

CHIMÆRA

WOMEN'S ISSUE.

WOMEN . . .

ONE wonders when —
before Archangel
Gabriel's trumpet sounds
the end of the world —
women will become
aware they are
responsible in a consid-
erable degree for the late
running of buses.

They NEVER have
their money ready when
boarding a one-man bus.

F. A. DONNAN,
Matraville.

PAGE ONE

EDITOR: Lina Street

ASSISTED BY: Jude McBean

John Hughes

Julie Cunningham

Judi Dransfield

Peter Schenke

And thanks
to Jenny
Barber &
Virginia Cor-
lenty for
their help



love is...
...being proud
that she's both a
good mother
and a good stu-
dent.

LIP

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 it 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 experience of Australian women. The collective remains open to any women who wish to participate with suggestions, articles, art work and feed-back.

Lip Collective,
66 Carlton St.,
Carlton. 3053. Vic.



PAPERBACKS THAT

Please...

Mills and Boon is an English publishing company that started a branch in Australia about six years ago. They publish a variety of books but are most renowned for their romance section. These books are read by 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 people are strictly heterosexual and the women are always white.

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 spurt), and the characters in them have much in common with those of "The Young and the Restless" because their primary, indeed only concern is making money, the stories have to appeal to the widest possible audience. Hence, the constant promise of a sexual event without the delivery, the exotic settings and the inevitable happy ending.

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. A typical hero 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 irises under 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 to the hue of mahogany, and evoked in Melissa a mind mirage of desert sands and wild winds under a blazing sun. Suddenly it came to her 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 lacy 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 choked 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 flimsy 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

ailing, 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 swiftly, her eyes jewel coloured and lustrous 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 love 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 fluid 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 theory 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 précis 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, domineering, and always right. They would confine our behaviour to convenient stereotypes, even in our fantasies in an attempt to make us fit in and consume.

"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".



fiona buckland



AUS Friendly Society

STUDENT GUIDE TO NEW HEALTH BENEFITS

Medibank levy ends 31st October, 1978

WHAT ACTIONS TO TAKE!

ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PRESENT HEALTH INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS, SHOULD REGISTER WITH THE A.U.S. FRIENDLY SOCIETY FOR THE NEW COMMONWEALTH MEDICAL BENEFIT. *THIS WILL COST YOU NOTHING, BUT YOU MUST REGISTER TO BE ELIGIBLE.*

MEDICAL COVER

1. If you register with the A.U.S. Friendly Society, you will be eligible for the Commonwealth Medical Benefit. This represents only 40% of the Schedule Fee for any Medical Service, with no service costing you more than \$20 when the Schedule Fee is charged.
2. If your doctor decides to classify you as a "socially disadvantaged person", and he/she bulk bills, then a visit to your doctor will cost you nothing.
3. If you want "Basic Medical Cover" (By Govt. definition = 75% of Schedule Fee), then you should take out cover with the A.U.S. Friendly Society. If you join prior to 1st January, 1979, there will be no waiting period for benefit eligibility.
4. If you want cover for the remaining 25% "gap", it is anticipated that this will shortly be available as part of a revised ancillary benefits package.

HOSPITAL COVER

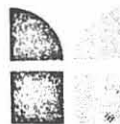
1. Anyone not privately insured for Hospital Benefits will only be entitled to Standard (Public Ward) Hospital care.
2. Intermediate or Private Ward Hospital cover will not be affected by the new arrangements. The special rates available to students through the A.U.S. Friendly Society are up to 60% less than normal, and are available now.
3. If you wish to avail yourself of the substantial savings available through the A.U.S. Friendly Society, but are currently enrolled in another Health Fund or Medibank, then you can transfer immediately, without loss of cover, provided you transfer before 1st January, 1979.

WHERE TO JOIN?

Forms are available at your SRC/Union/Students' Association, and A.U.S. Friendly Society Pharmacies.

ENQUIRIES

Contact A.U.S. FRIENDLY SOCIETY, C/- GRAND UNITED ORDER OF ODDFELLOWS, 147-9 CASTLEREAGH ST., SYDNEY, 2000, OR 'PHONE GRAND UNITED ON (02) 26-6834, AND ASK FOR THE A.U.S. FRIENDLY SOCIETY.



AUS Friendly Society

Another service of the Australian Union of Students

"REARRANGING THE DECK CHAIRS ON THE TITANIC..."

Trying to start a women's group at college...

Trying to start a women's group at college ...
1. Having been appointed by the SRC as "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 solidarity as a group etc. etc.

Of course this college is notorious for inducing a kind of complacent apathy about communicating with anybody at all. We're segregated into different groups with inherently differing "status" — art students are suspicious of teachers and vice versa, we're separated over three campuses with no real common meeting space (or time).

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 compromises 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 meeting there were only five or six of us present, including Gabrielle Finnane and Nicky Hanley from NSWIT, who came to talk about their experiences of running a women's collective. We also decided to start a kind of library for the embryo women's group, and subscribe to magazines like "Spare 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 unionism 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 medical establishment, governments etc.

This was perhaps the most successful meeting, 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 exhibition in the Ivan Dougherty Gallery.

2. 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, enticed by the thought of free booze and put on the defensive 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 snooker with the fellers who'd give them moral support.

The sort of behaviour exhibited by the men involved seems to stem from some kind of distrust of women meeting without men. This distrust is usually rationalised by the argument that such meetings are "sexist". This argument fails completely because it confuses two ideas, i.e. 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 bait. 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 men feel threatened by our meeting without them.

3. On this basis our meetings need no justification — 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 trained 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 problems which are specifically ours — even more important in the context of Alexander Mackie, where the power structure is male and the ratio of male to female staff is grossly unbalanced and where the typical situation is a group of female students with a male lecturer: a structure which is also typical of society in general — there's always a male foreman in a factory full of female workers.

LAVENDER BLUES!

"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.

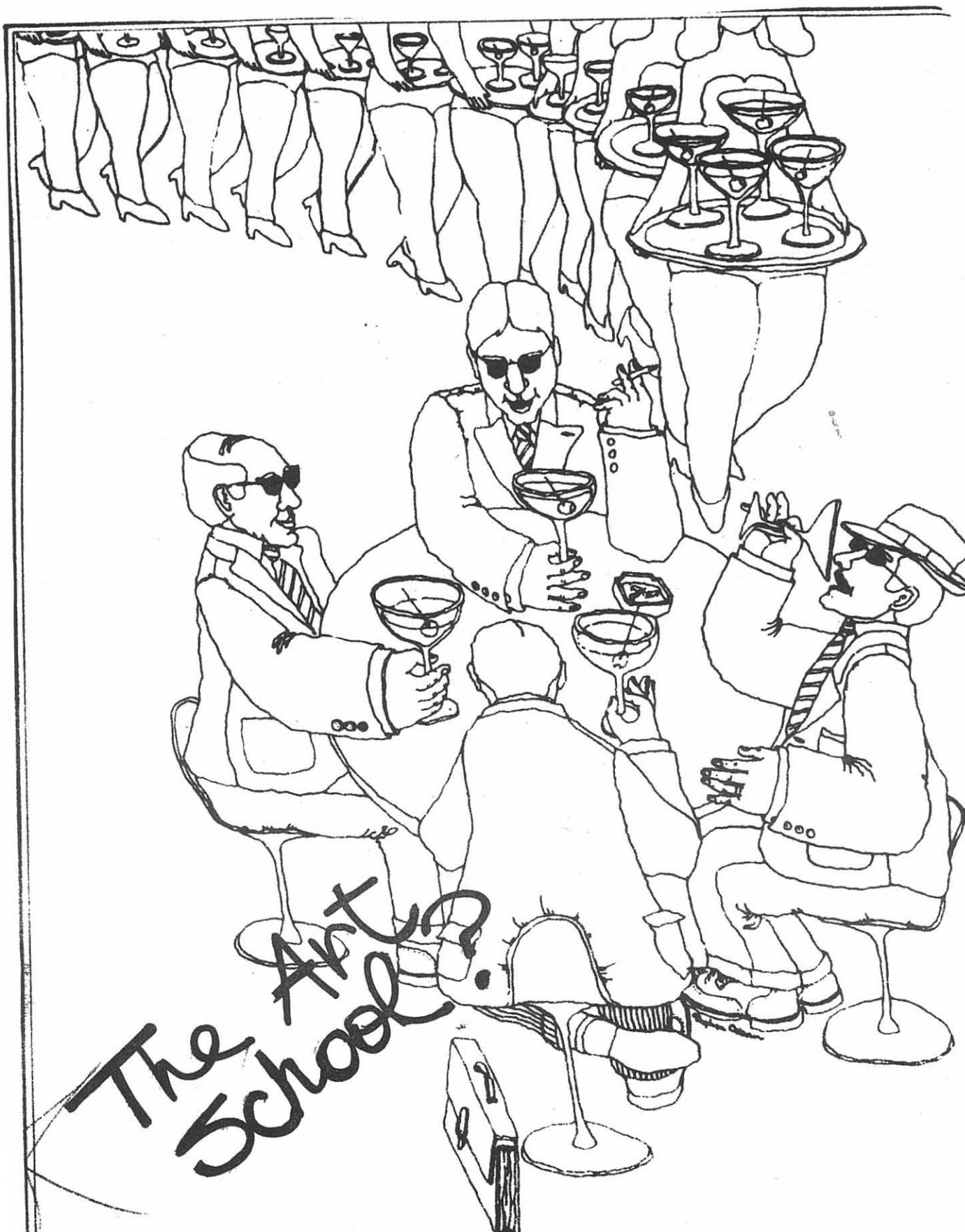
A variety of styles has been included, which should appeal to a broad spectrum of music listeners. Seven of the thirteen tracks are original songs ranging from the love lyrics of "After Such a Good Start" to the militant title tune, "Wake Up Sister". The album also contains traditional folk songs about 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 Pinch nad Nicole Mortier — are amateur musicians who started singing together on social occasions. From requests by friends for 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 Jumbooks 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..."





I can work and play.



I can be very bad.
I can fight.

There are now attempts to redress the balance; in Australia, **Wren Books**, from the Women's Movement Children's Literature Co-operative; 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 several new titles.⁹ However, these counter-sexist books are being criticised by sellers and customers alike for being "sexist"... it seems that positive discrimination will take a long time to become respectable on the grounds of sex, whereas no-one objects, with race, to the portrayal of very positive, if at present unrepresentative, images. Until the books on the library shelf change, maybe 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 criticised 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 doctor (male) dentist (male), ditchdigger (male) and so on through ten or so occupations - including Daddy - where the only females are a go-go dancer and a girl playing with dolls. The fact that so many programmes are re-run leaves little hope that up-dated roles will be shown, though perhaps an attempt is made in the recent science-fiction drama "Andra" on A.B.C.

"There is evidence that parents encourage their children to develop sex-type interests, particularly in providing sex-typed toys for them".¹⁰ 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 four to sixteen plus is advertised this year with photographs of five boys of different ages; only one photo showed a girl, who is looking over a boy's shoulder, and the words: "If his sister Carol is nice to him, he will let her drive the car across the bridge which he himself has built with the static extension kit."¹¹ Yet the same kit is given tabloid newspaper publicity under a large headline: TOYS TO LIBERATE LITTLE GIRLS, with a comment from a marketing director (female) saying "I'm no Women's Libber but..."

I recently collected a pile of toy catalogues available in Canberra shops. In each of six general catalogues, the virtual invisibility of girls, either on packaging or in advertisements, re-inforces their limited roles. All Fisher-Price dolls are female. The only Dinky females in 48 pages are Cinderella in a coach and a two-year-old (though she is using a hammer!). Matchbox, in 64 pages, devote 6 to dolls: "See Suky in the kitchen, dressing for her wedding or off on a camping trip"; the other pages have cars, boats and "super-detailed" war toys, and male models on every second page, while the "fully poseable" Disco-girls have "over 40 different outfits" and "Tony, their

boyfriend, too". Toys have Jenny, the jet-setting Qantas hostess - "the glamorous big girl that little girls are going to want to be like"; its catalogue of 44 pages has a better 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 Ravensburger catalogue (not available in Canberra from a European firm making games and craft materials. Not a single item where girls or boys are mentioned, only an 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, support skills and attitudes: the story of **William's Doll**,¹² where boy is given a baseball set and many other boys' toys despite his wish for a doll is probably still the rule (though in the story his grandmother wins out and he gets the doll eventually). Hopefully, a present recently received by my daughter from the U.S.A. shows a changing trend: a toy stethoscope came in a box on which a girl is pictured using the stethoscope, while a boy holds the pet cat to be doctored.

What changes can be made, at home and at school? Home is clearly the most basic where most of the early experiences occur, and few nuclear families reflect feminist 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 change can be effected in a group situation where at least some teachers and parents are aware of sexism. I shall describe a local example briefly.

Since January 1976, a group of Canberra parents and teachers have been working in a co-operative school called the Neighbourhood Children's Centre, where children from three to eight, with younger and older siblings, 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; small numbers (35 at present) make this possible.

We are very conscious of the sexist nature of many learning materials and situations, and deliberately try to counteract this, though we admit to a major difficulty that our roster 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 "flop" 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 children to set sex-roles, so that they see girls digging, boys knitting, women mowing, men cooking and changing babies. In dressing, and dressing-up, there are wide choices and boys happily wear skirts, hats or handbags. Real and make-believe cooking is one of the most popular of all activities. The role playing that spontaneously develops proves that the children can learn to adopt a wider 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 their open and natural acceptance of nakedness which grows out of swimming-together and sharing mixed toilets. Knowledge of their bodies extends naturally to coping sensibly and openly with their developing sexuality. Aggression has been another area where more freedom results in the children solving their own problems in their own time; they have shown us that co-operative 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. Duffy Primary School, Canberra, held a meeting in October 1976, where parents, teachers, and members of the community met to hear speakers on the Schools Commission Report "Girls School and Society" and to see films of sex-stereotyping in pre-school and primary school children. Discussion of particularly bad books in reading schemes such as **Breakthrough to Literacy**; "things I can do" (illustrated), can shock some teachers and parents into the realization of the permeation of the stereotypes.

Change can be pushed at the school level, as it is possible to expose many children to new choices - so that boys can go to cooking and girls to wood-work as a matter of policy. Some schools already encourage girls to play soccer, and boys to share dish-washing, while strong nine-year-old girls are not "protected" from lifting heavy objects. Much more must be demanded of our schools by parents if girls and boys are really to have their needs provided for: in terms of cultural change, we must find a greater tolerance, gentleness, strength and resourcefulness.

reprinted from
"Refractory Girl"
Nos 13-14 ...

ANYMORE

that we had better laugh if we are able to do battle with it; it can be used as a display of personal charm and attractiveness. In all these cases, humour has, in addition to its other functions, a political function.

Humour as a weapon in the social arsenal constructed to maintain caste, class, race and sex inequalities is a very common thing. Much of this humour is pure slander. It serves to put whoever it is in their place by showing that they can't be taken seriously, that they're too stupid or dumb, or ugly or childlike or smelly or mean to count as human. But some ridicule of the powerless touches on the real behaviour of the people who are out of power and the laughter is at the manifestations of their victimisation. This is not because people are "naturally" insensitive to other people's pain, or "naturally" bad or cruel. It is extraordinarily difficult to understand what it means to be out of power when you aren't there, to understand the behaviour, the symptoms of powerlessness. It is very difficult for someone not under personal or physical or social threat to understand why someone else is so nervous, so jumpy, so dumb, so slow moving, so "dizzy", so careful about their speech, so careless about their speech. It is common place in the Women's Movement to tell men that if they really want to understand what we mean by our total oppression, they should pass for women for a day and see what happens. Ignored in conversations, patronised at work, hello-babied by strangers, ogled on the street, followed into buildings, fondled in crowded buses; attacked in elevators; objects of ridicule and contempt; even the most neutral transaction is usually accompanied by abuse. "Hey Dutch, she says do we have any pork chops. Did you hear her. Do we have any pork chops? Lady what's your problem? Can't you see we don't have any pork chops?"

As women, we live in a coercive, threatening, unpleasant world; a world which tolerates us only when we are very young or very beautiful. If we become stupid or slow, jumpy or fast, dizzy or highpitched, we are simply expressing the pathology of our social condition. So when we hear jokes against women and we are asked why we don't laugh at them, the answer is easy, simple and short. Of course we're not laughing, you arsehole. Nobody laughs at the sight of her own blood.

But this is a glib answer because people do laugh at their own pain. The important difference is that if they are really to find it funny, they have to have made the joke. Humour here too had a political use, but its friction is reversed: it is a weapon or technique of survival used by the oppressed. It is the powerless fighting back.

There are a number of great comic traditions among oppressed groups. Lenny Bruce had a bit about why Jews and Blacks are such natural comedians. It focussed on the survival function of entertaining: you charm your oppressor and then you don't have to work so hard.

But it's deeper than that. My grandparent's humour drew from an Eastern European Jewish tradition. All sorts of characters appeared in this humour, many of them winning small victories over their oppressors. (The clever, gentle Jew, for instance, who upon hearing a Prussian officer yell "Swine!" turns around, bows, and returns the introduction: "Cohen. Pleased to meet you"). In one of these stories were there kike jokes, archetypal Izzy's and Ikeys: the "little Hebe" wasn't there. The humour was based on the understanding of a shared and unjust oppression. If the humour wasn't heavy on political ways to fight the oppression, it was nevertheless about people fighting back, retaining their dignity. It ridiculed those who oppressed them. This type of humour can create strength. It can assert that the roles and social categories we find ourselves in are not going to intimidate us; they are human creations and we can play with them, challenge them, attack them, ridicule them. Historian Margaret Young Jackson quotes a beautiful example of this: an exchange between a slave and his master, who is just about to fight a duel and has dressed appropriately.

"Pompey, how do I look?"
 "O Massa, mighty"
 "What do you mean, 'mighty', Pompey?"
 "Why Massa, you look noble"
 "What do you mean by 'noble'?"
 "Why say you just look like one lion"
 "Why Pompey, where have you ever seen a lion?"
 "I seen one down in yonder field the other day, massa"
 "Pompey, you foolish fellow, that was a jackass"
 "Was it massa? Well you look just like him!"

Some humour of oppressed groups is directed against types within the group itself. There are categories of self-deprecation humour within groups of the oppressed. Categories even, of the same kind of stereotype of the group held by the rest of society. This seems directly a survival humour, an implied understanding that if this is what some of us have

become, it is because we couldn't help it, and we're helping it by naming it and laughing at it ourselves.

I know of no comparable tradition of women's humour. By women's humour, I don't mean women being funny. I mean a humour which recognises a common oppression, notices its source and the roles it requires, identifies the agents of that oppression. This may simply be my own ignorance; there may be traditions of women's humour in different social classes, ethnic groups, cultures, historical periods. But if such traditions existed or exist now, I have been denied them. I remember no redemptive or fighting humour about my condition.

If this is true, it is a very painful conclusion. Why didn't we develop or maintain a tradition of humour with which to fight back? Why didn't I have a culture available which would allow me to mock my own roles, and therefore question their sanctity, their quality of inevitability?

There may be a couple of reasons. Consider rebellious humour as a technique for surviving. It would seem to require that the group with whom one identified provide some permanent, though perhaps fragile shelter, some base from which one goes out and deals with an oppressive world. While there are many occasions when women are together — in offices, in factories, in homes — our base has not generally been a social grouping of women, but some particular man with whom we live. In fact, it is assumed that when women are out together socially, they are not together out of volition; they are together either because their men prefer to be alone, or they are waiting for some man, or they are forced together by their inability to attract some man. For most of us, our livelihood depends on having some man protect us — and our primary social interaction is limited to a single individual from the opposite sex. Under these circumstances, the development of an open, rebellious humour may not have been an option available to us. In addition the charm that we had to develop was of a very special nature. For us, the definition of our charm depended primarily on our being passive, beautiful, accepting and mute. Had we just been charming, coming into consciousness, a politicising, a without also being required to be sex objects at the same time, we might still have been able to develop some fairly subtle survival humour. But being a funny, nasty clown doesn't go along with the definition of woman that gets us our provider (beautiful, mysterious, she keeps her own counsel; a quiet stream...).

An independent humour is too active for the objectified role we were meant to fill. Yes, we had an obligation to laugh endlessly at men's jokes, whether or not they were funny, insulting, crude, stupid, unpleasant; yes, we were supposed to laugh at what others thought we were; yes, we were supposed to be witty and pleasing — all that is part of personal charm. But to be able to mock the requirements that we be all these things is quite a different thing.

It may be, in fact, that the reason the charge "humourless" is not simply dismissed — as we would dismiss a charge that we were, for instance, stockpiling all the desk calculators in the world in order to halt commerce and industry and thereby bring on the final catastrophe — is that "having a sense of humour" in the way that is defined for women (that is, laughing at those things only which we are expected to laugh at) is part of maintaining our charm. Since our charm is so bound up with our survival, it may become a frightening accusation when people tell us we've lost our sense of humour — it's as good as telling us we're ugly. And it is, of course, as revealing. It means that we may actually be changing our social roles, that we have stopped trying to please. If we are no longer laughing at what is not funny to us, we may be, in a way, taking the first step in our being able to develop our own women's humour.

There's another baroque aspect of the cultural definition of women which may have made it difficult for us to develop a fighting, saving humour. At present, in our culture, unless we are being **woman** (beautiful, mysterious, in touch with the verities of birth, blood and death, quiet by the seashore...), being a woman, (actually being a 'lady' in the sense of: 'ladies room' or 'Listen, Lady, how the hell should I know you're going to get on the plane') is itself ridiculous.

That is, part of the present societal definition of woman is "ridiculous person". Women have always been in part defined as "ridiculous persons"; but there was a time when "wife" and "mother" was, in principle, honoured. If having babies, being that wife and mother was an oppressive role, at least it was something that had its rewards: there was a dignity attached to that social position. But wife and mother are held in less and less esteem, and are considered less and less useful socially. And until the current Women's Movement we had no alternative roles into which we were accepted and from which we could gain dignity. So women fast became that residual category, socially useless and ridiculous persons.

How can you trust humour when it's a weapon used against you? I notice movie audiences laughing when a woman does anything but be woman (beautiful, mysterious, a golden mist surrounds her...). It is quite a feat to turn what is defined as a ridiculous state of being into your own definition of the ridiculous, to take control of the quality of the absurdity, to turn it away from yourself. We must at the same time show that our existence has social meaning, that we agree that what we are supposed to be is not only ridiculous, but also barbaric, that nobody is either **woman** or "lady", and that all this is very funny indeed. That's a hard act to get together.

Finally women have not had a tradition of rebellious and fighting humour perhaps because the humour of the oppressed is based on a knowledge of shared oppression, and this has been hidden from us in curious ways. One of the paths of coming into consciousness, into politics of an oppressed group is the realisation that their misery is not due to some innate inferiority, to their own flawed characters, but that there is something going on outside that is keeping them down, and that it is not fair.

The curious thing about our oppression is that we were 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, whether defined in terms of being "born a woman", suffering because of men, the meanness of men, whatever, the conclusion was that this was timeless, unalterable, the way things are meant to be and always will be. It was woman's nature to suffer. We dug pain. How else could we really be **woman**?

It is, of course, belabouring the obvious to state that once a group is in a position of victim, it certainly is more pleasant for most people to believe that they like being there. Happy slaves, dumb niggers, women digging pain. God's in his heaven all right. But, to retrace, to deny this definition, clothed as it is in Ancient wounds! Guided Tour of the House of Secrets!), to deny this idiot metaphysics means a statement. No. We don't like the pain. We hate it. We hate the waste and destruction of human lives, of women's lives, of our lives. And we hate it so much we're not going to allow it to happen anymore.

There have been extraordinary obstacles to the development of a woman's fighting humour. We must therefore experiment with the public presentation of such a humour. We must try out forms which throw off or not they were funny, insulting, crude, stupid, the shackles of self ridicule, self abnegation; we must tap that capacity for outrage, that knowledge of our shared oppression.

We must construct a women's culture with its own character, its fighting humour, its defiant celebration of our worth. We must reclaim our history, our rights to self-expression, and collective enjoyment. We must create our own humour. The propitiating laughter, the fixed and charming smiles are over. This time, when we laugh, things are going to be funny.



"A woman is a foreigner in her own country"

A woman is a foreigner in her own country

"Shut your hole honey
mine's making money."
(Bette Midler)

A woman is a foreigner

A woman is a foreigner in her own country.

"From a non-dualistic viewpoint, thought and language, constituting a whole, always refer to the reality of the thinking subject. Authentic thought-language is generated in the dialectical relationship between the subject and his concrete historical and cultural reality. In the case of the alienated cultural processes characteristic of a modern or object societies, thought-language itself is alienated, when the fact that these societies do not manifest an authentic thought of their own during the periods of most acute crises. Disassociated from the action implied by authentic thought, this mode of thought is lost in inextricable false words. Irresistibly attracted by the life style of the direct or indirect alienated man is a nostalgic man never truly committed to his world. To appear to be rather than to be is one of his all-around wishes. His thinking and the way it expresses the world are literally a reflection of the thought and expression of the alienated man." (Paulo Freire, Cultural Action for Freedom)

A shoulder to cry on
A thigh to lie on
and a cunt to fly on.
(anon)

effect movies

THE PURPOSE OF ~~PUBLICITY~~ 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.)

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

GABRIELLE FINNANE



"Julia was a woman who actually existed, although that is not her real name", says Jane Fonda. "Lillian Hellman has vowed legally never to reveal Julia's true identity. But her parents were of the Rockefeller kind of wealth in the United States during the '20's and '30's. Her father and uncle were in the highest levels of government. They were ultra-rich and powerful and very unpleasant people".

"Julia was one of those rare human beings who was able to transcend her class", goes on Jane. "She was born into a family that did not care about the plight of the poor, that that didn't care about the poor, and were essentially selfish and little people. Julia was able to rise above all that. She was able to perceive reality, perceive true suffering, and she

The political action of women in history is frequently represented as individual altruism. They are often martyrs for the cause. Or they suffer stoically.

volumes of discursive, evasive, elliptical autobiography (An Unfinished Woman, Pentimento, Scoundrel Time) and made them best-sellers, giving Miss Hellman an historical centrality and public réclame she never had as a playwright or screenwriter. A largely unrepentant fellow-traveller, who (unlike her lover of twenty-odd years, Dashiell Hammett) never actually joined the Communist Party, she appears to embody an easy, unbroken line of liberal opposition through the 'premature anti-fascism' of the 1930s Vietnam campaign and Watergate. Precisely because she eschewed ideas and ideology, her career presents her admirers with something pure and redemptive. Her fuel is anger and

Another is because "Julia" is based on a book by another woman — both Jane and Vanessa admire — author Lillian Hellman. As Jane says: "She is one of our leading American playwrights, and has been since the middle 1930's. She has written a number of very successful plays — such as 'The Children's Hour', 'Toys in the Attic', 'The Little Foxes' — which have often been filmed". As outspoken as Jane and Vanessa, Ms Hellman was on the outer in the infamous McCarthy "blacklist" era of the early 1950's, but she received an emotional "welcome back" to Hollywood at the last Academy Awards.



Lillian Hellman en route to Hollywood in 1935.

Right On!!

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 notoriety — their relationships with men. They are exonerated 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 Lillian reminisces in 1962 about both Julia and Hammett.

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 variations of fashion throughout the film.

Julia is a must for quality filmgoers. More about this important film in our next issue.

Women's Films

Filmmakers Cinema

P.O. Box 217, Kings Cross, NSW 2011. 31 3237. New catalogue coming out in January. Descriptions of all films included.

All This Juice & All This Joy. 16mm Col. Helen Carey; \$10.00.

A Handful of Dust. 16mm Col. 45 mins. Ayten Kayululu.

Attica. 16mm Col. 100 mins. Cinda Firestone; \$40.00.

Breadmaker [The]. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Rosalind Gillespie; \$6.00.

Burstforth. 16mm B/W. 4 mins. Pat Fiske; \$2.50.

Circuit. 6mm B/W. 40 mins. Gill Burnett; \$20.00.

Cinemadrew. 16mm B/W 4½ mins. Barbara Levy; \$3.00.

Dream. 16mm B/W. 5 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$3.00.

Easy Street. 16mm Col. 20 mins. Penny Cigna; \$10.00.

Edge City. 16mm C/B/W. 20 mins. Diana Kearns; \$12.00.

Film For Discussion. 16mm. B/W. 25 mins. Martha Kay; \$15.00.

Flies. 16mm B/W. 10 mins. Di Fuller; \$6.00.

Fud 69. 16mm B/W 6 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$4.00.

Get High the Natural Way. 16mm B/W. 2 mins. Gill Armstrong; \$2.00.

Great Medicine Ball Caravan. 16mm Col. 25 mins. Jane Oehr; \$15.00.

Green. 16mm Col. 6 mins. Clemency Weight; \$3.00.

Gretel. 16mm Col. 25 mins. Gillian Armstrong; \$13.00.

Guriganya — Free School. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Martha Kay; \$4.00.

Harbour Lighteridge. 16mm B/W. 5 mins. Michelle Murch; \$4.00.

Hearts and Spades. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Gill Leahy/Pat Fiske; \$6.00.

Highway. 16mm Col. 6 mins. Hilary Harris; \$3.00.

Home. 16mm B/W. 15 mins. Barbara Levy/Margo Knox/Leonie Crennan/Susan Varga/Robynne Murphy; \$15.00.

In An Onion. 16mm B/W. 13 mins. Jeanette Grant-Thompson; \$3.00.

I Happened To Be A Girl. 16mm C/B/W. 23 mins. Jan Chapman; \$14.00.

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 Spae. 16mm Col. 5 mins. Leslie Nicholl; \$4.00.

Living Together. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. Julie Gibson; \$4.00.

Moonage Daydreams of Charlene Stardust. 16mm B/W. 13 mins. Margot Oliver; \$8.00.

Moon Rock. 16mm Col. 20 mins. Jane Oehr/Ian Stocks; \$15.00.

Niugini. 16mm Col. 73 mins. Jane Oehr;

Phantasma. 16mm Col. 7 mins. Karen Wynn; \$6.00.

Reflections. 16mm Col. 4 mins. Bev Clarke; \$4.00.

Roof Needs Mowing [The]. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. Naomi Christie; \$6.00.

Satdee Nite. 16mm Col. 27 mins. Gillian Armstrong;

Scholastics. 16mm. B/W. 8 mins. Nth. Syd. Girls High; \$3.00.

Sophie. 16mm B/W. 11 mins. Diane Van Dugteren; \$7.00.

Stairway To Hell. 16mm. C/B/W. 1½ mins. Diana Kearns; \$1.00.

Still Life. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. Jenny Thornley/Dagmar Ross; \$6.00.

Stripper. 16mm Col. 1 min. Siew Hwa Beh; \$3.00.

Tamu. 16mm Col. 35 mins. Jane Oehr;

Take 5. 16mm B/W. 5 mins. Margaret Clancy; \$6.00.

Tidikawa and Friends. 16mm Col. 90 mins. Su and Jef Doring; \$60.00.

To Bias Icarus Age 4. 16mm B/W. 3½ mins. Clemency Weight; \$3.00.

Up And Down. 16mm C/B/W. 12 mins. Phyllis Deutscher; \$7.00.

Upon Reflection. 16mm Col. 40 mins. Diana Nettlefold; \$20.00.

US Womans Film (Newsreel, USA). 16mm B/W. 40 mins. Newsreel, USA; \$15.00.

What's The Matter Sally? 16mm B/W. 12 mins. Dany Torsh/Meg Sharp/Robyn Dryen; \$8.00.

Woman's Day — 20 Cents. 16mm B/W. 12 mins. Margot Knox/Virginia Coventry/Robynne Murphy/Adrienne Marlyn; \$7.00.

Women's House. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Ann Roberts; \$6.00.

Yazidis 11. 16mm Col. 20 mins. Jacqueline Bottaqisio/Georges Drion; \$15.00.

Melbourne Coop

382 Lygon Street, Carlton 3053. Ph. 347 2984, 347 3450.

Andrew. 16mm B/W. 25 mins. Angela Youssef; \$25.00.

Footage. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Janet Isaac; \$4.00.

Media Centre

LaTrobe University, Bundoora. 3083.

It's Just Something Kids Do. 16mm B/W. 27 mins. Tricia Edgar; \$15.00.

My Way. 16mm B/W. 25 mins. Tricia Edgar; \$15.00.

Got At. 16mm B/W. 18 mins. Mary Keane/Kate Clancy/etc.; \$15.00.

Australian Film and Television School

2 Help Street, Chatswood. Ph. 412 1077.

Bellbrook. 16mm Col. Robynne Murphy.

Sunday Morning. 16mm B/W. Robynne Murphy;

One Hundred Pair A Day. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. Gillian Armstrong;

Canberra Women's Film Group

12 Bremer Street, Canberra ACT. Ph 956 916.

Super Duper. 16mm Col. 6 mins. Canberra Women's Film Group;

Australian Film Institute

Sydney Ph 61 2743. Ground Floor Bay 2, 365A Pitt Street, 2000. Melbourne Ph 347 6888. P.O. Box 165, Carlton South, 3053.

Backdrop For A Play. 16mm Col. 19 mins. Diana Nettlefold; \$5.00 (Children's film about play acting.)

Bobby Hares: A Cautionary Tale. 16mm Col. 12 mins. Diana Nettlefold; \$6.00. (Diana wrote this tale when she was a child and filmed it when she grew up.)

Earth Message. 16mm Col. 23 mins. Corinne and Arthur Cantrill; \$15.00. (A meditative film/poem on the Australian landscape around Canberra in early winter.)

Fijian Things. 16mm Col. 12 mins. Diana Nettlefold. \$6.00. (Some aspects of Fijian life and culture).

Footage. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Janet Isaac. \$4.00 (The various phases of the human condition are expressed in this study of the human foot in its many aspects).

It's Just Something Kids Do. 16mm B/W. 27 mins. Patricia Edgar; \$15.00. (A study of highrise housing and its implications, especially as it effects children's play patterns).

Robert Klippel Junk Sculpture 1964. 16mm. B/W. 5 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; (A cinematic exploration of the energies, rhythms and tensions of the sculptor's work).

The Secret of Madam X. 16mm Col. 5 mins. Antoinet; \$2.50. (The story of a nun unable to realise her full potential who seeks fulfilment outside herself).

Statues. 16mm B/W. 14 mins. Diana Nettlefold; \$7.00 (Children on a Tasmanian East Coast beach act out their own variation of the "Statues" game).

Tidikawa and Friends. 16mm Col. 90 mins. Su and Jef Doring; \$82.00. (A documentary film about Bedamini people of the great Papuan Plateau Area).

Time For Hiakie. 16mm Col. 11 mins. Diana Nettlefold; \$5.50. (An inventive game devised by children playing in a burnt out forest reserve near Mt. Wellington).

To Nofretiti. 16mm B/W. 4 mins. Sandra & Yoram Gross; \$2.00. (A film using superimposed b/w printing to evoke the effect of a real Egyptian bas-relief).

Upon Reflection. 16mm. Col. 40 mins. Diana Nettlefold; \$20.00. (In this experimental film all but two of the images are reflections. The story is about the bond between two young musicians).

Harry Hooton. 16mm Col. 83 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$80.00. (A film about the late Harry Hooton, Australian poet, anarchist and technocrat whose ideas, remarkably prefigure the theories of Buckminster Fuller).

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. 16mm B/W/Col. 30 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$20.00. (A film about the sculptor who was killed in the war in 1915 at the age of 23).

The Incised Image. 16mm B/W/Col. 23 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$15.00. (A study of the work of Charles Lloyd, an Australian artist working in London with etching materials).

Moving Statics. 16mm B/W. 30 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$20.00. (The abstract, kinetic art of the Dutch Mime, Will Spoer).

Robert Klippel Drawings. 1947-1963. 16mm Col. 25 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$15.00. (A study of sketches and drawings by the noted sculptor).

Skin Of Your Eye. 16mm Col. 117 mins. C. & A. Cantrill; \$100.00. (Fifteen film essays on Melbourne).

National Library of Australia

Canberra ACT 2600. Ph 62 1111. 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 Youssef. (The disintegration of a small family).

Angela 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 dramatic story 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 stresses and strains placed upon both mother and child when the mother goes out to work).

Cleo From 5 to 7. 16mm.

A Day Like Tomorrow. 16mm The Film and TV School, directed by Graham Shirley, 1974. (The plight and possible relief for a woman in one of Sydney's outer suburbs).

Destroy, She Said. By Marguerite Duras, The French novelist and playwright. She has created a haunting film about the politics of alienation.

Duet For Cannibals. By Susan Sontag. (A cerebral comedy that explores the psychological effects of sexual roles).

Film For Discussion. 16 mm B/W. 25 mins. Sydney Women's Film Group/Peublo Films Directed by Martha Kay. (This film raises questions about women's position at work and at home).

Gretel. 16mm. By Gillian Armstrong.

Growing Up Female. 16mm B/W. 60 mins. Julia Reichert/James Klein. (The socialization and sex role of the American woman).

Guriganya — Free School 1972. 16mm B/W. 8 mins. Martha Kay. (A film about Sydney's free school — breaking down authoritarian relationships between adult and child).

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

In An Onion. 16mm B/W. 13 mins. 1967 Jeannette Grant-Thompson. (Made in Brisbane, it depicts a neurotic love affair).

Living Together. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. 1973 Julie Gibson. (Using animation the film depicts the struggle women go through in trying to discover themselves while in relationships with men).

The Maki Sisters — The Women of Modern Japan. 16mm Col. 27 mins. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), 1959. (Modern and traditional life in Japan).

Manuela. 16mm B/W. 40 mins. (A young Cuban woman whose family is killed in a police raid joins the guerillas in the Sierra Maestra).

Melina Mercouri. 16mm.

More Than Fair. 16mm B/W. 29 mins. Unesco, 1970. (Shows aspects of the changed social position of women in modern life).

No Bras To Burn. 16mm Col. 49 mins. Lionel Hudson 1973. (Studies the new emerging roles of women in Papua New Guinea and contrasts the traditional and new ways of life).

1938 Olympia. 16mm d. Lene Riefenstahl.

100 Pair A Day. 16mm B/W. 7 mins. Gillian Armstrong, 1973. (The film is set in the 30's and concerns the struggle of a girl to survive the working day at a shoe factory after having a backyard abortion).

1973 The Passionate Industry. 16mm d. Joan Long.

1969 Pictures That Moved. 16mm script. Joan Long.

Responsible Jobs For Girls. 17mm 11 mins. Career Productions in association with Mutual Life & Citizens' Assurance, 1967 (Is this your Career? Series). (A vocational guidance film showing the wide range of opportunities for girls with high school and higher education in administrative and information fields).

Robert Frost, A Love Letter To The World. 16mm 1964. (Received an academy award in the documentary division.)

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. (A brilliant satire on the ritual of suburban existence, the film combines elements of absurd humour with pointed social comment).

Satdee Night. 16mm Gillian Armstrong.

1919 Sentimental Bloke. 16mm. co-dir. prod. star Lottie Lyell.

Something Different. 16mm B/W. 80 mins. Written and directed by Vera Chytilova. (Compares a quest for meaning in life as it evolves in the lives of two different women).

The Stripper. 16mm Col. Siew Hwa Beh. (This film was made by Siew Hwa Beh, one of the editors of the magazine "Women and Film" in California. It expresses a feminist view of a stripper; its implications are vast).

Stronger Since The War? 16mm 54 mins. Australian Broadcasting Commission for Intertel, 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. 16mm 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 Time. 16mm Col/B/W. 26 mins. Peter Tammer. (A portrait of Myra Roper).

Woman's Day. 16mm B/W. (Aspects of a day in the lives of many women we know with two small children. Doctor, tranquilizers, 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).

Woman's Strangest Job. 16mm 25 mins. Documentary Film Productions. 1964. (Shows Australia's professional woman crocodile hunter, Mrs Kris Pawlowska, at work at Karumba 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 tolerances).

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. 1958. (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. Ifage, 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 Have Had An Abortion. 16mm Col. 29 mins. Produced by Martha Stuart/"Are You Listening" series. (Deciding about having an abortion and having one).

You Don't Have To Buy 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 creative talent).

Sydney Women's Film Group

In these films women look at themselves and at the lives of other women. Each film in its own way is an attempt to understand the world and women's situation in it, and every film can be a starting point for change. When you use these films and discuss what you see in them you are continuing a process which the filmmakers have only begun.

The films we list here concern work, marriage, love, family, consumerism, women as sex objects, and the

women's movement. We hope that you will find a film here that will meet your interests. Get in touch with us through the Filmmakers Co-operative 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 available as well.

How to get the films Write or ring the Filmmakers Co-operative well in advance of the date on which you want to screen the films. If you have other dates open, list them too — also list films you would accept if the ones you want are not available. If you feel that you cannot pay full rents, discuss that in your letter too. The co-op will send you an invoice which, if possible, you should pay in advance. (Be sure to include a phone number and address (not P.O. Box) where you can be reached.) If you live in Sydney, come in and pick the films up the day before the screening. If you live outside the Sydney area, the films will be sent to you collect the day before the screening by TAA or East-West air freight where TAA doesn't run. — to be held at the Freight Office for pick-up. When you finish the screening, send the films back **immediately** — as soon as you can — prepaid by TAA or however. If at all possible, just slip a little note in with comments on the films and how the screening went.



How to get the films: Write or ring the Filmmakers P.O. Box 217, Kings Cross NSW 2011. Ph 31 3237 31 6708.

Films are all 16mm with optical sound unless otherwise stated.

What's The Matter Sally? Robyn Dryden, Megan Sharp, Dany Torsh b/w, 12 minutes. Rental: \$8.00. Discussion Kit. 1974.

Would wages for housewives simply reinforce women's role as the lowest paid people in the system? Why is housework not included in the national accounts? Is it real work anyway? A drama/documentary aimed at questioning assumptions about the nature of housework. Suitable for any age group from 10 up.

Expectations Nil Ann Folland b/w, 6½ minutes, 1975. Rental: \$5.00.

Expectations Nil tells the story of a young girl who is reluctant to leave the familiar for the unknown; her only escape being in her fantasies. Her hesitation is briefly contrasted with the determination of an old woman. This film was shot on location in London and uses the ageless symbol of trains and railway stations to show the young girl's indecision.

Living Together Julie Gibson b/w, 7 minutes. Rental: \$5.00. 1971.

An animated version of now-classical feminist cartoon about women and men living together. Provides material for discussion about alternatives to the family and a questioning of love relationships. Best for people over 16.

Ruth Naomi Christie b/w, 5 minutes. Rental: \$5.00.

A film about depression — Ruth is blocked in work and isolated from relationships.

The Roof Needs Mowing Gillian Armstrong b/w, 10 minutes. Rental: \$4.00. 1971.

Surrealist and satirical, Gill's film looks at family relations in suburbia. Her portrait of the martyred mother is particularly devastating. Use this film anywhere — it's very funny.

Woman's Day — 20c 16mm, b/w, 12 minutes. Rental: \$7.00. 1972.

Aspects of a day in the lives of many women we know with two small children. Doctor, tranquilizers, supermarket, fashion parade, groceries, end of the day depression and exhaustion, John Laws on the radio. Everyone agrees — there must be something wrong with a woman who just can't cope. This film is very effective in provoking discussion around the issue of whether her conditions are to blame.

Film For Discussion Sydney Women's Film Group b/w 24 minutes. Rental: \$15.00. 1970-73.

A drama/documentary showing Jeni in her office, talking about marriage with her girlfriend as they put on make-up, going shopping, trying to discuss new ideas with her boyfriend and with her mother during a family dinner. Designed to raise questions on work, consumerism, relationships with men and in the family. Works best with people 16 and over, in an atmosphere of questioning.

Women's House Anne Roberts, sound: Barbara Alysén 16mm, b/w, 8 minutes. Rental: \$6.00. 1974.

Shows the home of the Sydney Women's Liberation Movement — the place where meetings are held, and activities are planned. Shows recent demonstrations. Soundtrack includes Kerryn Higgs singing "We Are Rising". Women's House is at 25 Alberta Street, Sydney. Tel: 61 7325. (Address since changed).

The Stripper Siew-Hwa Beh Colour, 1 minute. Rental: \$3.00. 1973.

A witty experimental film which utterly exposes the notion of women as sex objects. The film is an example of how form can be used creatively in the service of a highly developed feminist imagination. Excellent in any situation.

Socialism Feminism Conference 1974 Jane Oehr and Martha Kay ½" videotape, 40 minutes Donation: to Women in Solidarity, 62-64 Regent Street, Chippendale.

A subjective impression of the conference — we didn't even begin to cover it all: Joyce Stevens, Biff Ford, Ros Harrison and many other speakers: Teresa Jack and Jen Short singing "Raise your voices high". You can get this tape and the equipment to play it on from the video access centres in most major cities. A video tape can be stopped and started anywhere, sections can be repeated and discussed; it is an excellent tool for small groups.

US Woman's Film [Newsreel] 16mm, b/w, 40 minutes. Rental: \$15.00. 1970.

Beginning with individual interviews, women talk about the days when their big hope was the man and marriage which would bring fulfilment. After disillusionment comes a raising of consciousness about women's real position in everyday reality. The second part of the film shows women in consciousness raising and self-help groups. Political understanding expands until the women can see their personal situation in the light of social realities affecting everyone. The film shows mainly women's economic exploitation and, although some "career" women speak, it deals primarily with the situation of the majority: poor and working women. The print that we have is in poor condition and only worth showing if there is a good sound system.

Home 16mm, b/w, 17 minutes. Rental: \$12.00. 1973.

Documentary with re-enactment as two women who spent their childhood in the "homes" of the child welfare system reveal what happens when young women are incarcerated in these prisons. The child welfare system buttresses the patriarchal family — if the family of a working class girl should "fail", she is liable to be locked up in a "home", forced to undergo "virginity" tests and other human indignities, sentenced to hard labour and deprived of all affectionate contact with other human beings. Deprived of all rights to education, freedom, or love, the girls who then rebel are sent through a system of increasingly punitive gaols, ultimately emerging with only one prospect for survival — prostitution.

Leonie's Film by Leonie Crennan 16mm, b/w, 11 minutes. Rental: \$5.00. 1971.

A deeply felt personal film about a strained relationship. Made by someone just becoming aware of the potential of the film medium to reveal emotions.

Still Life Jeni Thornley and Dagmar Ross 16mm, b/w, 7 minutes. Rental: \$6.00. 1974.

Still Life recreates an art class through the artist's model's eyes. It attempts to convey the conflict she feels while modelling for an all male class. Model — Janet Collins, Song — Janet Collins, Music — Jerry Garcia.

The Moonage Dreams of Charlene Stardust b/w, 13 minutes. Rental: \$8.00. 1974.

A slightly silly look at the real and fantasy life of a highschool girl: dreams and expectations provided by the movies, advertising, magazines, contrasted with the rather deadlier reality she is experiencing at home and with her boyfriend. The film is impressionistic and open-ended: Charlene realising that things don't have to be the way she always thought — that changes are possible. The film is probably best suited to female audiences, but was made for viewing/discussing by anyone interested in women's issues. Leaflet available with film when it is hired.

Hearts and Spades Pat Fiske, Gill Leahy, Virginia Catts b/w, 16mm, 8½ minutes. Rental: \$6.50. 1974. A Women's Film Workshop Film.

This is a film about women's ambivalent feelings toward men. Gill is a university student. Walking to Uni one day, she remembers the previous night. She and Jean had returned home to find the remains of a Men's Liberation Group meeting. She remembers a conversation two of the men have about washing up, where they suggest she is being "heavy". She remembers her boyfriend, David, deliberately dealing her the murder card. She remembers a row with David in the morning. She gets to University to find the same people from the night before waiting for her. Her response is an expression of her hate for men and her desire that men become lovable.

Circuit Gillian Burnett b/w, 16mm, 40 minutes. Rental: \$20.00.

This film is about the need for change and the possibility of bringing about change through self-examination. The film follows the emotional journey of a woman thru the breakdown of a relationship and her move towards recovery. It is through her growing self-awareness that the possibility of change comes about, of seeing through and throwing off certain problems, of learning to cope with others.

I believe that change is not only possible, but essential if we are to develop, to grow. And if we are to

live within loving relationships we must allow others to and Collusion, I tried to express and in turn elicit the change also. I believe there is an interdependence between inner/state and the state without, so that if we feel when she confronts limits imposed on her by are to bring about change in society we must also bring herself in collusion with the society " Milena Jelinek. about change within ourselves. This film was made 1972-74.

Its Just Something Kids Do* Pat Edgar. Australia 1973. 20 minutes black & white.

Children's play is an important learning process for them. But as the sterility of urban high rise development encroaches, their opportunities for investigation and discovery diminish. This film shows how children suffer from this and offers some suggestions as to how things can be changed and are being changed in some other countries.

Sugar and Spice Collective. USA 1974. 32 minutes colour. \$10.

Documents the attempts of three New York schools to raise the awareness of teachers, parents and students of their sex-role conditioning.

Animation

History Of The Cinema Joy Batchelor & John Halas. GB 1956. 12 minutes colour. \$5.

Joy Batchelor and John Halas founded what became the largest animation studio in Western Europe in 1940. They made many informational films and later specialised in technical educational films, frequently pioneering new techniques. Automania 2,000 and History of the Cinema are two of the few "entertainment" films that have come from their studio.

Crocus Susan Pitt-Kraning. USA 1971. 7 minutes colour. \$7.

This animated film is about the artist's family life — giving the baby a glass of water, going to bed and making love, during which a wild assortment of visions — including a huge cabbage, float through the room and out the window.

Marguerite Betty Chen, USA 1973. 4 minutes colour. \$4.

About a woman leaving her husband. With a narrative soundtrack and images from photographic stills to semiabstract animation.

"Experimental"

Collusion Chapter 8 Milena Jelinek. USA. 24 minutes black & white. \$15.

As Alice in Wonderland reaching forty, the heroine goes through a series of puzzling, disquieting adventures; an instant identity and fulfilment is being offered by various groups: The League of Women Voters, Radical Youth, Local artists and so on. The heroine is confused and puzzled by these conflicting demands which come partly from herself and partly from others. "In my trilogy D.C. al Fine, Conventior

Fuses Carolee Schneeman, USA 1973. 26 minutes colour. \$18.

A silent celebration in colour of heterosexual overmaking. Carolee Schneeman's concept of film-making falls within that defined as "experimental", where the technique is seen as part of the subject. In his film she extended the meaning of "fuses" to the length of hanging bits of the exposed film out the window over long periods of time so that sun, wind and rain played their part in "fusing" all the elements that went into making the images

My Life In Art Freude Bartlett. USA 1968-74. 40 minutes Freude's diary. We see a birth, scenes at home, on beaches, with friends and alone. Includes 9 films she made over a period of time.

The Autopsy Royanne Rosenberg. GB 1972. 4½ minutes black & white. \$4.

A film exploring the lyrical possibilities of death.

riverbody Annie Severson. USA 1970. 6 minutes black & white.

The faculty, staff and students of the San Francisco Art Institute; eighty-seven nudes in a continuous dissolve.

What I Want Sharon Hennessey. USA 1971. 10 minutes colour. \$8.

A journey forward through what Sharon Hennessey wants.

Noodle Spinner Anna Ambrose. GB 1974. 11 minutes black & white. \$7.

A Chinese chef is spinning noodles in his kitchen. The screen is split to show the rhythms of his technique. His life story is on the sound track. NB. Magnetic sound.

Solidarity Joyce Weiland. Canada. 15 minutes colour. \$12.

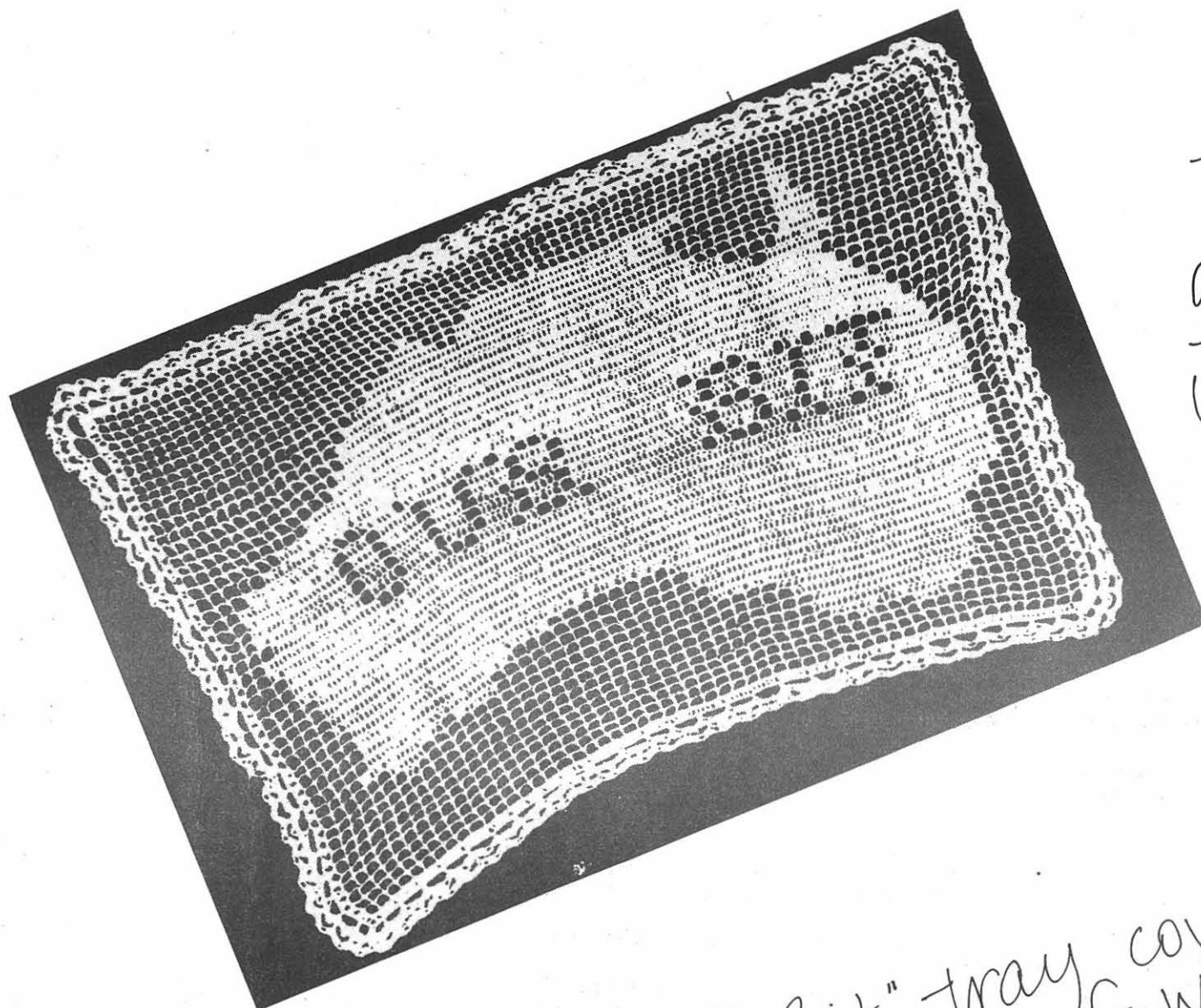
The Dare strike. Feet and legs. A speech on the Labour Situation. And a Word.

Tales From The Vienna Woods Veronika Soul. Canada 1973. 11 minutes colour. \$9.

Courtship, marriage and (finally) love in Vienna. A free association film within a film, containing one quote from Andy Warhol and several Freudian slips. Based on letters of the period (1887). Water, mountains, stars and fireworks with mixed live footage and animation Verinca Soul.

Traces Barbara Linkevitch. USA 1970. 12 minutes colour. \$9.

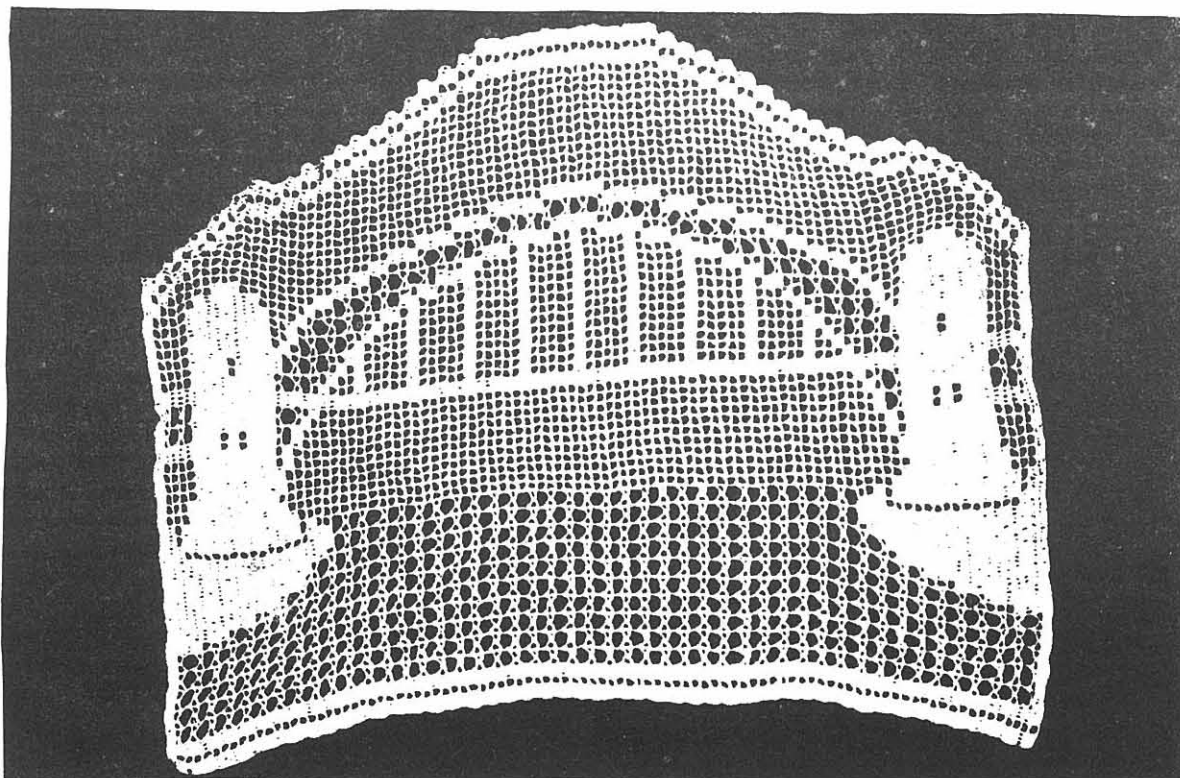
This is a film about loss of childhood and freedom to dependence on others. And about layers of people, colour, sound, motion, emotion, objects and movement



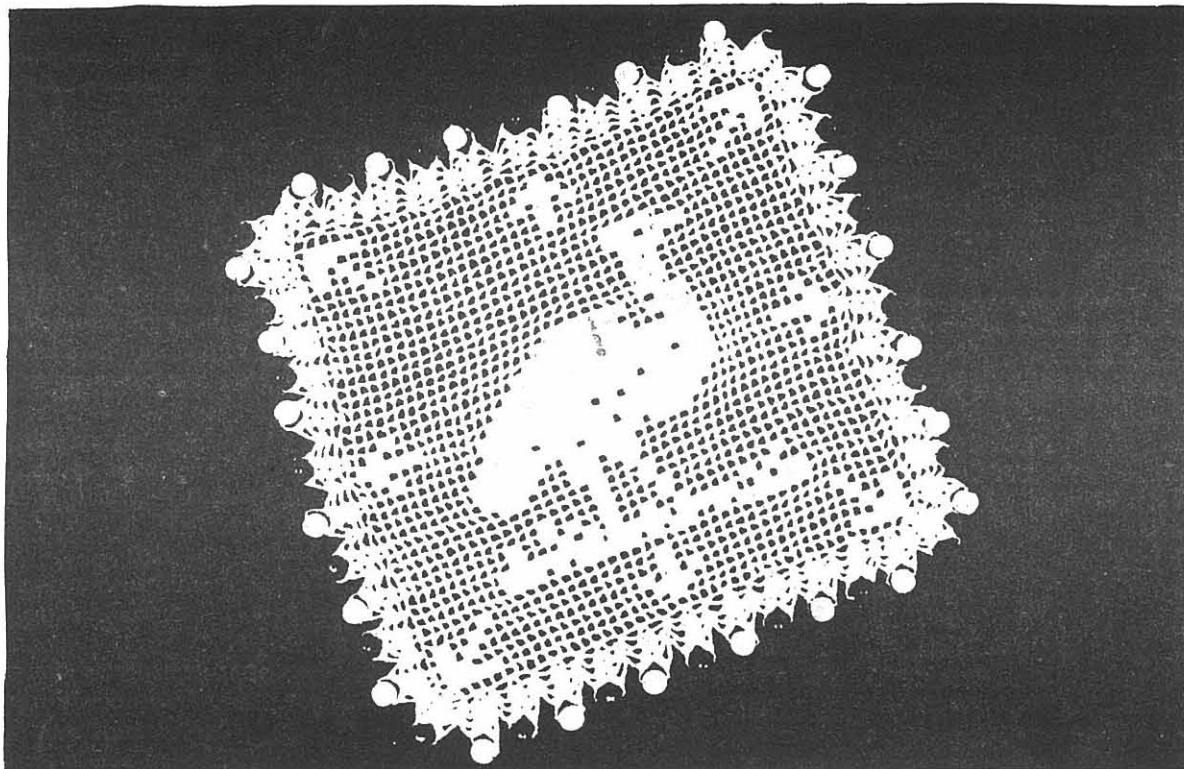
from a collection
of doileys and
domestic arti-
facts at Sydney
Uni Art Workshop.

"Our Bit" tray cover, filet crochet,
in support of women working
in the war effort, 1940's...

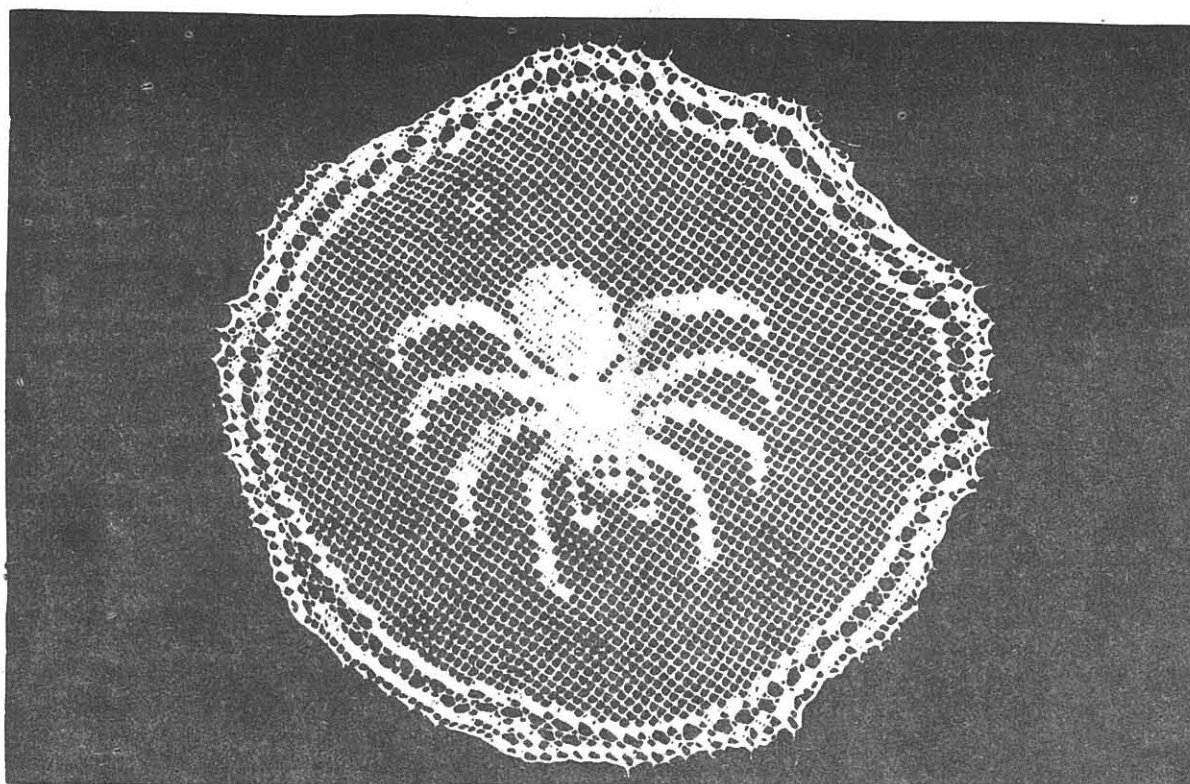
FROM A COLLECTION OF D'OLEYS AND DOMESTIC
ARTIFACTS AT SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ART WORKSHOP.



'SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE' worked in filet crochet.



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



Spider milk jug cover, worked in filet crochet with glass beads, early 1900'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 though for 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 Australia 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 during 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 Robertson 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), Marlene 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 Doily 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.

with Chips Mackinolty. Toni, Marie McMahon Jan MacKay and Frances Budden were the Sydney women participating in the show.

Virginia Coventry exhibited her Whyalla Project at the Experimental Art Foundation in November.

Joan Grounds (and Alex Danko) participated in the Paris Biennale. They did a series of performances on aspects of Australian life.

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.

Melbourne — Womens 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.

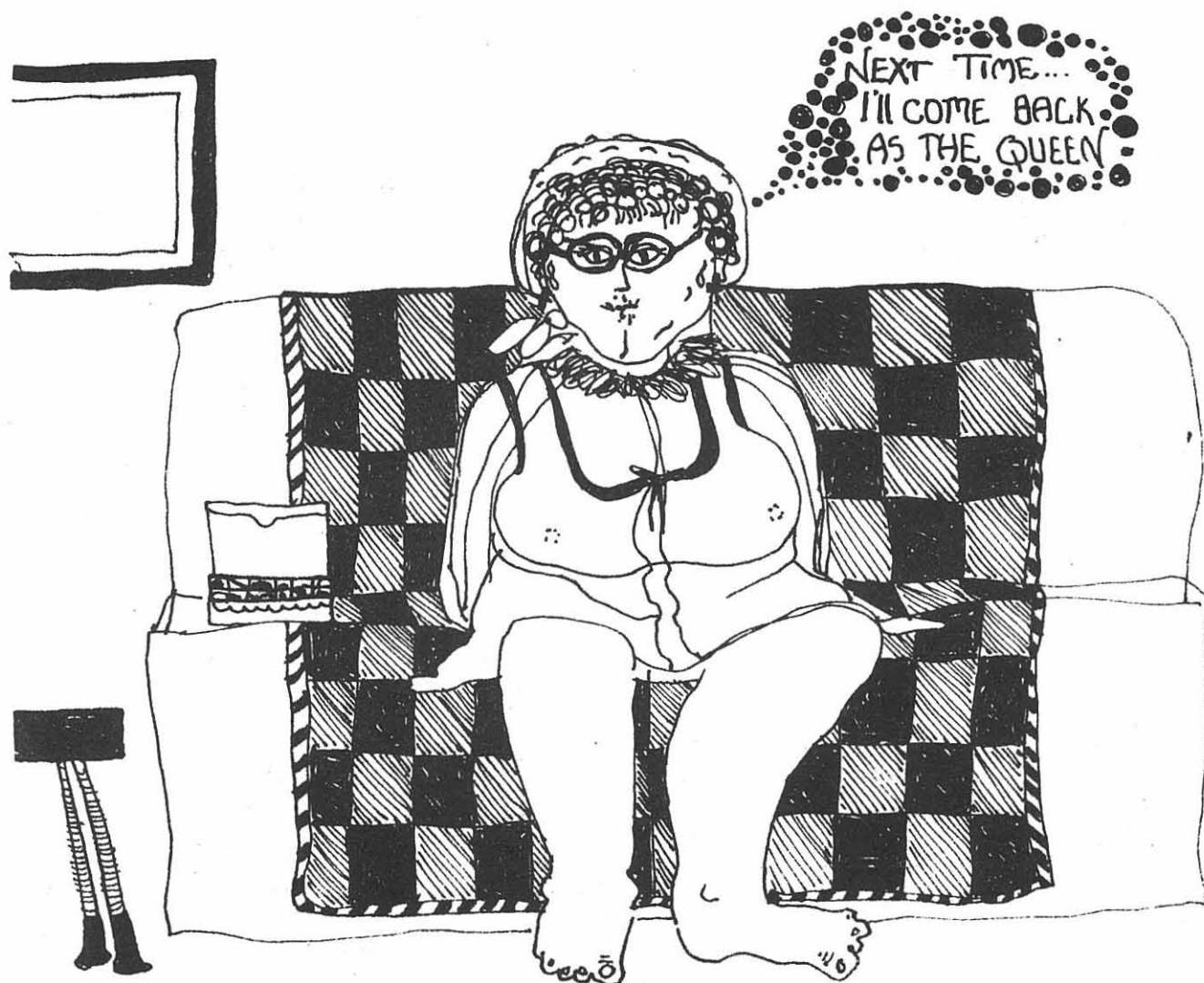
TOO MUCH A LADY TO BE A PROFESSIONAL



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". Page 9.



FIONA BUCKLAND'S
NON-TALKING, ALL-DANCING
K-TEL COLOUR-IN
pull-out page...



Free packet of colour pencils with every other copy of this paper*

* see other copy (apologies to Monty Python.)

Evening Wear

FEATURING
1 VIRGIN
1 CHILD
1 DONOR
1 "EAT LITER BIN"



I got my "Vaulcluse" pelt at 6th floor David Jones for \$1000... How much was yours.....



"She was a plain girl; and mum can bear me out on this, (mum: yes) but she looked beautiful on her wedding day..."



FOOD.....	
HAMBURGERS	65c
Chips	20c
Scallops	3c ea.



Tear-out post card. -Tina's time; wish inscription reads 'Having a lovely time; wish you were here...' X marks the spot...

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 Commission, 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. Preserve 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.

— inservice 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 made accessible by contributing it to WAREP. If you are interested in the area as a research assignment for your course we would be happy to assist.

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 Daniell Crescent Caulfield 211 2229

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, Thea Proctor, etc. (prints) Margaret Preston, Dorrit Black, (drawings) Thea 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 stills (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 China": Rachael Faggetter interviewed by Marieke Mugler.

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 'Dream Home') 19 Slides.

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

9 SEW THERE 6 Slides

Three women's use of needlework in sculpture and wallhangings

10 WOMEN'S POSTAL EVENT 50 Slides, including the NSW Women's Art Movement 'Clothes line' pockets, an adaption of a work shown at the South Australian Womens Show

11 PRINTMAKERS OF THE THIRTIES 30 Slides

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

12 ART IN AUSTRALIA Slides by Liz Coats

Rephotographed 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, Cumbræ Stewart, Thea Proctor, A.M.E. Bale.

13 CONTEMPORARY INDIVIDUALS not yet complete but in the process)

ISABEL DAVIES (drawing, paintings, sculpture)

MARGARET BELL (Drawing, sculpture)

JANE NEMEC (Drawing, painting, prints)

LWSLEY DUMBRELL (Drawing painting)

LIZ COATS (Painting, collage)

BONITA ELY (Drawing, painting, sculpture, video, photography)

JILLIAN ORR (Assemblage, performance)

MICKY ALLAN (Photography, drawing, performance)

MARY McQUEEN (Printmaking, collage, drawing)

ROSALIE GASCOINE (Sculpture, assemblage)
ELIZABETH GOWER (Assemblage)
JENNY WATSON (Painting, drawing)
INGE KING (Sculpture)

14 JANE AND RUTH SUTHERLAND 40 Slides

Accompanied by catalogue and notes.

15 GEELONG ART GALLERY COLLECTION 20 slides

Includes works by Clarice Becket, Agnes Goodsir, Elaine Haxton, Thea Proctor, Constance Stokes, Mary McQueen, Bea Maddox.

16 A PROFILE OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN SCULPTORS: 1860-1960 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 Wentcher, Ola Cohn, Inge King, Margel Hinder, Eileen McGrath, Daphne Mayo, Marguerita Mahood, Theresa Chauncy (Walker) Kathleen Shillom, Wendy Golling.

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

Includes works by Mary Abbot, Mitty Lee Brown, Lina Bryanus, Ednid Cambell, Mary Edwards, Joy Hester, Thea Proctor, Edith Wall, Erica McGilchrist, Cossington Smith
Accompanied by catalogue.

24 HILDA RIX NICHOLAS

A selection of works from 2 exhibitions held in September 1978 (Art Gallery of NSW and the Macquarie Gallery, Sydney). Slides by Jenny Barber. Accompanied by catalogues.

25 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ARTISTS Kits on Margaret Sinclair (sculptor), Margaret Bevan (painter), Jane Kent (sculptor), Leone Furler (painter), Pamela Harris (sculptor/performance), Margaret Dodd (ceramic sculptor), Dora Chapman (painter). Compiled by Antonia Chaffey and Karilyn Brown.

19 RESEARCH SLIDES FOR "WOMEN'S IMAGES OF WOMEN" Slides by Barbar Hall 128 Slides

20 7TH MILDURA SCULPTURE TRIENNIAL (1978) 30 Slides

Includes works by Margaret Bell, Elizabeth Honeybun, Jill Honeybun, Jill Orr, Isobel Davies, Bonita Ely, Noelene Lucas, Fiona Orr, Ann Morris.

21 WALLS SOMETIMES SPEAK 29 slides

From an exhibition of political posters. Includes works by Mandy Martin, Toni Robertson, Annie Newmarch, Jude Munroe, Marie McMahon, Ann Roberts, Mary Callahan, Angela Gea, Pam Harris, Jan Mackay.

22 MARY ELLEN KENNY 16 Slides

Photographed from pages of sketchbook, made c1877, by pioneer in the Gippsland area. Accompanied by notes on ancestry by Fanny Charlotte Murphy (nee Kennt) in 1935, and photocopies from diary of George Little, migrant passenger "Marco Polo" 1853.

23 MAP SHOW: 45 Slides

Includes works by Kai Dineen, Virginia Coventry, Mirka Mora, Ann Parry, Margaret Bell, Bonita Ely plus stills of Jill Orr's performance, Map of Transition.

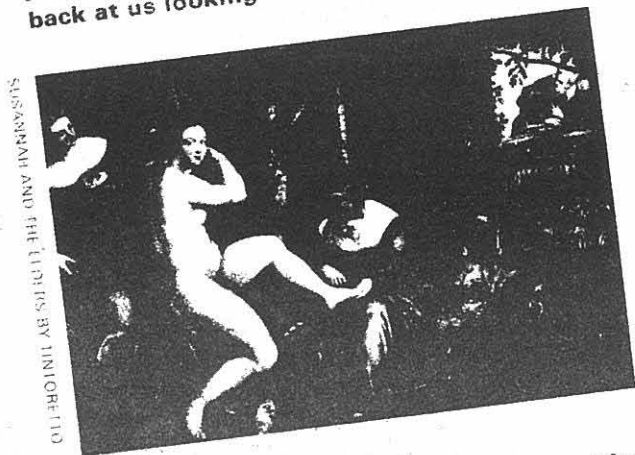
warep...



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
"sights" & 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.

FEMINIST ABSTRACT ART

a political viewpoint

Harmony Ham

There are many articles written on feminist art which try to pinpoint and define 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 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 artist and audience, to 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 *people to attempt* 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—to show its origin, meaning, and political potential.

In "Prime Time: Art and Politics"¹ Alexa 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 incorrectly see elitism as a pre-condition of abstract art, rather than realizing that this is how abstract art has been used by men as a defense mechanism against the alienation of their own capitalist system; that as well as fur-

thering the myth of artist as alienated and isolated genius, abstract art has offered an illusion of objectivity. Such notions suggest that the content of 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 Expressionist 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 illusory separation of art and politics.² 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 taboo for most artists who consider themselves political feminists. Because of the history outlined above, it is difficult to determine abstract 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.³ 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-western cultures, has been abstract. I'm thinking of incredible baskets, pottery, quilts, afghan and needlework women have created. The motifs used were based on "the self." The repetition and continuity of the pattern formed the individual shape; the pattern resulting from its repetition. These motifs and patterns were abstract, geometric. Patricia Mainardi points out 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 created beautiful and functional objects, but expressed their own convictions on a wide variety of subjects in a language for the most part comprehensible only to other women. In a sense, there was a secret language among women. The story goes, there was more than one Tory political persuasion who slept unharmed under his wife's 'Whig Rose' quilt, named quilts for their religious beliefs, their politics—at a time when women were not allowed to vote. The 'Radical Rose' which women made during the Civil War had a black center for each rose and was a sign of sympathy with the slaves.⁴

As we examine some contemporary art by women, it is important to develop a sense of identity and connection with our creativity rather than that of the oppressor has claimed "fine art" and "abstract art" himself. In fact, the patriarchal system of "decorative" traditional art and "craft" is right racist, classist, and sexist overtly. Both Weatherford states:

Art history assigns creative products to categories—fine arts and crafts—and identifies as legitimate only the fine arts, excluding those creative traditions of people, peasants, women, and marginalized groups outside the mainstream of history.⁵

Until recently, decorative art, or crafts and materials, have been valuable sources for contemporary male art. Women working with these ideas, techniques and materials have been ignored (A first painted on quilts in 1958) or put down as "women's work," men like Oldenburg, Stella, and Noland are innovative. But times have changed. Many female artists are connecting their line of creativity by proudly referring to their traditional arts in their own work, recording the ritual of women's art in the past and the present, thereby expressing feminist concern not only with the end product but with the daily process and functioning of art. Sewing techniques and materials in both process and content are used in a variety of ways in the abstract works of Sarah Scah, Pat Lasch, Nina Yankowitz, Paula La Norvell, Rosemary Mayer, and many others. Barbara Kruger says that she first learned to crochet and sew when she decided that these techniques could be used to make women, the meaning of sewing and "connecting"—connecting the past to the present, and connecting to other women—a sense of community and wholeness. Women, drawing on women's traditional crafts, make specific painterly reference to quilts and craft. Minam Schapiro utilizes fabric, lace, and ribbon along with charcoal and aprons in large collages, filling the very material of women's lives into her art. Joyce Kozloff and Mary Grell explore decoration as fine art, basing their work on the abstract patterning of Islamic architecture and tiles. Tantric art, Celtic and Navaho weaving.

The way many women talk about their work is revealing, in that it often denies formalism. Women tend to talk first about personal associations with the piece, then about how these are implemented through visual means; in other words, how suc-

Below: Louise Fishman, *Angry Harmony*, 1970. Acrylic and pastel on paper 30" X 40". (Photo: Sarah Whitworth)



consciousness-raising experience. It deals primarily with the work itself, what it says and how it says it—rather than with an imposed set of esthetic beliefs.

In her excellent catalogue introduction to "Changes," an exhibition by Betsy Damon and Carole Fisher, Kathryn C. Johnson comments that "intent" is most important when defining feminist art. She states that it is "a powerful oneness of subject and content" that makes certain work feminist:

Their work both is and tells about the pain of their life experiences. It is about pain and is painful, but does not present woman as passive victim. The pain is presented with deep understanding of its sources and effects, and the anger which follows confrontation with the hurt.⁷

Fisher writes:

Betsy 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 in my work instantly! This was something I had only come to recently recognize and acknowledge in my work. Like many women in our culture, I had become adept at hiding and covering my pain. I had gotten all the messages that to be vulnerable in our culture is to be weak and despised.⁸

It is this "oneness of subject and content" that carries their work through feminist consciousness beyond the personal to the political. It is also present in abstract paintings that seem superficially more related to the male modernist tradition than to women's creativity in that they involve the physically expressive manipulation of paint on a two-dimensional surface.

In much of this work the reoccurring stitch of women's traditional artmaking becomes the repetitive mark, taking on a new form 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 physical and psychic location to another, materials and dyes changing slightly, irregularities and tension showing, the painted marks also reveal daily emotional 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 contained in different spaces (usually grids or rectangles suggesting fabric, rooms and houses), the quality and feeling of the line changes and she becomes more comfortable in some spaces than in others. She explores her self-image and feelings about her body in relationship to other people and spaces. Snider describes these works as "figurative." To me, it is the mark and its repetition that is most important. Her works are figurative in the sense that Chinese calligraphy is figurative—in having a direct body reference. Works are sometimes combined or used interchangeably with the markings, reinforcing Snider's commitment to the diaristic mode. As she says, "The words and lines come from the same psychological place and gesture and are not intended to describe or explain what the drawings are in terms of images—but rather express the fact that they come from a nervous hand and a yakking heart." Phrases such as "little sounds arose (and it showed)"; "Well, for one thing, never step on broken glass"; and "Remember when we saw the ocean? It was just like this, wasn't it?" tell where the drawing is coming from and what the drawing is about.

Louise Fishman's paintings also function as a place for personal confrontation and as a statement directed towards other women. Earlier, Fishman ripped up her old paintings and reconnected them by sewing and knotting them together with fragile thread. Her past was used to make a statement about her present. The strips and connecting thread formed loose grids, transformed in later work to a series of strokes or marks repeated across the page or canvas or

within the confines of a "particular felt shape" (a circle or a piece of irregularly cut masonite). 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 a seven-panel reversible painting on unstretched canvas, Fishman deals with her feelings about her mother, also an artist. One side of each canvas is painted with calm strokes, while on the other side the marks explode into intensely scrawled letters reading "A letter to my mother about painting." Another canvas has the star of David and the words "I am a Jewish working-class dyke" scratched into the surface. Just as consciousness raising leads to political awareness, this work moves from the personal into the political. Titled *Angry Jill*, *Angry Djuna*, *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 crippled by their anger too. These paintings were made to force women to confront it rather than letting it turn inward and become self-destructive. Grouped together as a wall of women's anger, the paintings show a tremendous amount of energy that can now be redirected towards feminist creativity and revolution.

These women as well as others (Joan Snyder, Carla Tardi, 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 feeling 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 violated or mutilated; cut, gouged, 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, for instance, acts both as poultice for wounds and cement for holding self together. In Joan Snyder's recent work the marks, cuts and burning 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 ignore 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. Theirs is a reformist approach to a revolutionary endeavor.

I am reminded of Andrea Dworkin's "afterword"—"The Great Punctuation Typographic Struggle"—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 as empty of 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.

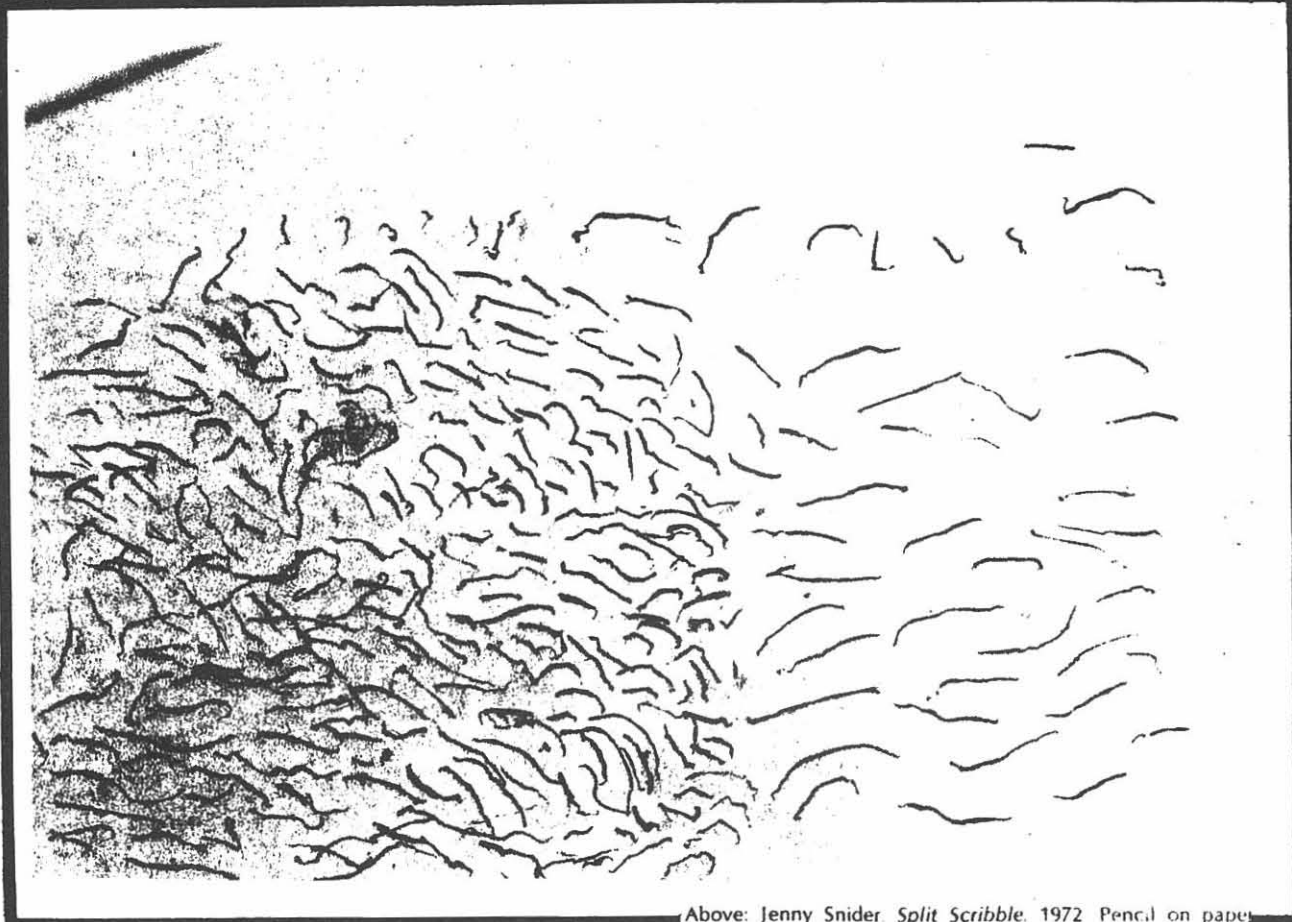
to permit writers to use forms which violate convention just might permit writers to develop forms which would teach people to think differently: not to think about different things, but to think in different ways, that work is not permitted.¹⁰

The fact that innovative form is so feared by the male establishment shows that like content it has a 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 yet there. 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 coming out through our art, and the work itself is a record of the ongoing process of developing a feminist esthetic ideology.

1. Alexa Freeman and Jackie MacMillan, "Prime Time: Art and Politics," *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* (Summer, 1975).
2. Eva Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War," *Artforum* (June, 1974).
3. Brooke, "The Retreat to Cultural Feminism," in *Feminist Revolution*, ed. Redstockings (New York, 1975).
4. Patricia Mainardi, "Quilts: The Great American Art," *The Feminist Art Journal* (Winter, 1973).
5. Elizabeth Weatherford, "Craft for Art's Sake," *Ms. Magazine* (May, 1973).
6. *Ibid.*
7. Kathryn C. Johnson, catalogue introduction to "Changes," exhibition by Betsy Damon and Carole Fisher at the College of St. Catherine (St. Paul, Minn., 1976).
8. *Ibid.*
9. Freeman and MacMillan, *op. cit.*
10. Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating* (New York, 1974).

Harmony Hammond is an artist living in New York who teaches, gives workshops, and has shown her work here and elsewhere. She has also studied martial arts, Tai Chi Ch'uan and Aikido.



Above: Jenny Snider, *Split Scribble*, 1972. Pencil on paper, 24" X 38". (Photo: Jenny Snider.)

Dedicated to the unknown artist



Susan Hiller working on her most recent piece, "Fragments".

Feminist artists are working in any number of ways from up-front poster art, to thoroughly researched documentary exhibitions, to avant-garde art practice which is where Susan Hiller's work belongs. She was trained as an anthropologist but in the mid 1960s began working as an artist. She pursues her initial fascination for objects like seaside post-cards, fragments of Pueblo Indian women's pottery, photos from automatic machines, analyses them and classifies them. She wants to bring out the cultural meanings hidden within the images, to raise questions about ways of seeing and ordering experience in a patriarchal society. In April three exhibitions of her work opened in Oxford, Cambridge and London.

Interview by Rozsika Parker

During April three exhibitions of your 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 no matter how much validation I receive from the mainstream, I can only see my presence within it as intrusive. 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. Rows 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 politicised 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 colleges 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. (laughter)

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

so complicated we could talk about it for the entire interview.... I'm speaking about aspects of our conditioning which 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 person in poetry. Women poets come up against important difficulties when they get outside the area of expressing personal feelings. When they try to speak as I-the-poet-speaking-for-humanity, a false note often enters their work and one feels 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 feel 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 there, the only hostile member of the discussion was a woman art historian whose speciality 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 soup ladles were as important as Rembrandts and she didn't think soup ladles were as important as Rembrandts. I replied that in terms of personal meanings to her Rembrandt's work might be more important than soup ladles, but in terms of telling us things about ourselves, soup 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 pressure building up inside and she started to mumble. The mumbling, all the