

Introduction

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Thank you, Mrs. Welskop-Deffaa, for your supportive words. They encourage us on our way building a Museum for Women's History. As historians we look backwards, searching for our roots. We need you and your daily work as a politician daily to make a future world, safe for democracy and peace possible. We are aiming at the same goal. Therefore it was wonderful to hear your opening words.

Dear Friends, I greet all of you, especially our friends from other parts of Europe. This is a great occasion, working together once more

We started this adventure: Making Women's History Visible, three years ago. In this introduction I will start with a glance back. I must admit that I didn't realise what it meant becoming aware of our common roots when we started three years ago. It was a great surprise to see how we managed to build up a big framework and to start inhabiting the seven rooms we envisioned as our common House of Women's History. I slowly became aware of the value of our common roots for our future.

In greeting you in the name of the City of Bonn I am speaking also in the name of our founding mothers in Bonn: the three matrons, who were venerated here during the Roman occupation in the first centuries A.D. The Roman soldiers, no longer eager to go to war, and their indigenous wives gave gifts to the three matrons, hoping thereby to gain peace. We shall be hearing more about the legacy of the three matrons during this conference. Barbara Degen will introduce you to her exhibition: Justice is a Woman, an example of the work within our German section.

We are approaching our leading question by working together in three workshops. The first workshop will lead of to the very beginnings of our human history, to the first

women in history, who reflected their own selves and who can introduce us the earliest experiences of creative, feminist thinking. The second workshop will deal with the matriarchal cultures basic to the development of Europe as an encounter of cultures. We experience cultural developments beyond the battlefields and male inspired thoughts on political domination. This second workshop will lead us to the times of fascism and totalitarian rule, searching together with the women of the past for ways out of the dilemma of a one sided male view of politics.

This is a time of diversity, of equality and of gendered democracy. This is our goal. We are proud of having Angela Merkel as a female chancellor, leading the Europe Union on its way as a model for our One world. Europe can only become a model for democracy if it is aware of its own feminist roots.

Thank you for being here.



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