

Thinking about Feminism, Art, Social Change, Results and Impact

Because the mission of the Kentucky Foundation for Women is to promote *positive social change* through varied *feminist expression in the arts*, KFW programs focus on the intersections of **feminism, art and social change**.

Thinking About Feminism

Questions to ask yourself:

What does feminism mean to me?

What is my understanding and practice of feminism?

How does my art reflect feminism?

What is the feminist nature of my art?

Statements on feminism that could be helpful:

The KFW Board of Directors has adopted the following statement on feminism:
Feminism is a conceptual framework based on a radical transformation of society and self. Feminism challenges socially and politically defined gender roles and fosters greater opportunity, choice, and independence. Feminism creates economic equality, a violence-free society, and racial and ethnic justice. Feminism is an evolving process, which requires courage and advocacy.

KFW staff and reviewers also recognize feminism as a dynamic force for social change that varies across age, ethnicity, economic class, geography, sexuality, and other differences. For this reason, KFW does not promote a single definition of feminism and encourages grant applicants to describe their own understanding and practice of feminism.

Thinking About Art

KFW staff and Board recognize the value and importance of a wide variety of art forms.

Questions to ask yourself:

Which art forms best describe my strength as an artist?

What do I most need to strengthen my art?

How do I see my art expressing feminism?

How can my art inspire change?

Thinking About Social Change

In thinking about social change, you may want to consider such things as how feminist art has the power to increase awareness about women's issues, alter perceptions, stimulate dialogue, open new spaces for civic participation and imagine new ways to create a more just and equitable Kentucky.

Questions to ask yourself:

What is my understanding of the relationship between feminist art and social change?

What kind of social change do I want to see in my life, town, area, state, nation, or world?

What kinds of activities will help my art or artmaking inspire and affect the kind of change I want to see?

What are the concrete results that I want to accomplish through my art or artmaking?

How will I know what kind of social change impact my art will have?

The Women's Funding Network has identified several areas of social change that especially relate to women and girls. Some of these include:

Health
Discrimination and Racism
Housing and Homelessness
Environment and Sustainability

Media/Body image
Economic justice
Human rights
Education
Immigrant & refugee rights
Reproductive justice
Gender based violence
Incarceration
Leadership/ empowerment
Rural or Appalachian issues
Birth and motherhood
Gender roles
Disabilities
Women's history
Anti-war
Spirituality and faith
Youth empowerment

Does my artwork or activism address, evoke or inspire change in any of the areas identified by the Women's Funding Network?

If I am not working in an area identified by the Women's Funding Network, what area of social change do I want to pursue through my work? What kind of creative work am I doing now or would I like to do that may inspire social change?

One example of a vision for how feminist art can affect social change comes from the Leeway Foundation, KFW's sister organization that funds feminist social change artists in the Philadelphia area (www.leeway.org). They have developed the following statement about art for social change: *Art for social change is art with a vision and impacts people in many ways. It can: raise consciousness; alter how we think about ourselves, our society, or our culture; create a vision of a more just world; be a tool or strategy for organizing and movement-building; reclaim traditional cultural practices as a form of resistance or community building; challenge racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism or other forms of oppression; and question mainstream culture and beliefs.*

Thinking About Results and Impact

As part of the feminist-led, arts-based social justice movement in our state, how do you think about the difference your art makes to others? Maybe you know you want to make a difference through your art, but don't know how to do that, or maybe you know you're making a difference, but how can you show it? Based on what KFW staff has learned from KFW grantees and from leaders in the field of art and social justice, starting by thinking about **Activities, Results, and Impact** can be helpful.

Activities are concrete actions. What will you actually do? Activities will be the *what*, *who*, and *when*.

Results are the observable, quantifiable and measurable end *product(s)* or *processes* caused by the activities. Results include products such as artwork created, capacities or skills developed or behaviors observed while doing your artwork. Results can also include processes such as new collaborations or relationships formed. Results look at *how many* and *how much*. For instance, what are the specific skills or capacities you want to learn, what will be some ways in which you will develop as a feminist social change artist, what kind of art will be created, how many pieces, how many people do you expect to participate or experience your art, etc.

Impact is *how* the results of your activities will advance positive social change or make a difference. Impact includes both individual/personal transformation and larger social change. KFW values both personal and societal transformation, because it is the link between these two where social change occurs. KFW staff recognizes that personal transformation is an important part of social change. Social transformation takes place when feminist social change art makes some *impact* on others. To think about what impact you want to have, it could help you to think about *social change indicators*.

Social Change Indicators are like signs, or road markers, to show what kind of difference your art can make. Indicators can help you, as a feminist artist, think about how you will make progress towards social change. Indicators can come in a variety of forms: they can be facts, or they can be anecdotal stories that will show that change is happening. Changes can be in awareness and knowledge, attitudes and motivation, behavior and participation, public discussion, individual or organizational capacity or systems, or policies or conditions. Indicators can be short-term or long-term changes in attitudes or behavior resulting from your development as a feminist social change artist. So, before you apply for a grant or begin your activities, think about what you want to do in the context of your art or artmaking and what *your* indicators for social change will include. By observing and recording these indicators, you will be able to show how your feminist art can make a difference.