

# FEMME FATALE

## GAZE – POWER – GENDER

# GLOSSARY

HAMBURGER  
KUNSTHALLE

This glossary is a cooperation between Missy Magazine and Hamburger Kunsthalle. It is published on the occasion of the exhibition »FEMME FATALE. Gaze – Power – Gender« at Hamburger Kunsthalle. It explains various TERMS, which are used in the exhibition and accompanying booklet.

### ABLEISM

The term is derived from the English word »able« and denotes discrimination based on physical abilities. People whose bodies are deemed less »able« due to a disability or impairment, are socially and spatially excluded and devalued. An ableist society adopts a »healthy« body as the norm and sees all others as (negative) aberrations. Ableism is, for example, when a person in a wheelchair is dependent on the help of others because buildings aren't constructed barrier-free. Or when blind students at universities or educational institutions don't have full access to all teaching materials.

### ANTISEMITISM

Hostile attitude toward Jews. It presents in various forms – from prejudice and verbal abuse to violence and murder. The gravest manifestation of antisemitism was German Nazism under Adolf Hitler, when between 1933 and 1945 more than six million Jewish people were murdered.

### BIPOC

BIPOC is a political self-designation and short form for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. The short form BIPOC combines the communities referred to but also underlines their different experiences. Because of this, the term is sometimes used as an alternative for the term People of Color, to make Black people and indigenous identities explicitly visible and to emphasise that not all People of Color have the same experiences.

### BLACK

Black is capitalised and is the politically correct and self-chosen term for Black people. The capital B emphasises social-political positioning within a society principally dominated by white people. The term Black is therefore not about biological characteristics but about socio-political affiliations. Black people are diverse and have completely diverse skin tones. As such, the term is more about high-

lighting the collective experiences that Black people have in this system and to emphasise their ongoing resistance.

### BLACK CULTURE

The term Black Culture describes Black popular culture which deals mainly with entertainment, pleasure as well as knowledge and which is expressed via aesthetic codes and genres. It represents the identity and politics of Black cultures according to their beliefs, experiences and values. Although Black Culture encompasses all Black people worldwide, US-American Black pop culture is given the most attention.

### CIS- AND TRANSGENDERISM

Cis and trans are Latin words. Trans means »across« or »beyond« and, in relation to gender, refers to a person who does not identify with the sex assigned to them at birth and who experience themselves »beyond« it. Cis is, in a sense, the opposite. It can be translated as »on this side of« and indicates that someone lives within the boundaries of their assigned sex.

### DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination means the use of supposedly unambiguous distinctions to justify and rationalise unequal treatment. As a result of this unequal treatment, the persons discriminated against experience social disadvantages. Discrimination is an extensive system of social relationships, in which the discriminatory distinctions operate. Discrimination can therefore not be understood as a consequence of individual qualities. A by now very well-known example for discrimination on a structural level is the *Gender Pay Gap*. This is the gap between the salaries of men and women as well as non-binary people for equal work. In 2022, women in Germany are still paid 18 percent less in terms of (gross) hourly wage than men.

### DRAG

The best-known examples are drag queens. A drag queen portrays, in a performative and artistic way, the appearance and behaviour of women, or rather femininity, a drag king the demeanour and outward appearance of men. This play with (exaggerated) femininity or masculinity is hence a show which is independent from the gender of the performer. The most famous drag practice is the embodiment of drag queens. These are often performed by queer men.

## **EMPOWERMENT**

Mostly used as self-empowerment, it means to turn a disempowered situation into a more empowered one through certain actions. Often, this is a group process, for example, racially and sexually discriminated people who unite and fight for their cause and thus gain more confidence and, at best, more rights. This process may also take place symbolically, for example when young girls feel »empowered« by the encouraging writings of a feminist.

## **EUROCENTRISM**

Eurocentrism means a view of the world that renders European history and so-called European principles as the primary measure of value. The term eurocentrism consequently makes evident global power relations and colonial historical thinking.

## **FEMINISM**

Feminism is a social movement, which has already undergone several waves with different priorities, for example the achievement of women's suffrage in the first wave or the legal equality of men and women in the second wave. While in the past many feminists assumed essentialist gender conceptions, meaning a clear distinction between only two genders – female and male – contemporary feminism is more inclusive. Often it no longer speaks of women but uses the term FLINTA\*, which encompasses Female, Lesbian, Intersex, Trans and Agender and, with the asterisk, all others who identify as feminine. Earlier feminists had often focused on the concerns of middle-class, white, western women. But as part of an intersectional consideration of feminism, queer, PoC, trans and many more feminist voices have gained influence in recent decades. Initially, feminism was understood as the liberation of women from the patriarchy, but today it ideally refers to engagement for a world in which all forms of oppression, discrimination and exploitation will be abolished.

## **GENDER AND SEX**

Gender describes the social, lived, perceived sex of a person. Gender is an English term, but is also used in German, precisely when it comes to social characteristics and gender identity. Gender is not limited to what is assigned to us at birth on the basis of physical characteristics but rather refers to socially constructed attributes, opportunities and relationships.

## **HETERONORMATIVITY**

When at day care little girls and boys, who are friends, are asked if they want one day to marry each other, this is an example of heteronormativity: a worldview in which heterosexuality is seen as the norm, as »normal« and so what is desirable for everyone. A heteronormative society divides people into the binary categories of men and women, values men as more important and tends to be hostile towards queerness.

## **HUSTLE-CULTURE/GRIND-CULTURE**

Hustle-Culture/Grind-Culture describes a lifestyle, in which an aspiration to success and high-performance take priority. Long working hours and little rest are seen as the benchmarks of success.

## **IMPERIALISM**

Derived from the Latin word »imperium«, it means to pursue extended political and economic power outside one's own (national) borders. By means of military or economic strategies, but also with the aid of culture and education, it is attempted to gain control over other countries or regions.

## **INTERSECTIONALITY**

The term intersectionality was coined in 1989 by lawyer, scholar and civil rights activist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. It is about the intersection and interaction of social identities and connected systems of oppression. Intersectionality focuses on the fact that people are often disadvantaged or benefit from several characteristics at once. Social, ethnic background, social and economic status as well as gender can be examples of such interconnected categories. A person may be Black and a woman, hence experiences racism and sexism. A white woman, on the other hand, experiences sexism too but benefits from her white privileges. Intersectional feminism therefore aims to recognize and make visible the multi-layered perspectives of people who experience overlapping forms of oppression.

## **CLASSISM**

When recipients of state benefits are depicted as unwilling to work and unintelligent, this is an example of classism. Or when a working-class child is laughed at in university for not knowing certain trends or foreign words. Because people are not only discriminated against due to their gender and skin colour, but also because of the social and economic class they were brought up in. The term classism is even older than sexism and racism, the terms often associated with it: it was already in use in the 19th Century. Those who are poor and/or have less education due to a lack of resources are devalued in a classist society and have more difficulty accessing institutions seen as elitist.

## **COLONIALISM**

Colonialism refers to a process of subjugation: one group of people goes to another group of people and imposes on it its rules, laws, language, customs, or religions in order to exploit it economically and culturally. When we speak of colonialism today, we mostly mean the process which began with the colonisation of the American continent by Europe's ruling classes from the 15th century onwards and its negative consequences (such as racism, slavery, and exploitation) which can be still felt today.

## **LGBTQIA\***

LGBTQIA\* is an English-language collective term for ways of living and loving outside the heterosexual norm, which is now being used around the world. It is short form for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, Inter and Asexual. The asterisk stands for further identities that are perhaps not or not completely included therein, to leave no one out.

## **MALE GAZE**

The male gaze is the concept of the male stare and stands for how systematically male control is applied and functions in our society. The term was coined by the feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey, who in the 1970s, brought attention to the fact that women in films were mostly represented as objects of male heterosexual fantasy.

## **MISOGYNY**

Misogyny literally means »hatred of women« (from the ancient Greek: »miso« = »hate«, »gyne« = »woman«) and has been prevalent around the globe for thousands of years as a derogatory to murderous attitude towards about 50% of the world's population.

## **(NON-)BINARITY**

If something is binary, it functions like a two-part system: there is always only the one and the other, like the two sides of a coin. Both mutually define each other. A binary gender system assumes that there are only men and women, and that everyone must belong to one of these two categories. Non-Binarity (NB) breaks up this rigid structure. Non-binary people, sometimes also called enbies (from NB), identify neither as man nor woman.

## **OBJECTIFICATION**

Objectification describes the dehumanising treatment of certain people as things, hence as objects. The most common example is sexist objectification by men, who reduce women to sex-objects.

## **ORIENTALISM**

The term Orientalism exposes how the world has been divided into two parts: on the one side there is the supposedly modern, enlightened West, the »Occident«, which sees itself as the centre and protagonist of world events. The »Orient« finds itself on the other side, depicted by the West as »backward« and »unmodern«, yet at the same time as »exotic« and »sensual«. According to the Palestinian-American literary scholar Edward Said, who published his influential book titled Orientalism in 1978, the »Orient« was invented by Europeans in order to better dominate and exploit these regions.

## **OTHERING**

With othering, a usually more powerful group, or individual, dissociates itself from another group characterising it as »alien« and »different«, thus devaluing it and connoting it negatively. The group higher up in the power structure thus discriminates against the people described as »different« who cannot defend themselves against these attributions.

## **PATRIARCHY**

Patriarchy is a social system predominantly controlled and shaped by hetero-cis men. This means men determine the gender roles within society. Everything in the patriarchy is geared towards cis-men and they profit highly from such a system. Patriarchal structures are firmly established everywhere in our society. For example, for many in a heterosexual relationship it is still a given that the woman takes parental leave after a pregnancy to take care of the child while the father continues to work. Another example of patriarchal structures: the man is supposed to propose marriage. And after the wedding, the woman takes his name. A man's power is thus always paramount, though emotions are denied to men. To cry, to be shy or insecure, or to take parental leave after the birth of a child – according to the patriarchy this is not how »real« men behave. In this way men too are restricted by the patriarchy's toxic masculinity.

## **PEOPLE OF COLOR**

The term People of Color, PoC for short, is a self-designation and does not describe, like the terms Black and white, any particular skin tones. It is a matter of a position in society and an umbrella term for communities that experience marginalization due to racism. The experienced racist discriminations vary and are far-reaching. To be asked every day »where are you from?« or be told »but your English is very good« are examples of this, as well as not being invited for a job interview because of one's name or being threatened or attacked on the train.

## **QUEER**

If something is »queer« in English, it is actually peculiar or odd. Since the end of the 19th Century the word has been used derogatively for people who felt sexually attracted to their own gender. From the 1980s, this negative meaning was consciously and provocatively reversed by activists and the term was used positively. Today, many people who do not love heterosexually and/or live cis-gendered, describe themselves as queer.

## **RACISM**

If people have to endure marginalization or even violence because of their origin or their appearance, for example because of their skin colour or their religion, that is racism. Racism can take on many forms – for example anti-Muslim, anti-Black, or anti-Asian racism, that particularly targets these groups.

## **SEXISM**

Sexism is the discrimination against people because of their sex. »Blonde jokes«, unequal pay for equal work or unwanted wolf-whistles on the street – these are all examples of sexism. Since we still live in patriarchal societies in which men dominate, sexism affects people perceived as female. But men too can be restricted by patriarchal gender stereotypes such as »boys don't cry« or »men don't know about babies.«

## **STEREOTYPING**

Stereotyping is the generalisation of a group of people. In the process, individuals and the differences between them are not considered. Instead, all people in this group are reduced to the same, often negative, characteristics.

## **STIGMATISATION**

Stigmatisation is a distinctly negative demarcation from other individuals or groups within a society. This may happen in interpersonal relationships, such as bullying in school, or on a structural level, when for example People of Color repeatedly experience rejection when searching for apartments, or when people with specific therapy experience are denied civil servant status. In this last case, derogatory characteristics are attributed to a mentally ill person by large sections of society, denying them full social acceptance.

## **WHITE**

White is the socio-politically correct description for white people. It is not a biological term, rather a position in society. The terms Black, PoC and BiPoC are capitalised because they are self-chosen terms. The term white, on the other hand, is written in lower case and often in italics. The call for concrete labelling of white, hence white people and white privileges, became louder through anti-racist movements. Because being white, from a white perspective, is generally the norm. In this way, being white is often made invisible, while all non-white people are made visible and portrayed as supposedly »different«.

## **WHITE SUPREMACY**

White Supremacy is the ideology that white people, and all their ideas, actions and opinions are superior to those of BiPoC. White Supremacy is a self-sustaining system in that it marginalizes People of Color through colonialism, exploitation and repression and so guarantees white people a continuous position of power.

## **IMPRINT**

### **FEMME FATALE. Gaze – Power – Gender**

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