
FEMEXFILMARCHIVE

<https://sites.google.com/ucsc.edu/femexfilmarchive>

KEYWORDS database, feminist experimental film, intergenerational feminism, interviews, pedagogy



FIGURE 1. The banner image at the FEMEXFILMARCHIVE home page (<https://sites.google.com/ucsc.edu/femexfilmarchive/>) currently features a still from *Athyrium filix-femina (for Anna Atkins)* (dir. Kelly Egan), 2016. Used with permission from the filmmaker.

The FEMEXFILMARCHIVE (<https://sites.google.com/ucsc.edu/femexfilmarchive/>) is an ongoing, collective, web-based archive of interviews with feminist experimental filmmakers. We created it as a visibility project that makes space for feminist voices and that can, over time, become a resource for people hoping to learn more about the rich history and dynamic present of experimental feminist filmmaking practices. Filmmakers who challenge the social status quo are often drawn to formal experimentation—questioning and reinventing cinematic processes, methods, forms, and tools. But experimental film’s location

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outside of commercial media—and now outside the wider reach of social-media-enabled cultural conversation—means that experimental feminist film is one of the last communities to gain greater visibility. Thus experimental film history has largely been told by men about men. At a moment when many people have been talking about the ways that women, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming makers have been sidelined from film histories, we hope that this kind of effort to gather feminist filmmaker voices can help dismantle the sexism and misogyny that are still entrenched in our creative communities.

We also conceived this archive as a pedagogical project that encourages younger feminist filmmakers to connect with and learn from more experienced makers. We see these conversations as a form of intergenerational feminist cultural work—a way of introducing younger filmmakers to older makers whom they might not know about, while also allowing younger makers to articulate and share their questions, concerns, and knowledge. We offer this as a site not only for artistic/aesthetic and political lessons, but also for practical exchange: a place to learn about one another's career trajectories and the interconnected realms of personal, professional, and artistic choices.

The first thirty interviews in the archive were conducted in fall 2017 by feminist filmmaking students at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the University of California, Davis. We invited the students to each select a filmmaker, research their body of work in detail, and invite the filmmaker to have a conversation with them. We encouraged our students to think about things like how to find their own creative role models, how to learn from listening, and how to learn from intergenerational feminist conversation. Most (though not all) of the interviewees personally identify as both feminist and experimental makers, and we asked our students to invite them to respond directly to those labels. Often they did so in nuanced and complicated ways.

We hope that the archive will continue to expand. To that end we've created a tool kit to make it possible for others to add interviews to the project, and to share how we set up this interview project for our students. While we've written this tool kit with other instructors in mind—we would love to see educators implement this project in their film classrooms—we invite anyone, whether or not they are a student, to submit an interview. We want the project to continue to grow, to become broader and more inclusive, and to introduce us all to new makers, voices, and works. Download the tool kit at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DokNutrZy9GDaX6qF9vio_n19IZT9oYmBf3xsBWteyI/edit. ■

IRENE LUSZTIG is a filmmaker, visual artist, and archival researcher. Her film and video work mines old images and technologies for new meanings in order to reframe, recuperate, and reanimate forgotten and neglected histories. It has been screened around the world, including at the Berlinale; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Film Society of Lincoln Center, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Anthology Film Archives, New York; the Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; Flaherty NYC, New York; the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam; Hot Docs, Toronto; AFI Docs, Washington, DC; and RIDM, Montreal. She teaches filmmaking at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she is a professor of film and digital media.

JULIE FORREST WYMAN is a filmmaker and performer whose work aims to challenge and expand our culture's narrow range of represented bodies. Her documentary films engage issues of embodiment, body image, gender, and the politics, possibilities, and problematics of media spectatorship. Her 2012 documentary *STRONG!* about Olympic weightlifter Cheryl Haworth premiered at AFI Silverdocs in Washington, DC; screened in theaters around the United States; and was broadcast nationally as the closing film of the tenth season of PBS's Emmy-winning series *Independent Lens*, where it won the series' Audience Award. Wyman is currently an associate professor in the department of Cinema and Digital Media at the University of California, Davis.