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Oral history interview with Guerrilla Girls  
Julia de Burgos and Hannah Höch, 2008 May  
8

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a digitally recorded interview with Guerrilla Girls Julia De Burgos and Hannah Höch on December 1, 2007. The interview took place at an undisclosed location in New York, New York, and was conducted by Judith Olch Richards for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

JUDITH RICHARDS: This is Judith Richards interviewing Julia Burgos and Hannah Höch.

JULIA DE BORGOS: Julia De Burgos.

MS. RICHARDS: Juliana?

MS. DE BORGOS: Julia -

MS. RICHARDS: Julia -

MS. DE BORGOS: - De -

MS. RICHARDS: - De -

MS. DE BORGOS: - Burgos.

MS. RICHARDS: - Burgos. And Hannah Höch on May 8, 2008, New York City for the Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution, disc number one.

So I'm going to begin by asking you each, one at a time - first of all, when you first start speaking, say who - your Guerrilla Girl name so that the transcriber can know who you are, and talk about how you first became a Guerrilla Girl. We could start with Julia.

MS. DE BORGOS: Okay. This is Julia De Burgos, aka - I'll just write J.B. from now on, right?

MS. RICHARDS: Sure.

MS. DE BORGOS: Julia De Burgos. Okay. My first action with the Guerrilla Girls began with the protest in the front of the newly constructed -

MS. RICHARDS: Let me go back before you had made an action. How did you ever become a Guerrilla Girl and when was that?

MS. DE BORGOS: That's what I'm going to tell you.

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, I'm sorry.

MS. DE BORGOS: The Guerrilla Girls had an action in front of the Guggenheim Museum [SoHo] that was criticizing the lack of women in their - in some contemporary art survey. And they were passing out these masks printed on a - gorilla mask printed on paper bags, white paper bags. And I was one of the invited guests to the opening of the Guggenheim downtown, which is where it occurred. And they asked me - a masked Guerrilla Girl asked me would I wear this paper mask when I got inside the museum, and I was happy to do so. So that was the first - even though I wasn't an official Guerrilla Girl, I took part in this action that they asked the public to participate in.

I was probably in my early - early 30s at the time, could've been, and I got to know another Guerrilla Girl who didn't reveal her identity to me, but as we got to know each other well, she asked me to join the Guerrilla Girls.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you remember her Guerrilla Girl name?

MS. DE BORGOS: Alma.

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, okay. Alma Thomas.

MS. DE BORGOS: Alma Thomas. She was one of my mentors in the art world, and as she got - we got to know each and she saw that I was a person who would be interested in supporting feminist causes and particularly the causes of female artists of color, I became part of the group.

MS. RICHARDS: And at that point, did you have a sense of what role you would play in their actions, performances? Did you have any - going into it, have a sense of what you would do as a Guerrilla Girl, what you hoped to do, what you imagined you would be doing?

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, I mean, the Guerrilla Girls were very well known to me in terms of just the kinds of actions - street actions that they performed and I knew that being part of this group would enable the perspective of an artist of color, which I was told there weren't many Guerrilla Girls of color in the group, to be able to have some of our perspectives reflected in the literature that was being produced at the time. So I felt that it was an important contribution that I could make to the discourse of art production and art criticism in general.

MS. RICHARDS: And Hannah?

HANNAH HÖCH: Uh-huh?

MS. RICHARDS: Could you talk about your history?

MS. HÖCH: Of course. Well, it's funny that Alma is who invited you - and I didn't remember that - because Jane is who, in fact, invited me.

MS. RICHARDS: Jane Bowles?

MS. HÖCH: Yes, exactly. And so it was the fall of 1997 that I joined the group. I received an e-mail from Gertrude Stein inviting me to be - asking if I were interested in taking part in this covert operation, donning a gorilla mask and infiltrating the art world and causing trouble and, you know, sparking conversations, and, you know, revealing problems and solving problems, and I was really excited about that. And then as, you know - as you just mentioned, there's a mentoring system in place, at least at the time that I was invited to be a part of the group. And so when I enthusiastically accepted this invitation, I was told that, in fact, this dead artist, Jane, is now my mentor. And so she kind of brought me into the fold that way.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you know when the mentoring system began because I actually hadn't heard about it before?

MS. HÖCH: It's a system from my perspective because I came in under it. I think it was probably just with my - I mean, I don't know.

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, I think - I think that it has a lot to do with our perspectives -

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: - because I would say that the Guerrilla Girls that I became familiar with, for example, you know, Gertrude -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - Alma - let's see who else. Name some of the other sort of - those women in particular, Gertrude and Alma, were women that had already established careers in the art world, and were making very - you know, and were - and still make important contributions as artists and in other capacities in the art world, and therefore, coming in younger in our careers and in years, just plain years, we might have a very different understanding of our relationship as mentors just because of our -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - situation at the time, whereas I think that the original Guerrilla Girls saw each other as peers. No?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, I think that's exactly right. And I was definitely brought in this tidal wave of new recruitment. I mean Alma was definitely spearheading this movement to get younger women in the group to get a more diverse group going, to get more energy in the group, different kinds of media activated in the group, and it was a part of that kind of push -

MS. RICHARDS: Different kinds of media and different backgrounds?

MS. HÖCH: Media being -

MS. RICHARDS: That the members would have different -

MS. HÖCH: Well, and it was, like -

MS. RICHARDS: - talents?

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - just after this book came out. So, exactly, new kinds of ways outside of postering and outside of what had been used up until that point to be, you know, working and, you know, the continuation of the gigs and all of that stuff. So, yeah, I came in on that wave of new recruits, so definitely have a different kind of, I guess, systematized approach to seeing how that relationship can be.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] When you first went to meetings - each of you could answer this - what was the experience of how the meeting took - how the conversations took place? Did someone run the meeting? Was there an agenda? How were new ideas introduced? And so kind of the climate of the meeting -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - and the - what would you expect when you went to a meeting that would happen.

MS. HÖCH: Well, what I remember - and [laughs] who knows where the truth is in this. What I remember is definitely, like, a process of reevaluating established ideas and kind of what anyone had worked on since the previous meeting, a section dedicated to, like, new ideas, kind of what new agendas there might be or new initiatives within the group.

MS. RICHARDS: You said the beginning was evaluating the effectiveness of the past or that -

MS. HÖCH: Like a current campaign that -

MS. RICHARDS: - the status -

MS. HÖCH: - we may be working on. Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - status report.

MS. HÖCH: It's like - let's say we've got, you know, two projects going already. So - exactly, a status report to figure out, you know, where we are, who's working on what elements of it, brainstorming on those projects, and moving them forward to the next level, whatever that's going to be, and then a process of hearing out new ideas and new initiatives.

MS. RICHARDS: And was there a conversation - a leader to the conversations? Was it really a free for all?

MS. DE BORGOS: Okay. Well, I joined before you did.

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: I was there when I was -

MS. RICHARDS: Hannah, you joined in '97?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And you joined in?

MS. DE BORGOS: Early '90s.

MS. RICHARDS: Early '90s, okay.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right, early '90s. I'm pretty sure that that action was perhaps as early as 1988, the Guerrilla Girl - the first protest.

MS. RICHARDS: I think that Alma said that she joined in '91.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right, but the protest at the Guggenheim, if I'm not mistaken, could be as early as '88.

MS. RICHARDS: But she recruited you and she wasn't a member until '91.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. So what I'm saying is, is that although I took part in that first action, I had no idea who the - I knew who the Guerrilla Girls were from, like, posters and hearing about them. I had, you know, all of these fantasies about who these women were -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - because they were anonymous. So it was a big deal for me to, like - to wear that mask. But that action didn't lead me to be recruited by the group. It wasn't until six or seven years later when -

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, I didn't realize -

MS. DE BORGOS: - Alma -

MS. RICHARDS: - the time gap.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes. I mean the Guerrilla Girls kept producing and I kept seeing it, but I wasn't at all - like, after I came out of the museum, nobody came to me and said, "Do you want to be a Guerrilla Girl?" It was really a long time. Alma really had to have joined in order to have recruited someone like myself, and I would say I joined maybe a year or two after Alma. So maybe it could've been '94 or '95 because, for sure, I took part in some of the work around the *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* [New York: Harper Collins, 1995].

MS. RICHARDS: That was in '94.

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: So maybe you joined in '93.

MS. DE BORGOS: Perhaps.

MS. RICHARDS: She joined in '91.

MS. DE BORGOS: Exactly. It was something as early as that, and what I can tell you about meetings at that time is that they were - which led to the schism in the Guerrilla Girls. They were dominated by Frida Kahlo or she did - you know, there was an attempt to have - you know, Frida and - the rest of the group would sometimes align themselves against Frida and there was a lot of negotiation.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well, and even, you know, I was pretty young when I joined the group and the youngest member for a really long time, and so I was also recruited at the same time as a new girl with women who were, you know, older than me in age, but the same kind of level in terms of coming to the group. And, you know, you had asked about camaraderie during the early years versus kind of this mentoring program when I was coming in, and the dynamic - you know, I could definitely see, you know, some of these women had known each other for a long time, regardless if they're just coming in the group now or not. So there was always like a power dynamic within it. I think you're exactly right, that Frida ran - many of the groups were meeting in one woman's loft almost all the time, and I can't remember her name, her Girl name - while I was, you know, coming in and during those early few years. So there was a lot of, like, triangulation of power within, like, geographically her space and then some of, like, Frida and then some of the very established women in the group.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: But what I would say for the most is that these meetings were mostly free-floating idea sessions where a question would be posed. Okay. Let's say a typical meeting would be, like, there would be an agenda. "There's this gig coming up or this group wants us to participate." You know, a gig is like when you get paid to - there's a distinction between, like, participation and a gig. A gig is when, like, an institution is paying you -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - to come out there, and that's how the group, I'm sure you've been told, got their - you know, got the money to keep going was through these public appearances as masked avengers in the art world, largely by colleges and museums that would support us being there. So that was, like, one component. So discussing, "Do we want to do this gig? Who can do the gig?" Then requests for us to intervene in some way in a matter in the art world or one of us saying, "I'm really upset about this. Let's do an action." So there was discussion what our - you know, gigs and actions. And opportunities like the *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*, and at that time, we were all producing the newsletter -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - the - what was it? *Hot Flashes*.

MS. HÖCH: *Hot Flashes*, yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: *Hot Flashes*. Again, a reference to the fact that there were some women in the group who were middle-aged - who were already facing middle age. And so that was, in some ways, very reflective of their mind space at the time. I think as a woman in my early 30s, like, hot flashes wouldn't necessarily mean anything -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - to me, right? They do now, though. [Laughs.] So a meeting would have, like, these components, actions, gigs, opportunities, and we would all vote on what we wanted to work on, what's a good idea. And also, a lot of voting and exchange -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - took place about the actual content. I mean it could take three months to produce a poster because we would brainstorm and brainstorm and brainstorm until it came out to the satisfaction of every - you know, to practically the satisfaction of everyone.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Or the acceptance -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: - by everyone else.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: And the taking on of roles, whether it was -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: - performer, graphic designer -

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, the graphic design part was always Frida.

MS. RICHARDS: - putting up posters -

MS. HÖCH: Right. Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - whatever your role would be or -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: - just an idea person, that was just you naturally decided to do what you felt?

MS. HÖCH: Well, yeah, you definitely volunteered for what you had strengths in and what you felt like you could contribute, you know, the most to in terms of, like, you know, were you interested in gigging? Like, could you speak in front of a crowd? Could you handle that? Can you travel? Is your schedule permitting this? Do you need to earn income from gigging? You know, so I think that people would volunteer for the right, you know, fit for them. Like you were just starting to mention, there was no graphic design negotiation. You know, I mean I was, like, really excited to design.

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: I'd like to do the e-mail. I'd like to do the website, and that was not happening, huh-uh. So -

MS. RICHARDS: What area did you find to work in, in the beginning?

MS. HÖCH: Well, I did a lot of gigs in the beginning. I did -

MS. RICHARDS: And how was that? What was that experience for you?

MS. HÖCH: Oh, it was great. It was, you know, a lot of weight to learn the history and to accurately represent it and to, you know, not be who I was, but, in fact, be Hannah and, in fact, be the Guerrilla Girls, you know, the representation of the whole history.

MS. RICHARDS: When you talk about doing gigs -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - and most people invited you expecting a certain performance -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - was there a scripted performance or a suggested scripted performance?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah, there was. It was a scripted performance, slightly suggested. You know, we would always tweak it to be just the right thing for the right crowd and, you know, include new posters that were coming out or new actions or, you know, make it topical to the environment and the climate of the time. But, you know, I was definitely interested in seeing a revamping of the gigs and was -

MS. RICHARDS: In what way?

MS. HÖCH: - very vocal about that. Well, I mean, you know, I experienced the Girls through learning about them in art appreciation classes, you know, art history classes.

MS. RICHARDS: In college?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] I saw them gig at my school. So I - you know, I saw them from that perspective over the years, and figured out ways to, you know, talk about them and evaluate them and figure out what was really working and what seemed a little stuck in time to me. And I really wanted to - you know, why it was so exciting to gig and to make comments about it is because that - like, the wealth of the history of the Girls and the amount of energy behind it, and, you know, amazing progress that the group made in the world and in the art world. And it was just so obvious that the potential for continuing on was infinite, but I really saw there was, like, you know, an updating that needed to happen.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you succeed in doing that, updating the -

MS. HÖCH: In updating it?

MS. RICHARDS: - script?

MS. HÖCH: In the GuerrillaGirlsBroadband.

MS. RICHARDS: But as - when you were doing gigs for Guerrilla Girls?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: You had a few years of that.

MS. HÖCH: Right. Right.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you have a role in playing - were you able to implement any updates in the general script that everyone would -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah. I mean I definitely remember playing down a little less of the high heels, like sex kitten angle of it. You know, that wasn't really interesting to me. I was much more interested in, like, wearing crazy cyborg glasses or something like - you know what I mean? Like, I just wanted to infuse it with a little more, like, contemporary now.

MS. RICHARDS: Your generation.

MS. HÖCH: Exactly. So, you know, but I had no - you know, I had never any interest in changing the representation of the posters or how formal the presentation was because that was very effective and that was very important and very interesting to me. So, you know, it was the playfulness and the just updating part of it that -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - I would say that happened.

MS. RICHARDS: And Julia, what was your experience of doing gigs?

MS. DE BORGOS: The first gig, I was really pretty nervous about, so I kind of stayed silent. I've done several gigs since then, and I became more confident about public speaking. I think that I've been particularly effective with gigs that - in colleges where much more of the social framework of arts activism is discussed and how, you

know, my interests - I'm an art historian, actually. I'm one of the few members of the group that is actually not a practicing artist, but I am an art historian and a curator. But because there are, in fact, so few Latina women/Puerto Rican women in the arts and we play so many different hats - and I do - I did have a history of doing performance beforehand. So, anyway, all of those things came into play, but my real interest was really understanding and being engaged in things like arts activism as a participant observer given that some of my own scholarship deals with different kinds of arts activism.

MS. RICHARDS: And did you find ways to update or personalize?

MS. DE BORGOS: I would say that my - I had two contributions. I mean I think that I'm a really bad speller even today. There's still a typo in something I wrote today that was published. [Laughs.] Little typos.

MS. HÖCH: [Laughs.] That was funny.

MS. DE BORGOS: And so those typos were sometimes really interesting. Like, I remember misspelling the Whitney Museum [of American Art, New York City] and it became the Whitey Museum, and they were like, "Yeah, let's keep that." Remember that one?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] [Laughs.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And then white - like, this poster White Suprematism, like, I wouldn't know the - I know the difference between supremacism and suprematism, but sometimes I mix one and the other in terms of my spelling. You know, there's the Russian - the Russian suprematists and white supremacy, but things like that, like my misspellings, were actually funny to the group, and so they kind of got incorporated. And I actually believe that - remember the whole thing about *Guerrilla* Girls and -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - *Gorilla* Girls -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - began in some ways as a - sort of a play on words, and the fact that *Guerrilla* and *gorilla* may sound alike -

MS. RICHARDS: Yes.

MS. DE BORGOS: - right? That whole thing had a very interesting - I could fit into that really well just because of my bilingualism and my proclivity to make mistakes in spelling, even though I intellectually understand what is going on. [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: What was the biggest challenge that each of you faced during gigs?

MS. DE BORGOS: During gigs in particular?

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah. I mean did you have difficult audiences? Did you feel you had to deal with different perspectives in - not a difficult audience -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: - but a specific kind of audience. Were they all sort of mostly young women who came to hear you speak?

MS. HÖCH: Well, I think I only lectured at colleges, so they were only young people, male or female, coming to hear the Girls speak. I would say the majority of the audience, if not the whole thing, was, generally speaking, supportive and engaged -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - and excited.

MS. RICHARDS: More so than in the early years of the *Guerrilla* Girls?

MS. HÖCH: Well, don't know that.

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah. Yeah, there was definitely like, the legacy has arrived. You know, when you get there, it's like

people are excited. Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] And did you want to continue doing gigs and make that your primary involvement in the organization?

MS. HÖCH: No. No, not at all. I mean it was just something that I did when it was - when it was needed, when a volunteer was, you know, being sought out -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - and I was available and it worked. It wasn't my primary interest -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - in the group in any way, you know, working on all of the projects.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] So tell me each of you - I'll start with Hannah -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - about a specific project that you worked on, whether you initiated it or had a big role in it or suggested the topic.

MS. HÖCH: Great. Yeah. I think I definitely had the greatest impact on the GuerrillaGirlsBroadband in that way. Can I talk about that group as well? I mean do we -

MS. RICHARDS: Sure. Yes.

MS. HÖCH: - want me to just focus on this?

MS. RICHARDS: Yes. Yes.

MS. HÖCH: When the split happened, I was a GuerrillaGirlsBroadband girl or the visual arts girls who then became the GuerrillaGirlsBroadband, and I had definitely a lot of energy and, you know, excitement about working on those projects. So I helped, you know, create the website and a number of the posters that came out in the early years of that group and kind of creating the, you know, the angle, why it was different, what the idea of broadband meant, you know, kind of, again, infusing that new media, new generation, new way of accessing information model into, you know, now this group.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you have a particular area of issues that you felt needed to be - that you had a particular passion to address, whether they're feminist issues or racial issues or whether it was in the art world or Hollywood or politics?

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: Was there a particular area that you wanted to -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: - see Guerrilla Girls do projects directed at?

MS. HÖCH: Well, I wanted to see projects unfold in a way that made sense to a more broad audience. I was not interested in solely focusing on the art world and solely focusing on inequities within, like, the gallery system or the museum system because it wasn't relevant to my experience at that time. I was much more interested in looking at issues of diversity and - in general - and in the workplace and in, you know, just more societal level stakes.

MS. RICHARDS: Not only beyond the artwork world, but beyond feminist issues to a broader societal?

MS. HÖCH: I mean it depends, right? Are you asking me what I think of feminism? It's like -

MS. RICHARDS: No, I -

MS. HÖCH: - I would say it encompasses these societal things. So, yeah, I don't think they're distinct.

MS. RICHARDS: But not strictly focused on issues in women's lives, focused on issues in everyone's -

MS. HÖCH: Yes, issues that pertain to society at large, which does include women.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: And do you recall any one particular campaign or issue that was important to you on Broadband that you felt - or maybe that's the wrong way to address your -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: - involvement.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: You could change that question into -

MS. HÖCH: Well, I mean, in particular in Broadband, as opposed to when we were working together as a group in a whole, I mean, my interest and my involvement at the time was really to make - to see the strength of the group, you know, prevail and to see that - to help nurture those early ideas, and to make sure that, you know, we had the legwork in place and the the files for printing ready and the - you know, technically making things happen was really important to me. And, you know, conceptually issue wise, I mean, before we split, there were kind of subgroups happening for a little while, interest-based subgroups on -

MS. RICHARDS: Oh.

MS. HÖCH: - welfare reform or on - theater started that way - on different topics. And so, yeah, I mean, I was - I'm definitely not, like, pulling up any specific examples -

MS. RICHARDS: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - of posters or anything like that because I don't always remember them so well.

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: And, you know, I'd hate to choose.

MS. RICHARDS: And so you were one of the Guerrilla Girls who created Broadband?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And you continue to this day to be involved in -

MS. HÖCH: I'm a slightly inactive/active member of Broadband, at large, maybe. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] I still -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: - you know, participate when I can, but -

MS. RICHARDS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Let me go to Julia now to ask you about your actions and your - besides the gigs -

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - what - how you see - what ideas were most important to you, what were the initiatives that were most satisfying or frustrating [laughs] in your experience.

MS. DE BORGOS: Okay. Well, okay, the first thing is that you - I don't - I didn't have the name Julia De Borgos when I first began in the Guerrilla Girls.

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, let's talk about that.

MS. DE BORGOS: It might've been Tina Modotti, actually, because I really wanted to have Frida Kahlo, and then Frida Kahlo was already taken.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: So then I took, like - it might've been Tina Modotti because I knew that she was Frida Kahlo's friend.

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: And I didn't become Julia until, I think, the Broadband, which demonstrates a couple of things that are, I think, important just to get out, which is, number one, that I went to an ivy league college where Latin American artists were not really taught. So when I joined the Guerrilla Girls, I actually didn't know that much about Latin American art in general. I was very identified with the - you know, with the modernist western and postmodernist western canon. So I don't think - I wouldn't appear necessarily - I don't appear in the Guerrilla Girls as Julia De Borgos. And that just goes to show that I - you know, my growth throughout my career -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - and my history. Number two, I would say that at the time that I joined, I was particularly interested, and still am, in issues of race and black - you might call, you know, African American feminist ideals, and so I think my contributions really had to when issues of race came up. For example, we were discussing Clarence Thomas and whether the - you know, how we were going to criticize him -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - and not, like, necessarily offend the black community. When we were discussing whether we should target - the guy who murdered his wife.

MS. RICHARDS: Carl Andre?

MS. DE BORGOS: No, not -

MS. RICHARDS: Oh.

MS. DE BORGOS: Carl Andre was one, yes, but also the football player. His name - I'm sorry -

MS. HÖCH: Oh, O.J. [Simpson].

MS. DE BORGOS: O.J.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: That was a big controversy -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - because there were some African American - there was one particular African American member who wasn't comfortable with us targeting African American males. And so I was kind of like the - yeah, I added - you know, I added that voice that, you know, we're feminists and feminists of color and we have the right and the responsibility to criticize people within our community, you know. And so that - I think that I added arguably what I think is a progressive, in my mind, critical attitude towards being open to criticizing members of the racial/ethnic category that I belong to -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - from a feminist perspective, and that is - and that's not always - that wasn't always the case. I think that - like, for example, in the *Beside Companion [The Guerrilla Girls' Beside Companion to the History of Western Art]*. New York: Penguin Books, 1998], I suggested that they include Amaral. Tarsila Do Amaral.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm, the Brazilian.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right, the Brazilian. I'm pretty sure that I - you know, I was - I mentioned that she would be a good candidate to include. What else would you like to know?

MS. RICHARDS: So what was the result of those - you talked about Clarence Thomas, that issue, and O.J. Simpson. Were there actions that you were involved in creating on those topics -

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean I think that -

MS. RICHARDS: - or was it a part - just you're talking about the discussion?

MS. DE BORGOS: I think I was - I wasn't able to do many gigs. I actually was a person who worked -

MS. RICHARDS: Or I shouldn't have said actions. I should've said projects.

MS. DE BORGOS: Projects. I would say that I was fairly active around the times of the - really around the *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* and afterwards, and I had a job. The Guerrilla Girls were very important to me, too, in terms of providing me employment when I was in graduate school, and I worked in the office mailing out *Hot Flashes*.

MS. RICHARDS: So you were a paid assistant?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes. Actually, there was a time when I was paid because they knew that I was a student and -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - members wanted to support my education, and so they gave me a job mailing out *Hot Flashes* and kind of working in the office, and that wasn't just done for me. That was done for other women in the group who were experiencing financial hardships. And the gigs - I think other members might tell you that the gigs were really important to some women who had to pay the rent and who weren't - you know, that \$1,000 or so that they received really helped them out in crucial periods when they weren't selling or didn't have employment.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: So I think that the Guerrilla Girls were really important to me as a group that sustained me during a time when I was very vulnerable to being extinguished if I didn't have this support group because I don't come from a rich family. So they were kind of like my art patrons.

MS. HÖCH: [Laughs.]

MS. DE BORGOS: [Laughs.]

MS. HÖCH: That's great.

MS. DE BORGOS: They were my private foundation.

MS. RICHARDS: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: And you talked about being recruited to increase the membership to include other voices. Were you then, in turn, recruiting members yourself at any point?

MS. DE BORGOS: I have done once or twice, but because I'm much more of an art historian, much more in a scholarly circle, the group generally wanted women who were artists and performers, and at that time, I just really didn't have the network in that world. And it would've been also dangerous for me because you do have to expose to someone. You have to let them know that you're a Girl to invite them, and it wasn't really a good time for me -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - to do something like that. I think today, I would probably have the ability socially to do that invitation and not fear that I would be exposed because -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - that person would not necessarily want to curry disfavor with me.

MS. RICHARDS: Are you still a -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: - are you a member of the GuerrillaGirlsBroadband?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: I take part in meetings, not as often as I should.

MS. RICHARDS: So I understand that even though you didn't recruit, there was very - there was a conscious effort to have a diverse group -

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - in GuerrillaGirlsBroadband?

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And that continues to today -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - and -

MS. HÖCH: And recruiting in GuerrillaGirlsBroadband still happens.

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: I mean new members are brought in. It's such an active group that - I mean I think that, you know, new members -

MS. DE BORGOS: I brought in some members to that. Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: - are always coming in. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And Hannah, what was your experience in terms of being - recruiting? I mean, did you -

MS. HÖCH: Well, you know, I remember this - and I hope it's the reality. If not, maybe you remember an alternative one or if you've heard an alternative one, but I remember, like, before the retreat and before the split and before these crazy things started happening, that there was a kind of internal petition happening to recruit again, and there was a lot of unhappiness from some members about new Girls, who were still considered new Girls, bringing in new people as it was just going to, like, be divisive and it was going to fracture the group too much and they were going to lose control over the core of the Guerrilla Girls.

MS. RICHARDS: Because the new Girls - the newish Girls weren't up to speed in terms of the whole history and understanding Guerrilla Girls enough to bring in new members?

MS. HÖCH: No, because the controlling faction was interested in controlling, and, I mean, that was definitely -

MS. RICHARDS: This is before Broadband or -

MS. HÖCH: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: Okay.

MS. HÖCH: Exactly. So I think there was on some level some regret on the new wave coming in, and I think that there was definitely conversation about bringing in another group of new Girls and that was not of interest. Bringing in new girls, especially when invited by "newgirls," I believe, was seen by some of the original girls as diluting the message and distributing the power.

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: Were Girls mostly from New York?

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: And what about Broadband? Are they still mostly from New York?

MS. DE BORGOS: The majority, but we do have - you know, because it is Broadband -

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: - and it's the internet, there is a - there's a much - the group is - encourages participation by people who are out of state because, you know, it's via the internet and e-mail. We can still include their voices and feedback on what the group is doing, right?

MS. RICHARDS: And international as well?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: So have you dealt with issues that are very important in a different place than the U.S. or -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah. Remember the one that - the action that we did, that poster that's written in Arabic?

MS. HÖCH: That's right. Mm. I recall the shirt campaign written in Arabic.

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean so there - you know -

MS. RICHARDS: What was that? Can you talk about that?

MS. DE BORGOS: You know what? Since it was written in Arabic - it really was written in Arabic. I don't remember the translation, but there is, like, a -

MS. RICHARDS: That came into being because of a member from that part of the world?

MS. DE BORGOS: I think a member's interest in reflecting issues on that part of the world. I think it was - it might have been when the - you know, when the Ayatollah [Ruhollah Khomeini, 1979 Iranian Revolution] came into power.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah. I don't know if I'm -

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - remembering that project.

MS. DE BORGOS: But, yeah, about women's rights, for example, in the Middle East and the suppression of women's rights in the Middle East.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean, I think - you know, when I start to think about it, I do believe that we probably should have a campaign to discuss, you know, the mutilation of women in certain parts of Africa, you know, the removal of their clitoris -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - and all these other kinds of things, but, again, from a Western perspective, to me that's really horrific, and yet, I'm sure that other members of the group would argue that it's cultural relativism and it - and if these women agree that this is what makes them part of the tribe, who are we to interfere. I think that when we get into these international and cultural kinds of issues, there'll always be contention in the group as to, you know, do the Guerrilla Girls have the right or should we, you know, discuss this matter or not, and the discussion becomes richer when there are different perspectives taken into account.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] You said, Hannah, that the group is very - relatively large now, GuerrillaGirlsBroadband.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: Can you imagine how many members there are? Can you guess?

MS. HÖCH: No, I can't because I'm not as active as other members.

MS. RICHARDS: I see.

MS. HÖCH: So I -

MS. RICHARDS: And do you know?

MS. HÖCH: - I'm not up to speed.

MS. RICHARDS: And do you know, Julia?

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, I mean, active members, there's probably 12, but, again, people come in and out.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And -

MS. RICHARDS: So the recruitment you're talking about isn't massive. It's one or two or four.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right, or let's say some people locate - like, one of our members - I would say it's international because one of our members was born and raised in Latin America, and then she came here and was recruited by the Guerrilla Girls, but now she's living in another part of the United States. So she's still a very active member of the group, but via e-mail. And that, to me, counts as a little bit -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - of, like, an international kind of membership. There's other Girls in broadband that were part of the - of Guerrilla Girls who have taken jobs out of state.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And I think if you're looking at the e-mail bubble, that kind of the voices come in, it's even larger than that because -

MS. DE BORGOS: Exactly.

MS. HÖCH: - you're - like, the physical meetings are one thing, and that's what you're -

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. HÖCH: - familiar with right now. And then, like, you know, we're on this, like, e-mail correspondence -

MS. DE BORGOS: But there is - right. There is -

MS. HÖCH: - that's even bigger, which -

MS. DE BORGOS: Exactly.

MS. HÖCH: - is cool.

MS. DE BORGOS: And people definitely - when it's time to, like - when a gig or action is going on, that's when a lot more voices chime in.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Like, there is an action that'll happen on May 17, as you know -

MS. HÖCH: Right. Mm-hmm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - and you may want to go see that.

MS. RICHARDS: Is there a part of the Guerrilla Girls - I understand that's Broadband as well as Inc. [Guerrilla Girls, Inc.].

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: Speaking of Broadband, a group who are promoting and publicizing that action, do you do that or is that entirely - the Bronx Museum is going to do that?

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: So you don't do e-blasts or advertising or any kind of way bringing people to your website to know more about what you're doing?

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, I mean, right now I would say that that's the failing of GGBB, is that we've been trying to - you know, we need members who are more familiar with the web.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: I'm not. I come up with ideas about actions that can happen on the web, and we're working - like, right now, one of the things that we're working on is, like, Second Life and trying to get a museum or some

kind of institution on Second Life that would be, like, a museum of GGBB and/or something that deals with feminism in that - in a space that, I think, is predominated by males and is a new media type space.

MS. RICHARDS: Creating your own Second Life?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes, a place - a place within Second Life that would reflect -

MS. RICHARDS: I mean in cyberspace.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. On Second Life, you can create spaces.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: So, you know, we were talking about the possibility of doing that. I don't know at what stage that that's in because this gig is taking precedence, but I would say that the website - I'm not - I don't know if there's any one web mistress that's taking care of the GGBB website. Do you?

MS. HÖCH: I don't know.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: What is - oh, never mind. GGBB -

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - GuerrillaGirlsBroadband.

MS. HÖCH: Exactly.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: What part do you think humor plays in the projects still in the present?

MS. HÖCH: I think it's right there under political action. I mean it's - yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: It's always been important and it continues to be?

MS. HÖCH: Absolutely. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. I'd say.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes, satire -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - role playing, turning conventions on their head, all of that, I think, is - earmarks the Guerrilla Girls from other groups.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And I would say that Gertrude has been very instrumental in keeping that active.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that there are whole areas that Guerrilla Girls - that it would be more effectively addressed if there were a separate - if there were a Guerrilla Girls theater group?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: There was one, yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: There was a Guerrilla Girls - an Asian group called Godzilla?

MS. DE BORGOS: That's not -

MS. HÖCH: No. No.

MS. DE BORGOS: That had nothing to do with the Guerrilla Girls. Absolutely not.

MS. RICHARDS: Okay.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that the GuerrillaGirlsBroadband can take on all the issues in that - as a general structure/organization or is there something to be said for dividing off and creating a group that would just focus on one area, whether it's the entertainment industry or an international political issue, or do you feel that it's totally inappropriate and - in terms of at least within the number of hours in the day for -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - a limited number of people to take on anything or do you think it gets too diluted? I guess that's the essence of the question.

MS. HÖCH: You know, I don't know if this is the answer you're looking for, but I think, from my perspective, the group should address the issues it feels are most relevant and that need to be addressed, you know, first and foremost. I think that what I'm not comfortable with and really not interested to see the group do is delegate or, "You're going to work on this because we're doing something else." That was really - that's very uncomfortable in the way that, like, the split was. You know what I mean? I think that if there are groups within the group working, that's great, you know.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: Of course everyone has different interests and talents and focuses and they're all still the group. You know what I mean?

MS. RICHARDS: I think what I'm trying to say - what I'm trying to focus on is how do you define the continuing mission of the GuerrillaGirlsBroadband and is there ever a question that the mission and the history would be so diluted by taking on any potential subject in the world that it wouldn't be the Guerrilla Girls anymore, that it would be someone else, something else?

MS. DE BORGOS: Okay. Let's see. There was a time when I was in favor - for example, after gigs or just encouraging people - there was a time when a lot - we would get a lot of e-mails when the Guerrilla Girls were really, really active, especially after the publication of a book.

MS. RICHARDS: In the '90s.

MS. DE BORGOS: In the '90s, of people writing to the Guerrilla Girls either by snail mail or later internet, asking could they be Guerrilla Girls or could they start a Guerrilla Girl type organization and my attitude was, "Well, tell them they can be Guerrilla Girls if they want to be. What's wrong with that?" Everybody - you know, "Whoever wants to be a freaking Guerrilla Girl should be allowed to be a Guerrilla Girl," and I would, again, say the importance of wearing that mask that day and giving, you know - giving the public that ability to take on this anonymous persona. And Frida was adamant that that should never happen, and she - you know, she would, like, say, "Well, we have to answer that they have to create their - you know, a different organization, but they can't be Guerrilla Girls because Guerrilla Girls are, like - you know, have this pattern."

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And, you know, "It's our group and it's by, you know, mentoring or asking people." She really had this whole idea of keeping it in this niche rather than seeing it kind of explode into a phenomenon. I was never really clear about it, but I think some of it had to do with, like, issues of gigs, and because the Guerrilla Girls had this commercial component to it or this - I shouldn't say commercial - income producing component to it -

MS. RICHARDS: It needed to maintain its brand.

MS. DE BORGOS: Exactly.

MS. HÖCH: Some people felt that way. I remember -

MS. DE BORGOS: Some people felt that way. Remember that?

MS. HÖCH: - infusing this into the gigs very much. Like, I remember talking about that also. Like, "Oh, go start

your own whatever." Yeah. Yeah. This is -

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. HÖCH: - that was a huge argument.

MS. DE BORGOS: Exactly. And that - that produced a - you know, that was definitely an issue about the split. Because of this, I felt and other people felt, that these books were creating a whole generation of people that were excited and why dampen their enthusiasm? Let them put on gorilla masks and do their thing. And it was about - I think it had to do with this branding and control.

MS. RICHARDS: And kind of the integrity, but also -

MS. HÖCH: Well, because it is the -

MS. DE BORGOS: Oh, well, she would call -

MS. HÖCH: Well, what -

MS. DE BORGOS: - it integrity, but I would -

MS. HÖCH: But what's the integrity? I mean isn't it - aren't we breaking down stereotypes and sexism in the art world and at large? Like, that's where the integrity -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - should lie, right?

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: Or is it really in the branding? So I think that was definitely a disagreement.

MS. RICHARDS: So did you support the production of these books? Did you find that the -

MS. HÖCH: I wasn't a part of it.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you, Julia?

MS. DE BORGOS: Sure. I supported - I mean to me, it was another action.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: I never was - I was grateful to be an assistant for a while and to receive that financial support of the Guerrilla Girls, but it wasn't the reason why I was part of the group, and I was never concerned about bookkeeping and who actually got money from the proceeds. I believe that the proceeds went back to support the group, and, you know, a lot of the money went into just, like, dinners. I don't know if people have talked about that, but -

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: - at the Guerrilla Girls meetings, a big component -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - was that we all got to have these really lavish - not lavish. I mean you got Chinese takeout.

MS. HÖCH: But we had food. It was great.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. And for people, like, who are - who actually are struggling - you have to understand that there's a - there was a - a lot of these women artists really were struggling. I've since found out that some of the women in the group were really rich. One of them in particular, I was, like, astounded.

MS. HÖCH: Oh, really?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: [Laughs.]

MS. DE BORGOS: [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: Maybe she paid for the dinners.

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: You know, but the idea that we would have wine and we would have food for an evening and kind of - I guess it was like the dinner party kind of setting -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - where it was part salon and dinner party. It was very attractive and kept us together, right, because, I mean, you're drinking and -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - and you're - they were really fun meetings. But these were sustenance. It was, like, physical and emotional and intellectual sustenance for many of us and it was entwined.

MS. RICHARDS: So from the very beginning, it was decided that some of your funds would go to this kind of physical nourishing -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: - emotional/physical nourishment.

MS. DE BORGOS: Absolutely.

MS. HÖCH: I don't know if it was from the very beginning or how that - I mean I think, you know, in the beginning they had other -

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. HÖCH: - you know, and different things and were doing -

MS. RICHARDS: I get the feeling there were always - it was - well, I don't know if there's a meal involved in every meeting.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: But I know -

MS. DE BORGOS: Not every, but enough.

MS. HÖCH: But we had - that's something that we both remember as part of the meeting. Absolutely, yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. Right.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: And people would bring stuff.

MS. HÖCH: We would have meals - right.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: Exactly.

MS. RICHARDS: So whether it was a potluck or it was the Guerrilla Girls funding the meal -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - that varied?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes, but that was definitely part of the feast that was being offered -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - for the evening, and that was, I think, an important component.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Maybe it was - maybe it's part of being women, right?

MS. HÖCH: Right. Well, and it's what kept us together, right? I mean -

MS. RICHARDS: So -

MS. HÖCH: - it's what made us interested in -

MS. RICHARDS: So going -

MS. HÖCH: - coming back and having these relationships -

MS. DE BORGOS: Totally.

MS. HÖCH: - that continued on, despite the -

MS. RICHARDS: So is this -

MS. HÖCH: - aggravation.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah. Maybe we'll go to that. So going back to this philosophical position that - am I correct, then, that you both feel that the GuerrillaGirlsBroadband can be as broad in its mission as it wishes to be? It'll still be the Guerrilla Girls. You can take on any issue. It might not be art. It might not be feminism, but it's an issue that the members feel is important to address from the platform of the Guerrilla Girls.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah. I mean thought the avatar idea of, you know, having this thing in Second Life and -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - allowing, like - giving people the option to take on the avatar of a dead woman artist and educating them about who this person is, like, they would go to the Guerrilla Girls, like, site, and then all of a sudden -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - they can, like, take on the persona of a female artist would be a way of engaging a different public and exposing them to women artists, exposing them to the Guerrilla Girls, and giving them the ability to do an action in Second Life of their own choosing. I mean I know that it involves an element of risk always, but, I mean, this is freaking virtual reality. So -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - why not offer people that kind of an experience if it's available to them?

MS. RICHARDS: You said -

MS. HÖCH: Well, and I think that I -

MS. RICHARDS: - you said women artists - I just - you said women artists. There is still - you still hold onto, I think you said this earlier, that basically most of the members should be visual artists. True? Wrong?

MS. DE BORGOS: It started out that way and I think that - you know, that's kind of an important aspect -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - for someone in the arts.

MS. RICHARDS: The Guerrilla Girls still have - hold that it's important that there's a base in the arts?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah, I do.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And if you just do political projects -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: - it's still - it's coming from the position of an artist?

MS. HÖCH: I think that make sense. I think also you asked, you know, if we're not doing work about feminism. It's a - it's a group of feminists -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - from the art world making projects. It's never going to be not about feminism. You know, you're bringing up Second Life in this action and that is about the art world. Even if it's not posters on the street, you're dealing with the role of the artist, the critique of the art world, and the perception of it through the virtual world. It's just a tool, like a book's a tool or a poster or anything else is a tool. You know, the upcoming action happening at the museum is about subjects outside of the art world. It's certainly steeped in feminism and the beliefs that this group holds and is an action with artistic merit. You know, it is definitely from, I think, that ilk, that vantage point.

MS. DE BORGOS: And this action will have - in fact, it'll be the first kind of bilingual action.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: We're going to have posters in Spanish at it, too.

MS. RICHARDS: The first bilingual action?

MS. DE BORGOS: I think so.

MS. HÖCH: I don't know.

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean no, not - maybe in Spanish because perhaps - I don't think there's ever been one done in Spanish.

MS. HÖCH: I think I remember working on one - a poster -

MS. DE BORGOS: Okay.

MS. HÖCH: - in Spanish in GGBB.

MS. DE BORGOS: All right.

MS. HÖCH: I don't remember what it was, though, but, okay.

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, I think this one - you know, this one - you know, being in the Bronx and -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - and the fact that there's so much anti-recruitment going on -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - among the African American and Latino community in -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - New York and throughout - and really throughout the United States. You know, because it's African American and Latino young men and women who are - make up the majority of the U.S. Army today and who are targeted to - for recruitment. So this is - this was the idea of - came out of really Jane - Jane's initiative.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And I think Jane and you are both Girls that have really tried to push GGBB out of the confines of the art world and to address broader issues.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean that's been their contribution, a very important contribution, is to break out of this little

art world bubble that we are comfortable in.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you want to say anything else about that?

MS. HÖCH: Huh-uh. [Negative.] I think I already have.

MS. RICHARDS: Does GuerrillaGirlsBroadband keep track or are consciously aware of what Guerrilla Girls, Inc. - what their projects are? I mean I think they do projects.

MS. HÖCH: Not to my knowledge, no.

MS. RICHARDS: So that you don't overlap or is that an issue at all?

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean - well, sometimes I see some - you know, Frida on social occasions and so I might be brought up to speed just on that respect -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - you know, at an opening or something. I mean I remember when we were all surprised, like, that they in the Venice Biennale. Like, the official GG was invited to the Venice Biennale. Remember that?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And that was just, like, they didn't call us and tell us. I mean, you know, you just read about it. And I don't know if we did - if anyone did an action - went over to the Biennale -

MS. HÖCH: I don't think so.

MS. DE BORGOS: - and did an action. So there's no - there's no animosity in the group. I mean, I think that a truce has been called, and there has never -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - to my knowledge been a desire - maybe there was a desire, but it's never been acted upon to disrupt -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - the GG's actions by GGBB or calling to question what they're doing.

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: And conversely, there has not been actions by GG to - well, there were - there was an attempt to constrict what we did -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - but that's been worked out, you know, in the courtroom and among various parties to have a truce.

MS. RICHARDS: What do you think would be most exciting for GuerrillaGirlsBroadband to expand into, to do in the future, and does it still continue to be you get together, throw out ideas, decide what seems the most compelling project?

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And do you have any sense of what might be a goal for the future?

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, the - you know, the Second Life project, although, again -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - it's like an idea, but since I don't have the kinds of skills that are, you know, would enable me to actually become a web mistress, I'm, like, constrained to my ability to carry it out. I have to work - although it's been accepted and excited by the group, right now I think that many of us - the younger members, for example, have children now, you know. They're at child-bearing age and so that has made it difficult for some to participate.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: So I think - I'm hoping that this gig reinvigorates the group. The group goes - has, you know, highs and lows in membership and in activity, but it keeps going.

MS. RICHARDS: You know, I was talking to previous groups about the issue of anonymity.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And why it - whether or not you see it's important to maintain that after you pass away, and should that - should it be known, and for Guerrilla Girls who are artists, it has a particular - when you talk about their career and what they've produced and the gaps perhaps that someone wouldn't understand why they weren't as productive.

Now, as an art historian or as a graphic designer, do you - what is your feeling about the time you give to it, the fact that it's not really recognized in your - professionally it can't be, and how that has - has being a Guerrilla Girl - how's it impacted on your real career and this issue of - and how the issue of anonymity plays out for you?

MS. HÖCH: I love the anonymity. I think it's the best thing ever. I think it's fantastic to not have to tell someone that you were just working on this Guerrilla Girl project. I think it's great to have a gap. I think it's nice to drop off the radar. You know, I don't know from an art historian's perspective how that would be looking at someone's life. I mean, you know, I'm overwhelmed with information. I love that there maybe isn't some here, like on just on a personal note. I mean that's really what I think is fantastic about it. I think the anonymity is just like coming from an art background the core of the group. I don't see it functioning without anonymity. I think it's very sad that as many, you know, individuals are known at this time as they are.

MS. DE BORGOS: Are they?

MS. HÖCH: Well, no -

MS. RICHARDS: Are they? I've never heard anybody being -

MS. HÖCH: - you know, well, with the whole - the -

MS. DE BORGOS: No one that I know.

MS. HÖCH: - the court record and it was published, like, who, you know, the -

MS. DE BORGOS: It was?

MS. HÖCH: - the founders were and stuff.

MS. RICHARDS: I don't think -

MS. DE BORGOS: No -

MS. RICHARDS: I don't think it's ever been public knowledge -

MS. DE BORGOS: Huh-uh. [Negative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - as far as I -

MS. HÖCH: I think the - Frida and Käthe's names were published in *The New Yorker*.

MS. DE BORGOS: You know, they might've been.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, you know, whatever. It's out there.

MS. DE BORGOS: But it's not everyone.

MS. HÖCH: No. No.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: And not everyone has read that one little thing. You know, no, absolutely. It's not vast public knowledge, but regardless -

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - that's still my feeling, you know.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: I mean I still think it was, you know, it's truest when it's just completely anonymous.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: I think it's great for careers. Like, as an artist, I think I love that it's not entwined with my art career. I have no interest as an artist to have any, you know, pull or sway either way from this because it's, I think, really nice to have something you love and you back and you are invigorated by and aren't, you know, keyed onto personality wise. I feel like there's an abundance of that and it's nice to have a little washing.

MS. RICHARDS: So the question of how it influences your work or how your work influences your GG work, that's not a relevant question?

MS. HÖCH: Well, I think it's relevant for everyone individually to suss out for their own projects and their own careers and how they contribute to the group, but I think that's a very individual kind of, you know, relationship that each person has with the work of the group and then their own work, and I think that ebbs and flows based on whatever anyone's doing. I don't think there - I mean it's not my opinion that there needs to be rules about that, like, "You have to use different fonts in your project here because we've used them here," or, like, "You can't do something else anonymous ever because you" - you know, like, that's not interesting. So I don't think that there are rules about how individual careers and, you know, the work here intersects.

MS. RICHARDS: And do you feel that your work should remain anonymous forever?

MS. HÖCH: That's a really great question. I don't - let me think about that for a second. I've thought about it a lot, obviously. Yeah. I don't - what do you think, art historian?

MS. DE BORGOS: I think it's extremely important that after a period of time passes, that names should be revealed.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: There are names in the archive, right?

MS. HÖCH: Uh-huh, right.

MS. RICHARDS: Where is the archive now? It was given to the Getty [J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA] or to -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes, I believe so.

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: So there are names in the archive?

MS. DE BORGOS: I'm not sure.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: There might be.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: There might not be.

MS. HÖCH: Maybe.

MS. DE BORGOS: It's the way that it was explained to us - did you receive that long letter from -

MS. HÖCH: Oh, yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - GG?

MS. HÖCH: Oh, that's right. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah. That, in fact - you know, I know those archives and they are - I don't think necessarily that all the names of the people who participated would - are going to appear there. You know, the - so it's a mystery, but I have no problem with after my death or 50 years after my death, that the - my name and the names of other women who are in the group be revealed. I think it would actually contribute a great deal to just art historical knowledge and understanding of what was going on in New York at this - at a certain moment in time.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well -

MS. HÖCH: I totally agree with you. [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: Well, it certainly -

MS. HÖCH: You know, which is funny after what I just said, but that's from, like, my perspective as an artist.

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: But looking at the evaluation of the historical materials, I mean -

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: It would certainly be important to understand the cultural differences that existed and how that played out and you wouldn't know it unless you knew who the -

MS. DE BORGOS: Exactly. And to kind of underscore that, you know, race and class and ethnicity even among the most progressive groups in the art world still existed, and that's something that we - that was very much why I joined, why I was asked to join, and I think that it's been a creative collision. Yeah, I think of the Guerrilla Girls in our meetings as creative collisions very often, that result in really, you know -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - in really hilarious kinds of projects. And -

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: - overall, I mean I bear no animosity personally to the original - towards Frida. You know, if I see her, man, I hug her -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - everything's cool. So that's my comment on anonymity, but I would say that the networking that goes on within the Guerrilla Girls has helped me and other women. I mean we have -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: We know each other. We have positions in various fields, and as with any group, we will, like, reach out to people -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - that we know and tell them if there's a job or something's going on. So there is a networking, a professional networking, that happens among women who are in the Guerrilla Girls, but it doesn't overshadow our relationships, and that's the great thing about anonymity.

[END MD 01.]

MS. RICHARDS: Good. Disc two, Hannah Höch and Julia De Burgos.

MS. HÖCH: Well, you know, kind of riffing on what you were just talking about, and, you know, relating it back to the dinner parties, right, and the camaraderie, and I love like how you described it as, you know, sustenance and intellectual sentience and it's so true. And it was so much about networking, and it's - you know, the group really created its own old girls network, you know -

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - and I think that was a big part of it for all of us, that we were able to, you know, support each other, both within the group with our ideas and, you know, helping bolster certain projects we wanted to see through, but then also, like, professionally and personally. Like, if you're having a problem, people can contribute and

help you throughout, you know, a tough phase of your life or exhibit wise or artwork wise. Like, you can go and support each other and always kind of be there, and I think that there's something really beautiful about that, and I think that's been - I think that's carried out through, like, you know, the legacy of how our work is going today.

MS. RICHARDS: And that sounds like appreciating and experiencing that would make you want to recruit and bring more women in who you could share that spirit with -

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - and it would - at least for some people.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah. I mean I got to say, though, that it's just the ability for young people, for young artists today to, like, have the time to engage in this is not so prevalent anymore because -

MS. RICHARDS: I was going to ask you.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: That's a great point to bring up.

MS. HÖCH: I'm glad you brought that up. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: I wanted to ask you about the reality that artists face today versus ten, 20, 30 - well, 25 years ago in terms of surviving and making a living and do you think that the Guerrilla Girls has a kind of a finite - there's a finite amount of work that can be done because of the reality of who can participate and how?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes. I mean all of those things. There are so many young women that I would love to bring into the - there's a couple.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: There's one in particular that I would love to bring in, but given her - extremely talented, hilarious, fantastic performance artist, but given the fact that this is a person who is from the working class and who is just struggling - she's recently graduated, although she's an older student from Rutgers [University, New Brunswick, NJ].

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: She doesn't even have the ability to come back to New York. I mean she was native born here, but it's going to be a struggle just to get her here, and then kids have their own - young people - many young artists, they already have their own websites. They have avatars. You know, like we in many ways, like, anticipated this whole, like, growth industry in the persona and in the avatar. I mean, of course, [Marcel] Duchamp had one, let's be - you know it starts with Duchamp, but today, you've got, like, four different e-mail lists. You've got a blog. You have your website. You've got an avatar. As a young artist, you've got a lot of stuff to juggle. I mean so -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - this is - I think it's really hard for them to see GGBB. For many of them, they may want to join, but a lot - you know, I've seen that people have dropped off.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Yeah, there's a total reality. You have to pay the bills.

MS. RICHARDS: What about the other fact that you brought up, that there are blogs, there are social -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: There is such a vast - it's just a completely different world now, even in just the last ten years, in terms of being a part of a collaborative, in terms of social action, in terms of position of artists and the possibilities. So does that mean that Guerrilla Girls has a lot of evolving to do to survive?

MS. DE BORGOS: I think that's what GGBB's trying to do. I think, you know, because we're trying to get more internet based, but you could answer it better than me. I'm sort of a tweener in this because I was part of the old

thing -

MS. RICHARDS: [Laughs.] A tweener.

MS. DE BORGOS: - and I'm, you know, barely - I'm okay with the computer literacy, but certainly not the way you are and the way younger people are who have all of these websites. I don't even have a Facebook page.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: Has GuerrillaGirlsBroadband thought about bringing together a little focus group or a ten - twenty - in their twenties potential - well, without identifying yourselves -

MS. DE BORGOS: Can't do it.

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah. I was just -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: To get some viewpoints and what could be the future of your actions and your website, but I guess that's awkward.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: We're a pretty self-critical group.

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: I'll be honest -

MS. HÖCH: And that's why things take so long.

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean we're very aware of the shortcomings and we talk about it all the time.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean our dinner parties are not, like, you know, self, you know, congratulations. We are very critical of ourselves, to the point sometimes of inaction, right?

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm, right.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that there is more you want to do to document what you're doing? Does the website do that? I mean I know there's the old archive, but you have since 2000-2001 with Guerrilla Girl Broadband started creating a new Guerrilla Girls reality.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: Is there someone who's archiving that or documenting it or in some way does it all survive forever because it's been on the internet?

MS. HÖCH: No, nothing survives forever, especially on the internet.

MS. RICHARDS: Well, not forever.

MS. HÖCH: I think Gertrude's got a big hand in -

MS. DE BORGOS: Gertrude -

MS. HÖCH: - archiving. I mean -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yes.

MS. HÖCH: - she always has. So - yeah, I would say if anyone's retaining the archive, it's her. It's a tenuous place to be, the internet, as opposed to creating posters where you keep two or three in your closet forever and ever and ever and pull them out 20 years later, right? Here we have something that's here and then gone and then can it exist again or if no one's participating, does it even exist now if it's, like, an online action. You know, I mean it's very, you know -

MS. RICHARDS: Do you track -

MS. HÖCH: - tricky.

MS. RICHARDS: Does GuerrillaGirlsBroadband - thinking about measuring effectiveness, does - that must be part of your conversations. In the days when you put up posters, you knew how many people kind of saw them. You knew how many posters or handbills or *Hot Flashes* you distributed. You knew how many people were affected, potentially. And, in fact, you could go back and do surveys and see what percentage of women are in galleries or what percentage in -

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - the Metropolitan [Museum of Art, New York City] or all those. How do you measure the effectiveness of what you're doing on GuerrillaGirlsBroadband in terms of the internet actions, the website work?

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean I would say that, again, with GGBB, I am - I come in and out of it, and that kind of measure, you know, those kinds of accountings are something I've never really cared that much about. So I apologize for not knowing the answer.

MS. RICHARDS: And since Guerrilla Girls, Inc. -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah, I'm pretty inactive, too.

MS. RICHARDS: - is doing the gigs, you can't measure it in terms of how many people are calling you for gigs. Do you -

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, we are doing that. We're doing -

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: We have our own gigs as GGBB, as you know, with -

MS. HÖCH: Mm. Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - the Bronx Museum action.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: Well, and other lectures and things like that that have happened. I don't know how they happen or how they come. There's a lot of discussion about how to funnel gigs and stuff. At one point, I think that was all resolved or, you know, taken care of, but - yeah, also as kind of being inactive, I'm not up to speed on this.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean, look, the GGs are an institution and GGBB is fastly becoming - you know, we're party of the history. Those of us who were in GG and now in GGBB go back and forth in relating the history to what we're doing now. We see ourselves as part of that legacy, not necessarily a total break, right? We see ourselves as a continuation and a renewal of GG. So as an institution, I think it's going to always survive. I think there'll always be - I can't really imagine it dying off that soon, and I - personally, we still apply for grants because that's part of how the group keeps going. We can't exist on -

MS. RICHARDS: So GuerrillaGirlsBroadband - grants in terms of -

MS. DE BORGOS: Well -

MS. RICHARDS: - nonprofit grants or -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: So it's a nonprofit organization?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah. Yeah. We have 501(3)(c) status, I'm pretty sure, and we do - we are and we have applied for grants to keep our work going.

MS. RICHARDS: I was going to ask if you do fundraising on the website, if there's someplace where you say, "Donate."

MS. DE BORGOS: No, I don't believe so.

MS. HÖCH: I don't think so. Actually, GGBB is a corporation. We decided to go that route when forming the new

group to avoid the problems of being anonymous and needing a board, et cetera, if we had formed a not for profit.

MS. DE BORGOS: But I do think, and I do know, that we have applied for grants specifically to do this online project and to keep the website going and all of that.

MS. RICHARDS: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And probably -

MS. HÖCH: And posters over the years, I mean - yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right, and posters, and so probably - and within those grant proposals, since Gertrude and other people write those grant proposals, I am sure that they're going to have that information because it's asked. So, yes, there is someone that keeps track of it and it's generally -

MS. RICHARDS: How many hits - your website hits?

MS. HÖCH: Right. Right. Exactly.

MS. DE BORGOS: How many hits, yes. That is kept track of. I personally do not do it, but the treasurer and Gertrude and the people who, like, take care of the financial aspect of keeping the group going know that information, so it is tracked.

MS. RICHARDS: This is another question for the future. Is there kind of some sense of a succession plan for the future given the important role that Gertrude and a couple of other people play, the central role? Is that kind of on the table for discussion?

MS. DE BORGOS: Oh, well, I don't - did Gertrude talk about her old folks home?

MS. RICHARDS: No.

MS. DE BORGOS: Her home for the old Girls?

MS. RICHARDS: No.

MS. DE BORGOS: I don't know if - well, we talk about, like, having an old - a home for - a senior home for Girls. You know that, right?

MS. HÖCH: That's funny.

MS. DE BORGOS: I don't know. We call it the home for old weirdoes or something, but she [laughs] - I mean a retirement home for us. I don't know.

MS. HÖCH: I think that as new women come into the group, as old women have stepped out at different years, I think it would - you know, it will organically evolve -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. HÖCH: - as to who's carrying on that torch or who's, you know, progressing it forward because the group is still active with, you know, I think a significant number of people in it. It's not, you know, under, like, the jeopardy of falling apart or if two people don't show up to a meeting, something like that, things stop functioning.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you have regularly scheduled meetings?

MS. HÖCH: I'm not so active anymore, so -

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, okay.

MS. HÖCH: - I really don't know. I mean I -

MS. RICHARDS: When you were a member -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. RICHARDS: - did you know that every other -

MS. HÖCH: I'm still definitely a member. I'm on the e-mail list.

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, sorry.

MS. HÖCH: You know, I pay attention, but I'm just not -

MS. RICHARDS: When you were an active member -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: - do you recall was there a regular system of regular scheduled meetings? They were always held in the same place. There was a certain structure to the meetings?

MS. HÖCH: Very much like the GG meetings in the '90s that I was a part of also. I mean it was kind of the same idea of we meet every month if we can. If we're working really hard or every other month if, you know, we're more flexible or not under a deadline or if that's what people's schedules dictate. It's just so organic. Whether it's the same place every time has changed over the years. I mean it's been held in - you know, if we end up with a comfy location, that's where we'll go for a while, someone's loft or - you know, an office space or, you know, it's - we don't go to restaurants so much because, you know, not so anonymous there, but - so I think that, yeah, that's still happening today. I mean it's pretty much the same formula.

MS. RICHARDS: Kind of a general question. What has it meant to you as an artist to be a member of the Guerrilla Girls?

MS. HÖCH: What it has meant?

MS. RICHARDS: What kind of impact has it had on your real life professionally or emotionally? If you couldn't - how do we say this?

MS. HÖCH: I don't know how we would answer this.

MS. RICHARDS: What has it given you? What meaning has it had to you personally to be a member of the Guerrilla Girls?

MS. HÖCH: What has it meant to me? These are very tricky questions to answer in a not so personal way but personal way. You know, I mean it's -

MS. RICHARDS: Well, I guess I shouldn't ask you a question that you have to answer in a very personal way.

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: But it seems to me important to think about how this impacted personally on the members and not just externally.

MS. HÖCH: I mean the meaning is that you get to do political action and you get to be, you know, an activist and involved and keep your feminism bubbling at the surface. I mean that's what it means to be in the group.

MS. RICHARDS: And through the performances, increase your confidence in performing and speaking in public?

MS. HÖCH: If you are a person who gigs, right. I mean some people are naturally inclined to be -

MS. RICHARDS: I mean right now, you're not active.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: Do you feel you're missing something important in your life?

MS. HÖCH: That's too personal a question to ask, yeah. [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: Okay. Okay. Fair enough.

MS. HÖCH: I mean I miss seeing, you know, Jane all the time, and we don't see each other. I mean, you know, but -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: But we keep - I keep up with your -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - with your work. I mean openings and stuff.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah, we see each other every - a couple of times a year, anyway, or things, yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: You know, and I think that in terms of - this is something I grapple with just, you know, in terms of history is that artists and creative people need these social networks. It's been, you know, it's been proven at the - you need this to grow as an artist. And some groups, particularly in the 1970s and '80s, what happened is that there's always been these networks of artists and they have a lifespan.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Historically, these things fall away, and they're actually supposed to fall away so that the members can go on to create other kinds of groups, and when - what tends to happen now is that like the Guerrilla Girls, they become institutionalized often because I would say one is economic circumstances. Remember, these things are - these kind - the paraphernalia -

MS. RICHARDS: Holding up a book, the *Confessions*.

MS. DE BORGOS: - enabled the group to keep going and certain women to - to just live at that time. So there's a tendency for this brand and this institution to happen, and when it works, you want to keep doing it, whereas let's say if you're very rich and you had this salon and it was a working for a while, like the Bloomsbury Group. You know, everybody was rich. So, "No problem. We're not meeting anymore. We're meeting other people." It just - it wasn't integral to the Bloomsbury Group to keep that group going to their economic circumstances, right, or to their branding. I mean they had a certain freedom to move in and out that so many of us don't as women artists. You know, there's a lot of oppressions that make the branding kind of important to hold on to.

MS. RICHARDS: I think that you're helping me with my question because I guess what I meant was to take as an artist to devote a part of your precious time not to your work but to this common goal, this common purpose, what does it mean to you? Why would you do that? And, like, it is a personal kind of question. It's a different answer for every person.

MS. DE BORGOS: It informs your work.

MS. RICHARDS: But you're putting your finger on the fact that all artists need a social network of some sort at some time?

MS. DE BORGOS: At some time to grow, to grow professionally, to grow intellectually, emotionally. You know, it's actually proven and there's books written about it, artists' circle - artists' circles are an important part of a person's career, but they are meant to fall away. But what's happened is that many circles from the 1970s onward became institutionalized because of certain economic and social factors in the art world that - you know, that the interplay between the economic need and all the other things kind of institutionalized groups that could've - you know, that should be falling away to create new ones. But, you know, that's just an aside. It informed - I've always been very proud and really happy and I owe a lot of my career, in some ways in my head, to have this experience as a historian who's also been involved in activism. Like I said, I'm almost like a participant observer in this sense that it's given me insights that I never would've had otherwise if I hadn't belonged to this group, but also emotionally, having the camaraderie and support from so many different kinds of women that if I just stuck to my little social network, I would never have come in contact with and be enriched by.

MS. HÖCH: Right. Yeah, I think the social aspect is an enormous part of it, and I - you know, I can rephrase the earlier part of my answer, which was still about activism. I mean it's still in addition to all these things that you just said, not, you know, in spite of them or, you know, to counter them. But everyone in the group has an impulse to be an activist and -

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. HÖCH: - and an impulse to, you know, take politics seriously and to take identity politics seriously and to want to make action about that and to want to inform others about that and to, you know, make a difference. And I think this is a great outlet for that kind of energy, and I think that - I mean it certainly, you know, enriches me personally to be able to be a part of that and, you know, fulfills the intellectual, and artistic networking. It's another aspect of that. It's the -

MS. RICHARDS: So obviously when you were recruited -

MS. HÖCH: - feminism activist aspect of it.

MS. RICHARDS: - someone recognized that -

MS. DE BORGOS: Oh, yes.

MS. HÖCH: Of course.

MS. RICHARDS: - in you.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah, I mean you only recruit -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah, an apolitical person wouldn't be a part of this group.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. You only recruit people who you think are going to contribute -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - in some way to the group.

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: Some people don't work out, but, I mean, you bring them in with the expectation that their voice is going to add some element that's - voice or talent will add some element to the group's survival. I mean we're interested in the group surviving, certainly, even those of us who may not participate a lot.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: I mean the reason why she's here -

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: - is because there's still an identification and a love for this group.

MS. HÖCH: Right. Right. I didn't use to be a Guerrilla Girl. I'm still a Guerrilla Girl. You know what I mean? Like, I don't think that ever goes away. I mean as you can tell, I'm sure, from speaking to Girls who retired a long, long time ago. It's still your identity. Mm-hmm.

MS. RICHARDS: Are there any other parts of your experience as a Guerrilla Girl that you'd want to share?

MS. DE BORGOS: Oh, I - you asked about, you know, women - did anyone mention Baboon Boys?

MS. RICHARDS: No.

MS. HÖCH: I was going to bring that up before. [Höch and De Borgos laugh.]

MS. RICHARDS: No, do tell. [Laughs.]

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, there was a - I think - you know, there are men who've wanted to be -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - part of the Guerrilla Girls or transgender or gay men or something. And also, some of us do have husbands and significant others who are male, and they eventually figure out that, you know, you're doing this. You know, especially like - right?

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: So -

MS. HÖCH: There's this crazy mask in the closet.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. So we made up a category of significant - for males who know - who, like, are - are allied with us and they're called Baboon Boys.

MS. RICHARDS: When did this start?

MS. DE BORGOS: Oh, I don't know.

MS. HÖCH: Forever, as long as [inaudible].

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, when it was the original Guerrilla Girls?

MS. DE BORGOS: I don't know. You'd have to check that out, but I mean - but the way that we refer to men who we feel are allied with us or significant others who are male who know the identity of the Guerrilla Girls is that we refer to them as Baboon Boys.

MS. HÖCH: Well, and at a gig, whenever someone would say, "Oh, you know, why don't you accept men," or, "Could I be a part of your group," we would encourage them to, in fact, start the Baboon Boys. You know, of the group of us that were encouraging others to start groups.

MS. DE BORGOS: [Laughs.]

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: Did other groups start anyplace else in the U.S. and call themselves Guerrilla Girls Tucson or L.A.?

MS. HÖCH: I know that happened.

MS. DE BORGOS: I really wanted that to happen, damn it.

MS. HÖCH: That did happen, and I don't know how quickly that fizzled out, if they're still going.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: I don't know the circumstances of it, but I had heard that was happening.

MS. DE BORGOS: Definitely. People would write us -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - and say that they were starting -

MS. HÖCH: Guerrilla Girls Sidney or whatever. Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - this Guerrilla Girls, you know.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah, all over the place.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. And I think that when *Hot Flashes* and all of that was going on, that was the time. The expansion of the Guerrilla Girls via this paraphernalia, which was done in part obviously to get word out, but also to support the Guerrilla Girls, you know, financially, right, private donorship kind of thing, people wanted to have these groups, and I think that that's when the expansion and jitters about how far the far-reaching aspects of the Guerrilla Girls began to create some conflicts in the group. You know, the more - and that's often - the more successful things got and how you divide the money and the fame and all of these other things that go along with success divided the group but didn't extinguish it and that's really, really important. It hasn't been extinguished.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well, and it's been allowed to change. I mean once you have the formula and you have these problems because of it, you know, and some people want change and it's like how do you allow that to happen and stay the same at the same time? So I think that is really what propelled that kind of, you know, split.

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, you know, split or -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: Hannah, you anticipate becoming active again?

MS. HÖCH: You know, like I said, I'm inactive active Girl. So, like - [they laugh] -

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: And if you did become active again, it would be with GuerrillaGirlsBroadband?

MS. HÖCH: Right. That's definitely the group I'm a part of.

MS. RICHARDS: I -

MS. DE BORGOS: To my knowledge, the Guerrilla Girls only exist now as -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - as a party of two.

MS. HÖCH: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: Isn't that right?

MS. HÖCH: Yeah. Well, you've heard about, like, the pink slips and all of this, right? I mean, like, it's what -

MS. DE BORGOS: No. What?

MS. RICHARDS: No, we didn't hear about the pink slips.

MS. HÖCH: Well, that's how the group started to separate. I mean, you know, we were just - from the split, I've always been a part of the Broadband.

MS. RICHARDS: Okay.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah, the Guerrilla Girls doesn't exist beyond the party of two now. They're very clear that they are the founders of the Guerrilla Girls and they do gigs under the - part of the truce is that we always identify ourselves as GGBB, always. And they're - those two are, like, the Guerrilla Girls and the rest of the other women are not really participating. I mean they're participating in terms of archiving and -

MS. RICHARDS: What do you mean by the rest?

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, there's -

MS. HÖCH: The old Girls.

MS. DE BORGOS: The old Girls.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah, the retired Girls.

MS. DE BORGOS: The old -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - Girls, the Girls who were -

MS. RICHARDS: Who retired before GGBB started?

MS. HÖCH: Exactly, before - yeah, any of this. Exactly.

MS. RICHARDS: Chose not to become members of GGBB?

MS. DE BORGOS: Right.

MS. HÖCH: Right. In the mid-'90s said, "I'm moving on."

MS. RICHARDS: They have a history.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: And they, you know, they write letters to us -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - concerning, like, when the archives came - you know, were given to the Getty -

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - we all received letters about what's going on.

MS. RICHARDS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: So I mean there's still a desire to reach out and maintain contact with us as ex-GGs and/or GGBs. So there's a respect there. I mean they can't get away from seeing this as a collective, and it would be just contradicting all the ideals that we as a group believed in.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you want to speculate if Guerrilla Girls, Inc., is just two girls, not that they've said that, but if it's just two girls and when they can't do gigs anymore, do you anticipate it'll - that it will just stop being an active group, it'll just end with them?

MS. DE BORGOS: Well, it'll be GGBB.

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: Right. Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah, because they're not recruiting new members. They're not actively recruiting. They're doing their thing. They're going to continue to do their thing. They get money for that thing, and that's - and we are the ones who are doing the active recruiting. I don't know of them doing that. Did they say otherwise?

MS. RICHARDS: I asked if there were other members and they said yes.

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah, but they're old Girls.

MS. RICHARDS: But they said there weren't any others I could speak to.

MS. DE BORGOS: Right. Right. Whatever.

MS. HÖCH: Yeah, I haven't a clue. I mean I don't follow what they're doing, so I don't know, but I mean I imagine that it's them and it's going to - you know, that's the legacy. Yeah, and then we're, you know, the active legacy.

MS. RICHARDS: I want to ask you a funny question. It might be the last question. You both have had the experience of wearing the gorilla masks -

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: - and I'm told they're really uncomfortable and hot.

MS. HÖCH: They're a little warm. You drink through a straw.

MS. DE BORGOS: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RICHARDS: And I always wondered why at some point someone hadn't invented a - hadn't had a custom made comfortable one with some air - with some breathable material instead of the rubber.

MS. HÖCH: We were not going to put our resources into that. Like, it just wasn't a top priority to spend, like, time and energy and resources on.

MS. RICHARDS: So -

MS. HÖCH: I mean if some women were, like, allergic to latex or something she'd make her own mask, but -

MS. RICHARDS: If you can survive with it on for two hours when you do a gig -

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah, it's not a -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: - it's not - it's not -

MS. HÖCH: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: No, no.

MS. RICHARDS: Oh, I was picturing like a Halloween mask, which you practically suffocate in.

MS. DE BORGOS: But, you know, to return to the issue of what you didn't ask and racial politics, I remember having a conversation -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - with - about the gorilla mask and just noting how this group had to have been started by white women because as women of color - the idea of putting on a gorilla mask considering that black women have always, you know, the association of blackness -

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - with animality and particularly as being, you know, below - you know, subhuman as apes would never have occurred. I accept -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - it now, but when we started to do some criticism about racism and institutional racism and all that, I do remember bringing up this whole issue that the very fact that they felt comfortable using this gorilla mask was part of the white privilege because they were never told, you know, that as white women -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - they were closer to apes, but as black people, you - you know, you always are thinking about -

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. DE BORGOS: - how often people just will say, you know, that we look more like apes than human beings.

MS. RICHARDS: And now that it's Guerrilla and there's the gorilla - the two spellings, you're forever locked into having the gorilla mask?

MS. DE BORGOS: Yeah. Yeah, which is why I accept it, but I wouldn't have come up - you know, like, if it was me, I would've -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: - come up with, like, something like a female Che [Guevara] kind of thing -

MS. HÖCH: Mm. Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - right? I wouldn't have come up with -

MS. RICHARDS: Right.

MS. DE BORGOS: - the gorilla iconography. I would've gone towards more of the Latin American guerrilla -

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah.

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: - kind of masking, right? Or maybe it would've been - what are those things called -

MS. RICHARDS: Camouflage?

MS. DE BORGOS: - the schema?

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. DE BORGOS: Balaclava. Is that right?

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah, I think so.

MS. DE BORGOS: That's would've come up with, right?

MS. HÖCH: Mm.

MS. DE BORGOS: We wouldn't have come up with anything like a gorilla.

MS. RICHARDS: Yeah, that's a very interesting point.

MS. HÖCH: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

MS. RICHARDS: So should we - yeah. Well, thank you very much.

MS. DE BORGOS: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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