

Maria Antonietta Trasforini

The Longue Durée
The Making of Biennale Donna in Italy

1. The beginnings and the context

The case of the Biennale Donna di Ferrara is decidedly unusual, if not unique, and not only on the Italian scene. Biennale Donna was established in 1984, and in 2016 the fifteenth edition took place. In the thirty years or so of its existence, the Biennale Donna has showcased the talent, professionalism and creativity of hundreds of Italian and international contemporary or historic women artists to a wide audience.

When Biennale Donna was born in the mid-1980s, the second wave of feminism (known as “new Feminism”) had in part exhausted its more sensational forms of protest, but had not resolved the internal differences concerning its relationship with the ‘institutions’, including those of the art world. The positions of some groups and of many individual exponents (women artists) of Italian feminism in the 1970s and 1980s were strongly anti-institutional on art-related issues,¹ displaying “separatist” tendencies, particularly in the 1970s, with different and often conflicting viewpoints. These ranged from the radical criticism of Culture to the ‘great refusal’ of the art world by Carla Lonzi,² and to positions that were more interlocutory than those of other artists. The debates about the pragmatic (and theoretical) ideas and concept for holding women-only exhibitions ranged, for example, from fears of ghettoisation and reduction of difference to open positions that considered separatist exhibitions as opportunities for visibility and recognition.³

Similar themes were widely debated in Italy when the subject Gender Studies was introduced in universities; this was hindered by the combined effect of the anti-institutional positions of the women’s movement and the historic opposition of the institutions towards them.⁴ Consequently, the situation in Italy in the 1980s was marked by a clear divide between the political culture of feminism with its practices of liberation on the one hand, and the art worlds, art movements, and academic and institutional environments on the other, with artists often finding themselves caught in the cross-fire.

The consequences for research on art and gender were, for example, that studies throughout the 1980s were few and far between (despite the relatively early Italian translation in 1977 of Linda Nochlin’s seminal essay, ‘Why have there been no Great Women Artists?’ from 1971), followed by a timid start which then gathered momentum from the late 1990s onwards.

The conflicts and echoes of the “great debates” of the political and cultural centre of second wave feminism in Rome, in particular, were more muted in the provinces, where more pragmatic political actions were taking place – actions that in theory were less extreme and more open to collaboration with the art world. A good example of this is Ferrara, a city traditionally on the periphery with “quarters of cultural nobility” linked not only to its Renaissance past but also to a present characterised by institutional investment in culture and in particular contemporary art. In this context, the local section of the UDI (Union of Italian Women) was very active. This national women’s movement was founded in the post-war period, and traditionally linked to the left-wing parties with the aim of promoting and defending the rights and emancipation of women. The UDI of the 1980s, radically transformed by second-wave feminism, was committed to responding to new social and cultural demands relating to women’s status, and was able to combine the themes of emancipation and liberation with practical and efficient organisation, deriving from its traditional links with the local area that were typical of a party of the masses like the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in those years.

Feminism, art and institutions

While exhibitions often act as a mechanism for constructing or reinforcing collective identities, they also provide a critical opportunity to question and renegotiate the cultural realities of our places and of our time... in relation to other cultural realities, as Steeds mentions.⁵ This is what happened in the 1970s and 1980s in Europe and the United States when the organisation of important exhibitions devoted to women artists became the first public channel for establishing a ‘new history of art’; this was aimed at acknowledging the erasure of many women artists of the past and the effects of gender

inequality in art, as well as constructing a new point of view and a new memory.⁶ The starting point was the founding exhibition, *Women Artists 1550-1950* (Los Angeles Museum of Arts, 1976 – translated in 1979 as *Le grandi pittrici, 1550-1590* (Feltrinelli, Milan).

The retrieval and rediscovery action accompanying what had already taken place and what was happening elsewhere led to some important exhibitions on women artists also appearing on the Italian art scene in the 1970s and 1980s.⁷ Romana Loda,⁸ distancing herself to some extent from the debate current in Italian feminism on art, separatism and radical militancy⁹ and virtually on her own, challenged the misogynistic world of Italian galleries by mounting women-only exhibitions in the 1970s.¹⁰ By presenting the Italian public with international and Italian exponents such as Gina Pane, Marina Abramovic, Niki de Saint-Phalle, Annette Messager, Valie Export, Ketty La Rocca, Lygia Clark, Rebecca Horn, Suzanne Santoro and many others, Romana Loda set in motion a comprehensive exploration of themes around body art, sexual identity, cultural subordination and the sexual exploitation of women. Similar choices that were radical, though “moderate”, were typical of the curatorial and artistic work of Mirella Bentivoglio, who in 1978 curated an exhibition as part of the Venice Biennale titled *Materializzazione del linguaggio* (Materialisation of Language)¹¹ with 80 women artists exhibiting in a gender event that was extremely unusual in the context of Venice Biennales.¹²

Finally, in 1980 Lea Vergine curated the seminal exhibition *L'altra metà dell'avanguardia* (*The Other Half of the Avant-garde*) shown first in Milan, then in Rome and Stockholm. This exhibition on the presence of women in the historical avant-garde movements marked a significant turning-point not only in art history and criticism but also in the media, due to its great success with the public. Almost as if she were making a connection between these events, Lea Vergine – who had never announced that she was a feminist – described how a visit to the exhibition *Magma* in 1975 curated by Romana Loda had inspired her embryonic idea for *L'Altra Metà dell'Avanguardia*.¹³

In those years (and later on) alongside these events there were more complex initiatives with small and large women-only exhibitions.¹⁴ In this environment that was evolving but also experiencing moments of stagnation, the first Biennale Donna was held in Ferrara, which at the time was only a limited initiative and not yet called Biennale Donna. It had emerged following a proposal made in October 1983 by some women in UDI's Ferrara branch to Franco Farina, the forward-looking director of the Palazzo dei Diamanti, home of the city's Modern and Contemporary Art Galleries. The idea of idea ‘organising a review around the presence of women in art today’ for 8 March 1984 (International Women's Day) was well received by the museum's director, who asked the art historian and critic Marilena Pasquali to curate the exhibition. The event was repeated with the same title on 8 March in 1986 and 1988, laying the foundation for institutional collaboration (on funding and organisation) between Palazzo dei Diamanti and the UDI, which was a precursor to the kind of event that Biennale Donna would become. After the third show in 1988 the Biennale Donna was formed, including the UDI women who had proposed the three exhibitions and others from outside the organisation who had been invited to participate. This is how a ‘gender’ and ‘de facto’ institution came into being (without any formal charter) which aimed to promote the visibility of contemporary women artists, raise their profile, recognise their talent and professionalism and rehabilitate forgotten women artists of the past, in a bid to counter the significant fragility of the social space of women in art.

Generation, organisation and urban culture

What made the establishment and resilience of the Biennale Donna possible in the turbulent and unstable context that characterised the transition from feminism to post-feminism in Italy in the 1990s? In my opinion, there were at least two reasons for the Biennale Donna phenomenon: one was a generational/cultural factor and the other a cultural/environmental one.

The first factor is generational, and by generation I mean individuals who share or have shared a historical and social experience that influenced their choices and behaviour, thereby generating a collective identity.¹⁵ The women who started the Biennale Donna were part of the same generational group – in the mid-1980s they were 35 to 45 years old – and they had a shared experience of cultural and political militancy (feminism and progressive left-wing tendencies). Significantly, they had in common a professional, political and administrative mind-set and background acquired from

positions within cultural institutions or local government. The group that formed the “Committee” in the late 1980s consisted of a small number of women from various backgrounds: those active in institutional policy, professional women in the arts and intellectuals – all with a history of political and/or feminist militancy and/ or from the intelligentsia of the local and left-wing middle class. It is likely that this singular melting-pot of characteristics is the reason for the long-standing relationship capable of producing consensus on values and a shared project. The generational factor was strengthened by the pragmatic and efficient structure of the local UDI, which became the logistical and organisational focus of the projects.

The cultural/environmental factor is represented by the city of Ferrara, a unique place in the Italian landscape. Ferrara saw relatively little industrial development and the economy was based largely on agriculture, with a history of large landed estates and farm worker revolts. During the post-war period the city was somewhat isolated from the rest of the country, but it gradually opened up due to its great cultural ambitions. Continually governed by left-wing parties starting in the post-war period, from the mid-1960s the municipal authorities began to invest heavily in the cultural industry promoting art, music and the theatre, and seeing culture not only in terms of development, but also for its economic benefits.¹⁶ This gave rise to a policy that brought together art and culture in a medium-sized city, but which was – and would be – typical of cities of much greater prestige.¹⁷

Ferrara was one of the few Italian cities where, since the 1960s due to significant public funding, contemporary art was promoted by the most important public art gallery, Palazzo dei Diamanti, which was directed by Franco Farina for thirty years. Between 1963 and 1993, Farina mounted over 900 small and large exhibitions of international acclaim, many of which already included women artists. Right from the start the Biennale Donna exhibitions were set within and funded by the innovative “cultural container” of Palazzo dei Diamanti, and since then they have been organised using its technical and management structure.

So Biennale Donna began to take shape in an urban context of synergies, production and cultural initiatives in which it was neither a fringe event, nor an unusual one. From its very early days it was funded by local government (the Municipal and Provincial authorities), and more recently with money from Regional government as well as funding mostly from local private sponsors. The way it was funded was not always the same, and was decided for each new exhibition. Since 1998 it has also been supported by the Ministry for Equal Opportunities. Since about 2005, budget cuts and financing difficulties at local and regional level have partly resulted in a reduction of funding for the Biennale Donna as well, with knock-on effects on planning and organising events.

Periodisation, exhibitions and the organisational model

Has Biennale Donna changed over its thirty-year lifetime, and if so, how? It was inevitable that it would undergo some transformation since its inception, and in my opinion there are three separate periods in its lifetime that are roughly equivalent to the three decades of its history.

The first period is the discovery of women artists and of moderate feminism, with the focus mainly on Italy (1984-1994).

The second relates to collective work, consolidation of the project and a focus on the international scene (1996-2006).

The third, since 2008, covers the last four Biennales and explores the thematic and political work of women artists in a global context.

Despite the changes that have occurred, some key elements have remained almost the same, ensuring a continuity of image, cultural marketing and professional management. The organisational and productive model of Biennale Donna has created its own recognisable public identity, with repeated “technical” decisions that can be summarised as follows: the production of a print catalogue with the same format for every exhibition, with an English translation since 2002; the creation of a logo which has been reworked but still reflects the original form; a recently constructed website with a detailed description of each event;¹⁸ the choice of the same exhibition period each year, now always between April and June; the same exhibition space, i.e. the PAC (Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea); a professional press office which, for every event, organises and manages the advertising campaign and produces a final press review; and finally, promotion of other events running alongside the exhibition (debates, talks,

films, secondary school visits). These essential services have been maintained, despite budget cuts.

The first period: the rediscovery of women artists and moderate feminism (1984-1994)

The early stages were marked by a sense of passionate urgency to show and document the presence, creativity and professionalism of contemporary women artists and by activity in research, rediscovery and appreciation which, from the fourth exhibition (in 1990) onwards, became increasingly collaborative, autonomous and with the involvement of several people.

The director of the Palazzo dei Diamanti gave the task of curating the first three events to women art critics and historians in agreement with the early founders of the UDI. These exhibitions were collectives, with the title *Figure dallo sfondo (Figures from the Background)* which was used for the first three (in 1984, 1986 and 1988) and underlined the political and cultural continuity of the project.

The first exhibition, curated by Marilena Pasquali, comprised 34 women artists, some of whom were already well known and who were to become famous nationally and internationally in later years: Carla Accardi, Carol Rama, Titina Maselli, Mirella Bentivoglio, Grazia Varisco and Nanda Vigo. Romana Loda was tasked with organising the second one,¹⁹ for which she referenced her seminal exhibition *Magma (1975-1977)* and presented a new wave of women artists, bringing a rapidly changing environment up to date. The third event (in 1988) was entrusted to two art historians and critics, Dede Auregli and Cristina Marabini, and showcased a double collective of young Italian and international women artists. However, in each of these three shows the feminist positions, though practised, were only hinted at, rather than proclaimed.

In these early years, there were other small shows devoted to a single artist or theme that ran alongside the main exhibition.²⁰ This composite formula consisted of small catalogues, various curators and complex tasks of coordination, organisation and research in addition to all the work for the main exhibition. This formula was eventually dropped after 1992.

The wide-ranging collective of 1990 focused on many local women artists active in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which was also a real turning-point: it was the first one managed by the Committee, which had been established the year before, and which had by this time achieved autonomy and security compared to previous events, while laying the foundation for an operation that would remain almost unchanged.

In particular, once the Committee had been formed, both the language and the theoretical frame of reference became more explicitly inspired by feminism and by a collective philosophy based on relationships. In 1994, for example, in the presentation of the Sixth Biennale which looked at women artists in Italy from 1900 to 1940, the Committee stated that this was:

‘the fruit of relations and relationships of a group of women. We believe that a work of art always creates a relationship between the maker and the viewer, between inner thoughts and the external space where it is displayed, between the space of time and the change that it announces, between the space-time in which it was produced and the here and now.’²¹

This exhibition was, in effect, a significant collaborative work with a catalogue containing no less than eight essays on the three sections of the exhibition: the first was devoted to Italian women artists from 1900 to 1940 (curated by Anna Maria Fioravanti Baraldi), the second to **artist's books produced by women artists** (by Francesca Mellone and Vittoria Surian), and the third part which consisted of a video by Lola Bonora and Anna Quarzi analysing the feminist art scene in Italy (1900-1940).

The only exception during the first period to the collective exhibition format (i.e. various women artists on display) was in 1992, when the event focused on costume designer Franca Squarciapino, who had won an Oscar in 1991 for the costumes from the film *Cyrano de Bergerac* and a parallel exhibition which also ran on the Italian film director Francesca Archibugi.

The second period: consolidation and international exploration (1996-2006).

In the second period the Biennale followed a format in terms of both direction and operation that was by now well established. For each exhibition the Committee

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Also was the second section art books about women artists or artists' books produced by women artists – ie graphic works in book form.

would plan and decide far in advance what the theme of the exhibition was to be, then based on the theme chosen, decide on the most suitable formula to curate it. In this period one or more external curators or consultants were brought in, usually working with an internal curator.

From a planning perspective, the project had become quite wide-ranging – alternating collective exhibitions with one-woman shows from Italian artists – and it was no longer just the international aspect which was extended – as the exhibition itself now encouraged new research on gender and art.²² All these exhibitions involved a great deal of collaboration, ranging from a catalogue with several essays (in some cases as many as nine or ten) to the production of thematic video essays – today important records of the voices of women artists, writers and art historians.²³ At international – and in part national – level, the presence of women artists was now becoming more widely accepted²⁴ and the exhibitions held in those years had two main objectives: to inform the Italian public about women artists well known internationally but far less so in Italy, and to explore specific and experimental aspects of the arts in twentieth century Italy.

The Seventh Biennale in 1996 on *Vanessa Bell & Virginia Woolf “Disegnare la vita”* (Vanessa Bella and Virginia Woolf – Designing Life) was a large monographic exhibition devoted to Bell (and included 58 works, with texts and photographs of the Bell family and Woolf), and it introduced an international perspective that would also run through later exhibitions. Running alongside the exhibition was a programme of research, a conference on the environment and times of Vanessa and Virginia,²⁵ the production of a video and a tribute to Virginia Woolf by some contemporary women artists with site-specific installations inspired by Woolf’s *Stanza tutta per sé (A Room of One’s Own)*.

After the 1991 event, due to internal differences the Committee lost some members who had been present right from the start and acquired a few new ones; from this time on a small stable group was formed, which was to remain unchanged until 2014. The stability of this phase was also due to the relative stability of institutional funding which, at least until 2006, safeguarded the more complex initiatives and the involvement of external experts in curating the exhibitions.

In 1998 a bold specialist exhibition was arranged showcasing 38 women artists active in the verbal and visual avant-garde movements of the 1970s in Italy, with the title *Post-Scriptum. Artiste in Italia fra parola e immagine (Post-Script – Women Artists in Italy Between Word and Image)*. This was curated by Mirella Bentivoglio and A.M. Fioravanti from the Committee, with a weighty catalogue and two research videos – an event that was very successful.

In 2000 the Biennale returned to the format of a one-woman show, this time a tribute to Carol Rama, one of the most important Italian women artists of the twentieth century, long ignored at home and better known abroad. The exhibition was curated by Vittoria Coen with Lola Bonora as internal curator. Carol Rama – who three years later won the Golden Lion career award at the Venice Biennale – took part in a conference in Ferrara dedicated to her and the poet Edoardo Sanguineti. All the Biennale events have provided a concrete opportunity for the public to get to know the invited artist or artists, who are often present at the official opening or at other parallel events.

In 2002 an unusual exhibition sought to explore the blurred boundaries between art and craft – an area where so many creative women work and have worked and the exhibition attempted to remove any sense of the strict codes of artist’s gender or hierarchical classifications. This event focused on Italian and foreign designers (103 were showcased) with a fashion-conscious title that reflected the variety of works on display: *Dal Merletto alla Motocicletta. Artiste/Artigiane nell’Italia del Novecento (From Lace to Motorbikes – Women Artists and Artisans in 20th Century Italy)* and was curated by Anty Pansera and Tiziana Occeppo.

The next event in 2004 was designed around the exchanges and spatial-cultural movements of some important contemporary women artists, including Louise Bourgeois, Marina Abramovich and Kiki Smith²⁶ with the title *Andata e ritorno: Artiste contemporanee tra Europa ed America (There and Back: Contemporary Women Artists Between Europe and America)*. This was curated by Committee member Lola Bonora. Here, as in the 1992 exhibition on costume designer Squarciapino, there was a related show, an exhibition by Patty Smith, *Strange Messenger. L’arte di Patti Smith*.²⁷ Patty Smith’s drawings focused on the 9/11 World Trade Center attack and this was organised

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in collaboration with the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Patty Smith was present at the opening in Ferrara; there was also a poetry reading and a very well attended concert.

While the 2004 exhibition explored artists from a western cultural perspective, Emanuela De Cecco who curated the 2006 event *Passaggi a Sud Est, Sguardi di artiste tra storie memorie attraversamenti* (Travelling South-East – Perspectives of Women Artists Between Stories Memories and Crossings) attempted to change this. The focus was travelling south-east over land (recalling the 2002 film by Ulrike Ottinger), and it addressed the theme of travel as transformation. De Cecco selected eight artists: Tacita Dean, Gülsün Karamustafa, Daniela Kostova, Laura Matei, Margherita Morgantini, Ulrike Ottinger, Joanna Rajkowska and Nasrin Tabatabai. In the work selected, the artists presented their work as witnesses to, and protagonists of, the irreversible crossing of new territories following the fall of the Berlin Wall, and new contradictory spatial and mental geographies.

The main feature of this period is summed up in the presentation of *Andata e ritorno. Artiste contemporanee tra Europa e America* where, using a pragmatic language that had clearly abandoned the early more rhetorical tone, a solid and concrete appraisal of the Biennale Donna was made, seen by now as a well-oiled and functioning machine:

‘Twenty years of activity, eleven Biennali, 350 women artists, twenty years of projects: this is Biennale Donna. The decision to showcase women artists has responded to the need to stress its specific identity by emphasising the everyday practice of art made up of meetings and debates, in constant dialectic tension. Using an exploratory approach... the Committee of Biennale Donna has investigated and promoted initiatives aimed at critical and cultural stimulus.’²⁸

The third period (2008-2016): thematic containers, standardised offer and globalisation

The third phase, which comprises the last four exhibitions,²⁹ could be said to begin with the event curated by Lola Bonora on Mona Hatoum, an artist not only of international renown but also the symbol of an identity that is inevitably multicultural and globalised. In reality, this exhibition can be seen as a link between the second period we called ‘international’ and the third more ‘generalist’ one, described in the presentation of the 2012 event as: a choice ‘aimed at exploring themes linked to sociocultural, identity, behavioural and geopolitical issues, interpreted through the creativity of some of the most important women’s voices in contemporary art’.³⁰ In fact, the three latest events have preferred the major ‘political and social container themes’, such as violence (*Violence, L’arte interpreta la violenza - Art Interprets Violence*) in 2012 with seven artists from different countries³¹ and parts of the world narrated by the critical voices of some women artists: the Iran of *Memorie velate, Arte contemporanea dall’Iran (Veiled Memories – Contemporary Art from Iran)* in 2010³², or the Latin America of *Silencio vivo (Live Silence)* in 2016, with four artists, three of whom were already very well known.

These four exhibitions are stylistically linked by features that mark a certain standardisation in the design of Biennale events. The first is that the curators, Lola Bonora and Silvia Cirelli, have worked on four events in a row – and the latter is a young curator with professional experience on the international scene who became a member of the Committee in 2015. This formula, which could be called ‘self-sufficient’ (also reflected in the catalogue which, for the last four events has contained only two critical essays) appears only partly justified by budget cuts and the difficulty of finding reliable funding sources compared to previous events. What is discernible is a loss of innovation, which risks aligning Biennale Donna with not with a decent intelligent cultural offer, but one which now tends to promote women artists on the art market. The presentation of the 2016 event, for example, used a more neutral language – even though critical of politics – which was more impersonal and far removed from the (subjective) gender identity that informed research conducted by Biennale Donna :

‘The priority of the Scientific Committee has always been to design exhibitions that would be thought-provoking for visitors, with the awareness that the art world with its many aspects can provide a critical perspective, giving voice to those who do not always have it... The four artists (Anna Maria Maiolino, Teresa Margolles, Ana

*Mendieta and Amalia Pica) are four profound 'voices' that use their works to break silences... Our task has been to collect their voices and give them space and visibility.*³³

Research and critical investigation of issues relating to the presence of women in the arts, whether contemporary or past, in Italy and elsewhere, have informed Biennale Donna's projects since its inception, creating over the years an exclusive phenomenon in the arts, not only on the Italian arts scene but also internationally. The direction it has taken, like other institutions born in the context of the new history of art (museums and institutions focusing on women artists, such as the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, or women librarians and archivists, for example, in the Women's Art Library in London), has aimed to counter the great fragility and precariousness of women artists' social spaces, but also to raise their profile and to create, promote and conserve documentation, information and memories about their work so that it will not be lost and be available in the future.

In many of its events, Biennale Donna has demonstrated a rare capacity for collective and professional work, which – together with a great passion, curiosity and focus on research into contemporary and past women artists and their work – has made them known to a non-specialist public, at the same time producing a valuable heritage of catalogues and videos. The great continuity of the group – which I have called 'the *longue durée*' in the title – as well as strict loyalty to the perspective of gender in art, were the reasons for the uniqueness of the project – but today it still has some unresolved issues which, in my view, risk undermining it.

The first issue – which has some positive aspects – derives from the fact that fortunately exhibitions on women artists are no longer a rare or isolated event in Italy or elsewhere. Even if we know that no victory should ever be taken for granted, the quality of works by women artists and the recognition of these works and their market value are now fairly well established. One benefit has been to make the exhibition offer more substantial and frequent, with high quality and standardised exhibitions, often with secure funding (from both public and private sources³⁴). If Biennale Donna wants to continue to have a recognisable profile, and not just be "any old" exhibition on women artists, it needs to safeguard its profile of research,

innovation and risk, with 'bolder choices, glimpses of the future or at least a more controversial and less reassuring present – in a word it needs to be more "problematic"³⁵ because these are features that in more recent exhibitions seem to be less apparent.

1. M. Seravalli *Arte e femminismo a Roma negli anni Settanta* (Rome: Biblink Editori, 2013) p. 45. see pp. 384-399 and E. De Cecco 'Trame: per una mappa transitoria dell'arte italiana femminile negli anni Novanta e dintorni' in E. De Cecco and G.

Romano *Contemporanee. Percorsi, lavori e poetiche delle artiste dagli anni Ottanta a oggi* (Milan: Costa & Nolan, 2000) pp. 8-28

2. L. Iamurri *Un margine che sfugge. Carla Lonzi e l'arte in Italia 1955-1970* (Quodlibet, Macerata, 2016); L. Iamurri and S. Spinazzè (ed.) *L'arte delle donne nell'Italia del Novecento* (Rome: Meltemi, 2001)

3. Ibid and L. Iamurri 'Questions de genre et histoire de l'art en Italie' in *Perspective*, no.4 (2007) pp. 716-721; J.R. Kirshner 'Voices and Images of Italian Feminism' in C. Butler (ed.) *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (exhibition catalogue) (LA MOCA and Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2007); M. Seravalli *Arte e femminismo a Roma negli anni Settanta* (2013) pp. 43-46 and M.A. Trasforini (ed.) *Donne d'arte. Storie e generazioni* (Rome Meltemi, 2006)

4. L. Iamurri 'Questions de genre et histoire de l'art en Italie' *Perspective* No.4 (2007) p. 718

5. L. Steeds *Introduction: Contemporary Exhibitions: Art at Large in the World*, in L. Steeds (ed.) *Exhibition, Documents of Contemporary Art* (London, Whitechapel Gallery and Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2014) p. 13
6. L. Nochlin 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists' *Artnews* vol. 69, no. 9 Jan 1971 and L. Nochlin 'Starting From Scratch. The Beginnings of Feminist Art' *History in Women's Art Magazine* no. 61 (1994) pp. 6-11; R. Parker and G. Pollock *Old Mistresses* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981)
7. A.Lanzoni 'Women's Art Exhibitions in Italy' in G. Schor *Donna : Avanguardia Femminista negli anni '70 dalla Sammlung Verbund di Vienna*, (Milan, Electa, 2010) pp. 254-255.
8. On the 'moderate' feminism of Romana Loda and her role in the art world in the Seventies, see R. Perna 'Mostre al femminile: Romana Loda e l'arte delle donne nell'Italia degli anni Settanta' in *R/C Ricerche di S/Confine* vol. VI, no.1, (2015) pp. 143-154, p. 143 in www.ricerchedisconfine.info
9. M. Seravalli *Arte e femminismo a Roma negli anni Settanta* (2013)
10. The following exhibitions were curated by R. Loda in the 1970s: *Coazione a mostrare* (Compulsion to Exhibit) (1974), *Magma. Rassegna internazionale di donne artiste* (Magma – International Review of Women Artists) (1975, 1977, 1978), *Altra Misura* (Another Measure) (1976), *Il volto sinistro dell'arte* (The Left Face of Art) (1978).
11. Bentivoglio M., (ed.) *Materializzazione del Linguaggio*, (Venice: Arti visive e architettura, Magazzini del Sale alle Zattere, 1978)
12. See Romana Loda Presentation of the catalogue *Figure dallo sfondo 2. Magma/10 anni dopo*, 2nd Biennale Donna , Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara (8 March-13 April 1986) and Mirella Bentivoglio catalogue in 1998.
13. R. Perna 'Arte Proto-Feminist. Una rilettura delle neoavanguardie italiane degli anni Sessanta' doctoral thesis (Università degli Studi della Tuscia, 2015) And R. Perna 'Mostre al femminile: Romana Loda e l'arte delle donne nell'Italia degli anni Settanta' in *R/C Ricerche di S/Confine* vol. VI, no.1(2015) p. 143. Exhibition publication: L.Vergine *L'altra metà dell'avanguardia* (Mazzotta, Milan; 2nd edition, 2005, Il Saggiatore, Milan. 1980)
14. A.Lanzoni 'Women's Art Exhibitions in Italy' in G. Schor *Donna : Avanguardia Femminista negli anni '70 dalla Sammlung Verbund di Vienna*, (Milan, Electa, 2010) pp. 254-255
15. K. Mannheim *Il problema delle generazioni*, in *Sociologia della conoscenza*, [ed. 1928]. (Dedalo, Bari, 1974) pp. 323-371
16. M.A.Trasforini 'The Immaterial City: Ferrara, A Case Study of Urban Cultural Policy in Italy' in D. Crane, N. Kawashima and K. Kawasaki (ed.) *Global culture: Media, Arts, Policy and Globalisation* (New York: Routledge, 2002) pp. 169-190
17. S. Zukin *The Cultures of Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995)
18. <http://www.biennaledonna.it/home/udinotizie>
19. For the artists present see: <http://www.biennaledonna.it/home/biennale-donna/1986--2-edition>
20. For the satellite exhibitions, see the website of the various exhibitions.
21. *Catalogue of the 6th Biennale Donna , 1994, p.13*
22. For an appraisal, see De Cecco (2000), Iamurri and Spinazzé (2001), Trasforini (2006), Iamurri (2007).
23. The following videos were made for various Biennali curated by Lola Bonora and Anna Quarzi: *Arte scheggiata* (Shards of Art) (1994); *V and V (Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf)* (1996); 1998 *Protagoniste* (Protagonists) (1998); *Il diamante a tre punte* (The Three-pointed Diamond) (including interviews with three of the designers in the exhibition) (2002). In 1998 the *Lettere Scarlatte* (Scarlet Letters) by C.Vuolo and M.A.Trasforini was also made (including interviews with the artists in the exhibition). The videos can be viewed on the website of each Biennale Donnaat: <http://www.biennaledonna.it/home>.
24. Think of the recognition in those years of women artists, for example at the Biennali di Venezia: Carol Rama, Louise Bourgeois, Barbara Kruger, up to the so-called feminist Biennale of 2005 with the presence of the Guerrilla Girls.
25. The conference *Lo sguardo incrociato: incontri, scambi e contaminazioni tra le arti nell'avanguardia delle donne* (*Exchanging glances: meetings, exchanges and*

contamination in the arts in women's avant-garde) organised by the Biennale Donna and the Department of Modern Languages and Literature of the University of Bologna was held on 14 June 1996.

26. The other artists in the exhibition were Angiola R. Churchill, Liliane Lijn and Beverly Pepper.

27. Tapestries by Keiko Ghio in 1984, women architects in 1990, the photographer Paola Agosti in 1992.

28. *Andata e ritorno. Artiste contemporanee tra Europa e America* Catalogue of 11th Biennale Donna, 2004, p. 19.

29. Biennale Donna was suspended in 2014 due to dangerous display structures caused by the earthquake in Ferrara.

30. L. Bonora and S. Cirelli *VIOLENCE. L'arte interpreta la violenza* (2012) p. 13.

31. There were seven contemporary artists in the exhibition: Valie Export, Regina José Galindo, Loredana Longo, Naiza H. Khan, Yoko Ono, Lydia Schouten and Nancy Spero. This event was documented in the video that can be viewed online at:

<http://www.biennaledonna.it/home/violence> (by L. Bonora and C. Ansaloni)

32. The six Iranian artists in the exhibition were Shadi Ghadirian, Shirin Fakhim, Parastou Forouhar, Ghazel, Firouzeh Khosrovani and Mandana Moghaddam.

33. Bonora and Cirelli in *SILENCIO VIVO. Artiste dall'America Latina Ferrara* (Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, 17 April – 12 June 2016) p. 9

34. A good example is the exhibition *La Grande Madre. Donne, maternità e potere nell'arte e nella cultura visiva 1900-2015 (The Great Mother – Women, Maternity and Power in Art and Visual Culture 1900-2015)* curated by M. Gioni (Milan: Palazzo Reale, 2015), promoted by the Comune di Milano and produced by the Fondazione Trussardi.

35. See L. Bonora *Chi siamo? Da dove veniamo? Dove andiamo? Storie, fatti e protagoniste della Biennale Donna a Ferrara* in E. De Cecco (ed.), *Passaggi a Sud Est. Sguardi di artiste fra storie, memorie, attraversamenti* Catalogue of 12th Biennale Donna (Ferrara: Palazzo Massari PAC, 2006), p. 45