Captions for Gallery 4 in Chapter 3

Taking to the Streets

1

*On Valentine’s Day 2012, college students wearing bloodstained wedding dresses that represented battered wives chanted slogans in Beijing’s first public performance art depicting violence against women. Their signs (left to right) say: “Violence is the sign of love. No violence!” (This is a twist on an old Chinese saying, “To beat is dear, to scold is love,” which refers to relationships between parents and children as well as spouses and lovers.) “Violence is around us. Can you remain silent?” And, “Love is not an excuse for violence.”*

*2*

*On November 25, 2013, activists engaged in performance art about violence women confront inside the home. The bandaged woman symbolizes wives who are physically abused. The cardboard box in which she stands speaks the words of battered women: “I want a safe home,” “Battered women need the support of law,” “It’s useless to call the police. Police say they don’t interfere with domestic issues.” The hand-held sign on the left reads, “Don’t wait until she kills her husband for the defense to know she has suffered from domestic violence.”*

3

*In April 2015, a young woman sued the state-owned China postal service for gender discrimination. She’d been verbally offered a job delivering the mail, but then was denied the position and told that only males could do this work. She launched an online campaign to find other women who wanted to deliver mail. Her legal action aims for equal opportunities for women in the job market.*

4

*On June 18, 2013, young women in Beijing dressed up as pregnant nurses, doctors and chefs to protest Meituan, a Chinese version of Groupon, after the company fired pregnant employees. They handed out messages on pink paper encouraging women workers to protect their rights. “Support pregnant women against Meituan,” says the sign in the middle, and to its right, “You cannot fire pregnant women as you wish.”*

*5*

*On November 26, 2012, the day after a civil service test was given, a dozen university students joined a flash-mob protest in front of Hubei province’s Human Resources and Social Security Department. They came to protest the mandatory gynecological exam that potential female government employees must take and questions they are asked about their monthly cycle. They held signs saying, “We don’t need gynecological examinations to be government officials,” and “Why does she have to be asked about the history of her period to be a government official?” The students’ oversized underwear declares “No gynecological exam.”*

*6*

*Sixteen young women came together in Guangzhou on August 20, 2012 to mark the half-year anniversary of the “Occupy Men’s Toilets” protest. Each carried a homemade replica toilet and a letter to city officials urging them to install more toilets for females. There were twice as many toilets available to men as there were for women.*

*7*

*On February 28, 2013, young people in high school uniforms gathered in front of the Guangzhou Admission and Examinations Committee office. “If the Department of Education doesn’t help me, I’d rather go back home and sell sweet potatoes," their illustrated sign proclaimed. They were expressing dissatisfaction with the ongoing practice in which girls must achieve a higher score than boys on the* gaokao*, the exam to gain admission to Chinese universities.*

*8*

*On September 16, 2012, Wuhan University students chanted, “I am not a vase. I am myself.” A young woman smashed a vase covered with the words “beautiful,” “skinny,” and “pale skin tone,” commonly used to describe women. They were protesting beauty pageants held at the university.*

*9*

*On December 12, 2013, village women in Zhejiang demonstrated in front of local government buildings against rules favoring men. When a rural woman marries, she often loses her right to land and collective benefits under “village rules.” Courts rarely take up such cases. The women received no response when they’d petitioned for changes. The sign on the left reads, “Does gender equality have the force of law? Give women back rights. Village rules cannot be weightier than law.” The middle sign reads, “Village rights favor sons,” and “A girl marrying out is like spilt water.”*

*10*

*The Chinese government detained 10 women activists on the day before International Women’s Day in March 2015 on the grounds of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” Five were jailed in Beijing – even though they had not yet carried out their protest of the sexual harassment of women on the subways. Women throughout the world called for their release. The Feminist Voice, a women’s rights group in China, posted daily photos on Weibo urging the government to “free the five” women. More than a month after their arrest, the women were released from prison as “suspects” whom police continue to monitor.*