

NEWSLETTER

To keep women's words, women's works, alive and powerful — Ursula LeGuin



Peace is something you do: a response to violent extremism

Having lost both her legs in the London bombing in 2005, Annual Luncheon guest speaker Gillian Hicks commenced her speech with a joke: she only likes to be in Sydney during the winter as at other times, the humidity causes her legs to slip off. This indication of the strength of her positive attitude shows that there is more than one way of responding to life's random slings and arrows.

The acknowledgement of Aboriginal elders in the Welcome to Country, she pointed out, is an important welcome in peace. Gill noted the parallel in Aboriginal culture between being 'welcomed' and expressing the intention that the person be assisted to travel safely and in peace across the land of which you were the 'dutiful custodian.'

Gill noted that the date of the Luncheon, 11 September, marked the anniversary of a traumatic event which has shaped the Western world's fear and vulnerability – three thousand people were killed. She spoke of close friends who suffered great personal loss on that day but who chose not to be touched by conflict and hatred. Instead they joined with Gill and together created GSN (Global Survivors Network) an organisation for members to share and grow in strength and advocate for peace. They tackle the attitudes of nonchalance about our roles today and our responsibility towards each other. It was a reluctant path, she admitted. She had never thought about life where her peace would be interrupted. She now felt she had to measure her path by what she had to give. She recognised her power as a survivor to advocate for peace and change.

Today, Gill works with people who actively choose to *do* peace, the challenging and exhausting activism for a world free of terrorism and war. She smilingly observed that these people did not fit a stereotype of peace builders that she had once held – the hippies of the '60s. She saw that we can all transform and change the world.

As the Head Curator of the Design Council, Gill was on her way to work in London when a 19 year old man detonated a bomb, killing and maiming people on the train. She recounts how her second life emerged in the hours after the bombing. People who were once strangers held hands and comforted each other. Their lives depended on each other to survive. All she remembered was feeling loved – her hand was held, she felt connected. Gill – who had lost both legs – heard a beautiful female voice; it was the voice of death. Then another voice, male,

loud and angry: don't think of going with death, legs or no legs. It's your choice, to live or die.

She realised that she had the power to choose. She chose the path to reflect on the gift of life and the responsibility to make a difference.

Four words crystallised this understanding for her – during the rescue, she had become 'One unknown estimated female'. Who she was became immaterial. She was a precious life and rescuers would risk their own lives to save her. It left a lasting impression. Difference of any kind made no difference.

Ultimately love saved her life and shielded her from hatred and bitterness. Love shaped her response, helping her gain confidence and positivity to accept amputeeism. It also helped her gain extra height (she walked out of hospital 175cm, to her previous 152cm!) She described the astonishing experience of seeing herself in the mirror in hospital when she went to the hairdresser: she was a different person, embarking on the journey of change. She learnt to associate pain as a positive and embrace its meaning: 'I'm alive'.

She spoke of her frustration when it takes a tragedy for people to value each other. Every cruel gesture or horrific event leaves her asking, why? Why has there not been a greater learning from history? We are global citizens and need to commit to being advocates for change.

Gill encouraged the audience to show solidarity by standing for peace and uniting with the Library's namesake Jessie Street, acknowledging and embracing her goal of peace.

Kris Clarke and Jessica Stewart



Suzanne Marks, the Library's Vice-Chair, introduces guest speaker Gillian Hicks

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE
The Library will close on Friday 15 December 2017 and reopen on Monday 22 January 2018.
Best wishes for the festive season!

Jessie Street National Women's Library

Australia's National Women's Library is a specialist library, its focus being the collection and preservation of the literary and cultural heritage of women from all ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

Aims

- To heighten awareness of women's issues
- To preserve records of women's lives and activities
- To support the field of women's history
- To highlight women's contribution to this country's development

Patrons

Quentin Bryce AD CVO; Elizabeth Evatt AC; Clover Moore Lord Mayor of Sydney; Laurence Street AC KCMG

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Annual Luncheon 2017 — Raffle winners

Thank you to those people and organisations who donated prizes. Raffle tickets were drawn by students from the schools attending the Luncheon. Congratulations to all winners!

1st Prize – Two nights' accommodation for two in a Deluxe City King Room at The Langham Hotel Sydney, daily full buffet breakfast for two in Bistro Remy, afternoon tea for two in Palm Court on one of the days during the stay, access to spa facilities and Internet Wi-Fi access, value \$1,500, donated by Teachers Mutual Bank: won by Kathy Green.

2nd Prize – Sterling silver brooch moulded from an olive leaf as a symbol of peace, value \$550, designed and made by Connie Dimas Jewellery: won by Maria Zannetides.

3rd Prize – David Jones gift voucher, value \$350, donated by Marie Muir: won by Mary Farrell.

4th Prize – Gift voucher for Kinokinuya Books, to value of \$100, donated by Gail Hewison: won by Barbara Snell.

5th Prize – Harbour Cruise, value \$78, donated by Captain Cook Cruises, Circular Quay, Sydney: won by Nicole Premer.

6th Prize – Three signed books of play scripts by Alana Valentine, including *Letters to Lindy*, donated by the author, plus a bottle of wine: won by Gail Tollifson.

7th Prize – Two poetry collections by Colleen Burke, *Splicing air* and *Fermenting*, signed by the poet, plus a bottle of wine: won by Katherine Gordan.

8th Prize – Two bottles of wine: won by Judith Nicholls.

9th Prize – Two bottles of wine: won by Judy Cribb.

10th Prize – Two bottles of wine: won by Jennifer Toisuta.

All wine produced by Mt View High School, Cessnock and donated by the NSW Teachers Federation.



Book Club report

The Library's Book Club discussed *The night guest* by Fiona McFarlane on 27 September. Most enjoyed the book which we agreed was well written and engaging. It provoked a lively discussion about aging and the implications of familial obligations towards elders in our modern world. When families are distant, the elderly may fall victim to unscrupulous opportunists. This somewhat sinister story keeps the reader guessing throughout the book and some mysteries remain even at the end. Fiona McFarlane's short stories *High places* is also recommended by short story fans. Copies of purchased books read by Book Club members have been donated to the Library. Many thanks for your generosity. A list of our selected titles appears on the Library's catalogue.

Also for discussion: 25 October – *Barbed wire and cherry blossoms* by Anita Heiss: a novel about the Cowra breakout from an indigenous perspective

22 November – *Testosterone Rex* by Cordelia Fine: refutes the arguments used to justify gender politics

24 January – novels of Jessica Anderson (your choice – open to discussion).

Barbara Henery

Cultural Gifts Program

Donors to the Library may be interested to know that we are an approved *Deductible Gift Recipient* (DGR) for the *Australian Cultural Gifts Program*. Subject to specific criteria the Australian Tax Office offers incentives (tax deductions and capital gains tax exemptions) to individuals 'who donate cultural items to Australia's public collections', with the exception of bequests arising from deceased estates.

The Library's collection includes printed material such as books, journals, pamphlets and posters, archives including personal papers, and ephemera such as banners, badges and photographs, as well as some objects. While the Library is pleased to consider these and other material donations, not all gifts will be eligible for tax exemption. In addition, not all potential donations will conform to the Library's *Collection Development Policy*. However we will be pleased to discuss these matters with potential donors.

The Library will undertake to meet its responsibilities as a DGR, outlined in the *Accepting Institutions Guidelines*, however it will be the responsibility of potential donors to consult, consider and meet the specific requirements and conditions, including costs of approved valuers. All requirements are outlined in the *Cultural Gifts Program* information web pages of the Department of Communication and the Arts. Further information is available in the booklet *Cultural Gifts Program Guide* (see arts.gov.au) and on the ATO website.

If you are considering donating material to the Library under the ATO *Cultural Gifts Program*, please contact the Library and we will endeavour to advise you on any

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Frances Phoenix: feminist and artist

Frances Phoenix (Budden) (1950–2017) was a significant figure in Australia's feminist and lesbian art histories. She originally studied to become a teacher, at the National Art School and Alexander Mackie Teacher's College in Sydney. But in 1975 – International Women's Year – she became an artist, a feminist and a lesbian. In the 1980s she abandoned the surname Budden, choosing Phoenix instead. Phoenix participated in both Sydney's and Adelaide's Women's Art Movements (WAM); contributed needlework, and opposition, to Judy Chicago's landmark feminist artwork *The Dinner Party* (1974–79); and spearheaded collective and community art initiatives. The Library holds many examples of her work.

In the mid-1970s, Phoenix began making works with found doilies. She was inspired by Lucy Lippard's idea of a feminine sensibility and Rachel Maines' research into women's textile histories. Phoenix recognised in doilies rich associations with femininity, domesticity and tactility as well as visual correlations to women's labia. Although most of this series is undocumented, and may no longer exist, the Library has one of her designs in the first issue of *Lip: A feminist arts journal* (1976–84). Folded in half, in the centre of the page, is a crisp white paper doily. Fingering it open, you find two smaller doilies, before reaching a thick slip of pink sheared cardboard.

Around the doilies, words in light pink cursive read: *use your culture in your own defence. use soft-aggression. female culture is in the minds, hearts and secret dialogues of women.*

It is a work that suggests women share a secret, preconscious language and a non-violent source of



mystical power. The experience of opening each fold is curiously intimate and the delightful play on pornographic centrefolds proved too suggestive for some. Victorian Premier Rupert Hamer vetoed all state funding for future issues of *Lip*.

A few years later, Phoenix designed two of the most well-known posters of the era: *Victory: Grow your own grassroots defiance against the capitalist diet* (1979) and *Stepping Out with the Emus on a Typical Aussie Day* (1981). The Library holds both posters. The first shows a Soviet-era woman, dressed in olive dungarees and cap, with a red neckerchief. In one arm she holds a basket, overflowing with fresh produce. Across the worker's chest, Phoenix emblazons a women's symbol, presenting a home-grown diet as a challenge to both capitalism and the patriarchy.

The second poster is more complex, both playful and deadly serious in its combination of found imagery, sarcastic text and anti-war message. In the centre, a blankly smiling woman dressed in a jumper pattern from *Australian Home Journal* (1948) talks to two emus. One emu knits an Australian doily. The other wears a necklace with the feminist symbol of a double-headed axe. In further, cartoon-like boxes, the emus play dead alongside an excerpt of cryptic, hyperbolic text from Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology*. In this work, Phoenix cautions women against nationalism, drawing attention to the artificiality of territorial boundaries and reminding us of Australia's brutal colonial beginnings. She calls on women to metaphorically 'pull our heads out of the sand' and to prevent the perpetuation of violence ideologies.

Both of these works are signed 'Matilda Graphics'. This is typical of the time, when poster groups around the country marked their works with collective names and logos rather than artist signatures. It was one of their methods for rejecting the established art world, and the 'genius' of solo artists, in favour of community and activism. Matilda Graphics was a group of 13 women artists who pooled their skills and shared commissions.

Phoenix contributed, with Marie McMahan, to a series of 10 beautiful posters designed and printed by Earthworks Poster Collective and the Women's Domestic Needlework Group in Sydney in 1979, with the assistance

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LUNCH HOUR TALKS – THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY AND 19 APRIL 2018 AT CUSTOMS HOUSE



15 February: Magdalena Janic

War Child

Magdalena (Leni) Janic's book *War child* spans 100 years from Nazi Germany to the suburbs of Adelaide, telling the story of a young illegitimate German girl growing up in poverty, coping with ostracism, bullying, abuse and dispossession. A refugee, she flees the advance of the Red Army in the dying days of the war. It tells of her unconditional love for her family, the sacrifices she made and secrets she kept to protect them.

19 April: Sue Liu

Accidental aid worker

Sue's travel memoir recounts her voluntary aid work, which she began in the wake of the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka. She went on to work with orphaned children in Cambodia with Geraldine Cox. This moving account of her drive to survive and support others, while battling a mid-life crisis, disconnection and depression forces her to face truths about herself in order to become the woman she wants to be.

Venue/Time: 12.00-1.30pm. Customs House Library, 31 Alfred St, Sydney – on Circular Quay, enter via front of Customs House
Cost: \$16 (members) \$22 (non-members) including light lunch. Pay at the door. **Book by noon Monday before the talk.** Ph (02) 9571 5359

The waves turn – a memoir

Poet and author Colleen Burke commenced her talk with a picture of life growing up in a working class Irish Catholic family in the Sydney suburbs of Tamarama and Bondi. Colleen has published two closely written volumes of her memoirs and regaled us with stories from the first volume, *The waves turn* and in her reading of poems.

The world she has recreated is one of overflowing extended family living in houses too small; the drinking and gambling which meant that wages did not always make it home and the constant battle to keep the rent paid. She remembered the house being painted whenever the landlord threatened to raise the rent.

Bondi was a place where everyone knew everyone else, especially so in the Irish Catholic community. Irish rebellion was a constant – the picture of Mary MacKillop was up on the wall, never the Queen, and fights between the ‘dirty tykes’ and the ‘dirty prods’ were commonplace.

As she says in her prologue, it was the women in her life who defined her childhood – her mother, grandmothers, aunts and other relatives, neighbours and nuns – ‘they are with me, these women, they are strong’. It was the women who went to the local police to garnishee their husbands’ wages: ‘the only way to pay for rent, bills and food.’ Her father worked in the Kellogg’s factory and was sacked for defending two co-workers who had been accused of communism. While the family supported his principles, she remembers that they were all sad about the end of the supply of cornflakes.

She talked about the contradictions and hypocrisies of her life while growing up. Her mother was a divorcee, highly unusual in those days, but placed a high priority on getting married. Colleen had always loved books and wanted to study and become a writer. While her mother wanted her daughter to achieve more than she had as a domestic in the homes of the wealthy families of Bellevue Hill, she thought that girls should not study and Colleen had to leave school at 15.

Colleen began working in the mail room, and eventually went into the typing pool in a state government department. She found that she was deemed ‘intelligent’ by men in her office.

It was her growing involvement with the libertarian Push movement which provided excitement and meaning in her life. She described them as a group of eccentrics who wanted to change the world. Her left-wing activism occasionally got her into trouble but she had found a place where she felt comfortable. She was recognised as intelligent – though the men added ‘for a girl’ – and she finally got her matriculation and went on to university.

Sharing houses with her husband Declan and others in the movement, she said these men were charming but hopelessly impractical. While they supported her and the other women’s independence on one level, they were condescending and wary of them. She was criticised for being ‘too personal’ in her writing. She said, ‘I say to my male friends, “We are personal and we are going to criticise you and we are going out!”’

Her memoir, studded with her poems, recreates the worlds of Sydney, Melbourne, then London, Ireland and Wales where she lived and worked in the 50s, 60s and 70s as her reputation as a poet grew. It is a fascinating read.



Report by Jessica Stewart

Dumbstruck

A Solicitor who sat near me
in the Legal section
of the old state run GIO,
regularly expounded his theories;
that if the working class
didn’t have money and opportunities
it was their own fault,
they should have saved,
invested for a rainy day,
been thrifty like his family and friends.
We argued non-stop.

Then one day in all seriousness
he told me that I was intelligent
for a shorthand typist;
someone from the working class,
and a woman as well!

Dumbstruck

I realised I was supposed
to be flattered and grateful
for his condescending observations.



The City of Sydney has honoured three Australian women who fought for equality by naming three public places after them: Louisa Lawson Place, Nita McCrae Park and Frances Newton Reserve – our highest scoring recent post.

Cultural gifts program continued from page 2

procedural steps which may help your decision regarding the tax exemption viability of your donation.

The Library is pleased to consider all material donations that meet the criteria of its mission and aims, regardless of their monetary value.

Valda Rigg

Maggie's kitchen: Finding courage and comfort in food

Screenwriter and producer Caroline Beecham has a lifelong interest in food, honed while growing up in her family's restaurant. *Maggie's kitchen*, her first work of historical fiction, tells the story of a passionate woman establishing and running a British Restaurant during World War II.

While researching the history of restaurants in 2011, Caroline became intrigued with the British Restaurants and thought there was material for a story. She used three main sources: the National Archives in the UK (documentation such as meal plans, the paperwork involved in setting up the restaurants which were uniform throughout



Britain); the Times Digital Archive (society during the 1940s, inequalities between rich and poor, magazines, radio plays, how to make food go further); and Trove.

After a year of research, she started to write the novel in 2012. Researching the social conditions of the time provided a setting for the story: it involved visiting the streets of Islington where dairies and bomb damaged buildings had stood; examining war cookery posters and leaflets, and interviewing chefs who grow their own produce. Approaching UK agents did not prove successful; however, Allen & Unwin accepted the book for publication in 2016 in Australia and New Zealand and Ebury Press in the UK in 2017.

Founded in March 1941, the 'communal feeding centres' known as the British Restaurants were instigated by the Ministry of Food and run by local governments to provide 'at least one hot nourishing meal a day, at a price all could afford' – a three-course meal cost ninepence. By 1943, there were over 2000 of these restaurants in the UK.

Caroline read an extract from the beginning of the book: Maggie was sitting in an air raid shelter while bombs dropped around her. Aware of the sounds of destruction, she forces back her panic and distracts herself 'by focusing on what she needed to do for her next shift ... new recipes from the ministry to master, food inventories to be done, the butcher's order, two hundred factory workers to cook for.'

Maggie was a feminist and activist at a time when women's roles were undergoing vast changes; women leaving the domestic sphere and taking up challenging and dangerous work in munitions factories or as ambulance wardens. She was a nurturing person, recovering from the loss of her fiancé, who coped with her grief by helping others – the factory workers supporting the war and the homeless – through the restorative power of food.

The novel focuses on Maggie's sacrifices, her physical and emotional difficulties and her relationships. She forms a friendship with 12-year-old Robbie, who was evacuated to the country, lives by his wits and tries to steal food from her, and Janek, a Polish refugee (one third of the British Air Force were Polish) with his dream of returning to his homeland. Together they create a victory garden to supply the restaurant; railway sidings, city squares and parks were given over to food production. Maggie has to overcome the threats of closure, battling bureaucracy to keep the restaurant running, finding a way around the rivalry between the restaurants and the established catering trade, especially when she was able to source ingredients that were hard to come by and in short supply.

Caroline spoke of the restorative power of food and its importance in wartime. People turn to food when there is emotional distress, celebration or comfort – the 'most basic need'. Included in the book are thirty tested recipes from the Ministry of Food's War Cookery Leaflets, updated for modern times. There is a recipe for Woolton Pie, named after Lord Woolton, then Minister of Food, that uses root vegetables and oatmeal. Caroline spoke warmly of her grandmother's contributions, of the importance of writing through the senses and of how cooking the recipes helped in creating character, in recipes such as the gingerbread,

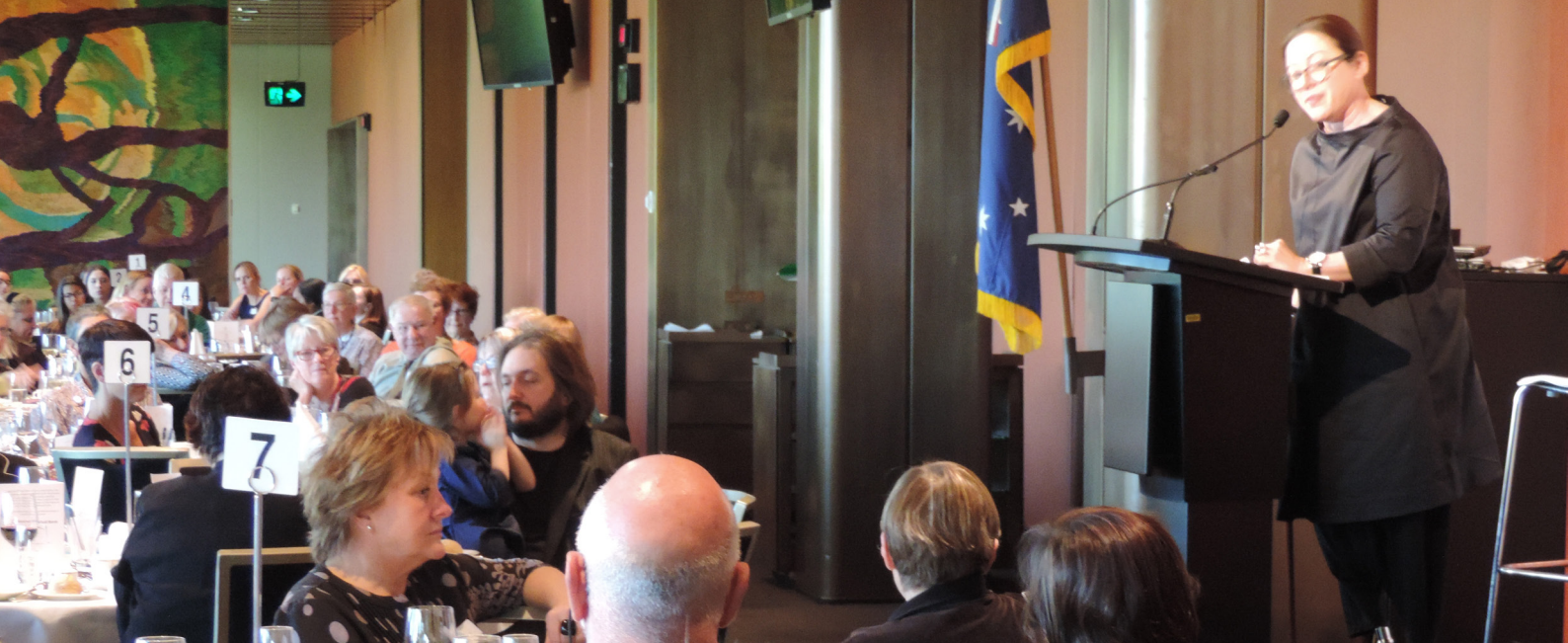


with its spicy sensuousness and childhood nostalgia. She also referred to parallels with the book such as the current revival of 'paddock-to-plate' food and 'nose-to-tail eating', and the war on wastefulness.

Her talk concluded, audience members reminisced about wartime shortages – luxuries such as butter – and ingenious ways to compensate for lack of cosmetics by applying gravy powder to the legs or rubbing beetroot to the lips when lipstick was unavailable. The book contains numerous examples of what could be used to 'make do' and was enthusiastically acclaimed by an audience member as a thoroughly enjoyable read.

More detail on the research and background can be found at www.maggieskitchenovel.com

Report by Kris Clarke



2017 Annual

The Library's 23rd Annual Luncheon at NSW Parliament House on 11 September was once again a well-attended and inspiring occasion. Jozefa Sobski's welcome to guests was echoed in Gill Hicks' reference to the significance of the Welcome to Country, led by Margaret Campbell, that had resounded spiritedly when clapsticks echoed as guests made their way into the Dining Room.

The Library was honoured to have in attendance hosts Penny Sharpe MLC and Tanya Davies MP and our Library patron Elizabeth Evatt AC.

The Luncheon was attended by numerous supporters of the Library and students from Cheltenham Girls, Holroyd, Lurnea, Miller, Riverside Girls, Sydney Girls and The Forest High Schools, Queenwood School and Wenona School.

Suzanne Marks introduced peace campaigner Gill Hicks, who gave an impassioned plea for peace in our troubled times. (See full report of Gill Hicks' speech on page 1.)

Barbara Henery summarised the Library's activities over the past year, as it continues to redress the imbalance of women's voices in our historical record. The Library paid tribute to the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Constitutional Referendum and the work of Faith Bandler and Jessie Street with a display of books and materials at the Library and encouraged awareness and interaction through Facebook posts. In supporting the encouragement of women's literature, the Library has entered into an agreement with the Rose Scott Women Writers' Festival to promote and publicise their activities.

The Library welcomed the newly established Ravenswood Women's Art Prize. A recent initiative has been the launch of the Library's Book Club, adding to an appreciation of the diversity in our collection. The archivists have this year been working on the conservation of banners, badges and other material with



Photographs above of speaker, Gill Hicks, school groups and teachers, Library members, volunteers and guests.



Luncheon

the help of conservators from the Powerhouse Museum.

The Library is particularly proud of its unique collection of posters depicting women's activism and advocacy, with the digitisation of over 1400 posters displayed on the online catalogue for accessing and reproducing for research. The catalogue also contains recently created reading lists covering topics such as Women Politicians, Young Women's Issues and what we hold of Jessie Street's personal library.

Barbara acknowledged the commitment of the Library's volunteers and supporters. She also thanked the students from UTS and TAFE whose contributions have assisted us to embrace the potential of technologies. Their work enables the Library to keep up its efforts in providing a service to the Australian community, expanding the Library's reach and sustaining its growth.

Baraa Omar, a year 11 student from Holroyd High School, gave a vote of thanks to the speaker as proceedings drew to a close and we were left with much food for thought.

Kris Clarke



Rose Scott Women Writers' Festival 2017

The 2017 Rose Scott Women Writers' Festival was held on the weekend of 15-16 September, its theme Women Writing Women.

The opening luncheon speaker was Yorta Yorta woman and soprano Deborah Cheetham who founded the Black Opera Company devoted to developing young indigenous singers. She wrote and composed the first indigenous opera *Pecan Summer* which portrays the power and strength of indigenous women and which debuted in the Sydney Opera House.



Photograph by Kristina Kingston

Deb articulated a unique and inspiring vision for the future of black/white relations in Australia. We have yet to realise that, through indigenous culture, whites are now part of the oldest, continuing culture on earth. She described how the Gadigal people are still passing on the strength of their wisdom of the land from which all can benefit.

She sees Australia as an 'immature society', where women are not equal to men. It does not yet understand the power of its own inner wisdom, yet greater connection to Aboriginal Australia could allow this to flourish. She urged us to read Bruce Pasco's *Dark Emu* to bring us from a place of 'not knowing to knowing'.

Deb's contribution to this process is through music, opera and performance. She foreshadowed her plan to write a War Requiem about the frontier wars between indigenous communities and whites. Significant to this is a healing for whites of the traumas both sides suffered. Unlike Aboriginal cultures, their ancestors did not practise the healing ceremonial rites which, through shared experience, have the power to acknowledge and release past hurts and allow antagonists to create a lasting and meaningful peace.

Finally Deb, in her musically rich soprano voice, treated us to a live performance of the national anthem *Advance Australia Fair* in lyrics re-written in a marvellous collaboration between herself and lead Seekers singer Judith Durham. It calls on us to 'stand as one upon this sacred land' and to move forward in 'trust and understanding'. A marked omission is that we are no longer 'girt by sea.'

Saturday's symposium drew such well-known writers as Delia Falconer, Tegan Bennet Daylight and poet Kate Middleton, launching her most recent collection, *Passages*.

Dr Bernadette Brennan started the day with her fascinating biography, *A writing life, Helen Garner and her work* (Text 2017). On discovering that there had been no in-depth study of Garner's oeuvre, despite a writing career spanning over forty years, Brennan changed her mind about doing a 'bit of a saunter' through the ideas Garner generated, and

gave herself up to rigorous biography. Immersing herself in the notes, letters and journals that Garner had produced over this time, she found it a revelation, including such treasures as 25 years of correspondence between Garner and her early publisher Hilary McPhee, of McPhee Gribble.

Bernadette talked fluently and engagingly about the polarising nature of much of Garner's work – is she a champion of women's voices, or the opposite? Is she a fiction or non-fiction writer? Brennan brought out the importance of Garner's taking on taboo topics such as menstruation, childlessness, bodies and sexuality, and the shame and guilt they can engender – which is elemental to her writing. Whatever side of the debate a reader falls on, Brennan's book is an overdue tribute to the importance of



Bernadette Brennan

Garner's contribution to Australian literature.

The day included panel discussions on writing real women and writing fictional women. Dr Karen Lamb brought us some pearls from Thea Astley's life in her biography, *Thea Astley: Inventing her own weather* (UQP 2015), another writer whose contribution to Australian letters had not received due recognition. Who would have known that she watched *The Bold And The Beautiful* every day, or her particular genius for 'one-way intimacy'?

On fiction writing, Tegan Bennet Daylight drew us into the creation of her characters – fragments, pieces of herself and others, are broken off, and fertile, these will grow in a new setting. Laughter followed her observation that though she would *never* lift a real 'whole person' to place in her writing, this rule may be forsaken if it's 'really good – there's a wobble in every writer's moral character!' Her new book, *Six bedrooms* (Random House 2015), is a collection of short stories, revisiting teen years, that scorched period where, once passed, we slam the door behind us. She asks, can children escape their backgrounds?

The support of women within the writing community for each other was beautifully illustrated by Lisa Gorton and Kate Middleton's friendship. When they feel their work is 'unpublishable', when the self-doubt rears, they often turn to each other. Gorton's new novel, *The life of houses* (Giramondo 2015), takes familiar places and hidden spaces and muses on the powerful relationships between what is seen and unseen, known, or possessed.

The day ended with a glorious reading from members of the Rose Scott Festival committee of parts of Alana Valentine's play, *Letters to Lindy*. Alana introduced the

reading with a funny and moving account of working with Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton. It was Lindy's sense of humour which relieved the hurt and pain, the 'transmitted trauma', that came in writing it. Lindy still receives over 1000 letters each year, most correspondents regretful of things they had once believed. Valentine ended with the observation that theatre is a communal act. In bringing communities together in a public space, allowing for reflection both individually and in relation to each other, it is greater than the sum of its parts. These shared experiences can be used to foster growth and social change.

The Rose Scott Women Writers' Festival is now formally partnered with the Library; we look forward to attending many future Festivals.

Jessica Stewart and Suzanne Marks

Frances Phoenix continued from page 3

of the Crafts Board of the Australia Council. The Library holds eight of these.

In 1982, Phoenix left Sydney for a trip around Australia. In Alice Springs she joined the preparations for the Women for Survival Pine Gap Peace Camp in 1983. This two-week women-only vigil was a protest against the secretive American-Australian spy base. Phoenix initiated *Double our Numbers*, calling on women around Australia to contribute self-portrait banners as symbolic participants in the protest. In Armidale, 100 women lay down in the mall to have their silhouettes traced; three of these huge banners were later donated to the Library. Hundreds more were painted and sent to Alice Springs, where women in working bees stitched them together and prepared them for carrying on poles.

The banners are wonderfully colourful and filled with allusions to heroines from feminist history, indigenous women, motherhood and mother nature. The Library has the banner designed and made by Phoenix herself, showing a goddess-like figure sitting nude in meditation. Across the top, words in capital letters proclaim: 'The freedom to think creative thoughts is the ultimate anarchy'. It is an image that celebrates women's creative thoughts and looks forward to a feminist future.

On the first day of the peace camp, women carried the banners in a procession to the base gates. The banners were laid on the ground and against the fences, offering shelter from the sun, and gathering dust and rain. At the end of the camp, a number of women brought banners back to Sydney in crates, but their whereabouts now are unknown. However in 2002, Phoenix organized for three banners and some 100 slides and photographs of the project to be relocated from the South Australia Women's Liberation Movement Resource Centre to Jessie Street National Women's Library. There they remain, many having been displayed in the Library's Pine Gap exhibition at Parliament House in 2009. In an accompanying paper, Phoenix explained that the slides document almost all the banners. She took the slides and photographs herself in 1983, feeling that as initiator of the project she had a responsibility to document it. The Library's archives include many papers recording the meetings and leaflets organising the project.

Following the camp, Phoenix moved to Adelaide, where she worked as a graphic designer, joined local chapters of



the Women's Liberation Movement and Women's Art Movement, and continued both her solo and community art practices. Posters including her designs, and other work of hers, are held in the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of NSW, the NSW and South Australian State Libraries, and other places. To Phoenix' description of herself as artist, feminist and lesbian, we can add life-long learner, teacher and archivist. Rounding out three degrees and a passion for short courses, her archives read like the papers of an individual dedicated to self-directed learning. As an arts educator, she spent her life running creative workshops for diverse members of the community. And as an archivist, Phoenix was dedicated to taking notes, documenting projects and lodging records in national collections. Phoenix understood these interrelated pursuits as deeply connected to her feminism.

Louise R Mayhew, Griffith University, l.mayhew@griffith.edu.au, with assistance from Jan Burnswoods about the Library's holdings

New Members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Jenny Aitchison MP
 Dianne Fruin
 Jodie Harrison MP
 Jo Haylen MP
 Rosemary Huisman
 Gaby Judd
 Louise Kelly
 Vicky Marquis
 Kerith Power
 Lisa Sharkey
 Denise Smith
 Rikki Stubbs
 Afroula Thomas

The Atria Institute in Amsterdam

The Atria Institute on gender equality and women's history is a library, an archive and a research organisation located in the centre of Amsterdam.

In 1935, Rosa Manus, Johanna Naber and Willemijn Posthumus-van der Groot founded the International Archives for the Women's Movement with the aim of collecting and preserving women's heritage and encouraging academic research into the position of women. Now known as Atria, the organisation continues to manage and increase the Collection IAV, which is considered to be one of the world's oldest collections about women and gender. Its holdings include 105,000 books, more than 9000 posters, 1800 objects (badges, pins, banners and notebooks) and 30,000 photographs of women and women's movements since the 19th century.

Similar to our Library's Tapestry Collection, Atria has an online 'Unforgettable Women' column, which tells the



stories of women who fought for women's rights. Both libraries share a common desire to ensure that the stories of inspiring women are not forgotten.

Atria also has a keen focus on influencing political debates that affect women. It undertakes research on behalf of governments, companies and social organisations on both Dutch and international matters. These research activities fund the library's operations.

Before visiting Atria's library, I was aware that a search of its catalogue produces numerous results for biographies about Jessie Street and also for this Library, including the Newsletter. However it was particularly pleasing to find that both the May and July 2017 issues of the Newsletter were on prominent display on the shelf of recent periodicals.

If you visit Amsterdam, you will be welcomed by the friendly library staff at Atria. <https://www.atria.nl/en>

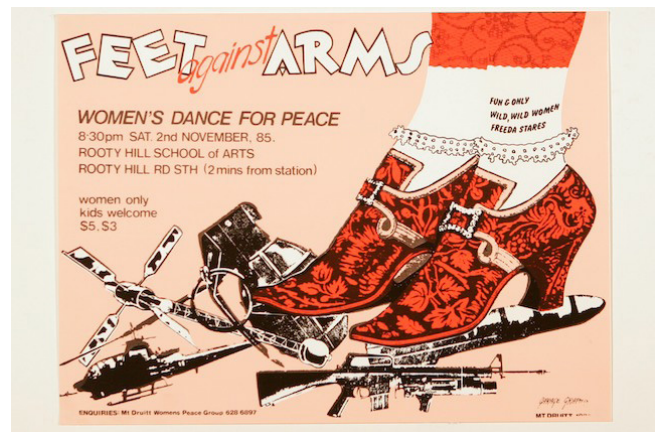
Lynne Morton



History Week 2017

The theme for History Week 2017 was popular culture: POP!

As feminist historian Michelle Arrow reminds us, 'the popular is political.' Feminist activism, both on and off the streets, was and for some still is a form of popular culture. Thus, Popular Culture with a Feminist Twist featured woman-centred popular culture from our collections. Feminists also know how to have fun! – from stepping out with the Freeda Stares and dancing to all-women bands to the stage of the Sydney Opera House concert hall, making art, making theatre, making noise.



With Facebook posts and displays in the Library, ranging from Helen Reddy's 'I am woman' to a suite of posters that remain all too relevant today, we highlighted music and cartoons as rich and uplifting sources of feminist popular culture.

Our 'music' post was a highlight, featuring images of songbook covers and introducing a new playlist to our YouTube channel, inviting suggestions. One of the Library's volunteers, Dale Dengate, selected 'Don't be too polite girls', an equal pay anthem by Glen Tomasetti, generously providing background material. With terrific contributions and a new volunteer inspired to join, the playlist will be an ongoing project.

Participating in History Week continues to be a wonderful opportunity to connect to a wider audience and showcase the Library's invaluable collections.

Sherri Hilario

Wish List

The Library seeks to acquire new publications for our collection and would be grateful to receive any of the following titles:

The intervention: an anthology, Rosie Scott and Anita Heiss (eds), 2015

An isolated incident, Emily Maguire, 2016

Exiles at home 1925-1945, Drusilla Modjeska, 2014

Do you love me or what? Sue Woolfe, 2017 (short stories)

Freda: A biography of Freda Whitlam, Noelene Martin, 2008

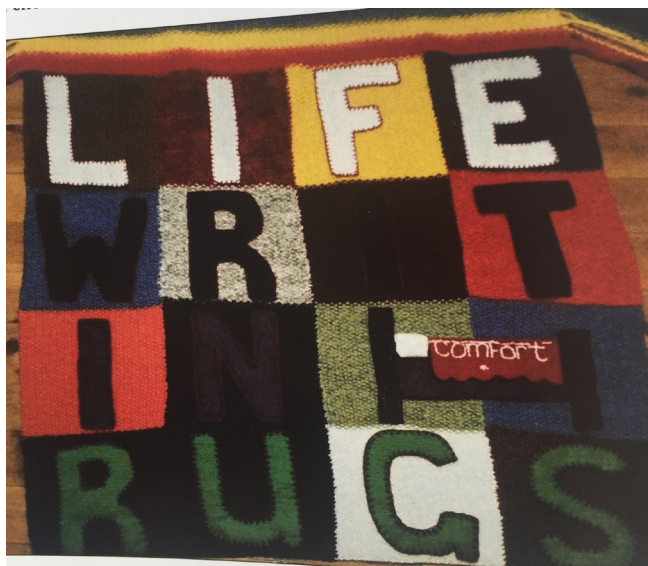
The swim club, Anne de Lisle, 2008

The museum of modern love, Heather Rose, 2016 (Stella Prize winner 2017)

Dying: a memoir, Cory Taylor, 2016

Heritage: The National Women's Art Book and exhibition, 1995

I am Melba, Ann Blainey, 2008



'Life Writ in Comfort Rugs', was photographed for *Peace works! Moving beyond 1915 remembrance*

The book is a recent donation by Boni Maywald of Queanbeyan and seeks to provide a starting point for community conversations to value peace and reconciliation as important steps beyond remembrance.

General donations since July 2017

Donations of money help meet day-to-day running costs:

Mary Allinson
 Jenny Atkinson
 Karen Banfield
 Ruth Callaghan
 Elizabeth Clarke
 Pam Dingle
 Deirdre Freyberg
 Myra Keay
 Riana King
 Kathleen Lamoureux
 Vicky Marquis
 Deirdre Mason
 Judith Newton
 Melissa Seymour
 Linda Shaw
 Rosalind Strong
 Betsy Wearing

Donations of material expand our collection:

Caroline Beecham
 Colleen Burke
 Judy Horacek
 Helen Swain
 Spinifex Press

Capital Investment Fund

Since it was launched in September 2009, the Capital Investment Fund has reached \$350,692. Our target is \$500,000, the interest from which will provide essential support for Library operations. If you would like to contribute, please indicate on the membership/donation form on this page.

CIF donations since July 2017:

Ruth Callaghan

Daphne Degotardi

MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

I wish to: join the library renew my membership
 make a donation

Date:/...../.....

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr/other

Name:.....

Address:.....

Tel: (h)..... (w)..... (m).....

Email: (Please print BLOCKLETTERS)

Please send newsletters by email instead of hardcopy.

Membership Category

- Full Member \$60 Life member \$1,000
 Organisation \$120 Student \$20 (conditions apply)
 Concession \$30 (Pensioner/Centrelink Concession Cardholders)

A membership year runs from 1 January to 31 December. Members joining after 1 October are financial until 31 December of the following year.

Donations (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

- I wish to make a donation of \$.....
 to the Library for general purposes
 to the Library's Capital Investment Fund
 I am willing to have my name published in the Newsletter
 I wish to remain anonymous

Payment Details

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS: Westpac Bank is no longer accepting manual vouchers for credit card payments. Therefore, payments will no longer be issued the yellow credit card receipt. Credit card payments can still be made in the usual way and will be processed electronically. Please contact Jean Burns at the library if you have any questions.

- Enclosed is my cheque/money order for \$.....
 (payable to Jessie Street National Women's Library)
 Please charge my MasterCard/Visa with \$.....
 Name of cardholder:.....
 Card no.....
 Expiry date/..... CCV_ _ _

Signature:.....

Auto Debit Authorisation

- I authorise JSNWL to charge this, and all future membership renewals as they fall due, to the credit card number above on this form.
 I authorise JSNWL to charge \$.....annually to the above credit card as a donation to
 the Library for general purposes or to
 the Library's Capital Investment Fund.

Signature:.....

Become a volunteer

- I would like to help the Library by becoming a volunteer. (You will be contacted for an interview.)

Please forward the completed form to:

Jessie Street National Women's Library
GPO Box 2656, Sydney NSW 2001

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GPO Box 2656 Sydney NSW 2001

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Registered Charity No. CFN10255

Note: Please advise the Library if your contact details have changed.

Visit us:

523–525 Harris Street (cnr William Henry Street), Ultimo
Please use the intercom for admittance
Level access is via the Ultimo Community Centre in Bulwara Rd

Opening times:

The Library is open to the public Monday to Friday 10 am to 3 pm

Borrowing policy:

The public can access items using the interlibrary loan system. The public cannot borrow items but may use them in their library of choice. A loan collection is available to financial members

How to reach the Library:

There are several ways to travel to the Library:

- ▶ The Library is a 20 minute walk from Town Hall Station through Darling Harbour or from Central Station via the Goods Line walk or via Harris Street
- ▶ Bus 501 (Railway Square to Ryde/West Ryde) at Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre stop
- ▶ Bus 389 (Maritime Museum to North Bondi) at Harris and Allan Streets stop
- ▶ Light rail from Central Station or Dulwich Hill to Exhibition stop
- ▶ There is limited two hour street meter parking available



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