

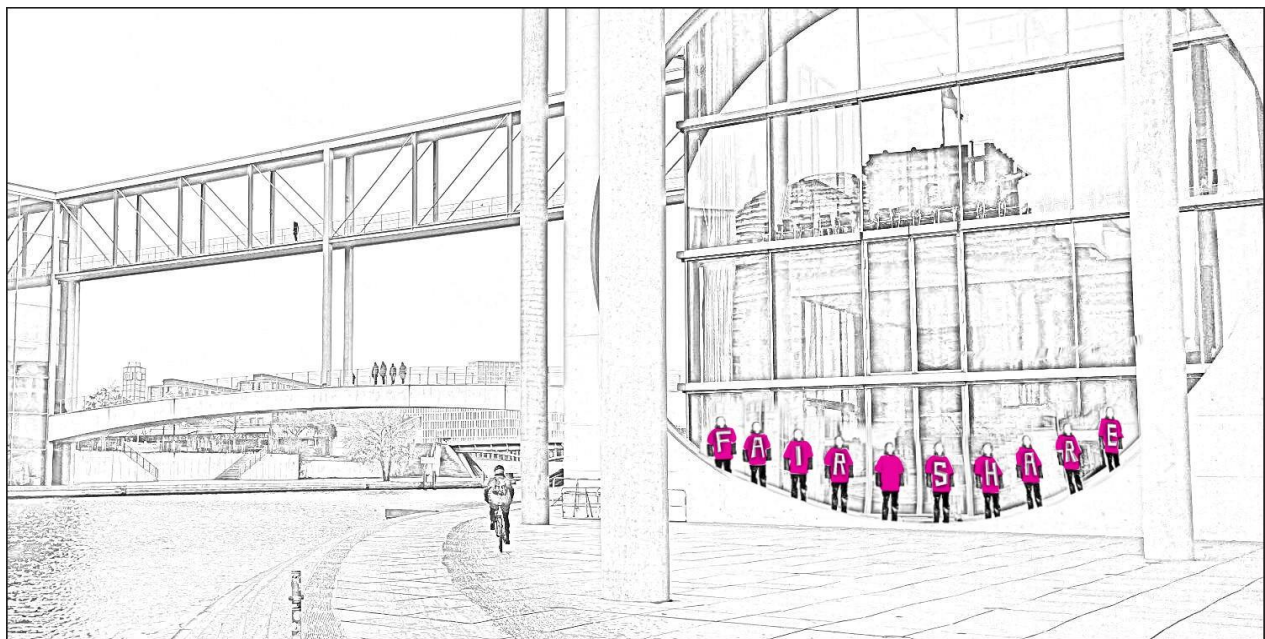


## Press release

***fair share!* Action: International Women's Day, Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 12 p.m.**

On International Women's Day 2023, the Berlin-based action alliance ***fair share!* Visibility for Women Artists** invites you to witness symbolic actions on the Spree riverbank in front of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Haus. The 7<sup>th</sup> March 'Equal Pay Day in Germany' sets the theme of this year's protest.

Unlike other years, when *fair share!* activists stood in front of national museums in Berlin, in 2023 we are gathering before a site of political decision-making. We demand fair payment for our work, greater visibility and the recognition of women's potential in the visual arts.



The initiators are available for interviews and additional information. Please see the attached press release for further details.

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Location: in front of the Marie-Elisabeth Lüders Building on the Spree riverbank

## **PRESS RELEASE**

On this year's International Women's Day, artists<sup>1</sup> and female cultural workers are going to the centre of political decision-making. Between the Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders- and Paul-Löbe-Haus, which face the Bundestag, *fair share!* activists dressed in pink will scrabble letters into a variety of slogans, while a 'Feminist Corner' will articulate the reality, what we strive for and what we demand of politicians. A special highlight will be activists waving pink flags aboard the old 'Aurora' tugboat travelling the Spree between Museum Island and Humboldthafen.

### **The Gender Pay Gap in the Visual Arts**

As a group, women in Germany earn 18 per cent less than men.<sup>2</sup> That means, women work 'for free' for 66 days – from 1<sup>st</sup> of January until 7<sup>th</sup> of March. The situation is even more extreme in the visual arts, where the gender pay gap is significantly higher (30 per cent<sup>3</sup>) and artists and female cultural workers remain unpaid until 19<sup>th</sup> of April. This is due to structural differences and still virulent gender stereotypes in the creative industries. Taxpayer-subsidized museums, exhibition venues and federal art collections all show glaring differences in the proportions of male to female artists. *Fair share!* research reveals that in the German Bundestag collection ('the *Artothek*'), which, since 1971, has purchased artworks annually (now with a budget of €175,000), barely 20 per cent of the works are by women.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, the German Federal Government has significantly increased its acquisition of work by women artists, with a current annual acquisition budget of several million euros.<sup>5</sup> However, work by women artists account for less than a third of all that has been collected since the early 1970s. Similar gaps are found in all German museums, even those presenting contemporary art – although 60 per cent of all art school graduates are female.<sup>6</sup>

For centuries, the art business – both private and institutional – has been dominated by men. Their power and money determine who and what is shown, collected and purchased. This influences state-subsidized institutions where, in close cooperation with the art market, supposedly objective curators make major acquisitions and mount exhibitions. Courage is needed to resist the pressure to 'succeed' and to stop thinking in terms of 'prestige' and stop believing in the canon. We want to encourage gallery owners, curators and museum directors to reshuffle the cards to favour women artists. The works of many women artists are both less visible and offered for sale at much lower prices (the 'gender discount') – which creates a glaring gender pay gap. According to the artists' social insurance (the *Künstlersozialkasse*), the average income of female artists in Germany is far below the poverty line, particularly for care-givers and single parents. Political action is urgently needed to redress this inequality.

In recent years, individual visual artists, along with their most important interest group, the *BBK*, have developed demands and catalogues of measures. Solutions and best practices are available – like the Freelands Foundation in the UK and the Burns Halperin Report in the USA.<sup>7</sup> But we need much more than *awareness* of the problem.

### ***Fair share! Visibility for Women Artists***

Founded in 2020 by Ines Doleschal and Rachel Kohn, the *fair share!* Action Alliance is a growing initiative of female visual artists, art historians, other cultural workers and interested parties

from Berlin, which has a supra-regional impact. Activists campaign for more visibility for women artists in the state-funded art sector. They demand quotas for all contemporary arts and the revaluation of women artists by historians. In addition to actions on International Women's Day in front of prominent Berlin museums whose collections significantly underrepresent women, the *fair share!* Action Alliance also supports overlooked individual artists (e.g., the Berliner, Anna Dorothea Therbusch, one of the most important Rococo artists), gender parity for grants and scholarships, and more equitable remuneration in the cultural sector for women's art and art-related activities.

The *fair share!* Action Alliance is also a platform for exchange and empowerment – promoting participation, diversity and the avant-garde. All its actions aim to increase the quality and diversity in German art museums and exhibitions, and greater fairness related to art production.

### ***fair share!* calls for**

- the recognition of women artists' past and present achievements
- gender-sensitive design of acquisitions and exhibitions
- a greater proportion of works by women artists in collections and exhibitions – and 50 per cent for contemporary art
- the promotion of research projects and publications on women artists
- revising and supplementing art-history publications and textbooks
- a nationwide database of women artists and monitoring office to analyze the representation of women artists in German museums and collections of the Federal Ministry for Culture and Media, following the examples in the USA and the UK
- significantly more, *targeted* subsidies and prizes for women artists of all ages
- the abolition of age restrictions in calls for proposals
- specific funding and grants for women artists with care responsibilities
- support programmes for artists with child-rearing and care responsibilities, as well as the development of targeted support for re-entry after family leave

For more about our actions visit:

**[www.fairshareforwomenartists.de](http://www.fairshareforwomenartists.de)**

The *fair share!* action on 8 March 2023 is designed to be climate-friendly and as resource-efficient as possible. It is financed by private donations.

Every donation helps!

Account: Frauenmuseum Berlin e.V.

IBAN: DE26 8306 5408 0004 0227 50

Key word: **fair share! Aktion 8. März 2023**

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<sup>1</sup> Artists\* refers to women, lesbians, intersex, non-binary and trans people

<sup>2</sup> The 18% pay gap (2022) puts Germany fourth to the last of the 27 European member states.  
<https://www.destatis.de/Europa/DE/Thema/Bevoelkerung-Arbeit-Soziales/Arbeitsmarkt/GenderPayGap.html>

<sup>3</sup> See Equal Pay Day – das Journal (February 2023), p. 6.  
<https://www.equalpayday.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/epd-journal-2023-230109.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The overall ratio in the *Artothek* is around 23% female to 75% male artists. Source: Bestandsverzeichnis  
[https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/807584/a9a260c73b3ba86efd31988f79f324ec/bestandsverzeichnis\\_artotheke-data.pdf](https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/807584/a9a260c73b3ba86efd31988f79f324ec/bestandsverzeichnis_artotheke-data.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> In the *Bundeskunstsammlung*, the overall ratio of female artists is 27% (73% for male artists). This has been significantly improved in the most recent acquisition periods: Between 2012 and 2016, the proportion of female artists were 40%, between 2017 and 2021, 59%, and 52% of the 2020 and 2021 acquisitions by the 'Neustart Kultur' programme launched in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Source: Bundeskunstsammlung and exhibition catalogues. [https://www.kunstsammlung-bund.de/kunstdatenbank/2\\_Kuenstler/2\\_kuenstler\\_node.html;jsessionid=D70B661FF82EE369B9D060BF4EABDC11.live412](https://www.kunstsammlung-bund.de/kunstdatenbank/2_Kuenstler/2_kuenstler_node.html;jsessionid=D70B661FF82EE369B9D060BF4EABDC11.live412)

<https://www.museumsreport.de/2020/08/ankaufetat-der-bundeskunstsammlung-auf-drei-millionen-euro-erhoeht/>; 'Identität nicht nachgewiesen' [Unproven identity]. Preface to the catalog of the eponymous exhibition, p. 8. Published in 2022 by the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland GmbH. ISBN 978-3-7774-3988-4

<sup>6</sup> In 2018/2019, reportedly 59% of fine arts students were female.  
<https://www.bbk-berlin.de/sites/default/files/2021-03/spartenbericht-bildende-kunst-5216102219004.pdf>, p. 43

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