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Oral history interview with Guerrilla Girls
Alice Neel and Gertrude Stein, 2007 Dec. 1

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a digitally recorded interview with Guerrilla Girls Alice Neel and Gertrude Stein on December 1, 2007. The interview took place at Independent Curators International offices 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 Alice Neel and Gertrude Stein of the Guerrilla Girls at 799 Broadway, iCI's offices, on Saturday, December 1, 2007, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number two.

So, let me begin. I wanted to ask you both a couple of questions, and we can go successively. When did you, Alice Neel, join the Guerrilla Girls?

ALICE NEEL: It was way in the beginning; it was the first meeting after the founding members. I think it was the first or second meeting, 1985. And I heard about this incredible group, the Guerrilla Girls, saw posters and things they did in the streets, and just was real excited about it, really - I thought it was important, wanted to be part of it.

So, I mentioned it to a few women artists that I knew, and then I got a phone call inviting me to a meeting. And I remember when they invited me to the meeting, they blindfolded me en route to the meeting - it was very, very mysterious.

GERTRUDE STEIN: Really?

MS. NEEL: And - yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Talk about that.

MS. NEEL: A few of the girls met me at my apartment and then we walked a little bit, and then they put a blindfold on me and we walked a couple of blocks to the first meeting, where it was, which - now I know where it is - where it was.

But at the - it was fun. It was - all of a sudden I was in this apartment. [They laugh.]

MS. RICHARDS: So not only were the members trying to remain anonymous, but the location needed to -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And why was that?

MS. NEEL: The anonymity was so important - it's such an important part of the success of the group.

MS. STEIN: The element of mystery.

MS. NEEL: Absolutely.

MS. STEIN: What if you had not actually joined? Then you would be loose, out there, telling people -

MS. NEEL: That's right, that's right, that's right.

MS. STEIN: - stuff that had happened.

MS. NEEL: Right, yes. Because it was so new then.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: We didn't - they knew it was - wanted to keep it very hush-hush, to maintain the power that is given.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: Because it wasn't about us. We all have various levels of where our career was at, too, at the time. Some of us were very visible; some of us weren't. We didn't want that to be the issue, at all. It wasn't about us, or our careers, or what we were doing. It was about the message that we wanted to bring forth that was compelling, and essential, we felt, to do that.

MS. RICHARDS: Why do - why were you recruited, and why did you join? Well, you said -

MS. NEEL: Well -

MS. STEIN: Did somebody sponsor you? Do you remember who your sponsor was?

MS. NEEL: I think I do. I think I remember. Yes, I remember mentioning it -

MS. STEIN: Do you remember her guerrilla name?

MS. NEEL: I don't know.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: That's why I'm not saying it.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: Because I don't remember the guerrilla name.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: I - it was barely - it was new, you know. I could speak for myself, but I know other girls have said they felt the same way. I felt this gut need to fix something that wasn't - it was not right, wasn't fair.

And the show ["An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture." 1985] at MoMA [Museum of Modern Art, New York City] was the straw that broke the camel's back in a way, too. But you just knew that this wasn't right, what was going on, that there was this inequality. And how do we address it; how do we approach it? What do we do about it? And I just felt that I wanted to be - do something about it. It was part of my life.

MS. STEIN: Well, plus, the ways that feminists had tried to protest inequality had been seen as shrill, and sour grapes.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: "You're just not as good, anyway."

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: "Why are you out there, burning your brassiere in front of the Whitney Museum [of American Art, New York City]?"

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: And so, this was an effort to come up with a strategically different way to look at discrimination and protest it.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: And what about your experience joining, Gertrude?

MS. STEIN: Well, I am a founding member. And there were - you know, I am going to reveal some of the warts that are going to be revealed by other people, because I think it is important to show the process. It was a bumpy, bumpy - we should say - bumpy process.

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

MS. STEIN: There were seven white women sitting around a red table in Lower Manhattan. And race was an issue that came up later, when one of the white women took the name Frida Kahlo, who is an artist of color, and spoke on behalf of artists of color, and that made the artists of color pretty mad. But we can get to that at a later point.

I think Alice Neel put it very well, that the moment was charged with this desire to try to protest in a way that would be immune from the previous charges that had been made against the feminists of the 1970s. This is

1985, we're at the mid-point of the 1980s.

And we were mostly - although the careers, you know, the establishment of our careers, was at all kinds of different places, we were mostly young and enthusiastic -

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you remember the number of founding members?

MS. STEIN: Seven.

MS. RICHARDS: You said seven.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And so you joined as a founding member. Did you have, at that moment - or Alice - an idea of how - what this commitment meant?

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: Not at all.

MS. STEIN: Not really.

MS. NEEL: No. We were just doing it to try to make a difference, to also satisfy our own frustration about the problem. We didn't even know, at the time, how to go about it. So we said, "Let's just start by counting numbers. Let's get the facts, the black-and-white facts."

So, we went through old *Art in America* -

MS. STEIN: *Art in America*, annual issues.

MS. NEEL: - annual reports - we knew there was a problem, intuitively. But we needed to show it. How do we do that? That was the challenge. How do we actually show it? So it was very obvious. It was the best way to do it. We counted. And we came up with these appalling figures of the state of women artists and artists of color.

MS. STEIN: Well, the first poster was, these galleries show no -

MS. NEEL: No women artists.

MS. STEIN: Or 10 - let's see.

MS. NEEL: I wish we had our book with us.

MS. STEIN: Next time - I didn't bring it.

MS. NEEL: Less than 10 percent, I think it was, women artists, was one of the first -

MS. STEIN: And then the next one was museum shows; is that right?

MS. NEEL: We did a report card early on.

MS. STEIN: Not the second one. The second one was -

MS. NEEL: Yes, museums.

MS. STEIN: "These museums show" -

MS. NEEL: And it was zero, woman.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Woman artists, it was like zero, zero; it was horrific, an eye-opener.

MS. STEIN: Zero, zero, one, zero.

MS. NEEL: Terrible.

MS. STEIN: So -

MS. NEEL: There was the answer, right in front of us, in black and white.

MS. STEIN: And then, the next strategy was to put up the posters on the streets, so they appeared anonymously overnight. And then, Saturday morning, you'd be going to the galleries, and you would see these posters that -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - they had put up.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Were you involved personally -

MS. NEEL: Yes, oh, yes. Yes. Oh, gosh, that was another story.

MS. STEIN: Well, later, we hired men.

MS. NEEL: We did, to do it. But in the beginning, we did it.

MS. RICHARDS: Hired? You paid?

MS. STEIN: Yes, we paid -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - men to go out and put up our posters.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: How long did you put up posters yourself before - what year, do you know, you started hiring -

MS. NEEL: It was probably 1985, when the posters -

MS. RICHARDS: When you started hiring men?

MS. NEEL: Oh, maybe the year - when we started to get a little bit more on our feet, financially.

MS. RICHARDS: You didn't hire women.

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. RICHARDS: You just hired men.

MS. STEIN: Well, yes.

MS. NEEL: It was kind of dangerous, the job, too.

MS. STEIN: Well, it was. Plus -

MS. NEEL: They needed to be put to work.

MS. STEIN: - we thought it was nice - it was retribution, you know.

MS. RICHARDS: The men -

MS. NEEL: Yes, it was making them part of it.

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: No, no.

MS. STEIN: The women wore gorilla masks in the beginning.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: As -

MS. NEEL: We were on the street. We would go out in the middle of the night. I remember getting the buckets with the paste, and the big brooms, and it would be three in the morning, because that's when we wouldn't be chased around by the police.

MS. RICHARDS: Were either of you ever stopped by the police?

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes, yes, yes. I remember having to drop the buckets at some point and run like a crazy woman.

MS. STEIN: On West Broadway, right?

MS. NEEL: On West Broadway.

MS. STEIN: Yes. Outside of Leo Castelli [Gallery]?

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: It was like, you know -

MS. RICHARDS: In your mask.

MS. NEEL: In the mask. You couldn't even do that now without, probably, getting shot or arrested.

MS. STEIN: Right, with the terrorist -

MS. NEEL: Recently I did an interview, as Alice Neel, for the movie that Andrew Neel did. It's a lovely movie. They interviewed Frida Kahlo and myself. And we weren't in it, just our voices in places. But I remember we had to put our masks on before we went into his home, so he wouldn't know who we were. And I remember feeling terrified of putting on a mask in public.

And that wasn't the fear in 1985, when we were postering -

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: Realizing that shift. That's a weird change.

MS. RICHARDS: So shortly after you started postering, you hired men to do it?

MS. STEIN: I don't know whether it was shortly.

MS. NEEL: Yes, I don't think it was so short.

MS. STEIN: Maybe a couple of years, several years.

MS. NEEL: I remember doing it quite a bit.

MS. STEIN: It was some years.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: And all the funds and the - we put our own money into it; I mean, it came out of, I know, my own pocket, and everybody's else's, to fund for all the supplies.

MS. STEIN: And the -

MS. NEEL: And the -

MS. RICHARDS: What were your ideas about how the finances would work in those days?

MS. NEEL: We had no idea.

MS. STEIN: Let's see, the first treasurer was -

MS. NEEL: Oh, right, yes.

MS. STEIN: Wait a second. Vigée LeBrun.

MS. NEEL: LeBrun.

MS. STEIN: Vigée LeBrun. And she -

MS. NEEL: That's right.

MS. STEIN: Her husband, as it happened, was a banker. So he got us a checking account, even though we had no corporation or -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - any reason to have a checking account. And then she would sign the checks with Leo Castelli or Ileana Sonnabend, or whatever -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - she wanted to, because, you know, it was all made up.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: So - but we had a checking account. So then people could contribute money, and then we would just get money in the mail, and -

MS. NEEL: Yes, donations.

MS. STEIN: And Alice Neel was the archivist.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: So she would open up the envelopes and say, "Oh, we got hate mail," or, "We got money," "We got a gig" -

MS. NEEL: File it, and -

MS. STEIN: "We got" -

MS. RICHARDS: How did each of you pick your name?

MS. NEEL: Well, I picked my name because I -

MS. RICHARDS: Alice Neel.

MS. NEEL: - met Alice Neel. I was actually in a show with her at the Whitney Downtown one year. And she - I just love her work. I just think she is terrific, you know. She was fun to meet, too. She was a real cantankerous soul. She was at the opening, chain-smoking cigarettes. She was terrific. I love her work, and then she passed away, so -

MS. STEIN: Also, you're a very good painter.

MS. NEEL: Oh, thank you.

MS. RICHARDS: And how about Gertrude Stein?

MS. STEIN: I had admired Gertrude for many, many years, all the way through graduate school. And I thought she was doing Cubist literature. I mean, I really thought she was a genius who was never given credit for having been a genius.

And one day, I heard that her handwriting was on view at the Library of Congress, so I got a train ticket and went down there and looked at it. And it was like a sine wave. You couldn't really distinguish the letters. So, Gertrude Stein, and Alice B. Toklas, actually, should be thanked for all of her work, because somebody had to transcribe all that stuff.

MS. NEEL: Yes, it's a collaboration of sorts.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think a - does the group have any rule about when you stop - when you leave the group, someone else can take that same name, or is it forever your name?

MS. STEIN: No. There have been two Ana Mendietas, as far as I know. One girl changed her name three times.

MS. NEEL: Yes, that's true.

MS. STEIN: She was -

MS. NEEL: I don't remember.

MS. STEIN: Or four, maybe four.

MS. NEEL: Yes, and I don't even know what the reasons were.

MS. STEIN: She was - well, she will tell you. We will get Julia DeBurgos in here. She was Tina Modotti, but then she found out Tina was fascist, and so she didn't want to be a fascist. She just wanted to hang out with Frida Kahlo. [Neel laughs.]

And then, somebody before that - and I can't remember who that was -

MS. NEEL: I don't know. [Laughs.]

MS. STEIN: But, anyway -

MS. NEEL: We usually keep our own names, though.

MS. STEIN: It was pretty free-form.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: I mean, I heard you ask the other two girls about the process through which the group worked. And there really was never a standardized -

MS. NEEL: Yes, it was organic. It was incredibly organic.

MS. STEIN: - process.

MS. NEEL: It -

MS. RICHARDS: Viral.

MS. NEEL: Yes, it worked. And we learned as we went along. And I remember there was one point that we were having difficulty - we thought we probably could learn a lot from white men in corporate America and how they run their business, because we would get to this point where somebody was, like say, doing gigs. And they weren't really good at it. And nobody had the heart to say to them, "You know, I think you would be better doing something else," without worrying about hurting their feelings.

MS. STEIN: Yes, it was horrible. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: You know, we're a bunch of girls here. And we realized that, in corporate America, I'm sure that kind of dialogue was more like, "You should do," or, "You should be doing this," - and nobody takes it personally. So there was - I remember a discussion about learning how to communicate in a different way.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you - do you remember thinking about how other collaboratives or cooperatives, even in the art world, have functioned in the past, and -

MS. STEIN: No, no.

MS. RICHARDS: - thinking about them?

MS. NEEL: No, because -

MS. STEIN: We didn't use other models.

MS. NEEL: No, no, we didn't use any - we were inventing it and reinventing it as we went along. And it was pretty exciting. We had a great time in the beginning; it was wonderful.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: It was really like a happy, dysfunctional family.

MS. STEIN: So joyous.

MS. NEEL: Yes. We had a lot of laughs. It was very creative. We would sit around, maybe because it wasn't so many of us, and we sat around and we would work on the Advantage poster ["The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist"], for example. I think that's one of the masterpieces of the Guerrilla Girls, because we all chipped in, and we hammered away at it, and we kept reworking and changing it. "No, that doesn't work. This works." And so for a long time, until we all were satisfied with it.

MS. RICHARDS: What year was that?

MS. NEEL: Early on. Was it -

MS. STEIN: Eighty-eight, I'm going to say.

MS. NEEL: - '88, I think it is. So -

MS. STEIN: I think.

MS. NEEL: Yes, 1988. So, by then -

MS. STEIN: And it was at Liubov Popova's house, is that right? Did I get her - did I pronounce that correctly?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Popova, I think, I got right, anyway.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: I don't know about her first name.

So, the structure was, there is the group, as a whole, and then there are - a committee, maybe a committee, that is working on the project. And then the project comes back to the whole group.

MS. NEEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative], like homework.

MS. STEIN: And then it gets critiqued yet again.

MS. RICHARDS: From the time when you were seven, did you immediately decide to expand, and how much, and how fast?

MS. STEIN: Decide?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: The word "decide" is hanging me up. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: Yes, me too. That's - exactly, Gertrude. That's interesting, but "decide" - it kind of - people would just say they were interested -

MS. STEIN: Well, we were recruiting.

MS. NEEL: We needed help.

MS. STEIN: We were out there recruiting.

MS. NEEL: Yes, we recruited, because we needed help.

MS. STEIN: And we figured out sponsorship later, that we could recruit people. If there was a girl who was already in the group who said - for example, later on, we had a debate about whether or not, what we - our public presentations, are they lectures or are they performances?

Well, if they're lectures, that requires one set of skills. And if they're performances, that - actually, there aren't any performance artists in this group, so I nominated Claude Cahun to come in and help us out with dance steps, you know, and things - [they laugh] - you see all these painters up there, gyrating around.

MS. NEEL: Yes. It was like breast-feeding supply and demand, the same kind of need.

MS. RICHARDS: And there was - and did you, at one point, decide how you were going to create a more diverse group, and why, and -

MS. STEIN: Yes, there was conscious effort to -

MS. NEEL: To bring in more women of color.

MS. STEIN: - bring in artists of color. And - but the only catch was that there was a kind of secret hierarchy that was in place that got to be the downfall of the group, I think. And they could smell that a mile away, and they would just leave.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Can you talk about that secret hierarchy?

MS. STEIN: You don't want to talk about this, because you're very close friends with one of the secret hierarchical people. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: I love everybody. [Laughs.]

MS. STEIN: Of the seven founders, two of them consider themselves to be the founders. And you will interview one or both of them, so no problem. And they're going to tell you the whole founding story, and that's fine. That's completely fine.

But at one point, there was a discussion about whether seniority would give one person more power, more control, than newbies.

And - but the process was so much about discussion and bouncing ideas around, that it didn't really make sense to offer somebody more power, just because they had had more years, when a new person who had just been brought into the group in the last week, who is young and right off the street -

MS. NEEL: And a little intimidated.

MS. STEIN: - might have - you know, might have really hot stuff.

MS. NEEL: Yes, and also a little shy about it. Yes.

MS. STEIN: Or - true. Or be shy, yes.

MS. NEEL: Yes. Yes, so - but sometimes, when the new members join, they would pull out because they felt their voice wasn't heard, and to be heard, had to go through some process.

MS. STEIN: Yelling. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: - yelling, and then some. The new members would confide in me and complain about it, and I would say, "If you have an idea, no one should stop you from it. I came from a large family where you had to keep repeating yourself and yell to be heard." So this process worked for me.

MS. STEIN: Keep - yes. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: I say, "Don't let that happen; keep yelling." I did talk to one of the members who was accused of causing this problem.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: And she was clueless regarding her effect on the group. She didn't realize she was doing that. So there was a period when she stepped back, and she tried to be a little bit less opinionated. But it was a problem -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: - as Gertrude was saying, in the group.

MS. RICHARDS: So, were there other conversations that would imply a kind of organization? You talked about seniority, and the issues of that.

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

MS. RICHARDS: Whereas, I think I was hearing that there really wasn't an organizational structure.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: It was very ad hoc; it was very - whoever had a great idea would bring a group of -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: People would gather around, and they would do it.

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. RICHARDS: But were there -

MS. STEIN: I think the hierarchical thing came into play with killing off ideas that were not deemed to be good enough, somehow. And who makes that decision?

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: Who decides what represents us, and the group? And battling to make sure that your ideas were continually brought forward and discussed -

MS. NEEL: Was not comfortable -

MS. STEIN: Because there was never any agenda. There were never any minutes. There was never any -

MS. NEEL: We did it for a while, minutes, but then it fell apart. [Laughs.]

MS. STEIN: Well, about a year.

MS. NEEL: Yes, it didn't work for a long time.

MS. STEIN: I know.

MS. RICHARDS: Nobody wanted to keep it.

MS. NEEL: We did, but I don't know -

MS. STEIN: And because there wasn't any pyramid. It was a pancake. I mean, I think the reality was some people did yell louder than others.

But, nevertheless, there was an effort for - everybody who remained, anyway, wanted to be there, and wanted to -

MS. NEEL: That's right. That's right.

MS. STEIN: - yell -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - and make sure they were heard.

MS. NEEL: So, that -

MS. RICHARDS: So it was a -

MS. NEEL: So there it is, in a nutshell, that when that started, that need to yell, or really make your voice heard, if there were some girls, new girls, who possibly had great ideas, but who couldn't fight for their ideas, they were the ones that drifted away and got pushed aside, or left.

MS. STEIN: This all sort of worked in a salutary way when, for example, we even - we developed, designed, and produced a poster that Alice Neel objected to.

MS. NEEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative], that's true.

MS. STEIN: And then it was not ever put up on the street. So -

MS. NEEL: Right, so it worked both - yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes, it worked both ways.

MS. NEEL: If you had a strong enough point of view, and you could represent it, or want to talk about it, sometimes you just pounded it out with everyone there.

MS. RICHARDS: Was that poster destroyed?

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. STEIN: Actually, no.

MS. NEEL: Nothing was destroyed.

MS. STEIN: It's still in the archives.

MS. NEEL: It wasn't put out in the street, and it's in the archives -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: - which it should be.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: You know, it was something we did.

MS. STEIN: It was produced.

MS. NEEL: But -

MS. STEIN: Do you want to talk about why it was -

MS. NEEL: Yes. It was a poster we did called "Drastic Cuts in the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts]."

MS. STEIN: Yes, "Guerrilla Girls Recommend Drastic Cuts."

MS. NEEL: Cuts, and for the -

MS. RICHARDS: What? Say -

MS. STEIN: "Guerrilla Girls" -

MS. NEEL: When the NEA was making these drastic cuts, this poster was this image of a knife with blades.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: And it was about asking the NEA board, or the males, to cut off their penises and mail it to the NEA.

My response was, "What? No." I was freaking out, because it, to me, was this horrific, violent kind of poster. And when you talk about violence and things like that, women never win, you know. They're the ones who are the victims of these violent acts.

And I just didn't feel like it should be part of what we do.

MS. STEIN: And she made that case persuasively, and then we didn't publish it.

MS. NEEL: We didn't publish it, yes. Yes, I guess that's how that worked.

MS. RICHARDS: Going back to the issue of diversity and the membership, because it was so organic, and a member would ask a member, and no one was assigned to ask a member, how did you make a big push to be more diverse from the original seven white women?

MS. NEEL: Good question.

MS. STEIN: It was constant.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: I mean, I think we figured out pretty soon that - well, the racial disparity in feminism goes back to suffragette times. And feminism has not had a very good record of fighting for the rights of women of color. Fighting for women was hard enough, so they kind of let the women of color float off into the distance.

So we were conscious of that and wanted to not be subject to the same things.

MS. NEEL: Repeat it.

MS. STEIN: But as I said, I think Rosalba Carriera told you that the Asian women went off and became part of Godzilla, and then the black women went off and became part of -

MS. NEEL: Oh.

MS. STEIN: What was the name of that group?

MS. NEEL: Oh, my gosh, yes.

MS. STEIN: I forget.

MS. NEEL: I had - it just slipped my - it was in my head, and left. Maybe I will remember it, but -

MS. RICHARDS: And Hispanic women?

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: No, I don't remember -

MS. STEIN: We didn't have any.

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. RICHARDS: Except Frida Kahlo.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Who is not actually Hispanic.

MS. NEEL: No. Far from it. Gosh, I don't remember now.

MS. STEIN: Yes, but it will come.

MS. NEEL: But it was a short -

MS. STEIN: It will come.

MS. NEEL: It was a little pocket of -

MS. RICHARDS: Do you remember what year that might have been?

MS. STEIN: Oh -

MS. NEEL: Oh, gosh, late '80s.

MS. RICHARDS: The same year that Godzilla was formed?

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. STEIN: I think it was before.

MS. NEEL: It was before.

MS. STEIN: One prominent black woman artist took off, and -

MS. NEEL: And then what happened? It didn't really survive -

MS. STEIN: - started a group.

MS. NEEL: - did it?

MS. STEIN: For a little while.

MS. NEEL: It just didn't survive long.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Oh, that's a good question. Now it's bugging me.

MS. STEIN: Well, wait. We're going to invite them in, so -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: We're going to get the answers to these questions later on.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. STEIN: I don't think we have to have the gears -

MS. RICHARDS: Had -

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. RICHARDS: As the group was expanding, did you consciously try to bring in different generations, and potentially different viewpoints?

MS. STEIN: Later.

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

MS. STEIN: Later.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: The - at the turn of the millennium, there was a - there were a bunch of new girls who were in the group, one of whom was a webbie girl who wanted to revamp the website, right?

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

MS. STEIN: So she would ask Frida Kahlo, who had the password, every single meeting, "Could I have the password for the website, so I can, you know, do something?"

And we all agreed that this was time to do something with the website. But the password never actually got conveyed, and this went on for two - count them - years.

So, as the end of the millennium was coming, the issue of power sharing became very acute. And five of us were fired by the two founding members, and we ran off and started a group, GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand, which then was sued because we were using the name, Guerrilla Girls, which had been trademarked by the two founding members.

And then, there was a - you know, the lawsuit was resolved, and -

MS. RICHARDS: Well -

MS. STEIN: - we're not supposed to talk about that.

MS. RICHARDS: What were the Guerrilla Girls' names of the two founding members?

MS. STEIN: Oh. Well, the two founding members who consider themselves to be the founding members? Frida Kahlo and Kathe Kollwitz.

And their group now, today, is called Guerrilla Girls, Inc. They incorporated as Guerrilla Girls, Inc. And GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand is the younger, webbie girls, and totally diverse, and totally - I'm the old one, and then there are all these kids.

MS. NEEL: Chickens. [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: Is the Guerrilla Girls -

MS. STEIN: And then there is yet another group of theater girls, Guerrilla Girls on Tour, who are looking at discrimination in the theater world.

MS. RICHARDS: Is the current website, GuerrillaGirls.com, run by -

MS. STEIN: Guerrilla Girls, Inc.

MS. NEEL: Inc.

MS. RICHARDS: Inc.

MS. STEIN: Sure, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand has -

MS. STEIN: Is -

MS. RICHARDS: - another website?

MS. STEIN: Right. That's on my piece of paper here.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: And the -

MS. RICHARDS: And when did that happen, that GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand was founded?

MS. STEIN: Two thousand one, I think, January 2001.

MS. RICHARDS: Why do you -

MS. STEIN: So this is all happening right at the turn of the millennium. There was a lot of unhappiness about - because we had never established any procedures, and we had never developed any process for power sharing, when it became clear, after 15 years, that the power was not going to be shared [laughs], that became the subject of the meetings. And then the meetings were just awful.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: You know, they were really, really depressing.

MS. NEEL: And then I -

MS. RICHARDS: Alice, how long were you a member of Guerrilla Girls, original Guerrilla Girls?

MS. NEEL: Too long. [Stein laughs.] No, I don't mean that. [Laughs.] I loved every minute of it. No, it was enjoyable. A long time.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you remember what year you started?

MS. NEEL: I started in 1985, and - well, when I left the Girls, my own life took over in a way that I had to take care of, too.

But also it opened up to too-large a group that weren't really, I felt, doing anything. A lot of them were -

MS. RICHARDS: What year was that?

MS. NEEL: - complaining about their lives, or they weren't really productive. It wasn't like the initial group, who really were focused on this.

Some new girls didn't even know the history of the Guerrilla Girls. They had little knowledge of our history. At that point, we were very well known, and I think a lot of them were interested in coming on because of the reputation of the Girls.

And I felt, when I would go to these meetings, that it wasn't the same kind of energy, where we sat and we really worked at something, and we focused and were driven. We might have fought or not agreed, but we came up with some incredibly, visually - inspiring product. And there wasn't enough product making at that point. It was just -

MS. RICHARDS: What year was that?

MS. NEEL: - all over the place. Oh, year?

MS. STEIN: Let's see.

MS. NEEL: The early 1990s?

MS. STEIN: You were crying in the bathroom. What year was that? [They laugh.]

MS. NEEL: In the fetal position. [Laughs.] Yes, that was - it was about in mid-1994? Around there.

MS. STEIN: Okay, somewhere in there.

MS. NEEL: Ninety-four -

MS. STEIN: So that's 10 years in.

MS. NEEL: Yes, 10 years in.

MS. STEIN: Ten - 1994, 1995 -

MS. NEEL: Yes, that's about right.

MS. RICHARDS: You're implying that, possibly, new members weren't involved as visual artists, therefore there wasn't the skill and talent and passion about a visual solution, visual -

MS. NEEL: I don't know if it was because it was visual. It might have been. I thought, too, that maybe this was the time for the Guerrilla Girls to end. I always had a fantasy of a going back to the jungle and reemerging as this union for artists.

Except that I do see that - especially recently, from the work of Gertrude and Frida and the groups, that there is still a life for it, and a really important place for it, you know. I'm sort of switching my idea about the value of it recently. When we were at the Brooklyn Museum and received an award, it was very interesting.

But I do feel that maybe this is the time - we're at the point where maybe this is the time to let it rest and reemerge in some other form, or another way. I think its life has had an incredible impact, and I think the life of the Girls has now shifted, or is in transition in some way. But I'm not sure what that is.

I'm more interested in hearing what younger women have to say. I want to hear their voice, what they have to say about it, because they're in a whole different generation and it's their turn.

MS. STEIN: And their views about feminism are completely different.

MS. NEEL: Very different.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: And I think it has to reemerge as their own. They have to do it.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: They have to take over and resume the responsibility.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: So -

MS. RICHARDS: When - Gertrude, did you say what year BroadBand started, GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand?

MS. STEIN: Two thousand and one was when we were incorporated.

MS. RICHARDS: And did the original Guerrilla Girls - was the perception that you would both exist and both flourish and continue on, or was there a fear that only one of you could survive, that you were in competition?

MS. STEIN: Yes, I think there was plenty of anger and jealousy to go around, and there was - but we got money from the original group. When the original group disappeared, and the three wings took off at the turn of the millennium, the theater -

MS. RICHARDS: The original group disappeared?

MS. STEIN: Yes, it kind of disappeared, yes. You had left already - the old girls - there were five old girls who were fired, right? We formed a new group, and then we got a bunch of young recruits. That's GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand.

And then the theater girls had already left, I think. They formed Guerrilla Girls on Tour in 2000, if I'm not mistaken. I can't remember. And then Guerrilla Girls, Inc., had incorporated as Guerrilla Girls, Inc., in 1999.

MS. NEEL: It's -

MS. STEIN: I think.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: For more legal reasons.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: Yes, in terms of -

MS. STEIN: So -

MS. NEEL: - defining groups -

MS. RICHARDS: And they had - all the other current members were then -

MS. STEIN: Gone. They had left.

MS. RICHARDS: So, how many members did Guerrilla Girls, Inc., have? Just two?

MS. STEIN: Two, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And they had to reform themselves.

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. NEEL: But - yes.

MS. RICHARDS: If they were to -

MS. STEIN: The Guerrilla Girls, Inc., site maintains the intellectual property of the collective. So that is where the problem is, I think, that you're having.

You think that there is a bunch of girls involved in Guerrilla Girls, Inc. But, actually, everybody was involved -

MS. NEEL: In the -

MS. STEIN: - in creating all the stuff that is on their site today.

MS. NEEL: Yes, it was everyone.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: But it was -

MS. STEIN: But now they're doing their own work.

MS. NEEL: Right, just two of them -

MS. STEIN: Going forward.

MS. NEEL: - took off, branched off.

MS. STEIN: But those historical - all the historical stuff was done by the collective, up to -

MS. NEEL: Right, not just two.

MS. STEIN: - about the year 2000.

MS. NEEL: It was the seven, or the beginning group.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Most of the work that was -

MS. STEIN: You can see -

MS. NEEL: - on the map for -

MS. STEIN: I mean, I think it's - I don't know if there is a clear distinction made on their site about what is "Inc." and what is not "Inc."

MS. NEEL: Yes, I - that's - I don't know. I don't think there is.

MS. STEIN: I don't think there is.

MS. NEEL: Because - no.

MS. STEIN: Okay.

MS. NEEL: That's a - yes. Well, it should be just about what they have been vesting their time in, as themselves, anyway. So that is - it wouldn't be fair if they were taking credit for everything, because it was all of us, the immediate group -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: - who did the real work of it.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you remember when the projects you were involved in, or that Guerrilla Girls, when you were members, started doing projects that weren't entirely focused on the art world?

MS. NEEL: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] The Gulf War.

MS. STEIN: That was happening all the way through.

MS. NEEL: Yes, it was.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: The Gulf War really kicked that off.

MS. STEIN: Yes, the Gulf War.

MS. RICHARDS: Ninety-one.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: And the homeless.

MS. NEEL: And the homeless project -

MS. STEIN: The homeless -

MS. RICHARDS: So from 1985 to 1991, perhaps, it was focused entirely on the art world?

MS. NEEL: Yes. In the beginning, it was just the art world. Yes. In fact, that was a little -

MS. STEIN: That was a discussion, yes.

MS. NEEL: - problematic in the group, too: should we be branching out to other issues, or we should just stick to the art world.

And then I guess my point of view is that we're artists, we're in the world, and everything affects us.

MS. RICHARDS: Could -

MS. NEEL: How can we separate it?

MS. RICHARDS: Why - was there the possibility that these girls could - half the girls could say, "We want to focus on the art world," and the other half could say, "We want to focus on the world," and -

MS. NEEL: That went on for a while.

MS. RICHARDS: And then say, "Fine. We will do both."

MS. NEEL: That happened in the beginning; there was some of that. But then it kind of just melted into - we all kind of agreed.

MS. STEIN: And we all did everything.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: We all agreed that it's an important issue. How can you - you know, how can you not -

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. NEEL: - react to it?

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: Or express it.

MS. STEIN: You did a series of posters -

MS. NEEL: Yes, right.

MS. STEIN: - with an artist outside the group, and homeless women.

MS. NEEL: Homeless - Artists and Homeless Collaborative.

MS. STEIN: And that - you did four?

MS. NEEL: Yes, about four posters. That was a - maybe that was also a way that we kind of started to mix things up, too. But it was a great project. We went into the homeless shelter, which is in the armory. It's way back, tucked in, nobody knows -

MS. RICHARDS: Which armory?

MS. NEEL: It's on 69th Street [The Park Avenue Armory]. You know, it's very - you're not supposed to - I don't even know if it's still there.

MS. RICHARDS: It is. There is a door -

MS. NEEL: Yes, that is - okay, it's still there.

MS. RICHARDS: - on 68th.

MS. NEEL: And we walked through - this big ballroom event was happening with the gowns and the minks and the drapes, and we went through this back door and we were in this little place where the women were.

And I just sat down with them, and the Artists and Homeless Collaborative woman at the time - I don't know if I should say.

MS. STEIN: I don't know if we should. I don't know.

MS. NEEL: No, better not say. Let's just not say any names, even though she wasn't a Guerrilla. She was - ran the thing. And we sat down with them; we didn't know what we were going to do. So we just talked with them. And we - from their stories, we created these posters that really -

MS. STEIN: They are very upsetting.

MS. NEEL: Very upsetting.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Very - you know, I think the strongest ones - now I'm not remembering exactly what they all said, but - were the ones that were very simple, about their lives, mostly about the stories about being raped.

MS. STEIN: "If I wake up and I'm wet between the legs, I know I've been raped."

MS. NEEL: Yes, that was one of them. Another one was about getting beaten up, going and looking for food in the garbage pails.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: I - yes, but that one was the more powerful one. We did a Mother's Day poster, too.

MS. STEIN: Was that before the Gulf War or after the Gulf War posters?

MS. NEEL: I think it was before.

MS. STEIN: It might have been before.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: What -

MS. NEEL: It was before.

MS. RICHARDS: Do either of you want to talk about the use of posters, which has a long historic tradition, social activism, even from the 19th century, posters - Russian posters, all kinds of posters.

How did that become, in the beginning, the key vehicle?

MS. NEEL: Posters?

MS. RICHARDS: For your activism.

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. RICHARDS: And was there recognition of the history of posters?

MS. STEIN: There was - no.

MS. NEEL: No, no.

MS. STEIN: There was a recognition -

MS. NEEL: Nowhere.

MS. STEIN: - that SoHo was a convenient broadcast point.

MS. NEEL: We had a lot of walls to put up the posters.

MS. STEIN: And so -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: And it was the center of the art world at that moment.

MS. NEEL: That's right.

MS. STEIN: So we were postering in SoHo, period. And then, later, it got to be more difficult, because -

MS. NEEL: I remember getting chased.

MS. STEIN: - Chelsea and the East Village and other -

MS. NEEL: That's right, it shifted.

MS. STEIN: You know, there were all these different locations.

MS. NEEL: We didn't know where to go. Right, we did it - I think it was Chelsea for a while.

MS. STEIN: We did poster in Chelsea.

MS. NEEL: But I remember getting chased by - for some reason - Leo Castelli; they were doing an installation so they were open late, and we were postering, and one of the guys who was working there and came out and was so pissed, because we were putting a poster right next to him about Leo Castelli - [Stein laughs] - he was in the

report card, that he didn't do too well. And he was - they were chasing us. [Laughs.] We were, like, laughing and yelling at the same time, with the buckets - [they laugh] - and - oh, we had to be young.

MS. STEIN: But then, the street became a less effective broadcast medium and one of the decisions that GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand made was to use the Internet as the street, and do projects that were Internet-based.

So they are not on the - except for the 2004 poster that they did called, "The Advantages of Another Bush Presidency," which takes advantage of "The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist," and was put on the streets of Chelsea, which is more difficult -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - because the laws had changed in the meanwhile, and we had to hire a firm that would do it, one of those -

MS. NEEL: - professional firm.

MS. STEIN: What's it called? Scalping? No, skulking? I forget. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: Squawker? No, I don't know.

MS. STEIN: Anyway -

MS. NEEL: They have a word for it.

MS. STEIN: We had to hire a firm, because we couldn't anymore go out and do it ourselves.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: And that cost several thousands of dollars.

MS. NEEL: That was funny.

MS. STEIN: But, anyway, we got the poster up right before the election 2004. That was the only time that we tried to - that the BroadBand, GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand, tried to do a poster on the streets.

MS. NEEL: Yes. But the idea for posters, we were concerned with, visually, how to represent the information we stumbled on, that we gathered.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: But it was shocking to us. I mean, it was like, "Oh, my God, I knew it was bad, but we didn't think it was that bad." You know, it was right in front of us. And so it was very obvious.

We did - we were visual artists, most of us, and we - all of us, really, and we were concerned about how it would - like typography, we wanted it simple; we wanted it real striking. We wanted to make - you know, we also wanted to have a sense of humor about what we did, make feminism sexy and funny again, because it had such a bad rap in the media of feminists, that they were all these angry, you know, shit-kicking, unattractive -

MS. STEIN: And Kathe Kollwitz, to her credit, was a professional designer -

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. STEIN: - for Conde Nast, or something.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: I can't remember.

MS. NEEL: So she created a lot of visual ideas -

MS. STEIN: She had a look that she wanted to create for the street -

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. STEIN: - that would be fast -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - easy to see, and -

MS. NEEL: And she was very good with that.

MS. STEIN: And I remember you asked the Guerrilla Girl Number One and Rosie about the Palladium show ["The Night the Palladium Apologized." 1985]. And so we should talk a little bit about the Palladium show. [The Palladium was originally located on 14th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues, since demolished.]

Were you around for the Palladium show?

MS. NEEL: I was there, yes, but I don't know - yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Nineteen eighties.

MS. STEIN: We were invited to do -

MS. NEEL: Eighty-five.

MS. STEIN: It was real early.

MS. NEEL: Oh, early?

MS. STEIN: It was very early, '86 or '85 or something.

MS. NEEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative], 1985, yes.

MS. STEIN: Anyway, we were invited to prepare an exhibition for the Palladium by Livet Reichard, and - [Anne] Livet invited us to do this show. And so we invited artists we admired: Barbara Kruger, Petah Coyne, I forget - Ida Applebroog?

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

MS. STEIN: I can't remember.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: And we put up this show. And then we realized, oh, this is promoting individuals who, okay, we admire, but the overall message was diluted.

MS. NEEL: They were - right.

MS. STEIN: It was not the right message.

MS. NEEL: We -

MS. STEIN: We didn't want to convey the message that we like this person -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - and we don't like that person. That is really not the point.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: So we, at that point, made a conscious decision, as a group, not to curate shows.

MS. NEEL: Never to curate shows -

MS. STEIN: Again.

MS. NEEL: And -

MS. STEIN: And to stick to the informational message.

MS. NEEL: Right, right.

MS. STEIN: That was the -

MS. NEEL: In an effort to - because it wasn't about promoting our careers, or anybody else's. And then we did that poster called "Guerrilla Girls' Identities Revealed." [Stein laughs.] So - because everybody -

MS. STEIN: Which listed everybody in the art world.

MS. NEEL: It was kind of connected - yes. And it was also the idea that we wanted to make it seem like everybody was a Guerrilla Girl. So we put anyone and everyone's name on it who said they wanted to be on it.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: So -

MS. STEIN: Another story that I don't think anybody else knows is where the gorilla mask came from. I mean, Rosalba Carriera came up with the idea of honoring dead women artists, using their names. But an early, early member, who never - it was before we were taking the names of dead women artists, anyway - she was taking notes at the first meeting or the second meeting, or something.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: Anyway, she wrote "Gorilla Girls," G-O-R-I-L-L-A G-I-R-L-S. And then somebody thought, "Oh, gorilla girls," and the mask came right out of this misspelling.

MS. NEEL: I remember that meeting.

MS. STEIN: It was a misspelling.

MS. NEEL: I remember that, because there was a lot of turmoil about it being correct to align ourselves with being a guerrilla, the real guerrillas that are fighting.

MS. RICHARDS: You mean should it be spelled "Gorilla Girls"?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Right, right.

MS. NEEL: How do we spell it?

MS. STEIN: Well, and then there was race.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: The issue -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: One of the members, Alma Thomas, who is of color -

MS. NEEL: Didn't want to -

MS. STEIN: - clearly said, you know, "Women of color are - African American women are identified as monkeys."

MS. NEEL: Right, yes.

MS. STEIN: "And I don't want to be a monkey."

MS. NEEL: Yes, that was an issue.

MS. STEIN: "You know, this is really not cool with me." [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: - getting pissed and pissing off, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: But she accepted Guerrilla Girls spelled G-U-E-R-R-I-L-L-A?

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. RICHARDS: But not wearing masks.

MS. STEIN: And the - in the end, the mask, after a long discussion about how -

MS. NEEL: The pros and cons.

MS. STEIN: - anonymity was -

MS. NEEL: Essential.

MS. STEIN: - going to be more powerful than any other strategy that -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - had come up before. Then she was willing to, as a woman artist of color, go out there wearing a gorilla mask, which, as a black woman artist, you would not do.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: I mean, this would be bad.

MS. NEEL: Yes, since nobody knew what color anybody was, anyway.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And that gorilla mask is carried on with GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand?

MS. STEIN: Yes, we all wear masks.

MS. RICHARDS: And Guerrilla Girls -

MS. STEIN: Oh, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: - on Tour?

MS. STEIN: It's so much fun.

MS. NEEL: And it's mysterious.

MS. RICHARDS: Same masks?

MS. NEEL: Yes, and the masks -

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: No, I have -

MS. NEEL: Well, masks change. Everybody has their own masks.

MS. STEIN: I have my own mask.

MS. NEEL: Yes. Usually -

MS. STEIN: I have a very good one.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: That allows me to breathe.

MS. NEEL: They have to fit in a certain way. They are not comfortable if they're not fitting correctly.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: But there is also -

MS. STEIN: And, actually, the on-tour girls have modified their costumes, so they now wear wigs and sort of half-face masks of plastic -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - which enable them to breathe, because they're jumping all around.

MS. NEEL: It's almost like a burkha.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: We had an albino mask for a while.

MS. STEIN: Yes, that was funny. Yes.

MS. NEEL: But they're scary, those masks. They're scary, and then it's a mixture of being forceful, scary, funny. You know, we try to dress sexy, whatever, however we still can.

[They laugh.]

MS. RICHARDS: Do you remember how you analyzed the effectiveness of the posters and actions in a - did you, in a systematic kind of way, or did you just intuitively know that they worked, and you went on to the next new idea?

MS. STEIN: You mean before the - before publishing?

MS. RICHARDS: Yes.

MS. NEEL: That's an interesting question.

MS. STEIN: How would we know that this was going to work?

MS. RICHARDS: Well, no, no. I mean, you put up posters -

MS. NEEL: That's a good question, itself.

MS. STEIN: After publishing?

MS. RICHARDS: - all over SoHo, poster one, poster two.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: Right, right.

MS. RICHARDS: You already were convinced the posters were an effective method.

But the statistics you were giving, did they have the impact? Was there different kind of statistics you should use? Or was it very intuitive, like the violence was not appropriate; it didn't further your efforts?

MS. NEEL: The statistics were absolutely accurate - how can you argue that? That's the point. It's like math, you know?

MS. RICHARDS: It was just your -

MS. NEEL: You know?

MS. RICHARDS: You came upon -

MS. NEEL: One plus one equals two. There was the answer.

MS. STEIN: Well, if Mary Boone took Barbara Kruger into her gallery, we took credit for it, even though -

MS. NEEL: Yes, that's true.

MS. STEIN: - maybe we - who knows what the process was?

MS. NEEL: You know - right. Yes.

MS. STEIN: But we decided to take credit for it anyway.

MS. NEEL: Well, what we did is we did open up eyes; it inspired the reaction, "Oh, my God, that's an appalling number." And, "Am I that bad?" And then there started to be articles about references to and reviews about this - how many artists were in the - et cetera.

MS. STEIN: Yes, well, and -

MS. NEEL: We saw it happening, the fruits of our labor.

MS. STEIN: Jerry Saltz, in the November 26, 2007, issue of New York Magazine, felt it was important to look at the percentage of women in the reinstallation of the Museum of Modern Art since 2004. I mean -

MS. NEEL: He may not have thought of that if it wasn't for us.

MS. STEIN: - how great is this?

MS. NEEL: That was wonderful, yes.

MS. STEIN: He has been doing this -

MS. NEEL: He was becoming conscious.

MS. STEIN: He has been doing this for years. He has been, you know -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - consciously and actively promoting -

MS. NEEL: Right, and may have never thought about that approach prior to us.

MS. STEIN: - the fact that the canon needs to be thrown up in the air.

MS. NEEL: That's right. So that's why we called ourselves the conscience of the art world.

MS. RICHARDS: Yes.

MS. NEEL: That was what I thought would be the best thing we could do, is just help make people aware that there was a problem. That's where we started out.

MS. STEIN: Right, right.

MS. NEEL: We don't know where we're going to go with this. We don't know if we're going to change anything. We just want to make, do something - but we were doing it for ourselves, as well.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: We just wanted to put it out there - show the problem in black and white, and -

MS. STEIN: Well, and statistically, it hasn't changed at all. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: Right, so we're due for another report card, that's for sure.

MS. STEIN: But there is consciousness, where there wasn't before.

MS. NEEL: That's true.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think there -

MS. NEEL: So we did do that.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that - is there conversation in any of the Guerrilla Girls -

MS. STEIN: Chapters?

MS. RICHARDS: Chapters or -

MS. STEIN: Wings?

MS. RICHARDS: - wings, that you know of, about redoing, looking again at some of the early posters?

MS. NEEL: Yes, the report card is one of them.

MS. STEIN: Yes. The BroadBand group published - well, actually, we didn't publish a new report card. We were going to do a 20th anniversary report card. And it was complicated by the - how to schematically look at artists of color.

The woman who did the first graph, the first version - no. The first version of the report card didn't have any discussion of color. It was women and men. And then, you know, these days, we are not happy about that anymore, so we did a really complicated poster, and we didn't publish it. We didn't publish it.

Meanwhile, there is a group that is picking up the torch and running with it; it's called Brainstormers, and it's

these young, not-anonymous, and not all women, I think, but they're looking at the statistics of the art world.

MS. NEEL: Well, you know, that is an interesting project we could do. It was very inspiring, what you said, to take our old posters, make a book, or make - or even split poster, split screen, like a diptych, do our old posters exactly the same place - some of the galleries don't exist, or whatever - with the updated poster.

MS. STEIN: Well, yes, that was another little problem that you had.

MS. NEEL: But some - yes. Well, we could even put "deleted," [Stein laughs] or whatever, and do another poster with the exact - just do the same thing, and see what's happened or not -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: - just to put it out there.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that just the fact that it was easier to define artists of color in 1985 than it is in 2005 is very revealing of a change in the art world?

MS. STEIN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], the complexity of the -

MS. RICHARDS: The complexity of our culture -

MS. STEIN: - art world is much -

MS. RICHARDS: - the complexity of the population.

MS. STEIN: - more - also more conscious now, than it was.

MS. NEEL: Yes. And also, I think that part of the problem was back then it was mostly white male curators and art dealers, and they're the ones who show; they have their own point of view about what they like, because of their own experience. It's totally valid; it's just tunnel vision. It's not the whole picture.

That's when I did that poster, the -

MS. STEIN: "It's Even Worse in Europe."

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: That was Alice Neel's poster.

MS. NEEL: Yes, and "You're Seeing Less than Half" -

MS. STEIN: "You're Seeing Less Than Half the Picture."

MS. NEEL: - "the Picture." I went home and made it quickly. Sometimes that would happen; you would do a poster, you would come in, and everybody goes, "Yes." Or, "We really need to work on," - but the poster made sense visually. It was cropped off on the side, "You're seeing less than a third," and that was the point - you know, that's a big problem that happens in the art world.

If you shift more women - well, it's like politics or anything else. If you put more women, who maintain their sensibility as women and people of color and different diversity of groups, you're going to get a larger picture - we were just asking for a larger point of view, inclusion of differences, not just that one point of view but the whole thing.

[END MD 01 TR 01.]

MS. RICHARDS: What group of Guerrilla Girls was responsible for the installation of the Venice Biennale [2007]?

MS. STEIN: Guerrilla Girls, Inc.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes. But we did those business cards for Documenta [1987. Kassel, Germany] -

MS. RICHARDS: But there were new -

MS. NEEL: And the Venice Biennale [2005] -

MS. STEIN: Oh, yes.

MS. NEEL: We did that. Remember, we did that?

MS. STEIN: That's true, that's true.

MS. NEEL: I went there and put those little cards in the bathrooms all over. So, in a sense, we had been there, too.

MS. RICHARDS: I ask that because -

MS. NEEL: That was Guerrilla Girls, Inc.

MS. RICHARDS: - they're worse in Europe, I think, was -

MS. NEEL: "It's Even Worse in Europe."

MS. RICHARDS: Well, something of that sort was in the Venice Biennale.

MS. NEEL: That was a poster done awhile ago, though.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: That was way before the Venice Biennale, that poster was made.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: There was another issue that started to crop up - maybe this is my own - about class, too.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: The issue of racism and class-ism in the art world, and how that was also a departure we needed to look at, in terms of tunnel vision, seclusion, and privilege.

MS. STEIN: Well, who can afford to be an artist?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Who has to have a job and -

MS. NEEL: Right, right.

MS. STEIN: - who doesn't.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: The - in the early '90s, when - the split took place in 1994?

MS. STEIN: No, 2000.

MS. NEEL: Two thousand and one.

MS. STEIN: Use 2000.

MS. RICHARDS: Two thousand.

MS. STEIN: I mean, 2000 is when everything started to spin off into -

MS. RICHARDS: That was perhaps a little later, but kind of when everyone in the art world realized that the art world is global.

MS. STEIN: That's right.

MS. RICHARDS: And how did that affect - and artists living in New York are not actually -

MS. STEIN: The center, belly button of the -

MS. RICHARDS: - other places.

MS. STEIN: - universe.

MS. RICHARDS: And galleries function in three other places.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And so the theater of operations for the Guerrilla Girls -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Did it then, because of the existence of the art world - was that one of the reasons why there was this kind of crisis?

MS. STEIN: Probably. Probably, you know?

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes, I think that's true.

MS. STEIN: I think -

MS. RICHARDS: It had been focused -

MS. NEEL: In fact, we did a poster on a global -

MS. STEIN: Did we?

MS. NEEL: Yes, we did, something about global issues.

MS. STEIN: Oh, yes.

MS. NEEL: We did, that's right. It did affect our needing to evaluate who we are.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: When we started, it was this little art world, New York, basically, and then considered expanding it outside of the art world, and globalism, and we did do a few posters that are -

MS. RICHARDS: Were your members in New York gradually becoming more international artists living in New York?

MS. NEEL: Some of them.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Who could sit and reflect about they knew what was happening in Berlin, or London?

MS. STEIN: Well, some of them even moved.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Several members have moved overseas -

MS. NEEL: Yes, that's right.

MS. STEIN: - and they live now in -

MS. NEEL: Yes. I don't know if that affected the posters or not though.

MS. STEIN: - international -

MS. RICHARDS: Do they still function as a Guerrilla Girl in New York?

MS. STEIN: No, just on the list serv. Just, you know, by e-mail.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: E-mail, which has been the godsend.

MS. NEEL: Yes. Oh, yes. Well, when you think of the Guerrilla Girls' life, it started 1985 to 2000 -

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: - as you were saying. That's 15 years. I mean, that was 15 years of real solid, kind of coherent products we produced.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Things we put out there.

MS. RICHARDS: When you were functioning at first, focused entirely on the art world, did you think about educating young artists still in graduate school?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Or undergraduate school?

MS. NEEL: That was a focus.

MS. RICHARDS: And how -

MS. NEEL: The *Workbook*, for example.

MS. STEIN: We were looking at art school as a -

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: The other Guerrilla Girls talked -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: - about how students have no perception of who is -

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: We did a statistic about art schools, and the majority of students were female in the fine arts majors. The percentage was really quite extreme. But as they go out into the world, their place in the art world was much lower, lesser in number. That was interesting information.

MS. STEIN: Well, and another project that - it didn't go anywhere, but it's a great story. I think it was '94, we wrote letters to the chairs of all the art departments in the United States; with the help of the College Art Association, we got the addresses, right?

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

MS. STEIN: We asked, "How many women are on your faculty," right?

MS. NEEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative], right.

MS. STEIN: We got not a single letter back. Then we wrote to all the secretaries of all the art departments. [Neel laughs.] We got all these letters back. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: They were all women. [Laughs.]

MS. STEIN: Saying, "Oh, my God, you should see the" -

MS. NEEL: Problem -

MS. STEIN: - "sexism in this place."

MS. NEEL: Yes. So that's when we started to also think maybe we should be talking about the movie industry, Wall Street, et cetera. We started to think about other women in the working force.

MS. RICHARDS: Have you gone back to graduate students, women graduate students, artists? Artists. I have heard stories about women painters at Yale [University, New Haven, CT].

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And the sexism there.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: I just wondered if, I don't know, if that would -

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. RICHARDS: But did that come up -

MS. NEEL: No, not specifically.

MS. STEIN: No, we didn't go back to -

MS. RICHARDS: Is that because it wasn't -

MS. STEIN: We should have done, but we didn't go back to College Art and get -

MS. NEEL: Obviously there are more posters to do.

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

MS. NEEL: I thought we should retire, but maybe not.

MS. RICHARDS: - in New York, you were focusing on - I mean, it is a huge art world. You were focusing on New York, and that needed to be where you put your energy?

MS. STEIN: No, there wasn't a conscious - there was a recognition that there is an inequality going on here in the art schools. But then there wasn't - at that time, it was before - right before the Internet, and it was difficult to figure out how to do all that research.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. STEIN: We wanted to have the research to back it up.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: Whatever it was.

MS. NEEL: And we didn't get there.

MS. STEIN: We didn't get to the research.

MS. NEEL: Maybe we should.

MS. RICHARDS: What did each of you find was your most fulfilling project?

MS. STEIN: Moment?

MS. NEEL: Moment -

MS. RICHARDS: Well, moment or project, in your experience as a Guerrilla Girl.

MS. NEEL: Well, when we did the Advantage poster, but also when we worked on the Clocktower show ["Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney." The Clocktower, New York City, 1987].

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Doing that installation, because that's when we had a lot of work under our belts.

MS. RICHARDS: You want to talk about what that installation was?

MS. NEEL: It was almost like a retrospective of all our work at that point.

MS. RICHARDS: And what year was that?

MS. NEEL: A good -

MS. STEIN: "Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney," right?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: That was the title of the poster.

MS. NEEL: It was a response to the Whitney Museum.

MS. STEIN: It was a review of the Whitney Biennial, and the process of the Whitney Biennial.

MS. NEEL: Eighty-five?

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: This is terrible. We should have - you know, we could get you all these dates, that's no problem, but -

MS. RICHARDS: Other Guerrilla Girls will be here.

MS. NEEL: Yes. I think it was - yes. I think it was the time we were the most together, as a group. It was this group project of putting everything out there. We didn't know what we were doing.

It was very creative, and fun, and we actually did a great job.

MS. RICHARDS: And what did you do?

MS. NEEL: We put up a lot of our posters. We also had a wall; it was like a speakeasy kind of wall, where people were able to put up their comments, pro and con.

MS. STEIN: There was a graph called, "Well Hung at the Whitney -"

MS. NEEL: There was a graph - yes, "Well Hung."

MS. STEIN: - that had a bar chart, except it was upside down.

MS. NEEL: Right. So it was visual. You know, it was very visual. And it was just - it was a lot of fun.

MS. STEIN: There was the game where you threw a dart at a breast.

MS. NEEL: Yes. Right, right.

MS. STEIN: To see if you could hit the amount of percentage of women of color in the art world.

MS. NEEL: Right, right.

MS. STEIN: Which is the nipple.

MS. NEEL: And the nipple was the lowest number, percentage. It was very informative and funny.

MS. RICHARDS: Has that installation ever been recreated?

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. STEIN: No. It's a shame.

MS. NEEL: And I hope we got good documentation of it.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: I don't even know - it was before the digital camera.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: But it was really a lot of fun.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: That was a good project.

MS. RICHARDS: Who was the curator, or was there one?

MS. STEIN: No, we just all did it together.

MS. NEEL: Oh, you mean at the Clocktower?

MS. STEIN: Oh -

MS. NEEL: Yes, we all did it. That's why it was such a great project. We all pulled in and did it.

MS. STEIN: Yes. You mean curator of -

MS. RICHARDS: Who invited you to -

MS. STEIN: Oh, who invited us?

MS. NEEL: Yes, who was - isn't that terrible?

MS. STEIN: Alanna [Heiss]?

MS. NEEL: Not Rodriguez.

MS. STEIN: No. Who was the curator who invited us?

MS. NEEL: Oh, we can get that, too. I forget, at the moment.

MS. RICHARDS: Well -

MS. STEIN: I know. There - it was a series at the Clocktower of invited things. But now I don't remember.

MS. RICHARDS: Yes. Gertrude, and what was your most memorable project?

MS. STEIN: Well, I was going to tell the story of the collaboration of the Guerrilla Girls and WAC, Women's Action Coalition.

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes.

MS. STEIN: Some of the members of the Guerrilla Girls would go to WAC meetings.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Some of the WAC girls, I don't know -

MS. RICHARDS: When was this, about?

MS. STEIN: This is -

MS. NEEL: Yes, it was early 1990s.

MS. STEIN: Ninety-two or '93. WAC was short-lived; it was, like, five years. And it got to be a huge gathering of women at the Drawing Center, on Tuesday nights, right?

MS. NEEL: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yes.

MS. STEIN: And all the chairs that they had are out, and all these women are arguing and yelling.

MS. NEEL: Men were there, too. I remember -

MS. STEIN: And were there men?

MS. NEEL: Men starting coming to the -

MS. STEIN: Really?

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes.

MS. STEIN: Oh, I didn't know.

MS. NEEL: I was at a lot of meetings; there was males - men - there; it was large.

MS. STEIN: No kidding.

MS. NEEL: It got too big.

MS. STEIN: The only thing I remember is that they - you know, unlike the Guerrilla Girls, they didn't pay for child

care. So, for me, it was an issue.

MS. NEEL: That was - yes. That is another issue, about us being mothers. Oh, I have another story.

MS. STEIN: Okay. So, the Downtown Guggenheim was cranking up. It was coming to downtown, and their first show was Carl Andre, Brancusi, somebody [Constantin Brancusi, Wassily Kandinsky, Joseph Beuys, Carl Andre, and Robert Ryman] -

MS. NEEL: The big boys - yes.

MS. STEIN: Four white guys.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: So, Eva Hesse wrote a pink postcard that was, "Dear Mr. Krenz [Thomas Krenz, director of the Guggenheim Museum], Welcome to downtown. We have heard about your first show, "Four White Boys of the White Boys Museum. Lots of luck, Guerrilla Girls," and then we printed up thousands of these cards.

MS. NEEL: Yes. Oh, that's right, yes. [Laughs.]

MS. STEIN: And then we handed them out to galleries and -

MS. NEEL: It made a difference, yes.

MS. STEIN: - members and people.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: And then they mailed them in to Tom Krenz. And then they put Louise Bourgeois in that show [retitled: "From Brancusi to Bourgeois: Aspects of the Guggenheim Collection." June 28-September 6, 1992].

MS. NEEL: And that was credit to the Guerrilla Girls.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Really, that was.

MS. STEIN: And then, the night of the opening -

MS. NEEL: The token woman.

MS. STEIN: - there was a, like a -

MS. NEEL: The best artist, too, in the group.

MS. STEIN: - WAC - the WAC drum corps came around -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - and we gave out bags.

MS. NEEL: Bags.

MS. STEIN: Paper bags, so everybody could be a Guerrilla Girl.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: And then, there was a protest about Ana Mendieta, wasn't there?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Also?

MS. NEEL: At the same time.

MS. STEIN: At the same time.

MS. NEEL: Because she wasn't in the show, and the whole thing about her death.

MS. STEIN: Well, because Carl Andre was in the show.

MS. NEEL: Carl Andre was in it, with the murder thing [Mendieta fell to her death from a 34th-floor apartment on September 8, 1985. Andre was tried and acquitted of her murder.] -

MS. STEIN: Right, right.

MS. NEEL: - and the whole suspicion and all.

MS. STEIN: So -

MS. NEEL: Yes. So we merged with them.

MS. STEIN: Yes. So there was a -

MS. NEEL: It was this big group.

MS. STEIN: It was a huge collaboration. It was probably the first and last time we ever did anything with WAC.

MS. NEEL: Together with another group.

MS. STEIN: But, because there were some members going back and forth -

MS. NEEL: Right, right.

MS. STEIN: There was communications between the groups, and we planned this thing. And it was just a huge success.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: We stopped traffic on Broadway.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: The place was completely filled with bodies.

MS. NEEL: The paper bag masks were great.

MS. STEIN: The paper bags were great. And the opening -

MS. NEEL: The card was terrific.

MS. STEIN: - people couldn't get in, it was so -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: You know, people were jamming themselves into this space.

MS. NEEL: Yes. It was very good. Yes, it was exciting.

MS. STEIN: And so we changed art history. That would be -

MS. NEEL: That did.

MS. STEIN: - my proudest memory.

MS. NEEL: That's a real turning point, too, you're right, and a point of reference of how it affected them.

MS. STEIN: Now, Louise Bourgeois, interestingly, doesn't consider herself to be a feminist. But we didn't care. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: No, it didn't matter. No.

MS. STEIN: We're claiming her anyway. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes, yes. She is there anyway.

MS. RICHARDS: She's French.

MS. NEEL: Absolutely. I have a story. I remember with Rosalba Carriera.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: We were asked to receive the award for the art - outstanding women in - outstanding women - national - it was in Washington, D.C.

MS. STEIN: Oh, my goodness. The National Arts Award.

MS. NEEL: The National Arts Award.

MS. STEIN: My God, yes, that's big.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: As a Guerrilla Girl?

MS. NEEL: As Guerrilla Girls. So we were asked to go to receive the award.

MS. RICHARDS: Who asked you?

MS. NEEL: I don't know who asked.

MS. RICHARDS: How was it determined who would accept the award on behalf -

MS. NEEL: Someone would say, like, "Now, do you want to - can you make it? Want to do an interview?"

MS. STEIN: "Are you available on Tuesday?" [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: "Are you available" - that's probably how this happened.

MS. STEIN: "To go to Washington?" [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: Right. "Can you go to Washington?" And, at the time, both of us were single moms - had young children, and needed a break.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: You know, a lot of us did at the time. So it was, "Oh, God, it's a vacation. My God, yes, we'll do it."

So, we went to Washington. And we had to wear our masks. It was a huge turnout, and dinner. So we couldn't eat with everyone, because we couldn't eat with the masks. [Stein laughs.] They gave us a nice room, because we were there for a couple of days. And they had our meals up in the room.

And we were ordering martinis - we both like martinis - eating and just enjoying ourselves, jumping on the bed, you know, like kids on vacation - a break from motherhood -

MS. RICHARDS: What year was this?

MS. NEEL: This was 1990s, too, wasn't it early '90s? I am so bad with this. I will look it up on the resume.

So then they call us from the room and they tell us to "Come on down; we're ready for you to get the award." So we went to this big dining room where there were hundreds of people. We sat down at the table, and -

MS. RICHARDS: Where was this? I'm sorry. Exactly?

MS. NEEL: At the -

MS. RICHARDS: A hotel ballroom?

MS. NEEL: Yes. It was like a hotel ballroom. I don't remember the hotel.

At this point we had a couple of martinis in us, and we were very relaxed. So we sat down, and they were still giving awards out. We were going to be getting ours. One of the women receiving an award came up, and oh, my God, the speech was gorgeous and really moving.

I mean, she was amazing, what she did and said. You know, I can't recall everything, but her achievements were impressive. "Oh, my God," we both looked at each other -

MS. RICHARDS: It wasn't just awards in the arts?

MS. NEEL: No. It was 10, I think, just 10 women that they gave an award for the Women of the Year awards for the incredible deeds they did in the world.

And so we heard three of the speeches, and they were so beautiful, and they were so impressive. They were glorious, how they presented, and what they did.

We realized, and then I said to Rosalba, "Oh, my God, we're going to have to give a speech." We were totally unprepared. Nobody ever told us we were supposed to give a speech. Well, that sobered us up; that really snapped us back to reality. "We've got to go up there and give a speech, and we don't have anything prepared."

MS. STEIN: Well, plus, you don't have any visuals or anything.

MS. NEEL: We didn't have anything. We didn't know what to do.

MS. STEIN: It's like you're standing there in your gorilla mask. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: We didn't know what to do. It was scary. We said to the woman hosting the even that we didn't know we were supposed to do a speech. She said, "Well, I guess you have to make it up."

So we came up with the idea to get a bunch of bananas. So the waiter went out, and they got quite a few bunches of bananas from the restaurant.

They called our names, we went to the stage, and we felt very humbled by these women, who were extraordinary, and here we were going up there unprepared to begin with, and so we just rolled with the punches and we just talked -

MS. RICHARDS: Had the two of you been involved in any performative activities for Guerrilla Girls?

MS. NEEL: No, not really. Maybe a few gigs here and there.

MS. RICHARDS: So you were really arbitrarily picked?

MS. NEEL: Yes, we were nitwits up there. [Stein laughs.] We had a bunch of bananas, and I remember turning around and giving out bananas to everybody to infer that they should get the award, and presented the bananas to the women who gave the speeches.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: And actually it turned out to be quite well received and in the spirit of the Girls. Everybody was laughing, and we had a good time, and they probably had to pull us off the stage. [Stein laughs.] But it worked out, but that was scary. [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: I was going to ask you what your - not the most exciting moment, but the - either the scariest or the - a moment which was really challenging.

MS. NEEL: That was my - might be it.

MS. STEIN: That would be a pretty big challenge.

MS. NEEL: What about you?

MS. RICHARDS: What about you? A challenge either intellectually -

MS. STEIN: I was performing -

MS. RICHARDS: - or physically. [They laugh.]

MS. STEIN: - with a black woman Guerrilla Girl at the College Art Association meeting. And we had not - we didn't have - we weren't mic'd through our masks, and we were really not able to function. We weren't able to read the content of the posters, or anything.

So, luckily, there was a Guerrilla Girl who was in the audience, and she started throwing bananas at us.

MS. NEEL: [Laughs] The old banana trick, I guess, is good.

MS. STEIN: And we thought, "Oh, thank God." So we - you know, we caught the bananas and just started

throwing them back into the audience.

MS. NEEL: Oh, God. [Laughs.]

MS. STEIN: And so we managed to theatrically get through -

MS. NEEL: Right, get through it.

MS. STEIN: - this very tense -

MS. NEEL: Yes, it's just - yes.

MS. STEIN: - difficult moment.

MS. NEEL: Yes, another banana routine.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: It works every time. That's funny.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you do any other kinds of activities, besides posters?

MS. NEEL: Well, we did -

MS. STEIN: Billboard. The billboard.

MS. NEEL: The billboard, yes.

MS. STEIN: Plus the posters.

MS. RICHARDS: The two of you were involved in both of those projects?

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: Not too much on that one.

MS. RICHARDS: What were you -

MS. NEEL: Books.

MS. STEIN: A book.

MS. NEEL: We did, in the beginning.

MS. STEIN: Several.

MS. NEEL: Yes, there was a couple of books.

MS. RICHARDS: So, Alice and Gertrude, you both were involved in producing a book?

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: Not really.

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: In the beginning, our first book, I helped out a lot.

MS. STEIN: The group, yes.

MS. NEEL: I worked a little on - what was it, true confessions [*Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1995]? Yes. And then there was *Beside Companion* [*The Guerrilla Girls' Beside Companion to the History of Western Art*. New York: Penguin Books, 1998]. The first one was true confessions. I did some research and helped out with that. And that's when the group -

MS. RICHARDS: That's when -

MS. STEIN: I mean, these are collective -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: These were published by Guerrilla Girls -

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: A commercial publication.

MS. STEIN: These are collective projects.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: The first one was a resume of everything we had done, in chronological order.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: With essays, also.

MS. NEEL: Right. And some of our stories.

MS. STEIN: And it's out of print now. You've never seen it, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*?

MS. NEEL: It's a good one.

MS. RICHARDS: I have seen it. I don't remember, though.

MS. STEIN: Okay. And then the second one was the -

MS. NEEL: Was the *Bedside* -

MS. STEIN: - *Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: Which is, you know, re-quoted in other places, and it's still in print, I think.

MS. NEEL: Yes. And then, there was the workbook, the one that's out now. It's called - it was at the Brooklyn Museum.

MS. STEIN: We did a -

MS. RICHARDS: So that was -

MS. STEIN: - a spy kit.

MS. NEEL: A spy kit, yes.

MS. STEIN: With a show at the New Museum [New York City].

MS. NEEL: Yes, had an interactive project in it.

MS. RICHARDS: All of this before 2000?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Before the branching off?

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: And then a workbook about how to do - become your own Guerrilla Girl.

MS. STEIN: How to take the statistics -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - when you go to galleries and museums.

MS. NEEL: How to do it for and with younger kids.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: We did some things for kids - activity books.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: How did it become -

MS. NEEL: And postcard book, too. That was with Pyramid Atlantic -

MS. STEIN: Oh, yes, that's true.

MS. NEEL: When we worked with them.

MS. STEIN: That's right.

MS. NEEL: It was a little post card book.

MS. STEIN: The posters are post cards that you can rip off and send out, individually, in a little booklet.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you actively, consciously, recruit members who would provide the skills you needed to do projects you knew you wanted to do?

MS. NEEL: You mean, like, as temporary Guerrilla Girls?

MS. RICHARDS: No. You'd say, you know, "We really don't have anyone who has graphic artist" -

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. RICHARDS: - or publishing experience, or whatever -

MS. STEIN: The opposite happened, really. I heard Rosalba say something to you about press. And we had a press representative who trained herself through being a Guerrilla Girl - press contact for the Guerrilla Girls. And she is now today a press contact out in the world. She does, you know - she's a writer.

And she figured out that somebody, a constant - there has to be somebody who is always there to answer the questions of the press, and that's how we can get our message out. That's - you know, it's a critical role.

And so she established a mailing list, and contacted people, and sent out press releases and made sure people showed up for *CBS News* tapings. And then we released her one day, [laughs] and she told me she felt like she had been set free from the Bastille. [They laugh.] It was such a relief. You know, the jobs were hard.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: There were - you were the archivist.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: It was like a job.

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes.

MS. STEIN: It was real work.

MS. NEEL: Oh, it was a real job, yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: We - yes. Required a lot of time, and we worked with limited funds and space.

MS. RICHARDS: The Guerrilla Girls maintain a physical office?

MS. STEIN: Did.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And Guerrilla Girls, Inc.?

MS. STEIN: Yes, the Guerrilla Girls, Inc., had a physical - oh, now. Guerrilla Girls, Inc., has a physical office, but I don't know where it is.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: But that's their box address -

MS. NEEL: The computer, I think.

MS. STEIN: This is their box address, 532 -

MS. NEEL: Right. LaGuardia Place.

MS. STEIN: GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand doesn't have an office. We rotate around, like the old girls used -

MS. NEEL: But in the old, or early, days -

MS. STEIN: - to just rotate around.

MS. NEEL: - we had an office [inaudible].

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: But how did the Guerrilla Girls get involved at looking at Hollywood and the film industry?

MS. STEIN: One of them, Kathe Kollwitz, lives in Los Angeles.

MS. NEEL: Yes, L.A.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: And she was well connected with that world.

MS. RICHARDS: And was it an issue, convincing you to go so far afield from your previous focus?

MS. STEIN: No, because Inc. was doing that, anyway. It wasn't really - the group was not concerned, except for one - I think there was one poster about the anatomically correct Oscar, or something.

MS. NEEL: Right, right.

MS. STEIN: At the very end.

MS. NEEL: And there were stickers. They were made into stickers, too.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: So that whole campaign was Guerrilla Girls, Inc., post-2000?

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: So by then, they had more members, not just two members?

MS. STEIN: Well, we don't know.

MS. RICHARDS: Okay.

MS. STEIN: You can ask them when you see them.

MS. RICHARDS: Okay. So that was Guerrilla Girls, Inc., and that was because they had a member who was familiar with the problems that they have -

MS. STEIN: Who was living there, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: - in that world. Has GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand stretched out similarly in a different -

MS. STEIN: On the other coast?

MS. RICHARDS: No, in - gone into a different area, where women have had issues in the arts or not, since you were going beyond - I know beyond issues of race and -

MS. NEEL: Class.

MS. RICHARDS: I know you did homeless, war - are there any specific initiatives you -

MS. NEEL: Focus -

MS. RICHARDS: - decided to focus on?

MS. STEIN: Fashion. Fashion was one of the concerns of the younger women that was not a concern of the women in the group. But after we left, there was a lot of outrage over how an article in the *New York Times Magazine* reported on the outfit that Cecily Brown - did I get her name right?

MS. NEEL: Yes, the painter, mm-hmm [affirmative].

MS. STEIN: Cecily Brown was wearing, and no discussion of her work, and what her work looked like, and no image of her work. There is an image in the *New York Times Magazine* of the artist wearing this short skirt.

So we were outraged by that and decided to try to do a fashion project called "Strut." And Strut went through several forms. The first idea was to do a fashion show, and match young designers and visual artists together.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: And we went to the Fashion Institute of Technology and spoke to Joe Lewis, who was the dean at the time.

MS. RICHARDS: Can I ask you - interrupt for a second - GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand is, in general, a younger group. And did their interest in taking up that issue have to do with the younger generation's kind of feminism, and the difference between that sense of feminism and the older -

MS. STEIN: I think so.

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

MS. STEIN: Yes. I would say that fashion was not a concern at any point in the Guerrilla Girls from 1985 to 2000.

MS. NEEL: No, no, no.

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: We were just trying to get out of - from under the negative rap feminism was branded with.

MS. RICHARDS: So, go on about this -

MS. STEIN: Okay. So the Fashion Institute of Technology met with us, and we - you know, we had various discussions about how this could work. Maybe it should be part of their curriculum and be part of a class.

But we wanted to also look at fashion from the point of view of labor practices. [Laughs.] No. They couldn't find a teacher who - I mean, they're all about getting these kids into the industry, and not asking any questions about how that industry is supported. And here we are, trying to look at the underpinnings of the fashion industry.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. STEIN: That didn't fly.

MS. NEEL: Universities are a corporation, too.

MS. STEIN: Fine. So we developed a questionnaire, an online questionnaire, and we still get responses to it, about the appearance of self in everyday life, and how do you treat fashion as a tool to help you, or to aid you in your goals, and what are your favorite articles of clothing, and why is that, and how do you convey your gender

ideas - and gender is another thing.

We got a question out at - we did a gig in UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles], and one of the questions was, "Do you have any transgender members?"

MS. NEEL: That came up in a recent meeting I was at. That seems to be a big issue -

MS. STEIN: It is totally a big issue.

MS. NEEL: - with young, feminist women, about transgender -

MS. STEIN: Totally big issue.

MS. NEEL: And it fascinates me.

MS. STEIN: Well, when - during the Girls, there was a time when, remember, we were discussing whether to admit men, and it was a huge, huge battle over that.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Well, the woman who won, Aphra Behn, said, "Look, I was battered as a young wife. I just cannot go there. I cannot have - I cannot be comfortable in a room with men. This is my sanctuary. This is where I can really let go, and let my ideas let go, and know that I am heard, and not feel like I am going to be" - she started crying, and we thought, "Okay, fine. Okay. No men; it's okay." [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: [Laughs] This is back to the original thing about hiring, or asking somebody to do a job or not. [Stein laughs.] We were so worried about hurting someone's feelings. For better or for worse.

MS. STEIN: But the transgender question is a very - I mean, what if a man wants to be a woman? Then could that man be a member of GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand? I mean, that's something that -

MS. NEEL: Well, that whole idea and need about redefining neofeminism. I was talking to some of these women at these meetings, and when we received the award at the Brooklyn Museum, about it, too.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: And I talked to my son about it. He is 18. He was writing in his yearbook. He calls himself a neofeminist.

I think it was an interesting point of how the definition has shifted, what the idea of feminism is now - this was part of my fantasy about reinventing the Guerrilla Girls. Reemerging and including men and their perspectives.

MS. STEIN: They wear nail polish. [They laugh.]

MS. RICHARDS: The focus on -

MS. NEEL: He would do that.

MS. RICHARDS: Getting back to the focus on fashion, and young feminists who could wear high heels and dye their hair and paint their nails, which older generations never did, did you talk about analyzing how many women were major fashion designers, versus men, and how many - how much they made, versus men, how many -

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. RICHARDS: - were shown in magazines, versus men?

MS. STEIN: Because we didn't really have -

MS. RICHARDS: Those -

MS. STEIN: We didn't really have people in the fashion industry. We were commenting on it from the outside, from the point of view of artists.

And so one of the series of things that we did do that was successful is, after 9/11 we designed a post-9/11 fashion shoot. We did all of the fashion in clear plastic and duct tape. We have a baby carrier, you know; we have whatever you might require - [laughs] - in post-9/11 fashion.

So we did it from an activist perspective, but not from - not in the same statistical way. I mean, that's a very good idea, Judith, which we probably should take up.

MS. NEEL: There are a few inspirational ideas you've brought up from your questions.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: We're not finished.

MS. STEIN: We should take some notes.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Does GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand - can you say how many members there are?

MS. STEIN: If you look at our website, you will see that we feel it is important to talk about the reasons - who - the dead women artists and their histories, and why we took - you know, the biographies of those women are on the site.

So there are, I don't know, 15 or 18? I don't know how many there are.

MS. NEEL: It's interesting how that is always asked, how many are in the group. I don't understand; if it's a lot, does that give it more credentials, or if it is a little, does that give it more?

MS. RICHARDS: I just think -

MS. NEEL: It's curious - it's asked all the time.

MS. RICHARDS: - when you imagine human energy going into an activity, you wonder how to define it.

MS. STEIN: There was a -

MS. RICHARDS: It's invisible.

MS. STEIN: Well, there was a -

MS. RICHARDS: You are invisible, therefore, you want to -

MS. NEEL: See it in some way.

MS. RICHARDS: People want to grasp it.

MS. NEEL: Visualize it.

MS. STEIN: And it was important, I think, to keep the numbers -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - quiet, because, I mean -

MS. NEEL: Mysterious.

MS. STEIN: - if anybody had known that -

MS. NEEL: It was just a handful, here.

MS. STEIN: Yes, a handful of women were making these posters, then you know, what would you think? [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: Your credibility might have suffered.

MS. NEEL: I don't know. Maybe it would have strengthened it, too. You know?

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: I don't know.

MS. RICHARDS: So, GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand -

MS. NEEL: But you -

MS. RICHARDS: - over the past seven years, what kinds of projects have you focused on? And has it been consistent, or totally, constantly evolving?

MS. STEIN: Oh, it is totally, always evolving.

The latest idea - well, there was - at the 2004 election, we did the "Advantages of Another Bush Presidency" poster. And then we had worked on -

MS. RICHARDS: Sorry, it's BroadBand, and it's a website, and there is activity on the website, but you also do concrete projects like posters?

MS. STEIN: Yes. We did - well, we only did that one poster in physical space. Everything else is on the website.

There is a wonderful animation, which you saw. It's about how to succeed in the art world, and it's based on the real life story of Lee Bontecou. You remain anonymous for 30 years, and then - but keep doing really good art the whole time. And isn't having two jobs and not having an apartment that you can afford miserable? No, no. We don't want misery; we want tragedy. [Neel laughs.] We want tragedy.

MS. NEEL: To help our work.

MS. STEIN: You know, so you have to be willing to die -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - to be a famous woman artist.

MS. NEEL: Well, it is true, when you look at women artists that are living now and in history. It's like a sexual kind of comparison. Men seem to do their best work earlier - like they shoot their wad earlier, and women seem to continue to evolve and their work gets better with time.

MS. STEIN: Early.

MS. NEEL: Early.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: But there are always exceptions, like Philip Guston.

MS. RICHARDS: There is a research project.

MS. NEEL: Yes, it is. It is quite noticeable.

MS. RICHARDS: A lot of Ph.D. dissertations in here.

MS. NEEL: It becomes very obvious when you investigate it.

And then, the women artists who do their best work, and who have their success, they are really much older, in their 60s, 70s, you know, or dead.

Women take a longer time to peak. Maybe it's connected to the biological sexuality of men and women.

MS. STEIN: Well, and the latest idea is to start a Second Life [a 3-D virtual community], an island on Second Life, and retire -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - to the tropical island in Second Life.

MS. NEEL: Absolutely. I think we deserve that. Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think BroadBand, GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand -

MS. STEIN: Because then men will be able to pose as women and join our community, see? In Second Life. So we will be admitting male members, but we're not going to know that, because you can be anybody you want to online.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: So it kind of goes around this problem of not admitting men, or -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: What about the anonymity of that kind of site, in terms of representing diverse viewpoints, the diverse artistic community?

MS. STEIN: I wouldn't -

MS. RICHARDS: Right now, I -

MS. STEIN: I don't see that as a problem. What -

MS. RICHARDS: Okay. So you have 18 or so members?

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: And you have addressed issues of diversity -

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - of color, and maybe economic position.

MS. STEIN: And the points of view of Muslim women, for example.

MS. RICHARDS: Yes. When you go to -

MS. STEIN: Second Life.

MS. RICHARDS: - Second Life, you won't really know.

MS. STEIN: Exactly. No, you're absolutely correct.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: We won't really know.

MS. RICHARDS: Although, when you go to Second Life -

MS. STEIN: We will know each -

MS. RICHARDS: - each person creates their own -

MS. NEEL: Right, identity.

MS. STEIN: Right, right.

MS. NEEL: Visually, too.

MS. STEIN: We will know each other.

MS. NEEL: Visual identity, too.

MS. STEIN: And then, if - but I don't know if we're going to have any kind of gatekeeping - we haven't discussed how we're going to let people on the island or not. You're allowed. You're allowed.

MS. NEEL: [Laughs] Good, I need a place. That sounds good to me.

But, you know, the issue about anonymity, at this point, is kind of frustrating. I find it frustrating, because when I'm asking to do lectures and talk about my work to students, especially, I find there are so many times where exposing my identity and experience as a Guerrilla Girl would be so valuable for them to hear and a generous thing to do.

MS. STEIN: That you're an activist, as well as a painter.

MS. NEEL: Yes, to know what that is about on a personal level, too. Sometimes even the question comes up, and I get so, like - it's so inbred in me to, sort of, never speak about anything that I really withhold what may be

valuable information to them.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: I clam up, and I feel so ungenerous doing that. See, I don't know, at this point, what purpose it is serving for a lot of us to be anonymous.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: - when we could be sharing with the younger generation a lot of experience we have that would help them. And what about preserving history and the real story, which is so fragile as it is?

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that is an issue that could be discussed, put on the table, among a - various groups of Guerrilla Girls?

MS. STEIN: Well, yes, sure.

MS. NEEL: Yes, it is. Yes.

MS. STEIN: I think it could be -

MS. NEEL: We are in the process of it.

MS. STEIN: Because the question is, will the effect of the group be altered, changed, lessened, by knowing so-and-so was a member of Guerrilla Girls?

MS. NEEL: Lessened or heightened. I don't know.

MS. STEIN: Or it could be heightened.

MS. NEEL: It could go either way. Yes, that's the point.

MS. RICHARDS: If, in fact, the Guerrilla Girls -

MS. NEEL: We're protective of it, still.

MS. RICHARDS: - had an active functioning life from 1985 to 2000, and that's archived -

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - it's gone into new life. Has there been discussion of tying that up by revealing identities and -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: There has been talk about it.

MS. STEIN: Actually, tomorrow. We are sending a letter to all the old girls.

MS. NEEL: Oh, yes, yes, tomorrow.

MS. STEIN: To ask them if they want to be anonymous or not.

MS. NEEL: Right, or not, and what to do about it.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: So we are kind of dealing with that.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you have to deal with issues of ego and celebrity, and if you're not anonymous - the impulse to not be anonymous could be to get credit -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: - for doing these things?

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: I think it goes both ways, yes.

MS. NEEL: It could hinder your career, too. I don't know. Sometimes I'm on the fence about it, too.

But as I said, I find it frustrating at this point not to be able to share it with a younger generation, because I am in a place where I feel I am not really active in either group in some real way, and I've put in my dues and I feel like it's time to share it. And this is a way of keeping it alive, too.

MS. RICHARDS: In the natural evolution of cooperative -

MS. STEIN: How - could I ask, before we go on, how would you feel if you knew the identities of the members of the Guerrilla Girls?

MS. NEEL: Yes, that's good.

MS. STEIN: Would you feel the work of the group was, therefore, less valid, or would you feel the work of the group was more valid? Or do you -

MS. NEEL: Yes, how would that affect your opinion of us?

MS. STEIN: - have any response to -

MS. NEEL: If you knew who we were, would you ask them to talk or participate more on panels and things like that, or would knowing who we are make us more accessible to you, or less? Would it be more effective or not?

MS. STEIN: She wants to turn off the tape.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: I think it would be more positive than negative.

MS. STEIN: Really?

MS. RICHARDS: Because -

MS. NEEL: To know who we are?

MS. RICHARDS: - in terms of the Archives of American Art, I think that the interplay between your personal career and your activity as a Guerrilla Girl would be very revealing and interesting -

MS. NEEL: Yes, that's a good point.

MS. RICHARDS: - for historians to know.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And -

MS. NEEL: I agree.

MS. RICHARDS: - in terms of the past -

MS. NEEL: I didn't think of that.

MS. RICHARDS: - in the really active moments of the postering, and when it had a huge, "Oh-my-God" impact, it doesn't matter who they are.

MS. NEEL: Now it doesn't matter.

MS. STEIN: Now that the "Oh-my-God" impact is over.

MS. RICHARDS: What the Guerrilla Girls did - right.

MS. NEEL: Yes. It's over. Yes, that's what -

MS. RICHARDS: What the Guerrilla Girls did was done.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: The impact was made. And that has had a tremendous ripple effect.

MS. NEEL: That's interesting.

MS. RICHARDS: The fact that they are still doing posters, as some functioning artists in the art world, for those people it might be problematic, because they're still poking fingers or - at political figures.

So, maybe there is part of it that could be known, those women who are retiring, and who - and you could say this part of the Guerrilla Girls is now history.

MS. NEEL: Retired.

MS. STEIN: Is retired, is history.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And it could be archived, and exposed, and examined, and learned, and you could learn more from it. Younger artists would be interested in seeing -

MS. NEEL: I agree.

MS. RICHARDS: - how older artists integrated their own work -

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: - with that kind of activism. And - but some artists right now are still putting their careers, potentially, on the line, doing these sensitive statistical programs, or performances, where maybe -

MS. NEEL: They don't want to be known.

MS. RICHARDS: - they don't want - and the personal will get mixed up, and someone who knows their work as an abstract painter, and somehow there will be implications about that -

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes. That makes sense.

MS. RICHARDS: It might harm both sides, for a person functioning now, possible.

MS. NEEL: But that's -

MS. RICHARDS: Although on the Internet it doesn't matter. [Stein laughs.]

MS. NEEL: That's true, about integrating your past and present. If you could call it history, or retired - that's the other frustrating part about being at these lectures and stuff, is not being able to integrate that important part of what I did, and how it affected my work, or how my work affected that.

You know, all of us have a history that partly defines who we are and our work. I think that's an important thing for them to see, too, instead of seeing us as an isolated group with no other identity. And it might help - yes, weave it in better.

MS. RICHARDS: Has there ever -

MS. NEEL: - and make it more rich.

MS. RICHARDS: Has there ever been a possibility of a Guerrilla Girl writing a memoir and naming names for their -

MS. STEIN: Well, one -

MS. RICHARDS: For whatever positive or negative reason.

MS. STEIN: One reason we're debating whether the archives should remain anonymous is that we don't want some hotshot art historian to go in there and just, you know, name names, and that's the subject of the book.

MS. NEEL: That would be a short book.

MS. STEIN: And all the work of the Guerrilla Girls boils down to the fact that so-and-so was in the group, and obviously, it - I don't know. So -

MS. NEEL: It just seems a little self-serving at this point, and selfish, to not be out on the table as historical reference. I don't know what the point of being anonymous is anymore, or if it does more harm than good, seems to serve no purpose.

MS. RICHARDS: What do the Guerrilla Girls on Tour think about this? Does it matter -

MS. STEIN: I don't know.

MS. RICHARDS: - in their field as much?

MS. STEIN: I don't know. I think that they are also naming names, though. So they are not loved by all.

MS. RICHARDS: They're not anonymous.

MS. STEIN: Oh, they are anonymous. They are. So they are active, and they are anonymous, and they are putting up - you know, they are naming names of directors who don't show women in their theater. And I think your advice is well taken, that the retired girls -

MS. NEEL: Yes, active and retired.

MS. STEIN: The retired girls can feel free about -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - letting their names go, and that the active ones should keep with the program, because it worked.

MS. NEEL: And I do think when any of us die, there should be a big service and ceremony, [Stein laughs] with our names and everything out there.

MS. STEIN: Cathedral of the Guerrilla Girls.

MS. RICHARDS: So -

MS. NEEL: Yes. We should celebrate that.

MS. RICHARDS: Since 1985, members have passed away, and there hasn't been any recognition in their biography of this part of their life.

MS. STEIN: No, no, there hasn't been any members passed away.

MS. NEEL: There have been members that passed away that were very supportive and involved, not as Guerrilla - they were very supportive and were considered - people thought they were Guerrilla Girls.

MS. STEIN: That's true.

MS. NEEL: Yes. So, in spirit, they were. In a way, being anonymous goes against what we are fighting for. We are actually keeping ourselves from being fully acknowledged and recognized and part of history.

MS. RICHARDS: You mean you feel like you're protecting -

MS. NEEL: I mean, women artists have such a problem with being recognized in general, and here we are, doing it even to ourselves. It once served a function; it was very important to be anonymous, but at a certain point it can be counteractive.

MS. STEIN: It's counter -

MS. NEEL: It's counter to what we are fighting for: equality and recognition.

MS. STEIN: - counter to what we were trying to do -

MS. NEEL: Right, yes.

MS. STEIN: - for women, in general.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes. We are, in a way, creating the same problem.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that this idea of being more open now relates to the fact that the Internet, and the activities on the Internet, are anonymous -

MS. STEIN: Anyway?

MS. RICHARDS: - in and of themselves?

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And nobody really wonders who is writing on a website?

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: It's not authored.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: That's a - it's different. It's a different climate.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: A different environment, and -

MS. NEEL: The anonymity has a different function or meaning.

MS. STEIN: And feminism is adapting, and -

MS. RICHARDS: What about - do you think it relates to the fact that the original Guerrilla Girls are getting older, and examining their lives, and thinking -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: - about these -

MS. NEEL: Absolutely. Also, making our own archives, gathering our own archives, in terms of our work and all we've done, and getting full credit, and that we're able to share it, and we're able to get credit and share it, too, at the same -

MS. STEIN: And be proud.

MS. NEEL: Be proud.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: And not have to squirm or be nervous about twitching, about talking about it, when it would be beneficial to be able to do that for the person we are talking to.

MS. RICHARDS: And do you feel it has also - in terms of educating future generations, and mentoring - to be able to speak about -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Without the mask?

MS. NEEL: Absolutely.

MS. RICHARDS: Or is it just as effective with the mask?

MS. NEEL: I always found those masks uncomfortable and restricting. There are so many stories and things that we're just talking about now, which would be wonderful to be able to share, inspire, hopefully, with other artists. Especially the younger women artists.

MS. RICHARDS: Did either of you -

MS. NEEL: I don't know.

MS. RICHARDS: I know Gertrude did. Did either of you do performative lectures, or performative pieces? And during the years you were doing that, how did the audience response change, as perhaps you were making an

impact? Or did it -

MS. STEIN: I think the questions changed.

MS. RICHARDS: - change, depending on the geography?

MS. STEIN: The questions evolved over time. In the beginning -

MS. NEEL: There was a lot more anger, too.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: "How come you're hiding" - "Why don't you take the masks off and show us who you are?" - you know, there was a lot of threatening remarks.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: - and controversy, and then it became, like, we were accepted.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: More like we were honored.

MS. STEIN: "How can I be one?"

MS. NEEL: Yes, we were more honored. So that changed the whole idea of how they treated you.

MS. RICHARDS: Were you frightened at the beginning, when there was the antagonism?

MS. NEEL: I was - yes. Especially when we received hate mail, that was a little scary. We got one letter from a male accusing us of causing the AIDS epidemic, [Stein laughs] because we were these horrible feminists that hated men; we turned men gay. His logic was because of us, men were being forced to have sex with men and getting AIDS, something like that.

MS. STEIN: Yes. He wrote over and over.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. STEIN: He was quite a -

MS. NEEL: I thought, "Oh, my God. We're going to get hurt" - sometimes I would get scared at public appearances -

MS. STEIN: - dedicated correspondent.

MS. NEEL: - that during one of our gigs we would get shot or something, by some crazy person.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Did anyone ever get attacked, physically?

MS. STEIN: Not that I know of.

MS. NEEL: No, no. Just when we were postering, we would get chased and stuff.

MS. STEIN: Yes, but -

MS. NEEL: But no, we never really - no.

MS. STEIN: But they're just cops, doing their job.

MS. NEEL: We were lucky, I guess, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And what about your experience in places outside the United States? How did that differ from in the U.S.?

MS. NEEL: I'm sure if we wore a mask, depending on where we were -

MS. STEIN: They loved us. They loved us in Berlin.

MS. NEEL: - in Pakistan or something, that would be another story.

MS. STEIN: Well, Pakistan would be another -

MS. NEEL: Another story.

MS. STEIN: No, the mayor of Berlin met with us, and -

MS. RICHARDS: Did you ever -

MS. STEIN: We went to a bar, and met Cecil Taylor. I mean, it was just completely -

MS. NEEL: Yes, we were - at that point, we were more like celebrities touring.

MS. STEIN: We were totally, totally, honored. Like -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: How far have the -

MS. STEIN: - big deal.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: - Guerrilla Girls gone in their lectures and performances around the world? Have - every continent? Every -

MS. NEEL: We have been to Australia.

MS. RICHARDS: Are there areas of the world you've -

MS. STEIN: Australia.

MS. RICHARDS: - never gone?

MS. NEEL: Australia, all over Europe.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: China? Did we go -

MS. STEIN: South America.

MS. NEEL: South America.

MS. STEIN: Right?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: China, I'm not sure. Japan, I don't know.

MS. NEEL: No, I - no, I don't think we did.

MS. STEIN: I don't think so.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that - in terms of Asia - that relates somehow to the position of women in Asian - Japanese/Chinese - culture?

MS. STEIN: Possible.

MS. NEEL: Could be, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: And the art world, and women in the art world?

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

MS. STEIN: Because you get invited by the - well, in the beginning, it was the art departments and women's studies departments.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: And then it became media studies.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: And critical studies departments, and -

MS. NEEL: And courses in colleges.

MS. STEIN: Weren't so many women's studies programs in Russia.

MS. RICHARDS: Mostly - what percentage of your speaking engagements were connected to a university or teaching institution?

MS. STEIN: Lots.

MS. NEEL: Probably most, right?

MS. STEIN: Now, Rosalba, who is the gig girl, should really answer that question. But I would say lots, right?

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Ninety percent?

MS. NEEL: Probably.

MS. RICHARDS: And the others were what?

MS. NEEL: Museums.

MS. STEIN: Cities, museums, art programs like DAAD [Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, Berlin], something like that.

MS. NEEL: But mostly colleges, college students.

MS. RICHARDS: Did you see the audiences grow over the years?

MS. NEEL: I don't know. We always seemed to draw a crowd.

MS. STEIN: Yes, I -

MS. NEEL: I think, by the time they invited us, we were known. So people wanted to see us. It was always a big crowd.

MS. STEIN: Yes, it was always packed.

MS. NEEL: Yes, packed. It was always a big crowd. Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Have you ever used interns?

MS. NEEL: We did once.

MS. STEIN: We had one intern.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Who was supposed to take minutes, because we decided we, maybe, needed to know what we had decided at the last meeting.

MS. NEEL: How to do it.

MS. STEIN: But she became Marilyn Monroe, so she became a Girl, and did a wonderful, wonderful audiotape about - the "Cutting Off Your Dick" audiotape that was used in multiple performances.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: So, it kind of didn't work.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: And we had an intern for mailing purposes. I think we had someone help for a while, but it didn't work.

MS. RICHARDS: Has anyone ever taught a course, or a seminar?

MS. NEEL: Well, the Brooklyn Museum has a course now. Don't they?

MS. STEIN: On the Guerrilla Girls?

MS. NEEL: I thought they had a course -

MS. STEIN: We're in a lot of course material.

MS. NEEL: Yes, right.

MS. STEIN: We know that. But I didn't know about a course -

MS. NEEL: I thought I remembered something about there was an actual course on the Guerrilla Girls at the Brooklyn Museum.

MS. STEIN: No kidding.

MS. NEEL: Maybe I'm remembering it wrong.

MS. STEIN: Oh, wow.

MS. NEEL: Isn't that true?

MS. STEIN: I don't know.

MS. NEEL: I will double-check.

MS. STEIN: Don't know.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: When you are asked to speak, and it is somehow decided it would be Alice, or it would be Gertrude, are there any general guidelines, rules -

MS. STEIN: Well, we have -

MS. RICHARDS: - understandings about how to -

MS. STEIN: We developed a script. We did develop -

MS. RICHARDS: Could you talk about that script?

MS. STEIN: Well, in the beginning, there was no script. But the same questions kept coming. And so we developed a script.

MS. NEEL: Stock answers to get past commonly asked questions.

MS. STEIN: So that we would have stock answers that - one of the questions is, "How many Guerrilla Girls are there?"

MS. NEEL: "How many in your group?"

MS. STEIN: We would say, "We are not going to tell you the answer."

MS. NEEL: Right, yes. "Why are you anonymous?"

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: You know, we would say, "Because the message is the important thing."

MS. STEIN: Right.

MS. NEEL: We did this because we kept getting asked the same thing over and over again.

MS. RICHARDS: You felt there was a value in consistency?

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Branding.

MS. NEEL: Absolutely.

MS. STEIN: Well, also, there is a value in having something to say when you get up there, because -

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes, that's true.

MS. STEIN: - of the experience of standing up at the National Arts Awards and not having a speech.

MS. NEEL: Right, and not being warned to be prepared to say a speech.

MS. STEIN: That was just so terrifying.

MS. NEEL: But we did have some things under our belt by then, so we could pull it off okay.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: So you could assure that speakers would represent -

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. NEEL: Not all the time.

MS. RICHARDS: - the Guerrilla Girls -

MS. NEEL: Not all the time.

MS. STEIN: No, no. I mean, the Girls are - they are a pretty independent bunch.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: So, they would - but at least you were out there with some kind of -

MS. NEEL: I think that's why we started this guideline; it was just - a few times when one member, who was new to the group, and it was inferred how she had a different sensibility in a lot of ways, politically, whatever.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: We all pretty much - very diverse individuals, but we all had the same or similar focus. And she was saying things that were - [Stein laughs] - so out there and inappropriate. That's when we said, "We've got to get some stock answers."

MS. RICHARDS: So it was, in part -

MS. NEEL: Get that script going, here.

MS. RICHARDS: - in part, to help your members in awkward situations, and secondly, to help the group.

MS. STEIN: To shut them up when -

MS. RICHARDS: To make sure that -

MS. NEEL: Yes, to make sure that they've got it right. This person, I don't remember what she was saying, but it was really off the wall.

MS. RICHARDS: Were there any other actions taken to help strengthen your message, and - whether it's in terms of selecting who should fill what request, or -

MS. STEIN: Yes that's what was -

MS. NEEL: We tried to do it -

MS. STEIN: Rosalba did.

MS. NEEL: Yes, we tried to do -

MS. STEIN: She -

MS. NEEL: Yes, some people -

MS. STEIN: She did a good job. She would assign an experienced Girl with a new Girl, for example, so you're not out there with two new Girls who have -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - never been on a gig before.

MS. NEEL: And it's disaster.

MS. STEIN: There is a gig - a Girl who has been on gigs multiple times, and then somebody else who is being trained to -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Does that mean that you required or requested there always be two Guerrilla Girls speaking together?

MS. STEIN: Oh, that -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Well, that was also -

MS. NEEL: Guerrilla Girls go in pairs, too.

MS. STEIN: Yes. That was part of it. But the other part of it was to not have a party line. We didn't want to have - because it's a collective, and because we argued all the time, we didn't want to have -

MS. NEEL: One voice.

MS. STEIN: - one - even though we had a script - I know it sounds contradictory - we didn't want to convey the impression -

MS. NEEL: Impression.

MS. STEIN: - that the Guerrilla Girls only had one set of -

MS. NEEL: One person or one idea.

MS. STEIN: - responses and ideas. And, indeed, we argued so much that -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - having two Girls ensured that there was going to be some give and take -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - in the presentation.

MS. NEEL: And I think we also read somewhere that gorillas moved in twos, or something. [Stein laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: Did you ever create performances at a meeting, and then take it on the road?

MS. STEIN: Yes. I think the script came out of a process.

MS. NEEL: Yes, we did most of the work when - most of the best work was done collectively.

MS. STEIN: Yes, together, and -

MS. NEEL: Bringing it back to the table and hashing it out.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Someone early -

MS. STEIN: But then, when you get there, you get to Berlin and you realize that they don't have a slide projector. Then you tailor the performance for the occasion that you're in.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: So -

MS. RICHARDS: And the -

MS. STEIN: So it's a rehearsal before you go out, among just the Girls who are there, doing the gig.

MS. RICHARDS: There is a difference between performance and lecture, and -

MS. STEIN: I don't know if we ever resolved that.

MS. NEEL: The lectures, we would split it up, "Okay, you talk about the posters." "And you can talk about," whatever was going on. We knew at that point what questions were going to be asked.

But most of us always had an opinion about something, anyway. So it was never silence. Sometimes we would, actually, divvy up things to say. If we didn't have an answer, we would sometimes ask them to answer it.

Even though most of the time we didn't have to have a script, at least there was some security if you weren't totally prepared. Most of it was very organic.

MS. RICHARDS: But did you feel that you would go back to the meeting and report on the experience, and a kind of responsibility, or that that was a benefit to future planning, you would come and - how did -

MS. STEIN: On the gigs?

MS. RICHARDS: - the acts -

MS. STEIN: On the gigs?

MS. RICHARDS: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Reviews would come out.

MS. RICHARDS: How did it go? What worked? What didn't?

MS. NEEL: A lot of reviews would sometimes tell you what worked or not. The other girls would talk about what someone did or not.

MS. RICHARDS: If they were in the audience?

MS. NEEL: Yes, or even each other. We would discuss, "Oh, we should have done this; she's not too good at this," or, "She's better at that," et cetera. [Laughs.]

MS. STEIN: Or, "This worked," and, "This didn't work."

MS. NEEL: Yes, you know, like that.

MS. STEIN: There was a gig at CalArts [California Institute of the Arts, Valencia] when Frida Kahlo, just on the spur of the moment, decided to divide the boys from the girls. It was brilliant, it was quite brilliant.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: And, you know, everybody got all energized and upset. And that was a spontaneous decision that worked.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: And then got used again.

MS. NEEL: We were open to unraveling it as we went along.

MS. RICHARDS: And that became part of a -

MS. NEEL: Yes, like throwing the bananas in the audience.

MS. STEIN: A strategy, right.

MS. NEEL: Or the bananas being thrown at you, or getting up and dancing, or whatever.

MS. STEIN: And then some of the boys would go over to the girls' side, and some of the girls would go to the boys' side.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Fun was had by all.

MS. NEEL: You get up and stretch your legs, too. Be part of it. It's a way of being part of it more. So that's a good way of combining performance with a lecture and information. It works well.

MS. RICHARDS: What do you think will be in the future for the Guerrilla Girls?

MS. STEIN: Well -

MS. RICHARDS: BroadBand.

MS. STEIN: Gertrude is still worried about her weight. [Neel laughs.] But at a recent performance, somebody stood up and said, "Gertrude, we love you just the way you are."

MS. NEEL: Yes, that's true.

MS. STEIN: Which I thought was very nice.

MS. NEEL: It's very true, too.

MS. STEIN: And -

MS. RICHARDS: You talked about going to the virtual -

MS. NEEL: Second Life?

MS. RICHARDS: Second Life.

MS. STEIN: Well, and about -

MS. RICHARDS: But what about kinds of - what are the areas that you have been talking about focusing on, in terms of issues that you wanted to -

MS. STEIN: I think it's Muslim women. I think it's -

MS. RICHARDS: Muslim women?

MS. STEIN: - really, well, incorporating Muslim women into the group, first of all, and then handling the very, very different perspective of women who wear culturally identifiable headgear. You know, what exactly do you experience when you're walking around the street and people know you're an Arab? [Laughs.]

MS. RICHARDS: Do you include other groups of women who wear things, besides Arabs and Muslims?

MS. STEIN: Well, we haven't, so far. It has only come up in the case of women wearing head scarves.

But you know, there were feminists who would wear lipstick and the feminists who would wear hobnail boots, right? That was kind of in the - that was in the early days.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: And now, we have appearance in a much more politically charged world.

MS. NEEL: More - yes.

MS. STEIN: And I don't know what is going to come out of that discussion. I don't really know.

MS. RICHARDS: And this is - and you're not talking about art.

MS. STEIN: No. Well, no. There is a Girl who has designed T-shirts in support of the Arab High School in Brooklyn. And we also designed - the GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand - designed a T-shirt, "How do you say 'feminist' in Afghanistan?" It's in Farsi.

MS. RICHARDS: So would you say that GuerrillaGirlsBroadBand is not so much focused anymore on issues of artists, but rather of broader feminist issues?

MS. STEIN: Although we are all artists, I would say it is - yes, there is a lot about immigration; there is a lot of concern about war. There is still a lot of concern about economic disparity. And, you know, production by women, and prostitution, and, you know, issues that affect women globally, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: So even though you're all artists, somehow the -

MS. STEIN: The larger issues are -

MS. RICHARDS: - issues and concerns of women artists at the moment are -

MS. STEIN: Less urgent.

MS. RICHARDS: Less urgent.

MS. NEEL: Yes, there are some larger issues that -

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: - affect you being an artist, too.

MS. STEIN: The fact that we didn't ever publish the report card on the 20th anniversary of the report card, suggests to me that that was just less urgent than other stuff that had - that came up.

MS. RICHARDS: Do you think that is a reflection of the political situation in the United States in the past eight years?

MS. STEIN: Could very well be, although - [laughs].

MS. RICHARDS: And, I mean, since post-9/11 - well, since 2000.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes. Since the Bushies. Yes.

MS. NEEL: Yes. We did that Newt Gingrich poster awhile ago about censorship.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: Yes, things have shifted in a lot of ways.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: There isn't much activism about the NEA.

MS. STEIN: No.

MS. RICHARDS: Just given up and gone on to more important -

MS. STEIN: Yes, we've given up and gone on to other stuff. That's true.

MS. NEEL: Yes, we have more -

MS. STEIN: Yes, that's true.

MS. NEEL: - concerns, yes.

MS. STEIN: BroadBand did a poster about Giuliani and his attack on the Brooklyn Museum. That was the - one of the first things. And another one was right around 2000 -

MS. RICHARDS: So you have done more than one poster.

MS. STEIN: That's true. But we did them online. We publish them online. We never tried to stick them up on the

street.

Another one was Bush, "I Stand on My Record," and then we enlarged and contracted the states, depending on the number of - the amount of teacher salary - the statistics of Bush's second term.

No, no, sorry. His - the statistics of his term as governor, in Texas. So it was a map of the United States, with Texas enlarged, and then the statistics in Texas. It has the lowest literacy rate; it has the highest amount of welfare - I forget what they are, exactly.

MS. NEEL: Health care issues.

MS. STEIN: Health care. [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes. Well, yes -

MS. STEIN: So we're using an artistic approach to -

MS. NEEL: Right, yes.

MS. STEIN: - to the larger issues.

MS. NEEL: Yes. I think I probably said this already, an idea of the Guerrilla Girls reemerging as a union, because artists and professors, they are so terribly underpaid, and not really taken care of. And art is really such a vital, important part of life, whether you recognize it or not.

MS. RICHARDS: That -

MS. NEEL: And most people don't.

MS. RICHARDS: That brings up a question I have about alliances. Sometimes when groups are getting old, and issues are shifting, and the world is shifting, alliances are formed to strengthen both.

So, for example, you're talking about artists' union. Well, there are unions of freelancers, and there are broad issues of health insurance, and there are all kinds of mutual concerns. Does that ever come up in conversation in 2000, when the Guerrilla Girls were having their crisis?

Or, for BroadBand, whatever your issues are, or Guerrilla Girls, when you're going away from just the art world, you open -

MS. STEIN: Yes. No, that's a very good point.

MS. RICHARDS: - and the global nature of some of these concerns and these problems.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: It's another good idea -

MS. RICHARDS: But you obviously -

MS. STEIN: I am just going to write that down.

MS. RICHARDS: You have obviously gone away from - well, maybe to be resurrected - a focus on the situation of women artists in New York -

MS. NEEL: I think we need to do another comparative study, though.

MS. RICHARDS: Not that they -

MS. NEEL: Maybe as a book - we've got to do that, and then, boom.

MS. STEIN: Move on.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Yes. What about the fact - thinking about what the other two Guerrilla Girls said - the fact that the Guerrilla Girls aren't focusing - whichever section I may be speaking about - aren't focusing on problems of

women in the art world in New York now, right now is an incredibly wealthy moment.

I mean, not for nonprofits, [Stein laughs] but for - there is a huge amount of money to be made in the art world.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Some for women. And collectors have power. And I - maybe there is even more at stake for - to being critical right now; there is even more to lose.

Do you think that the wealth of the art world right now is possibly a disincentive to rock the boat and be an activist focused on the art world?

MS. STEIN: Oh, that's a good question.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: But we were never selling paintings.

MS. NEEL: No.

MS. STEIN: We were doing gigs -

MS. NEEL: We were never in this to do that.

MS. STEIN: - to make money.

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. RICHARDS: But that's what I mean. Now -

MS. NEEL: That the art world is much more lucrative?

MS. RICHARDS: - artists are selling paintings -

MS. STEIN: Now that - oh, I see.

MS. RICHARDS: Even though they might be only 10 percent in the gallery.

MS. STEIN: Oh, oh, oh, oh. Now that -

MS. NEEL: The market -

MS. STEIN: The activism, the need for activism is blunted by the economic reality.

MS. RICHARDS: Is it?

MS. STEIN: Is - that's the question?

MS. NEEL: Right, although the economic reality is misleading, because it really is just a few in there that are making any real money. If you want to put it in a class hierarchy, the art world, it's really rich and poor.

MS. RICHARDS: Which is a reflection of the country in general.

MS. NEEL: Politics, yes, what's been happening. This extreme split.

MS. RICHARDS: Disappearance of the middle class.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes. It's - yes, Bush era, the whole period. I think that's how it is.

MS. RICHARDS: You could speculate -

MS. NEEL: It's another time.

MS. RICHARDS: - if we went into a recession, if the art world had collapsed, there would be more activity? There would be - you would once again look at the situation with women? There would be more incentive? Or, do you think that you would continue to look at, quote, bigger problems, in the world?

MS. STEIN: No, you're right. I think it's very possible - it's like the collapse of New York in the '70s made it possible for the alternative space movement to start in for all these -

MS. NEEL: Right.

MS. STEIN: - artists to move here, and be able to afford to live here, and write, and -

MS. NEEL: That's right.

MS. STEIN: - do stuff.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: The collapse of the art economy might open it up for -

MS. NEEL: Yes. Because artists are the ones who are always pioneering neighborhoods that are affordable, so that's the place to buy real estate as an investment; follow the artist community.

But now, New York is so expensive. The artists upgrade the neighborhood, and then they have to move because they can't afford it. But New York has become, really, a place for only the rich or poor. It's hard to be able to stay here unless you own something.

So New York is shifting, too.

MS. RICHARDS: Well, maybe that - hearing you say that, do you think that actually has an impact on the existence of the Guerrilla Girls physically, not the BroadBand?

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

MS. RICHARDS: The shifting economic reality for artists in New York? You think that impacted on the Guerrilla Girls' existence?

MS. NEEL: That's an issue - would we have been able to start now - well, that's an interesting idea. Where would the Guerrilla Girls form now; would they? And how would they do that.

MS. STEIN: Yes, yes.

MS. NEEL: How would it be different? It's harder, because now we're seeing paintings going for millions and millions of dollars. And there are more women artists connected, and it's still a problem for men, too.

MS. RICHARDS: Are there websites that are really taking the place -

MS. NEEL: Different -

MS. RICHARDS: - and the Guerrilla Girls don't need to be active, because there are all kinds of feminist websites that feminists can go to for support and instruction?

MS. STEIN: What are they? [Laughs.]

MS. NEEL: Yes, what do they do? I don't know where they are. Are they doing that?

MS. STEIN: It's a great idea.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: I have -

MS. STEIN: It's a good question; it's a very good question.

MS. RICHARDS: You hear about websites existing, and blogs.

MS. STEIN: And blogs.

MS. NEEL: Blogs.

MS. RICHARDS: Everything under the sun.

MS. STEIN: Everything, everything, everything.

MS. NEEL: So -

MS. RICHARDS: I thought maybe you would know about feminist websites -

MS. NEEL: The real change and shift happens within everyone, so I think, in a way, that has opened up, that dialogue, or that problem, and the idea about it. We were talking earlier about the consciousness of it.

MS. STEIN: But I think one of the things I have to do, as a result of this conversation - we are close to the end, right, of our period of time - is make sure I get one of the younger Girls in here to direct -

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: - to answer those questions. Because I feel like I am not qualified to -

MS. NEEL: Yes, you know, I would like to hear what they have to say.

MS. STEIN: Because they live online.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: They live online. They take baths online.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. STEIN: They just totally have a -

MS. NEEL: That's their world, the Second Life, too.

MS. STEIN: It's another -

MS. RICHARDS: Yes.

MS. STEIN: It's another -

MS. NEEL: Also, what they think about feminism, what it is now, how they define it. Those questions you just asked are for them, too, really, about the economics, how it's shifted or changed and affects them.

And I know that they really are thankful about - Dylan said this - and he's a young man.

MS. STEIN: Bob Dylan?

MS. NEEL: Bob Dylan, yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Cate Blanchett? [They laugh.]

MS. NEEL: Yes, I was having one of those out-of-body experiences, and he spoke to me in a dream, and he said that, looking down on everything, he felt that what we, the women, did, we set the stage, and that it's his job, as a young spirit, to keep it alive, or keep it going. No, I was talking about my son, Dylan.

MS. STEIN: Oh, that's so great.

MS. NEEL: It's almost like he doesn't feel like he is inventing it.

MS. STEIN: Okay. But his job -

MS. NEEL: He is - his job to keep it alive.

MS. STEIN: Keep it alive and keep it going.

MS. NEEL: To make sure it - keep the fire going, yes.

MS. STEIN: Rolling, okay.

MS. NEEL: So I thought that was an interesting point of view.

MS. STEIN: That's interesting. That is interesting. Yes.

MS. NEEL: Yes, yes.

MS. STEIN: Yes.

MS. NEEL: Yes.

MS. RICHARDS: Well -

MS. STEIN: Okay.

MS. NEEL: Whatever that's worth.

MS. STEIN: All right.

MS. NEEL: But, you know, I'm curious to hear them, what they have to say, the young women.

MS. RICHARDS: Thank you.

MS. STEIN: Thank you.

MS. RICHARDS: Very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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