INTRODUCTION // A FEMINIST GLOSSARY, OR: GETTING THE #FEMINISM YOU DESERVE

When writing her programmatically titled essay "How to install a show as a feminist", published in Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art in 2010, the curator Helen Molesworth chose to refer to a definition of feminism by Marxist social historian Eli Zaretsky (Molesworth 2010: 499). According to Zaretsky, the significance of the women's movement of the 1960s is that it confronted the fundamental challenges of a capitalist economic and social order with the claim and goal "to revolutionize the deepest and most universal aspects of life – those of 'personal' relations, love, egotism, sexuality, and our inner emotional lives." (Zaretsky 1976: 13) The provocative and affect-laden tone with which Zaretsky opens his book Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life, first published in 1976, still retains its power. Indeed, feminist themes that have acquired an almost "classical" character are currently regaining discursive scope. We are seeing, for example, a renewed interest in women's collectives, accompanied by the republication or translation of theoretical positions formulated by modern classics, with the aim of updating emancipatory aspirations on the basis of civil rights movements. 1) Moreover, in recent years there has been an increasing focus on a (re-)contextualizing (re)discovery of women's artistic positions in the museum context, which usually emphasize their historical-revolutionary impetus (fig. 1 & 2).2) In particular, discourses around the visibility of certain groups are now undergoing a political update and reassessment in a series of current, partly-literary publications - as demanded for many decades by Audre Lorde, among others, in relation to non-European women neglected by white feminists³.

_____ The re-polarization and re-articulation of the term *feminism* is, of course, not new. When Lorde wrote her (unanswered) letter

to Mary Daly, the author of *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978), in 1988 (#wickedary), she started out by describing the impact of reading Daly's work, and then asked a series of provocative rhetorical questions: "Where was Afrekete, Yemanje, Oyo, and Mawulisa? Where were the warrior goddesses of the Vodun, the Dahomeian Amazons and the warrior-women of Dan? Well, I thought, Mary

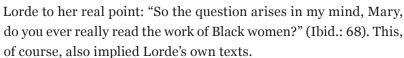
Worth mentioning in this context are, among others, the translations of (previously unpublished) (art) historical feminist writings by authors such as Carla Lonzi, Audre Lorde and Griselda Pollock, In recent years, texts by women art historians have also been appearing. sometimes for the first time, in anthological selections, e.g. Chichester, K. Lee / Sölch, Brigitte (eds) (2021): Kunsthistorikerinnen 1910-1980. Theorien. Methoden, Kritiken. Berlin, Reimer. The anthology Great Women Artists, London/ New York, Phaidon 2019, presents 400 women artists spanning 500 years. And the 2018 volume edited by Helena Reckitt. The Art of Feminism, San Francisco, Chronicle Books, already refers in its subtitle to women's civil rights movements since the suffragettes: Images that Shaped the Fight for Equality, 1857-2017. Also worth mentioning in the context of feminist collective praxis is: Alex Martinis Roe: To Become Two, **Propositions for Feminist Collective** Practice, Berlin, Archive Books/Bolzano, ar/ge kunst/Casco. Utrecht/If I Can't Dance, I don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution, Amsterdam/The Showroom, London 2018.

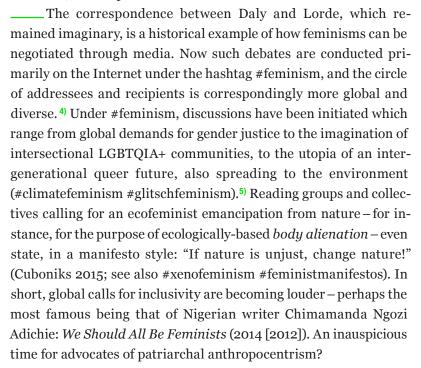
// Figure 1

re.act.feminism #2 – a performing archive,
view of exhibition, Akademie der Künste,
Reclin 2013



has made a conscious decision to narrow her scope and to deal only with the ecology of western european women." (Lorde 1984: 67). Lorde continues, "Then I came to the first three chapters of your Second Passage, and it was obvious that you were dealing with noneuropean women, but only as victims and preyers-upon each other. I began to feel my history and my mythic background distorted by the absence of any images of my foremothers in power." (Ibid.) This brings





In general, feminisms and feminist demands also seem to be increasingly diffusing into society, as evidenced, for instance, by the selection of the word *feminism* as the Merriam-Webster *Word of the Year* in the USA in 2017. Symptomatic of such tendencies are also conceptual constructs such as *gender mainstreaming* and *mainstream feminism*, which are taken up from time to time by conservative or even new-right forces and reinterpreted in a discrediting way. Feminist family relationships are also proving tricky in other contexts. In 2015, the U.S. sociologist and feminist Michael Kimmel proposed gender equality for all in his TED talk *Why Gender Equality is Good for Everyone – Men Included* (Kimmel 2015), arguing that this was the only way to counter the dysfunctional



// Figure 2

re.act.feminism #2 – a performing archive, view of exhibition, Centro Cultural Montehermoso. Vitoria-Gasteiz. 2011

Examples include: WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution, MOCA 2007: Global Feminism, Brooklyn Museum 2007; re.act. feminism - a performing archive. Akademie der Künste Berlin et al. 2008/2013: We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-85, Brooklyn Museum 2018; Il Soggetto Imprevisto. 1978, Arte e Femminismo in Italia, FM Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, Milan 2019: Feminist Avant-Garde. Kunsthalle Hamburg et al. 2015. The curator of the upcoming Venice Biennale, Cecilia Alemani, even posits the end of anthropocentrism, referring, among other things, to Silvia Federici's "re-enchantment of the world" (see Alemani 2021). As early as 2000, in the Berlin exhibition cross female - Metaphern des Weiblichen in der Kunst der 90er Jahre, Barbara Höffer and Valeria Schulte-Fischedick questioned the sometimes euphoric talk of so-called gender crossing in the new media of the time, in fashion, advertising, popular culture, and subculture,

See Lorde's 1978 essay *Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power*, in which the author interprets eroticism as a spiritual resource and means of self-empowerment for Black women (Lorde 1978).

confronting it with constants in the

attributions of femininity to images.

"aggrieved entitlement" of *white* Americans who feared losing the privileged position they took for granted in patriarchy (Kimmel 2013). The fact that Kimmel has since then himself been accused of sexual harassment is another matter.

In addition to these discursive shifts in the sociopolitical, academic, and museum spheres, an increasing circulation of the term feminism in pop culture is also evident. "New media facilitate the development of novel ideas and the exploration of uncharted possibilities. In response to the rekindling of debates about sexuality and identity on the Internet and in social media, women net artists have developed a hyperfeminine aesthetics. They present themselves as aggressively feminine or girlish and cute. Their colors are pink, purple, and neon." (Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig 2018) This is stated in the press release for the exhibition Virtual Normality. Women Net Artists 2.0, held at the Museum der bildenden Künste in Leipzig in 2018, which presented "net artists" in some cases for the first time in the German museum context. Has the (hyper)feminine on the net thus advanced to become a synonym for feminism? And what does this mean in concrete terms?

A phenomenon that can be increasingly observed at present, for example, is that demands or statements by the historical women's movements are being lent a new, sometimes glamorous lease of life by hashtagging, pop-cultural music video clips, and fashionable T-shirt labels. If in this way a revaluation of female experiences is being asserted quasi ex ovo and celebrated as a new trend with recourse to historical models such as the female imagery of the 1970s, ⁶⁾ one must inevitably ask to what extent the return of feminism qua femininity is to be understood as a change in a diversity discourse or merely as a new standard in the sense of a neoliberalist maxim of flexibilization promising authenticity. Is it, in principle, a welcome development that Adichie's "We should all be feminists" has been displayed on T-shirts, at least since the Dior catwalk of 2016? However, this not only valorizes a book as a slogan via Instagramability; there is also a danger that the old, still unresolved problem of the exclusion of women in the femininity valorization machinery of the new economy will dissolve without a sound. So how can pop cultural phenomena help to convey and pass on the convictions and achievements of the women's movement to the next generation? Is this even possible? And what is the significance here of the consumer-capitalist supported catchphrases of an undifferentiated reference to feminism as a participatory channel? (Fig. 3)

#feminism is coupled, for example, with
#outcry, #equalpayday, #feministforeignpolicy, #blackfeminismmatters,
#childnotbride, #whitewednesday,
#mosquemetoo, #notheidisgirl,
#feministfriday, #genderequality,
#equalitymatters, #iwant, #accelerateacceptance, #cripqueer, #LGBT, #LGBTQ,
#LGBTQIA+, and #womenrightsarehumanrights - only some of which are addressed

5)
For example, José Esteban Muñoz's
Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of
Queer Futurity, 2009. Feminist manifestos
also argue in the direction of a utopian
future.

in this issue.



// Figure 3

Dani Wilde: Screenshot, Twitter 2021
Dani Wilde's illustration of the feminism
boom as a mash-up between the feminist
reorientation of Dior, which was launched
under the new creative directorship of
Maria Grazia Chiuri, and the German
chancellor Angela Merkel in the year of her
"outing" as a feminist.

The demand for social justice, already formulated as a pressing issue by the U.S. theorist Nancy Fraser in her study Justice interruptus in 2001, seems to have assumed a new urgency in view of the current pandemic situation, which has led to a worsening of social inequalities (including in the field of care work, #care). Of particular significance is the distinction between family and economy, which is considered specific to capitalist societies and which cannot be emphasized clearly enough in this context. This dichotomy was also considered by Zaretsky to be an integral part of an exploitative or women-exploiting system - one that had to be transformed accordingly against the background of socialist experiences (cf. Zaretsky 1976: 9, 23-35). Zaretsky's remarks still sound as refreshing as they do groundbreaking, not least because they hold out the promise of making the affect-laden notion of the family appropriable and transformable via new consumer-cultural forms and formats circulating through mass media. Furthermore, these reflections are of great relevance when contemplating the present-day therapeutic tailoring of the emotionalized private self to the values and constraints of the economic sphere (cf. Illouz 2004). However, the fundamentally conflictual model of the family as a "crucible of social disparity" (Illouz 2021: 128) remains. This is evident not least in a pluralization of familial forms that demonstrate the desideratum, indeed the fundamental failure, of the paternalistic-patriarchal nuclear family as a conflict-laden model. 7) Thus, an important research finding in sociology on the topic of the post-familial family is that Western societies have been facing a rearticulation of family values since the 1990s (see, for example, Brooks 2020). Preference is being given to new forms of cohabitation as well as affiliation, e.g., sisterhood in the tradition of feminist collectives of the 1960s - one thinks here, for example, of bell hooks' 1986 treatise Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women, or Lorde's conception of sisterhood as empowerment. At the same time, the (old) feminist demand for the transformation of gender relations and relationships in life and work-in short, the political core of feminism – is undergoing a global update.

The year in which Molesworth formulated her groundbreaking proposals for curating a feminist exhibition also saw the publication of the German translation of Angela McRobbie's *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (2009).⁸⁾ This book by the Birmingham cultural theorist and communication scholar introduced a new term into the discourse. Among the effects or *aftermaths* of feminism, the author counts the emergence of a new type of woman, the so-called *top girls*, a term used in the

Annekathrin Kohut, for example, declares brelfies to be a political issue, arguing that "long-established feminist discourses [are] – and this is historically new – more than ever being continued with the help of images rather than texts or even manifestos." Kohut (2019: 9f.) However, particularly in the art context these strategies are not new: see #feministmanifestos; with regard to the reactualization of a "core" or "female imagery" (Chicago/ Schapiro 1973) see especially hashtags such as #vulvapower or #periodpower.

Values. Zur Reartikulation eines

konfliktbeladenen Modells, most recently
presented at the international conference
Vielfältige Familienformen: Elternschaft
und Familie/n jenseits von Heteronormativität und Zweigeschlechtlichkeit
— Diverse Families: Parenthood and Family
beyond Heteronormativity and Gender
Binary, Humboldt University of Berlin,
07.—08.09.2021.

Regarding the 2020 reorganization of MoMA's permanent collection, see Helen Molesworth's reflections on the limitations and opening of new perspectives in Molesworth (2020). I first formulated the following thoughts on McRobbie's and Hark's approaches in a reading of Phoebe Waller-Bridge's series Fleabay as compulsive feminist cringe comedy (Zanichelli 2021).

title of the book's German translation (Top Girls. Feminismus und der Aufstieg des neoliberalen Geschlechterregimes 2010 [2009]). Top girls, the author argues, are less interested in the manifold oppression and exploitation of (other!) women than in the demand for participation in power and consumer culture. Referring to the "new sexual contract," McRobbie argues that "young women, primarily in the West, [...] come forward and make good use of the opportunity to work, to gain qualifications, to control fertility and to earn enough money to participate in the consumer culture which in turn will become a defining feature of contemporary modes of feminine citizenship" (McRobbie 2009: 54). The author is quite critical of this "postfeminist" turn of feminism: "Drawing on a vocabulary that includes words like 'empowerment' and 'choice', these elements are then converted into a much more individualistic discourse, and they are deployed in this new guise, particularly in media and popular culture, but also by agencies of the state, as a kind of substitute for feminism." (Ibid.: 1) In this way, formerly feminist demands have been instrumentalized and new images of women have been "disseminated more aggressively, so as to ensure that a new women's movement will not re-emerge" (ibid.). The vogue of feminism seems nevertheless still contagious.

Sheryl Sandberg, co-managing director of Meta Platforms (formerly Facebook Inc.), followed up on the success of her 2010 TED talk with the publication of Lean In and in 2013 became the first author of a *feminist* book to top the *New York Times* bestseller list, staying there for more than sixteen weeks. This must have pleased not only a number of top girls, but also their bosses. Meanwhile, the website of the same name launched by Sandberg has its own particular agenda: "Lean In helps women achieve their ambitions and helps companies build inclusive workplaces where women of all identities are supported and empowered." (Lean In, n.d.) Sounds enticing, right? The Black feminist, theorist, and activist bell hooks, author of the book Feminism Is for Everybody, published in 2000, was probably not pleased with this statement, which is now circulating under the keywords Lean In Feminism. Her position on Sandberg is unambiguous: she unapologetically defines the latter's stance as "faux feminism" (hooks 2013). As she notes in her review Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In (2013), all those who-like herself-have engaged with and elaborated feminist theories throughout their lives have hitherto been received almost exclusively in the circles of an academic subculture: "In recent years, discussions of feminism have not evoked animated passion in audiences. We were far more likely to hear that we are living in

a post-feminist society than to hear voices clamoring to learn more about feminism." (Ibid.) Her use of the term *faux feminism* places hooks firmly within the circle of those theorists who read and reject the dictates of self-optimization and self-monitoring (not only postulated by Sandberg) as tools of integration into neoliberal consumer society (cf. Gill 2017: 617). There are others, however, particularly younger women, who would like to crown Sandberg one of the world's most influential *female leaders* and who consider her *Lean In* as a kind of new feminist *manifesto*. A generational conflict is emerging. Is this a favorable time, then, for post-feminists who want to adapt to patriarchal, European- and Western-influenced anthropocentrism?

The fact is that Sandberg does not reveal herself as a particularly motivated supporter of feminism in the aforementioned manifesto – just like many women (and also men) of her generation: "Given all these strides, I headed into college believing that the feminists of the sixties and seventies had done the hard work of achieving equality for my generation. And yet, if anyone had called me a feminist, I would have quickly corrected that notion. [...] But when I was in college, I embraced the same contradiction. [...] We accepted the negative caricature of a bra-burning, humorless, man-hating feminist. She was not someone we wanted to emulate, in part because it seemed like she couldn't get a date. Horrible, I know-the sad irony of rejecting feminism to get male attention and approval. In our defense, my friends and I truly, if naïvely, believed that the world did not need feminists anymore. We mistakenly thought that there was nothing left to fight for." (Sandberg 2013: 142f.) This confession makes Sandberg's goal clear in encouraging women, with reference to gender mainstreaming as well as the achievements of feminism, to continue (sic!) to play in the same league as those in power, namely, the corporate (white) men – or as hooks puts it: "[Sandberg] comes across as a lovable younger sister who just wants to play on the big brother's team." (Ibid.) Once again it becomes apparent that family relationships are tricky.

It is precisely this supposed complicity, which suggests that women will make it *to the top* if they only work hard enough, that is reminiscent of McRobbie's *top girls*. At the same time, it ignores the structural inadequacies of a system that all but makes social advancement impossible and stylizes or simply fails to recognize the importance of intersectionality within this process. It is thus not surprising that feminism, also in the German-speaking world, has "returned to the theatre of discourse" (Hark 2008: 111). As the philosopher Sabine Hark remarks, not entirely uncritically, of

9)
Translations from German: Joe O'Donnell.

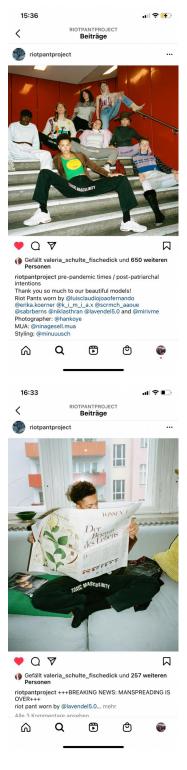
the so-called alpha-girl (Alpha-Mädchen) authors: "Here comes the new German girls feminism – very relaxed, ideologically stress-free, and sexy to boot." (Ibid.: 112) This feminism 2.0 is "more a reflexive reaction to than a reflection of current conditions" (ibid.: 113). As in the Anglo-American environment, it is thus also evident in the German context that the new public enjoyment of female power is actually shaped in patriarchal terms such that the actual, partly precarious conditions under which women work are (supposed to be) concealed. Being a woman does not automatically mean being feminist, and vice versa.

The urgent question of the participation and representation of women and those who identify as women, however, arises not only in companies, but also in cultural institutions such as museums, where it is negotiated, for example, under the aspect of art historical canon formation or the retrospective attribution of canonical status. In the course of an intersectional as well as pop-cultural renegotiation of feminism in the recently dawned third decade of the new millennium, the problematic of the inclusion and exclusion of certain population groups within the cultural sector thus comes into focus just as urgently, not only with regard to the art historical (feminist) canon, but also to the people working in this field. Who is empowered to speak where? What are the consequences for hierarchies and power relations in the respective institutions? And what role does the (mass) media play in this? If current survey exhibitions and new text publications do essential work in this sense, the strategy of "troubling canons" proposed by the Berlin artist duo Renate Lorenz and Pauline Baudry, among others, is a welcome suggestion for addressing the problem theoretically and practically: "Tactics of troubling canons draw attention to the ideologies, inclusions, and exclusions that underpin canon formation, including canons of feminist art. To trouble canons means to pinpoint the logic of competition (between artists and mediums, genres and regions) that canons both symptomize and perform. Artworks from the past cannot be easily recuperated, the practice of troubling canons reminds us, as all acts of translation entail processes of misunderstanding and incorporation, identification and desire. Based in intersectional politics, this approach does not separate critiques of masculinity from those of whiteness, heteronormativity, cis-gender superiority, and other dominant value and classification systems." (Boudry/Lorenz et al. 2016: Introduction) At first, this sounds as if theories and practices of the 1970s are being rediscovered or revisited. However, at least since the introduction of gender-related and queer semantics, the (discussion)

horizons involved have broadened and expanded many times over. In the meantime, a distinction is made between at least four waves of feminism. When Valeria Schulte-Fischedick and I wrote our review of what was for the time being the last German female art historians' conference in Berlin twenty years ago, we were concerned to reflect on the lack of internationality and interdisciplinarity exhibited by such major events. Moreover, against the background of the development from women's to gender studies at that time, it seemed important and indispensable to us to include much more queer-feminist and transgender topics (Schulte-Fischedick/Zanichelli 2002). Today, with #feminism, we are facing a similarly drastic change, one that evokes resignation but also gives rise to hope – hope, for example, when Linda Valerie Ewert in her review in this issue speaks of the "universalization of theoretical feminist discourses and their terminologies." Nevertheless, with the pluralization of topics and theoretical approaches, misunderstandings have also multiplied, especially in those areas where the popularization of feminism has been elevated to a kind of vulgate. We are therefore less interested, for example, in why body hair activists wear perfectly plucked eyebrows (#bodyhairdontcare). Rather, in this issue of FKW we want to trace the contradictions and opportunities of a pluralized, asynchronous feminism with all its discrepancies and dis/continuities. The issue is conceived as a glossary, which gives us the opportunity to reflect on feminism in all its plurality. In particular, it sheds light on those disparate connotations, forms and transformations, visual languages, and discursive elements that have been associated with #feminism since the 2010s, not least in the wake of the #MeToo debate (see also Lee 2011). Accordingly, the issue inquires into the challenges of a global, decolonial, and anti-discriminatory feminism as well as its resonances and dissonances, without losing sight of current developments. It inquires into the relationships between lived bodies and public voices (#womanspreading, A.-. L. Ndakoze's contribution in this issue), critical-genealogical references (#situatedknowledges #affidamento #sisterhood #symbolischemutter #plastischedifferenz #care #feministsurveillancestudies), (neoliberalist) exploitation machineries (#ghostfeminism #postfeminism #girlboss #girlempowerment) and the feminist postulate of visibility in social media (#bimboism #vulvapower #periodpower). Against a background of multiple discriminations, recognition policies are (again) increasingly becoming a focus of interest (#blackfeminism #PNGManUp [Papua Niuginian Visual Feminism]). For example, Black Male feminists Darnell L. Moore and

Hashim Khalil Pipkin advocate for a more holistic feminism: "Black feminisms have sought to intervene in this fractured notion of progress that imagines black boys and men as in need of saving from white racial supremacy even while black girls and women are daily impacted by 'the Man's' system of racial supremacist heteropatriarchy and sexism/misogyny/rape and homo- and transantagonism at the hands of some black men. That is why black feminist theory is vital. It is a multivalent political framework that maps the route to collective liberation. Black feminist theory, therefore, is a project for all of us." (Darnell L. Moore and Hashim Khalil Pipkin 2016: 30, see also Linda Jalloh's essay on #blackfeminism in this issue)

Looking back into the future, this issue also contains contributions that deal with new strategies of visibility and the push for visibility as well as their strategic irritation (#bodypositivity #fatfeminism #feministcurating #feministkitchen notes #masshisteria #witchtok #hiphopfeminism). The range of net-savvy activist-feminist tactics (#cyberfeminism #postcyberfeminism) as well as antifeminist tendencies that often make use of a resentment-generatnet-savvy format (#antifeminism #badfeminism #toxicfeminism) are also considered. It is not only here that the question arises: who is authorized to say what? Who can claim the term feminism for themselves and lay claim to it-for example, even in societies that tend to be repressive and characterized by censorship (#chinesefeminism)? The problem of who speaks how is in turn addressed by contributions on the emergence of autobiographical, fictional, and ethnographic thought in the sense of autotheory (#iwillswim #compulsiveheterosexuality #amialesbian, see also the review of Lauren Fournier's Autotheory in this issue). The texts in this issue of FKW, marked with hashtags, deal with all of these discursive elements and disputes around interpretive sovereignties and affiliations. Like the edition of Riot Pant Project accompanying this issue, they shed light on those (new?) signifiers with which feminism, oscillating between lifestyle and activism, can be expanded and enriched in the 2020s (fig. 4 & 5) - ambivalences and misunderstandings included. Instead of tricky kinship relations in art-scholarly as well as curatorial practice, we propose feminist elective affinities as a form of canon troubling. Thus, readers are invited to reflect on their own situatedness in the midst of new global challenges: Getting the #feminism you deserve.



// Figure 4 & 5
Screenshots: Riot Pants Project,
Instagram-Posts, 2021

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// About the author

Elena Zanichelli, Italian art historian and curator, studied at the universities of Parma, Bonn and Zürich and received her doctorate from the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2012. Since 2018 she has been Junior Professor of Fine Arts and Aesthetic Theory at the University of Bremen, and since 2021 director of the *Mariann Steegmann Institut. Kunst & Gender*. She is also a member of the advisory board of German Federal Cultural Foundation.

Her book Privat – bitte eintreten! Rhetoriken des Privaten in der Kunst der 1990er Jahre (Private – Please Enter! Rhetorics of Privacy in the Arts of the 1990s) was published in 2015. She is currently working on a research project with the working title Family Values – On the visual rearticulation of a conflict-laden model. In the spring of 2022, she will be Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor in the Department of German Studies at Stanford University.

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