

## REPORTS FROM THE FRONT – SPRING 2010

March 23, 2010

Dear Book,

Flying into Knoxville with Julia Child armed with a brand new and updated version of our signature show “Feminists Are Funny” that we hope will wow the feminists of Tennessee. We arrive in a very small airport and head out to UTK as they call it, a sprawling rocky top campus of 25 thousand students. We park next to the giagantor football stadium under construction – a familiar sight on most campuses – and wait for Kerri, the advisor who’s helped the women’s coordinating council to organize our tour.

As we enter the UC (University Center) we pass the bookstore, (orange is UTK’s colors and the Volunteers is the name of all sports teams – go Lady Vols!) the cafeteria, the bank, and tons of spaces for students to hang. Kerri is armed with recent copies of the Beacon, the daily paper, and the student art magazine....both impressive. The auditorium where we will be performing is quite large but our two techies – DJ Special K and Grand Master Fruit Loops are ready for us to begin. Julia and I immediately get silly and run through our dancing, parody’s, bread making skits and singing. The order of our show is determined by a random selection of themes out of a hat so they have got to be at the ready. We finish in time for some yummy snacks back stage and wander through the vast halls of the UC in gorilla garb.

One of the best things about being a Guerrilla Girl On Tour is making people laugh. And laugh and laugh and laugh they did at UTK – the show was awesome! DJ Special K and GM Fruit loops did the appropriate amount of mess ups for us to really go off into our improv- style. Julia’s wig turned completely around, flew off and my pants almost fell down which also fed the fodder of our performative natures. We LOVE when those things happen. And the Lady Gaga parody was a smash hit. What more could you ask for? How about a standing O, some provocative questions during the Q and A and a follow-up letter from a student and fellow feminist who was converted to the cause and signed her email with a Guerrilla Girl On Tour pseudonym – “Alice Paul”.

I have to say I am sad to be leaving eastern Tennessee. Everyone was so welcoming and appreciative of our guerrilla grunts, humor and theatre stylings. We’ll just have to come back to Knoxville and Rocky Top soon!

In sisterhood,

Aphra

March 4, 2010

Dear Deezer,

Ohio. The land of farms and greetings. I am, of course, referring to the "hi" right in the middle of the oooohh's. There's something so promising about the word Ohio for just those reasons. And Denison certainly delivered. Not just delicious pre-show wraps, chocolate and seltzer, but crackerjack smart students. I was in love with the participants in our poster-making workshop who made intelligent, provocative posters and images around issues they were psyched to tackle: gender identity, capitalism, the (il)legality of marijuana, and sexual violence. Before we worked on posters, we conducted some theatre exercises and made them become human sculptures and tableaux. They obliged willingly and enthusiastically, thus contributing to the collaboratively driven sharpee/newsprint masterpieces. Bravo participants! Per GGOT style we braved the Bee (Applebees) and the Roo (Ruby Tuesdays) of Heath, Ohio, waking up from the daze of NYC as food paradise. I can't say I miss Ruby Tuesdays when I'm not around one but I can say that I miss the incredibly generous and articulate audience that came to see "If You Can Stand the Heat: The History of Women and Food". Our student volunteer, (Tara) played Tammy the Tummy and got pied in the face at the end of the show. I was the culprit that had the pleasure of pie-ing her. For her, it was a total surprise. For me, it was completely gratifying. Nothing like a little dessert after some masked activism, I always say. Another highlight of the tour was our cab driver back to the airport when all was said and done. She delivered brilliant every-five-minute saucy one-liners while we shop-talked about theatre. She was a farm girl by birth, and a cab driver by trade: it was the perfect hybrid of Ohio and NYC and a great way to cap off the trip. Bon appetit, Julia Child

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March 3rd, 2010

Dear Diary,

Well, we have arrived safe and sound in Greater Licking County, Ohio. I have to say the open roads and clear sky are an incredibly refreshing break from the beautiful but incessant city chaos. I am lovin' our company meals at Applebees

and The Olive Garden – we feel like a real company. This just happens to be by my maiden Guerrilla Girls On Tour voyage – (I was inducted into the group via a banana eating contest last fall!) Eating and drinking as a Guerrilla Girl On Tour feels very cool and fun and new.

We had a smashing workshop this evening with twenty or so students from Dennison University. Julia Child did a rockin' job introducing us and working with students. People are definitely jolted by our masks and wigs but once they talk to us and see that we are normal (though anonymous) human beings, they open up and feel more at ease. I love working in this medium. It really forced me to focus on the students and the issues they needed to discuss.

I think the moment I graduated from my alma mater I felt I knew more than all under-graduates. Making posters with these young adults reminded me how smart college kids are. College is this beautiful time in your life when you can focus on your brain and sort out your points of view on life and politics. Not that these POVs won't change, but for many of us it's the first time in our lives we develop ourselves as separate entities from our home-life and family roots. I was particularly touched by a poster series on sexual assault, which addressed both men and women: it challenged men to listen and women to speak up. How great! Ta for now, xoMFK Fisher

March 4th, 2010

Dear Diary,

Day 2! Woke up at 8 to eat free hotel breakfast, which lasted until 9. I now know that it is only food that will get me out of bed at 8 in the morning when I have time to sleep in until 11. I avoided eating bananas as we scarf several of these on stage during our performance.

After a full productive day of strong techs (and a couple of line flubs), we meet our "Tammy the Tummy" a.k.a. our student volunteer who interacts with us in the show. "Tammy The Tummy" is the name we used in rehearsal back home, before we knew who our volunteer would be. Our volunteer's name is Tara. Which is very close to Tammy. Now Tara /Tammy The Tummy gets a pie in the face in our show. A surprise pie in the face. I was privately worried that poor Tammy might be affronted by this unsolicited pie. But on meeting Tara, who was lovely, enthusiastic and up for anything, I am confident that we can pie her without hurting her feelings or bruising her ego. Or setting off her deadly dairy allergy – (she doesn't have one. We checked). Her hair got messed up, but that was the worst of it.

Our show goes well with a minimal amount of snafus - a great start when you

consider this is the world premiere and the first time we are putting up our multi-media piece “If You Can Stand the Heat: The History of Women and Food”. The audience seemed a little shy and got a bit quiet whenever we asked for audience participation; but they laughed with us and were engaged throughout the show. I remember our audience members leaning forward in their seats with mingled interest/discomfort when we were outlining the procedure of a gastric bypass procedure (which Julia narrates in our “fat bias” section of the show). They were into it, if a little private.

After the show Aphra kindly bought us drinks, toasted to the GGOT’s (new and returning), and then drove us all back to the hotel where we collapsed our potassium rich bodies on our hotel beds.

The show was a success! Now time for rest and the plane ride back home tomorrow. XoMFK Fisher

March 5th, 2010 Day 3 – a quickie. Entry. That is. A quick entry. Today is all about travel. Our workshops and shows are complete. Aphra left for home ahead of us; Edna Julia and I share a cab to the airport. Our driver is great; she hands us all bite-size snickers and pulls over to “Caribou Café” where we pick up our respective caffeine beverages. Somehow I think she would appreciate “The Herstory of Women and Food.”

Edna, Julia and I groggily argue over Lady GaGa’s aesthetics before boarding our plane and heading back to the city. I greatly enjoy this time spent after the show. Without lines to run or pie to clean out of our Guerrilla masks, we talk about our lives outside of Guerrilla Girls On Tour and our weekend plans. A good end to a good journey. Cheers to my Guerrilla Girl On Tour gals and the Dennison student collective. Au revoir, xoMFK Fisher

March 3rd, 2010

Diary Dearest,

I’m not sure if I am glad or sad that I wasn’t forewarned about the size of our plane. I’ve been on bigger buses! Instead of fear, I will embrace my inner Beyonce and think of it as a private jet. We had a quick ride and a smooth landing - what more can a Diva ask for? We had an uneventful drive to Denison University. Granville, Ohio is dollhouse – aka adorable town. Remember that episode of “The Twilight Zone” where the couple wakes up in a town they can’t

escape from, only to find out they are toys for a giant little girl? Well this town would fit that scenario perfectly. Our poster making workshop was fun, energetic, and informative. It mad me a little nostalgic for my college days.

Luv,Edna Lewis

March 3rd, 2010

Diary Dearest,

Woke up at the crack of 10am feeling refreshed and ready to go. Added a shower, some food, some coffee and I am now hyped and ready to go! Practice, practice, practice, and raking the I-270 are the way to performing at Ace Morgan Theatre. Our run through and tech went swimmingly. Our volunteer "Tammy the Tummy" is prepped and ready to go.

The show was amazing. We had a fun, and a sometimes shy audience. But once they came out of their shells, it was on. I was a little nervous about my "Where'd your ass go?" line, but I was worried for nothing because it got a huge laugh. Sure, there were only two Sista's that I saw in the audience, but as far as I'm concerned we were out in full force.

There was fun, surprises, and whipped cream. What more can a Guerilla Girl On ATour ask for?

Luv,Edna

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Diary Dearest,

Its been real Ohio. Thanks for the memories Denison University. Its time now for me to board my Bus/Jet and fly home!

Luv,Edna