

Ise Bosch:

Letter to the Editor

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Justus Eisfeld - © Taufiq Klänkerborg

Ise Bosch

You requested ‘an article that demonstrated the importance of women of wealth’ for your next issue. I do not have time for a full article at this time, but here is my response, in short.

At first, your request did not ‘click’ – why should women of wealth be more important for philanthropic impact than men of wealth?

In the West, women of wealth have historically been excluded from public spaces and roles that depend on wealth, broadly speaking. But, on the other hand, philanthropy has actually been the place for women of inherited wealth, when other power positions were not available.

It seems that women, as opposed to men, must learn to fully own their wealth, for themselves or whomever they chose to support, rather than being encouraged to give it away. (Although personally I think there are thousands of reasons for people of wealth of whatever gender to give lots away, at this time in history.)

There are some studies on philanthropic and financial behaviour saying that women tend to go for

the long perspective; that they take their choices more slowly but more consistently than men; that they are less interested in having their names on buildings than in empowering others to pursue their own goals. This happens to be my own propensity. Yes, I owe much of my thinking to feminism and other teachings of solidarity – but men of wealth can follow this route as much as I.

In effect, I consider it more important what we give to, and how, rather than who we are. We’re asking for equal treatment, after all. To give at the level of their true potential, women need to show up to the tables of power, they need to speak up, take their share, and do with it what they consider right. ‘Ladies banking in pink’ won’t do. And there’s no need to copy the men (except if they are actually cool).

Great Britain has some great examples of good philanthropy by feminists – I expect this issue tells their stories. These are what should be copied.

With warm regards,

Ise

Ise Bosch grew up next to the headquarters of Robert Bosch company, though, at the time, she was more interested in music. Nowadays she works full time as a philanthropic activist. She is co-founder of the Pecunia network of women with inherited wealth, and the German women’s fund, filia. die frauenstiftung. Her book Besser Spenden! Ein Leitfaden für nachhaltiges Engagement (Giving better! A guide to sustainable engagement) was published in 2007. It is the first and as yet only German language publication on giving from a donor’s perspective. Her personal focus is on

human rights and gender. She is executive director of ‘Dreilinden gGmbH’ and supports gender diversity globally.

She has recently published a book called Transformative Philanthropy – Giving with Trust which is about privilege, power and access. Together with co-authors Justus Eisfeld and Claudia Bollwinkel, Ise Bosch reflects on ten years of holistic grant making and impact investments by Dreilinden gGmbH, while also providing an in-depth look at her own method of transformative philanthropy.