

EMILIA-AMALIA

# **Syllabus/ Workbook**

Since 2016, EMILIA-AMALIA has organized regular meetings that invite participants to read a text together, engage in discussion and undertake short writing exercises related to a particular theme. With the goal of using writing as part of the “practice of doing” articulated by the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, these sessions foregrounded historical and contemporary texts by feminists, the lived experience of participants, and the centrality of informal knowledge sharing as a feminist praxis.

This workbook assembles descriptions of each of the sessions and includes instructions for the writing exercises. Our hope is to create a bibliography of readings, and a syllabus of activities that might be useful to other feminist practitioners in their work.

## EMILIA-AMALIA Syllabus/Workbook Chapbook 5

<b>Who are EMILIA and AMALIA?</b>		EMILIA-AMALIA Session VIII: <b>Questioning Through Writing</b>	29
Shellie Zhang	4		
<b>About Us</b>	5	EMILIA-AMALIA Session IX: <b>Oral Histories/Interviewing</b>	32
EMILIA-AMALIA Session I: <b>Translation/Annotation</b>	6	Seika Boye and Nicholas Matte	
EMILIA-AMALIA Session II: <b>Affidamento/Entrustment</b>	10	EMILIA-AMALIA Session X: <b>The Practice of Resonance— Generating Political Alliances</b>	35
EMILIA-AMALIA Session III: <b>Autobiography/Narration</b>	14	Federica Buetti and Alex Martinis Roe	
EMILIA-AMALIA Session IV: <b>Education/Pedagogy</b>	16	EMILIA-AMALIA Session XI: <b>Wages For Housework—The Canadian Context</b>	39
Adriana Monti		Christina Rousseau, initiated by Helena Reckitt	
EMILIA-AMALIA Session V: <b>Alien Language</b>	20	EMILIA-AMALIA Session XII: <b>Reprinting Feminism</b>	43
Annie MacDonell and Maider Fortuné		Paola Melchiori and Adriana Monti	
EMILIA-AMALIA Session VI: <b>Memes/Fungibility</b>	23	<b>Letter Writing with EMILIA-AMALIA</b>	46
Yaniya Lee and Merray Gerges		Zinnia Naqvi and Shellie Zhang	
EMILIA-AMALIA Session VII: <b>We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know</b>	26	<b>Abolitionist Poetics and the Practice of Dreaming</b>	50
		Jackie Wang	
		<b>EMILIA-AMALIA at Mercer Union: SESSION Amy Wong</b>	53

In 1970s Milan, two women, Emilia and Amalia, were brought together by a feminist reading and writing group. Emilia's life was full of rich stories that she would consistently repeat in fragments. Amalia's strength was her natural aptitude for storytelling and narration. Seeing her friend's strong desire and ineffective efforts of sharing her life's story, Amalia applied her skills towards telling her friend's biography. Reflecting on the countless times she had heard Emilia speak, Amalia provided structure and context to her friend's stories, while connecting threads of commonality she saw. This intimate exchange demonstrates the archiving of the personal as a political act and the wish for new perspectives to develop from acts of telling and retelling. Moved by this heartfelt gesture, Emilia no longer had to rely solely on her attempts to speak her story into existence. She carried her friend's writing in her purse and reread it often—a reminder of her life's experiences with the validation that they have been heard.

Shellie Zhang

EMILIA-AMALIA is a Toronto-based feminist exploratory working group. Initiated in 2016, the group meets regularly to examine and employ practices of citation, annotation, questioning, interviewing and autobiography as essential feminist strategies that activate feminist art, writing and research practices. Each session is organized around a 'text,' a conversation, and a writing activity, but beyond that the meetings have taken many different forms. All meetings are open to the public and participants have varied widely.

One particular interest has been to elucidate the histories and strategies of feminism that have been obscured and overlooked. EMILIA-AMALIA asks how we might update and rewrite past practices so they can better respond to contemporary questions. Our aim has been to think through these questions from the differences and disparities between members and in a spirit of collaboration. For this reason, EMILIA-AMALIA is an open group that invites all levels of engagement.

We are all experts.  
No one is an expert.  
Expertise is not expected.

This series of five chapbooks is a partial record of the conversations, texts, images and output the meetings have generated and engaged with.

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION I:

# Translation/ Annotation

5 June 2016, 1–4 PM  
Gallery 44, Toronto

Taking seriously our relationship to other paradigms of understanding, this session considers the political significance of translation as a feminist practice.

Translation and annotation are key ways that feminist knowledge is transmitted. How can practices of translation shape our relationship to each other? What are the limits of translation? What are the obligations and duties of the translator? What are the reciprocal duties of the reader? Departing from Spivak's critique of the cultural politics of translation, we will consider what is at stake in our own practices of translation and annotation.

## Text

Gayatri Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," In *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 179-200.

## Writing Activity

Intimate Acts: An exercise in feminist citation, annotation and translation, conceived by Laura Guy and Kajsa Dahlberg

Reading transforms the meaning of a text. Sometimes this transformation manifests as a material intervention. For example, annotations generate an alternative text in the margins of an original. Underlining passages, we single out extracts to return to at a later point, share with others, or else deploy in a different context. Quotations articulate things that matter at the time. They help to give form to our own feelings, desires and demands. Reading allows us access to languages other than our own and in turn gives written language over to circulate as a new set of possibilities.



Feminism has often emphasized experimental forms of literature. It has politicized reading through collective reading groups and by developing radical approaches to translation and distribution. Feminist writers have worked to show how language shapes us and have invented strategies in order to reconfigure, disrupt or undermine what Gertrude Stein once referred to as “patriarchal poetry.” In doing so, feminist literature and theory has made traditional forms of language speak otherwise in the on-going pursuit for self-knowledge and self-determination.

## Process

### 1 Transcription

Ask each participant to read the passage that they have brought and underlined. Selections should be anywhere from one sentence to one paragraph in length. Ask participants not to disclose who the author is, nor the title/source.

Other participants take turns transcribing these passages into one Word document that is live projected for the group to see. Please use two carriage returns between excerpts to note where one passage ends and the next begins.

### 2 Annotation/Translation

Print the transcribed document out.

Divide the participants into groups of three to four people. Distribute the pages of the entire document evenly amongst the groups, in order (e.g., if the total document is 10 pages, and there are five groups, the first group would receive pages one

to two, the second group pages three to four, etc. Do not worry if a page breaks in the middle of an excerpt).

Providing the groups with pens, scissors and tape, ask them to work on annotating and translating their text. They have 30 minutes to work on this translation/annotation.

### 3 Reading

Each group reads their translation out loud to the larger group.

### 4 Citation

Once all the pieces have been read/performed, one member from each group reads their text aloud and a transcriber creates a new master document, on the projector, of this reconstituted text.

At the end of this new translation, make a heading called “Citations.” Ask each participant to name the author and title of their original passage/excerpt and record them here.

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION II:

# Affidamento/ Entrustment

4 July 2016, 6–9 PM  
Gallery 44, Toronto  
and  
16 July 2019, 6–9 PM  
Dufferin Grove Park, Toronto

*Affidamento*, or entrustment, is one of the most important and difficult practices enacted by the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, founded in 1975. Rejecting a narrative of equality and sisterhood, the Milan group sees difference, or disparity, as one of the most generative qualities of the personal and political relationships between women. Looking to historical examples of relationships of *affidamento*, and discussing how entrustment operates in our own lives, this session explores how practices of writing and narration give form to these exchanges and open up new spaces for feminist politics in the everyday.

## Text

Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, “Chapter Four” in *Sexual Difference: A Theory of Social-Symbolic Practice*, trans. Patricia Cicogna and Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 108-131.

## Writing Activity

“An exercise in the practice of *affidamento*”

Devised by Alex Martinis Roe, this activity invites participants to consider entrustment as “a practice doing” that combines narration and an individual writing activity.

This group exercise takes about an hour; each part requiring around twenty minutes:

## Part One

Meet in a circle. The facilitator begins from her left and gives everyone in the circle a consecutive number, stopping when she is halfway around the circle. Then she begins counting from one again, so that everyone can find the person who has

been given the same number. That way pairs are formed and the pairing is more likely to join people in the group who are not (yet) closely connected.

These pairs then find a space in the room where they can listen to each other, uninterrupted for 10 mins in the psychoanalytic dispositive, i.e. one lying down, the other sitting next to her head so that they don't look at each other, and listening to each other with a special kind of attention: keeping an open mind and not categorizing what the other person is saying. Other physical arrangements are fine, as long as there is a disparity in orientation between the positions, and there is no eye contact.

Each tells a story about a relationship she has had with a woman (and if you are not a woman, a story of a relationship between two women that you know of) which could possibly be a story of *affidamento*. It is important that the one listening does not interrupt the one speaking, although she may take notes.

When the first block of 10-minutes is up, the facilitator tells those speaking to stop and change positions with their partners. After the next 10-minute block, the facilitator explains the next stage of the exercise.

### Part Two

In 20 minutes, write the other person's story. The facilitator poses some challenges and questions to the group: Think about the way you tell the story—its form and the kind of language you use. From what perspective, in which voice do you write, and why? Do you need to ask your partner questions as you write? Try to think of this story as a gift to the other: what

can you write that will help her and the others to understand the relationship in a particular way?

### Part Three

Gather again as a group in a circle to read a few of these stories. Those in the circle who would like to share the story they have written read them aloud. The facilitator asks for a few minutes of silence, so that everyone in the circle can consider the following: This reading should be done in such a way as to be a kind of gift to your partner (or the women in the story in the case that your partner is not a woman), giving her a coherent sense of her uniqueness-in-relation, and giving her the authority to speak about the relation for herself. In this task we entrusted one another with intimate stories of relations between women that work through and on disparity rather sameness. We worked on the important task of storytelling as a way of creating affirmative relations over time and giving others a political space of co-appearance as an act of co-becoming. How can we perform this in the act of reading?



EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION III:

# Autobiography/ Narration

25 July 2016, 6–9 PM  
Dufferin Grove Park, Toronto

*Literary texts were treated as we treated our own words, that is, as parts of an enigma to be investigated by taking them apart and putting them back together in different ways along with non-words: places, facts, feelings. The result of this total experimentalism was to wipe out boundaries between life and literature. Women novelists, their biographies, their fictional characters, and we ourselves exchanged roles, giving birth to new, strange novels.*

– The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective

Foregrounding the ways that autobiography and memoir function as vital spaces for shaping feminist subjectivities, this session invites participants to think about the various strategies authors use to give language to life experiences. This open-air session will centre on sharing examples of memoir and autobiography from participants’ personal collections, and then practice using these tools to narrate our own life stories.

## Text

Hannah Black. “Press for Service” in *Dark Pool Party*. (London, UK: Arcadia Missa), 2016.

## Writing Activity

“New, Strange Novels: an experiment in self-narration and autobiography.”

Taking one line, half-sentence or word from one of the memoirs or autobiographies shared out loud today, begin writing your own account of your life experiences. These short, experimental texts should attempt to enact the voice and ethos of the author you have been inspired by, as an extended form of feminist citation.

After writing in silence for 10–15 minutes, participants are invited to share their results out loud with one another.

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION IV:

# Education/ Pedagogy

26 September 2016, 6–9 PM  
Feminist Art Gallery (FAG), Toronto  
In collaboration with film director Adriana Monti

Education/Pedagogy focuses on examples of feminist pedagogy, both past and present, as modes of transmitting feminist knowledge across generations. This session considers the generative function of experimental education and practices of collectivity in allowing feminists to develop survival strategies for the social sphere; as labourers, caretakers, mothers, teachers and students.

At the centre of this session is the 150 Hours Courses, an educational experiment implemented in Italy beginning in 1974, initially available to factory workers and farmers and later expanding to include women. The courses were non-vocational; they were not intended to improve one's productivity at work, but rather to allow for personal and collective growth. The courses sought to help workers reflect not only upon their working conditions but also on their lives. A large part was devoted to the re-elaboration and reinterpretation of what was defined as the "lived experience" of those attending: their experiences with work, immigration, cultural and language discrimination, union struggles and more.

Emilia and Amalia, the two women who are the namesake of our working group, met as students at the 150 Hours Courses. Their friendship and the role played by narration is a cornerstone of the practice of *affidamento*, or entrustment, developed by the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective.

Adriana Monti's film, *Scuola Senza Fine (School Without End)* (1983), shows how the experiment extended into the lives of women taking the course, most of whom were housewives. The film was produced in collaboration with these students as part of their studies for the class, turning the curriculum's

questions about the representation of women into questions about the representation of themselves.

Building on our ongoing discussions about the function of autobiography as a vital space for shaping feminist subjectivities, this session will invite participants to share examples of meaningful or challenging pedagogical experiences from their own lives and to examine how writing and filmmaking might offer important avenues for self-narration.

### Film

Adriana Monti's *Scuola Senza Fine (School Without End)* (1983), 36 min, distributed by Cinenova, London.

### Writing Activity

“More Dust in Our Houses, Less Dust on Our Brains”

Following the radical aims of the Women's Free University and the 150 Hours Courses, participants will work collaboratively to develop a syllabus for a radical feminist education. This can include readings as well as assignments, field trips and guest speakers. Ideas will be jotted down on post it notes and distributed throughout the space to be shared with others.

**Adriana Monti** is an Italian-Canadian independent producer, director and screenwriter. She began her career in the context of a larger feminist movement in Italy in the 1970s. Her 1983 film *Scuola Senza Fine (School without End)* has become one of her artistic trademarks which reflects her collaborative and participatory style that encourages the subjects of the film to co-author and infuse their creativity into the final production. Monti is the founder of the experimental film school Laboratorio di Cinematografia and taught film history and film production at the Women's Free University and at the Film and Television School in Milan.

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION V:

# Alien Language

13 October 2016, 6–9 PM  
 Gallery 44, Toronto  
 Facilitated by Annie MacDonell and Maïder Fortuné

The focus of this session returns to writing, autobiography and self-narration, practices which have been central to EMILIA-AMALIA's thinking and programming.

At the core of the session is the essay by Hélène Cixous called “Coming to Writing” (1976) that argues for the pressing need for women's writing, which she describes as emanating at once from the body, from the margins of society and the margins of language itself.

Participants are asked to bring in and share examples of writing that falls into this broad and expandable category. We'll start by reading and discussing some of these examples. Additional readings and films by Ulrike Meinhof, Jamaica Kincaid, Kathy Acker, Sarah Kane, Carla Lonzi, Liz Rhodes, and Hannah Black will also be available for sharing.

## Text

Hélène Cixous, “Coming to Writing” in *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*, Sarah Cornell et al., trans. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 1-59.

## Conversation

Is *écriture féminine* actually possible? In what way can language and writing exist outside the patriarchal system?

## Writing Activity

“Writing to pull apart and provoke”

After reading and discussing excerpts from the above-listed texts, participants are asked to write in response to a series of image, audio and film prompts. The prompts are offered up

sequentially, with 10 minutes for written responses between each prompt.

Once all the prompts have been presented and the writing is complete, participants are asked to share something from the pages they've written—they can choose anything, from a single word or sentence to an entire response.

**Annie MacDonell** is a visual artist. Her practice begins from the photographic impulse to frame and capture, but her work extends beyond photography, into film, installation, sculpture, performance and writing. She lives in Toronto and teaches at Ryerson University.

**Maïder Fortuné** was born in 1973, studied literature and theatre at École Jacques Lecoq, in Paris before entering Le Fresnoy National Studio for Contemporary Arts, where she developed a performance-related practice of the technological image. Often playing on fantasy and wonder, she draws on the styles of Samuel Beckett, Maurice Blanchot or Virginia Woolf for the suggestive power of words. Her work includes film, performance and images. She lives and works in Paris.

*EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION VI:*

# Memes/ Fungibility

14 November 2016, 6–9 PM  
Gallery 44, Toronto  
Facilitated by Yaniya Lee and Merray Gerges

Taking Aria Dean's essay "Poor Meme, Rich Meme" (2016) as a starting point for a discussion about the relationship between Black culture and the Internet, this session continues the group's ongoing conversations about the politics of practices of citation by thinking about how modes of knowledge circulate online, and how this circulation appropriates Black creativity. In her essay, Dean roots memes in Blackness to examine how spectatorship, appropriation, surveillance, privacy, circulation, and representation come to bear on it.

By looking at examples of memes, and at contemporary artworks that employ their mechanisms, the discussion will address questions of authorship, appropriation, Black fungibility, internet aesthetics, representation, and context, and will invite participants to adopt the form of the meme to consider how these forms provoke spectatorial discomfort, relatability, or both.

### Text

Aria Dean, "Poor Meme, Rich Meme," *Real Life*, 25 July 2016, <https://reallifemag.com/poor-meme-rich-meme/>.

### Writing Activity

"#relatability"

Drawing on examples from our own lives, this exercise asks participants to adapt a meme to respond to the critical issues raised by Dean's essay. Please come to the session with a meme or an example from the online circulation of culture that speaks to the themes in Dean's text.

**Yaniya Lee's** interdisciplinary research questions critical-reading practices and reconsiders Canadian art histories. Lee was previously on the editorial advisory committees for *Fuse* and *C Magazine*. From 2012-2015 she hosted the Art Talks MTL podcast, a series of long-form interviews with art-workers in Montreal. She is a founding collective member of MICE Magazine and a member of the We Curate, We Critique collective. In 2017 she participated in the Banff Research in Culture:Year 2067 residency and organized a series of public conversations with Black Canadian artists alongside Cauleen Smith, Jerome Havre and Camille Turner's "Triangle Trade" exhibition at Toronto's Gallery TPW. Lee currently works as associate editor at *Canadian Art* magazine.

**Merray Gerges** writes around art rather than about it. She studied art history at NSCAD and journalism at King's in Halifax, where she co-founded and co-edited *CRIT*, a free biannual criticism publication. Her reporting and criticism have appeared in *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *MOMUS*, *Hyperallergic* and more, addressing issues ranging from the radical potential (and shortcomings) of intersectional feminist memes and art selfies, to art-world race politics. At *Canadian Art*, she was editorial resident in 2016, and assistant editor from 2017 to 2019. She's currently the editorial fellow at *C Magazine*.



*EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION VII:*

# We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know

8 February 2017, 6–9 PM  
Gallery 44, Toronto

This session is part of a five-session arc inspired by Kyla Wazana Tompkins's essay, "We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know" (2016), which explores strategies for asking questions as a political and feminist practice.

In this next chapter, EMILIA-AMALIA shifts our focus from reading texts together to writing and acting together. These sessions will examine how feminism can manifest in a daily "practice of doing" that allows participants to take space and make space for one another's experiences. Each session will consider the different modes of questioning that shape our relation to the world, to ourselves and to our feminisms.

EMILIA-AMALIA asks:

What are the questions we need to ask to learn what we don't already know?

How can questions work to dismantle white supremacy and give authority to the voices and experiences of women of colour, Indigenous peoples and trans communities?

Who has been marginalized and obscured in the conventional history of Anglo-American second wave feminism, and how do we refuse to inherit these legacies?

What could we learn from other generations of feminists if we asked the right questions?

If equality is insufficient as a goal because it presumes a sameness between women, how can we stage disparity and

difference as generative forces in our relationships with one another?

What does it mean to take up space on the page, online, in public forums by asking questions?

What does visibility and vocality mean in a post-Internet age of hyper-visualization?

How can we shift public conversations by taking the authority to ask meaningful questions and to actively challenge racist, sexist, classist, and transmisogynist statements?

### **Text**

Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know," *Avidly*, 13 September 2016, <http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/09/13/we-arent-here-to-learn-what-we-know-we-already-know/>

### **Writing activity**

"What can we ask of feminism?"

Following Kyla Wazana Tompkins's call for questions that "move from theory to the world," this session considers the kinds of questions we want to pose to texts, to ourselves, and to one another. Deploying her strategy of editing and revising questions, the writing activity invites participants to craft questions about what they want from feminism, and then to share and edit them with the wider group.

*EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION VIII:*

# Questioning Through Writing

2 March 2017, 6–9 PM  
Gallery 44, Toronto

The last writing intensive session of EMILIA-AMALIA (October 2016) focused on autobiography and self-narration as feminist strategies for art making and writing. In this follow up, deep winter, writing intensive, we consider the flip side of that coin: using a series of textual, filmic and visual prompts, participants will attempt to shed the skin of their own experience and ask questions from inside another body, or from outside the body altogether.

In “Session V: Alien Language,” we thought about the political potential of writing one’s own story in a language that has only and always been designed by others. Here we consider if there is potential in writing from outside the self altogether.

A writing warm up, borrowed from Jennifer Fisher: without looking, participants write for 5 minutes about the precise position of their left foot. Then begin again, this time writing for 5 minutes, without looking, about the current position of their smartphone. The exercise compares our ability to describe our embodied position to our ability to narrate the precise location of our technology.

### Writing Activity

Participants are asked to bring in film clips, images, music and texts that provoke or prompt the group to write from outside the body. Each participant presents and explains their prompt, then 10 minutes is given over for the group to write in response to it.

At the end of the session, participants are asked to share some part of their writing. This could be as little as a single word or sentence or an entire response.

### List of Prompts

*All That is Left Unsaid*  
Michèle Pearson Clarke  
video, 2014, 2:27 mins

*The Co(te)lette Film*  
choreographed by Ann Van den Broek  
dance, 2007, 148 mins

*Libation For Mr. Brown—Bid ‘Em In*  
Matana Roberts  
song from *Coin Coin Chapter One: Gens de Couleur Libre*,  
Constellation 2011

*Untitled (Clay Portfolio)*  
Chris Curreri  
gelatin silver print, 2013, 7¾”x 5¾”,  
from a portfolio of 21 images

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION IX:

# Oral Histories/ Interviewing

4 April 2017, 6–9 PM  
and  
17 April 2017, 6–9 PM  
Gallery 44, Toronto  
Facilitated by Seika Boye and Nicholas Matte

Oral histories and interviews are vital ways that knowledge is exchanged between generations: particularly for marginalized communities whose narratives and expertise are often ignored in, obscured by, or repressed from official histories and archives. Asking questions, and taking the time and care to record the answers, is therefore a political gesture that can give authority to the experiences of interviewees, and counts them as meaningful for future audiences.

In this two-part session, participants learn the basics of oral history methods and interviewing techniques and then are tasked with developing questions they would like to ask another feminist in their lives. In the second part, participants report back on their experiences of interviewing and share transcriptions and recordings of the results.

Previous experience with interview methods is not required, although participants should expect to generate some material in relation to the workshop theme between sessions. Participants are requested to commit to both parts of the session.

This session is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

**Seika Boye** is a dance artist, scholar and advocate. She is a lecturer at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and director of the newly established research Centre for Dance Studies at the University of Toronto. She has been published in *The Dance Current*, *Dance Collection* *Dance Magazine*, *alt.theatre* and *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*. Seika has also worked in editorial capacities for the *Dance Current* and *Dance*

Collection Dance, where she was an archives assistant from 2004-2010. Most recently Seika co-edited the first Dance Forum in Performance Matters online journal. As a performer Seika has appeared with Judith Marcuse Projects, Electric Company Theatre, Ballet Creole, and various independent artists across Canada. Seika's recent projects include movement dramaturgy for Djanet Sears' *A Black Girl in Search of God* (Centaur Theatre/National Arts Centre) and Ars Mechanica's *Sisi* (2016 Hatch Series, Harbourfront Centre). Her SSHRC funded doctoral research focuses on social dancing within Toronto's black population at mid-century.

**Nicholas Matte** is a politically conscious interdisciplinary historian whose research interests include the historical, social and scientific constructions of bodies in relation to sex, gender, sexuality, health, disability and race. Nick has presented at numerous conferences and his work has appeared in *GLQ*; *International Journal of Transgenderism*; *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*; *Transgender Studies Reader* and *Trans Activism in Canada*. His dissertation, "Historicizing Liberal American Transnormativities: Medicine, Media, Activism, 1960-1990" traced the consolidation of trans activism and transnormativity as a cultural formation and in relation to liberalism. Matte teaches in the Sexual Diversity Studies Program at the University of Toronto where he also curates the Sexual Representation Collection.

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION X:

# The Practice of Resonance— Generating Political Alliances

3 June 2017, 11 AM–7 PM  
Gallery 44, Toronto  
Facilitated by Federica Buetti and Alex Martinis Roe

Presented by Berlin-based artist Alex Martinis Roe and writer Federica Bueti, this workshop will begin from the resonances between two feminist texts that are from completely different places, contexts and discourses: one about the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, and the other “No Selves To Abolish: Afropessimism, anti-Politics, and The End of The World” (2016) by K. Aarons. The resonances and dissonances between the two texts will be explored through a collective film and writing experiment. Through the production of a short film, the group will devise a toolbox of techniques and practices to explore the conditions for generating political alliances between different positions.

The texts will be sent in advance of the workshop—please read them prior to the event. No prior knowledge or experience with filmmaking is required to participate.

### Texts

Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, “Chapter Four,” in *Sexual Difference: A Theory of Social-Symbolic Practice*, Patricia Cicogna and Teresa de Lauretis, eds. (Milan: Libreria della Donne di Milano, 1990), pp. 108-131

K. Aarons, “No Selves To Abolish: Afropessimism, anti-Politics, and The End of The World” *Meta Mute*, 29 February 2016, <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/no-selves-to-abolish-afropessimism-anti-politics-and-end-world>

### Writing Activity

In pairs, describe your practice as a researcher, writer, artist, feminist or curator. After listening, your partner will ask

questions and take notes. Then trade, so the first person listens while the second person describes their practice.

Working independently, write a description of the “practice of alliance” undertaken by your partner. Give it a name.

Returning to the large group, share the title of your partner’s practice and your description of it with the wider group.

In the afternoon, larger groups of four to six participants work together to build a collective practice from their individual descriptions. These practices should centre on a common strategy or act. Using a camera and sound equipment available on site, create a film that embodies your collective practice of alliance.

**Federica Bueti** is a writer and editor based in Berlin. She is the editor of *...ment, Journal for Contemporary Culture, Art and Politics*. Her writing on art and cultural theory has appeared in magazines such as *frieze*, *BOMB*, *Ibraaz*, *Makhzin*, *Flash Art*, *Carla*, *X-TRA*, a.o. and she regularly contributes to critical anthologies and artist monographs. Her current research focuses on feminism and the economies and politics of personal writing. She is part of



the curatorial team at SAVVY Contemporary, where she co-curates the series Speaking Feminisms dedicated to an exploration of current feminist practices and alliances. In 2013, she organised the spoken-word series Rhythms, Voices and Ties at Archive Kabinett, Berlin. She has given lectures widely including at Tate Liverpool, UK; HKW, Berlin, Germany; Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands; Akademie der Künste Der Welt, Cologne, Germany; Hordaland Art Centre, Bergen, Norway; and dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Germany. She is currently completing her PhD in Critical Writing in Art at the Royal College of Art, London.

**Alex Martinis Roe** b. 1982 (Melbourne, Australia) is an artist based in Berlin. Her current projects focus on feminist genealogies and seek to foster specific and productive relations between different generations as a way of participating in the construction of feminist histories and futures. Recent and upcoming exhibitions include Badischer Kunstverein, Germany (2017); ar/ge kunst Galerie Museum, Bolzano (2017); Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2017); Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory, Amsterdam (2016); Rongwrong, Amsterdam (2014); Archive Kabinett, Berlin (2014); and Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2013). She was a fellow of the Graduate School for Arts and Sciences, University of the Arts, Berlin from 2013–16.

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION XI:

# Wages For Housework— The Canadian Context

5 September 2017, 6–9 PM

Art Metropole, Toronto

Presented in collaboration with the Blackwood Gallery in tandem with the exhibition *Habits of Care*

Facilitated by Christina Rousseau (initiated by Helena Reckitt)

Continuing EMILIA-AMALIA's commitment to exploring under recognized histories of feminism and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and tactics across generations, our fall session focuses on the global campaign, "Wages for Housework." This transversal movement highlighted the capitalist appropriation of unpaid domestic labour, and demanded its remuneration by the state. The session highlights Wages for Housework's actions in and around Toronto and Montreal in the 1970s and 1980s, which included the Women's Liberation Bookmobile, the paper "The Autonomy of Black Lesbian Women," by Wilmette Brown of Black Women for Wages for Housework, and the manifesto "Fucking is Work," by Wages Due Lesbians. These activities aimed to meet the intersecting needs of lesbian feminists, migrant workers, domestic labourers, and Black and working class women.

Following the format of the Feminist Duration Reading Group in London, which Reckitt initiated in 2015 to bring to light feminisms from outside the Anglo-American canon, this session will centre on an out-loud reading activity. The meeting aims to open up discussions on how feminism operates transnationally, the politics of undervalued care work and what it means to "take care."

This session is part of an ongoing exchange of ideas, activities and texts between EMILIA-AMALIA in Toronto and the Feminist Duration Reading Group in London.

### Texts:

Toronto Wages Due Lesbian Collective (subset of Toronto Wages for Housework Committee), "Fucking is Work"

Toronto Wages Due Lesbians, "Lesbian Autonomy and the Gay Movement" (1976)

Frances Gregory of the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee, "I'm Not a Housewife, I'm Liberated"

Editorial by Toronto Wages for Housework Committee, "Why A Campaign for Wages for Housework?" (1977)

**Helena Reckitt** is a curator and researcher and Reader in Curating in the Art Department, Goldsmiths, University of London. Her work often explores legacies of queer and feminist art, theory, curating, and activism. She has edited *Art and Feminism* (2001), *Sanja Iveković: Unknown Heroine* (2013) and, with Joshua Oppenheimer, *Acting on AIDS* (1998). Reckitt's 2013 essay "Forgotten Relations: Feminist Artists and Relational Aesthetics" appeared in

*Politics in a Glass Case*, edited by Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry. She has held curatorial and programming positions at the ICA, London, Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Georgia, and The Power Plant, Toronto, and has curated solo exhibitions with artists including Yael Bartana, Keren Cytter, Hew Locke, and Ryan Trecartin (with Jon Davies), and group exhibitions such as *What Business Are You In?* (2004), *Not Quite How I Remember It* (2008), and *Getting Rid of Ourselves* (2014). She is curating *Habits of Care* at the Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, Mississauga, an exhibition that initiates the curatorial research platform “Take Care,” organised by Letters & Handshakes.

**Christina Rousseau** is a sessional instructor teaching in Southern Ontario. Her teaching, research, and writing interests include: social reproduction and emotional labour; gender and work; gender, the body, and disability; Canadian feminist history; and social movement organizing.

EMILIA-AMALIA SESSION XII:

# Reprinting Feminism

Paola Melchiori in conversation with Adriana Monti  
29 October 2017, 3–5 PM  
Metro Toronto Convention Centre  
Co-presented with Art Metropole  
and 2/edition Art Book Fair

How does writing and publishing facilitate the transmission of feminist practices across generations? This participatory conversation with Italian philosopher and writer Paola Melchiori will explore the legacies of publishing—both in text and film—in transmitting feminist histories and knowledges. A founder of The Women’s Free University in Milan, an experimental institution for feminist knowledge established in 1986, Melchiori will discuss her research into feminist knowledge production, and consider the role that printed matter plays in rehabilitating forgotten or overlooked histories of feminism.

The Women’s Free University of Milan drew on the legacies of radical feminist pedagogy from the 150 Hours School program of the 1970s, the subject of *Scuola Senza Fine (School Without End)*: a film by Melchiori’s colleague and friend, Toronto-based Adriana Monti.

**Paola Melchiori** is the founder and past president of The Women’s Free University in Milan, and Crinali, the research and intercultural education association. She is also present president of the International Feminist University Network, an international think-tank for women’s critical thinking and education. These Free Universities are committed to carrying on participatory research and refining methodologies to collect the history of “invisible groups”

in society and making them available for the public and for future generations. She is author of three books, co-editor of seven collections of oral history, and has written more than 70 articles and reports about feminist theory and on the topics of knowledge creation, interdisciplinary and relational learning, and education. She has also produced three videos on international struggles of women in Argentina, Iceland and Albania. Melchiori is currently focusing on how to pass on experiences, memory, history to young women and men, through written and visual texts.

**Adriana Monti** is an independent producer and filmmaker with more than 30 years’ experience. She is the principal of A&Z Media Ltd., a documentary film making company. She began her career in the context of a larger feminist movement in Italy in the 1970s. Her 1983 film *Scuola Senza Fine (School without End)* has become one of her artistic trademarks. It reflects her collaborative and participatory style that encourages the subjects of the film to co-author and infuse their creativity into the final production. The film follows a group of former housewives who completed a 150-hour secondary diploma course and then joined a research and study group.

# Letter Writing with EMILIA- AMALIA

4 May 2018, 3–5 PM  
 article, Montréal  
 as part of Montréal Monochrome VI: Sanctuary City?  
 Facilitated by Zinnia Naqvi and Shellie Zhang

In thinking about the falsity of the term “sanctuary city” in relation to Canadian cities, how can we use letter writing as a means to vocalize our opinions in hopes of holding public figures accountable? In our contentious political climate, we all face the obligation to be an advocate for social change. We are often encouraged by our activist peers to reach out directly to those in power or voice outrage against unjust policies, bills, judicial verdicts and more.

While we continue to be reminded that every single voice matters, to the individual, letter writing can seem like a futile gesture that is sure to go unnoticed. Is the act of making your position known only beneficial in making us feel that we are inciting change? How much effect do these actions have? How can we avoid becoming ambivalent in times of injustice and unrest? EMILIA-AMALIA would like you to consider these ideas with us as we discuss them and collectively write letters to those who have obligations to serve the public.

EMILIA-AMALIA held its first session in Montréal as part of the annual Montréal Monochrome at articule artist-run centre. This sixth edition of Montréal Monochrome explored the different meanings and socio-political ramifications that the concept of “sanctuary city” includes or suggests, especially if it is used to speak to notions of an unceded Indigenous territory.

In January and August of 2017, the former mayor of “Montréal,” Denis Coderre, declared: “Montréal is a ‘Sanctuary City,’ and proud to be one.” However, if “Montréal” was a sanctuary city in the true sense of the term, its elected officials would have already enacted a series of actions guaranteeing the security of refugees, most notably by stopping the collaboration between

the police service (SPVM) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to transmit information. To date, nothing has indicated that they have had such intentions.

### Writing Activity:

“Can Letter Writing Lead to Concrete Action?”

Participants are encouraged to think of a time in which they picked up a pen or phone to reach out to a political entity in hopes of igniting concrete political change. Did this action have a direct result? How can we use certain tools to ignite change through the act of letter writing? Or is the act of simply writing enough to create change within ourselves and our relation with that issue?

Choose a current cause that moves or concerns you and write to your local political entity to express your concerns. Stationary and stamps will be provided.

**Zinnia Naqvi** is a visual artist based in Tkaronto/Toronto and Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. Her work uses a combination of photography, video, writings, archival footage and installation, while dealing with larger themes of colonialism, cultural translation, language and gender. She is a recipient of the 2019 New Generation Photography Award.

**Shellie Zhang** (b. 1991, Beijing, China) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada. She is interested in exploring how integration, diversity and assimilation is implemented and negotiated, how this relates to lived experiences, and how culture is learned, relearned and sustained. She exhibits internationally and is a recipient of grants such as the Toronto Arts Council's Visual Projects grant, the Ontario Arts Council's Visual Artists Creation Grant and the Canada Council's Project Grant to Visual Artists.



# Abolitionist Poetics and the Practice of Dreaming

30 March 2019, 1–3 PM  
Toronto Media Arts Centre  
In partnership with the Canadian Filmmakers  
Distribution Centre  
Facilitated by Jackie Wang

*Poetry...is not what we simply recognize as the formal 'poem,' but a revolt: a scream in the night, an emancipation of language and old ways of thinking.*

– *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*

In this workshop, participants will explore the relationship between poetry and social imagination. Using dreams to access a mode of thinking that does not concede to the realism of the present, the session seeks to shatter the captivity of bodies and imaginations through writing exercises (feel free to bring your dreams!) and discussions responding to textual and filmic clips.

## Text:

Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Toronto: Penguin Random House, 2003)

Poems selected by Jackie Wang distributed as a packet.

## Writing Activity:

Write down a recent dream and explore its potential meaning with a partner, starting with the prompts “In the dream I saw,” “In the dream I was,” “In the dream we become,” and “In the dream we make.” Writing experiments can be individual or collective.

**Jackie Wang** is a black studies scholar, poet, multimedia artist, and Ph.D. candidate in African and African American Studies and History at Harvard University, specializing in race and the political economy of prisons and police in the US. She recently published a book titled *Carceral Capitalism* (Semio-text(e) / MIT Press) on the racial, economic, political, legal and technological dimensions of the US carceral state. Her interest in this topic is rooted in her experience of having an imprisoned brother who was sentenced to juvenile life without parole as a teenager. She is the recent recipient of a fellowship at the Schlesinger Library, where she conducted research on the life and legacy of Angela Davis. She has also published a number of punk zines including *On Being Hard Femme*, and a collection of dream poems titled *Tiny Spelunker of the Oneiro-Womb* (Capricious).

# EMILIA-AMALIA at Mercer Union: SESSION Amy Wong

23 May 2019, 7–10 PM  
Mercer Union, Toronto  
Facilitated by Amy Wong

Artist Amy Wong hosts a performative lecture focusing on mother-work as interwoven with social, communal and activist work. Wong explores a range of inspirations and traditions: the popularity of mid-19th-century quilting bees, Cantonese traditions of postpartum nourishment and healing, and the artist's own use of and thinking around breast milk production as linked to cultural production.

This event is part of EMILIA-AMALIA's partnership with Mercer Union in response to the exhibition, *Beatrice Gibson: Plural Dreams of Social Life*. Through four public programs in the ongoing series SESSION, EMILIA-AMALIA invites artists and practitioners to consider Gibson's propositions for collective authorship, feminist histories, and the maternal as an essential point of collision between the self and the external world.

### Activity:

Amy Wong presents a slideshow and informal talk, as participants piece together and personalize their own motherhood readers, selecting from the photocopied texts provided.

### Selected Texts:

Angela Garbes, "The More I Learn About Breast Milk, the More Amazed I Am," *The Stranger* 26 August 2015.

Megan Guerber, "Q&A with Wendy Red Star and Beatrice Red Star Fletcher," *American Craft Council* 17 May 2018.

Raven Davis, "My Mother Gave Me My IMFA—Indigenous Master's of Fine Arts," *Canadian Art*, 31 January 2017, <https://canadianart.ca/essays/my-mother-gave-me-my-imfa-indigenous-masters-of-fine-arts/>

Cassie Remo Steele, "Drawing Strength from Our Mothers: Tapping the Roots of Black Women's History," *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 2.2 (2000)

Octavia Bürgel, "On Being Kara Walker's Daughter," *VICE* 14 May 2017

Rossina Cazali, "Empathy and Complicity in Regina Jose Galindo's America's Family Prison," *Post*, 10 May 2019.

Karsonya "Kaye" Wise Whitehead, "A Writer with Writers: Mothering as an Act of Revolutionary Love"

Audre Lorde, "Black Mother Woman" (1971)

Julietta Singh, "The Ghost Archive," in *No Archive Will Restore You* (2018)

Amy Wong and Rudi Wong (working draft for *Canadian Art*), "Reflecting on Mother Work: Let's not be afraid to revel in mothering clichés—especially the optimism and joy that is a *faux pas* in the cool, collected (no feelings unless we call it "affect") art world"

**Amy Wong** completed her MFA at York University, Toronto and post-graduate studies at De Ateliers, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Recent projects include "Shared Conversations: A Dinner with ARCs across Canada," Modern Fuel, Kingston, Ontario and "Institutional Critique Teach-In and Catalogue Cover," Gardiner Museum, Toronto. Forthcoming projects include *Room for Taking Care* at the OCAD University Graduate Gallery, Toronto; *Alimentary* at Obrera Centro, Mexico City. She is a 2019-2020 fellow of the Toronto Arts Council Cultural Leader's Lab at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Alberta.

## Colophon

EMILIA-AMALIA meets on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Huron-Wendat, who are the original owners and custodians of the land.

E-A is initiated by Cecilia Berkovic, Yaniya Lee, Annie MacDonell, Gabrielle Moser, Zinnia Naqvi, Leila Timmins, cheyanne turions and Shellie Zhang.

E-A would like to thank Gallery 44 for hosting sessions and Trinity Square Video for lending space. Special thanks to Sean O'Neill for inviting us to be residents at the AGO; Helena Reckitt and the Feminist Duration Reading Group in London for their mentorship and friendship; Adriana Monti, Maïder Fortuné, Merray Gerges, Seika Boye, Nicholas Matte, Federica Bueti, Alex Martinis Roe, Christina Rousseau, Jackie Wang, Paola Melchiori and Amy Wong for their mighty contributions; and lastly, to all of the folks who have come to our sessions, screenings, events and talks over the past three years.

A portion of the proceeds from the sales of the chapbooks will be donated to Black Lives Matter Toronto's Freedom School. [freedomsschool.ca](http://freedomsschool.ca)

published in Toronto, Canada in 2019 by EMILIA-AMALIA in an edition of 200  
creative direction by Cecilia Berkovic  
designed by Tal Sofia Braniss  
typeset in Visuel, New Century Schoolbook and Rational  
printed in Canada by printNG.ca on 100% recycled paper  
[EMILIA-AMALIA.com](http://EMILIA-AMALIA.com)

Thanks to the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Ontario Arts Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their support.



- Chapbook 1**     **EMILIA-AMALIA Session II: Affidamento/Entrustment**
- Chapbook 2**     **EMILIA-AMALIA Session I: Translation/Annotation**
- Chapbook 3**     **EMILIA-AMALIA Session VII: How to Ask a Question**
- Chapbook 4**     **EMILIA-AMALIA Session VIII: Questioning Through Writing**
- Chapbook 5**     **EMILIA-AMALIA: Syllabus/Workbook**

This series of five chapbooks is a partial record of the texts, conversations, images and output the EMILIA-AMALIA working group sessions have generated and engaged with since 2016.