

Landmarks from a younger vantage

TWO generations of artists have emerged since the 1970s, when feminists made themselves heard, but discussions about the importance and meaning of their legacy continue. The Times raised the issue with artists of these later generations at various stages of development. Here are some of their thoughts:

— SUZANNE MUCHNIC

Audrey Chan, 24;
second-year MFA student,
CalArts, Valencia

I grew up in Chicago. I'm Chinese and my parents came to the United States for college, so I'm first-generation American. I have been interested in art most of my life, but I have a concurrent interest in political science. A lot of what I think about is the skills that artists and activists can offer each other. I hadn't studied feminist art or theory before coming to CalArts. But I was raised in a feminist way without realizing it, being encouraged to be assertive and to speak up and be ambitious. I had really strong female role models.

The idea in feminism that means the most to me is "the personal is political." I'm working with projects that deal with Chinese American foreign policy because of my grandmother's experience in Communist China and what my family went through there.

The main project I worked on last year was a piece about the Iraq war and what a memorial for it would look like. My point of entry was Maya Lin and her Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It was pretty clear from the news that the Iraq war was going to resemble the Vietnam war. I was thinking, "Do we have to wait for the war to finish before we can respond to it?" I ended up doing a video about Maya Lin that included my own writing and video footage of the war that was circulating on the Internet. I have been asked if I was thinking about feminism when I was making that project. It's hard to answer because ideas of feminism are implicit.

People do feminism more often than they realize. But I do encounter discomfort with the term "feminism." I think that's normal. It's a problem with the media, with the way feminism has been represented. I think, for good reason, people are confused about what feminism is.

A parade of feminists

The Museum of Contemporary Art's exhibition "WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution," running today through July 16, and the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, to be launched March 23, seem to have inspired a nationwide bonanza of related events. Here's a sampling of what's going on in Southern California:

CalArts

24700 McBean Parkway, Valencia,
(661) 255-1050,
www.calarts.edu/~feminist

"Exquisite Acts, Everyday Rebellion," exhibition of works by faculty, alumni and students, Monday to March 10; symposium including panel discussions, noon to 7:30 p.m. Saturday