

# The Waitresses in the Context

By Marlena Doktorczyk-Donohue

Filled with a naughty sense of play, sprinkled with didactic components in nearly all of today's best conceptual art, rife with Brechtian non-theater absurdist tropes, yet never relinquishing mainstream accessibility or humanist ideals like hope and mutual respect, the Waitress collective sits in history somewhere on its own. The Waitresses remind one of a precocious, gifted child seemingly engaged in wild fun that only time and perspective reveal to be sagacious beyond its years.

In 1977 six women committed to creating Feminist art outside of any academy or white cube came to the realization that they shared a long life experience – years of work at a one of the few jobs available to US women from the 20s to the 70s: waitressing. Laced with a troubling and rather convoluted semiotic that attends women's labor, waitressing included and includes associations with lower class, with servitude, nurturance, and most significantly with what Michel Foucault<sup>1</sup> has called docile, controlled bodies that are not subjects with agency or dignity, but commodities for hire and use.

*"Girl, oh girl, I dropped my fork. . ."*

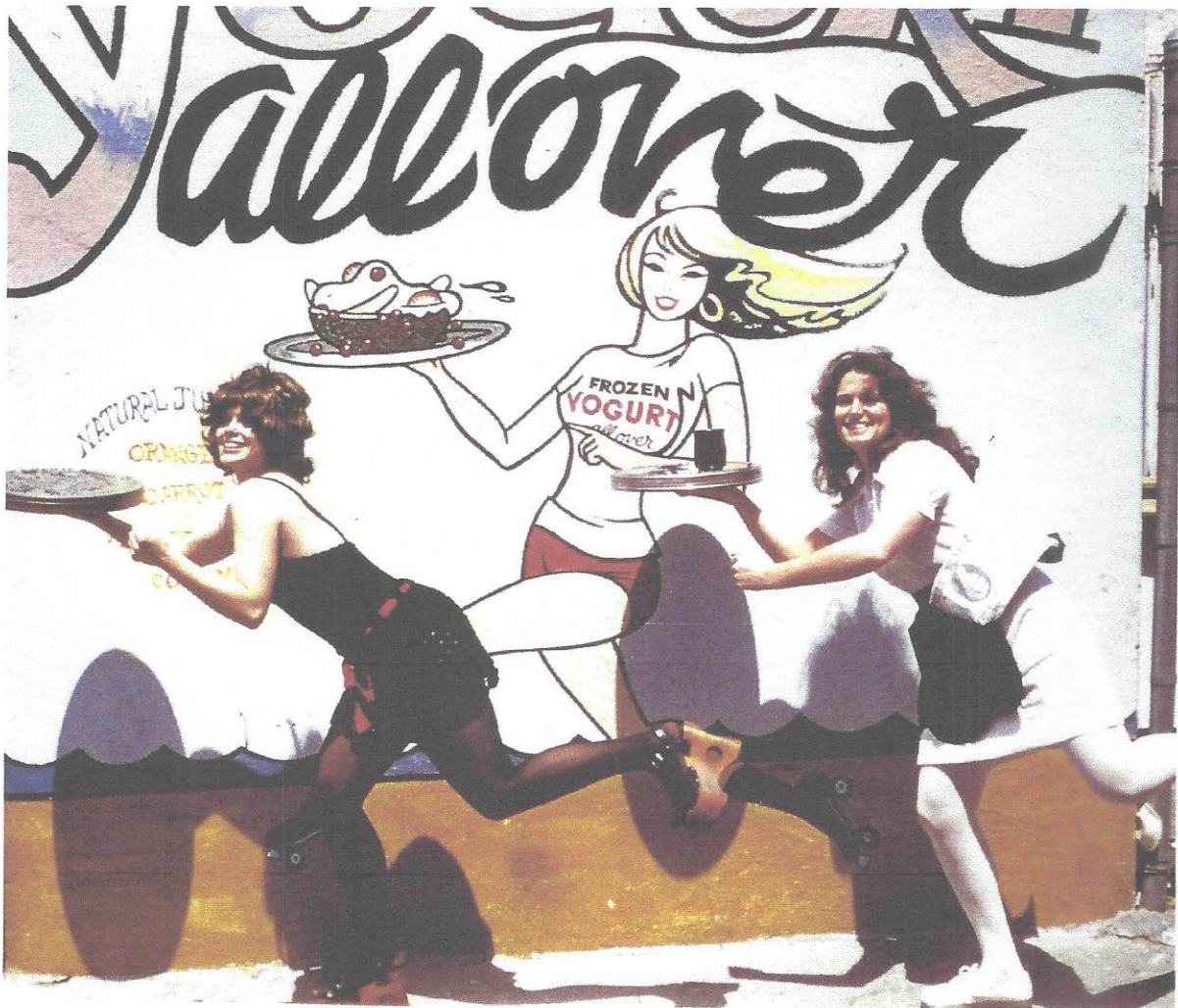
To place the Waitresses in some over-arching art historical context that reaches back to antiquity and forward in time to Post Modern discourses interrogating systems of privilege is fairly easy. Easy because masculinism and woman-as-server is so blatantly writ large across the face of history,

its arts, letters, language and artifacts. Also easy because the theory and practice invoked by this Feminist collective – both by informed intention and potent intuition – exemplifies and anticipates nearly every major inquiry of post modern criticality. Without necessarily naming high intellectual lingo, the collective tapped strategies at the heart of the last thirty years of art discourse; this is not to imply these degree-wielding servers could not "do" academia – indeed, breaking down the patriarchal separation between academic pursuits and real life was a conscious Waitresses goal.

Contextualizing the Waitresses is also a more nuanced task by virtue of the subtle and spunky ways in which this imaginative, forward-thinking collective engaged art historical paradigms in intuitive, quirky, and yes, uniquely feminine ways related to arenas of theory but never identical to any.

Having faced almost two decades of unfair pay, sexual harassment madonna/whore, server/slave, mother/nurturer stereotyping, the artists Jerri Allyn and Anne Gauldin founded The Waitresses in 1978 – in the throes of a Feminism that had not yet found itself fully. For some anchoring perspective one might recall that this is one scant year after the end of US involvement in Vietnam, one scant year after the decision by professionals to remove the word "homosexual" from a list of mental illnesses<sup>2</sup>, a year before *The Dinner Party* opened in San Francisco to the horror of "respectable" art critics (Camille Paglia, Hal Foster) and





**Patti Nicklaus and Anne Gauldin, *Ready to Order?***, Venice Boardwalk, in front of Lafayette's Café – site of Breakfast Performance, Venice, CA, April 27, 1978, photo credit: Maria Karras

**Anne Gauldin, *Toxic Waitress***, Suzanne Lacy's performance art course, Feminist Studio Workshop (accredited by Goddard College), Los Angeles, CA, Fall 1977

**Jerri Allyn, *Prostitute***, Unannounced Performance, The Pub, Cliffhouse, and financial district restaurant – three "fern bars" owned by two brothers, San Francisco, CA, September 1975 – May 1976



female museum trustees, who panned the show on the grounds that it was “mere kitsch” and that the display of women’s “private parts” was in some fashion commonplace and offensive.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1978 and 1984, the Waitresses art collective conceived and staged changing public performances adapted to a variety of audiences and real venues – street corner eateries – using the generic waitress role as a perfect socio-psychological-economic-sexual metaphor for the treatment of women throughout society since ancient times. Allyn and Gauldin were eventually joined by Jamie Wildperson, Denise Yarfitz, Leslie Belt, Patti Nicklaus and Chutney Gunderson; over the years of Waitress activity new members came and went and came again, but the pro female, pro equity mission stayed much the same.

The Waitresses’ sensitivity to the millennial metaphor and harsh reality of the female server/waitress stemmed one imagines from members’ exposure to intensive Feminist Studies programming at the Woman’s Building. Jerri Allyn, Waitress co-founder had in fact trained in performative community techniques even earlier with Suzanne Lacy at the San Francisco Institute of Art. But it was a solo performance piece conceived in 1977 by Anne Gauldin that coalesced the group. A math major coming to art against her family’s advice, Gauldin had (like nearly every other Waitress) subsidized art and self discovery by years of mindless, exploitative waitressing.

In ‘77, Gauldin conceived a performance in which, dressed in black, eyes circled in black she feigned pouring toxic spirits for leering men to whom she was forced to pander sexually for the sake of a decent night’s tips. In the enactment, she poured the disease-causing entertainment while exteriorizing her socially sanctioned interior dialogue. As she poured and smiled, she muttered as if speaking thoughts in no fashion related to her actions in the world that she hated the work,

that she wished she might see the sunset (a small pleasure denied to most women forced for reasons of family, school, childcare, poverty to work night shifts).

Co-founder Jerri Allyn had been working previously with the social construction of sexual identity, power and class in Duchamp-ian Rose Selavy send-ups where she embodied the dual-persona of a female prostitute and male flyer pilot driver. Allyn had experienced decades of her own “waitress moments,” so this hit a kindred chord. Gradually other members gravitated to the circle, until six women coalesced, all of whom shared decades of thankless waitressing. Extensive brainstorming and rigorous research led in 1978 to the first Waitress event, *Ready To Order*. The work was a series of carefully designed vignettes and impromptu actions in actual cafes, informative often bilingual panels, and other *agit prop* actions like a marching band of Waitresses and sympathizers banging kitchen utensils.

As part of *Ready To Order*, real restaurant goers and food workers in local eateries of L.A. experienced, for example, a performance in which a Waitress, bending and fetching, gathered the “big bucks” (huge faux bills) left by a “male diner,” enacted by another member. Another performance, a Waitress donning a shorter and shorter mini-skirt watched her tips explode; during the skit real male customers got increasingly “involved” as more and more skin appeared. Here the reality of disproportionate power and sex was made tangible and visceral. When *Wonder Waitress* burst on the scene of a corner café to right the wrongs against women servers, to make things just for all, the sense of helplessness and the fantasy of empowerment, though filtered through caricature and humor was nonetheless scathingly on point.

The Waitresses rendered the connection between gender and wealth, sexuality and pay, between agency and choice over our bodies and





**Jamie Wildman-Webber** (center), flanked by two Venice Boardwalk locals, *Ready to Order?*, in front of Lafayette's Café – site of Breakfast Performance, Venice, CA, April 27, 1978, photo credit: Maria Karras



**Anne Gauldin**, *The Malta Project*, collaborative performance with Cheri Gaulke, July 28, 1978, performed in Tarxien Church, Tarxien Temple, and Hypogeum, Paola, Malta.



the lack thereof in a grass roots language and in public venues at a time when these ideas were limited to few feminist “enclaves.” Diner vignettes and street actions often incorporated researched stats on wage inequalities, rates of employee sexual harassment, etc. Advocacy met art met theater met consciousness-raising in the transgressive space of real life. So effective was the Waitresses’ breaking down of boundaries like art versus life, fiction versus reality, artwork versus real work (all oppositions interrogated in Post Modern theory) that often diners believed that the artists were actual waitresses staging a protest on their shift, and they “took sides” accordingly. Esoteric Cagean interactive theater butts up against (pun intended) women’s lib... and the results were magical.

### **The Waitress and Her Art Historical Sisters**

We can trace this loaded lineage of the waitress much further back than the 1920s or the 1970s. Here it fitting to note that Anne Gauldin was creating art related to goddess culture and matriarchy before the Waitresses, and continues to do so today. Gauldin’s early performances on Malta with Feminist artist Cheri Gaulke were done to commemorate one of the earliest pre-historic matriarchal cultures.

In fact the earliest objects of art history and material culture suggest that the female began as a potent, primal (if only speculatively understood) symbol for ideas related to fecundity, to the power of nature and the *giving* of life and sustenance. The Woman of Willendorf, the small carving of “Pregnant Women with Deer” on reindeer horn from Laugerie-Basse circa 14,000 BCE, the female effigies from temples at Catal Huyuk, Turkey; Malta’s goddess effigies, the beautiful snake goddess figurines from Knossos, plus ample forensic anthropol-

ogy suggest eras when entire classes of nobles and priests (far extending the limited role of Greco-Roman female sibyls) were in fact female.<sup>4</sup>

Once the waging of war for territory and property replaced hunting, gathering and reproductive clan-building as a means of survival, once the female became part of tribal property passed from father to husband, objects indicate a switch. Forces of nature and war become rather abruptly associated with stalwart male deities – the god Abu is vegetation; Shamash personifies the sun and heavens. Female consorts play a role in cosmological narratives, but they are not the key players. And as Western and non Western cultures became colonized or Christianized, important female signifiers like Aphrodite, Diana of Ephesus from Turkey, Gaia, Devi, Maitreya, Kali, (all of whom give life, participate in creation, unravel mysteries) are all but lost in masculinist re-castings. The female deity is transformed into goddesses of physical/erotic love, into muses who inspire men to create culture but create none of their own, into side-bar consorts like Hera, who watch passively as powerful mates scan the heavens for younger fare. A more male positioned re-coding of the primeval symbol of the goddess one cannot imagine.

Directly related to the Waitresses is a concomitant male re-invention of female “serving” specifically. The earliest connotations of alchemy, healing, mysticism, procreation, fecundity and assistance come to be gradually grafted onto ideas of passivity and servitude. Tellingly, service also begins to accrue a strong code of erotic availability. As Richard Leppert<sup>5</sup> and others have noted, image upon image of asexual, emotionally controlled, unclad Greek male figures come to be associated with lofty Platonic abstractions like harmony, symmetry, and the classical will for order called *cosmos*.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, partially draped female figures, whose often perfunctory covering reveals

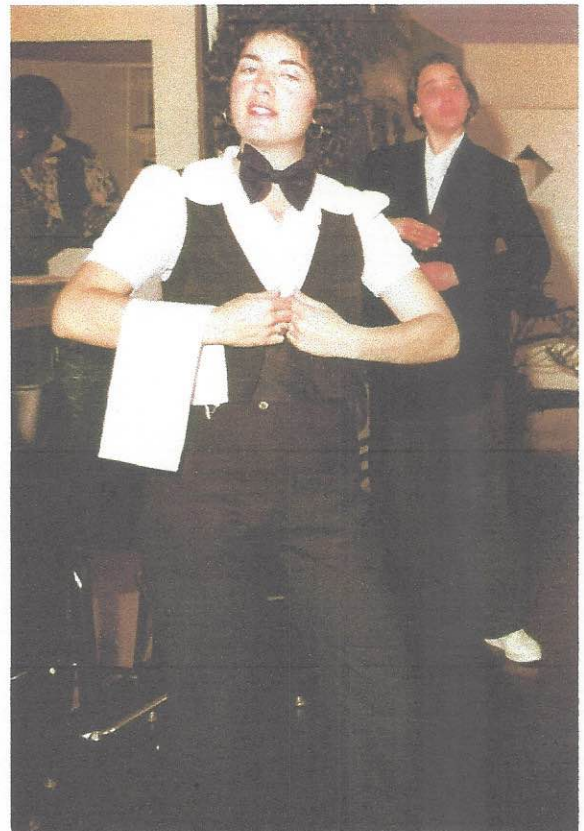




**Jamie Wildman-Webber and Anne Gauldin, *Ready to Order?*, Lafayette's Cafe, Venice, CA, April 27, 1978, photo credit: Maria Karras**

**Denise Yarfitz, *Ready to Order?*, Women's Coffee-house, University of California at Irvine, CA, April 30, 1978**

**Denise Yarfitz and Leslie Belt, *Ready to Order?*, Jett's Cafe & Art Haus, Los Angeles, CA, April 28, 1978, photo credit: Maria Karras**



more than it conceals come to be associated with ideas like decoration, beauty, and surfaces of desire.<sup>7</sup> Here we need only recall the kore lining the passageway to sanctuaries. Unlike the male nudes who approached the gods offering their perfect nakedness as an emblem of “order,” the female kore often extended a hand holding and offering sacred food like a pomegranate. The famous Parthenon caryatids holding up the Erechthium porch on their heads are direct representations of girls chosen to serve, i.e., to carry on their heads ritual baskets filled with offerings in ancient processions.<sup>8</sup> In most cases these early female servers were represented in clinging, nipple-revealing, tummy-hugging garments – the sculptor Phidias’ famous “wet drapery” style noted in even current art history for its “skilled realism” but not well studied for its overtly gendered semiotics.

The suckling Diana, multi-breasted goddess of Ephesus was the daughter of Jupiter and Latona. Latona bore Diana painlessly, then Diana helped her mother deliver her twin, Apollo. This act made Diana the patroness of childbirth, the nurturer and a potent symbol for the giving of life and help. Diana goes through some bizarre permutations of appearance and meaning. In Rome, Diana becomes a beautiful woman and an allegory for “abundance/generosity,” exposing one luscious breast to suckle grown men (Roman relief, Louvre, Paris). In figures found at Capitoline Hill she has been transformed into a rather frightening grotesquery covered with sagging breasts. From the Renaissance on she become a contrivance for Christian “charity,” as in an untitled Fontainebleau portrait of Henry VI’s pregnant mistress with her sister (Louvre, Paris), where the mistress gets one taut nipple tweaked erotically by the other female. In David’s *Rape of the Sabine*, a dark haired beauty pleads over dead babies with one strategically exposed breast placed at the compositional fulcrum. And in Eugene Delacroix, Diana as

Liberty now wages righteous war for *republique* with one “nurturing” breast exposed. Alas, so much for the spiritual and curative powers of Diana of Ephesus.

Fast-forward to 19th century industrialized Paris, and very real, flesh and blood young women faced (much as they faced in the early 70s) limited labor options: the lucky ones were bourgeois mothers, wives and daughters (the “madonna”); working class girls worked either the factory, the brothel, or the cafe (the “whore”). Indeed serving food since the advent of industrialized cities was not fit for “proper” women, was tantamount to serving sexual favors.<sup>9</sup> The tired, bored girl in Manet’s *Bar at the Folies Bergère* who faces her male “customer” comes to mind here, as do hundreds of popular posters from the late 1800s<sup>10</sup> (designed by men, one is sure) hawking popular pubs via pop images of willing waitresses in ample cleavage. Open any current airport hotel PR and see there again a gorgeous buxom hostess beckoning and intimating with the same veiled symbols that she will meet the male corporate wayfarer’s every whim.

In 1971 Judy Chicago did a performance in Fresno in which – naked, arms akimbo – she invoked the eternal feminine. Chicago’s belief in a utopian matrilineal culture and central core imagery was the basis of *The Dinner Party*. This concept of “the feminine” drew nearly immediate fire from some of the most respected feminist thinkers – Arlene Raven, Lucy Lippard – on the grounds that such a concept linked women inevitably to one-dimensional, white-heterosexual biological gender. So was born the so-called second wave of identity Feminism – Lacanians and linguists, transnationalists and queer theorists – who tended to cast early essentialism as trite and old hat.

Some short six years after that Judy Chicago performance, and well before the post structural gender studies in the late 80s/90s, the Waitresses showed a prescient and subtly shaded awareness





Anne Gauldin (front) and Denise Yarfitz (back), *Ready to Order?*, Lafayette's Café, Venice, CA, April 27, 1978, photo credit: Maria Karras



Anne Gauldin (front) and Denise Pierre (back), *Coffee Cauldron: A Restaurant Ritual*, created by Anne Gauldin and Chutney Berry in 1980, performed in *The Waitresses Revue*, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, 1981, photo credit: Sheila Ruth



of the issues underlying the essentialist-constructed dichotomy. Their multi-breasted Diana – a Waitress who strides into a real café wearing a plastic suit with rows of breasts – was complex, funny, human, conflicted. She was gorgeous, aware of socially mediated abjection and Julia Kristeva's<sup>11</sup> notion of masculinist body horror all at once. She was a product of a genuine (yes, perhaps primordial) desire to form community, but her hard wiring was tempered by an equally feisty awareness that someone else was calling the shots as to who she was and what she could do. In her plastic boobs, the Waitresses' Diana was part pleaser and true care taker, part warrior and cynic giving clear public notice that her good will was intact, but her acquiescence was at end. The following was part of the Diana vignette (excerpted):

*Great many breasted mother, nourisher  
 Provider of sustenance physical and spiritual  
 Too hot, too cold, wheat, white, rye  
 Roquefort, Thousand Island, French  
 Diana had hundred of breasts (I don't)  
 I wonder if Sambo's would hire her?  
 She could have each breast labeled  
 As to its particular nourishment  
 No more hassle with temperamental cooks, unreliable  
 bartenders  
 Every restaurant should have... a shrine to her*

### The Waitresses, Feminism and Community

Born in response to and aligned with the general Civil Rights movements of the 60s, Feminism was never intended to be exclusively about art, about politics per se, or about heady gender discourse or culture theory divorced from life. Though it has come to richly embrace all these, the cataclysmic social revolution we call Feminism began as a grassroots wellspring, in support of and awakened

by demands for equality by the excluded and marginalized: people of color and women. From its inception, the message and the hope of the "movement" was indeed that liberation and awakening would not be the purview of any one class or of the *bas bleu* intellectual, the Virginia Wolfe/Simone De Beauvoir crowd, but the potential legacy of every housewife, secretary, mother, yet to be lawyer and, yes, waitress exploited and excluded from access on any level, quotidian to scholarly.

By extension Feminist Art (well before it had a name) was in no fashion imagined as separate from the daily lives of women. In fact, the first voices percolated up from a clear understanding that inequities of sex, economics, work, power, pay, education, creative expression implicated one another reciprocally – injustice in one of these arenas of female experience created de facto barriers in every other.

*"The personal is political."*

This clarion motto best articulated that at its roots Feminism's goal was to address by supportive group activism female experience in its complex entirety (rather than as fragmented parts or essentialist roles): the private and public, the psychic and social, the erotic and intellectual. This matrix of the personal and the political was not missed by the earliest pioneers. When Betty Friedan formed NOW in 1966, it was in response to the fact that the 1964 Bill of Rights, while legislating against discrimination by race, refused to do the same for inequalities of wage and access based on gender. Earliest efforts at gender liberation like New York Radical Women, and The Women's Study program at Fresno State, then at Cal Arts and then, most significantly, at the Women's Building in Los Angeles taught liberation as a broad-based *action imbedded in real time*, not as an abstraction. As such, these programs included intense study of history, consciousness raising encounter groups, assertion training and practical job skills. As the move-





*The All City Waitress Marching Band, created by Jerri Allyn, Leslie Belt, and Chutney Berry (pictured in front with baton), with Anne Mavor (in sequined suit) and 35 waitresses, The DooDah Parade, Pasadena, CA, December 1979, photo credit: Mary McNally*

Performed by: Nancy Angelo, Elizabeth Blouser, Terry Bleecher, Diane Diplata, Laurine DiRicco, Anne Gauldin, Cheri Gaulke, Leibe Gray, Anita Green, Maisha Green, Vanalyn Green, Annette Hunt, Elizabeth Irons, Julie James, Maria Karras, Laurel Klick, Sue Maberly, Anne Phillips, Linda Preuss, Arlene Raven, Maureen Renville, Rita Rodriguez, Jeanne Shanin, Barbara Stopha, Cheryl Swannack, Sue Talbot, Rina Viezel, Lynne Warshafsky, Christine Wong

Jerri Allyn and Chutney Gunderson, facilitating a workshop, *The Waitress and the Witch*, for FSW students in Suzanne Lacy's class, who took a weekend field trip to participate in a Feminist Perspectives on Pornography Conference and Take Back the Night March, San Francisco, CA, November 1978



ment gained momentum and coalesced in the mid 70s, special focus groups did in fact branch off, each foregrounding one or another dimension of oppression; some were art activists (WAR), others labor directed (AWC), still others academic (LACWA).<sup>12</sup>

Though we may marvel today at how it could be otherwise, the notion that the disenfranchised and underprivileged – women, laborers, the non-white – might indeed be sentient, choosing, thinking, imagining subjectivities with their own interior creative lives, who could look back at us and request equal rights came as quite shock in the 60s and the 70s. If we acknowledge that the core principles of Feminist Art from its inception included a holistic, cooperative, economic, creative and political advocacy, and if we further reflect that the challenge to patriarchy came by uneasy increments even to most women of the 70s, then only do we begin to appreciate the lucidly historical and radically futuristic practice called the “The Waitresses.”

### The Waitress and Post Modernism

Performance, Marxism, Feminism, Institutional Critique; Identity Politics; and Globalization: these capital letters name fields of Graduate studies today. In the 70s these remained unnamed yet the crux of questions the Waitresses raised. Their contribution to Post Modern thought and theory is not one of “firsts” but of insightful reframing. Clearly their performative strategies arc back to Dadaist events that involved reading random verse, or the making of *bruit* or noise-music. They depend also on Guy Debord and the Situationists’ “interventions” designed to disrupt habitual consumer routines by blocking entries to public buildings for the purpose of snapping citizens out of their benumbed false consciousness. And yes, the Waitresses came into their own at a

time when Fluxus, John Cage, Gutai, Josef Beuys, Chris Burden evolved to challenge the “transcendent gestured canvas.”

But the Waitresses were not confrontational, insistently cerebral, nihilistic nor radically political as much of the performance being done in the mid to 70s was. An important difference is that the legacy of modern and actionist performance was not necessarily intended as bridge-building but rather as shocking transgressive events designed to fly in the face of authority and to situate mostly male “visionary” avant-gardists outside the norms of convention and the moral status quo. The Waitresses had a touch of all this, but the goal was education and *community-building*. The Waitresses most certainly deal with economy, consumption, exploitation, but this collective specifically and Feminist performance generally were dedicated to facilitating communication and effecting communal, positive change. If we were to find a real performative ancestor it might best be Allan Kaprow, whose Happenings he geared toward self awareness, human connection and spirituality.<sup>13</sup>

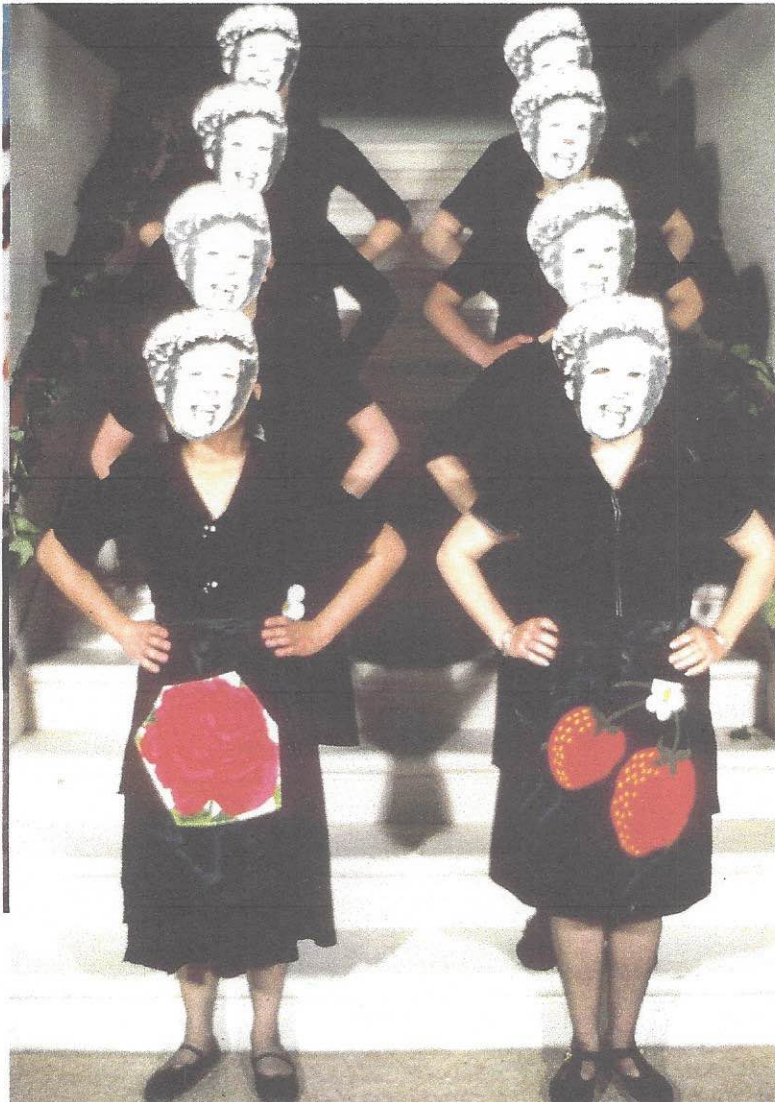
One could also argue that the collective anticipated and engaged in the issues of semiotics and spectator/gaze discourses not as grad school arcania but in the experience-real, work-a-day performative language accessible to art and non art participants, to men and women, straights and gays, worker and owner. Before Barthes (a male) fell like gospel from the lips of every (male) Professor, Waitresses were enacting and you might say publicly teaching semiotic arguments – that is, unpeeling the ideological tyranny of language via action, and seeing the world from outside of one’s frame. To the (male) customer of the 70s, the signifier “waitress” necessarily implied certain class and gender permissions.

*“You hard of hearing? I said white toast.”*

*“You’re a cute thing, what are you doing after work...”*

To the woman working at this job, “waitress”

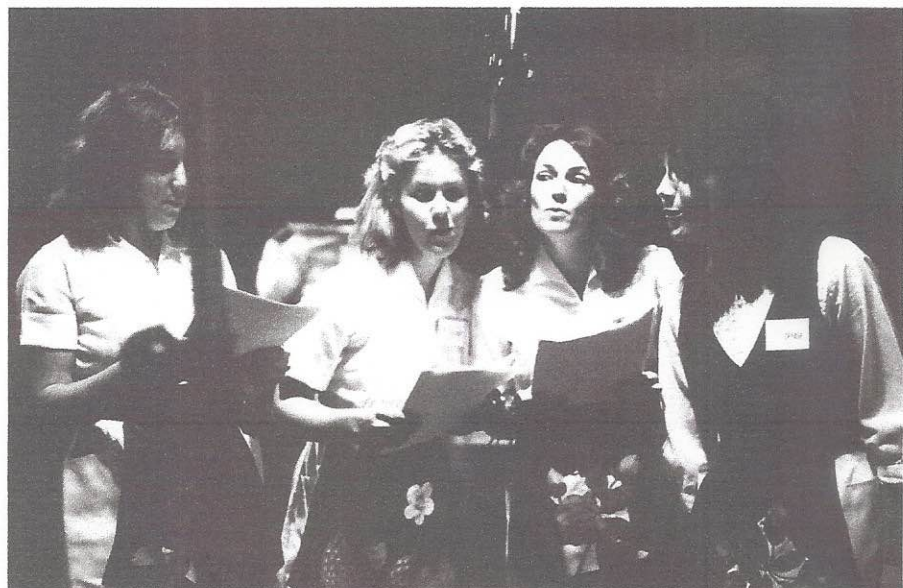




Anne Mavor, Denise Pierre, Anne Gauldin, Chutney Berry, and Elizabeth Canelake (not pictured), *Home on the Range*, At Home at the Woman's Building performance series, The Woman's Building, Los Angeles; and *The House of Women: Art and Culture in the 80's* conference, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA, 1983

Performance for fundraising dinner party for The Great American Lesbian Art Show, Chutney Gunderson, Anne Mavor, Julie James, Christine Wong, Roberta Rothman, Jane Thurman, *The Waitresses Salute Eleanor Roosevelt*, Jetts Café & Art Haus, Los Angeles, CA, 1980, photo credit: Jo Goodwin

Anne Mavor, Chutney Berry, Anne Gauldin, Denise Pierre, *The All-American Waitress Radio Show*, KPFK-FM, Pacifica Radio, International Women's Day Program, Hollywood, CA, 1980



signified quite another set of meanings and cultural constructs: subjects (men) act; objects (women) are acted upon; subjects decide; objects comply, subjects are people; objects are things; subjects are “us”; objects are “other than us.” These ideas would branch out to intersect with Edward Said’s<sup>14</sup> profound ideas about the construction of non white others; with Laura Mulvey’s<sup>15</sup> analyses of an ingrained and erotic type of male looking that attends all levels of Western European culture and inculcates unequal relations of use, pleasure and dominance.

### The Waitresses Today

The Waitresses and many other performance practices of early Feminism are typically associated with the so called “first wave.” In other writing and speaking, I have forcefully objected to oppositional labels like “first wave” and “second wave,” for these only rehearse male-conceived dualistic Cartesian symbolic systems wherein things are either “this” or “that.” This type of fractured/territorialist thinking runs counter to what was and is a holistic Feminist social program. In the context of this “first wave versus second wave” schism, the reality of the Waitresses resisted any neat fit into this simplified body/mind gendered model. The Waitress works, impromptu interventions, didactic events struck an unusually open hearted, visceral *as well as* research heavy, cerebral chord. Instead of essentializing the female body, they pointed out with utter clarity that the sacred and the profane, the “have” and the “have not” were matters of sexual and economic power.

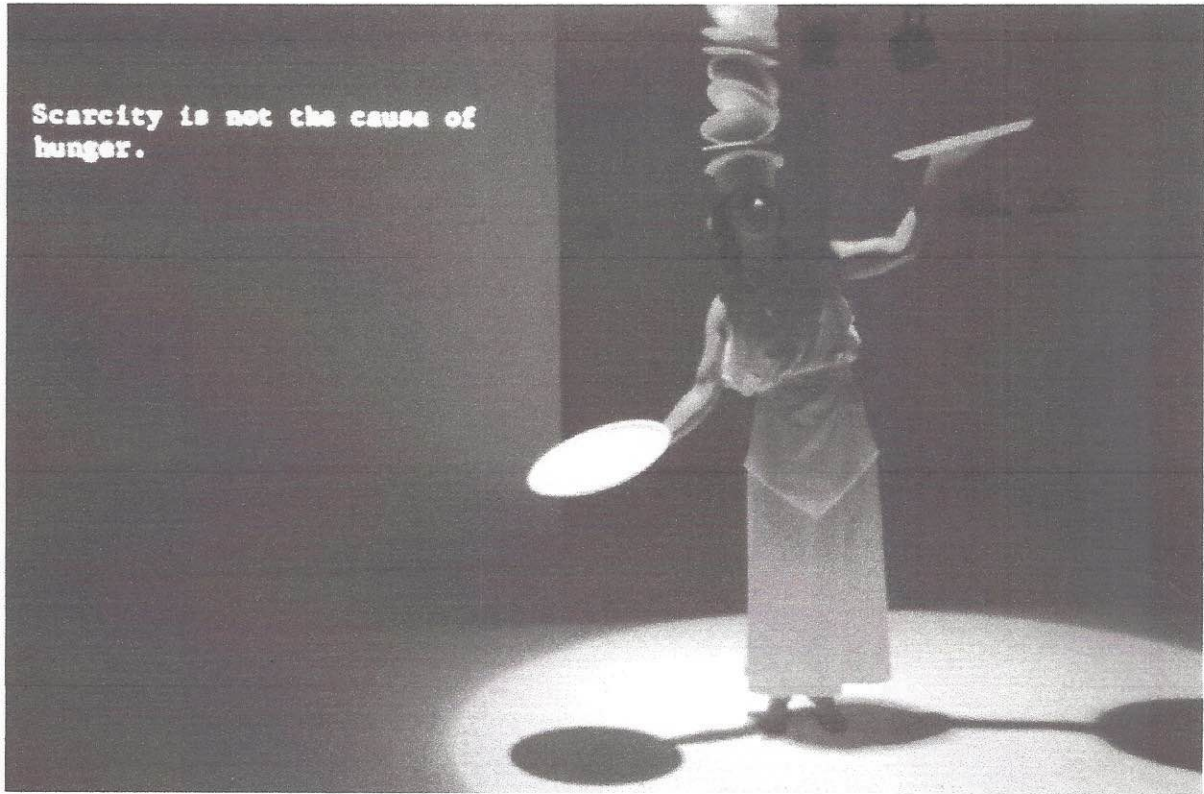
When the so called “second wave” (again, a term I use with reservation) rose in the late 80s and 90s and came to mistakenly and subtly equate “serious” Feminism with post structuralist theory, with deconstruction of language and the pages of *October*, previous and more confrontational

enactments of gender and sexual politics came to be associated with a quaint past, with phase of Feminism relevant “back then” when such things as immediacy and stridency were called for by the nascent state of gender relations.

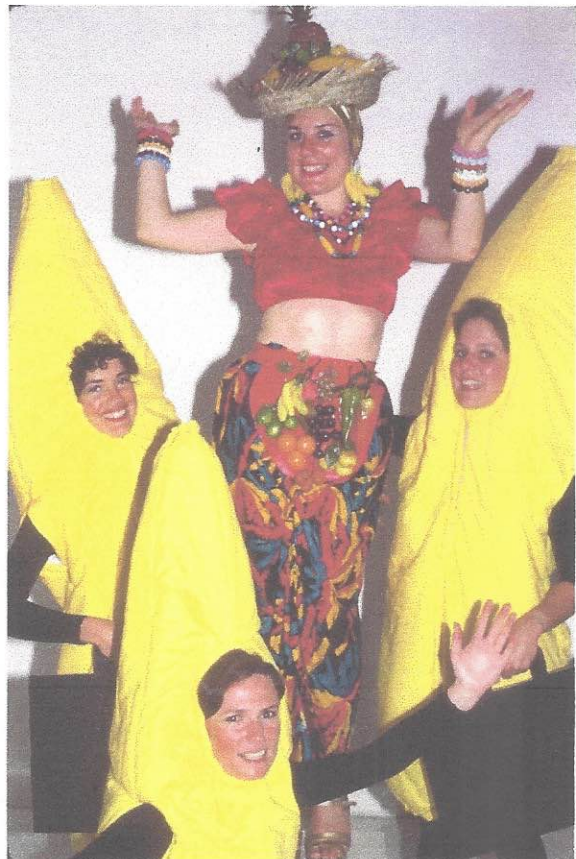
Here we are three decades later. We enter a time of unheard of progress; we have witnessed the first viable female candidate for US President. This is huge. That said, we also note that the statistics cited by the Waitresses in the 70s and later by the Guerilla Girls in the 80s have not changed all that much in 2008. As *Roe v. Wade* and health privacy for women take steps backward, as vaginal mutilation and terror-rape against female adults and children escalate, we come to see that thirty years of cultural dialectics renders the Waitresses *anything but quaint*. Their enactment of the idea that the docile/controlled/sexualized bodies are not “born” but, as Louis Althusser suggested, *interpellated*<sup>16</sup> – i.e. named into being – through representations, actions and commerce makes the Waitresses ever timely.

It is no minor observation that Waitress co-founder Anne Gauldin continues to invoke as part of her on-going art practice rituals of healing, it is not minor that co-founder Jerri Allyn is a Quaker tirelessly dedicated to public art and community pedagogy. In their later incarnations as a group, and particularly in the solo work of founders Gauldin and Allyn, the legacy of the Waitresses continued to make broader connections to issues that subsume and surpass women’s rights, all of which are ironically today on everyone’s radar: world hunger, non violence, the interfaces between global economic imperialism and danger to our psyches and our planet. It is quite shocking and gratifying to realize that these very themes were already the subtexts for late 70s Waitress works such as *One Planet, One Plate*, or *Coffee Cauldron*. The issues the Waitresses raised are as applicable today to Indonesian sex trade, to sweat shops filled with





above: **Chutney Berry**, right: **Denise Yarfitz, Anne Gauldin, Anne Mavor, and Chutney Berry**, *One Planet, One Plate*. Various sites: Espace DBD, Los Angeles, CA; The Woman's Building, Los Angeles, CA; Sushi Gallery, San Diego, CA; Wing Café, San Diego, CA; 1982



preteen girls (and boys) whose labors feed a global economy mostly profiting multi-nationals...

In its 1970s origins, the famous *All City Waitress Marching Band* was a spoof on male dominated roles. The event was part education, part vaudeville, part Chaucerian morality play taking back the streets from our sequestered sisters who could not walk them alone for so much of history. In 2007, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in a performance sponsored by *Art Scene* magazine, the Waitresses marched again. On this night many of the original Waitresses were joined almost thirty years later by females aged 4 to 80, by Persians, Moroccans, Asians, Jews, gentiles, Muslims, males, gays, blue states, red states, students, their Profs.,

lesbians and grannies – all invited into the grand “white cube” of LACMA to joyously resuscitate a unifying and life-giving ritual.

As we enter a level of unprecedented global change, look back from the long lens of cultural theory, the Waitresses’ grass roots pluralism, appeal to experience and call for community ring not simply germane but urgent.

–**Marlena Doktorczyk-Donohue**

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*Editor, ArtScene*



**ArtScene's 25th Anniversary Celebration and launch of All Visual Radio,**

produced by Jerri Allyn; Anne Gaudin, Chutney Gunderson Berry, Anne Mavor, Denise Yarfitz; joined by Danah Ezekial, Cheri Gaulke, Marcus Kuland-Nazario, Linda Kunik, Laura Kuo, Abdelali Dahrouh, Jasmine Kuo-Dahrouh; *LA Art Girls*: Allison Danielle Behrstock, Micol Hebron, Alissa Hunsaker, Dilean Jimenez, Sarah Riley, Elizabeth Tremonte, Marjan Vayghan; Terry Lenihan; Raudel Lopez; Elizabeth Lopez; *LOUDmouth Zine*: Irina Contreras, Violent Vickie; Jesus Mascorro; Phranc; Brooke Rollo; Holly Tempo; Linda Vallejo; Andrea Whyte; Terry Wolverton; *UCLA & SPARC Artists*: Pilar Castillo, Nikki Hoekstra, Visperd Madad'Doust, Gita Meh, Mahyar Nili, Jessica Wood, Samira Yamin, and Brenda Zamora; *The All City Waitress Marching Band – Redefined*; Los Angeles County Museum of Art Plaza, Los Angeles, CA, April 18, 2007, photo credit: Morgan Morgan Cuppet-Michelson

