



« Are Periods Taboo?

**F W O T M : C o u r t n e y K e n n y**  
March 13, 2015 by Green Feminine Hygiene Queen



Courtney Kenny Porto

The Feminist Art Movement began in the late 1960s as a way for women to find their voice through art and have their work showcased in galleries. Before this movement, the art world was very male-dominated and women were rarely given the opportunity to publicly display their work. Feminist art was meant to be very thought provoking, as well as influential in altering archaic ways of thinking and putting a stop to social stigmas and taboos.

The Feminist Art Movement has come a long way and there are still artists paving the way in



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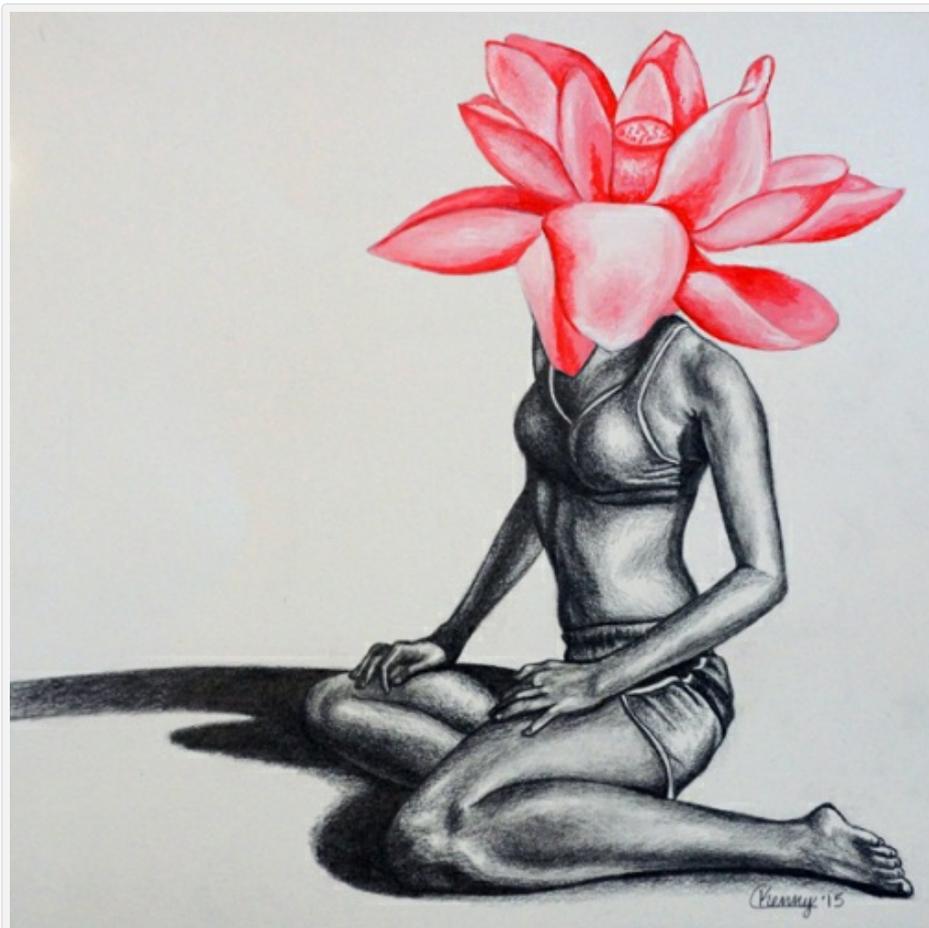
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empowering women and promoting social change through their work, which is how and why we chose [Courtney Kenny Porto](#) as our Fierce Woman of the Month.

Courtney's feminist inspired artwork is fueled by her own unique experiences of being a woman and the taboo topics that come along with that. She draws inspiration for her art from everyday life, societal pressures, phobias and the human form. Courtney uses lots of unique mediums for her work like yarn, and enjoys experimenting with new materials. In her artist statement she says, "I believe that in order to be truly genuine, artists must portray ideas and concepts that are close to their own heart. The truly powerful artists do this in such a way that others are also able to deeply relate. This is my objective."



She Was a Flower by Courtney Kenny Porto

Courtney's most recent work clearly meets her objective as a feminist artist and is currently being featured in an exhibit called "I Heard She's a Feminist." She created a mini series of three large tampon prints that are being displayed at the exhibit and the names of the prints are "What is it", "It's a Tampon" and "Sorry I Asked". In last week's post, "[Are Periods Taboo?](#)" we discussed that people do often see menstruation as taboo. Ms. Porto produced these tampon prints with the objective to expose people to this social stigma, encourage them to fight against it and start viewing periods as a normal part of a woman's life.



Courtney Kenny Porto and her three original tampon prints

At [Maxim Hygiene](#) we want women to feel proud of their bodies and especially their periods. Through her art, Courtney is doing a great job of shedding some light on our values and moving the The Feminist Art Movement forward.

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If you are in the Omaha area, we encourage you to stop by the [Connect Gallery](#) to check out Courtney's work. An Artist Reception will be held Friday March 20<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-9 PM at the gallery. The exhibit is running through March 28th.

To gain more insight on Courtney's artwork and what inspires her, check out our exclusive interview below .

**At Maxim Hygiene, we define a Fierce Woman as a "glorious female creature whose idea of beauty is hinged upon the idea that she can change the world with each choice, each moment and each breath of her life." Who in your life is a Fierce Woman and why?**

“ My mom is a Fierce Woman in my life. She is a woman who leads by example. Her confidence and unhinged individuality make her an excellent role model for me as well as any other woman who is lucky enough to cross paths. She has always been someone who believes in the importance of feeling empowered and has taught me to empower myself both as an artist and a woman.

“



She Was Alone by Courtney Kenny Porto

**Your tampon prints that will be exhibited at your upcoming gallery opening in March are meant to desensitize people from thinking of menstruation as something "bad" or "strange" and allow them to accept that it is a natural part of life – Do you often try to push people to fight against socially accepted taboos? What was your inspiration for this particular exhibit? Did you spend a lot of time examining tampons to help shape your rendering of one?**

“ I do often try to push people to fight socially accepted taboos with my work, sometimes very subtly, and (as with my tampon pieces) sometimes not so subtly. My best pieces depict a message I feel passionate about. My inspiration for this exhibit was a collection of my experiences as a woman as well as some of my feminist beliefs. I spent months knowing that I wanted to make art somehow pertaining to tampons, but it took several failed attempts and weeks of studying different types of tampons to find out what it is that makes a tampon recognizable as a tampon before I eventually landed on the idea to pull prints from them.

### **What is the most rewarding part about being a female artist?**

“ The most rewarding part of being an artist in general for me is two-fold. First, the finished piece – at the risk of sounding completely arrogant, I spend quite a bit of time staring at my own recently finished work. It’s always exhilarating to be able to see how it finally came together in spite of all of the struggle, confusion, self-doubt and frustration in the process. The second most rewarding part of being an artist is watching others view my work and either take away exactly what I had intended, or something completely different than I had ever thought of. I love listening to others’ interpretations of my work. I love evoking conversation, and I love making people think. As far as being a female artist, I don’t know that the most rewarding part is any different than it would be for a male artist.

### **Are there any other female artists that inspire you? If yes, what do you like most about their work?**

“ One female artist who continues to inspire me is Mary Kay. One of my favorite qualities of Kay’s work is her use of metaphor. Taken at surface value, her work is beautiful for its luscious colors, painterly brushstrokes and textures, but on a deeper level, these works contain powerful stories about life, death and insemination. Aside from the merit of her work, Mary Kay herself is an inspiration to me. She is a beautiful person who is not only a wealth of knowledge, but also someone who uses much of her time to help and encourage others.

### **What interests you most about feminism?**

“ I am interested most in feminism from a social and cultural perspective. The term feminism means different things to different people, and unfortunately it has been misrepresented in some instances. This misrepresentation has led to a negative connotation for some people. I am happily married, am not a “man hater” in any sense of the term, and do not want to act like a man or dress like a man. For me, feminism is about respect (both from others and from self), pride (of a woman’s body, mind, and everything that it is to be a woman), and embracing differences (the unique characteristics that we hold as women). It is not about trying to be a man, but is instead about being proud to be a woman.

### **Where do you see your artwork evolving in the future? For example, I know you currently use yarn in some of your work, do you plan on using other unique mediums?**

“ It’s hard to predict where my work will evolve in the future. Had you asked me a few years ago, I certainly wouldn’t have guessed I’d be using yarn. That being said, there are certain ideas and concepts that continue to appear in my work over and over, much like a reoccurring dream. One such concept is the juxtaposition of a pop of color amidst a grey-scale majority; another is the comparison of a blooming flower to a young woman. It is also likely that feminism, femininity and women will continue to play a large role in my work.

As an artist I enjoy experimentation. When viewing my different bodies of work, it is clear that I refuse to stick to one medium and I assume that will always be the case. I enjoy variation and the challenge that it brings. Each medium possesses something unique. Each has its own challenges and virtues. I am currently having fun with the use of caulk in some of my work. I can’t quite put my finger on it yet, but there is something liberating about caulk. In other words, yes, I think it is safe to say that I plan on using other unique mediums in the future.

Much thanks to Courtney for inspiring us to not only be Fierce Women, but creative Fierce Women. We invite you, our fellow Green Queens, to join in on the fun by sharing your most favorite and “fierce” feminist art pieces.