable contribution to my topic, as I'm exploring in the piece how women in an oppressive society can find solace and strength in the medium of film to explore the avenues only possible through collective advocacy and effort.

Juno, Andrea, and V. Vale, editors. Vol. #13 *Angry Women*. RE/Search Publications, 1991.

V. Vale and Andrea Juno are each accredited to founding the RE/Search Publications early in their career but later going on to publish other books of their own and others. Juno, graduating from the New School with an MFA in media studies, as well as studying

video/film at NYU, serves as a rich resource when interviewing artists about their insight to performance and video. The information published within this piece is valuable and of interest to studying and curious artists seeking out writing media about and by other practicing artists, specifically feminist performance and video artists. This source provides multiple points of view from a variety of artists with different backgrounds, mediums, and environments. The publication features various artist interviews conducted by Juno and Vale, each of which addresses the questions differently. The bias presented here would come from the likely close relationships that authors/editors Vale and Juno could have had with the artists being in similar scenes, which could have influenced the choice to include them in the piece/what questions to ask. Additionally, the main topic of feminism and oppression has a bias because everyone interviewed identified as a woman, thus prompting similar sentiment on the topic across most. This was published in 1991, particularly at the height of third-wave feminism, one that began taking intersectionality into the forefront of conversation. While this was progressive thinking at the time of the interviews, lots of conversations across feminists have further progressed past some of the dated language and ideas presented in the text. Because this is a series of interviews that are tied together by the same broad topic of feminism in the 90s, the scope is fairly narrow; however, each interview explores different directions relevant to each artist's personal interests. This source is extremely insightful to my topic as I am able to hear insight into how different femme artists in a more contemporary time of performance and art utilized film and video to express their anger and oppressed feelings.

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B. Ruby Rich is a professor and scholar known for her criticism on independent, feminist, Latino, and queer film, who additionally coined the term "New Queer Cinema." She is editor of a scholarly film journal, "Film Quarterly." This source would be considered academic and targeted towards an audience of scholars looking to advance their understanding of cinema by and for women, assuming this audience has some prior knowledge of the subject. Ruby Rich's bias may come from her interest in avant-garde, experimental independent filmmaking. This would inform the paper in the sense that most "feminist" films are independent, focusing on activist agendas, and experimental in nature compared to the mainstream histories of cinema. This was published in the reader in 1999, and this matters because it dates the text by over two decades. Many advancements have been made since the publication date concerning filmmaking, as well as feminist art, discourse, and activism. This text goes in-depth on the subject of film being used as a platform for women's voices and creativity. This source contributes to my topic by going over the intersection of feminist activism and experimental cinema.

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The RTS Archives, a Youtube channel dedicated to uploading their collected archive of footage from Swiss Television/Radio, uploaded the interview of Agnes Varda, a critically acclaimed French New Wave filmmaker who's made dozens of films, initially aired on a the artistic/cultural TV program titled Lucarne Ovale. This program was aimed at audiences who were socially invested in the current performing arts, music, and film. Showcasing various interviews and performances, this was a program meant to connect viewers directly to the art. The source, posted on YouTube, is to archive and allow contemporary audiences access to the original footage. This specific interview was about how Agnes Varda felt about the acceptance of women into the film industry, behind the camera. Agnes at this point had been working for almost 20 years in the field with lots of experience under her belt, so her responses are entirely shaped by what she's endured as an emerging woman in the industry. Additionally, the questions being asked, though about her art and opinions, are also accessible to understand for an average audience

member with no prior knowledge about the entertainment.film industry. This was initially recorded/conducted in 1978, and Agnes Varda has since spoken about her practice and opinions on the industry. Though this is no indicator of truth, her opinions very well may have changed since this due to the varying experiences and opportunities she's had since this interview. This one recorded interview is narrow in regard to what's covered, as the interviewer only really questions Varda on her relationship to film as a woman. However, within this topic, many different ideas are explored. This is an essential resource towards my topic because Agnes Varda is a key figure in the history of films by women, or feminist filmmaking. Two of her films I analyze within the text, and using this interview I can better tie in her personal thoughts about filmmaking to what's visually present within her work.