ONE wonders when daily 
be for 
Archangel 
Gabriel's trumpet sounds 
the end of the 
world 
women will become 
are they are 
responsible in a 
considerable degree for the late 
rushing of 
uses. 
Tbey 
NEVER have 
their 
money ready when 
boarding a one-man bus. 
F. A. DONNAN,
The third issue of "Lip", a feminist arts journal published in Melbourne will be coming out early next year. "Lip" is run by a collective of around twelve women all involved in the visual arts.

This year for the first time, "Lip" was awarded a substantial grant from the Visual Arts Board; previously we held fetes, jumble sales, friends donated money and finally those members of the collective who could afford to put in sufficient funds to publish the last issue.

We felt strongly that, with or without funds, somehow another issue of "Lip" would come out.

This determination was in response to the way "Lip" had expanded in the space of two issues and it indicated to us that "Lip" served a positive function in recovering and acknowledging the achievements of Australian women artists and by doing so making this information available to an increasingly wider audience.

For example in the forthcoming issue the music supplement concentrates on composers, performers, musicians and songers working in both the classical and contemporary fields. Most of this material has never been published and therefore provides a core of researched and documented information.

In this issue the collective worked as a whole on matters of policy, production and contents but two or three members devoted themselves to co-ordinating each section of theatre, film art and music; in this way these sections benefited from specialist attention and contributors had more personal contact with collective members.

As feminists we committed to continue producing a journal that deals with the cultural experiences of Australian women. The collective remains open to any women who wish to participate with suggestions, articles, art work and feedback.

Lip Collective,
66 Carlton St.
Carlton, 3053, Vic.
These books are read by women of all ages and they publish a variety of books but people are strictly heterosexual and the women who read them are women of all ages and false view of personal relationships. They insist that the world is inhabited by tall, handsome men, dominating small, beautiful women who are rich, exceptionally talented, or both. These books are strictly heterosexual and the women who read them are women of all ages and if one can believe the covers, are written solely by women.

It is interesting to examine these books and to see the way in which they promote an entirely false view of personal relationships. They insist that the world is inhabited by tall, handsome men, dominating small, beautiful women who are rich, exceptionally talented, or both. These books are strictly heterosexual and the women who read them are women of all ages and if one can believe the covers, are written solely by women.

It may be claimed that these books are not intended to represent the "real" world, and that fantasy is an important, if not essential, part of our existence. Certainly, they make no pretensions to being anything other than pulp dreams. However, the life style these books reinforce, the insidious ideas they push about life being 'happy ever after', discouraging women from being responsible are not constructive.

These books, like the American daytime import shows are "mental chewing gum" (without the outpour), and the characters in them have much in common with those of "The Young and the Restless because their primary, indeed only concern is the outcome of their relationships. They were so dark as to appear beyond stirring, disarming women from being responsible are not constructive.

As the characters are 'stock', the outcome already known, the book depends upon the ability of the author to make the events surrounding the love story interesting. This is one of the reasons the settings are usually European. The heroine is invariably the English rose type, her knowledge of the area is limited, hence her dependence upon the hero is greater when she meets him. Often, the female is physically weak or sick to enhance male dominance, strength and aggression. She is as follows: "A dark compelling gaze burned down on her from the most arresting eyes she had ever encountered. They were so dark as to appear almost black at first glimpse, until one saw the topaz glints and the deep tawny hazel shine within the frame of heavy black lashes and their sheer male arrogance was complimented by a severely chiselled mouth and a jawline of which the set betrayed both dominance and an inflexible will. His skin was smooth and dark, tanned under the glare of mahogany, and evoked that his faultless English, the immaculate linen suit, and the smooth, assured demeanour of him were but a mere veneer disguising a ruthlessness she sensed instinctively despite her present moment of stress. This man would prove an unshakable ally or a remorseless enemy if ever...."

Compare this with a typical heroine. "Today she wore a pale blue dress that complemented her pale gold tan and added depth to her blue eyes, and her corn gold hair was, as always, crowned by a small lacquer brimmed hat that shaded her eyes and kept the worst of the heat from her head and neck or..."

"This girl's short copper curls clustered around a face that was curiously elfin, with high cheekbones and wide set eyes. The eyes were green, large and lustrous."

The female characters are drawn with more depth than the men (in spite of the obvious differences between the above descriptions). Usually, the women have rarely attained education at a tertiary level and they are always sexually inexperienced. The men are always employers or self-appointed guardians; an authority figure who is older and much more experienced. They are also successes in their own field, either wealthy or artistic. The women are secretaries or helpers. A sort of ever present Greek chorus to the main action that occurs because of the activities of the men.

The two characters are frequently antagonistic towards each other initially until the heroine is forced to realise that love is the underlying motive of her unfriendly behaviour, and she departs with the hero trailing clouds of glory. As a result, their lovemaking is always of an aggressive nature where the female is overwhelmed by the hero. The realisation of being in love comes after "the kiss", which, is the equivalent to intercourse. It is because the books have to appeal to such a wide audience, that this plays an important role.

"The spell snapped its bonds. Her chocked murmur of his name was lost in the engulfing tide that swept away her resistance. The heartbeat of distance was lost, crushed within the circle of his arms, the final captivity of his embrace. He kissed her eyes, her brow, the curve of her cheek, and then, with soul pervading sweetness, claimed her mouth. His arms, his kiss, his entire being seemed to merge with her own throbbing senses until she was lost in the wild sweet intoxication of his ardour."

"When at last he drew back a little and looked down on her" she was beyond stirring. She lay limp against his shoulder, and a sigh trembled through her. It was as if some great barrier had crumbled as though some storm tossed sea had thrust her far beyond its reach where she lay spent and drained, waiting till the tempest ebbed."

This all takes place in a raging sand storm underneath a somewhat filmey canvas length that the hero has in his car.

The life lead by these characters if that of cigarette commercials; a pastiche of fast cars, swimming pools, and spacious houses. They all combine to represent a view of the world that attempts to persuade us that these objects confer desirability on the possessor. If male, we will spend our life working for them at the expense of emotional growth. If female, we will inherit them when we are chosen by the right man.

Women in Mills and Boon books are in many ways modernised Victorian heroines. Frequently

- nailing, and incompetent, they break through the "male reserve" of the hero by needing to be rescued. They then, by the end of the book, are ready to exist parasitically through marriage: "You're a part of me, Colby, as much a part of me as my heart or brain."

- "She looked at him raptly, her eyes glistening with love and life itself. This was her Dart. She yielded to the strong tide of her love of him. "And you're my dearest joe though I shouldn't be telling you, you're so infernally arrogant." She turned her face into his shoulder, feeling the gentle tug upon her curls. Dart gave a short laugh and pulled her to her feet with field strength. He held her there, noticing proudly the beautifully poised head, the dancing vitality, the happiness that flowed from her, uninhibited and absolute.... Dart's smile was inexpressively tender... possessive.... Kinjarra will have a new mistress and King Country will welcome my bride."

Most books end at this point, subscribing to the apparently still popular theology that the peak of female existence is to be a bride.

In books that are set in underprivileged areas like Morocco, Spain, or South Africa, the natives are stupid, vicious, lecherous, servants, or perhaps even more insulting ornaments providing "colour and movement". This is a hero speaking to his heroine about the Aborigines on his station:

- "Take it in easy stages, little one. In all probability Bukka will live out his life on the station, among his own kind in his natural surroundings and well looked after. These people are my responsibility. Her eyes searched his face. It had the powerful unique stamp of the true outback man.... "Do as you please, honey, but don't knock yourself out on it. Bukka is not a white child and his aims and ambitions are not at all the same. Encourage him by all means... You're a nice child Colby. Now tell me what made you stay at home this morning."

The focus of these stories is limited to a small group of people who know each other. No politics other than personal ones are presented. Alternative life styles are never mentioned or offered.

The stories are predictable; certainly the precis on the back of the books reveals the whole story. Why then do people read them. An instant reaction to this question is that they are "light" and "relaxing". However, obviously these books do more than provide "happy reading". They reinforce single women's loneliness; married women's dependence upon their husbands, and female passivity. These books would persuade women that they have no influence in the outside world; that "real" men are aggressive, dominating, and always right. They would confine our behaviour to convenient stereotypes, even in our fantasies in an attempt to make us fit in and conform.

"Paperbacks that please" offer us all, along with most television, and advertising an existence full of status objects, free of worry. For this, we have to leave undeveloped our sense of individuality and our social conscience. Our silence is "bought".
a There's al
...have been quite successful. At the first meet
...embryo women's group, and subscribe to maga
...tak ing...an uncompromising political stand

"Women's Officer" I was at a bit of a loss to
know what to do about it. I thought the best
way of finding out would be to initiate a series
of meetings where women from all campuses
would be able to get together and talk about
themselves, problems at Mackie which might
affect specifically women, ways of alleviating
these problems, ways of achieving more solidar
ity as a group etc etc.

Of course this college is notorious for induc
ing a kind of complacent apathy about commu
nicating with anybody at all. We're segregated
into different groups with inherently differing
"status" — art students are suspicious of teach
ers and vice versa, we're separated over three
campuses with no real common meeting space
and we're segregated a kind of complacent apathy about commun.

This isn't necessarily sex-linked but I thought
it would be incredibly good if we, as women,
could overcome some of these barriers which
the administration chooses to throw up against us.
I didn't quite foresee some of the problems
arising out of this. One thing is that people seem
to equate coming to a women's meeting with
taking an uncompromising political stand —
"No, I'm not a feminist, I like men" — which
has forced me into making too many comprome
sses with my own position, because I've been
trying not to alienate other women.

Despite all this, some of the meetings held so
far have been quite successful. At the first meet
ning there were only five or six of us present,
including Gabrielle Finnane and Nicky Hanley
from NSWIT, who came to talk about their ex
periences of running a women's collective. We
also decided to start a kind of library for the
embryo women's group, and subscribe to maga
zines like "Space Rib", "Heresies", "Reading
Lavender, Seeing Red" etc.

For some reason about 25 people turned up
at the second meeting, and we talked to Mary
Perkins and Marilyn McCormack (regional
women's organiser from AUS) who generated a
lot of interest in the problems facing student
unions due to a current right-wing backlash
which is affecting all of us — and especially
women, specifically in the area of abortion:
various right-wing factions collaborated to move
that AUS have NO POLICY on abortion — a
move which would negate AUS policy which has
for the last six or seven years been based on the
premise that it is a woman's right to choose
what happens to her own body and that she
should not be dictated to by the patriarchal
medic;al establishment, governments etc.

This was perhaps the most successful meet
ning, because everyone was outraged at the
thought of such reactionary ideas becoming part
of AUS policy. It would mean that AUS could
spend no money campaigning on the abortion
issue, thus effectively reinforcing the status quo.

Subsequent meetings have been fairly ragged,
because of desultory attendance, though once
we came to a decision about producing this issue
of CHIMAERA it became a bit more exciting,
being a more definite goal to work towards. Our
other long-term goal is to have a women's exhibi
tion in the Ivan Dougherty Gallery.

Various excitingly exaggerated rumours have
been circulating about events at the last
meeting. To set the record straight, an argument
ensued because a couple of men, envious of the
thought of free booze and put on the deuce
by the idea of a group of women talking on their
own (i.e. without men) decided to crash it, and
did so in a fairly offensive way. When a lot of us
weren't amused by their parody of how they
imagine women behave, they got pretty abusive
and ran off to play another with the fellas
who'd give them moral support.

The sort of behaviour exhibited by the men
involved seems to stem from some kind of dis
trust of women meeting without men. This dis
trust is usually rationalised by the argument that
such meetings are "sexist". This argument falls
completely because it confuses two ideas, an
institutionalised separation, e.g. apartheid, and
that of voluntary association of people with a
common interest or goal.

The right of people to meet in the groups that
they choose is a basic pre-requisite of a "free
society. Given that, why should people feel
threatened by the idea of women meeting on
their own? No one looks askance at a group of
men drinking in a pub by themselves, but a
group of women doing the same are fair game.
Why? Is it because a woman is supposed to
be seen in relation to a man (to whom she belongs)
or because "women haven't got anything to say
to each other"? The point seems to be that no one
feels threatened by our meeting without them.
3. On this basis our meetings need no justifi
cation — it's valuable and important that we
meet together — traditionally women are forced
to see themselves in relation to men, and
because of this it's harder to express our ideas
without seeking male approval. Women are train
ed not to assert themselves, unlike men, so that
in a mixed group women tend to be shouted
down by men, so it's an unusual occurrence for
most women to be only with other women.

In this context we may gain the confidence to
express our ideas and look for solutions to prob
lems which are specifically ours — even more im
portant in the context of Alexander Mackie, where
the power structure is male and the role of
male to female staff is grossly unbalanced and
where the typical situation is a group of female
students with a male lecturer: a situation which
is also typical of society in general — there is
everyday a male foreman in a factory full of female
workers.
"Wake Up Sister" by the Lavender Blues breaks new cultural ground. It is the first recording by a Lesbian/Feminist group in Australia. But while it is assured prominence for these political and cultural reasons alone, the album nevertheless deserves to stand on its musical merits.

A variety of styles has been included, which should appeal to a broad spectrum of music listeners. Seven of the thirteen tracks are original songs ranging from the love lyrics of "After Such a Good Start" to the militant title tune, "Wake Up Sister". The album also contains traditional folk songs about women, all arranged by the group members. In fact, all of the songs on the album were arranged by the group, which also provided its own backing.

The Lavender Blues' members — Carole Deagan, Dorelle Finch and Nicole Mortier — are amateur musicians who started singing together on social occasions. From requests by friends from tapes of their songs, grew the idea of putting down a record. The proposed venture generated much enthusiasm and it became apparent that there is a considerable demand for music expressing the lesbian culture in this country. Since then the Lavender Blues have sung at many gay and feminist gatherings, including International Women's Day, and have been heard in sessions on national radio.

While musically this album can be seen as the product of one group — the Lavender Blues — it is essentially a collective venture in which numerous women have participated. In addition to the fifteen financial contributors, several women provided professional advice and technical skills.

The record, produced by CBS Records, was publicly launched at the Feminist Bookshop, Rowntree Street, Balmain on Thursday 5th October. It is now available at the Feminist Bookshops at Balmain and Eastwood, Folkways and Jumbucks in Sydney and from selected outlets in most capital cities. The recommended retail price is $6.

"As all Americans know; the commercial world is a battlefield. When executives are 'fucked' by the company, they can retaliate by 'fucking' their secretaries..."
There are now attempts to redress the balance; in Australia, Wren Books, from the Women’s Movement Children’s Literature Cooperative, in France, Des Femmes are publishing new and translated non-sexist and counter-sexist books; in England, the Writer’s and Reader’s Publishing Collective has started new titles. However, these counter-sexist books are being criticized by sellers and customers alike for being “sexist”... so that positive discrimination will take a long time to become respectable on the grounds of sex, whereas, non-sexist books... with race, to the portrayal of very positive, realistic, unrepresentative, images. Until the books on the literature shelf change, may be the reluctant reader should be left alone, and the bookworm persuaded to ride a bicycle.

Television is even more damaging than books to any hope of developing autonomous self-esteem in girls - Sesame Street has been criticized since 1972 for its negative view of girls, yet each week our children can watch a programme brought to you by the letter D for Daddy (male) dentist (male), dentist (male) and the through sex or sex occupations - including Daddy - who the only females are a go-go dancer and a girl playing with dolls. The fact that so many programmes are never leaves little hope that up-dated roles will be shown, though perhaps an attempt is made in the recent science-fiction dream “Andra” on A.B.C.

“I am evidence that parents encourage their children to develop sex-type interests, particularly in providing sex-typed toys for them”. Toy catalogues and toy salespeople don’t give parents much help if they are trying to give children what they really need. You can’t buy a present without being asked “Is it for a boy or a girl?” An excellent construction kit for boys is no good to anything else children with pictures of boy dolls at different ages, only one picture a girl doll, and it is bewildering over a boy’s shoulders, and the words, “If the girl, Carol, is given, he will let her have the car across the bridge which he himself has built with the static extension kit.” Yet the same kit is given tabloid newspaper publicity under a headline: TOYS TO LIBERATE LITTLE GIRLS. The sales comment from a market director (female) saying “I’m no Women’s Libber but...”

I recently collected a pile of toy catalogues available in Camberwell shops. In each of six general catalogues, the virtual invisibility of girls, either on packaging or in advertisements, re-forces their limited roles. All Fisher-Price dolls are girls. The only Dinky dolls in 48 pages are Cinderella in a coach and a two-year-old (though she is wearing a hammer). Matchbox, in 64 pages, devote 6 dolls; “Sally, Suey in the kitchen, dressing for her wedding or off in a camping trip”; the other pages have cars, boats and “super-detached” war toys, and male models on every second page, while the “fully posable” Disco-girls have “over 40 different outfits” and “Tony, their boyfriends, too.”

Teddy’s have junior, the juggling, and playing, “the glamorous big girl that little girls are going to want to be!”. Its catalogue of 44 pages has a footstool representation of girls than the rest of 123 items. 11 show girls using toys, 47 show boys and 42 show both girls and boys. What a contrast I read the Bensinger catalogue (not available in Camber for a fashion from making toys and craft materials. Not a single view when girl or boy are mentioned. The only age is indicated, and pictures show children playing and working together equally, sometimes even with their parents!

“Perhaps the spread of male dolls now makes it possible for boys also to develop nurturing, caring skills and attitudes, the story of William’s Doll, where boy is given a baseball bat and many other boys’ toys despite his wish for a doll is probably still the rule (there in the story his grandmother wins out and he gets his doll eventually).” Hopefully, a present recently received by my daughter from the U.S.A. shows a changing trend - a toy headache in a box on which a girl is pictured using the “etiquette, while a boy holds the petal to be dethroned.

“What changes can be made, at home and at school. Home is clearly the most basic, where most of the early experiences are, and how the families reflect learned values. Can we provide for children’s real need in school, if there is a conflict with beliefs and needs brought from home? This is indeed difficult, but changes can be made. The implication where at least some teachers and parents are more aware of sexism, I shall describe a local example briefly.

Since January 1976, a group of Camberwell parents and teachers have been working in a co-operative school called the Neighbourhood Children’s Centre, where children from three to nine, with younger and older, can interact with parents and other adults. The basic aims are 1) to provide a link between school and home, where familiar people and ideas are in constant contact; 2) to allow people of all ages to get to know each other and learn about people; 3) to provide a realistic learning situation. Other aims include the wish to use existing local resources, such as libraries, swimming pools, parks and playgrounds; talk numbers 10 (at present) make this possible.

We are very conscious of the sexual nature of many learning materials and situations, and deliberately try to counteract this, though we admit to a major difficulty that our rosters of parents is heavily reliant on mothers, only four fathers having spent time regularly at the Centre. The children have no limitations of activities because of gender, all participate in cooking, woodwork, sewing, soccer, swimming, climbing, throwing, jumping - this last in contrast to a sports day reported this week in a nearby suburb where a girl high-jumper was not allowed to use the “boys” jump because it is too dangerous, and had to try the less successful scissors style. Our most adventurous climber is a girl, the boys help with small children as often as the girls, fist-fights are not restricted to one sex, and guns, cowboy or Batman outfits are shared. In buying equipment, we have concentrated on posters and books which do not limit colours, to set stereotypes, so that they see girls digging, boys playing, men making and cooking stones. In dressing, and dressing, we have made choices and boys happily wear skirts, hats or handbags.

“Role and counter-sexist toys” is one of the most popular of all activities. The role playing that spontaneously develops proves that the children can learn to adopt a gender range of behaviour, even when their normal contacts are stereotyped on the whole.

Spending the night at a friend’s house is a frequent occurrence, and it is accepted that girls and boys develop close friends of both sexes. It is pleasing to see the open and natural acceptance of nakedness which grows out of swimming together and sharing mixed toilets. Knowing that their bodies extend naturally to coping sensitivity and openly with their developing sexuality. Aggression has been another area where much freedom was given in car games and girls children solving their own problems in their own time; they have shown us that cooperative play develops very early when they are given enough time in unstructured situations.

Pressure on individual responsive teachers can open up discussion, even in unlikely schools. Some P. and C. meetings have raised several of these issues. Dudley Primary School, Camber, held a meeting in October 1976, where parents, teachers, and members of the continuity unit, me as speaker on the Schools Commission Report “Girls’ School and Society” and to see films of sex-stereotyping in preschool and primary school children. Discussion of particularly tool books in reading a horror film Breakthrough to Literacy, 4 things I can do”, can shock some teachers and parents into the realization of the permanence of the stereotypes.

Change can be pushed at the school level, as it is possible to expand many children to new choices - so that boys can go to cooking and girls to woodworking, as a matter of policy. Some schools already encourage girls to play soccer, and boys to show their affection, while strong, pawsyno-sexual girls are not “nigger teds” from lifting heavy objects. Much more must be done of our schools by parents if girls and boys are really to have their needs properly provided for. There, in social change, we must find a greater tolerance, gentleness, strength and resourcefulness.
In addition to attractiveness, it is extraordinarily difficult to overlook people's charm and humour. But the latter, more than the former, is being funny. I mean a humour which recognises a common oppression, notices its source and the roles it requires, identifies its oppressors and may simply be my own ignorance; there may be traditions of women's humour in different social classes, ethnic groups, religions, and so on. But if such traditions existed or exist now. I have been denied the opportunity to rediscover or fight back humour about my condition.

If this is true, it is a very painful conclusion. Why do we need to fight against a creature which we can laugh with, which we can employ as a way to break free, while knowing that it is going to put us back down? Is it because we lack courage? Is it because we don't really want to be funny? If so, we should encourage it. If not, we should find some way to make it happen. We should force our minds to accept the truth of what we have been taught. We should use laughter to break free from our oppression, from our own self-imposed limitations.

The curious thing about our oppression is that we are taught that it is fair. That it was in the divine order of things. So even when we realised that there was something out there keeping us down, we fell into the trap of thinking that it was our own fault, that we were being silly or stupid, and that we should just try harder to overcome it. But the truth is that we are fighting against something that is not fair, and that can only be overcome by using our own native resources.

There have been many obstacles to the development of women's humour. But the most obvious of these is the objectification of women. Women have been taught that it is fair: that it was in the divine order of things. So even when we realised that there was something out there keeping us down, we fell into the trap of thinking that it was our own fault, that we were being silly or stupid, and that we should just try harder to overcome it. But the truth is that we are fighting against something that is not fair, and that can only be overcome by using our own native resources.
"A woman is a foreigner in her own country..."

"But your halo, honey, mine's making money."
(Bette Midler)

A woman is a foreigner.
A woman is a foreigner in her own country.

From a non-racist viewpoint, thoughts and language constitute a schema, a network of thought. In the minds of the dominant culture, dominant thoughts do not imply an alternative. You are better thought the world as it appears to be in the light of the dominant culture. To appear to be rational, this is to say, is to be in the light of the dominant culture. A figure and the way in which it is conceived is a reflection of the tenets and assumptions of the ideational matrix.

A shoulder to cry on
A thigh to lie on
And a cunt to fly on.

(Anonymous)

"A woman is a foreigner in her own country" — Heima Sanders, German film-maker.

"...and to talk of the foreigner is to talk of the dominated, the dominated is to talk of the foreigner."

"The purpose of foreignness is to make the spectator marginally dissatisfied with his present way of life, not with the way of life of society, but with his own within it..."

It offers him an improved alternative to what he is.
(John Berger,

Ways of Seeing.)

Gabrielle Finnane
Why do girls kiss each other?

Because some girls have nobody else to kiss.
Films about famous or successful women are safe tools with which to acknowledge the feminist movement.

They are often women famous in the artistic sphere.

Or famous through sterility — their relationships with men.

They are exasperated from the obligatory marriage with children by entering the male sphere and achieving within it.

Being 'exceptional' women, from another world and class, their lives are not feasible alternatives to our own.

They live only in our dreams.

The story — an excellent vehicle for the outstanding talents of two of the screen's most gifted actresses — spans a period of over forty years in its telling. From when the girls first meet at school in 1918 to when Lilian Himmelfarb in 1938.

This time gap created additional problems for director Zinnemann and his crew during the preparation period of the production. Fashions and hair styles changed radically during those four decades, and there are at least four distinct versions of fashion throughout the film.

Julia is a must for all filmgoers. More about this important film in our next issue.
**Melbourne Coop**

Kilda Rd, Carlton. 16mm. Ph 347 3844. 18 mins. $5.00.

**Australian Film and Television School**

2 Holy Street, Chatswod. Ph 412 1072.

**Better Look Here**

16mm. Col. Robynne Murphy.

**Footage**

16mm B/W. 8 mins. Janet Isaacs: $4.00.

**Media Centre**

LaTrobe University, Bundocra. 3083. It's Just Something Kids Do. 16mm B/W. 27 mins. Tina Edger.

**My Way**

16mm B/W. 25 mins. Tricia Edgar: $15.00.

**Super Duper**

16mm. B/W. 7 mins. Gillian Thompson:

**Canberra Women's Film Group**

12 Bremer Street, Canberra ACT. Ph 966 916.

**Australian Film Institute**


**The Golden Sister**

16mm. B/W. 5 mins. Antoinette: $5.00.

**The Goldfish Process**

16mm. B/W. 5 mins. Antoinette: $3.00.

**Skylt Of Your Eye**

16mm Col. 117 mins. C. & A. Cantrill: $100.00.

**Fifteen film essays on Melbourne.**

**National Library of Australia**

ACT 2600. Ph 418 2100.

**Conditions:** The National Library lends films direct to tertiary education institutions, industry and Australian government agencies. Other groups are asked to book through the state centres. Held, in, or on order for, the National Film collection.

**Abortion**

16mm B/W. 30 mins. (A women's collective in Boston demands free birth control information, health centres, abortion on demand, and the equal responsibility of men for birth control.)

Andrew. 16mm B/W. 25 mins. By Angela Youssell: (The dismantling of a small family)

**Australian Davis:**

Like It Is. 16mm B/W. 60 mins.

**Bernadette Devlin.**

16mm.

**Caroline.**

16mm B/W. 27 mins. National Film Board of Canada. 1964. (A dramatical diary of a day in the life of a working mother, revealing her attitudes to her job and family situation.)

**Children of Change.**

16mm 31 mins. US Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, 1961. (Views on the "posses and strains faced upon both mother and child when the mother goes out to work.

**Cleo From 5 to 7.**

16mm. A Day Like Tomorrow. 16mm B/W. 5 mins. Sydney Thompson.

**Duet For Cannibals.**

By Susan Sotnag. (A cerebral comedy that explores the psychological effects of sexual roles.)

**Film For Discussion.**

16mm. 50 mins. Sydney Thompson.

**Growing Up Female.**

16mm. B/W. 60 mins. Julie Reichert/Jane Klein. (The sexualization and sex role of the American woman.)

**Gurikanya — Free School 1972.**

16mm B/W. 5 mins. (A film about Sydney's free school 'breaking down authoritarian relationships between teacher and student'.)

**Home Film 16mm. B/W.** (Documentary with re-enactment of two women who spent their childhood in the "women's refuges of the child care system to reveal what happens when young women are incarcerated in these prisons.)

**In An Onion.**

16mm B/W. 13 mins. Jeanette Grant-Thompson: $3.00.

**I Happened To Be A Girl.**


**Just A Little Note.**

16mm B/W. 7 mins. Jan Chapman: $4.00.

**Leonie's Film.**

16mm. B/W. 18 mins. Leonie Crennan: $5.00.

**Living Space.**

16mm Col. 5 mins. Leslie Nicholls: $4.00.

**Living Together.**

16mm. B/W. 7 mins. Julie Gibson: $4.00.

**Moonage Daydreams of B / W 13 mins. Margot

$4.00.

**Fiske:**

Great Medicine.

Get High the Fiske:

Home. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. Margaret Clancy: $6.00.

**Hearts and Fud 69.**

16 mm B/W. 6 mins. Murch; $1.00.

**Easy Street.**

16mm Col. 20 mins. Penny Cigina: $10.00.

**Edge City.**

16mm C/B/W. 20 mins. Diana Kears: $12.00.

**Dream.**

16mm B/W. 5 mins. C. & A. Cantrill: $3.00.

**Easty Street.**

16mm Col. 20 mins. Penny Cigina: $10.00.

**Fiske:**

Great Medicine.

Get High the Fiske:

Home. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. Margaret Clancy: $6.00.

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**Dream.**

16mm B/W. 5 mins. C. & A. Cantrill: $3.00.

**Easy Street.**

16mm Col. 20 mins. Penny Cigina: $10.00.
Rohani Steps Out M.F.U. 16mm B/W. 18 mins. 1955. (The Women’s Institutes of Malay were founded to enable women to get to know one another and to attain such accomplishments as cooking, dressmaking and first aid).

The Roof Needs Mowing. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Gillian Armstrong. (The film shows how a group of the British satire on the ritual of suburban life.)(Sedate Night. 16mm Gillian Armstrong. 1919 Sentimental Bloke. 16mm. co-dir. prod. star Local Landlord. 30 mins. Directed by Vera Chytkova. (Compares a quest for meaningful films as it evolves in the lives of two different women).)

The Stripper. 16mm Col. Siew Hwa Beh. (This film was made as part of the first issue of the magazine “Women and Film” in California. It expresses a femininst view of a stripper; its implications are vast.)

Stronger Since The War. 16mm 54 mins. Australian Broadcasting Commission for Euterel, 1964. (An examination of the status of women in Japan since the end of World War II, and their new social and economic conditions. Three Lives, 16mm Col. 70 mins. Directed by Kate Millett. (Directed by Kate Millett for the Women’s Liberation Cinema Company. Three ordinary, but different women present themselves to the camera).)

1936 Triumph Of The Will. 18mm d. Leni Riefenstahl. (A Woman Called Gima. 16mm 21 mins. Dept. of Territories, 1963. (The organisation of Women’s Clubs among the native women of Papua and New Guinea to help them in their transition from their present way of life to citizenship in a modern democracy. A Woman Of Our Times. Film Col/B/W. 26 mins. Peter Tammer. (A portrait of Myra Roper).

Women’s Day. 16mm B/W. (Aspects of a day in the lives of many women we know with two small children. Doctor,quirksters, supermarket, fashion parade, groceries, end of the day depression and exhaustion, John Laws on the radio).

A Woman’s Story. 16mm B/W. 22 mins. C.O.I. (Gives an account of the work done by thousands of women in Britain who devote part of their spare time to various voluntary social services). A Woman’s Strongest Job. 16mm 25 mins. Documentary Film Productions. 1964. (Shows Australia’s professional woman crocodile hunter, Mrs Kris Pawlow who, at work at Khumba on the Gulf of Carpentaria).

Women Alone. 16mm B/W. 27 mins. 1973. (In Australia there are almost 200,000 deserted wives, widows, divorced women or other supporting mothers. Many are isolated by their circumstance. The film is a social drama with two parallel stories. One concerns a widow, the other a deserted wife. Both are pushed by financial and emotional circumstances beyond their normal tolerance).

Women of Modern Japan. 16mm Col 27 mins. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, 1970. (Shows the new role of the women of Japan and in particular their contribution to professional life).

Women On The March (parts 1 and 11). 16mm 60 mins. National Film Board of Canada, 1950. (The struggle for equal rights waged by the suffragette movement initiated in England before the turn of this century. Women Talking. 16mm B/W. 80 mins. Directed by Midge Mackenzie. (Women relate their own experiences and analyze sexist attitudes pervading the culture). Women Today. 16mm 26 mins. Rage, 1963. (The German woman of today is emancipated, having the same education, professional chances and rights as the German man. There are many problems, however, connected with her role in today’s society). Women Who Had An Abortion. 16mm Col. 29 mins. Produced by Martha Stuart. Are You Listening? series. (Deciding about having an abortion and having one).

Young Women Don’t Have To Be War, Mrs Smith. 16mm B/W. 30 mins. Produced by Another Mother for Peace. (Bess Myerson’s brilliant anti-war speech). Young Women of Japan, 16mm Col 25 mins. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 1965. (Illustrates the role of women in Japan’s development in manpower, technical skill and intellectual talents). How to get the films: Write or ring the Filmmakers Cooper-ative in for further information and to find out about new films. Let us know how you go with the films you use. If you wish a speaker to go out with the films, make arrangements well in advance. Feminist literature on a number of topics is also available. Expectations: Nil Ann Folland b/w, 61 minutes, 1975.

Stones. A well-made version of new classical feminist cartoon about women and men living together. Provides material for discussion about affluence and relationships. Best for people over 16.

Women Who Have Had An Abortion. 16mm m/n. Directed by Jane O’Rourke and Deirdre Logue. 26 mins. Produced by Another Mother. 1972. (Shows Australia’s first abortive experience by giving women the opportunity to talk about their abortion experiences).

Women’s Film Group Discusion Kit. 1974. (A witty and satirical, Giliii film looks at family relationships in suburbia. Her portrait of the married mother is particularly devastating. Use this film anywhere—It’s very funny). Women’s Film Group Rental: $4.00. 1971.

Women’s Film Group Rental: $15.00–$70.00. Three quarters of a year of films Writte by Sallyrobat and Cynthia Tait. 16mm, 5 minutes. Rental: $5.00. A film about depression—Ruth is blocked in work and isolated from relationships.

The Roof Need Mowing Gillian Armstrong m/n, 10 minutes. Rental: $4.00. 1971.

Women’s Film Group Rental: $7.00. 1971.

Women’s Film Group Rental: $5.00. 1970. 1973. A drama/documentary showing Sally in her office talking about marriage with her girlfriend as they play on the computer shopping, trying to discuss ideas with her boyfriend and with her mother during a family dinner. Designed to raise questions on work, consumerism, relationships with men and women’s family. Works best with people and over, in an atmosphere of questioning.

Women’s Day. 20 Col 16mm, b/w, 12 minutes. Rental: $5.00. 1971.

Aspects of a day in the lives of many women we know with two small children. Doctor,quirksters, supermarket, fashion parade, groceries, end of the day depression and exhaustion, John Laws on the radio.

Women’s Film Group Rental: $15.00–$70.00. Three quarters of a year of films Writte by Sallyrobat and Cynthia Tait. 16mm, 5 minutes Rental: $5.00. A film about depression—Ruth is blocked in work and isolated from relationships.

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from a collection of drawings and domestic artifacts at Sydney Uni Art Workshop.
FROM A COLLECTION OF DOLEY'S AND DOMESTIC ARTIFACTS AT SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ART WORKSHOP.

"SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE" worked in filet crochet.

Emu with Footprints worked in filet crochet with bakelite beads - 1930's

SYDNEY WOMEN'S ART MOVEMENT

Jenny Barber

The Sydney Women's Art Movement was formed in 1974 after Barbara Hall's return from America where she had been in contact with feminist art groups in New York and on the West Coast. Unlike the more broadly based Melbourne Women's Art Register, established a year later, the Sydney group rapidly evolved into a core group of seven committed feminists through which many of them WAM was their first introduction to the Women's Movement.

Throughout 1974 WAM held fortnightly meetings attended by filmmakers, photographers, painters, printmakers, art historians, sculptors, architects, designers, musicians and writers. Plans were developed for a Women's House with space for communal projects, private studios and resource materials for a wide variety of art concerns. However submissions for assistance to the International Women's Year Committee and the Visual Arts Board of the Australian Council were rejected, in spite of the IWY committee's stated commitment to foster creative activity by women.

WAM ACTIVITIES 1974-76

1974: A questionnaire on the representation of work by women artists in public galleries and collections was devised and circulated to curators and gallery directors, after the exhibition "Fifty Years of the National Art School" showed the work of two women artists.

A second questionnaire aimed at assessing discrimination against women art students was distributed to women at the National Art School.

Four issues of the WAM Newsletter have been published since 1974, each written and produced by different members of the group. Jewellery workshops were held in Vivienne Binns' studio. The jewellery was sold through the Feminist Bookshop and other outlets to raise money for WAM.

A Slide Registry was established to collect information on women artists for presentation to gallery directors and curators in order to combat the exclusion of women artists from group shows and surveys.

1975: Jude Adams and Jenny Barber exhibited at Central Street Gallery, as members of WAM. During this exhibition, Lucy Lippard showed slides from the American West-East Bag Registry.

A link up with West-East Bag was established.

A library was set up and housed in the "Studio" (WAM's meeting place) in 1975.

"Women in the Community" event at Bondi Pavilion, WAM members exhibited work, gave talks and showed slides of women's work.

WAM participated as a group in Women's Day marches in 1975-76.

1976: The Women's Art women stopped meeting regularly as a group early in 1976, but members continued to be involved in various activities.

A Studio Group organised by Frances Budden met regularly in 1976 at different women's studios to discuss their work.

A Women's Art Forum on feminist aesthetics was organised by Gabrielle Dalton at the Fine Arts Workshop, Sydney University. This developed out of Jude Amad's course for WEA.

Frances Budden and Marie McKahon started a needlework collective which met every Saturday to share skills in lacemaking, weaving, quilting and other needlework techniques.

Vivienne Binns, Marie McMahon, Frances Budden and Toni Robertasen held an exhibition at Watters Gallery (later shown in the George Paton Gallery, Melbourne).

Jude Adams arranged an 18 week course for the WEA entitled "Women in the Visual Arts: the Artist as She". The course provided a historical study of women artists ranging from the Bayeux Tapestry to the present.

Jude Adams also ran a Feminist Aesthetics course at Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education during the second semester.

Barbara Hall produced a programme for the ABC Radio's "Coming Out '76" on the Sydney Biennale. Only four women artists were represented in the Biennale and the programme consisted of interviews with three of them, Fujiko Nakaya (Japan), Lynda Benglis (USA), Matlak Craser (Australia), the show's director, Tom McCullough.
Since the beginning of 1977 women artists and students have been regularly meeting at the Tin Sheds to work collectively, to discuss their work, to participate in activities such as the Slide Registry and the Dolphin Archive, to give and get support.

When the group met again at the beginning of 1978 there was a decision to form into smaller closed groups. We felt this was necessary if discussions and collective activities were to progress and individuals to become more committed.

ACTIVITIES IN 1977:

A Self-Image exhibition at Central Street in February was organised by Barbara Hall, Jude Adams, Sandy Edwards and Jenny Barber. Twelve women exhibited in the show.

The “Collective Pocket Piece” by the women’s art group was sent to the Adelaide Women’s Exhibition in August.

Women’s Art Conference was also held in Adelaide at the same time as the exhibition. Vivienne Binns gave a paper and also delivered another for Jude Adams and Jenny Barber who were unable to attend the conference.

The “Women’s Images of Women” exhibition (Project 21 at the NSW Art Gallery) was organised by Barbara Hall, Jude Adams and Jenny Barber. The show was a historical exhibition of women’s paintings and drawings of women from 1910 to 1960, and it was organised by non-gallery staff.

The Slide Registry is presently housed at the Tin Sheds. Its function is to represent the current work of any woman artist wishing to participate, as well as a historical collection of past Australian women artists, and past and present overseas women artists. Both parts of the Registry, Current and Historical, can be borrowed for educational purposes. Contact: Vivienne Binns, Jenny Barber (211-5940) or Gabrielle Dalton.

INTERSTATE CONTACTS FOR TRAVELLERS and for research on women artists ....

WAM is at 233 Rundle Street, Adelaide 5000. Carolyn Brown is the permanent director funded by the South Australian government.

too much A lady TO BE A PROFESSIONAL

AUSTRALIA’s latest golf phenomenon is a 19-year-old girl student who has no intention of allowing her success to turn her into a “golf spinster”.

Melbourne - Women’s Art Register, care Liz Coats, 46 Miller St, North Fitzroy 3068.

Kiffy Rubbo, Ewing and George Paton Gallery, Melbourne University Union, Parkville, Vic.

LIP Collective, 66 Carlton St, Carlton, 3053, Vic.
NEXT TIME... I'll come back as THE QUEEN.
free packet of colour pencils with every other copy of this paper
*see other copy (apologies to Monty Python)

I got my Vaucluse Pell at 6th floor David Jones for $11000... How much was yours......

"she was a plain girl... and mum can bear me another... (mum: yes) but she looked beautiful on her wedding day..."

COME UPTO KOOL...

FOOD:
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FEATURING

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Tear out post card, make a cloudy moon...
the womens art register extension project

WHERE can you find a resource collection offering information about the work of Australian woman artists?

You will find it by contacting the co-ordinators of the WAREP. This project, made possible by a grant from the School's Committee, has during the past twelve months endeavoured to collect information about Australian woman artists, past and present, for educational use.

OBJECTIVES:
1. Provide sole models for female students, inspiring the feeling — "if she can do it, so can I!"
2. Fill the gaps in art history with information about the roles and achievements of women artists in our cultural development.
3. Establish contact with women artists to gather information: to liaise between artists and schools.
4. Stimulate research by tertiary students and other interested people and make it accessible to others.
5. Establish the content and whereabouts of completed research and work "in progress", thus directing you to its source.
6. Provide an historical background through which to discuss "language" and/or sensibility arguably apparent in woman's art.
7. To establish the "grassroots" philosophy of the WAREP by involving as many people as possible in administration; accepting material offered without screening or selection; making the material as accessible as possible.

COLLATION: two goals emerged—
(a) KITS on particular topics, "ready to use" in the classroom, containing slides accompanied by a text, quotations from the artist herself about her career, ideas, etc; biography; bibliography; source of additional material; location of works on public display; student notes, games, puzzles, etc; to make the information more absorbing to young students.

Much primary source material has been gathered — collation of this information into kits is in its infancy. If you would like to contribute your ideas and/or test the effectiveness of the kit format in your classes, we would be delighted to hear from you.

(b) RESOURCE COLLECTION consisting of all the information gathered to date, ranging from slides of a scrapbook made by an East Gippsland pioneer woman in the 1870's to contemporary assemblage art.

ACCESSIBILITY — The entire resource collection will be housed at the Carringbush Library, Richmond, Victoria in the near future, providing easy access through the inter-library lending scheme.

— in-service events; conferences; seminars; arranging school visits by artists; media; displays; etc;

ON-GOING INFORMATION GATHERING

Of course this collection is incomplete and its effectiveness will always depend on continued public input. If you have information or are involved in researching a related subject area it could be source of additional material; location of works on public display; student notes, games, puzzles, etc to make the information more absorbing to young students.

If you can help in any of the ways suggested, or wish to use the information gathered to date, please contact the co-ordinators of the WAREP.

Co-ordinators: Bonita Ely 15 Molesworth Street Kew 861 5167 or Erica McGilchrist 2 Danieli Crescent Caulfield 211 2228

SLIDE HOLDINGS:

1 WOMEN'S SHOW ADELAIDE
30 Slides

Mixed bunch in terms of imagery, media, styles political involvement etc, therefore interesting as a cross section of contemporary women's work.

Accompanied by a programme of events and a catalogue including notes by the artists themselves.

2 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GALLERY COLLECTION

60 Slides

Mainly paintings, prints and one drawing. Artists include: (painting) Jacqueline Hick, Margaret Preston, Nora Heysen, Marjory Gwynne, Joy Hester, Kate O'Connor, Jean Bellette, Theo Proctor, etc; (prints) Margaret Preston, Dorrit Black, (drawings) Theo Proctor.

3 MARGARET PRESTON

40 Slides

Accompanied by bibliography (limited), bibliographical details, articles written by or about her, mainly from 'Art in Australia'.

4 LA TROBE WOMEN'S SHOW

20 Slides of contemporary work, similar to the SA Women's Show variety.

20 slides (slide format) of Jill Orr's performance.

Accompanied by catalogue with notes by many of the artists.

5 CHINESE POSTER EXHIBITION

19 Slides of women's work

Catalogue notes. Also see "AM No 3, p14, "You shouldn't sit on a horse to see flower posters by the People's Republic". Of course, if you would like to hear from you.

6 MOLAS (Needlework from the San Blas Is.)
9 Slides

Accompanied by historical/cultural notes and bibliography

7 JANE KENT (Contemporary South Australian Sculptor
16 Slides

Slides by Toni Chaffey; accompanied by text written by the artist.

8 LYNN HERSCHMANN (American installation artist — her visual comment on the Australian Dramaticome)
19 Slides

Including a series of the bathroom slide installation depicting 'the housewife's escape'. Accompanied by catalogue.

9 SEW THRE
6 Slides

Three women's use of needlework in sculpture and wall hangings

10 WOMEN'S POSTAL EVENT
60 Slides, including the NSW Women's Art Movement 'Clothes line' pockets, an adaption of a work shown at the South Australian Women's Show

11 PRINTMAKERS OF THE THIRTIES
30 Slides

Includes the work of Ethel Spowers, Eveline Symq, Mabel Pye, Margaret Preston, Helen Ogilvie. Catalogue with bibliographical details.

12 ART IN AUSTRALIA

Slides by Liz Coats

Republished slides of all the women's work including from 1916 - 1939 plus all the articles written by or about women artists. Includes Margaret Preston, Adelaide Perry, Hilda Rix Nicholas, Daphne May, Cuinbrae Stewart, Theo Proctor, A.M.E. Bale.

13 CONTEMPORARY INDIVIDUALS

not yet written but in the process

ISABEL DAVIES (drawing, paintings, sculpture)
MARGARET BELL (Drawing, sculpture) JANE NEMEC (painting, collage)
MARGARET PRESTON (Drawing, sculpture, video, photography)
JILLIAN ORR (Assemblage, performance) MARY McQUEEN (Photography, drawing, performance)

MARY McQUEEN (Printmaking, collage, drawing)

BOSALIE GASODINE (Sculpture, assemblage) ELIZABETH GOVER (Assemblage)
JENNY WATSON (Painting, drawing) INGE KING (Sculpture)

14 JANE AND RUTH SUTHERLAND
40 Slides

Accompanied by catalogue and notes

15 INTERNATIONAL ART GALLERY COLLECTION

20 Slides

Includes works by Clarice Beckett, Agnes Goodall, Elaine Haxton, Theo Proctor, Constance Stites, Mary McQueen, Beatrice Wood, etc.

16 A PROFILE OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN SCULPTORS: 1860-1990
80 Slides

Catalogue includes biographies and bibliographies, where represented and statements from the artists about their work.

17 RESEARCH SLIDES, PRE 1960 WOMEN SCULPTORS

Approx 500 slides

Includes works by Margaret Baskerville, Tina Wentcheer, Ola Cohn, Inge King, Magel Hirster, Eileen McGrath, Daphne Mayne, Margret Mahony, Thea Proctor, etc.

Accompanied by catalogue.

18 WOMEN'S IMAGES OF WOMEN (Project 21, Art Gallery of NSW, 1978 by Jane Adams, Jennifer Barber, Barbara Hall)
23 Slides

Includes works by Mary Abbott, Mitly Lee Brown, Lina Bryaux, Ednud Campbell, May Edwards, Joy Hester, Theo Proctor, Edith Mal Elly McGilchrist, Fran Tom Smith

Accompanied by catalogue.

19 HILDA RIX NICHOLAS

A selection of works from 3 exhibitions held in September 1975 (Art Gallery of New South Wales, Macquarie Gallery, Sydney). Slides by Terry Barber. Accompanied by catalogues.

20 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ARTISTS Kit on Margaret Sinclair (sculptor), Margaret Baxian (painter), Kate O'Connor (sculptor/potter), Lene Furler (painter), Pamela Harris (sculptor) performance, Margaret Doddi (ceramic sculptor), Dora Chapman (painter). Compiled by Antonia Chaffey and Karlyn Brown.

21 RESEARCH SLIDES FOR "WOMEN'S IMAGES OF WOMEN"

Slides by Barbara Hall 158 Slides

22 7TH MILDURA SCULPTURE TRIENNALE (1978)
30 Slides

Includes works by Margaret Bell, Elizabeth Honeynban, Jill Honeynban, Jill Orr, Janet Davies, Bonita Ely, Noeline Lucas, Fiona Connors, Ann Morris.

23 WALLS SOMETIMES SPEAK
30 Slides

From an exhibition of political posters. Includes works by Mandy Martin, Tonii Roberts. Annie Newnmarl, Jude Munroe, Marie Michael, Ann Roberts, Mary Callahan, Angie Gea, Pam Harris, Jan Mackay.

24 MARY ELLEN KENNY
16 Slides

Photographed from pages of sketchbook, made C1977, by pioneer in the Geelong area. Accompanied by notes on ancestry by Pam Charlotte Murphy (nee Kenny) in 1958, and reproductions from diary of George Little, migrant passenger "Marco Polo" 1853.

25 MAP SHOW: 45 Slides


Map of Transition.
photo - J. Dransfield.

She is not naked as she is.
She is naked as the spectator sees her.

Often - as with the favourite subject of Susannah and the Elders - this is the actual theme of the picture. We join the Elders to spy on Susannah taking her bath. She looks back at us looking at her.

In another version of the subject by Tintoretto, Susannah is looking at herself in a mirror. Thus she joins the spectators of herself.

Women are seen as "rights" and judged accordingly...

But the essential way of seeing women, the essential use to which their images are put, has not changed. Women are depicted in a quite different way from men - not because the feminine is different from the masculine - but because the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him.
There are many articles written on feminist art which try to pinpoint and delineate a feminist sensibility. Few of these articles go beyond the recognition that feminist art is based on the personal experiences of women by beginning to question its larger political implications and the role it plays in feminist revolution. Most articles, originating from the art world, tend to be formal and descriptive attempts at documenting what women are doing, and do not attempt a feminist analysis of function and meaning.

In a reactionary escape from formalist criticism, most movement writing on feminist art deals with political issues, but lacks any real understanding of the creative process, how it functions for the artist and how it affects form and content. Without such an understanding it is impossible to evaluate the work as art. While feminist poets and writers comment on each other's work and write of their own processes, we visual artists tend to remain silent and let others do the writing for us. Our silence contributes to a lack of dialogue between art and audience. In the lack of criticism from a feminist perspective, and ultimately to the misinterpretation of our work.

In this article I wish to focus on abstract art and show that it can have a feminist basis and therefore be political. Feminists are not only housewives. They are active in political or revolutionary art, but because certain ideas and issues occur over and over, they are of interest to us and worth exploring. I will focus on one area of abstract art by discussing concepts of marking and language in feminist drawing and painting—how it's origin, meaning, and political potential.

In "Prime-Time: Art and Politics," Alexes Freeman and Jackie MacMillan look at how art is viewed in this capitalist, patriarchal society and criticize activists for reacting too quickly and overlooking the revolutionary potential of art. However, they in turn react to male establishment myths about abstract (non-representational) art and exclude it from feminist and political potential. They view abstract art as private expression which is not understandable or analyzable to the audience, and therefore irrelevant to feminist political goals. Thus they ignore the experiences women have in the creation of abstract art, rather than realizing that this is how abstract art has been used by men as a defensive mechanism against the alienation of their own capitalist system; as well as for furthering the myth of the artist as alienated and isolated genius. abstract art has offered an illusion of objectivity. Such notions suggest that the content or one's work can be separated from one's political beliefs. By sponsoring international exhibitions showing apolitical abstract paintings by former Communist Party members, the C.I.A. (via the Museum of Modern Art) has sought to impress other nations with the cultural freedom of the U.S.A. The way in which Abstract Expressionism art was defined and developed by the artists and then used by others to further cold war politics in the fifties is only one example of the manipulation of abstract art to create the illusionary separation of art and politics.

Thus when women continue to respond to abstract art as "apolitical," they are reinforcing and maintaining myths established by men. The Freeman/MacMillan article is typical in its analysis of art and politics. Abstract art has become a taboo for most artists who consider themselves political feminists. Because of the history outlined above, it is difficult to determine abstract art's painting's relationship to feminist ideology. There are radical feminists who are making abstract art. Radical feminism operates from the belief that women as a class are oppressed, and that a mass political women's movement is necessary to overthrow male supremacy. Therefore, we might ask, how are the visions, of radical feminists analyzed and portrayed in this art?

It is necessary to break down the myths and fears surrounding abstract art and make it understandable. Women—artists and non-artists—need to talk about art, and talking about abstract art need not be more difficult than discussing portraits, nudes, vaginas, or whatever. every work of art is understandable on many different levels. It is by talking about our work and work processes that we will not only begin to develop a new language for interpreting abstract art, but also to integrate this work with society. This language, which I see evolving from consciousness-raising techniques, will be able to be shared with any woman, regardless of class background. For artists, such a dialogue with the audience is essential, as it offers valuable feedback for the development of our art.

I want to reclaim abstract art for women and transform it on our own terms. It is interesting to note that much of women's past creativity, as well as the art by women of non-white races, has been abstract. I think it is incredible that baskets, pottery, quilts, slabs, and needlework women have been excluded from history, but the motifs used were based on "the self." The repetition and continuity of one or more forms formed the indwellings and the pattern resulting from its repetition these motifs and patterns were ab geommetric. Patricia Mainardi points out that they had specific meaning for the women who made them, and in a sense formed language in themselves.

In designing their quilts, women not only spiritual and mnemonic objects, but also left a political, cultural mark in a language for the past most remembable only to other women. It was a secret language among women the story goes, there was more than one form of political persuasion, the spell unite under his Whig Rose quilts nudged quilts for their religious or their political—at a time when women allowed to vote. The Radical Rose which women made during the Civil War a black center for each rose and was a sign of sympathy with the slaves.

As we examine some contemporaries by art, it is important to delve into identity and connection to the process of creativity rather than that of the art has claimed "fine art" and "abstrait" himself. In fact, the practice of the "decorative" traditional art and "cra right activist, classist, and sexist overt both Weatherford states.

Art history assigns creative products categories—fine arts and crafts—and titles as legitimate only the fine exclusion of those creative traditions of people, peasants, women, and men groups outside the mainstream of history.

Until recently, decorative art, or niche-based art, have been seen as the sources for contemporary male art women working with these iden, t and non-arts as legitimate only the fine and excluding those creative traditions of people, peasants, women, and men groups outside the mainstream of history.

Below Louise Fishman, "Angry Harmony 1970" Acrylic and pastel on paper 12 x 48" (Photo: Sarah Whitworth)
Their work both is and tells about the pain of their life experiences. It is about pain and is painful, but does not present women as passive victims. There is presented with deep understanding of its sources and effects. And the anger which follows confrontation with the hurt. 7

Fisher writes: 

Betty looked at the work and recognized the fact that I worked to survive, to keep from growing crazy, and to keep the pain from becoming too great. She recognized the pain on my work instantly. This was something I had only come to recently recognize and acknowledge in my work. The many women I've talked with about my culture. I have become adept at hiding and covering my pain. I had gotten all the messages that we were weak and desirable 8 by the 'denial, subject and content' that carries their work through feminism conscious beyond the personal to the political. It is also present in abstract paintings that seem so far removed from the male modernist tradition than to women's creativity in that they involve the physical expressive manipulation of paint on a two-dimensional surface.

In much of this work the reworking of stitch of women's traditional artmaking becomes the resistance to making and the forming of their work as a visual diary. Such works are daily records of thoughts and are used as such by the artists. Just as the weaver continues from day to day, from one job to another with a specific technique to another, materials and dyes changing slightly, irregularities and tension showing, the painted marks also reveal daily and notional changes and tensions. They are a record of present feeling, a ritual giving in to the repetitive gesture, a language to reveal self — a woman's mantra.

Jenny Snider's nervous lines recall ancient Chinese calligraphy, which has both a letter/character reference and a body/figure reference. Her drawings are made with and are about her nervousness and vulnerability. She 'is' the mark, the line. As the marks are repeated and moved in different spaces (grids or rectangles suggesting fabric, rooms and houses), the quality and feeling of the line changes as it moves and becomes more comforting and more intriguing. She explores her self-image and feelings about her body in relationship to other people and spaces. Snider's drawings are a 'figuring' of her shifting. To me, it is the mark and its repetition that is most important. Her works are figurative in the sense that Chinese calligraphy — in having a direct body reference. Works are sometimes combined or used interchangeably with the marks in the paintings. Snider is committed to the diaristic mode. As she says, 'The words and lines come from the same psychological place and gesture and are not intended to be read as poems. They are meant to be experienced as a sequence of images but rather express the fact that they come from a nervous hand and a thinking heart. Phenomenes such as 'little sounds around and it showed it'. 'Well, for one thing, neevo step on broken glass'. 'Remember when we saw the ocean. It was just lovely. There wasn't a win'. Where the drawing is coming from and what the drawing is about.

Louise Fishman's paintings also function as a place of personal confrontation and as a statement directed towards other women. Earlier, Fishman ripped up her old paintings and reconstructed them by sewing and knotting them together with a large thread. Her past was used to make a statement about her present. The strips and connecting thread formed loose grids, tied together after work to a series of stitched marks or marks repeated across the page or canvas or within the confines of a 'patina of felt shape' (a circle or a piece of irregularly cut muslin). The marks of paint, layered on top of each other, lead eventually to a rich sensuous surface. The top layer usually consists of strong marks holding the partially revealed undermarks to the painting surface feelings revealed and hidden. Fishman has always talked about her work in terms of hiding, guilt, vulnerability, anger, and personal individuation. In this, paintings, particularly those painting on unstrung canvas, Fishman deals with her feelings about her mother, also another artist. One side of each canvas is paint landscape, while on the other side the marks explode into intensely scrawled letters reading 'A letter to my mother about painting.' Another canvas has the text of David and the words 'I am a feminist artist' painted on it rather than as a political statement. This work moves from the personal into the political. Titled Angry Jill, Angry Diona, Angry Paula, Angry Sarah, and so on, they seem to be painted with the anger. When she made these 'angry paintings' Fishman said that all she could feel was her rage. When she looked around at other women, she saw that they were also frightened and hurt. These paintings were made to force women to confront it rather than letting it turn inward and become self-destructive. Grouped together as a woman's revenge, these paintings show a tremendous amount of energy that can be directed towards feminist creativity and revolution.

These women as well as others (Ivon Snyder, Carla Taeri, and Pat Steir, to name a few) have used words and marks fairly interchangeably as abstract gestures with concrete feminist meanings. Words are marks and marks are words; their repetition becomes not only an interior monologue but also a dialogue with other women. Like Damon and Fisher, these artists make individual feelings and experience the subject of their work, while the content deals with the difficulties and ambiguities of being a feminist artist in a patriarchal society. Their painting surfaces are often violent or mutilated, cut, gashed, ripped, scratched, or torn. The reversal of the usual additive process of painting refers to the violation of the traditional painting surface and also to the physical and psychic violation of women. The thick paint applied with a palette knife in Fishman's work, fills in the surface, acts both as a source for wounds and cement and force holding self together. In Joan Snyder's recent work the marks, cuts and burns combine with words and color to make a passionate statement about sexuality. This work is certainly political. Yet Freeman and MacMillan, in their attempt to distinguish protest from political art, to show that specific forms are more conducive to one or another still are the political potential of abstraction. 9 They accept male definitions of what art is, and do not deal with the evolution of a feminist creative process or feminist art forms. There is a radical approach to a revolutionary endeavor.

I am reminded of Andrea Dworkin's "afterword" — "The Great Punctuation Typography 'Introduction' in her book Woman Hating' where she explains how the text was altered against her will by the publisher's insistence on upper-case letters and standard punctuation. She had wanted the book to be an empty convention as possible, to create a new form that would merge with the content reading a text which violates standard form forces one to change mental sets in order to read. There is no distance. The new form, which is in some ways unfamiliar, forces one to read differently — not to read about different things, but to read in different ways.

I want to permit writers to use forms which violate convention just might permit writers to develop forms which would teach people to think differently — not to think about different things, but to think in different ways. That work is not possible.

The fact that innovative form is so feared by the male establishment shows that such content is the power of its own. If our lives and our art are connected, and if "the personal is political" in the radical sense, then we cannot separate the content of our work from the form it takes. As abstract artists, we need to develop new abstract forms for revolutionary art.

The women's work I've discussed here, and I include my own, is moving in this direction. We are not there yet. Hopefully, as we create art within the context of other women's art, and within the context of evolving feminist theory, we will develop a new visual language. Art in transition is political, for it both is our development and describes our development. In a sense we are carving out our own art, and the work itself is a record of the ongoing process of developing a feminist esthetic ideology.

6. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Andrea Dworkin, Woman Hating (New York, 1974).

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Dedicated to the unknown artist

During April three exhibitions of her work opened in relatively conventional galleries, yet you are highly critical of the 'Art World' structure. I would say that my using the gallery context at the moment is strategic. I am trying to insert a kind of world view smack into the middle of patriarchal notions of what art is. When I was younger I experienced real difficulty in placing my work within this very hostile structure, but at a certain point you have to face up to the necessities. If you want to communicate you are impelled to insert your work into the art of your time. I think you have a responsibility towards your work, and it's a heavy burden to have it sitting around unseen by everyone but a few friends. Once you've been working for a fair period, once you feel fairly confident about your work, you have to make a decision about what to do with it. The decision to place your work within the contemporary art context causes incredible stress. I don't know any women artists who are not stressed.

I can understand that putting your work up for public judgement would be stressful, but why is it particularly acute for women? Well, your work won't be seen properly, it won't be seen clearly. And the difficulties that I get into are, I believe, the difficulties of communication and language based on a totally different perception of the world.

I'd agree that the way people see your work is indelibly coloured by the fact you are a woman, but how does your experience as a woman – your perception of the world – affect your relationship to the male art establishment? Take for example the arts grant aiding committee that you and I served on. It had initially been all male but gradually over the years more and more women were invited to serve as members. As soon as there were several women on that panel the language of discussion changed from being the formal and strategic language of the committee room to being a language of feeling and a language of confrontation. Raws broke out that had formerly seethed unmentioned, and those rows were about absolutely basic issues concerning the whole problem of grant aiding the arts. But they had not been made explicit in all those years of funding the arts in this country. Who made them explicit? The women on the panel.

Don't you think that happened because we were already politised rather than because we were women? No. Look, recently there's been a lot of trouble because there are not enough women teaching in art college and the students are finally getting to the point where they are demanding that more women be hired. In a staff meeting at the college where I teach I said that this request of the students should be listened to, I think it's important because I respect the students, not just because that specific demand might be in my interest. A male member of the staff stood up after me and said he totally agreed with everything I said, he thought we should have at least 50% women teaching at the college and ended up by saying "Of course that would mean the end of art education as we know it." He's absolutely right. (laugh)

But surely a lot of art administrators, people running galleries and so on, are women and they change nothing.

Because administrators who are not feminists are often people who fit themselves into the male structure. They can therefore only give credibility to the existing value system. But this is really complicated we could talk about it for the entire interview... I'm speaking about aspects of our conditioning when made conscious can be a constructive force in your life, but unconscious can be pretty damned destructive.

What do you mean? You see a woman is mute, right? No.

A woman is mute within our culture in that when she speaks she speaks as a man. This is a point I think Cora Kaplan made brilliantly about the first print shop. She pointed out the importance of women when they are outside the area of expressing personal feelings. When they try to speak to the port-speaking-for-humanity. False notes often enter their work and often feel a kind of inauthenticity. This is a problem we all face. For example, you may speak well in public, but is it really you? You can seem articulate and yet alienated. You have to suppress your alienation in order to remain articulate. And that becomes personally destructive.

Exactly. When I was talking at Cambridge about the work I showed them the only hostile member of the disaster was a woman art historian whom people thought was the Renaissance. She attacked me because she said I was calling into doubt ideas about art that she held dear. I was saying that soap ladles were as important as Rembrandt's and she didn't think soap ladles were as important as Rembrandt. I replied that in terms of personal meanings to her Rembrandt's work might be more important than soap ladles, but in terms of telling us things about ourselves, soap ladles were just as important. Then she did a sudden about face, she looked as though she was going to cry, I could see some sort of presen building up inside and she started to mumble. The mumbling, all the