HAZEL FRIZELL - THE REPRESENTATION OF SPECIFIC CONCERNS OF THE WOMEN’S LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN BRITISH FEMINIST ARTISTIC PRACTICE 1970-78

RESEARCH INFORMATION
Taking the Women’s Weekend Conference held at Ruskin College Oxford, 1970, as my starting point, this thesis critically investigates the representation of specific issues relating to the concerns of the Women’s Liberation Movement in British feminist art practice 1970-78. Those concerns relate specifically to the personal experience of child raising and domesticity and are, loss of identity, female isolation, guilt, dependence and childcare and as feminist publications indicate, these were central to the politics of the Women’s Liberation Movement. Despite the fact that such issues were represented in the work of many feminist artists, feminist art history has prioritised theory based feminist art such as the psychoanalytical work produced by Mary Kelly as it embraced an established academic tradition While essentialist feminist art has been recognised as a form of feminist art in which the essence of femininity is expressed via such initiatives as vaginal iconography, an important element of feminist art is that relating to liberation politics. Although the objectification of the female body is one form of female oppression, by far the most important and widely recognised cause is that relating to the cultural positioning of women within the domestic environment. This thesis identifies and defines the work of those feminist artists who fought female oppression by raising awareness of issues that needed a change in society rather than legislative measures. A new category of feminist art that embraces the ideology of the Women’s Liberation Movement is defined as Liberation Feminist Art and it is suggested that this category be fully integrated within the feminist art history discipline as well as the socially aware protest art that formed part of the conceptual art movement in the early 1970’s.

ABOUT
Hazel Frizell commenced her studies of the History of Art by undertaking a BA in History of Art, Architecture and Design at Kingston University as a mature student. Having secured an AHRB scholarship she completed an MA and then embarked on a PhD continuing her inquiry into feminist art. Having developed an interest in issues relating to women both as artists and subjects of artistic practice she has undertaken research on the work of Suzanne Valadon for her BA, Feministo at MA and is completing her doctoral thesis on The Representation of Specific Concerns of the Women’s Liberation Movement in British feminist artistic practice 1970-78. It is hoped that she will publish her thesis as 1970’s art and in particular feminist art that relates to the Women’s Liberation Movement appears to be a much under-researched area.