

Elke Zobl; Ricarda Drüeke

Foreword

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Foreword

This anthology grew out of a research project and has gone through many different visions, stages, and forms of collaborations. The idea of this book was developed within the research project “Feminist Media Production in Europe,” which was started at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and then moved to the Department of Communication at the University of Salzburg, Austria. A warm thank you goes out to Elisabeth Klaus, the department head in Salzburg, who has been very enthusiastic about the project. The project was funded by the Austrian Science Fund (P21187) from December 2008 until November 2012. The study was conducted by a team: Elke Zobl, as the project leader, post-doctoral researchers Rosa Reitsamer (2009–2011) and Jenny Gunnarsson Payne (2008–2009) and doctoral student Red Chidgey (2008–2010), with research support from Stefanie Grünangerl (2010–2012). In the context of this project, we have been interested in such questions as: What are the content, forms, processes, and functions of feminist media production in Europe today? How far are these media used as sites of feminist news, activism and engagement? How can media produced by women at the grassroots level be a means to foster participation and civic engagement? What are the implications of women as active media producers for civic society? What is the potential of feminist grassroots media in Europe for cultural, social and political changes? Discussions of these and other questions can be found in this book (esp. see the research report by Elke Zobl and Rosa Reitsamer).

At first, an open call to contribute to this anthology with academic essays and case studies, as well as activist reports, practitioner interviews and visual commentaries, was issued in 2008 by Red Chidgey, Jenny Gunnarsson Payne and Elke Zobl. We received many contributions from various countries for which we have been very grateful, and we would particularly like to thank everyone who contributed at this stage. However, due to the difficulty in finding a publisher willing to publish a mix of theory and practice, as well as project personnel changes, we had to make the decision to focus the current volume on academic essays. At that stage Rosa Reitsamer and Elke Zobl were able to secure transcript Verlag as the publisher. We thank the editors of the Critical Media Studies series for their immediate enthusiasm for the book and their productive collaboration. As Rosa Reitsamer left the project for another job posting, Elke Zobl teamed with Ricarda Drüeke at the Department of Communication in Salzburg to edit the present anthology. As the project leader, Elke Zobl would like to thank all team members warmly and deeply!

The information that has been collected during the project has been continuously documented at the digital archive *Grassroots Feminism: Transnational archives, resources and communities* (www.grassrootsfeminism.net), which was set up in December 2008. By providing an interactive network portal and research platform for researchers, activists and media producers, this Web 2.0 archive makes contemporary feminist, queer and antiracist media and cultural practices more broadly accessible. The site is organized and maintained by Elke Zobl in collaboration with Rosa Reitsamer, Stefanie Grünangerl and Red Chidgey. Above all, we would like to thank everyone who continues to contribute to a diverse, engaging and critical feminist media landscape – and consequently to this website. At the end of this book you will find a selected list of feminist media projects in Europe for further consultation.

Another important impetus for this book were the annual Civil Media Conferences organized by Radiofabrik in Salzburg, where from 2008 to 2011 we invited feminist media producers from various countries to present their work and engage in discussions around media, social change, participatory culture, networks and cultural citizenship. We are deeply indebted to everyone who accepted our invitation and came to Salzburg, as well as to Radiofabrik!

Such an anthology is dependent on the help and enthusiasm of many: It would have not been possible without the patience of the contributors who revised their articles according to our input. For the detailed proofreading, we thank Jason Heilman (USA), and for the layout, we are greatly indebted to Brigitte Geiger (Austria). At transcript Verlag we would like to thank Anke Poppen for being our competent contact person.

In short: the development of this book has involved many people in various countries. We cannot name them all, but we would like to thank them from our deepest hearts!

We are looking forward to feedback and further discussions!

Elke Zobl & Ricarda Drüeke