MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY
○ BASQUE WOMEN ARTIST RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE
● FEMINIST ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND ART THEORIES
“Indeed the uneven collection of works by contemporary women, the failure to preserve their archives and exhibit their work continue this process of failed historical inclusion.”

Griselda Pollock
The Basque Women Artist Research and Documentation Centre: Feminist Artistic Practices and Art Theories in Artium Museoa, Museum of Contemporary Art of the Basque Country is the result of the museum’s commitment to the present and to the history of art, as well as to its mission of including more women artists and feminist theorists in the narratives of their disciplines in a way that cuts across its fields of action. It is a centre specialised in the productions of Basque women artists, in documenting their works and archives, and in understanding these productions as the result of constant dialogue with international artistic currents. The centre similarly incorporates in its collections the productions of women artists that are present in the museum’s collection and featured in its exhibition programmes.

This underlying commitment in turn implies a second commitment, which consists in fostering research and disseminating feminist knowledge in the field of art. A specific field of knowledge that began its journey in the 1970s by pointing out the inequalities that contribute to exclude women artists from the History of Art.

Thirdly, by fulfilling its mandate as a public institution, the centre acts as an open window to promote its women-oriented exhibition program and observe the progresses in the representations of women in the museum’s collection, thereby providing the artistic community and general public with access to both the legacy of women artists who historically have not been documented in art institutions and also their research.
Euskal emakume artisten ikerketa eta dokumentazio zentroa
Praktika artistiko eta artearen teoria feministak

Centro de investigación y documentación de artistas vascas
Prácticas artísticas y teorías del arte feministas

Basque Women Artist Research and Documentation Centre
Feminist Artistic Practices and Art Theories
OBJECTIVES OF THE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

● To bring together, preserve and disseminate documentation and archives of Basque women artists.

● To bring together and preserve documentation and archives of women artists and thinkers linked to the museum’s collection and its programmes.

● To identify, collect, organise, preserve and disseminate bibliographic and documentary sources that contribute to research on artistic practice and feminist thought.

● To provide support for research on the various cultural, social and political contexts that have revolved around feminism.

● To position the centre as a reference for the study of contemporary Basque women artists.

● To position the institution as a point of reference in the field of research on artistic practices and feminist theory.
**LINES OF ACTION**

- Preserve and catalogue documentary archives of Basque women artists, as well as women artists present in the museum’s collection.

- Create a thesaurus on art and feminism.

- Develop lines of acquisition of women artists linked to the Documentation Centre and the museum’s collection.

- Design and produce programmes, seminars, courses, publications, etc.

- Disseminate and make available to researchers the materials produced as part of the museum's programmes and its documentation centre.

- Develop an accessible online space to disseminate the centre’s contents.

- Consolidate collaboration networks with women artists, women curators, associations, institutions and other research and documentation centres, as well as international projects.
**ACTIONS IN THE YEAR 2022**

- Set up an **international advisory board** that includes women theorists and artists.
- Create an **annual research grant** linked to the centre and its archives.
- Produce the interdisciplinary, international and intergenerational course *The Feminist Gaze: Feminist Perspectives in Artistic Productions and Theories of art.*
- Produce the second edition of the annual series *From the Beginning: Feminist Cinema’s Stories.*
- Produce the first edition of the programme *The Rare Production of Little Women*, a **school** during the months of January to June that will give classes and workshops for small groups by international guests whose productions have been essential in developing a new inclusive, feminist art historiography.
- Consolidate our reading list programme by regularly inviting guest women artists, theorists and other art agents to select a recommended reading list.
- Create an archive of documentary interviews with women artists who are part of the museum’s collection and programmes.
- Produce a **specific editorial policy** that will have two titles of its own in 2022:
  - Course: *The Feminist Gaze: Feminist Perspectives in Artistic Productions and Theories of Art*
  - Catalogue raisonné: *Juncal Ballestín*
- Develop tools to disseminate the museum’s documentary collections: a digital **timeline** that links together the works of women artists that are in the museum’s collection and document holdings, thereby chronologically framing and ordering this entire patrimonial legacy.
“The word archive, Jacques Derrida tells us, comes from the ancient Greek ἀρχεῖον: arkheion, “the house of the ruler.” [...] What is placed in or left out of the archive is a political act, dictated by the archivist and the political context in which she lives.”

Carmen María Machado
With the launch of a new masterplan in 2019, the museum’s collection, comprising almost 2,400 works, underwent an analysis that confirmed the scarce presence of women artists in its list of works: 20.8%. Since that time, and as a public institution concerned with offering the best service to citizens as a whole, as well as taking into account both the Basque reality and new international museographic trends, a strategic policy has been implemented that affects the necessary incorporation of contemporary women artists and their productions in all the institution’s fields of action: Collection, Exhibitions, Public Programmes, and Library and Documentation.

This reading of the collection is concurrent to the implementation of research and curatorial projects, such as those developed on the artist Juncal Ballestín; research on the feminist movement since the mid-1970s directed by Garazi Ansa; case studies, such as those of the magazines Zehar and Arena (edited by Miren Eraso and Mar Villaespesa), curated by Laura Vallés; exhibitions dedicated to the artists Gema Intxausti, Elena Mendizabal, June Crespo and Txaro Arrázola, among others; annual seasons on the History of Feminist Cinema, and annual course on feminist perspectives in art, co-directed by Lourdes Méndez and Xabier Arakistain, among other programmes. Within this framework and context of the museum’s collection, the new additions incorporated into its collection of women artists are on display, and a central space has been dedicated to works such as those by the artist Juana Cima, including, among other pieces, a mural by her from the collection of the Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council that was awarded a prize at the 4th Biennial of Painting and Sculpture in 1980.

In this perspective, and as previously mentioned in this document, the Basque Women Artist Research and Documentation Centre: Feminist Artistic Practices and Art Theories was presented in March 2021. Consolidating Artium as the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Basque Country entails incorporating the productions of Basque, national and international women artists in both its programming and collection. Similarly, thinking about contemporary Basque art requires knowledge of the research that women artists and feminist theorists have been developing in and on the field of art over the past few decades.

Specifically, as a result of the political, social and artistic tradition that advocates the achievement of equality between men and
women and respect for sexual diversity, the Basque Country has had in its recent history an outstanding number of women artists, thinkers and associative and institutional experiences that are essential to assess and document in order to continue building a plural society that achieves equal opportunities for women and men, as well as in the field of art. In the political sphere, Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council was a pioneer in creating the first municipal registry of civil unions in Spain in 1994. The Basque Parliament also passed a pioneering law for the equality of women and men in 2005, which preceded Spain’s Organic Law for the effective equality of women and men in 2007.

In the field of contemporary art, the contribution of women artists to the emerging feminist political and social movement of the 1970s – as militants and as producers of much of its iconography, as well as of the first exhibitions of women artists in the 1980s – ushered in other milestones linked to art institutions that mark our recent history. The constitution of the Erreakzioa collective and its programming at the Arteleku production centre in the 1990s preceded the project developed at the Montehermoso Kulturunea Cultural Centre between 2007 and 2011, a pioneer in implementing gender equality policies in the field of contemporary art.

The Basque Women Artist Research and Documentation Centre: Feminist Artistic Practices and Art Theories in the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Basque Country aims to contribute decisively to bring feminist thought and theory of art closer to the artistic community and non-specialists citizens as useful tools to rethink and democratise today’s artistic institutions.