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The Guerrilla Girls: Feminist Artists Challenge Women's Roles in the Art World

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Is the art world in need of a conscience? It is according to the Guerrilla Girls. The Guerrilla Girls act to hold the male dominated art world accountable for its lack of support for female artists. Although more women are trained in the arts, more men earn a living as professional artists. Regardless of gains in political rights, women are still being legally discriminated against in the art world. Museum directors, gallery owners, artists, art critics, and art critics uphold men's stereotypical role as artists and women's roles as muses, models, or objects of art. Murray Edelman's theory of *contestable categories* ties into work of the Guerrilla Girls because "artist" is a term that has multiple connotations, each defined by a different perception. When considering the term "artist," the spectrum of perception ranges from the conservative view of white males to the liberal view of feminists like the Guerrilla Girls. The term "artist" has a masculine connotation deriving from a Western art history of almost exclusively men's work and the authority of men in the art world. As a result, "male artist" has became a conventional category unconsciously supported by the majority. The Guerrilla Girls use a variety of mass media techniques, especially posters, to get the art world to redefine the role of women in the art world.

The Guerrilla Girls is an organization of feminist artists that stresses the importance of the group over individuals. This group is secretive, and all the members' real identities remain anonymous to outsiders. The Guerrilla Girls must remain anonymous so that they can continue earning a living after exposing some of the most important people in the art world. The group identity also allows all members to have an equal voice since their outside careers are not impacted by their membership in the group. This enables the members to "focus…on the issues, not on [their] personalities or [their] own work." The Guerrilla Girls successfully remain anonymous in public by donning gorilla masks and using pseudonyms of dead female artists.

Since their formation, the Guerrilla Girls have been active in fighting stereotypes of women in the art world. The organization of the Guerrilla Girls formed in New York City in 1985 as a protest against the Museum of Modern Art. In 1985, the Museum of Modern Art opened its "An International Survey

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