“Artful Vandals”:

Urban Interventions, Street Art and Spatial Feminisms

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Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis of Montréal-based artist MissMe's series of wheat-pastes, *Vandals* (2014 -) in relation to spatial theory, feminist theory, and feminist geography. I argue that through feminist imagery and spatial occupation of sites around Montréal's Plateau Mont-Royal and Mile End neighbourhoods, MissMe's *Vandals* ephemerally transform inherently patriarchal built space and highlight how the gendered body influences one's experience of the city. Through examples of site-specific urban interventions by feminist artists, the groupe Mauve, Suzanne Lacy and Valie Export, I establish continuity and explore the debt between contemporary feminist street art, and second-wave feminist art that takes place in the city.

Mauve, Lacy, Export instrumentalized the built environment to broadcast feminist messages. Further, they used their female bodies in the built environment to refute the supposed gender neutrality of the city. In this way, these second-wave feminist artists ephemerally transformed their strategically chosen places into feminist spaces. Continuing the radical exploration established by second-wave feminist artists, MissMe's *Vandals* materially occupy locations in Montréal. Through analyzing the visual tactics specific to the *Vandal*, and considering the socio-spatial specificity of these characters within the Plateau Mont-Royal and Mile End districts, I argue that the *Vandal* emerges as symbols of resistance within the built environment, temporarily transforming patriarchal place into feminist space.

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Introduction

Bodies are absent in architecture, but they remain architecture's unspoken condition.[1]

In the early days of research on this topic, I felt like I was trying to connect two movements that are disparate both temporally and in practice: contemporary feminist street art, and specific urban interventions made by second-wave feminist artists. Despite the three obvious common tenets between these practices — feminism, art and urban space — the connection between the tactical grittiness of a series of wheat-pasted self-portraits and the urban interventions meticulously conceptualized by second-wave feminist artists was not always evident. While examining these two practices through the lenses of spatial theory, feminist theory, social histories and human geography, the links between the two movements became increasingly clear. Feminist street art and urban interventions by second-wave feminist artists ephemerally transform space through a triangulation between image, urban space, and the movement of the dynamic female body in the city.[2] This thesis traces a connection between contemporary feminist street art to urban interventions from three 1970s feminist artists: the groupe Mauve (Montréal), Suzanne Lacy (Chicago), and Valie Export (Vienna). While there are many street artists creating what I define as feminist street art in Montréal — such as Lilyluciole, Starchild Stela, Swarm, and Zola — this thesis focuses on the series *Vandals* by Montréal-based artist MissMe.

MissMe refers to herself not as a street artist, but as an "Artful Vandal." "Artful" has two meanings: doing something with artistic skill, such as painting, drawing or writing; or accomplishing a feat in a surreptitious way, without being noticed. The practice of street art combines these two definitions by placing skilled artworks in the city without the act of placement itself being seen. "Vandalism" is defined as the act of damaging another person's property. For MissMe, the *Vandal* is an image of the artist that sustains an act of vandalism in the space that it occupies. The groupe Mauve, Lacy and Export were equally artful in the conceptualization of their interventions. I have seen no references to their art as "vandalism" and I believe the reason for this is that once the intervention is over, there is no permanent damage to

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[1] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: Massachusetts, 2001), 14.

[2] Any sustained occupation of built space is inevitably absorbed back into the patriarchal social order: "Even women-only spaces (feminist or lesbian spaces) are ones set up in reaction to or opposite to patriarchal cultural space. Both today and in the recent past, to produce a women-only space is to produce that space as separatist and thus as reactive to the dominant male culture." Grosz, *Architecture From the Outside*, 25.

the material integrity of the places in which the interventions took place. *Vandals* in the city of Montréal are a feminist presence: they signify both the woman in the city, and trace the trajectory of a female street artist circulating by herself.

In addition to demonstrating the transformative capacity of MissMe's *Vandals,* this thesis seeks to establish continuity and debt between contemporary feminist street art and second-wave feminist urban interventions. Susan Faludi has made clear the difficulty of passing down knowledge from one generation of feminism to another within a patriarchal society.[3] Faludi writes:

> [...] while American feminism has long, and productively, concentrated on getting men to give women some of the power they used to give only their sons, it hasn't figured out how to pass down power from woman to woman, to bequeath authority to its progeny.[4]

Studying and creating a genealogy of these art practices, as well as examining commonalities and establishing debt to past generations of feminists, is a way to bridge gaps between these generations. The tendency to not pass on feminist pedagogy and practices is the crux of the perceived rift between past and present feminisms. The problem with not passing down feminist knowledge is not due to any flaw in feminism; it is a symptom of the dominant patriarchal social order, whose inherently hegemonic structure complicates the transmission of feminist knowledge from one generation to the next. Feminism requires a new social order that revolves not around capital, hierarchy and power but collective learning, equality, care and reciprocity. Unfortunately, a patriarchal system centered on market capital and oppression does not allow for the widespread implementation of learning environments that are conducive to the transfer of feminist knowledge.

The connection between women and public space is a key preoccupation in this thesis. The contentious relationship between women and the city was especially evident at the turn of the nineteenth century.[5] Given this association, the public arena was an obvious site for the exploration of the gendered body within urban space for second-wave feminist artists. To preface

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[3] Susan Faludi, "American Electra: Feminism's Ritual Matricide, "Harper's Magazine (October 2010): 30.
[4] Susan Faludi, "American Electra," 29.
[5] See: Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1992 ; Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago Press), 1991; Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol 2 no 3 (November 1985): 37-46 ; Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," in *Vision and Difference*, 70-127 (London; New York: Routledge), 1988.

my thesis, I address my methodology, the work of spatial theorists, feminist theorists and human geographers. I also define my terms: feminist street art and patriarchal space. The first part of my thesis draws upon three case studies of second-wave feminist urban art interventions to discuss the female body in urban space. In the second part of my thesis, I revisit the relationship between women and street art, as well as connections between women, public space and gentrification. Walking is a key part of my methodology, and is crucial to street art as a practice, since most street art is executed at eye level and is therefore encountered by pedestrians. I observed the *Vandals* in Mile End and the Plateau Mont-Royal during my weekly patterns of circulation between June 2015 and May 2016.

My research on graffiti, street art and public art is guided by the work of Rosalyn Deutsche, Nicolas Ganz, Anna Wacławek and Alison Young. I analyze the visual imagery and spatial location of the *Vandals* in order to situate contemporary feminist street art in relation to radical second-wave feminist art in the built environment. I define feminist street art as the proliferation of images by street artists that explore and subvert femininity: it is a political expression that seeks to assert a feminist presence in the city. MissMe's *Vandals,* like the urban interventions of Mauve, Lacy and Export, are forms of artistic production by women that contest gendered injustice such as violence against women and unrealistic images of women in advertising. Additionally, feminist street art is an illegal street art practice that places representations of women that explore and subvert femininity into the visual and spatial fields of the built environment as a form of gendered resistance against oppression created by the dominant ideology. In her series *Vandals,* MissMe uses wheat-pasted characters to address issues that affect — but are not exclusive to — women, such as safety within urban centers, racism and colonization. Feminist street art is not only feminist by virtue of imagery: as my thesis demonstrates through the example of MissMe, feminist street art occupies multivalent spaces: the space temporarily occupied by the images that street artists produce; the space of reception between the viewer and the image; and the space of circulation created by feminist street artists while they are putting up their works in the urban center. This thesis also contexualizes MissMe's practice within an international network of women street artists creating feminist street art such as Cake, Magrela and Miss Van.

Ephemerality is arguably street art's most powerful characteristic, which feminist street art takes as an advantage. This could be seen in the 1970s when anti-graffiti campaigns were put

into place to solve the problem of graffiti, which was considered a visual nuisance and widely perceived as a sign of disorder.[6] As Wacławek points out, attempts to erase graffiti failed to quell the countercultural urge to create graffiti. In fact, writers thrived on newly cleaned cars, as they offered fresh canvases on which to experiment.[7] Graffiti and street art are practices that are resistant to destruction: destroying the work only gives the artist another opportunity to hone their skills and put up new work. This perseverance through erasure is a quality well suited to the feminist cause. The task of feminism is to continuously render visible women and marginalized minorities within societies that pretend they do not exist: the persistence through the dominant ideology's attempts to reject feminist theory through omission as it complicates the essentializing and totalizing view of the city from which patriarchal space is created.

"Patriarchal space" refers to architecture and an increasingly privatized built environment that reflects the values of capitalist patriarchy. As Laurie Penny observes:

> The word "patriarchy" is a particularly hard one to hear, describing as it does a structure of economic and sexual oppression centuries old in which only a few men were granted power. Patriarchy: not the rule of men, but the rule of fathers and father figures. Most individual men do not rule very much, and they never have.[8]

Patriarchal space reveals the interests of powerful corporations. This demographic is in large part wealthy white men. It facilitates modes of oppression that affect people of colour, queer people, and the underprivileged as well as women. Furthermore, patriarchal space perpetuates a geography of fear, in which women — particularly First Nations women, trans women, homeless women, and queer individuals — face the threat of gendered violence on a daily basis.[9] Patriarchal space is made possible only through the rejection of, and violence towards, bodies of individuals that complicate the assumption that space is a tool for endless growth for monetary gain, and the silencing of voices that contest this oppressive structure.

Patriarchal space is not solely upheld by the apparatus of capitalism. Doreen Massey and Rosalyn Deutsche make clear that postmodern conceptualizations of space that neglect to incorporate radical political left theories such as feminist theory are equally guilty of creating

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[6] See T. Cresswell "The Crucial 'Where' of Graffiti: A Geographical Analysis of Reactions to Graffiti in New York," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 10 (1992), 332.
[7] Wacławek, Graffiti and Street Art, 50.
[8] Laurie Penny, Unspeakable Things: Sex, Lies and Revolution (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 70.
[9] See Cara Listerborn "Understanding the Geography of Women's Fear: Toward a Reconceptualization of Fear and Space" in Subjectivities, knowledges and feminist geographies: the subjects and ethics of social research (Lanham, Md: Rowan & Littlefield, 2002), 34 - 43.

totalizing patriarchal space. Deutsche contends that totalizing views of space depend on the "unfragmented subject" and reject the plurality of voices that problematize this seamless view of public space.[10] Massey has a similar response to Edward Soja's book *Postmodern Geographies*: Massey acknowledges the omission of feminist theory in texts on human geography, and further criticizes the historical linearity imposed by this discourse that again denies plurality and excludes the voices of others who do not fit into the linear dominant narrative. I propose in this thesis that MissMe's *Vandals* and the feminist urban interventions of Mauve, Lacy and Export create feminist space that is conducive to plurality and non-linear narratives.

Leslie Kanes Weisman argues that architecture and the built environment spatialize gendered inequality between men and women. She emphasizes that spatial experiences are influenced by one's position in society; women perceive space differently than men, and women demand different things from the spaces in which they work and live.[11] The second-wave feminist movement saw the creation of feminist spaces. These spaces were not always women-only spaces, but spaces in which feminists discussed issues affecting women and contemplated strategies to work towards solutions to problems such as domestic violence, unequal wage labour, and unpaid domestic and emotional labour.[12] The oppression of women, queer people, trans people, people of colour, and homeless people are inherent to and perpetuated by the built environment. Instead of creating static spaces within which to discuss implementing solutions to injustices — which is also an important tactic within the larger feminist project — Mauve, Lacy, Export and MissMe create fleeting spaces that react to the patriarchal built environment, revealing the phallocentrism that is intrinsic to the city. As they do not claim space for any sustained period of time, transitory feminist street art practices such as MissMe's *Vandals* emerge as a constantly renewing feminist presence within the city.

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[10] Rosalyn Deutsche, 'Men in Space' in Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics (Chicago, Ill: Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, 1996), 198.

[11] Leslie KanesWeisman, Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 9.

[12] Maura Broadhurst's thesis focuses on several examples of woman artist spaces in Canada, including Powerhouse Gallery (today La Centrale) in Montreal. Maura Broadhurst, "Strategic Spaces: Towards a Genealogy of Women's Artist Groups in Canada" (Masters Thesis, Concordia University: 1997), Library and Archives Canada (0612402266)

Chapter One
"We Fight Back!": Gendered Bodies in Public Space

Feminist street art is a form of site-specific, contemporary art production. Seemingly distinct from the work produced by second-wave feminist artists, feminist street art owes a debt of sorts to the work of second-wave feminist artists. My aim in this chapter is to demonstrate how certain feminist artists radically explored the social position of women in the city. Further, I show how the feminist artists ephemerally transformed patriarchal spaces into places of gendered resistance, through the dynamic movement of their female bodies through built space. My three case studies are the groupe Mauve's *La Femme et La Ville* (1972), Suzanne Lacy's *In Mourning and in Rage* (1977) and Valie Export's *Body Configurations in Architecture* (1972-1982) and *Touch Cinema* (1968). I support my analysis with the work of feminist geographer, Rosalyn Deutsche and graffiti and street art expert, Anna Wacławek.

The feminist urban interventions of the groupe Mauve, Lacy and Export subverted stereotypical female roles through visual tropes and instrumentalized patriarchal space to render visible gendered injustice through a triangulation of place, the female body, and the viewer. In this way, they explored what it meant to navigate the patriarchal city in a woman's body, and to what extent a totalizing view of the city could be criticized, problematized and transformed by the female body. Although the works of these artists take place within the built environment, they do not directly call for the mobilization of groups within the city, nor do they seek to extend, surpass the physical boundaries of, or permanently claim space within, the built environment. (Any ongoing claim on the existing built environment would be difficult to sustain; feminist performance is easily absorbed back into patriarchal structures of power.) Rather, these feminist urban interventions explore the female body in relation to architecture and the built environment, pushing symbolic boundaries and exposing the purportedly ideal and unfragmented (presumably male-bodied) subject for whom the city is designed. Sociologist Fran Tonkiss emphasizes the role of sexual difference in claims to urban space in her research on gay and lesbian claims to urban territory. Tonkiss writes:

> […] such gender difference reflected men's advantage in relation to women, and their enhanced power in housing and labour markets. Men, simply, could afford to make claims to urban space.[13]

[13]Tonkiss, "Embodied Spaces," 109.

Urban space is unequivocally easier to navigate, claim, and utilize by men. The interventions of Mauve, Lacy and Export expose the asymmetry of this power balance through their feminist urban interventions. In Grosz' terms, instead of calling for the abolition of phallocentrism, they are uncovering and rendering visible the phallocentrism that permeates architecture and city planning.[14] In what follows, I argue that these works ephemerally transform patriarchal places and propose alternative feminist spaces.

Women Moving Through Public Space

An important consideration to make when analyzing both contemporary feminist street art and feminist urban interventions of the 1970s is the embodied experience of the gendered subject within public space. Grosz states,

> Bodies have all the explanatory patterns of minds. Indeed, for feminist purposes the focus on bodies, bodies in their concrete specificities, has the added bonus of inevitably raising the question of sexual difference in a way that the mind does not.[15]

Mauve, Lacy and Export expose the "concrete specificities" of their bodies in relation to public space. Especially relevant to this discussion of space and the female body is architectural historian Cynthia Hammond's definition of public space:

> The occupation of space, whether by authority, advertising, tourists, or citizens, inflects the degree to which it may be said to be public. Thus, I see the publicness of space not in a binary mode, whereby it is either public or not, but rather as one characteristic of space whose intensity is strengthened or lessened by a variety of other factors. Fundamentally, however, I believe — as I would suspect many urban interventionist artists do — that art has a particular capacity to act upon the urban realm, to engage this charged dynamic by which inhabitants must continually assert their agency, spatially, within cities.[16]

Through their urban interventions, Mauve, Lacy and Export assert their agency by temporarily claiming public space. Through placing their bodies in public spaces — the steps of a museum, the City Hall steps, and municipal architecture, respectively — these second-wave artists expose

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[14] Elizabeth Grosz, "bodies-cities," in *Sexuality & Space* eds. Beatriz Colomina and Jennifer Bloomer (New York, N.Y.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 247.
[15] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), vii.
[16] Cynthia Hammond, "Urban 'Truths': Artistic Interventions in Post-Socialist Space," in *The Post-Socialist City: Continuity and Change in Space and Imagery*, eds. Marina Dmitieva and Alfrun Kliems, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2011), 80. It is important to note that this quote is from a text concerning the urban interventions of Krystian 'Truth' Czaplicki in Poland, therefore in a Central European context where the notions of private and public are different than in the Western context, a concern that is articulated by the author in the paragraphs preceding this quote. However, I believe that this quote applies more broadly to the author's definition of public space.

the extent to which women are alienated within public space, and how architecture and city planning are complicit in this process. Further, the performances open up these spaces and transform them into places that solicit reactions towards women in public space.

Elizabeth Grosz, in her essay "bodies - cities" contends that the body and the city are not distinct totalities that exist independently of one another, but are rather two entities that are intrinsically linked and constantly engaged in a forever fluctuating, mutually constitutive relationship. Bodies imprint cities and, in turn, cities leave impressions on bodies.[17] According to Grosz, the city is a complicated matrix that links together social and economic processes, through which social relations and the dissemination of various kinds of information constantly filter: a body-city interface.[18] This chapter demonstrates the ways in which feminist urban interventions challenge and critique the patriarchal ordering of architecture and city planning through visual tactics, to reveal and expose the "apparently neutral, but visibly patriarchal and fraternal social order"[19] of the city. Through the organized and strategic placing of their bodies against the rigid geometry of the built environment, feminist artists Mauve, Lacy and Export critique the dominant social order and momentarily transform the site of their performances, producing gender in space.

The feminist street art and urban interventions that I discuss subvert and contest stereotypical images of the female body. Fran Tonkiss suggests that:

> The guerrilla tactics of feminist graffiti, aimed at the easy sexism of advertising, both marks and extends the limits of political speech. If feminism has involved a redrawing of the space of politics, feminist graffiti actualize this in rewriting as political sites those images which project women's bodies as passive surfaces of consumption.[20]

In this context, Tonkiss is referring to Jill Posener's 1982 book *Spray it Loud*, which deals with subversive feminist slogans tagged over existing advertisements.[21] Adding language to an existing billboard subverts the image of the objectified woman and transforms the static image through subversion. Tonkiss' discussion of feminist graffiti is significant as it underlines the importance of spatial location in feminist street art. Who is going to see this advertisement

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[17] Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: Massachusetts, 2001), 247.
[18] Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 243.
[19] Elizabeth Grosz, "The Time of Architecture" in *Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis*, eds. Amy Bingman, Lise Sanders, Rebecca Zorach (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 273.
[20] Fran Tonkiss, "Making Space" in *Space, the City and Social Theory*, 141.
[21] This type of artistic production is different from the type of feminist art production that I will examine in my case studies. Graffiti and Street Art are different in terms of materiality and content, in terms of execution in time and place — as a "guerrilla tactic" — the two are similar enough to discuss simultaneously.

billboard, mounted high above the city street? The elevation or separation of these images creates, spatially, a visual separation from the city. Both the spatial placement and the beauty standards of the commercial billboard are unattainable — the visual imagery and the privileged location render the image an inaccessible site of passive consumption. Art historian Anna Wacławek,in her important survey, *Graffiti and Street Art,* states:

> Acting either as counter-advertisements, or additions to unsanctioned imagery in a city, post-graffiti art functions as a necessary opposition to corporate representations of how a city is visually organized — what does and does not belong.[22]

By adding subversive text to the corporate advertisement that objectifies women, this instance of feminist graffiti transforms the image and causes a disruption in the site of passive consumption. Feminist street art, as well as the interventions of Mauve, Lacy and Export depart from the rejection of corporatization and capitalism — advertisements and increasingly privatized space — and exposes the potential for exclusion of public space. The modes of artistic production around which my argument is centered take place on architecture, or directly on the concrete and cobblestone forms of the city. While these works target the objectification of the female body through the visual materiality of mainstream advertisements, feminist street art explores and renders visible the position of women in public space. Mauve, Lacy and Export depart from the layering of feminist imagery or language to transform a static image and momentarily produce feminist space through the movement of their bodies in the built environment. Through staging feminist urban art interventions in purportedly public, accessible spaces, these artists expose the type of person that the city is meant to serve — and, most poignantly, those who the built environment excludes.

Women Transforming Space

The urban interventions of Mauve, Lacy and Export transform place into feminist space. De Certeau defines a *place* as a location with a definite spatial ordering of elements at a fixed location: "It [place] implies an indication of stability."[23] *Space,* according to De Certeau, is characterized by movement, temporality and the intersection of variable elements.[24] De Certeau states that place is transformed into space when it is inhabited or utilized by people: individuals

[22]Anna Wacławek, "From Graffiti to the Street Art Movement," 259.
[23] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 117.
[24] Ibid

moving through places activate them and transform them into space.[25] In De Certeau's terms, *any* bodies moving through *any* place activate it and transform it into space. This conceptualization of space and place is reductive: it denies sexual specificity and the temporal and locational specificities of place. Grosz highlights the potential banality of daily transformations of space: "Space is mired in misconceptions and assumptions, habits and unreflective gestures that convert and transform it."[26] Grosz further asserts that space is not the everyday stagnation of controlled social processes, but is characterized by "emergence and eruption […] the event, to movement or action."[27] Further, gender is produced in space and reinforced through these daily social processes. As Tonkiss points out:

> Gender and sexuality become visible in the city in the symbolic coding of spaces, through modes of spatial practice and interaction, in terms of material divisions and exclusions of space, and in the 'micro-geographies' of the body.[28]

In their feminist urban interventions, the artists placed their bodies in contrast to strategically chosen locations that are places of prescriptive function to reveal the importance of gender in one's experience of the city. Further, they presented an interruption into the daily social processes that normally occurred in those spaces, and transformed patriarchal place into politicized feminist space.

In addition to choosing public spaces for their performances, these artists complicated the totalizing view of the urban environment that is produced and perpetuated by the dominant discourse. Deutsche contends that this totalizing view of the city is contingent on the city's inhabitation by "unfragmented subjects," which omits — and therefore silences — marginalized voices such as women, people of colour, individuals with disabilities and the working class.[29] The "unfragmented subject" becomes a problematic concept once the built environment is read through a feminist lens. Furthermore, Deutsche asserts that built space itself does not inherently exclude feminism — overly simplistic and exclusionary discourse about the built environment does:

> From the moment we try to understand the city as an image, feminist theories of visual space intersect with, and simultaneously problematize, the political economy of urban space, which, it is important to note, does not inherently exclude feminism. That exclusion

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 115.
[27] Ibid, 116.
[28] Tonkiss, "Embodied Spaces," 111.
[29] Deutsche, *Evictions*, 92.

> is enforced in an epistemological field where grandiose claims are made on theoretical space, where only one theory is allowed to explain social relations of subordination.[30]

The female bodies of artists activate the urban center during feminist art interventions and transform place into a space in which the dominant social order is destabilized, revealing gendered injustice.

Case Studies: The Groupe Mauve, Suzanne Lacy and Valie Export

In the 1970s, the feminist movement swept through North America. Women's groups began meeting in community centers, universities and private homes all over Canada and the United States to discuss the widespread discontent regarding issues effecting women, such as domestic violence, sexual violence, and racism. The publication and circulation of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963*,* while written from an American perspective, had an enormous influence on the women's movement in Canada, and subsequently the feminist art scene.[31] Collectives popped up all over Canada: In Montréal, there was the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes*, and the *Front de Libération des Femmes du Québec*, both created in 1969. These organizations were followed by the creation of the *Fédération des Femmes au Québec* in 1970 and the *Conseil de la Statut de la Femme* in 1973.[32] Queer-friendly spaces for women in the Plateau Mont-Royal included the *Woman's Information and Referral Centre*, the *Gay Women's Centre,* and the café *Entre Femmes.*[33] Women's groups in Québec — and in Canada in general — created women's only spaces, such as health services, shelters for women who were victims of domestic violence, and other women's resource centers.[34] Concurrently, the glaring omission of women artists in museum collections and art galleries could no longer be

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[30] Deutsche, *Evictions*, 197.
[31] Maura Broadhurst, "Strategic Spaces", 60.
[32] Collectif Courtepointe, *The Point Is -Grassroots Organizing Works: Women from Point St. Charles Sharing Stories of Solidarity* (Montreal: Éditions du remue-ménage, 2006), 57.
[33] Julie A. Podmore, "St Lawrence Blvd as 'Third City': Place, Gender and Difference Along Montréal's 'Main'," (PhD Diss, McGill University, 1999), 255.
[34] The feminist movement in Québec in the 1970s coincided with the province's rising desire for sovereignty and separation from the rest of Canada. Accounts of feminist organizations in the southwestern borough of Pointe St Charles tell of the sentiment from husbands and the community that women should focus their efforts on Québec sovereignty and the liberation of the working class, instead of women's rights. Collectif Courtepointe, *The Point Is*, 57.

ignore, giving rise to discourse about gendered inequality in the art world.[35] Galleries that showed exclusively all-women exhibitions were necessary tactics of visibility in second-wave feminism. The most notable all-women feminist art space in Montréal was Powerhouse Gallery, one of the oldest artist-run centres in Montréal.[36]

Galerie Powerhouse was founded in 1973, and was incorporated as a gallery the following year.[37] Founded by Elizabeth Bertoldi, Leslie Busch, Isobel Dowler-Gow, Margaret Griffin, Clara Gutsche, Billie-Joe Mericle, Stasje Plantenga and Pat Walsh,[38] Powerhouse Gallery's mandate was to promote art created by women, who were underrepresented in galleries and institutions. In the beginning, Powerhouse was a predominantly Anglophone organization, but in 1980 the majority of the membership was Francophone. The name then changed to La Centrale in 1990.[39] The major triumph of La Centrale is the creation of a space created for women, by women, which showcased experimental forms of feminist art such as performance, installation and sculptural works.[40] Spaces such as La Centrale were crucial to the growth of the feminist art scene in Montréal, as larger institutions often turned down experimental works since they lacked the space and equipment that such art forms demanded.[41]

The women's movement was not only preoccupied with creating safe interior spaces with resources for women; feminist consciousness-raising groups were equally concerned with negotiating the position (and safety) of women outside, in public space. Leslie Kanes Weisman, in her 1992 book *Discrimination by Design,* observes how:

> The denial of women's rights as citizens to equal access to public space — and of the psychological and physical freedom to use it in safety — has made public space, not infrequently, the testing ground of challenges to male authority and power.[42]

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[35] For one of the most influential texts on the exclusion of women from the art historical canon, see: Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010) 229-233.
[36] "Herstory and Mandate," La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, http://www.lacentrale.org/en. Accessed April 22, 2016.
[37] Broadhurst, "Strategic Spaces:" 69-70.
[38] "Herstory and Mandate," La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, http://www.lacentrale.org/en. Accessed January 9, 2016. In Maura Broadhurst's thesis, Nell Tenhaff is also credited as a founding member. Broadhurst, "Strategic Spaces," 68.
[39] Ibid, 72.
[40] Today, La Centrale has expanded its mandate to uphold the rich history of women artists in Quebec and showcase feminist art practices that revolve around feminism and gender identity theory, as well as interdisciplinary artists. "Herstory and Mandate."
[41] Broadhurst, "Strategic Spaces" 64.
[42] Weisman, *Discrimination by Design*, 78.

The women's movement of the 1970s extended outside the home, and into public space. However, this was hardly the first feminist foray into the public sphere. Second-wave feminist mobilization picked up from first-wave feminist insurgence, where suffragettes and feminist reformers fought for women's right to vote and rallied against forms of gendered oppression such as the Contagious Diseases Acts in Great Britain and Canada.[43] In the art world, second-wave feminist artists experimented with different media to push the symbolic boundaries of the female body in the modern imagination. Artists such as Carolee Schneeman, Martha Rosler, Yayoi Kusama, Yoko Ono, and Cindy Sherman explored femininity and identity politics. They turned to media such as photography, performance, installation and their own bodies to follow their lines of feminist inquiry. Within this body of feminist work, the performance interventions of the groupe Mauve, Lacy and Export are especially relevant to my discussion of feminist street art, as they used movement created by their female bodies in the city to communicate gendered resistance and explore the relationship between the female body and the city.

The specific works that I now turn to are Suzanne Lacy's *In Mourning and In Rage* (1977), Valie Export's series *Body Configurations* (1972-1976) and *Touch Cinema* (1968), as well as the groupe Mauve's inaugural performance intervention of their exhibition *La Femme et la Ville* (1972) that took place on the steps of the Montréal Museum of Fine Art (MMFA). Consisting of a series of interventions, *La Femme et La Ville* was part of an exhibition curated by Melvin Charney titled *Montréal, Plus ou Moins?*[44] and is widely considered one of the most important contributions to feminist art in Québec. Through postering, a display window at Dupuis Frères, and most importantly the performance on the steps of the MMFA during the opening night performance, the groupe Mauve performed critical representations of domesticity and stereotypical images of women in the public arena.

The groupe Mauve was founded in 1971 by sociologist Ghislaine Boyer and filmmaker Lucie Ménard.[45] The goal of this group was to protest stereotypical images of women in the

[43] The Contagious Diseases Acts, or CDAs, were implemented in 1864 in Britain, and gave police the right to apprehend women who were, or who were suspected of sex work. Female sex workers were subject to mandatory venereal disease testing at hospitals. See Phillip Howell, "Private legislation and privileged places: the Contagious Diseases Acts," in *Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire*, eds. Alan R. H. Baker, Richard Dennis and Deryck Holdsworth, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[44] A detailed account of the series of performances in the context of Quebec feminism has already been written by Eliana Stratica Mihail in her thesis "I Don't: The Commodification of the Bride in Montreal Art from the 1970s" (Masters Thesis, Concordia University, 2014).
[45] Stratica Mihail, "I Don't," 21.

media.[46] Mauve's exhibition consisted of multiple performances, a poster, and a display window at the Frères Dupuis department store (fig. 1) at the corner of Sainte Catherine East and Berri street.[47] All components explored and subverted stereotypical female roles, such as the housewife and the bride. The posters circulated by Mauve in conjunction with the exhibition featured a burlesque dancer who was popular in Québec during the 1950s, named Lili St. Cyr (fig. 2).[48] Mauve's display at the iconic Frères Dupuis retail store was a black-and-white, multiple component installation (fig. 3). The focal point of the installation was a white bridal dress displayed on a hanger.[49] Next to the dress was a nude female mannequin sitting cross-legged, and Heinz soup cans were hung over the dress.[50] The performance took place at the opening, on the steps of the North pavilion[51] at the MMFA in 1972 (fig. 4). Six women participated in the performance: Catherine Boisvert, Ghislaine Boyer, Céline Isabelle, Thérèse Isabelle, Lise Landry and Lucie Ménard.[52] The women, dressed in bridal gowns and veils, ascended the museum steps. Once at the top, the women removed their veils and crumpled them up. They then descended the steps, dusting the columns and steps with their veils as they descended. Shocked by the performance, a woman in the audience gasped, "Vous êtiez pourtant si belles!"[53]

Through appropriating the image of the bride on the steps of the museum, Mauve critically subverted representations of women in Québécois society to the audience. The significance of the group Mauve's *La Femme et la Ville* performance on the steps of the MMFA is further present in the spatial location of the performances. The media the artists chose to communicate their resistance — performances at multiple locations, posters, and a display at the Frères Dupuis department store — showed images that contest stereotypical roles of women and normative beauty standards by appropriating the very means that perpetuate them within the city: architecture (the museum steps that ascend into the collection of the MMFA), as well as advertising and visual merchandising geared at women. Visually, the MMFA pavilion is the

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[46] Nicole Charest in "La Vie en Mauve: Six femmes en colère à la défense des femmes silencieuses" La Presse, August 26 1972, 8 as quoted in Stratica Mihail, "I Don't," 21.
[47]Marguerite Sauriol, "Dupuis Freres," *Canadian Museum of History,* accessed April 22nd, 2016, http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/cpm/catalog/cat2402e.shtml
[48] Lili St. Cyr was identified by Eliana Mihail Stratica after an interview with Lise Landry, one of the founding members. Stratica Mihail, "I Don't," 23.
[49] Stratica Mihail, "I Don't," 25.
[50] Ibid.
[51]Today called the Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavillion.
[52] Rose Marie Arbour, *Déclics, art et société: le Québec des années 1960 et 1970* (Québec: Musée de la civilisation, 1999), 146.
[53] "And yet, you were so beautiful!" translated by Phillippe O'Brien. Arbour, Déclics, Art et Société, 146.

epitome of an austere, authoritative institution: it boasts a marble exterior, four enormous columns and a dramatic ascent into the narrative of the Museum's collection. Storming the steps of this monolithic pavilion in bridal gear, the group Mauve not only criticized stereotypical images of women in 1970s Québec society, but delivered a sharp criticism of the sexist collecting and exhibiting practices of the MMFA. Furthermore, the group Mauve's choice of action, scrubbing the columns of the MMFA, is in line with the feminist critique of labour performed by women in the domestic sphere, an issue explored by artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles in her 1973 site-specific performance titled *Maintenance Art*.

Ukeles' *Maintenance Art* took place at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut.[54] The performance consisted of two parts: in the first part, Ukeles, on her hands and knees, washed and scrubbed the exterior plaza and steps of the institution for four hours (figs. 5 & 6); then, in the second part, she cleaned the floors inside the museum galleries for another four hours (fig. 7).[55] This work exposed the dependence of the institution on hidden labour, the devalued apparatus on which the museum's pristine, white-cube appearance depends.[56] Furthermore, Ukeles' performance highlighted the uneven gender division in labour,[57] such as the unpaid work performed by women in the family home. Laurie Penny coined the term "Love™" to denote the notion of love that is maintained and perpetuated by capitalism: the dynamic that ensures domestic labour such as cooking, cleaning and child rearing, all performed traditionally by women remains outside of the realm of paid labour:

> The insistence that Love Always Comes Free — that Love™ cannot ever be related to money or value exchange — is remarkably convenient. Because it turns out that Love™ is also the theoretical basis for most of the work done for free, largely by women, so that the mechanisms of profit and production can be maintained. [58]

Mauve's performance transformed the entrance to the Museum into a site of feminist institutional critique. The dynamic bodies of the six women moving through space exposed gendered inequality through subverting stereotypical gender roles in the city.

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[54] Miwon Kwon, "Genealogy of Site Specificity," in *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2004), 19.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Kwon, "Genealogy of Site Specificity," 24.
[58] Laurie Penny, "Love and Lies" in *Unspeakable Things: Sex, Lies and Revolution* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 225.

The performance *In Mourning and In Rage* (1977) by Suzanne Lacy in collaboration with Leslie Labowitz also took place at the steps of an institution: City Hall in Los Angeles, California. Lacy and Labowitz conceptualized the performance in response to the series of murders committed by the Hillside Strangler from April to November 1977.[59] On December 17, 1977, a hearse pulled up to Los Angeles City Hall.[60] One by one, ten women dressed in robes evoking Victorian mourning dresses emerged from the vehicle.[61] Suzanne Lacy, dressed in a suit, fixed the garment of each woman as she exited the hearse and took her place at the side of the steps.[62] The performers stood side-by-side, forming a line in front of City Hall (fig. 8). A microphone was placed in the center of the city hall steps, and four women held two banners that read together, "IN MEMORY OF OUR SISTERS / WE FIGHT BACK." One by one, the robe-clad women approached the microphone, and spoke firmly and clearly, declaring statistics of violence against the women for whom they mourned: "I am here," declared the first performer, "for the ten women who were raped and strangled between October 16th and November 29th,"[63] referencing directly to the victims of the Hillside strangler. After each of the ten women spoke, a chorus of voices chanted "In memory of our sisters, we fight back!" The final performer was dressed in red instead of black, representing the act of self-defense. The performance culminated in the women chanting "we fight back!" repeatedly in front of the City Hall.

The aesthetic choices in this performance as well as the spatial location combined to poignantly render the devastating problem of sexual violence in the United States in the 1970s tangible and undeniable. In addition to their black mourning gowns, the performers wore headpieces that evoked the shape of coffins and exaggerated their natural height to seven feet tall.[64] The women created a monolithic, disconcerting presence on the City Hall steps. Architecture and art historian Sharon Irish points out that the headpieces of the procession echo the top of the City Hall skyscraper.[65] Somberness marked the entire ceremony, communicated by the dress, the slow purpose with which the women walked, and the firm, loud declaration by each

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[59] Initially known as the Hillside Strangler, the murders were in fact committed by two men, Angelo Buono Jr. and Kenneth Bianchi. Sharon Irish, *Suzanne Lacy: Spaces in Between* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis and London, 2010), 70.
[60] My visual account of this performance is based off of a video that documented the event found on Suzanne Lacy's artist website. "In Mourning and In Rage," filmed December 1977, Vimeo, https://vimeo.com/100465745
[61] Irish, Suzanne Lacy, 71.
[62] "In Mourning and In Rage," filmed December 1977, Vimeo, https://vimeo.com/100465745
[63] "In Mourning and In Rage," filmed December 1977, Vimeo, https://vimeo.com/100465745
[64] Irish, *Suzanne Lacy*, 71.
[65] Ibid, 72.

performer stating whom or what she symbolized. In choosing to stage the performance at a central location, Lacy secured plenty of media coverage, and ensured that the performance was at a location where viewers who were not physically there could picture themselves.[66] The choice of spatial location on behalf of the artists was significant: *In Mourning and In Rage* took place at the architectural epicenter of a municipal government that allowed sensationalized violence to take centre stage in the media over the more palpable social reality of violence against women. Irish states: "With municipal architecture for the setting, the artists created a physical link, both live and in the media, between the resistance to violence and public policy."[67] Further, the Women's Building, a non-profit feminist art education center, was situated in Los Angeles city center, close to City Hall. Staging the performance at City Hall prompted a wider audience for *In Mourning and In Rage* and drew attention from media outlets.

In contrast to *La Femme et la Ville* and *In Mourning and in Rage*, both ephemeral performances that featured many women in one place in order to communicate resistance, Austrian artist Valie Export took a different approach. She documented a series called *Body Configurations in Architecture* (1972-1982) where she repeatedly bent her body around components of the built environment in Vienna over the span of 10 years.[68] This form of artistic production is markedly different than that produced by the groupe Mauve or Suzanne Lacy, but is nonetheless relevant to my discussion of the relationship between feminist street art and second-wave feminist urban interventions.

In the late sixties, Export navigated the art world in Vienna – a scene monopolized by the male-dominated cohort of the Viennese Actionists.[69] *Body Configurations* visually communicated the sexual difference of the female body against architecture. In conversation with Devin Fore in 2012, Export stated:

> In the 1960s, our attempts to cultivate a direct and uncontrolled language in art were based upon the idea that the dominant language was a form of manipulation. The plan was to circumvent these forms of social control and to develop other forms of language outside the

[66] "The banner was designed to fit in the horizontal frame of the camera, so that one image — of the women gathered on City Hall's steps, with the banner raised — could carry a clear meaning via mass media." Irish, *Suzanne Lacy*, 71.
[67] Irish, Suzanne Lacy, 73.
[68] Jill Dawsey, "The Uses of Sidewalks: Women, Art and Urban Space, 1966-80" (PhD Diss., Stanford University, 2008), 78.
[69] Dawsey, "The Use of Sidewalks," 84. Export used the term "feminist actionism" to separate her work from that of the Viennese Actionists. Dawsey maintains that Export's work is indebted to, yet distinct from, the work of the Viennese Actionists. Dawsey, "The Uses of Sidewalks," 80-86.

> body system dominated by men. This was the strength of the female body: to be able to express directly and without mediation.[70]

In *Body Configurations*, there was no symbolism by means of costumes, or spoken words: only the body pressed up against architecture, which emphasized the fluid corporeality of the organic body juxtaposed with the authoritative rigidness of civic architecture, "expressing directly" the malaise of the gendered body within the confines of patriarchal space.[71]. *Fit Into* (1976) (fig. 9), showed Export, limbs flailing, two hands on the ground, one foot against the concrete sitting ledge and the other leg reaching up to touch the wall of the building against which she was leaning. Other photographs depict a languid acceptance, such as *Encirclement* (1976) (fig. 10), where Export was on the ground, eyes closed, her entire body curved into a sleepy half-moon, cupping the rounded end of a median. In *Vertical Gel* (1976) (fig. 11), Export wrapped her arms around the corner of an enormous building, absurdly trying to embrace the sharp right angle, and stared blankly into space.

Another work relevant to the discussion of feminist urban art interventions is *Touch Cinema* (1968). *Touch Cinema* (fig. 12) involved Export wearing a wooden box with a piece cut out in the front to facilitate access to her breasts from the exterior. The rest of Export's torso was encased in a cumbersome, rectangle structure. This box was a "mini movie theatre"[72] with curtains between Export's exposed breasts and the public. Export stood on the street as her collaborator Peter Weibel encouraged passersby to touch her breasts with carnival-style enthusiasm. The performance took place multiple times, but in this discussion, I refer to a particular instance where Weibel was absent and two women orchestrated the performance. *Touch Cinema* was generally well received, although Export speaks of one time when the performance turned violent:

> Only once, in Cologne, were the visitors to Touch Cinema aggressive. This time we did the piece in Cologne, a performer named Erika Mies wore the box, and I spoke about cinema. We were both women, and people became very aggressive.[73]

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[70] Valie,Export "Valie Export - On Work of the Late 1960s: In Conversation with Devin Fore," by Devin Fore, in *Sexuality*, ed. Amelia Jones (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2014), 103.
[71] Dawsey, "The Uses of Sidewalks," 81.
[72] Roswitha Mueller, *Valie Export: Fragments of the Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 18.
[73] Mueller, Valie Export, 104.

When two women orchestrated the performance, the public became hostile. Because of the sexualized nature of the performance, it was presumably a performance for men. As Jill Dawsey observes,

> Weibel's masculine presence seems to have been necessary for the performance to move forward in a smooth fashion. He grants permission to watch and join in, mitigating the participants' shame.[74]

The disturbance caused by the absence of the male figure stems from nineteenth century anxieties concerning the woman in public. Historian Judith Walkowitz states that the unaccompanied woman in public at the turn of the century signified distress and disease and posed a threat to the male bodies around her. Walkowitz writes: "No figure was more equivocal, yet more crucial to the structured public landscape of the male flâneur, than the woman in public."[75] The reverberations of these anxieties were present at the time of Export's performance, and persist today in contemporary discourse about women's safety and circulation patterns at night.[76] When a man was soliciting men to touch Export's breasts, the "normal order" of female subjugation was in place: a man negotiated the sexual activity of the woman in public. Once two women were in control of *Touch Cinema*, the order was destabilized: the disorder signified by the two unaccompanied women induced hostility from the onlookers. Export manipulated the anxieties about women that are embedded in the built environment and rendered visible the gendered inequality facilitated by the city.

The groupe Mauve, Lacy and Export produced feminist urban interventions that ephemerally highlighted the patriarchal occupation of space through the movement of the female body into the built environment. Social theorist and feminist anthropologist Henrietta L. Moore asks the question:

> How is it possible for people to both consent to and dissent from the dominant representations of gender when they are encoded in the material world all around them?[77]

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[74] Dawsey, "The Uses of Sidewalks," 90.
[75] Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 21.
[76] Laurie Penny writes: "Telling women that we are not allowed to… have the same fun or take the same risks that young men do — risks like getting drunk, going out adventuring or travelling alone — may offer us some protection from predators in the short term. But in the long term it just gives those predators more power. It gives them the power to control women's behaviour, to keep us fearful, and to make sure we cannot have fun and take risks without the threat of sexual violence." Penny, *Unspeakable Things*, 144.
[77] Henrietta L Moore, *A Passion for Difference: Essays in Anthropology and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 75.

Indeed, Mauve, Lacy and Export demonstrate that it is possible to temporarily critique gender representations in the built environment through the use of their female bodies. The presence of the female body in the works of Mauve, Lacy and Export exposes the gendered inequality facilitated by the social processes and the architecture of the built environment. In these urban interventions, the artists did not simply shake their fists at injustice: they manipulated components of the city that are complicit in the structural oppression of women, namely advertising and the media. Mauve, Lacy and Export reclaimed these oppressive places, and exposed who does *not* belong — the bodies alienated by these places. In ascending the steps of the MMFA in bridal gowns, the groupe Mauve defied the symbolic gatekeepers of the museum and temporarily occupied the entrance to a collection that reinforces a patriarchal narrative; Lacy's performance drew attention to Los Angeles City Hall, calling on the city to take action against sexual violence against women; and Export's *Body Configurations* and *Touch Cinema* explored the uneasiness of the gendered body against the rigid authority of Vienna's architecture. The viewership of the interventions by Mauve, Lacy and Export extended beyond those who were immediately present, since they were documented by Henry Koro,[78] Maria Karras,[79] and Export,[80] respectively. These important second-wave feminist artists opened up the locations as politicized spaces of feminist resistance.

In the chapter that follows, I contend that contemporary feminist street art employs similar tactics of ephemerality, the image of the female body in the city, and the creation of space through movement, to transform patriarchal urban space. My case study, MissMe, wheat-pastes nude images of herself throughout the city. I argue that MissMe's body is part of her artistic process: she relies on her body to travel around the city to put up her *Vandals*. My next chapter presents a shift in methodology: my research on MissMe is substantiated by writing on the social history of Montréal, and grounded by primary research in the form of personal, pedestrian encounters with *Vandals* and an interview with MissMe. I return to the work of Anna Wacławek to consider from a feminist perspective how street art is executed in space, allowing street artists

[78] As credited in Arbour, *Déclics: Art et Société*.
[79] As credited on Suzanne Lacy's artist website: "In Mourning and in Rage," Suzanne Lacy Artist Website, accessed October 5 2016, http://www.suzannelacy.com/in-mourning-and-in-rage-1977.
[80] Export herself took the photographs, as the artist often used stand-ins to appear in her place in Body Configurations. Jill Dawsey states: "In the *Body Configurations* photographs from 1976, the actress Suzanne Widl appears in lieu of Export. The 1976 photographs were made in conjunction with Export's film *Invisible Adversaries*, which features Widl in the lead role. Given that *Body Configurations* are not about the specific person of Export, but about the positions of the female body more broadly, I am not concerned to differentiate the two women here. Export often enlisted other people to perform in works that she originally staged […]" Dawsey, "The Use of Sidewalks," 78.

to express themselves without fear of rejection from the dominant order.[81] The works of Lacy, Mauve and Export finish their spatial actions once their performances have ended: the ideological re-shaping of space is contingent on their bodies moving through a given site and against the built environment. These performances demonstrated the extent to which sexual specificity influences one's experience in the city, as well as how one is perceived within the city.

[81] Anna Wacławek, "From Graffiti to the Street Art Movement," 247.

Chapter Two
The "Artful Vandal": Spatial Feminisms in the Plateau Mont-Royal and Mile End

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated through several examples the ways in which the groupe Mauve, Lacy and Export temporarily transformed space through site-specificity, subversive imagery, and the female body in art works that took place in the city in the 1970s and early 1980s. In this chapter, I argue that contemporary feminist street art is a mode of production that transforms patriarchal urban space through related tactics. Guided by feminist and spatial theories, I suggest that Montreal-based street artist MissMe's series of wheat-pasted self-portraits, *Vandals* (2014 -) subverts the image of the female body and transforms urban space into a site of gendered resistance. At the beginning of this section, I contextualize MissMe's work through a discussion of the global network of individual street artists who produce feminist street art. I reference art historian Miwon Kwon's work on site-specificity to situate feminist street art as a site-specific form of gendered resistance within a larger history of site-specific artistic practices. I present case studies of four *Vandals* that I encountered in two Montréal neighbourhoods: Mile End and the Plateau Mont-Royal (I will refer to the Plateau Mont-Royal as "the Plateau" from now on). The work of architectural historian Cynthia Hammond, human geographer Julie Podmore, and cultural theorist Sherry Simon informs my analysis of the social history of these neighbourhoods. Through discussing the work of visual theorist Griselda Pollock and spatial theorist Rosalyn Deutsche, I analyze *Vandals* in relation to the notion of woman as a spatial and relational, rather than fixed and static, identity. I weave findings from my primary research — accounts of my pedestrian encounters with the *Vandals* and an interview with MissMe — through my secondary research to situate my subjective experience of the works as a woman in the city.

Feminist Street Artists Around the World

There exists a large, global network of street artists and collectives practicing feminist street art. MissMe's practice can be understood in relation to the work of street artists such as Cake (New York City, USA,) Fafi (Paris, France,) Magrela (São Paolo, Brazil,) Lady Pink (New York City, USA,) Miss Van (Barcelona, Spain,) and Shiro (Shizuoka, Japan and New York City, USA). This section discusses the variety of tactics and media utilized by street artists all over the world to create feminist street art. Further, drawing from Wacławek's work on performance and

street art, this section establishes feminist street art as a form of performance and identity building.

The notion of street art as performance extends not only to the artists creating the work, but the viewers who encounter it.[82] The feminist street artists that I discuss here perform femininity through their works, and communicate their identities as female street artists through style. Wacławek writes,

> Many female post-graffiti artists who have rejected the signature-fuelled subculture, create work which both announces them as women and renounces the historically male graffiti traditions.[83]

Female street artists use a variety of tactics in order to "announce" their femininity, such as colours associated with femininity and female-bodied figures. Traditional graffiti pieces, with their hard lines and geometric forms, visually parallel the rigid structure of architecture within the city. The feminine imagery deployed by street artists within the city stands out from traditional signature-based graffiti, as well as the city itself, creating a rupture in the cityscape. As Wacławek points out, in this way, street art functions as performance:

If art-making and art-viewing are actions with the artists as publics as the actors, then it follows that the experience of street art, either through production or reception, is an embodied gesture which constitutes a type of performance.[84]

Wacławek further asserts that the work is completed through the interaction with the audience, and as such, street art is a form of social identity building.[85] Street artists working in an overtly feminine style, such as Lady Pink and Miss Van, communicate their social identities as female writers to the audience. Through overtly feminine characters and the depiction of sex-positive female bodies in the city center, feminist street artists claim space within the male-dominated built environment.

Lady Pink is a trailblazer in the world of women writing graffiti. Born in Equador and raised in New York City, the artist began writing graffiti in 1979,[86] and put up her first piece in 1980.[87] The moniker Lady Pink establishes the artist as a female writer. Further, Lady Pink's

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[82] Wacławek, "From Graffiti to the Street Art Movement," 243.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] "About – Lady Pink NYC," accessed August 10, 2016, http://www.ladypinknyc.com/about/.
[87] Nicolas Ganz, *Graffiti Women: Street Art From Five Continents* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2006), 73.

style is feminine: the artist uses pastel colours, curved, curly block letters and often includes hearts and flowers in her pieces (fig. 13).[88] Lady Pink, along with most of the street artists I mention, is featured in Nicolas Ganz 2006 book *Graffiti Women: Street Art From Five Continents*. As Wacławek points out, the publication of Nicolas Ganz' *Graffiti Women* is a long overdue compendium of women's street art practices since the movement's emergence in the 1970s.[89] However, what struck me about this collection was the way in which the author illustrates woman street artists. In the short text on Lady Pink's career, for example, about half of the text is devoted to the influence of Lady Pink's husband, Smith, whom Ganz credits for the shift Lady Pink's career took in the 1990s.[90] Even if this is true, the narrative suggests that Lady Pink's husband is responsible for her success and the cause of a turning point in her career. Subconscious biases such as these dominate the world of women and street art and are indicative of the hurdles that women street artists continue to overcome today both on the streets, and in the realm of discourse.

Street artists Miss Van, Fafi and Shiro are known for their hyper-sexualized, doll-like characters. Instead of wheat-pasting, stenciling or spray-painting, these artists paint directly on walls, a style that emerged from Toulouse in the 1990s.[91] Fafi's characters, known as *Fafinettes*, are curvy, coy characters. Neon locks, striped thigh-highs, headbands and hearts drawn over the cheeks are stylistic signatures of the *Fafinettes* (fig. 14). Miss Van's characters have a similar appearance to the *Fafinettes*, but are more provocative than coy. Miss Van's sensual characters feature a pouty rosebud mouth, a voluptuous figure, and most notably, heavily lidded, cat-like eyes (fig. 15). For the most part, the characters are female-bodied, but some are chimeric figures of a deer head on a female body (fig. 16). While the *Fafinettes* often avoid the viewer's gaze, Miss Van's characters confront the viewer with a sultry stare. Through their characters, Fafi and Miss Van assert a feminine presence on the walls where they paint. Finally, Japanese-born Shiro creates *Mimi* characters. Like Miss Van's girls and the *Fafinettes*, Shiro's *Mimis* are cartoon-like female figures (fig. 17). These characters function as alter-egos of the artist: "My own character *Mimi* is like another version of myself, and then in my art I can be anything."[92] These characters,

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[88] Wacławek, "From Graffiti to the Street Art Movement," 172.
[89] Ibid, 170.
[90] Ganz, *Graffiti Women*, 73.
[91] Ibid, 50.
[92] Alexandra Henry, "SHIRO // SHIZUOKA // JAPAN," video on VIMEO, 2:18, posted by Alexandra Henry in 2013, https://vimeo.com/76563919

for Shiro, are a means of self-expression. Through their characters, Fafi, Miss Van and Shiro assert a feminine presence on the walls of the city where they paint and reclaim the sexualized female body within the city.

Street artists Magrela and Cake create surreal, psychological portraits of women within the city. Cake uses a combination of wheat-paste, paint and stencil to create her images. Typically, Cake's figures feature a profile or portrait of a woman's face (fig. 18 & fig. 19) or a torso, sometimes with a limb (fig. 20). Cake places emphasis on the throat, sternum and ribcage through highlighting the skeleton of the female figure, or drawing attention to these areas of the body through the placement of the female figure's hand (fig. 21). Cake's characters are usually solitary women, looking off to the side, and occasionally the artist depicts an image of mother and child (fig. 22). Magrela's characters are animated, displaying an array of emotions ranging from despair (fig. 23) to anxiety (fig. 24). Magrela also paints murals with themes of struggle, duality and tension (fig. 25 & fig. 26). In contrast to the sensual, playful characters of Fafi, Miss Van and Shiro, these figures communicate depth and emotional complexity: they are both commentary on and material evidence of a woman's relationship to the city.

Some feminist street artists deliberately feminize their style to render their images in the city center. Lady Pink was one of the first artists to announce her femininity on the trains of New York City with pastel colours, hearts and flowers. Artists such as Fafi, Miss Van and Shiro place hypersexualized characters to project their femininity onto the city walls. Cake and Magrela use different visual tactics that communicate complex emotions to the viewer. While these characters are visual manifestations of the artist's identity within the built environment, MissMe uses a different tactic by wheat-pasting an image of her own body throughout Montréal. The *Vandal* is masked, but the artist's body is exposed. MissMe continues the tradition of claiming space as a female street artist in the city through feminist imagery and the placement of her own body within the streets of the Plateau and Mile End.

History of Site Specificity

MissMe's *Vandals* can productively be understood by considering the art historical critique of site-specific practices, in which artworks create meaning not simply from content, but

through the context in which the artist placed them.[93] According to Miwon Kwon, site-specific art "whether interruptive or assimilative, gave itself up to its environmental context, being formally determined or directed by it."[94] Site-specific artworks emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the hermetic closure of meaning within the art object that was championed by High Modernist art movements such as Minimalism.[95]

Site-specific art practices create artworks that extend beyond the white cube of the gallery or museum space in order to critique the institutions or structures of power that framed or housed the artworks. Kwon asserts that site-specific art avoids institutional habits and the commodification of art by favouring anti-visual and immaterial practices.[96] An example of an immaterial practice is a performance "bracketed by temporal boundaries."[97] MissMe's *Vandals* are works of a material quality, yet they are artworks that are meant to deteriorate. Wacławek states, "[...] as paste-ups and posters age, rot, curl and disappear, they reflect the cycle of life and generate a relationship between the audience and the work, the work and its context, and the everyday life of the city."[98] The elusiveness of site-specificity as a practice is mirrored by the definition of what constitutes a site: the definition of the "site" in site-specific art transcended the physical site and expanded to include temporal, discursive, and socio-spatial sites.[99]

The site becomes the point of intersection that references spaces and structures that are found outside of the artistic action.[100] In addition to physical locations, Kwon asserts that sites also exist immaterially, that is to say, discursively.[101] James Meyer has identified a new node of site-specificity that he calls the "functional site." According to Meyer, the functional site does not necessarily involve physical space.[102] Rather, the functional site exists in the interstices between the nodes of institutional and discursive space: it traces the movement of bodies between the

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[93] Miwon Kwon, "Genealogy of Site Specificity," in *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004), 11.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Kwon, "Genealogy of Site Specificity," 24.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Wacławek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, 91.
[99] Kwon, "Genealogy of Site Specificity," 28.
[100] Kwon, "Genealogy of Site Specificity,"14. Kwon uses the examples of the studio, gallery, museum, art criticism, art history, and the art market.
[101] Kwon, "Genealogy of Site Specificity," 24.
[102] James Meyer, "The Functional Site," *Documents 7* (Fall 1996): 21.

multiple spaces. In other words, it privileges the space created by the movement of the artists' bodies above all others:[103]

> It is a temporary thing, a movement, a chain of meaning devoid of a particular focus. The functional site thus courts its own destruction, it is willfully temporary, its nature is not to endure but to come down.[104]

"Functional," in this sense means that the location serves its purpose, and then is no more. The functional site as described by Meyer applies to street art due to street art's inherent ephemerality: the fleeting nature of the works, and the ever-evolving and inconstant shape of the space created by the artist through transit. Street artworks are put up by artists with the understanding that their pieces will be tagged over, ripped, torn and buffed. Even without the interference of agents within the urban center, the works will disintegrate over time because of their materiality.

Taking into consideration these delineations of site-specific art, MissMe's *Vandals* operate within and extend the boundaries of several sites: the physical site of the actual location of the *Vandal*; the discursive sites of the spatial (and historical) narrative of the neighbourhood in which they are situated; immaterial spaces such as online on platforms like Instagram; the space that MissMe creates as she puts up her work; and the mental map of the city that the artist inevitably holds in her mind as she navigates the city to put up her work. Occupying multivalent spaces — physical, psychic and discursive — MissMe's *Vandals* are site-specific urban interventions that transform urban space through their presence. Most importantly, the image of the *Vandal* presents a gendered body. The visual proliferation of the female body in the city causes a disruption in the city's visual landscape. The *Vandal* is a material locus of the spaces occupied by the woman in public in the modern imagination.

MissMe: The Artful Vandal

MissMe began putting up her *Vandals* series in 2014. Prior to this, the artist gained recognition in Montréal for her *Jazz Saints* (fig. 27) and *Lady Lie-berty* (fig. 28) images. While her previous series depicted celebrities and historical figures (Nina Simone, Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, Betty Boop) in this series, MissMe created a self-portrait (fig. 29). Walking through the streets of the Plateau and Mile End, it is nearly impossible to avoid MissMe's *Vandals*. Mary

[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

Ann Doane writes, "[t]he woman is always there as the butt of a joke — a 'dirty' joke which, as Freud has demonstrated, is always at the expense of a woman."[105] In contrast to Freud's view of women being both the butt of the joke, but also outside its humour, when I first encountered Miss Me's work, I felt as if I were in on a joke, that MissMe was poking fun at the male gaze and exposing the inherently patriarchal nature of the hegemonic viewing hierarchy. This hierarchy was very present for me in museums or art galleries, where my search for feminist art that questioned, subverted, and rendered visible the absurdity of patriarchy was often frustrated. I did not expect to encounter the art that I sought in the street. This is because my impression at that time was that street art and graffiti culture was male-dominated. Street art, to me, was an insular space-claiming tactic: a world of inside jokes between young — and for the most part, male — graffiti writers. MissMe's work stands out in her aesthetic and political choices.

The terms street art and graffiti are often used interchangeably to denote unsanctioned public art. However, graffiti and street art are separate practices that are different in terms of materiality, motive, and execution. MissMe's medium of choice is wheat-paste, which belongs to what Wacławek categorizes as the "post-graffiti" movement. Wacławek states:

> While traditional graffiti is essentially an affirmation of self within a network of initiates, street art, while it might also represent its maker, generally communicates a variety of ideas.[106]

Street artists operate in signs and images, and the urgency that is attributed to proliferation springs not exclusively from the want or need to be recognized or earn clout, but to claim space through placing an image in the urban center.

In 2016, MissMe has two versions of *Vandals* pasted around Montréal. In the original 2014 *Vandal,* MissMe rendered her image in a soft, black-and-white, charcoal portrait. The *Vandal* is nude, except for a white t-shirt, and the figure wears a balaclava made distinctive by the addition of Mickey Mouse ears. The *Vandal* lifts up her t-shirt with her left hand, exposing her left breast, which is covered with a unicorn head. The *Vandal* complies with normative beauty standards: she is slender, toned, and hairless. MissMe started putting up the second flight of *Vandals* in 2015 (fig. 30 & fig. 31). These *Vandals* are full-height (the image of the 2014 *Vandals* ends at the knee) and more sharply rendered. The 2015 *Vandals* lift up their shirts with

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[105] Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator., *Screen 23*, no. 3-4 (1982): 85.
[106] Anna Wacławek, "From graffiti to the street art movement: negotiating art worlds, urban spaces and visual culture, c.1970 – 2008" (PhD Diss, Concordia University, 2008), 268.

both hands, exposing both breasts. This time, MissMe chose a variety of symbols and fantastical creatures to cover the breasts of the *Vandals*: vicious sharks with gnawing, broken-glass teeth; foreboding smiley faces with Xs for eyes and a tongue lolling out of the side of its mouth; and the slogan 'IT'S NOT ME / IT'S YOU." The *Vandals* in this new series appear more life-like and muscular, as opposed to the soft, sketchy quality of the earlier *Vandals.* The breasts with mythical creatures, the white t-shirt, and the Mickey Mouse balaclava operate as deliberate, feminist visual tactics in the image of the *Vandal* as they reference visual cues from known feminist collectives *Pussy Riot* and *Femen.* Other than the t-shirt and the balaclava, the female body is completely nude in both sets of *Vandals.*

The *Vandals* were first conceived as a reaction against censorship that MissMe had experienced on social media. MissMe drew a self-portrait wearing her Mickey Mouse balaclava, her left breast bare, the nipple visible and posted this image on various platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and her artist website. The image was reported anonymously, and as a result, it was removed from Instagram. The forceful erasure from the Internet was especially difficult for the artist as it was a self-portrait:

> I felt so personally attacked, for who I was and really, the core of my being, that it made me so enraged that they would erase me and leave so much vulgarity, so much violence, so much hate on all of those [platforms][…] So I just decided that if I couldn't live on those [platforms], I was just going to put myself out there everywhere, for everyone to see.[107]

The self-censorship with the image of a unicorn was also prompted by this attempted erasure. The unicorn covering the left breast of the Vandal is meant to poke fun at the absurdity of censoring women's bodies, because "clearly, that is what we have under our shirts and never show."[108]

The action of lifting the t-shirt is intended as a transformative gesture that signals control over the body and sexuality of the *Vandal*. For MissMe, the act of undressing, or revealing, is a powerful one. This gesture is also meant to stand in contrast to more traditional, problematic forms of viewing female subjects:

> The t-shirt for me was important because, with the t-shirt being raised, it's me undressing, me showing something under. Because if I was completely naked, then there's no movement from being something to another.[109]

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[107] MissMe (Street Artist), in conversation with author, Montreal, December 2015. Transcript.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

The *Vandal*'s control over her nudity, indicated by the movement from concealed to revealed, echoes the control that MissMe exerts over her own image. After being censored by Instagram, the *Vandals* allow MissMe to assert her presence illegally in a highly regulated arena: the city.

Mary Ann Doane explores the transformative gesture through the example of the woman in cinema removing her glasses.[110] According to Doane, glasses represent active looking and intellectuality, and by removing her glasses, the woman in cinema transforms herself from the "spectator" to the "spectacle" — from the one who is seeing to the one being seen.[111] What is important in this sequence of events is that the woman in cinema — whether the reason for removing the glasses stems from patriarchal pressures or not — is the one who holds the power to see or to be seen.[112] The visual language in MissMe's *Vandal* operates in a similar way: the *Vandal,* in the act of lifting up her t-shirt, transforms her body from being on display, to displaying herself. In this way, MissMe's visual imagery interrupts the passive consumption of her image and disrupts the male gaze.

The balaclava is significant on several levels. In graffiti and street art cultures, writers and artists conceal their faces with masks so that they are not readily identifiable lest police officers apprehend them while they are putting up their art (illegally) in the street. Balaclavas are also a symbol of riot and anarchy, as they are worn during protests to conceal identity. The balaclava worn by the *Vandal* bears the resemblance to the balaclavas worn by feminist punk band *Pussy Riot*. *Pussy Riot* was formed in 2011 by members emerging from an underground art group called *Voina*.[113] During their performances, the band wore balaclavas: the insistence on concealing their identities was inspired by the online hacker activist group Anonymous in the US, who wear the Guy Fawkes mask.[114] *Pussy Riot* gained international attention in February 2012, when they attempted to stage a performance protesting the involvement of the Catholic church in Vladimir Putin's presidential campaign.[115] Five members of *Pussy Riot* began the performance in the early

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[110] Doane, "Film and the Masquerade" 74.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Peter Rutland, "The Pussy Riot Affair: gender and national identity in Putin's Russia," *Nationalities Papers* vol. 42, No. 4 (2014): 576, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2014.936933; *Voina* means war in Russian, and the group *Voina* was founded in 2006 as a street art group that performed illegal art interventions. Catherine Schuler, "Reinventing the Show Trial: Putin and Pussy Riot," in *Anthropology, Theatre and Development; the Transformative Potential of Performance*, eds. Jonas Tinius and Alex Flynn (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 292. doi 10.1057/9781137350602.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

hours of the morning, but were quickly rushed off of the stage. The group gained international media attention in the following days, as three *Pussy Riot* members — Maria Alekhina, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, and Yekaterina Samutsevich — were arrested and faced criminal charges in relation to the event.[116] Following the performance, the bright coloured garments and balaclavas worn by *Pussy Riot* became emblematic of feminist resistance around the world. The *Vandal*'s action of revealing her breasts as an attempt to (re)claim bodily autonomy is a visual tactic used by "sextremist" group *Femen*. Originating in Ukraine, *Femen*'s objective is "total victory over the patriarchy."[117] Mandated to focus on women's rights, the group coined the term "sextremism," which the group defines as "female sexuality that has risen up against patriarchy by embodying itself in extreme political acts of direct action."[118] *Femen* members protest with their breasts exposed, and through doing so, aim to expose the inherently aggressive nature of patriarchy. Both *Pussy Riot* and *Femen* have received criticism for the effectiveness of their feminist tactics.[119] In *Vandals,* MissMe joins visual tactics from two feminist activist groups' expression of gendered resistance: *Pussy Riot*'s balaclavas, and *Femen's* use of nudity as a radical gesture.[120]

Feminist geographer Rosalyn Deutsche discusses the mask in relation to the feminist contestation of the universalized male viewing subject. Deutsche challenges the Freudian notion of the image of the woman as one of lack and questions the fetishistic image of the woman in relation to photographic artist Cindy Sherman's *Film Stills* series (fig. 32).[121] In this series, Sherman uses a variety of costume make-up techniques to visually assume the identity of new characters, masking her singular identity. Deutsche contends that in traditional modes of viewing images, it is assumed that meaning is produced not only between objects within images, but between images and the viewing subject.[122] Deutsche asserts, "feminist explorations of vision suggested, on the contrary, that purportedly independent images universalize their subjects

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[116] Rutland, "The Pussy Riot Affair," 577.
[117] Femen; with Galia Ackerman, *Femen*, trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA : Polity Press, 2014) ix.
[118] Ibid, x.
[119] See: Emily Channell, "Is Sextremism the new feminism? Perspectives from Pussy Riot and Femen," *Nationalites Papers*, vol. 42, No. 4 (2014): 611-614, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2014.917074.
[120] An observer would note that there is a common aesthetic across feminist activist performance that is evident in the style of *Pussy Riot* and *Femen,* but the artist does not state that these are conscious aesthetic references.
[121] Rosalyn Deutsche, "Boys Town" in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Chicago, Ill. : Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts ; Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1998, c1996), 241.
[122] Ibid.

through the conquest of difference."[123] Sherman, in assuming the identities of these characters through masking, destabilizes the notion of an essential identity as well as the universal viewing subject:

> Each is Sherman herself and seems to convey a single, essential identity — the "real" Sherman — but none can actually be "the real thing" precisely because they all promise to be."[124]

Through masking, Sherman rejects the notions of both the singular identity and the universal viewing subject. Similarly, MissMe, through concealing her identity with the Mickey Mouse balaclava, destabilizes the universal viewing subject, as well as the singular interpretation of the image. The *Vandal* calls for manifold interpretations and the fragmented viewing subject that is imperative to feminist readings of images. Furthermore, the *Vandals* are a series of wheat-pasted self-portraits: they are all the same image, but each image is in a different context, and lives through different conditions. The mask, exposed breasts and the nude female body are visual tactics employed by MissMe that suggest the fragmented viewing subject that feminism calls for; they transform the sites they occupy into platforms for multiple interpretations of the image by more than one subject.

"Woman As Image"

To further unpack the visual tactics of MissMe's *Vandals*, I turn to two separate, but complementary, schools of 1970s feminist discourse surrounding images of women in advertisements: "images of women" and "woman as image." The fragmentation that Deutsche calls for is a reaction to human geographer David Harvey's complete dismissal, through omission, of feminist theory in his critical re-hashing of postmodern geography. Deutsche recalls the discursive divide in representations of women that occurred during the 1970s: between "positive" and "negative" images of women, throughout history and in contemporary advertisements. This divide led to a desire in feminist discourse to fill a gap between "images of woman" and "woman as image." With the goal of relating the concept of "woman as image" to the visual tactics employed by MissMe, I turn to Griselda Pollock's 1970s text "What's Wrong with Images of Women?" Here, Pollock establishes "woman as image" as a relational and spatial,

[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid, 244.

rather than fixed and whole, identity.[125] This notion prevails today and can be applied to the tactics utilized by MissMe in the *Vandals* series, as well as modes of producing and encountering feminist street art. As Deutsche points out, feminist discourse identified two categories within dominant artistic representations of women: "positive," meaning realistic images of women; and "negative," meaning stereotypical images of women.[126] These polarizing categories of images of women reveal the disproportionate correlation between sexist representations of women within artworks in institutions and the amount of artworks created by women within institutions. However, "positive" and "negative" images of women pose the problem of assuming that images of women are only produced in the process of the hierarchical viewing of the image.[127] Seeking not to critique "images of women" but rather to propose an alternative way to analyze visual representations of women, 1970s feminist theorists conceptualized "woman as image" to bridge the gap between the image of the woman as produced through the relationship between the image and the hierarchical viewing subject.

Pollock's definition of "woman as image" calls for the consideration of other symbols and signifiers operating within the visual representation of women.[128] Within this framework, "woman" emerges as the product of a complex network of visual, social, spatial and temporal relations. Pollock provides several examples of gender reversals in advertising to expose the "asymmetry, inscribed into the language of visual representation"[129] that permeates portrayals of women throughout a broad temporal swath of visual traditions; from high art to contemporary advertisements. The imagery in the *Vandal* — the image which the artist asserts is a "counter-voice" to sexist imagery of women in advertisements[130] — suggests the relational identity that the "woman as image" model calls for. The visual lexicon implemented by MissMe is not specific to Montréal: the balaclava and the exposed breasts are known symbols of feminist activism. However, this does not mean that the *Vandal* transcends site-specificity, as the meaning of each individual *Vandal* is produced by space (site and temporal) and multiple encounters with many viewers. Most importantly, the *Vandal'*s identity as "woman" is produced spatially in the moment of the encounter with the *Vandal*: the surprise encounter with a nude *Vandal* in the street

[125] Deutsche, *Evictions*, 239.
[126] Deutsche, *Evictions*, 238.
[127]Deutsche, *Evictions*, 239.
[128] Griselda Pollock, "What's Wrong with Images of Women?" *Screen Education*, no 24 (1977): 133.
[129] Pollock, "What's Wrong,"137.
[130] "Make it Happen: MissMe," YouTube video by Brit + Co, 3:44, posted by "Brit + Co," October 18, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxQHIOI9iKk

transforms the location into a site of gendered resistance and exposes the inherently patriarchal social order of public space.

The Encounter

In addition to feminist visual imagery, location and reception are key to feminist street art's ephemeral transformation of space. The encounter with street art is a crucial moment in which the viewer apprehends the image on the street. According to Wacławek, reception by the viewer marks the moment of the work's completion:

> The intersection between the work, the street and the viewer is one that cannot be taken for granted. This junction creates an element of surprise on the artwork's discovery and, in that moment, also facilitates the work's transitory completion.[131]

The "element of surprise" is facilitated by the *Vandals* as MissMe puts up her wheat-pasted self-portraits at ground level, in order to make her image accessible to pedestrians and thus maximize the moments of encounter.[132] The *Vandal*'s reference to radical feminist protest — the balaclava — as well as her nudity and the image of a woman in the city that exists outside of the realm of commodity and advertising creates a startling disruption in the city. Alison Young elaborates on the chance encounter with street art, and points out that the element of surprise can be either one of enchantment or of outrage and offense. According to Young, even enchantment does not necessarily mean that the encounter is a positive one:

> […] "wonder" does not necessarily connote pleasure. Nor is enchantment necessarily an agreeable condition. While the viewing of street art can involve delight, other forms of enchantment are not confined to pleasurable affective connection.[133]

The encounter with street art in the city conjures a wide range of reactions and emotions. As Wacławek points out, it is impossible to measure the multitude of reactions drawn from street art, as it is impossible to measure the effectiveness of commercial advertising.[134] Considering multivalent spaces — some concrete, some metaphorical — occupied by the *Vandals* is productive in examining the *Vandals* as site-specific urban artworks. However, an in-depth

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[131] Wacławek, *Graffiti and Street Art*. 96.
[132] MissMe, (Street Artist). In conversation with the author. December 2015. Transcript.
[133] Alison Young, *Street Art, Public City: Law Crime and the Urban Imagination* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 129.
[134] Wacławek, *Graffiti and Street Art*, 96.

analysis of these works in their respective locations is crucial to understanding the *Vandals* in their socio-geographic specificity.

Vandals in Montréal: The Plateau Mont-Royal and Mile End

I now discuss the social history of two neighbourhoods — the Plateau and Mile End — in which I have encountered and documented *Vandals*. Within these neighbourhoods, I discuss four *Vandals* on three streets: rue Prince-Arthur (in the Plateau Mont-Royal), and avenue Laurier and rue Saint-Viateur (in Mile End)(fig 33). In some instances, my discussion of the *Vandal* is supplemented by my personal encounter with the *Vandal* and the space that she occupies.[135] To further understand the significance of feminist street art in the Plateau and Mile End, I turn to scholarship on gender and gentrification by Damaris Rose and Jason Patch. Taking into consideration women's role in gentrification, MissMe's *Vandals* emerge as symbols of female agency in the Plateau and Mile End.

Montréal has known a tradition of graffiti-style interruptions in the city center, such as slogans hastily sprayed onto walls, since the 1960s.[136] Early graffiti in Montréal reflected political issues: Bill 101, Québec nationalism, racism and First Nations issues, to name a few.[137] According to Wacławek,

> Montreal street artists tend to favour working within a bohemian neighbourhood, the Plateau, known for its trendy shops, relaxed party atmosphere as well as musical, visual and performative artistic expression.[138]

Indeed, the Plateau Mont-Royal is home to a vibrant landscape of graffiti and street art. The borough is intersected by boulevard Saint-Laurent, also known as "the Main," a vital artery that runs through the dynamic neighbourhood from the Old Port to the former train station on rue Bernard.[139] Once home to the Canadian garment industry, the manufacturing lofts on the stretch of the Main between Sherbrooke and Mont-Royal have been converted to residential and commercial lofts, and the shops below meet a wide array of needs — international grocery stores,

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[135] This structure is inspired by Alison Young's book *Street Art, Public City*.
[136] Anna Wacławek, "Pop Culture and Politics" 247.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Wacławek, "Pop Culture and Politics," 251.
[139] "From 1876 onwards, the intersection of Rue Bernard and Boulevard Saint-Laurent was the place to come if you wished to leave the neighbourhood. Rail tracks cut diagonally into Rue Bernard, which terminated with a tiny wooden platform building: the Mile End train station." Cynthia Hammond, "Rue/Bernard/Street: An Architectural Essay" *Flaneur: Fragments of a Street,* Issue 03, Summer 2013, 76.

vintage and secondhand clothes shops, boutiques, home décor shops, and cafés.[140] The Main is a crucial point of discussion in examining the *Vandal* situated on rue Prince-Arthur, as rue Prince-Arthur intersects rue Saint-Dominique, which runs parallel one block east to boulevard Saint-Laurent.[141] Julie Podmore demonstrates how the Main, itself a boundary, produces boundaries — sexual, social, cultural — and in turn how the bodies that moved within it — gendered, working-class —shaped the Main.[142]According to Podmore, the Main is a liminal space, a "third city" between the discursive and spatial divides of Montréal: east and west, upper-class and working-class, North American Montréalers and immigrant Montréalers.

If you follow the Main north past avenue Mont-Royal, you arrive in Mile End.[143] Social historian Sherry Simon points out that architecturally, Mile End is a neighbourhood with buildings whose functions are constantly changing:

> As a neighbourhood that has served as a transit station for immigrants on their way to the more affluent suburbs, Mile End has a particularly high proportion of recycled buildings. These mark tranquil forms of transition, and become distinctive forms of *architecture partlante,* forms that speak less of the original intentions of the architect than of the many histories in which the buildings participate. [144]

The buildings on avenue Laurier, rue Saint-Viateur and rue Bernard on which MissMe placed *Vandals* are part of a neighbourhood that is in a state of persistent flux. The buildings that are constantly changing hands in Mile End and the Plateau are indicative of gentrification. Two concepts are crucial to my discussion of MissMe's *Vandals* and gentrification in the Plateau and Mile End: the notion of cultural capital and the dominance of young, female professional residents in Montréal.

Urban sociologist Damaris Rose includes the Plateau and Mile End in her study on gender and gentrifying neighbourhoods in Montréal. The Plateau and Mile End are both neighbourhoods that were traditionally home to working-class and lower-middle class residents that "[…] have undergone a slow process of gentrification, which has — so far — left them with considerable

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[140]Podmore, "St. Lawrence Boulevard as 'Third City,'" 19.
[141] The Main first appeared on a map of Montreal in the eighteenth century, and throughout the nineteenth century was a zone of commerce, socialization, and social reform. Podmore, "St. Lawrence Boulevard as 'Third City,'" 55.
[142]Mile End is thought to be named after the space of about a mile that follows Sherbrooke street to Mont Royal, which was formerly known as Mile End road. Podmore, "St. Lawrence Boulevard as 'Third City,'" 26.
[143]Sherry Simon, "Hybridity Revisited: St Michael's of Mile End," International Journal of Canadian Studies/ Revue Internationale d'études canadiennes 27, Spring/Printemps (2003): 114.
[144]Sherry Simon, "Diasporic Translation: Klein in Mile End" in *Translating in Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (Montreal, QC, CAN: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006) Accessed May 1, 2016. ProQuest ebrary.

socio-economic diversity."[145] Rose points out that the neighbourhoods of the Plateau and Mile End, in contrast to other "corporate cities"[146] listed as hot-spots of gentrification — Chicago, Paris, New York, Boston and Toronto[147] — are home to a cohort of young, professional women.[148] In the 1970s, linguistic and cultural tensions in Montréal came to a head with the October Crisis, resulting in a mass exodus of Anglophone Montréalers and subsequently, a decline in industry.[149] During this exodus, "male-dominated" sectors such as finance, insurance and real-estate relocated to Toronto, leaving public tertiary sector jobs such as education, health and social services – areas which were dominated by women.[150] Further, due to the proximity of the Plateau and Mile End to downtown, they are suitable locations for gentrifying, professional women to live.[151] Rose asserts that the Plateau and Mile End are home to women of varying economic status: immigrant female-headed households are simultaneously impacted the most by gentrification, while being dependent on the social networks and resources established in the boroughs; and young professional women are equally likely to become gentrifiers, as the inner city is "more supportive" of lone, young women or single mothers than the suburbs.[152]

Sociologist Jason Patch applies Jane Jacob's notion of "public characters" to his study of gender and gentrification in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.[153] Acting as "public characters," agents who promote neighbourhood stability, women in Williamsburg have controlled the housing market by keeping out newcomers.[154] For Patch, gentrification poses a new type of public character: the "faces on the street," who act as informal resources for newcomers, and encourage new residents to stay in the neighbourhood.[155] Interestingly, Patch illustrates his notion of "faces on the street" with the example of a cartoon baby face logo on a boutique run by women.[156] Patch

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[145] Damaris Rose, "A feminist perspective of employment restructuring and gentrification: the case of Montreal," in *The Power of Geography: How Territory Shapes Social Life*, eds. Jennifer Wolch and Michael Dean (Unwin Hyman Inc., Winchester, Massachusetts; Unwin Hyman Ltd, London, 1989), 124.
[146] Rose, "A feminist perspective," 133.
[147] David Ley, "Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification," *Urban Studies*, vol. 40 no 12 (November 2003): 2527.
[148] Rose, "A feminist perspective," 122.
[149] Hammond, "Rue / Bernard / Street," 75-76.
[150] Between 1971 and 1981, jobs held by women increased by 40.8 percent in Montréal. Rose, "A feminist perspective," 124.
[151] Rose, "A feminist perspective," 119.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Jason Patch, "'Ladies and Gentrification': New Stores, residents and relationships in neighbourhood change," *Gender in an Urban World* (12 March 2015): 109. Accessed June 11, 2016.
[154] Ibid ; Ibid, 106.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid, 111.

points out that the women running the boutique transform the sidewalk space in front of the store into a friendly locus for incoming residents to congregate through material visual culture: the image of the baby's face. This instance sets precedence for considering MissMe's *Vandals* as loci of gathering for new residents in the Plateau and Mile End. Interference with the visual and material properties of the *Vandal* by anonymous individuals, such as adding words or drawing images onto the *Vandal,* or tearing or removing the *Vandal,* suggest that the presence of this character in these neighbourhoods draws people in, and encourages urban agents to interact with the characters. I further explain this in the following section of case studies, where I documented and observed *Vandals* at several locations in the Plateau and Mile End. Considering the framework laid out by Patch, it is tempting to compare the *Vandal* to the "public character," as the *Vandal* stares out from the balaclava at the viewer. However, I contend that MissMe's *Vandals* are produced by and speak to the gentrifying class, therefore they act more as material "faces on the street," providing points of congregation for the female gentrifying class of Mile End and the Plateau.

The Plateau: rue Prince-Arthur and rue Saint-Laurent

On Saint-Dominique, MissMe placed a *Vandal* above street level, about eleven feet in the air (fig. 34). MissMe put up this *Vandal* in broad daylight, despite the objections of a particularly vocal passerby.[157] By the time I first observed this *Vandal* in 2015, half of the wheat-paste had been torn down, but the *Vandal*'s defiant stare still emanated through the eyeholes of the balaclava.

Today, nightclubs and cafés surround the corner of rue Prince-Arthur and boulevard Saint-Laurent. During the nineteenth century the corner was an important site of social reform and protest. Rue Prince-Arthur marked the northern border of the space frequented by socialists in Montréal — the southern border was Craig street, known today as rue Saint-Antoine — at the beginning of the twentieth century. Significantly, women featured prominently in the socialist movement in Montréal.[158] In the 1970s, the corner of rue Prince-Arthur and boulevard Saint-Laurent was the centrifugal force around which queer, lesbian and feminist resources centers and recreational spaces orbited.[159] Looking to the social and spatial histories of Prince-Arthur and the

[157] MissMe,(Street Artist). In conversation with the author. December 2015. Transcript.
[158] Podmore, 'Third City,' 134.
[159] Podmore, 'Third City,' 255.

Main bridges the gap between past and present, MissMe's *Vandal* is active in a space with a long history of gendered resistance.

Prince-Arthur is a busy pedestrian street that leads to Carré Louis, a leafy park with a fountain that is especially popular in summertime. This street is a quick way to access Sherbrooke metro on Saint-Denis from boulevard Saint-Laurent. The time of day when MissMe placed each *Vandal* is equally important, as the artist pasted up the *Vandal* during daylight. This is a bold move for a street artist, since daytime wheat-pasting increases the likelihood of apprehension by police, thus risking exposing the artist's identity and, subsequently, arrest. I encountered the Saint-Dominique *Vandal* for the first time in broad daylight. I had certainly encountered this *Vandal* before, at night, but I would not have noticed her. Traveling down rue Prince-Arthur at night, my gaze remains at street level: when the clubs are packed on the weekend, I stare straight ahead so as not to engage club-goers or bar patrons. When the corner is quiet on nights early in the week, I scan the street at eye level: being aware of my surroundings gives me a sense of ease while walking alone. Prince-Arthur is well-lit, and I do not consider myself to be in immediate danger of violence at that corner. However, media narratives of sexual violence influence my perspective of the city at night. I discuss the change in character of the street from day to night in more depth in the following section, in which I demonstrate how the *Vandals* materialize as traces of resistance in an urban landscape that is dangerous for women at night.

Mile End: avenue Laurier and rue Saint-Viateur

The *Vandal* is pasted up on a building on avenue Laurier and rue Jeanne-Mance, which formerly housed Collège Rachel, a French high school.[160] In 2007, the previous location was turned into a luxury condominium complex for retired seniors, and re-named Campus Rachel.[161] MissMe installed this *Vandal* on a somewhat sleepy corner, surrounded by cafés and boutiques. One day, the *Vandal* was scraped off the building by an unknown individual, presumably for maintenance purposes. However, the *Vandal* clung to the black paint of the surface, and what

[160]Collège Rachel moved from its original historical building on 310 Rachel in 2002 François Cardinal, "Développement immobilier – Le Collège Rachel transporte ses pénates rue Jeanne Mance" *Le Devoir*, 28 June 2002. http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/education/4477/developpement-immobilier-le-college-rachel-transporte-ses-penates-rue-jeanne-mance

[161] Simon Diotte, "Le collège Rachel converti en maison de retraite" *La Presse*, 30 avril, 2007. http://www.lapresse.ca/maison/immobilier/projets-immobiliers/200704/30/01-870280-le-college-rachel-reconverti-en-maison-de-retraite.php

remains is a silhouette, the Mickey-Mouse ears still recognizable (fig. 35). To the west of the building that the *Vandal* occupies are RYU and L'Autre Bar. The resto and the bar have similar social functions in the sense that they are both places where people gather during the day to shop or have coffee and brunch together. However, bars are frequented mostly at night, and cafés, more so during the day. In this location, the presence of the *Vandal* is particularly defiant: as a high-traffic destination for mostly female consumers shopping in boutiques, and residents consuming coffee, it is likely that MissMe would be seen putting up the *Vandal* in daylight. The *Vandal,* then, must have been put up at night while the street was devoid of daytime shoppers.

Patch traces the trajectory of gentrification from a "nocturnal, spatially-marginal phenomenon" to an area featuring bookstores, small art galleries, and coffee shops to entice the affluent gentrifying class to explore and consume within the neighbourhood during the day.[162] The boutiques and coffee shops on rue Laurier can be understood as points of congregation by "faces on the street" that draw in female shoppers and neighbourhood residents during the day. At night, however, the atmosphere of rue Laurier and rue Jeanne-Mance changes, as coffee shops and boutiques lock their doors, and the bar and restaurant open. The environment during the day is inviting towards women, but at night, on a dark corner near a bar, the street is less welcoming. Carina Listerborn cites Gill Valentine's research on women's fear in public space at night, which indicates that the fear of circulating at night is rational, and that victims of sexual violence are often shamed for venturing out at night in the first place.[163] Listerborn states:

> In response to their fears, which are often regarded as "normal" and "appropriate," women develop "coping strategies" by avoiding "dangerous places" at "dangerous" times (usually at night), sometimes by following lengthy and circuitous routes. Thus, women develop "mental maps" according to their fears and perceptions of danger and impose corresponding restrictions on their mobility.[164]

Taking this into consideration, the spatial routes that female street artists pursue, often alone, are significant. Further, as feminist scholar Jessica N. Pabòn points out, female street artists dispersing images of depicting female sexuality are especially at risk of violence:

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[162] Patch, "Ladies and Gentrification," 106.
[163] Carina Listerborn, "Understanding the Geography of Women's Fear: Toward a Reconceptualization of Fear and Space," in *Subjectivities, Knowledges and Feminist Geographies: The Subject and Ethics of Social Research*, ed. Liz Bondi et al (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 37.
[164] Ibid.

> For women, painting at night — often alone — can be dangerous at the outset. When the imagery one is putting on the wall is specifically about sex and sexuality, the threat of rape and sexual harassment is magnified.[165]

In this way, the silver silhouette of the Laurier *Vandal* intractably claims space in an area that is perilous for lone women at night.

There are four *Vandal*s on rue Saint-Viateur. Two are tucked into an alleyway that intersects rue Saint-Viateur between rue Jeanne-Mance and rue Saint-Urbain (fig. 36), and two more are put up at the eastern-most end of rue Saint-Viateur, on avenue Casgrain (fig. 37 & fig. 38). In 2015, another artist began putting up wooden blocks over the pubis of the *Vandals*. On the bottom half of the block, the artist glued fake fur, evoking pubic hair. On the top half of the block, the artist wrote: "oppression thrives on the aesthetics of cool" (fig. 39).[166] This interference with the work brings up an important part of the visual imagery in the *Vandal*, and echoes some of the critical concerns surrounding the "sextremist" political tactics of *Femen.* Like *Femen,* the *Vandal* participates in patriarchal oppression and normativity: the pubis of the *Vandal* is completely bare and faintly rendered. Furthermore, the *Vandal* is thin, toned, conventionally attractive, and appears to be white. In this sense, the *Vandal* does not challenge the unattainable beauty standards of mainstream advertisements. How can I claim that this image is feminist or empowering if it does not challenge the inherent oppression of patriarchal social norms? MissMe does not claim to represent anyone but herself; this image is not meant to be a perfect model that encompasses all feminist ideals. Further, even though the absence of female body hair is problematic when held up against the backdrop of contemporary feminist literature, the absence marks a space where a conversation on feminism and body hair is possible.

The subject of women's body hair foregrounds the question of the female body itself as a site of resistance. The removal of body hair is a point of contention within feminist discourse. On the one hand, the removal of body hair is oppressive, as it upholds normative standards of femininity, and more specifically, it is emblematic of heterosexual femininity.[167] Breanne Fahs

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[165] Jessica N. Pabòn, "Ways of Being Seen: Gender and the Writing on the Wall" in *Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art*, ed. Jeffery Ian Ross (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 84.

[166] This happened over the span of a few weeks, and I did not get a chance to photograph the *Vandal* with the fake pubic hair covering the pubis.

[167] "[…] women's body alteration practices represent a tangible manifestation of how women (including feminist women) internalize social control mechanisms; such practices reveal much about the gendered context of women's lives" Breanne Fahs, "DREADED OTHERNESS": Heteronormative Patrolling in Women's Body Hair Rebellions," *Gender and Society,* 25 (4). (Sage Publications, Inc, 2011): 452. http://0-www.jstor.org.mercury.concordia.ca/stable/23044206.

explains: "Women's hair removal practices represent an important marker of gendered social control, as those who resist face stigma."[168] On the other hand, feminist rhetoric champions freedom and choice. Body hair removal has strong ties to femininity. Women's studies scholar, Daniella Caselli observes that, "A female body with hair does not overcome cultural normativity; rather, it situates itself in a different position in relation to it."[169] Caselli explains that within feminist discourse, the claim that removing body hair is "unnatural" while body hair is "natural" is seen as problematic.[170] However, Caselli further points out that this binaric divide exists within other problematic assumptions about "threatening femininity […] national otherness […] gender masquerade […] disgust, and — at best — excess."[171] In other words, looking to female body hair as a demarcation between natural, and unnatural, or good and bad feminism, is misguided. This does not mean, however, that body hair is not important: quite the contrary, attitudes towards body hair are significant. The anonymous artist's placement of body hair where there was none instigates dialogue around the *Vandal.* Drawing attention to the absence of pubic hair on the *Vandal* draws attention to the constructed nature of gender, and also revives the discursive divide between "positive" and "negative" images of women from the 1970s.

Despite the *Vandals* adherence to normative beauty standards, the placement of the *Vandal*'s female body into the city is a political, feminist tactic, and, indeed, a brave gesture. Further, the neighbourhoods in which MissMe places the *Vandals* are areas that have become gentrified. The *Vandal* on rue Prince-Arthur is present in a place with a political history where women were active participants. The Laurier *Vandal* is a mark of resistance against the geography of women's fear of the city at night. Finally, the Saint-Viateur *Vandal* opens up a platform in which to discuss gender constructs. Caren Kaplan states,

> In a transnational world where cultural asymmetries and linkages continue to be mystified by economic and political interests at multiple levels, feminist need detailed, historicized maps of the circuits of power.[172]

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[168] Breanne Fahs, "DREADED OTHERNESS," 454 & 467.
[169] Daniella Caselli, "'The wives of geniuses I have sat with': Body hair, genius and modernity," in *The Last Taboo: Women and Body Hair* ed. Karin Lesnik-Oberstein (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007): 19. Proquest ebrary. Accessed 24 May 2016.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Caren Kaplan, "The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Critical Practice," in *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* eds. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 148.

Examining the nuances of the connections between gender and gentrification in their social, historic and spatial specificities is one way of tracing these circuits of power. Looking at the *Vandals* through their location in the gentrified neighbourhoods of the Plateau and Mile End, the *Vandals* emerge as symbols of female agency, transforming the built environment into places of feminist resistance. The space that MissMe creates with her female body is just as much a part of her practice as the wheat-pastes that she creates.

Conclusion

MissMe's *Vandals* transform places into feminist spaces. In the context of the gentrified neighbourhoods of the Plateau and Mile End, the *Vandals* accumulate meaning through site-specificity, feminist visual imagery, and encounters with viewers. A close look at the socio-spatial particularities of the neighbourhoods in which I observed the *Vandals* deepens the connection between these characters and Montréal. Placed on a corner of mostly cafés and boutiques, the Laurier *Vandal* interacts with space to highlight the ways in which that area changes in women's mental maps of the city at night. On avenue Casgrain, an unknown artist glued a wooden block to the pubis of the *Vandal,* and created a platform within which to discuss normative beauty standards. MissMe accomplishes her "Artful Vandalism" unseen and anonymously: the *Vandals* occupy space and mark her trajectory through the city.

In Montréal, MissMe is not alone in her feminist claims to space through street art. Harpy, whose moniker refers to a creature with a woman's head and a bird of prey's body, wheat-pastes illustrations of young women in nineteenth century dress with anarchist statements such as "Fuck Yoga. Smash the State!" in protest to gentrification in Montréal.[173] Lilyluciole wheat-pastes black-and-white photographic portraits of women overlaid with painted flowers, hummingbirds and geometric shapes.[174] Starchild Stela creates doll-like characters in pastel colours, often accompanied by aggressive feminist and anti-rape culture slogans such as "Cats Against Cat-Calls!" and "Think Critically or Die Tryin'".[175]Swarm's practice protests colonial violence through street art: in 2014, the artist created a series for the project *Decolonizing Street Art: Anti-Colonial Street Artists Convergence*[176] that featured wheat-pasted images of missing and murdered Indigenous women Loretta Saunders, Cheyenne Fox, and Tina Fontaine, framed by

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[173] "Why Harpy?/ Harpies have wings (they can fly!)/ Also, they turned against the Gods. / Also, gentrification is boring." "About Harpy," *Cargo Collective,* accessed August 18, 2016. http://cargocollective.com/harpy/About-Harpy ; a blog post on Harpy in the context of gentrification and the 2013 student strike in Montréal: Cindy Milstein, "The (Street) Art of Stirring Things Up, Montreal, Night 66," *Outside the Circle,* accessed August 18, 2016. https://cbmilstein.wordpress.com/2012/06/29/the-street-art-of-stirring-things-up-montreal-night-66/

[174] "LilyLuciole-Bio," *Women Street Artists,* accessed August 18, 2016. http://www.womenstreetartists.com/lilyluciole#/id/i8388425 ; Lilyluciole's photo stream, "Lilyluciole," *Flickr,* accessed August 18, 2016. https://www.flickr.com/people/lilyluciole/.

[175] Jessica N. Pabòn includes Starchild Stela in her chapter on gender and street art. Pabòn, "Ways of Being Seen," 84-86; Pabòn's interview with Starchild Stela: "Interview with Stela," by Jessica N. Pabòn, *Jessica N. Pabòn: Feminist Scholar, Feminist Mother,* March 21, 2013, https://jessicapabon.com/2013/03/21/interview-with-stela/

[176] More information on the project: "Decolonizing Street Art: Anti-Colonial Street Artists Convergence (August 22 to September 3,)" *Solidarity Across Borders,* accessed August 18, 2016. http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/en/decolonize/decolonizing-street-art-convergence.

heart-shaped funeral wreaths.[177] Finally, Zola's characters, their faces hidden by balaclavas, hooded sweatshirts, and bandannas, evoke anarchy and revolution.[178] Thus, MissMe belongs to a cohort of radical, politicized street artists within Montréal.[179]

If, as Grosz asserts, the body and the city are connected through a porous interface that is the site of a constant exchange of different social processes,[180] then the works of Mauve, Lacy and Export function as a blip, a blockage, a momentary standstill in the ebb and flow that draw attention to the inherently patriarchal social structure of the city. The site-specific urban interventions produced by these artists, while not permanent, ephemerally subvert and disrupt the symbolic order of architecture to suggest feminist space in the spatial imagination of the viewer. Today, feminist street art continues this tradition of creating transient feminist space within the city through asserting a feminist presence through images and the movement of their female bodies through space.

MissMe's *Vandals* and the interventions of Mauve, Lacy and Export are material, visual and spatial signifiers of feminist space. Further, these forms of artistic production make clear the role of sexual difference in experiencing the city. The continuity from second-wave feminist urban interventions is evident through the wheat-pasted image of MissMe's female body. The debt owed to second-wave feminist artists by feminist street artists manifests itself spatially, both in the placement of the *Vandal* in urban space and the space that is created by MissMe in the circulation patterns created through her street art practice. Since street artists put up their work at night, MissMe's *Vandals* are marks of resistance in an urban space that becomes inhospitable to

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[177] In May 2014, the Royal Canadian Police released a study of reported incidents of missing and murdered Indigenous women across Canada: "Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview" *Royal Canadian Mounted Police,* accessed August 18, 2016, http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/mmaw-faapd-eng.htm ; a video on Swarm's series for *Decolonizing Street Art:* "ITW # 5 – SWARM," Youtube video, posted by "Decolonizing Street Art," uploaded September 1, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfQtnCwc_jk.

[178] Zola's Tumblr: "ZOLA: Anti-oppressive street art in Montréal, unceded Kanien'kehà: ka & Anicinape Territories," *Tumblr,* accessed August 18, 2016. http://zolamtl.tumblr.com/ ; In 2015, Maxime Faure released a short documentary on Zola: Maxime Faure, *Masquée,* from Vimeo, posted by Cinema Politica February 2016, https://vimeo.com/156705855; interview with Zola: Zola, "Global Track Interview: Street Artist Zola Takes a Radical Approach to Her Medium," by Rhiannon Platt, *Complex Magazine,* June 28, 2014, http://ca.complex.com/style/2014/06/global-track-zola.

[179] Starchild Stela, Zola, Swarm and Lilyluciole are all members of a street art collective called *OFFMuralES,* which was conceptualized in protest to Montréal's annual street art festival, Mural Festival, in 2013 and 2014. *OFFMuralEs* promotes "feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonial, anti-corporate street art in Montréal. "OFFMuralES," *Tumblr*, accessed August 18, 2016. http://offmurales.tumblr.com/; Article written about *OFFMuralEs,* featuring interviews with Harpy, Lilyluciole, Starchild Stela and Zola: Hera Chan, "Feminist Art Collective Puts Writing on the Wall: OFFMurales' Ways of Seeing," *McGill Daily,* February 10, 2014, http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2014/02/feminist-art-collective-puts-the-writing-on-the-wall/

[180] Grosz, "bodies – cities," 243.

the safe travel of lone women at night. I do not claim that MissMe's *Vandals* have any tangible, sustained impact on the architecture or design of cities. The *Vandals* are not meant to last: their power lies in their ephemerality. The presence of the female-bodied *Vandal* in Montréal emphasizes the importance in considering sexual difference in discourse about city planning and architecture.

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Figures

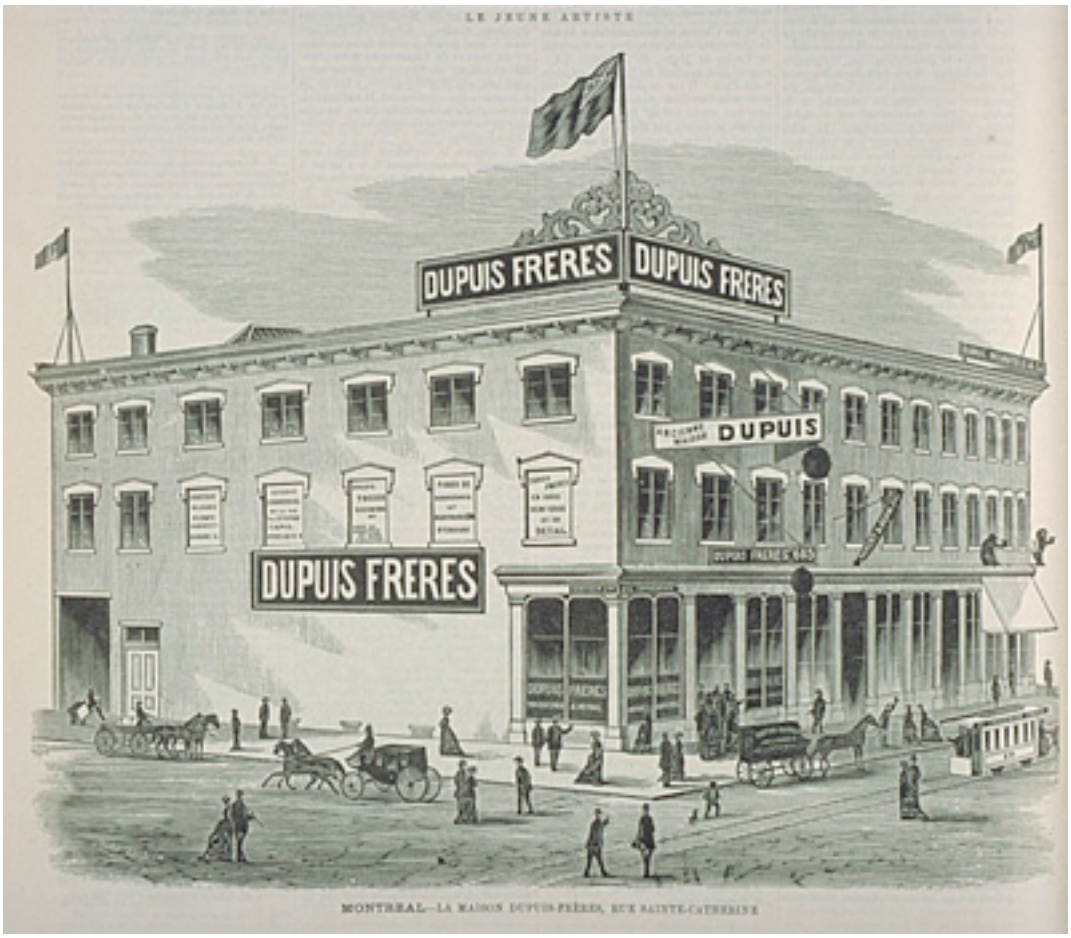

Figure 1 - *Dupuis Frères.* BaNQ, Vieux-Montréal – Archives, Montréal, Québec. Accessed May 2016. http://collections.banq.qc.ca/bitstream/52327/2083392/1/2733386.jpg

Figure 2 – Charney, Melvin. *Lili St. Cyr.* 1972. Montréal Museum of Fine Art, Montréal. In *Montréal, Plus ou Moins.* Montréal: Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, 1972.

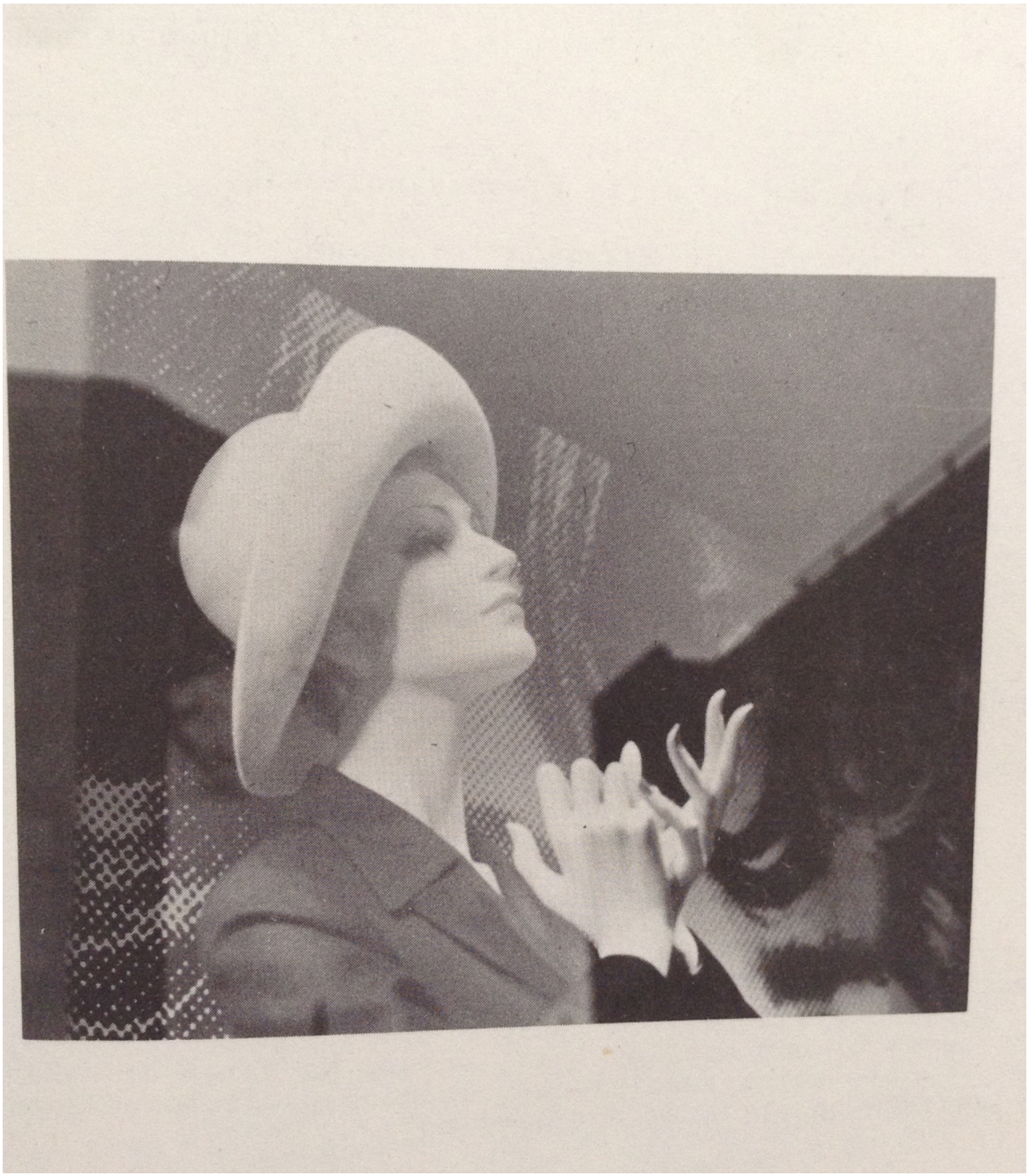

Fig. 3 – Charney, Melvin. *View of Mauve's Dupuis Frères Install.* 1972. Montréal Museum of Fine Art, Montréal. In *Montréal, Plus ou Moins.* Montréal: Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, 1972.

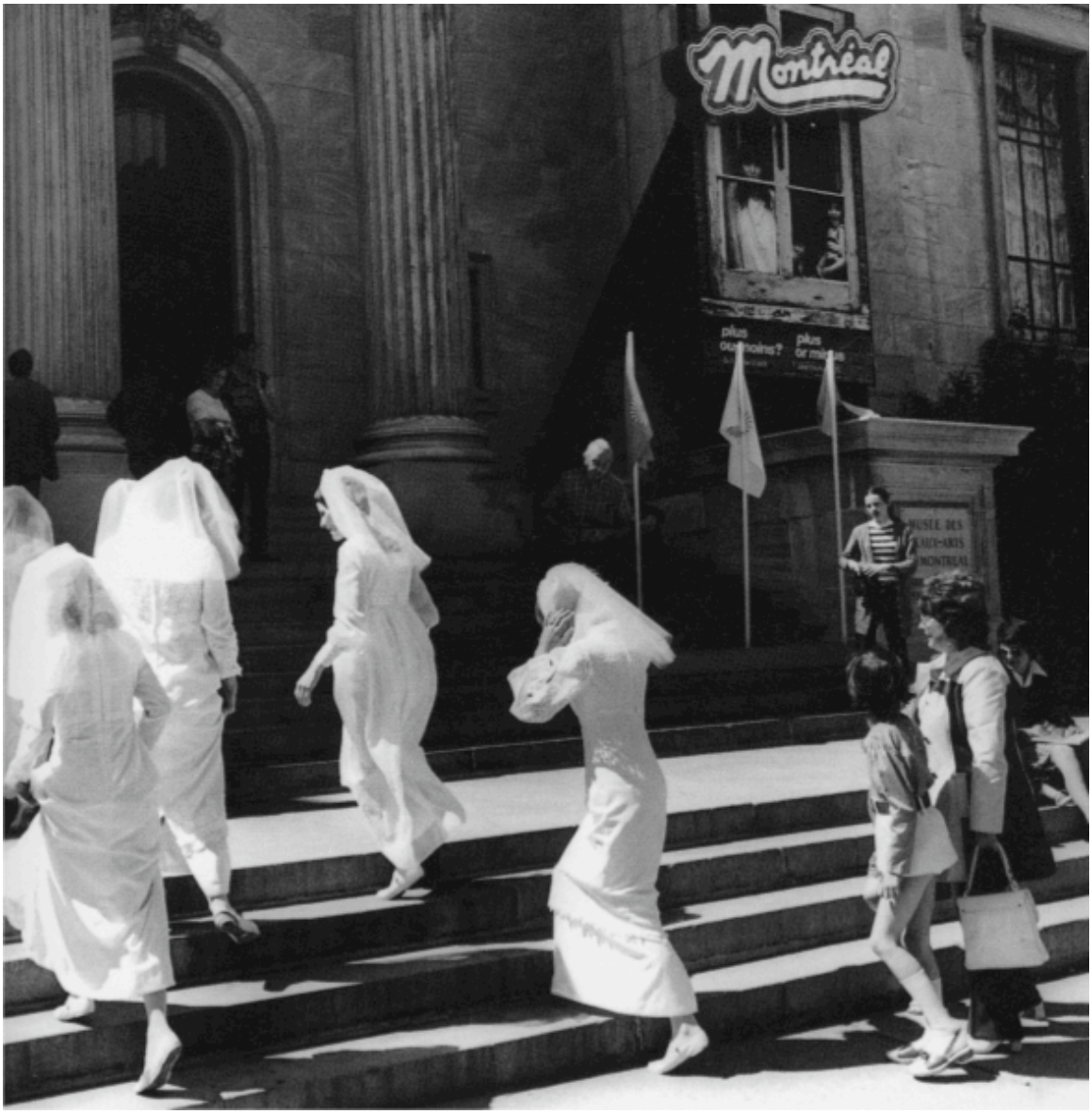

Figure 4 – Koro, Henri. *Mauve Performance.* June 11, 1972. In Déclics: Art et Société. St. Laurent, Québec: Fides, 1999.

Figure 5 – Laderman Ukeles, Mierle. *Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks, Maintenance Outside.* Wadsworth Atheneum. In One Place After Another. MIT Press: Massachusetts, 2004.

Figure 6 – Laderman Ukeles, Mierle. *Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks, Maintenance Outside.* Wadsworth Atheneum. In One Place After Another. MIT Press: Massachusetts, 2004.

Figure 7 – Laderman Ukeles, Mierle. *Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks, Maintenance Outside.* Wadsworth Atheneum. In One Place After Another. MIT Press: Massachusetts, 2004.

Figure 8 – Karras, Maria. *In Mourning and In Rage.* 1977. Suzanne Lacy's artist website. Accessed October 2015. http://www.suzannelacy.com/early-works/#/in-mourning-and-in-rage-1977/

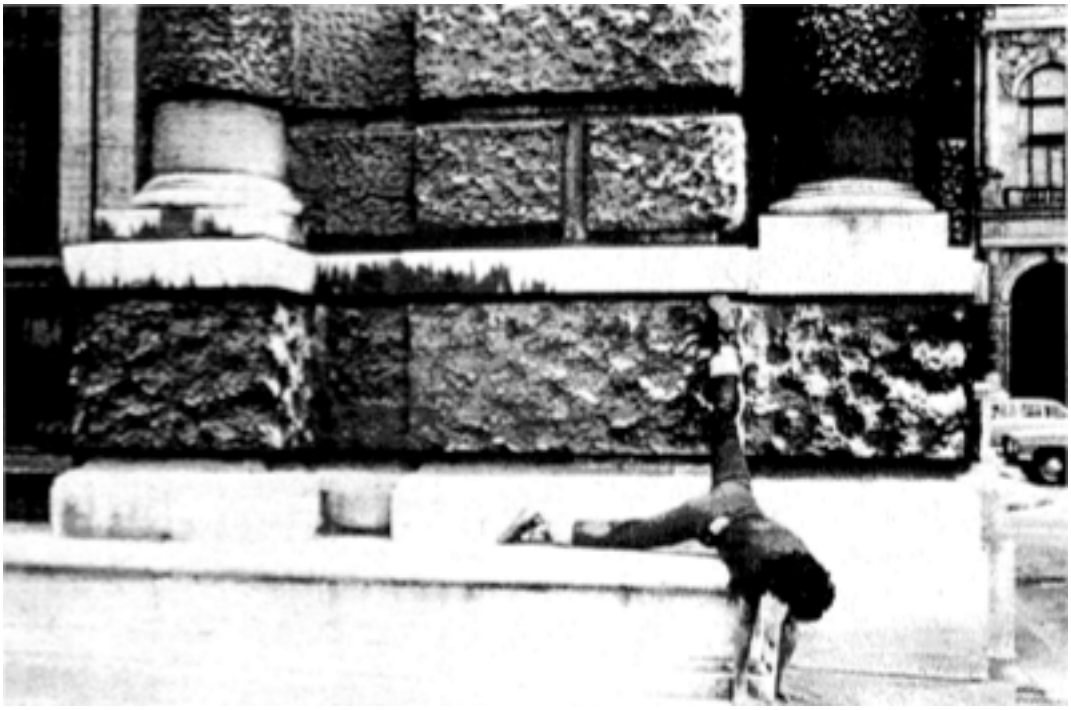

Figure 9 – Export, Valie. *Fit Into,* 1976. In "The Uses of Sidewalks: Women, Art and Urban Space, 1966-1980." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2008.

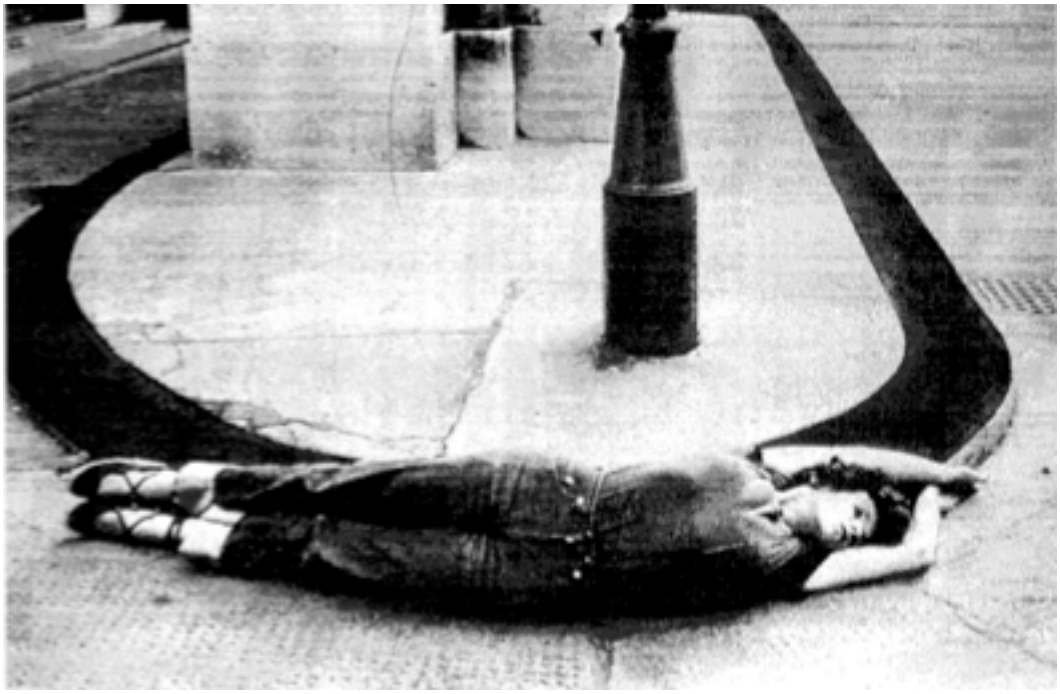

Figure 10 – Export, Valie. *Encirclement,* 1976. In "The Uses of Sidewalks: Women, Art and Urban Space, 1966-1980." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2008.

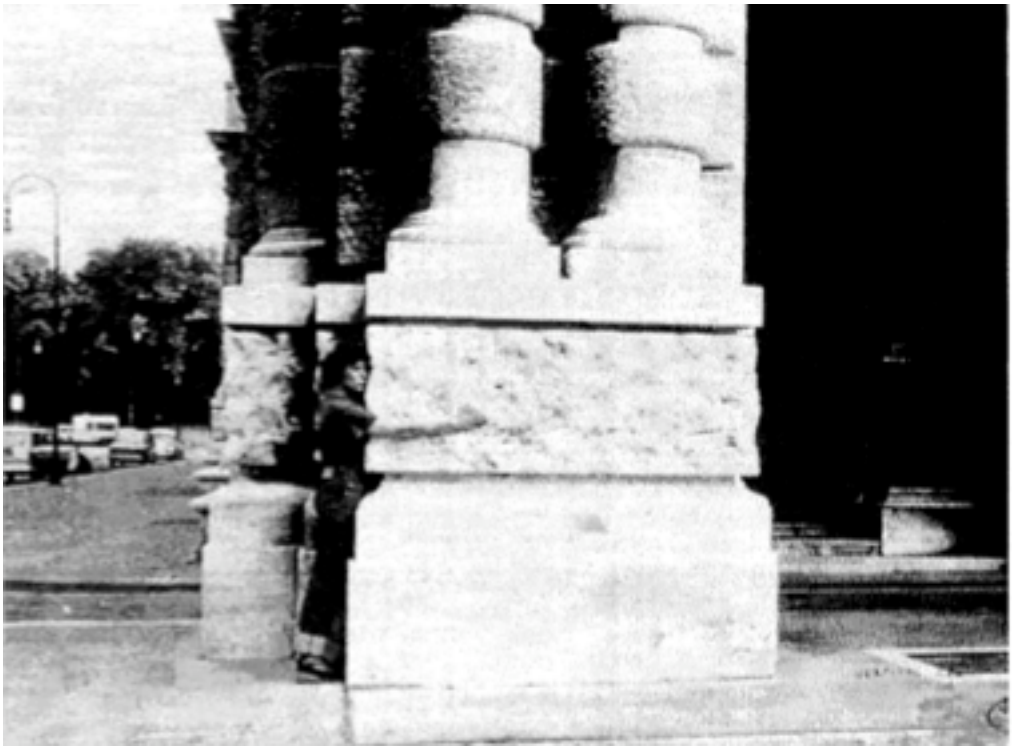

Figure 11 – Export, Valie. *Vertical Gel,* 1976. In "The Uses of Sidewalks: Women, Art and Urban Space, 1966-1980." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2008.

Figure 12 – Export, Valie. *Touch Cinema,* 1968. In "The Uses of Sidewalks: Women, Art and Urban Space, 1966-1980." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2008.

Figure 13 – Lady Pink, *Pink, with Gremlin Character,* 1984. Digital Image. http://www.ladypinknyc.com/trains/

Figure 14 – Fafi, *Fafinette.* Digital Image.
http://65.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_m2yf6cIGjo1rqqucho3_1280.jpg

Figure 15 – Miss Van, *Miss Van.* Digital Image from Pinterest. https://www.pinterest.com/colinlyall/miss-van-art/.

Figure 16 – Miss Van, *Miss Van.* Digital Image from Google Images.

Figure 17 – Shiro, *My Way.* Digital Image from Billi Kid Flickr. http://www.brooklynstreetart.com/theblog/2011/10/27/billi-kid-curates-pongtopia-a-benefit-art-show-manhattan-ny/

Figure 18 – Cake, *Portrait.* Digital Image. http://streetartnyc.org/blog/2012/05/30/speaking-with-cake/

Figure 19 – Cake, *Portrait.* Digital Image. http://streetartnyc.org/blog/2012/05/30/speaking-with-cake/

Figure 20 – Cake, *Portrait.* Digital Image. http://www.brooklynstreetart.com/theblog/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/brooklyn-street-art-WEB-cake-living-walls-albany-3-web.jpg

Figure 21 – Cake, *Portrait.* Digital Image. http://www.25thcenturyyy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Cake-Albany.jpg

Figure 22 – Cake, *Portrait, Woman and Child.* Digital Image.
http://www.25thcenturyyy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Cake-Albany.jpg

Figure 23 – Magrela, *Magrela.* Digital Image from Google Images. http://graffiti.fatcap.com/4168/opct_a07ddbf8a3070a75de13d5f519729a6c.jpg

Figure 24 – Magrela, *Magrela.* Digital Image from Pinterest. https://www.pinterest.com/pin/495888608945034081/

Figure 25 – Magrela, *Magrela.* Digital Image from Google Images. http://payload.cargocollective.com/1/0/633/47156/magrela_sao-paolo_4.jpg

Figure 26 – Magrela, *Magrela.* Digital Image from Google Images. https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/3c/6c/d0/3c6cd0b677afcddc3807f0dbba78528a.jpg

Figure 27 – MissMe, *Saint Billie.* Digital Image from Google Images. http://s473932511.online-home.ca/wp-content/uploads/blogger/-NkL5RQBPxyQ/TyHXAGIo8TI/AAAAAAAAGiQ/fNu_R317B2o/s1600/BillieHolliday_0.jpg

Figure 28 – MissMe, *Lady Lie-berty.* Digital Image from MissMe's artist website. http://www.miss-me-art.com/post/58156501197/lady-lie-berty-in-bushwick-brooklyn

Figure 29 – O'Brien, Laura. *Vandal on Saint-Viateur,* 2015. Montréal, Québec.

Figure 30 – MissMe. *Vandal,* 2015. Digital Image. Accessed May 2016. http://www.miss-me-art.com/archive

Figure 31 – MissMe. *Vandal,* 2015. Digital Image. http://www.miss-me-art.com/archive

Figure 32 - Cindy Sherman. *Untitled Film Still # 21,* 1978. Digital Image. Google Images.

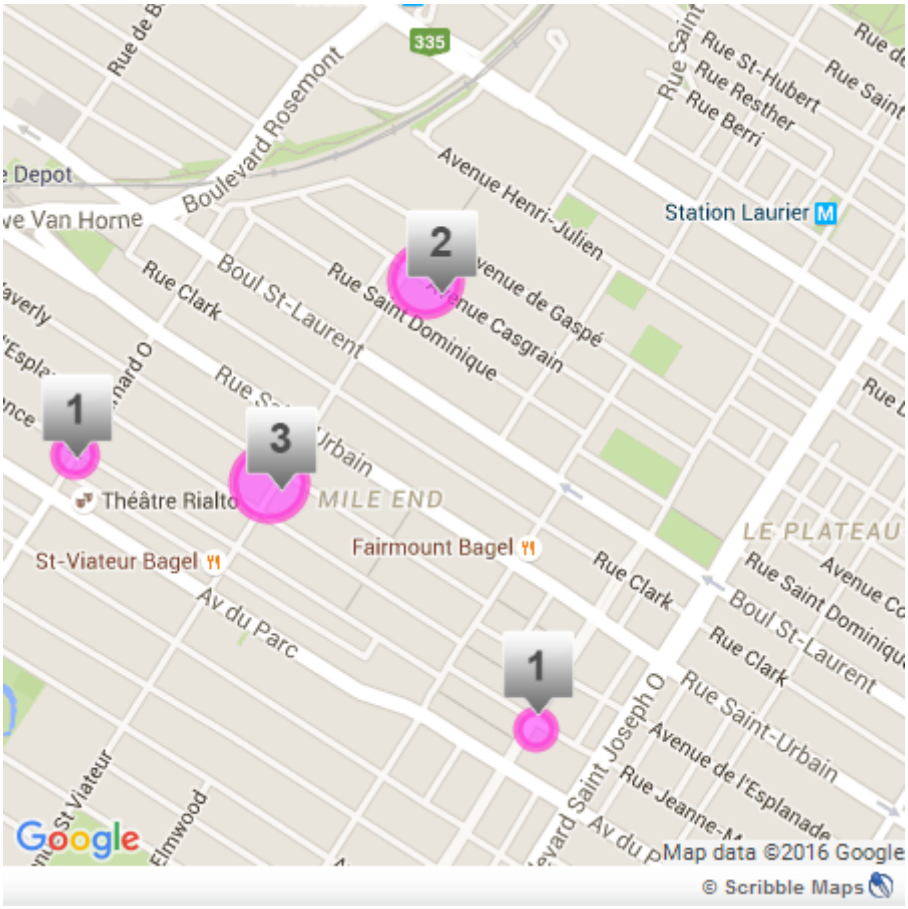

Fig. 33 – O'Brien, Laura. *Map of Mile End Vandals.* Created on Google maps.

Fig. 34 – O'Brien, Laura. *Vandal on Saint-Dominique*, 2015. Montréal, Québec.

Fig. 35 – O'Brien, Laura. *Vandal on Laurier*, 2015. Montréal, Québec.

Fig. 36 – O'Brien, Laura. *Vandal in Alleyway on Saint-Viateur*, 2016. Montréal, Québec.

Fig 37 – O'Brien, Laura. *Vandal on Casgrain and Saint-Viateur,* 2016. Montréal, Québec.

Fig 38 – O'Brien, Laura. *Vandal on Casgrain and Saint-Viateur,* 2016. Montréal, Québec.

Fig 39 – Johnson, Maude. *Vandal on Saint-Viateur/Aesthetics of Cool,* 2015. Montréal, Québec.

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