Arguably, over the past decade, feminist interventions in the arts have taken what might be called a ‘curatorial turn’, a deliberate move to examine and evaluate the significance of feminism to exhibition-making and curatorial thought. This presentation explores feminism’s ‘curatorial turn’, suggesting that it might be understood as a contigent constant of feminist interventions into art’s histories, theories, institutions and practices, simultaneously characterised by a long-term, embedded relationship between feminism and curating (constancy) while remaining open to the emergent potential of feminism as a process of continual change (contingency).

Positioning a feminist ‘curatorial turn’ as a contingent constant argues for the power of its provisional, sometimes momentary, effects. To ask what the feminist curatorial turn is suggests that it might be understood as a fixed object; to position feminism’s curatorial turn as a process of continued meaning-generation is to ask what it can do. This presentation argues that it can do many things and, indeed, has an important strategic role to play in both feminist theory and activism.

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