



**This is a Leeds Arts University Repository copy of:
Crossing the Line**

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Abstract

The output is a performative artwork consisting of fifty meters of crime scene tape created from appliqued blue and white satin ribbon.

Research Process: Crossing the Line was made during the Covid 19 summer of 2020 in response to escalating domestic violence incidents triggered by the pandemic restrictions. UK crime scene tape has the phrase 'Police Line Do Not Cross' printed in blue on white. This phrase is subverted by replacing the word police, with every other word that might precede the word line; coast line, waist line, straight line etc. With the addition of 'Do Not Cross', these textual interventions take on multiple layers of meaning. Coast Line Do Not Cross becomes a comment on immigration, Waist Line Do Not Cross a comment on sexual harassment, Straight Line Do Not Cross on transphobia.

Chambers performed with this tape walking in and around her home, climbing out of the living room window and returning through the front door. This work exists as a film of this performance and as a sculptural object.

Research Insights: Several new works were made during the Covid-19 pandemic as a response to the circumstances women found themselves confronted with: domestic violence, depression, loneliness, isolation and desire to escape from home. This was the first performance of an artwork which led to further investigation of embodied actions arising from sculptural works.

Dissemination: In addition to public performances, Mis(s)placed Women? concluded with an online event and discussion panel at the Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Chambers being an invited participant. Crossing the Line was performed live around the buildings in front of the audience, and streamed live to online participants. Crossing the Line was shown at a film screening event for House, Home and the Domestic Symposium at Coventry University, 22nd October 2021.

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Crossing the Line

a performance work
by Paula Chambers



Crossing the Line

In the summer of 2020, during the height of the Covid 19 pandemic, I had made an artwork in response to escalating numbers of domestic violence incidents triggered by the confinement required by the pandemic restrictions. I made fifty metres crime scene tape out of appliqued blue and white satin ribbon. I then performed with this tape walking in and around my home, climbing out of the living room window and returning through the front door (which is a ground floor flat). This work exists as a film of the initial performance and as the tape as sculptural object.

In the UK crime scene tape has the short phrase 'Police Line Do Not Cross' printed on it in blue on white. I subverted this phrase by replacing the word police, with every other word I could think of that might precede the word line; coast line, waist line, straight line etc. With the addition of the 'Do Not Cross', and within the context of these short phrases appearing as blue and white crime scene tape, my textual interventions took on multiple layers of meaning. Coast Line Do Not Cross seemed suddenly to be a comment on immigration policies, Waist Line Do Not Cross a comment on sexual harassment, Straight Line Do Not Cross on transphobia.

The film *Crossing the Line* was shown at the Film Screening event at House, Home and the Domestic Symposium at Coventry University (October 2021)

<https://vimeo.com/522360499>







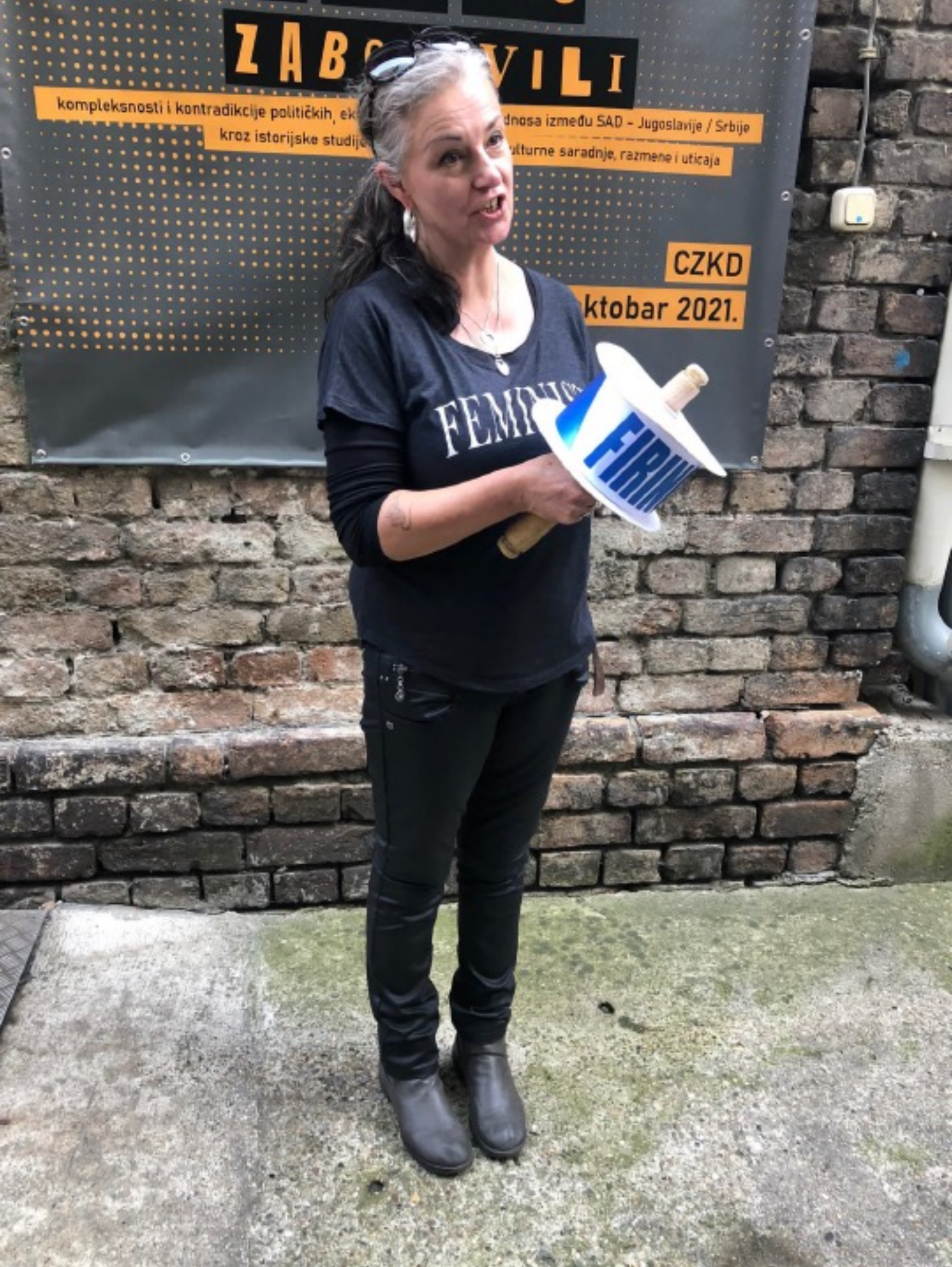




Crossing the Line for Mis(s)placed Women at the Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Sunday 17th October 2021

When I saw Tanja Ostojić's call for participants for *Mis(s)placed Women?* in Belgrade, my initial response was in relation to my *Crossing the Line* work. This existed as a film but I very much wanted to perform it live in another context, I was interested to see how this might change the reading of the work by potential viewers. As I researched *Mis(s)placed Women?* in all its iterations, across sites and enactments, I realised that there were more interesting connections to be made, and that performing the score *Unpacking a Bag of Your Own* exposed many of the gendered vulnerabilities that I had been thinking about when I made *Crossing the Line*.

I travelled to Belgrade to take part in the performances and workshops led by and with participants from Tanja Ostojić's community of *Mis(s)placed Women*, and performed *Crossing the Line* at the commencement of the panel discussion on Sunday 17th October at the Center for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade.



Paula Chambers, *Crossing the Line*, live performance at the Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Sunday 17th October 2021



