

The women activists who in 1981 established anti-nuclear, non-violent protest camps near the barbed-wire perimeter fence of a military base in Greenham Common, UK probably could never have imagined that their protest would remain continuously active for 19 years. (The 96 cruise missiles there were finally de-stationed in 1991, but it wasn't until the end of the millennium that the ground was handed back to the public.) In 1989, in the New Museum in NYC, Margaret Harrison had their collective ongoing struggle on her mind, even though it was no longer in the press as it had been when tens of thousands had formed a human chain. As a kind of homage she created the installation *Commonland/Greenham* (1989). This major work will be the centrepiece of her Berlin solo exhibition 'PREOCCUPY' at SILBERKUPPE. Decorating the high-security structure are mementos of domestic and family life, above it in capital red letters is a quote from Virginia Woolf:

WE CAN BEST HELP YOU PREVENT WAR

NOT BY REPEATING YOUR WORDS AND FOLLOWING YOUR METHODS

BUT BY FINDING NEW WORDS AND CREATING NEW METHODS.

Harrison is one of the most distinguished feminist artists and cultural activists to emerge out of the UK in the 1970s. She was one of the founders of the London Women's Liberation Art Group, the Women's Artists Group and the Artists Union. The Berlin exhibition, whose title pays tribute to the historical feminist lineage of protest and resistance, includes examples of works from each of the decades since then to the present day. Together they address some of her major artist concerns: the central importance of direct feminist and politicized content and action; the interplay of slogans and text with drawn, painted and photographic images; and the agitprop use of mixed-media techniques. In her work Harrison deals not only with the visible political global hegemony but also the politics of sexuality and gender for instance, in her densely reconceived drawings of Captain America, Superman and other generic figures. These depictions overturn the normative conventions of gender and sexuality and entail a critical consideration of the interests of the LGBT community. This is Harrison's first solo exhibition in Berlin. In the past her works were included in the NGBK group exhibitions 'Goodbye London - Radical Art and Politics in the Seventies' (2010), and 'Künstlerinnen 1877-1977 (1977).

HARRISON'S WORK SAYS: LOOK LIVELY, KEEP PROTESTING OR AT LEAST KNOW HOW, BITE BACK, RECLAIM THE SPACES OF POWER AND HUMOUR

Margaret Harrison lives and works in San Francisco and Cumbria. She was Research Professor at Manchester Metropolitan University from 1997 to 2008. Her work is in several public collections including the TATE and the V&A Museum, London and is currently touring in the British Arts Council show *Transmitter: Receiver*. In 2012 her work will be shown in *Marilyn Revised* at Rhode Contemporary Copenhagen (August 2012). Further Reading: John A. Walker 'Left Shift – Radical Art in 1970s Britain'

I.B. Tauris, 2002

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