

Casondra Sobieralski holds a B.A. in Art History from the University of Pittsburgh and an MFA in Conceptual and Information Arts from San Francisco State University. She addresses nonlinear narrative and the spatiality of storytelling in her video, web, and performance work. The content of her work seeks to excavate women’s history, and to explore the often fuzzy and subjective line between myth and history. She has shown in Western Pennsylvania, Bing Gallery and ProArts in Oakland, California, StartSOMA Gallery in San Francisco, the Berkeley Art Center, and she does site-specific work outside the gallery system. Casondra has also worked with CNRS/the Louvre doing digital reconstruction work and documentation for French archeologists in Egypt. Her teaching resume includes: San Francisco Art Institute Extension Education, UC Berkeley Community Education, the Bay Area Discovery Museum, JUST THINK, the Museum of Children’s Art, Oakland (MOCHA), and the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. She has done production work at the Three River’s Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and on several independent films.

Marin Camille Hood received her B.A. from Mills College in 2005 with a major in Art History and a double minor in Film Studies and Studio Arts. During her time at Mills she worked in the Special Collections and Rare Book Room of the Olin Library and interned at the Art Museum on campus. She is an artist who works predominantly with sculpture and textiles, exploring ideas of timelessness, the re-enchantment of the mundane, and identity as social construct. Marin has shown at Mission17 Gallery in San Francisco and the SFSU Art Gallery. She has worked at the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, and is currently employed by California College of the Arts.

THE GHOSTS OF SENECA FALLS

CAST AND PRODUCTION TEAM

PRODUCTION

Conceived, Produced and Edited by

Casondra Sobieralski

Visual Design, Costume Construction and

Sound Concept by Marin Camille Hood

Research, Casting and Cinematography by

Marin Camille Hood and

Casondra Sobieralski

Sound Capture by Casondra Sobieralski

Video Shoots Lighting by Matthew Petyo

Installed by

Casondra Sobieralski and Kevin Cain

CAST Video 1: The Drafters of the Declaration of Sentiments

(in order of appearance)

Elaine Santos as Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Marin Camille Hood as Martha Wright

Georgia Wright as Lucretia Mott

Marcie Gutierrez as Jane Hunt

Ruah Wild as Mary Ann M’Clintock

CAST Video 2: Amelia Bloomer and Friends

(in order of appearance)

Ellen Soloway as Amelia Bloomer

Nnekay FitzClarke as Sojourner Truth

Ken Davis as women’s rights supporter and abolitionist man

Mary Whalen as socially conservative woman

CAST Video 3: Seneca Falls Convention Audience

(from viewer left to right, back row then front)

Alana Miller as young women’s rights enthusiast

Matthew Petyo as abolitionist and suffragist

Brett Dickey as abolitionist opposed to women’s rights

Sandy Hersher as abolitionist and suffragist

“Cash” as Frederick Douglass

INTERVIEW VOICES:

Kevin Cain, Stephen Cataldo, Grizel Esquivel,

Marcie Gutierrez, Kelley Roberson, M. Brie Todd,

Ruth Tringham

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Women’s Rights

National Historical Park

The Ghosts

of Seneca Falls

August 29,30,and 31, 2008



ARTIST STATEMENT for THE GHOSTS OF SENECA FALLS: LET THE FOURTH WAVE BEGIN!

I first conceived of The Ghosts of Seneca Falls about two years ago, 2006. It was born of an exchange with a friend. I made a comment to this friend, a typically egalitarian male friend, about the “founders of our country.” He seemed annoyed. “They were all men, Casondra. It is ok to call them the founding fathers.”

I believe he thought I was being “hyper-pc” about gender-neutral language. In reality, I was reacting more as a person who worked for years in theater production. Audiences give actors all the credit for a good production, while the enormous work and support of the costumers, lighting designers, dramaturges, and so forth, goes unrecognized. As I saw it, the men who signed the Declaration of Independence were analogous to the actors. Yes, they were all white men, but those pen strokes were the crowning moments of a long struggle that included the ideas, fortitude, sacrifice and labor of men, women, and people of many ethnicities. All of these people, in my mind, were the founders of this country. (That said, I did indeed wonder why my generally enlightened friend seemed so irritated by a term that was not incorrect even if all the founders had been men. In contrast, would he have been irritated if I had said “mankind” to mean “everyone?” Hmmm...)

To argue my points with him, about language and about history, I told him I thought I had read somewhere—the memory was vague—about some early American women who had protested the wording of the founding documents because they thought that lines like “all men are created equal” did not secure the equal status of women. He told me that was ridiculous. So I set out to prove him wrong, because I am a feisty competitive sort. I did confirm my hazy recollection of the actions of the First Wave Feminists at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848.

I do a lot of politically motivated art, including politically motivated performance art and creative, props-assisted political street action, ala the later suffragist Alice Paul. I was struck by how the Seneca Falls action read to me as a form of proto-performance art, and I began to think about how to put the deeds of my foremothers—seemingly as feisty as I am--into a contemporary art context. I decided that video installation was an appropriate medium for raising awareness of “left over energy” in the historical location of the original event. I appreciate that the immateriality of video projection has a “ghostly” effect that can animate spaces and materials.

I also hope that using digital media will help to get young people interested in the Seneca Falls Convention, its implications for American history and how it jump-started equality-based feminisms. By talking with and listening to young people in Northern California where I live, I have been finding that most have little awareness of the women’s movement or the civil rights movement, for example. Women who are now in their teens and twenties came into a world where many battles had been won for them. Many do not seem to realize that the rights and freedoms that they have taken for granted are still precarious, and that there are still greater degrees of equity yet to be reached.

Today, advertising and Hollywood try to “sell” many people a canned SPAM™ dictate of what it means to be “feminist,” “empowered” or “liberated.” However, I think true empowerment comes from understanding whose shoulders we are standing upon as we reach higher, and history provides that sense of context, that cultural narrative. As journalist Naomi Klein argues, if a people are stripped of their narrative, they leave themselves vulnerable to an external authority (like advertising, a dictator, or a metaphorical “false prophet”) creating one for them. Thus begins a process of social control—someone or something else telling you who you are, what you should want, how you should feel, what you should fear, how you should look, how you should act, what you should believe to be “true.” That is the antithesis of women’s liberation, men’s liberation, human liberation.

So with this piece, let the Fourth Wave begin! I offer this project as a gift to my younger brothers and sisters. Dig into the wellspring of history, dig into your deepest self, and find or create your narrative.



Mash it up! The West Coast voices in this project --friends of mine who grew up reaping the benefits of Second and Third Wave feminism and who see how things can be better still--will give you a start. Keep in touch and let me know what you come up with! Let’s call it a generational collaboration, “from sea to shining sea.”

Casondra Sobieralski
Producer, The Ghosts of Seneca Falls

Funded By the Gracious Support of the Puffin Foundation, Bob Barde, Nita Cain, Stuart Gaffney, Karrie Hovey, Rosanne Kail Javorsky, Tricia Lowder, Elinor Powell-Bloom, Casondra Sobieralski, Ellen Soloway, Mary Kate Stimmler, James T. Sakamoto, Paul Thanos, Ruah Wild, and Georgia Wright.

Special Thanks to: Cinefemme, our fiscal sponsor, Academy of Art University, San Francisco, California <http://www.academyart.edu/> and Andrew Britt and Ex’pression College for Digital Arts, Emeryville, California <http://www.expression.edu/> for the use of their green screens.



The opinions expressed herein are those of participants in the project, and they do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Park Service or the Women’s Rights National Historic Park staff.

Also, please remember that The Ghosts of Seneca Falls is ART, not a peer-reviewed history source. Visual material, while based on extensive research, is interpretive. Answers to historical questions in the soundtrack may be, and in some cases are, incorrect. Answers given represent what people think they might know about American history. Part of the motivation in doing this piece was to demonstrate that most of us need to devote a bit more time to learning history—and “her-story!” Thank you!