



tharunka

UNSW STUDENT VOICE

WOMEN'S ISSUE 05 EDITION 54

I am a feminist, hear me roar... I think?

Women of Colour: THE INTERVIEWS

WOMEN ON SCREEN

ATC
UNSW Student Life

IMAGE Carmelina Nunnari
TEXTILE INSTALLATION
COFA BFA
Untitled



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Tharunka would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which the university now stands, and on which this magazine is printed, the Cadigal people of the Eora nation. In doing so, we would also like to pay our respects to elders, both past and present.

Tharunka recognises that this land was never ceded. Furthermore, we express solidarity with Indigenous people in the struggle for land rights, self determination, sovereignty and the recognition of past injustices.

COVER ART Jade Muratore - BFA "Lady In Red" #2.

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tharunka thanks

Publications Co-ordinator Jude Whitfield.
All our fabulous women contributors.
Thanks and Farewell to Penny Spankie our
Creative Guru, for the past 5 issues for 2008.
Printers MPD - The fabulous job they do!!!

tharunka needs u

Your articles, editorials, arguments, letters,
creative writing, satire & artworks.

Tharunka, comes out roughly every 3 weeks.
This issue is the Women's Edition which comes
out once every year.



Dear Editor

Finally, finally...

We have reached the final issue for semester 1, 2008. And, for this issue we bring you our oh-so-awesome Special Women's Edition. All the content, editing and designing is the work of women.

Many of you may be wondering why we still need an autonomous Women's Issue in 2008. You may be thinking, isn't everything equal between men and women yet? Surely?

Surely not.

Even in this publication, produced within a supposedly equal and progressive university context, most of our regular contributions come from men. The mere existence of a Women's Issue has opened *Tharunka* up to a whole new range of female writers, most of who have never submitted before. We hope you keep on submitting!

Look inside to marvel at the talent, guts, passion and political savvy of UNSW Women. Jen Sunga describes how she stumbled across her feminist identity in 'I am a Feminist'. Niisha Sharma claims her place on the margins with pride in 'C'est dans les silences...'. Claire Nemorin talks to three of her women of colour sister-comrades. The variety in the content of the articles, art, opinion pieces, critical reflections and creative writing demonstrates that while there may be similarities between the experiences of women; ultimately women are different (and difference is a positive).

For what does it mean to be a woman? This is the better and more relevant question in 2008. And we sure don't have any clear-cut answers. The only constant is that there are women all over the world who are fucking strong, powerful and doing it her way.

To all those who identify as a 'woman', to those who do not always identify as women but are female-bodied, to those who have never questioned being a woman, to those who are female bodied and identify as genderqueer and to us: The 2008 Women's *Tharunka* is a dedication, this issue is just for YOU!

Have something to say?

Get it published!

Attention all Letters to
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Dear Editor,

As a woman, I can't get over a niggling bone of contention I have about the fact that there is a 'women's room' on campus. I see absolutely no need for such a thing. This being women's week, I read an article about the women's room in *Blitz*, where Claire Nemorin, the Women's Officer, attempted to defend the existence of the women's room, by answering 'the "hairy" gender questions'. I don't think her answers were adequate, because I'm still asking myself 'why do we need a women's room'? Claire Nemorin claims that having a women's (only) space does not discriminate against men because 'men are freely able to access most other rooms and spaces'. Excuse me, but so are women, so why do we need our very own special room, and men allegedly do not, given that we have the same access to other rooms and spaces as our male university fellows?

She also responds to the question of "shouldn't there be a men's room if we are aiming for equality" by stating that this assumes that men and women already have equality, and then pointing out that 'women have less access to resources than many men, the legal system does not often provide fair and just outcomes for mainly female survivors in certain areas, and women's voices aren't often considered as important by many'. What I want to know then, is how creating a space that undeniably discriminates against men helps to actively address these inequalities (which I fully acknowledge and as a woman am angered and frustrated by). I do not accept the argument that it encourages women to become interested, and hopefully active, on women's rights and equality issues because whilst this is important and I agree having a regular meeting space set up for this would indeed encourage women, I don't see why it needs to be to the exclusion of men. I don't see how women are better off fighting for fairness on their own. I think we are better off and will be more successful by showing the entire community that equality for women is a cause worthwhile getting on board for.

The women's room is mostly promoted as a comfy lounge room where you may find some interesting reading material ie gender and feminist literature. Although I'm glad that they also provide important information and encouragement to women to stand up for themselves against crimes where the majority of victims are women eg sexual assault and domestic violence, I don't see how excluding men from being exposed to such material and information promotes equality. If anything, denying men access from a space where they would be exposed to such materials discourages men from taking an interest in issues confronting women and also from appreciating that women (and men and children) deserve to be protected from crimes like domestic violence and sexual assault and to have justice served when such crimes are committed, the onus of which is on the entire community to

demand, which -gasp- includes men.

I think that by having a women's room, where men are not permitted to use, it is formally asserting a connotation that men are in some way unpleasant, untrustworthy or dangerous, thus women need a space where they can feel safe from the terrible male! This breaks my heart. My life is full of wonderful men: I wouldn't choose to exclude the company of my father, grandfather, brother, uncles, friends, and my partner, as they are all examples of kind, intelligent PEOPLE who happen to be male. They are not dangerous or threatening in any way, which of course could be said for most guys (yes, there are some creeps out there, but being a creep isn't exclusive to the male gender). If however I wanted to be exclusively in the company of females, then I don't need a specially allocated space to do that. As I said before, female students have the same access rights as male students.

In a way, it seems as if one of the main reasons women students would take advantage of the women's room is just to use the microwave, kettle and lounges in order to glean creature comforts such as hot meals on cold days at campus, coffee that won't blow your student budget, and somewhere comfy to catch up on the sleep you missed out on after pulling an all-nighter to finish that essay, not to mention the fact that you probably won't find the extraordinary cues you get at the library in order to use the computer. But why should only women have access to such facilities? On this point, I will acknowledge the fact that if men so felt the desire to have access to such comfortable facilities as offered by the women's room, then assuming UNSW really is about fairness and equality, then nothing is stopping them from setting up such a space (-or is it? I don't really know...)

Finally, I want to comment on Claire Nemorin's disgruntlement about having to let men into the women's room to fix something that had gone wrong (I cannot remember exactly what it was,

if maybe there was a small fire in there or something, but in any case it was an incident that required workers to make some kind of repairs or adjustments). What is your problem with this? These are people who had to come in order to restore your precious space - IN WHICH CASE THEY WERE PROVIDING YOU WITH A VALUABLE SERVICE!!!!!! AND THEY JUST HAPPENED TO BE MEN WHO CARRIED OUT THAT SERVICE!!! THEY DIDN'T ENTER FOR THE PURPOSE OR WITH THE INTENTION OF HARRASSING, INTIMIDATING, INVADING OR OPPRESSING WOMEN OR WOMEN'S RIGHTS!! Why so much disdain for men? I feel that if anything, I would have had gratitude that a space I value was restored to its former condition/made safe/whatever service or maintenance it was that was carried out- regardless of whether a man or a woman did the job.

Given this amazingly long rant, let it not be misconstrued that I am not a modern woman who seeks equality and fair treatment for women, nor do I fail to acknowledge that women are, in certain areas and respects, disadvantaged compared to our male counterparts, and yes this does anger me to tears at times. But I still fail to understand how dividing and separating the genders can ever allow us to value and appreciate each other's struggles and to lend our support.

Giovana Faraguna

Dear Giovana,

Your response is impassioned which is great, but contains many flawed arguments.

Your opinion that women are freely able to access most other rooms and spaces is a very literal interpretation, and one that doesn't take into account some other women's experiences.

Your letter states that: feminist action should always include men. An alternative response is that all the genders must work together for social change YET some women want to work autonomously in a space where

they feel welcome and heard. Ways of working do not have to encompass an either/or like your letter suggests.

Using some practical examples, during Women's Week the UNSWomen's Collective worked with men during the mixed gender discussions groups and the Women and Religion forum AND worked with women only when there were events just for women. Some women sometimes feel more comfortable sharing certain ideas, thoughts and feelings with other women.

Your letter then states that because the Women's Room does not allow men access to its feminist literature then they will not engage. Yet people can borrow books at libraries and go to bookshops. It's also up to individuals to follow up on their own interests.

Your letter next says: "The Women's Room formally assert[s] a connotation that men are in some way unpleasant, untrustworthy or dangerous, thus women need a space where they can feel safe from the terrible male!"

This is strictly YOUR interpretation. It also contradicts my Blitz article's assertion that a Women's Room is not about men in all their differences, it's about WOMEN.

Inclusive of the previous quote, your letter partakes in some huge and reductive assumptions made about myself and the women who use the Women's Room. I suggest that future arguments be backed up by actually talking to the women who use the space. As a related aside, the mixed gender events were advertised in the same issue of the article that was responded to.

We are all human, this we agree on. We just have vastly different opinions who is recognised as human and what to do about that.

Sincerely,

Claire Nemorin

P.S I was actually joking in the OB report where I was 'suitably pissed off' that the male fire fighters who entered the Women's Room. Seriously.

I am a feminist, hear me roar... I think?

Jennifer Sunga

This is my personal journey of how I've come to call myself a feminist. It is flawed as most human experiences are, but it's still my journey. Despite the prescription at the end, my aim is not to convert, but rather to tell you a story, because like all important things that happen in one's life, we all love an audience.

Today I discovered that I am a feminist! Why? I don't know, it just happened! Of course, nothing really just happens. I'm sure I was on the path towards this discovery before I even knew I was on a journey, but alas I have arrived; a woman and a feminist. I'd like to tell you all that the heavens opened up, a light shone down on me, Gaia spoke to me, and I found myself connected to all women in one way or another, but unfortunately, the world does not revolve around me (harrumph), and my revelations do not come with big budget productions. Actually, it came in the form of my Politics tutorial. There I was, listening to a male student claiming to be a feminist and voicing his support of affirmative type programs for women in the workplace. I was a little taken aback, not because I didn't believe that men could be feminists, but rather here was this man; proud to call himself a feminist, when I - woman, supporter of women's rights - could not bring myself to do so. What was my deal???



I then reflected on what my friend had said to me when she first asked whether I considered myself a feminist. When I replied no, she then queried why I didn't believe so, as she had thought that I was. I went on to explain that there were certain beliefs that I held that some feminists may deem patriarchal, and I was afraid to be a hypocrite. My friend then responded, "It's not an Either-Or approach; it's not an ALL or NOTHING". I agreed, but of course I was set in my ways. I knew what it meant to be a feminist, and I was not that.

This knowing was again revisited during a holiday, in which I met a Norwegian woman, who had the female symbol tattooed on her arm. When I asked her what her tattoo meant to her, she replied that she was a feminist, and she proudly said that "most Scandinavian women are". I was impressed! Having recently studied some feminist theory in courses I had taken the semester before this particular holiday, I asked her which wave of feminism had most influenced her. She said she wasn't aware of the waves. I then asked her which type of feminism she mostly associated with, radical versus socialist and so on. She said she wasn't aware of the

differences. When I went on to explain to her what I had come to understand as the differences, she said she supposed that she was "a little bit of everything".

What was going on? Here was a feminist proud of it to the point that she had inked the very symbol permanently on her skin, yet I knew the theories. I suppose that's when the wheels really started turning. Perhaps I didn't really know what it meant to be a feminist. I was living another person's concept of what feminism meant, so of course, I was never going to add up to that concept.

So back to my class...

So as I sat there listening to this male voice claiming pride in his own feminist stance, it made me wonder, "Did I really know what it meant to be a feminist?" As I sat there, I realised I did, and I realised that I am a feminist.

I realised I didn't have to live up to the Germaine Greer notions of feminism (I know a lot of feminists who don't) or even quote Butler (whom I find so enlightening, but find shamefully difficult to read). I had an epiphany! It really wasn't an Either-Or; an ALL or NOTHING.

It was about how I had come to understand myself as a woman, as someone who supports women's rights as they aspire to gain equality in the world. I think, in a world where everyone is expected to fit into a box (only to discover no one really does), this was an amazing realisation for me. No, the heavens didn't open up, but something just as wonderful happened, I realised I AM A FEMINIST!

So, I may not be picketing the fences of misogynistic institutions, or be a voice in the UNSWomen's Collective (although I should make an appearance once in a while), but I am the girl in the background, silently (but surely) rooting for women and their rights, and I guess in my own way trying to make a difference. So, just because you don't fit into the mould (by the way, whose mould is it anyway?), don't be afraid to call yourself a feminist, because as my friend once wisely said, it's not an "Either-Or; it's not an ALL or NOTHING!". =)

Wearing her "FEMALE SYMBOL" proudly

- jen



IMAGE Zoe Coombs Marr
PERFORMANCE - *this is not art festival*
COFA Bachelor of Arts and Fine Arts
THE POST - Floating Around Newcastle

WOMEN ON SCREEN

Tisha Dejmanee

Well, it's exam season and my procrastination skills have been worked overtime. My laptop has swiftly transformed from implement of study to weapon of mass distraction as I vegetate in front of hours of mindless TV. However, whilst watching *Sex and the City*, I started wondering whether my feelings of guilt related not just to the fact that I should be studying, but that this show had a compromised feminist agenda. How do we define representations of feminist role models? What judgments are we bringing to the screen in deciding whether or not a show is credible feminist fare?

Sex and the City revitalised our television screens with rarely seen portrayals of women as independent, sexually predatory and cynical of motherhood and marriage. It gave us frank dialogues about sex without adulterating it with love, female insecurity or babies. It forced us to purge our childhood diets of heterosexual fairy tale endings, in a way that was both confronting and ultimately liberating.

By hacking off the happily ever after, the show was able to explore the conflict between an apparent need for heterosexual romance and the idea that four passionate friends could maintain a significant life together. Although the girls drift in and out of relationships, the stability of the girls' relationships with each other are forwarded as the hopeful and fulfilling alternative to the instability of heterosexual relationships – Carrie is Miranda's birthing partner, and Samantha is surrounded by her girlfriends while she is recovering from chemotherapy.

On the other hand, there seems to be a contradiction with the premise that modern women do not need men, and the reality that the show is one extended obsession about relationships. By the end of the show, Carrie is with Big – dysfunctional, arrogant, obsessive. Miranda, the staunchest career woman of them all, is married with child despite herself. Charlotte, neurotically clucky, remains childless and has to settle for a dog. Samantha, the man-eater, ends up with breast cancer and no libido. These endings defy the choices the girls make, and their ability to know what is best for them.

In defence, it could be said that *Sex and the City* has never claimed to be a feminist show. It does not use the f-word, and perhaps the show's exaggerated glamour is an overt attempt to distance the girls from the typically unstylish feminist stereotype. *Sex and the City* lingers in the juxtaposition of 'feminist' and 'un-feminist': These girls are into fashion, but not stupid about eating. They are into men, but also highly value their female friendships. So is our criticism of the show just a reflection of our own indecision about what is feminist?

Women are complex creations and feminism has never had a static agenda nor been immune to criticism, which is how it's possible for

Sex and the City to be funny and clichéd and rubbish all at the same time. Watching this show does not mean that we want to emulate the lifestyles of these women by buying 400 pairs of Manolo Blahniks and bedding as many men, but it is important for us to have representations of these women, their choices and their mistakes.

In many ways, understanding this breed of *Sex and the City* woman is essential to understanding feminism's evolution through the generations. Generation X was a generation that was raised by Superwomen, who balanced career, family and profound exhaustion with varying degrees of success. The single career woman portrayed is both a reaction to perceived failings of previous generations of feminisms and a celebration of qualities such as independence and ambition which feminist mothers taught their daughters. In turn, *Sex and the City* furiously waves red flags for the next generation – career women may miss the ticking of their biological clocks, and women must balance independence with healthy emotional intimacy – with honesty and without judgment, amongst a glittering social life and with the support of brilliant female friendships.

In my mind, there are three feminist qualities that redeem the show. Firstly, it discussed everything taboo, and did so unapologetically. What is taboo? Initially, it was sex explored in terms of pleasure, implements and masturbation. However, it also covered 'feminist' taboos: admitting that one would like to give up a successful career to become a housewife and have babies; choosing to buy shoes rather than save up for a house deposit; admitting that despite our self-sufficiency, we can still be obsessed with seeking out relationships with men. Secondly, it encouraged greater acceptance of women's choice. The girls have different viewpoints and do not always share the same moral values and standards. This allows discussion and argument between friends, which is an open and honest discussion about how women feel; female voices for a female audience. Finally, the most feminist-positive quality that comes out of this show is its promotion of non-competitive, nurturing female relationships. Let's face it – feminism can be divisive. In the process of defining a homogenous brand of feminism, many women point the finger at other women, blaming them for allowing society to perpetuate generalisations about women, shunning them for the clothes they wear and the lifestyle choices they make. Yet this takes us further away from the necessary tenets of feminism – positive female relationships and open-mindedness. Here we have a model of four women sharing their understanding of femininity and their lives with each other; this is surely something which should be celebrated and replicated by women everywhere.



IMAGE Natalie Sing
INSTALLATION PHOTO
COFA Bachelor of Digital Media
Untitled

IMAGE Ruby Taylor
INSTALLATION
COFA BFA Sculpture, Performance & Installation
Passing Pith

women of colour:

THE INTERVIEWS

Claire Nemorin

There are many stereotypes about feminists. One: we all think the same. Two: we're all from one part of the world with fairer skin and from a particular class background. Three: all we do is unjustifiably complain without offering any solutions for a more just world between the genders.

Without seeking to dispel these myths, three women of colour feminists were interviewed about their views on gender issues and the place of feminism in their lives and the world.

Read on for some fascinating insights.





Natalie Dabarera, 23

IS A COMMITTED ACTIVIST IN DIFFERENT AREAS, NATALIE WAS THE 2006 CO-WOMEN'S OFFICER, AND IS A LAW/HISTORY HONOURS STUDENT AT MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY.

How would you define feminism? Drawing on bell hooks, a feminist writer, I would say that feminism is a movement to end all forms of sexism including sexist practices, institutions and systems.

What does feminism mean to you? I see feminism as interconnected with many other movements and many other struggles. I can't and I won't separate it from the rest of my politics. Feminism is a way in which I can articulate my resistance against capitalist exploitation, gendered discrimination and patriarchal control over womyn's bodies. For me, it is one means of understanding both injustice in the world, and resistance to it.

What does being a woman of colour mean to you?

Feminism in the West does not always recognise the ways in which racism and sexism intersect, nor how pervasive racism can be. Identifying as a womyn of colour is important to me, as it is a standpoint from which I can bring my feminist politics and my anti-racist politics together.

Do you think feminism is dead or that we live in a post-feminist age? Why or why not? Not at all! I think feminism is just as relevant as it ever was. There are so many womyn around the world and within Australia fighting against exploitation and discrimination.

To say that "we live in a post-feminist age" ignores and discounts their experiences. We also live in a time of corporate globalisation. Corporations care little about who gets hurt and often end up polluting the environment, exploiting labour and disposing people in their quest for profit. Corporate globalisation has had devastating effects on many womyn, especially those who are poor or live in the Majority World. Feminism can give us a framework for understanding these issues.

Which woman/women and/or feminist/s do you admire the most? I admire all womyn who are working and organising to create radical change on social justice and environmental issues around the world, especially those who face significant risks when doing so.



Kristine Jover, 26

IS A LONG TIME FEMINIST ACTIVIST, A GENDER STUDIES MAJOR, WAS THE 2007 CO-WOMEN'S OFFICER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, AND A CO-ORGANISER OF THE 2006 NETWORK OF WOMEN STUDENTS AUSTRALIA (NOWSA) STUDENT FEMINIST CONFERENCE.

What is feminism to you? Liberation; wholeness; community; sisterhood; radical thinking and action; connection; compassion; justice; and hope.

What does being a woman of colour mean to you? It means constant attention and effort to connect issues and politics, and a constant refusal to limit my allegiances to only one movement or one group. Audre Lorde writes that "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives". A lot of our issues are the same, but the effects, the consequences, are also different for women of colour, and our awareness and our approaches to these issues are different. So when we talk, in our collectives and our forums, about violence against women, and we talk about women's safety in the streets, and in clubs and pubs and bars, and we talk about intimate-partner violence, to me the issue – violence against women – also includes racist violence against women of colour, and that's something that doesn't often occur to white feminists. The same goes for reproductive rights – it's not just issues of access to abortion or issues of access to IVF technology, it's also issues of forced sterilisation or having your kids taken away. And issues of sexual violence and objectification, to me, isn't often just about because I'm a woman; to me, it's also because I'm Asian, and all the racist and sexist connotations that's attached to that identity in a white Western context – that I'm quiet and submissive, shy and obedient, exotic. A lot of the time I feel like white feminists are trying to separate issues into neat categories – "Well, is that racism or sexism?" – and I'm like, "Well, it's both together". I don't have the privilege of being able to separate out aspects of my identity and prioritising one over the other.

Which woman/women and/or feminist/s do you admire the most?

Audre Lorde (African-American poet and essayist)

Jackie Huggins (Aboriginal academic)

Barbara Shaw (Aboriginal activist against the NT intervention)

Sr Mary John Mananzan (Filipina Benedictine nun and feminist scholar, chairperson of GABRIELA, the federation of Filipino feminist orgs, and she also helped establish one of the first Women's Studies centres in the Philippines)

Adrienne Rich (Jewish American poet)


Rashmi Kumar, 24

IS INVOLVED IN THE FEMINIST, ANTI-RACIST AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS MOVEMENTS, IS A POSTGRADUATE WOMEN'S OFFICER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, AND STUDYING TOWARD A MASTERS OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.

How would you describe feminism? I think feminism is a political movement that seeks to eliminate gendered injustice against women. There are many perspectives on where that injustice comes from, why it persists, and how to fight against it, but they engage with each other and work together, I think.

What does feminism mean to you? To me feminism is the analysis I use to understand my life as a woman, and my relationships with other people on a gendered basis. That means I seek to support other women and challenge the oppression of all women, whether the basis of that oppression is sexism alone, or if it's a combination of oppressive forces.

Feminism means a lot to me, personally, because it gives me the tools to understand how male domination works against me, and strategies I can use to challenge it.

You identify as a woman of colour; what does that mean to you? Being a woman of colour (woc) means dealing with sexism and racism, as well as the intersections of sexism and racism. It means re-centering feminist politics around the differences between women, and how those differences are exploited by the oppressive structures we live in. For example, racism often becomes gendered because of women's role in reproduction: women of colour become targets of violence, such as sterilisation abuse, because the state tries to limit and control the reproduction of racialised groups.

It also means that I need a community of other woc around me, because women of colour often have to fight on two fronts: fighting against racism in the wider culture, and against sexism in our own families and communities. The intersection of racist and sexist oppression means that woc are often the most silenced and marginalised group in society, so we need spaces dedicated to woc issues in order to organise around them.

Do you think feminism is dead or that we live in a post-feminist age? Why or why not? I don't think feminism is dead or that we live in a post-feminist age. I think there are many problems with how feminist movements have organised themselves in the past, which has contributed to the decline of feminist action. But I don't think that's solely because of feminist movements. The 'backlash' against feminism – clawing back of reproductive rights, anti-discrimination measures, maternity leave entitlements, anti-violence measures, affirmative action, and the general devaluing of feminist political analysis – is also responsible

for this. It casts feminism as an outdated movement, and feminists as inhumane extremists, making it seem unappealing to women. And it's gone along with the intensification of women's exploitation in so-called 'pink collar' industries – those industries where women are concentrated. It has also divided women, by appealing to the interests of some women over others, and rewarding women who comply with the status quo.

I think that as long as sexism exists, we will need feminism to challenge it.

Which woman/women and/or feminist/s do you admire the most? I admire all the women around the world who work so hard together to challenge the oppressive conditions of their lives. In particular, I admire Andrea Smith, who founded Incite! Women of Color Against Violence in the USA, and who is challenging every aspect of academia and academic feminism. I admire Mukhtaran Mai from Pakistan, who was raped as a young woman but challenged the rapists in the courts, and won her case; she went on to build a school for girls and to speak out against sexual violence. I admire the women of the Niger Delta, who occupied oil production facilities to protest against the exploitation of their lands and natural resources.

There are so many women who inspire me that it would take forever to name them all. But they are the reason why I continue to call myself a feminist, and I feel lucky to associate myself with them.

...these women deeply inspire me too.

To be inspired some more: the ovarian feminist text *This Bridge Called My Back - Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Eds. Cherrie L. Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa) comes highly recommended.

If you identify as a woman of colour and are interested in women of colour feminist/gender issues yet think you don't know enough – often the reflection on our experiences and sharing with other women of colour are good starting points.

Until then - power to the pink (and brown, purple, green and white)!

IMAGE Paula do Prado
TEXTILE INSTALLATION
COFA BFA Honours

Fair go Sista!



MAKE SURE YOU CHECK THE EXPIRY DATE:

The Shelf-Life of the Australian Career Woman

Anne Gleeson

How much time, effort and money would you be prepared to invest in your tertiary studies if you knew that in ten to fifteen years it may all come to nothing?

What if all those long hours researching in the library, swatting for exams and pulling all-nighters to meet assignment deadlines counted for squat in the career stakes?

Would you be prepared to slug it out in low-paid jobs, put your hand up for work experience and work endless hours of unpaid overtime if you knew all this would soon be forgotten?

While these may be crazy suppositions that no logical person would voluntarily sign up for, it is the reality for many Australian professional women once they become mothers...

What impact motherhood may one day have on my career as a professional journalist in Australia barely registered in my undergraduate-addled brain in the early 1990s. To be honest, I doubt I gave it more than a fleeting thought because such a concern would have felt as remote as the idea that now, 15 years later, I would find myself pursuing a PhD to answer that very question.

Like many an eager young wannabe journalist, I did as I was told. I worked and studied hard to pay my way through university to gain a degree. I travelled overseas to get some life experience. I sweated it out on small two-bit newspapers in isolated country areas away from family and friends to earn my stripes. I took jobs in which I had no real interest or expertise to get the necessary training and that proverbial "foot in the door". And yes, all the way along, I was criminally overworked and underpaid.

It was a labour of love that I was convinced one day - all my hard work, sacrifices and passion for my craft - would pay off. And they did when I finally landed my dream job on a state daily newspaper covering the type of news stories I loved best.

So why would I decide to throw in a much-loved career as a respected newspaper journalist, only to find myself virtually back where I started? The simple answer is I was driven out by the sheer frustration of being a working mother in the Australian media industry.

The downward spiral all began when I finally plucked up the courage to tell my boss I was pregnant and that I intended to take 12-months maternity leave and then return to work part-time. In hindsight, I might as well have quit on the spot and saved myself the heartache of helplessly watching my hard-fought career disintegrate before my eyes. However, my wretched experiences, and those of many of my female colleagues forced to make the same heart-wrenching decision, are by no means confined to the media industry.

The meteoric rise in the number of part-time workers in Australia in the past two decades appears to have escaped the notice of many employer groups, policy makers and political leaders. In fact, Australia nearly tops the charts of OECD countries[1] with twice as many part-time workers than the United States and the United Kingdom.[2] Not surprisingly, the vast majority of part-time workers are mothers with almost two-thirds returning to the workforce before their children reach school age, and an increasing number still with babes-in-arms or toddlers.[3]

Many are driven back out of economic need or restrictive maternity leave provisions threatening the security of the jobs they left behind. For others it is the well-documented isolation of motherhood or a desire to restore their professional identity. [4] Modern women workers reluctant to be defined by their motherhood are struggling to combine work and family in an era yet to shrug off its conservative shackles.

IMAGE Kate Afrakoff
PHOTO
COFA BFA

Talking Back to the Machine #2

The Australian workforce is still obsessed with the "ideal worker" norm[5] which has been historically caricatured as a male worker with no ties – or at least a devoted housewife - loyal to his chosen field for life. It is this prehistoric view of working life that is wreaking havoc in the lives of ordinary working women expected to balance the incompatible demands of work and family.

Many soon discover the rhetoric of "family-friendly" work practices amid a corporate culture demanding ever-increasing work hours to offset dwindling staff and resources. For them, the school gate still shuts at 3pm and heaven forbid a child should fall sick.

To be fair, journalism – like many professions – is characterised by unpredictable and tight deadlines given the nature of news. But women have been entering journalism – and the labour market in general - in droves for the past three decades[6] so it is not like the issue is new or will simply go away. Instead, what are disappearing are highly-skilled and talented career women at their professional peaks. The loss represents a massive cost to both the companies and the individuals themselves at the very point when they should be reaping the rewards for their hard work.

The first step to assuaging the waste is a commitment by management to pay more than "lip service" to the changing needs of the modern Australian work force. As it stands, part-time work appears to provide the perfect solution to the mounting pressures. Provided, that is, women are willing to forego the trappings of professional success, namely, any hope of promotions, training, and pay rises.[7] Therein lies the rub.

Australia lags behind most other industrialised countries in terms of relinquishing its deathgrip on the outdated "male breadwinner/ female carer" view of the world,[8] meaning the burden of striking the balance falls unfairly on women. What beggars belief is that many so-called experts are left scratching their heads at Australia's dwindling birth rate, and contemplating ways women can be convinced, cajoled or careened into motherhood.

To my mind, it's pretty easy, even my three-year-old son could help them join the dots.



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IMAGE Jessica Haly
PHOTO
COFA BFA Honours
Reflective Fingers

rare but precious: women in Information technology

Anne Cregan

Women in Information Technology (IT) are a rare species, struggling to make double-digit percentages in many organisations in Australia. Furthermore, rather than gradually catching up with men, the number of women has declined significantly since the late 1980s. A 2005 report from the Computing Research Association indicated that the number of women awarded bachelor degrees in Computer Science recently fell below 20% from nearly 40% in the mid 80s.[1] Anecdotally, many of those graduates did not settle down into careers in IT.

Yet looking at the history of Computer Science, some of the key advances have been made by women. Ada Lovelace is often cited as the first computer programmer, due to her work on Charles Babbage's analytical engine around 1842. Six of the original ENIAC programmers of 1946 were women, and the compiler – probably the single biggest advance in programming – was invented by Grace Hopper, also credited as the “mother of COBOL”. In 1969, Grace put the sexist stereotype to shame by winning the first “Man of the Year” award from the Data Processing Management Association.

Given such auspicious beginnings, why have women now fallen away from IT so dramatically? The answer is elusive and no doubt due to a number of complex factors, but I can offer my own experience and insights as a woman working in IT.

I can honestly say that in my experience, I have found women to be exceptionally good as programmers, analysts and in other IT roles. In fact, I cannot think of a single woman I've known working in IT who wasn't at least better than average. Yet women tend to be silent achievers, getting the job done with little fanfare. If you look closely, you'll find them: LinuxChix, Open Source Developers, women working in corporate and government IT. However, I now rarely even encounter another woman in my day-to-day work.

After working in the field for some years, then enrolling in a PhD in computer science at UNSW, I now work full-time at NICTA. NICTA is the premier organisation in Australia for leading edge research in Information and Communications Technology. It has affiliations with several leading Australian universities including UNSW, and one of its labs is on campus at Kensington. In that six storey building on Anzac Parade filled with world-class researchers, until about a month ago I was the only female researcher; there are now (thankfully) two of us. NICTA has recognised the deficiency of women amongst its ranks and in IT generally, and sponsored its women across the nation to have a dinner at the end of April to discuss the issues openly.

From my own perspective, it was great just to have contact with other women in the field. In my day to day work, I'm now used to being the only woman and generally find I'm on a different wavelength to the men: I think about different kinds of issues and I think about them in a different way. For instance, where one of the guys might focus on computational complexity, I'll be much more concerned with how the system interacts with the user and how it supports them to do their work more effectively. Where they

might think about formal properties of logical systems, I'll be worried about how the system represents the real world factors we need to deal with to make sure all the computing power is really put to good use by having good solid connections to the things it is supposed to represent. Of course any good computer scientist has to consider complexity and logic and I don't mean to dismiss the need for this, but whilst it makes a good computing “engine”, it doesn't ensure the engine does anything useful! The dual aspects of being a lone female combined with having a different viewpoint and struggling to be heard have made it a bit of a hard slog, so I understand why other women choose different careers.

A lot of things were discussed at the women at NICTA dinner: getting girls interested in technology from an early age, overcoming stereotypes, affirmative action, making a better environment for women in terms of respect and career prospects, and making IT's image more attractive to women – the idea of scruffy geeks sitting in a darkened room scoffing pizzas doesn't really cut it with the girls.

But for me, the key insight was that I was not alone in choosing to do IT in order to make a difference. Other women talked about buying into IT and its associated disciplines because they were thinking of the big picture – benefits to society, solving real world problems and having an impact. Whilst they were more than competent performing coding and the technical parts of IT, perhaps unlike men, that was not the attraction, simply a means to an end. For them as for me, the attraction was the power to make a difference.

And for me, this summed up the difference between the genders in IT: men love playing with the toys, but women enter IT to have a practical impact. And that makes women in IT very, very precious.

[1] Vegso, (2005) *Computing Research News*, Vol. 17, No. 3, May.

... or how I stopped worrying and learned to love the blog

Erin Flynn

The Internet (bless its little heart) although starting with the best of intentions, degenerated into a complex web of porn, social networking and covert exhibitionism.

Or so the Luddites amongst us would have us believe. Anyone who has had exams and assignments to procrastinate prepare for will be well informed of the guilty pleasures that lay beyond the well tread paths to Google Scholar, WebVista and Wikipedia. Pleasures that keep you up at night, that can get your heart racing, your blood pumping and involve more than a little element of exhibitionism.

Of course I'm describing the adrenaline rush of the regular blogger or the excitement of identifying with a newly discovered blog. For the uninitiated:

Blog: *n.* an online diary; a personal chronological log of thoughts published on a Web page; a weblog (with thanks to the good people at www.dictionary.com)

Its beauty lies in its simplicity. It's a means by which your most mundane or extreme thoughts are validated and like-minded communities can form. For a campaign such as the ongoing pursuit of rights for women, blogs have easily filled an important niche, thus detailed in the many sites dedicated to espousing the benefits of the medium's role in the conceptual whole of feminism (www.bloggingfeminism.blogspot.com/).

The F-Word (www.thefword.org.uk/) is one of many that appeals directly to the younger generation that tends to treat the term feminism with contempt previously reserved for the other f-word. User-friendly, it avoids preaching and patronising the reader to, instead, relate to young women's lives directly and to things they know already. Careful, though. There's nothing people like more than to read about themselves and, as many of these articles are pulled from normal lives, you may find yourself lost in the blog for a great deal longer than anticipated.

For those looking for a more theoretical viewpoint have everything from an **Introduction to Feminism** (www.finallyfeminism101.blogspot.com/) to discussion forums (www.feministing.com/about.html) at their disposal. The inclusion that one can't help but feel in these domains underlines what these blogs are essentially all about: putting the stuff out there so that those who care can access it, join forces or be inspired with a set up assuming that you're there because you want to be.

And, finally, the kicker: why The Blog is The Best Thing since sliced bread. If there's nothing out there that speaks to you, for you, or about your experience, then just write one.

Simple as that.

AROUND THE GENTS

Angie Rozali

When you enter the workplace from uni, there are different noises you have to deal with, various personalities to co-operate with, an impression to make and of course, to get results. I always felt I had to be professional; a sponge for knowledge and slightly sociable, but restricting myself to a controlled laugh in case workmates thought I was losing it with my apparently 'Arpeggio-like' laugh.

Anyway, doing work experience at a place like Tooheys was amusing in every way, except beer is OK, but drinking is not really my thing (mainly because I go red) – so I never imagined this would be an option after uni. Unsurprisingly, the brewery was a fun place to work. Plus it was full of men. Not that I meant for a male-dominated workplace to bother me, nor did it until one workmate who rotationally runs our daily 8.30am meetings kept ending the meeting with, "Thanks gents". Even if I was plainly sitting across from him and even if he passed his eyes over the whole group including *moi*. I don't mind being part of the generic, "Hey guys", and acknowledging that I was new - I tried not to care – "Meh!"

Before you know it, at the next meeting I couldn't control my carefree attitude wondering whether he would say the same thing again and would I react if he did? Gah! It made me twitch in the eye and I kept noticing the differences around the table. Me, student and woman of colour; them, old male brewers. But this time a bit of a seizure-like twitch and cough on my behalf helped him mention "gents and lady", eventually. Ah! It brought such resolution and closure.

I felt it was important and much easier to express the meaning of being acknowledged in that little sentence to him. And in a sense it's not about him empowering me but feeling part of the team meetings as a contributor.

What built my sense of belonging was experiencing the same treatment as everyone else. This may have seemed trivial, but having done only one year of 'proper' engineering in my second year, and in an office and brewery full of over 30-year-old men – the dynamics are totally different to student meetings and such.

It wasn't like my experience there was terrible – it was just a social hurdle. Or two.

When my supervisor gave me three fluoro yellow tops to wear everyday when all the other engineers and brewers wore red tops, I was alarmed. How could I tell my supervisor I would blind train passengers on my way to and from work? Or be labelled an eyesore in the office? I wanted to be a sponge but not this bright (lame, eh?) nor obvious – am I not obvious enough? Luckily, another work mate saved me and understood the importance of belonging to a team and got me three red tops. Phew!

So that was the verbal and visual taken care of.

During meetings, seats were always shifted around to include everyone, and not just me. So it wasn't like I was given special treatment for being a female student as people usually say to make high achiever's experiences seem invalid or rigged. Just a general practice of courtesy and inclusion for all, which I found develops a more friendly and caring work culture. I was comfortable working with the over 40-year-olds who were father type figures and the boyish 30-year-olds "brothers". So even though I could never acquire the taste of beer even after 9.00am taste tests available everyday, surprisingly I'm not going to cancel out the brewery as a place at which I would work.

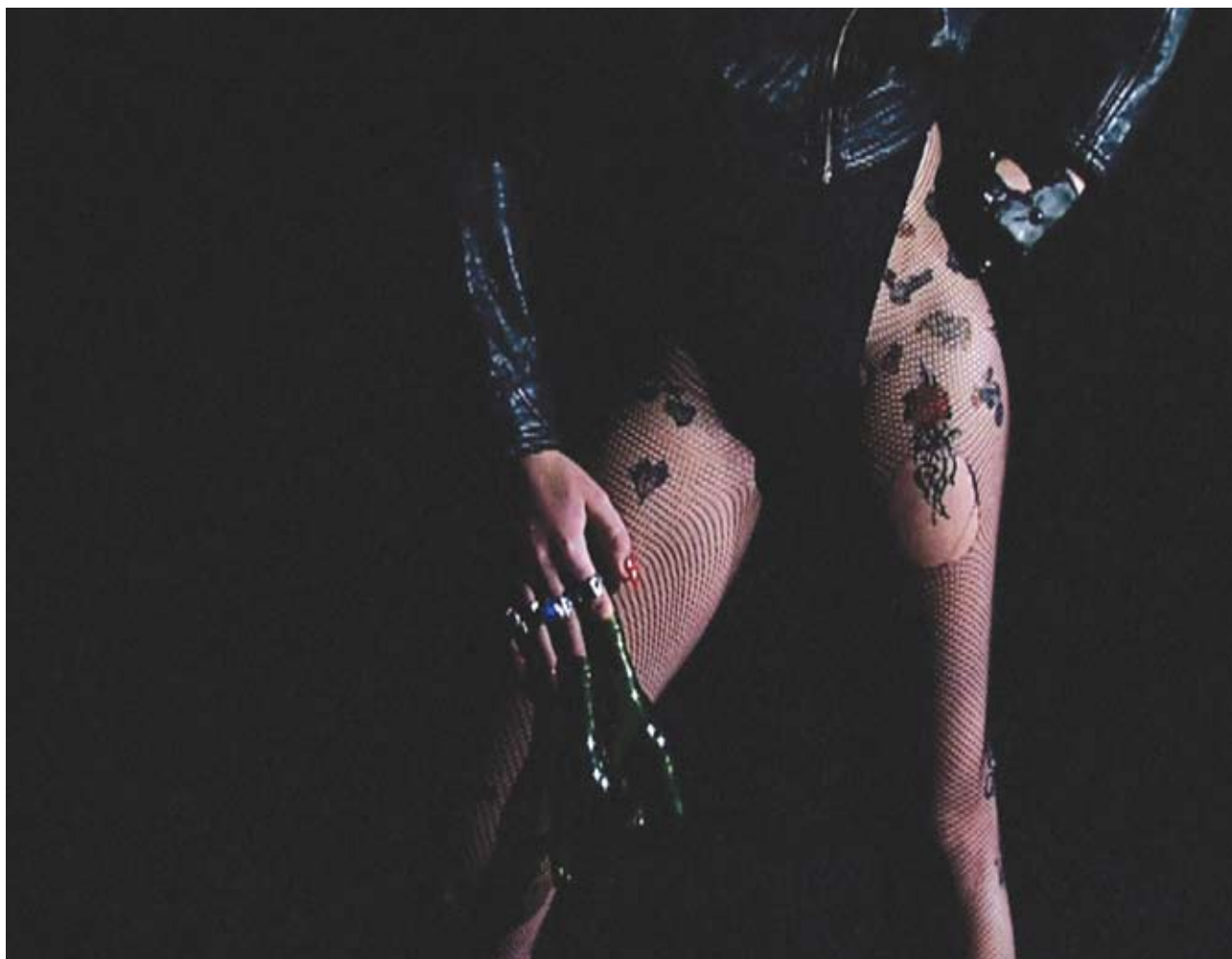


IMAGE Kate Blackmore
STILL FROM VIDEO
COFA BFA Honours
Dirty Drunkards #2





IMAGE Justine Makedessi
COFA BFA Sculpture, Performance & Installation

Four eager sheila's
More eager sheila's

IMAGE Julia Featherstone

PHOTO

COFA Master of Art

Valkerie



C'est dans les silences que j'existe, joyeusement

Writing from the margins

Niisha Sharma

I am a woman and I am a writer. Both. At the same time. I occupy the gaps, the intervals in the incessant chatter of the patriarchal discourses, which attempt to occupy my emotional and intellectual space, to colonise my mind. The patriarchal discourses, which claim for itself the very essence of my existence and yet will not celebrate my victories, quieten my fears, or foster my dissent. The same patriarchal discourses which contend mastery over the universe and yet wilfully misunderstand my desires.

My desires, your desires, our desires. Women's desires.

So what do I desire? I desire to write. I desire to subdue, subvert this history that has bound and gagged my dissenting voice. I desire to pick up the discursive battle axe and join the warrior-women of history, who co-opted that most powerful of the Master's tool, language, and in the manner of all wicked women, kept it for themselves, redefined it and used it to write themselves back into history. I desire to transgress the limits and fragment the (masculine) coherence of language so that I may be heard for what I am: a woman.

The Patriarchs, thinking themselves clever and so entitled,

have arrogantly banished me to the silent space of the "dark continent". But, dear Freud, today I am reclaiming my silence and my darkness, my existence in the margins. In your vast chamber, devoid of sound, devoid of light, I learn to understand the voices, and the silences of the Others who share my fate. In the darkness, the murky depths of our shared unconscious, I begin the violent, seditious task of effacing all that is "finite, definite, structured, loaded with meaning" in your unjust social matrix (Julia Kristeva). And in the space you have dealt me, hoping to separate me from my fellow dissidents, so full of rage, I joyously dance. What you use to separate, I use to create – a place of commonality and difference, love, empathy and the insatiable desire to overthrow the Emperor.

It is from these blank spaces, gaps and moments of rupture that I agitate and write. It is from these margins that I derive my strength, for as Marguerite Duras, writer and feminist, says "L'histoire de ma vie n'existe pas. Ça n'existe pas. Il n'y a jamais de centre." The history of my life does not exist. There is no centre. And I rejoice because I understand that I am a woman suspended, perpetually deferred. I am a subject-in-the-making, able to deny, disrupt, reject, subvert, and transgress patriarchal boundaries. And yet, capable of ceaseless self-creation, self-inscription. When I write, I am terrible and I am indestructible.

Asked to choose between "light" of patriarchal femininity and the freely consented madness of the "dark continent", I choose to haunt the margins. For, "If the reader feels a bit disorientated in this new space, one which is obscure and silent, it proves perhaps, that it is women's space" (Xavière Gauthier, feminist-warrior-writer).

Niisha Sharma is a feminist and a writer. Both. At the same time. She would like to acknowledge all the courageous women writers in whose footsteps she follows. She is particularly inspired by the poststructuralist theoretical feminists such as Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, who have wilfully, rebelliously found *jouissance* in subverting the phallogocentrism of linguistic structures. She would love to hear from you, so please e-mail her at niisha@gmail.com

All quotes are from the amazing anthology of French women's writing, *New French Feminisms* (ed. Markes and Courtivron).

AUSTRALIA 2020 AND BEYOND

Sam Chung

Due to some odd coincidence two irrelevant events occurred on April 19th, 2008 – I turned 25 and a 1000 Australians converged on Canberra to produce (or reiterate) ideas. I have to admit I didn't pay much attention to the initial machinations of the 2020 Summit, I was too busy feeling old. The evening news didn't help either, I found myself rolling my eyes at the recurring 2020 reports. It seemed like I was watching a television mini-series. It had quite a good cast, as three main characters were played by Cate Blanchett, Hugh Jackman and Tim Costello. Like all good programs, there were many nameless, faceless but indispensable mysterious extras. Like all bad but popular programs it had a repetitive theme – the Republic idea was resuscitated and shortly after a deceased character was magically alive again. Alexander Downer, who finds Parliament too boring but is happy to attend Queen's birthday celebrations, derided the Summit as simply having a 'sprinkling of conservatives.' Like all PG programs, controversy was well hidden and the child-friendly classification prevented

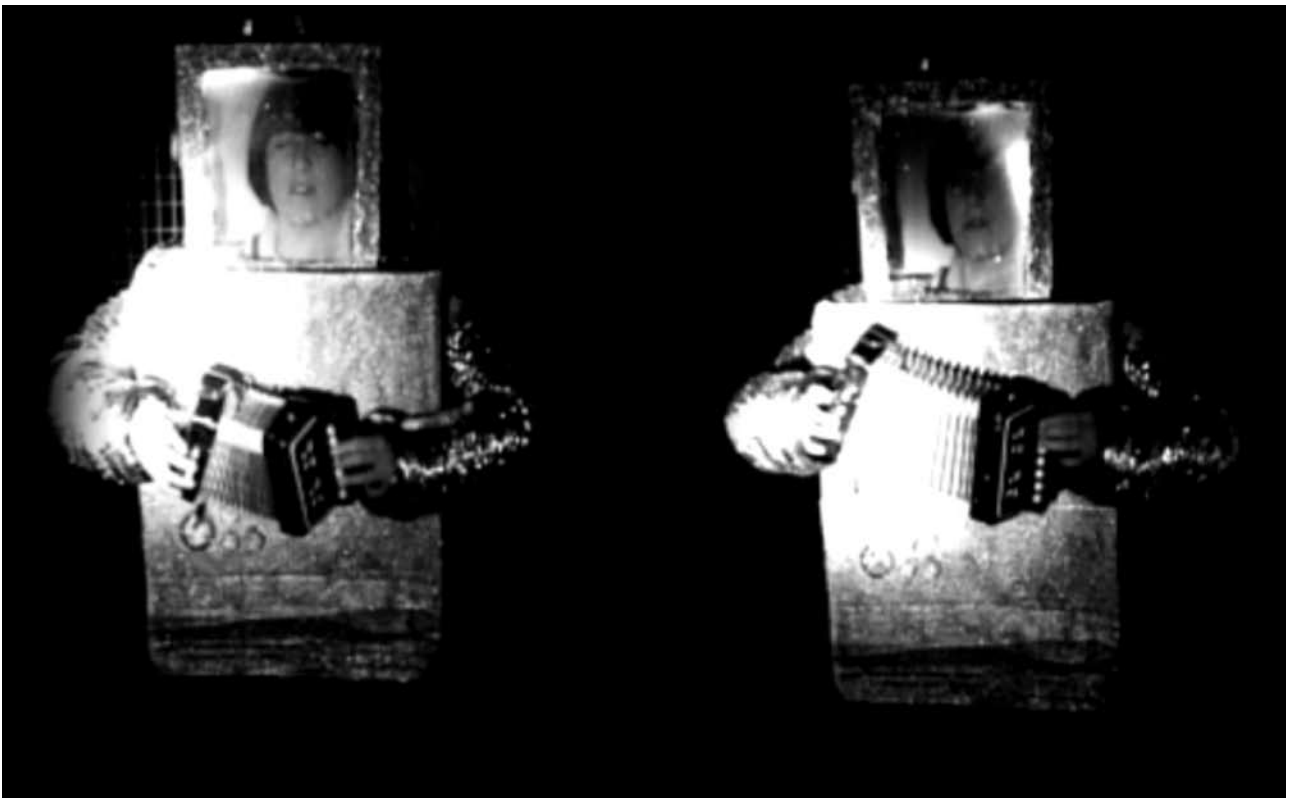


IMAGE Emma Pike
STILL FROM VIDEO
COFA BFA Time Based Art

The day you met my robot

the discussion of anything remotely interesting and nothing radical was attempted. What does this have to do with women's issues?

A few months ago the government was faced with a public relations disaster. Various people had already derided the 2020 Summit, but when the Steering Committee was announced people asked how could only one woman make the Top 10? Not just any woman, a celebrity that conveniently fell into 'creative arts'. Trying to remove the sexist tag, the government assured us that the selections were merit-based and immediately (ap) pointed the six female co-chairs. From the moment the government claimed that the appointments were based on merit, anyone criticising them for other reasons were immediately cast as 'anti-merit'. Something all groups should avoid. I believe this is when feminists lost this particular battle.

Rather than repeating the sexist charge, feminists should have adapted and played the governments' game. The government had proclaimed that

the selection was purely based on merit but it was quite obvious that, at least in relation to some, it was not. Some groups suggested alternatives to those who had already been appointed, but few were game enough to question the original appointees. I can't discuss every single one but there was one appointment that annoyed me immensely.

The person responsible for the discussion on 'the future of Australian governance' was John Hartigan. If you visit the Australia 2020 summit website you will find a biography that details his impressive media career, as a former editor of *the Daily Telegraph*, and former CEO and current director of News Ltd. He is also a director of the Bradman Foundation, the American-Australian Association and the NSW Wine Industry Council. Hartigan may well have other qualifications and experience that would justify his appointment, but if he had it, the Australian government chose not to emphasise it. There was not one element in his biography that indicated that Hartigan had any expertise or qualifications on governance, not on a legal or national level. Does anyone really believe that he was apparently the most qualified Australian to organise this particular discussion? Anyone who was vaguely awake realised that this process, like any other government process, was political. Feminists should have accentuated this point. By establishing that the appointments were political, the governments' claim that they were merit-based would have collapsed and the allegations of sexism would have become more credible.

Feminists lost the battle and tarnished their reputation because they didn't play by the government's rules. Sometimes subverting and challenging rules is indispensable, but sometimes it is more advantageous to exploit them for your own use. An atheist will never convince a Christian that there is no God, but an atheist can influence a Christian by exploiting the Bible to argue against a particular viewpoint. Deciding whether to accept rules or to challenge them will always depend on what your objectives are. What do feminists wish to achieve? How can those objectives be met? By undermining institutions or by infiltrating them? But most importantly, one question that is too rarely asked: will our involvement help or hinder this particular cause?

Sax in the city of Men

Sylvia Mitchell

It's pretty hard not to get cynical, angry and a bit depressed when asked to think and write about all of the challenges that come with being a female jazz musician in Australia. Immediately, I recall a recent conversation with a former teacher and awesome musician, who was discussing how there are few playing opportunities here. They were also discussing how hopeless the fight for more jazz funding, venues and broadcasting support is, and how many incredible musicians have chosen to earn a decent reliable income and no longer play music full time. The sad truth seems to be that we are a sporting nation bombarded by constant commercial artists with the same formulaic songs to download whilst being distracted by reality television shows that celebrate mediocrity (e.g. *Big Brother*) who don't really care about original live music with no lyrics. Therefore this story is sad enough without then focusing on the fact that I am a white Australian girl, in a heavily male dominated industry, whose greatest influences are predominantly black American men who are almost all dead.

A pretty tough situation to feel enthusiastic about... but I do. I absolutely love playing music, hearing music, seeing music and talking about music. Even the idea that I could get up everyday and play my sax for a living makes me so excited that I don't even have the choice not to be a musician. Doing something truly great is always hard, which is why it's worth doing. With all that in mind however, I will discuss some specific challenges that have affected me so far as a female saxophonist.

The first small but irritating point is how everyone always thinks you must be a singer – "Girls don't actually play instruments do they?" Whilst I can sing, I refuse to compromise my integrity as an instrumentalist by conforming to the stereotype. The second is navigating working friendships with other musicians; most of the time it's awesome and exciting hanging out backstage with everyone and getting free admission to gigs. The downside is when you can't hang out one-on-one with someone to simply talk music because they have a jealous

girlfriend. The opposite of that is disappointing too when you're really wanting to share thoughts on music with someone who doesn't recognise your musical ability past your tits and confuses your enthusiasm for music with enthusiasm for them. Either way these have been frustrating issues at times, and also stunted my network of musicians as well as playing opportunities.

The largest issue however, which I am still working through, is one of identity. Where do I fit in the jazz world? What relevance is my music today? Who are my role models? Unfortunately, there is a serious lack of amazing female musicians in the limelight to look up to other than the amazing singers of the past like Ella and Billie. It seems that without other women to look up to in those roles, we've hardly stepped out of them or supported those enough who do. People feel comfortable buying a CD with a sultry singer on the cover. It's attractive and what we're used to. Good luck trying to look sultry when your face is beefed up with a big saxophone stuck in it let alone trying to convince other young girls it's a better choice.

Luckily, I am very privileged to know a handful of incredible female musicians who keep me inspired and remind me that our time is coming. Although it hasn't happened completely yet, more and more women are giving the men a run for their money and so making pathways for others to follow. There will be more kick ass female musicians demanding respect, admiration and recognition in the music world so long as we all keep creating opportunities for ourselves and not asking the question of why it was too hard but instead asking why despite everything, we were able to do it.

GIRL, WOMAN... PLEASE!

Your Voice on Campus Safety

Anita Spinucci and Amelia Clancy

Since the outsourcing of campus security there have been some big concerns raised about the quality of security on campus. However before any action can be taken, some facts needed to be established.

Being clever and highly resourceful women, members of the UNSW Women's Collective donned pink t-shirts during Women's Week and surveyed 70 women about feeling safe on campus.

Here's what we found:

- 88.6% of women do feel safe on campus as opposed to 11.4% who don't
- Of the women who claimed to feel unsafe, 100% claimed that they felt unsafe at night
- 97.1% of women feel that we as students are entitled to crime statistics relevant to our campus.
- Out of the 11.4% of women who felt unsafe, many listed their biggest fear as dark spaces such as the car park behind the new Law building.

The UNSW Lifestyle Centre's (more colloquially known as the gym) car park was also listed as an unsafe area at night. Many of these women reported incidences where they were followed closely by an unknown person, chased outright by strangers or much less seriously ambushed by an army of campus cats.

The women who feel safe on campus commented that nothing ever happened to them or their friends so why should they worry? Another stated that UNSW is her 'hood and she knows the place back to front. One woman commented that the survey was offensive as it implied that she was vulnerable and needed to take special precautions just because she is female. We at the Collective are NOT trying to perpetuate patriarchal views such as the one stated above, if anything we seek to empower and look out for the collective welfare of women on campus.

Interestingly enough, out of the 88.6% who felt safe on campus, every last one of them identified ways that UNSW could improve security on campus. An overwhelming number of women stated that 'better lighting' was needed in trouble spots around UNSW and its adjacent side streets. The second most popular strategy for increased safety was a more efficient shuttle bus service. Anonymous, who has been using the UNIBEAT Shuttle Bus Service since 2003 stated: "Since it became privatised...the quality [is not what] it used to be." The escort service has also anecdotally been reported to have been slow and at times nonexistent.

So what can be done? The Women's Collective is campaigning for

statistics to be released, as this has overwhelmingly been the biggest issue voiced by women on campus. We also believe in the complete breakdown of these statistics so that sexual assault is separated from personal assault. Also as many of our survey responses indicated, Security Services can be improved and we are taking steps to ensure this happens.

However there are always steps one can take to ensure a safer campus experience. These include, but are not limited to:

- Safer Routes Through Campus. Although seemingly common sense, move in well lit, and if possible well populated areas.
- Safety in Numbers. This is of paramount importance after the consumption of copious amounts of social relaxant/s.
- Inform yourself of the Security Services that are available to you such as location of Help Points (www.security.unsw.edu.au/systems/systems_help.htm), the UNIBEAT Shuttle Bus Service times and escort service.

If you would like to discuss this topic or any others with the Collective, our meetings are 3-4pm Monday afternoons in the Women's Room, Level 1, Blockhouse.

These meetings occur in session and are open to all women.



Miss Squish

You are not Gay!

There is a lot of talk about homosexuality. Talk about gay marriage, gay adoption, gay parenting, the causes of homosexuality, and whether it is safe for daughters to talk to shaved-headed girls with hairy legs. Well, I'm here to tell you that: 'You are not gay!' Since I'm the published writer, I'm obviously the authority on your sexuality. And I know that homosexuality is a narcissistic, unnatural, media-driven, society-corrupting, mental disorder... caused by eating chicken.

Everyone knows (or at least, my year nine History teacher knows) that when children eat too much chicken they grow up to be gay. It's the hormones. And the breasts; the big, juicy breasts. But it's more the hormones, which they pump into farmed chickens to make their breasts bigger. You eat it, then it ruins the natural hormone balance in your delicate, little body (I probably shouldn't mention here how many lesbians I know who are vegetarian, should I?).

If you're a bloke reading this, have you ever noticed that the really, really cute girls are always

gay? But there's a perfectly reasonable explanation for this as homosexuality is closely tied to narcissism. Really cute girls who daily look in the mirror can't help but realise how adorably sexy they are, and fall in love with their own bodies. Can you blame them? This unnatural attraction is actually kind of unfulfilling, so they then turn their affections to others with similar bodies.

As many religious pamphlets will tell you, just because you think another girl is 'attractive' doesn't mean you are 'attracted to' them, or that you are gay. It's normal and natural to be able to appreciate God's work in all its forms (and not just in boys). Just do not assume that 'natural' means 'good'. For no matter how much you think you are attracted to them, you actually aren't... so you don't need to question yourself.

At the same time, having these curiosities is normal when the media widely peddles homosexuality. So don't think you're dirty or sinful for falling into this trap. Never mind the middle-aged lifelong lesbians who grew up without the media telling them it was all right. Do not let yourself fall into the easy trap of listening to propaganda which says homosexuality is 'natural' – this still doesn't make it 'healthy'. Unfortunately 'important' and 'encouraging' religious messages aren't broadly spread to the already confused and alienated teens who are thinking of coming out in a judgmental society.

Having this homosexual disorder is no excuse for acting on perverted urges or sleeping with other girls(!) Disabilities should be treated and not allowed to fester. Gay sex is wrong and disturbing, like incest. Your disorder is a disease not only to you, but to society.

Yes, what you do in the privacy of your own home where I cannot possibly know it is happening affects me greatly. You are corrupting society's morals in so many ways I cannot name them. If you don't see this then you are selfish and closed-minded.

Homosexuality is a disorder just like depression, and can be managed by simple thought control. This is not brainwashing. It uses the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, a common and scientific method used by psychologists to manage depression or other patterns of disturbed emotions. You can control unwanted thoughts by being aware of them and changing how you think, and you can train yourself to either acknowledge or reject thoughts of attraction and arousal. More simply, you have a choice to not be gay.

I conclude with the 'wise' words of my friend Cornelius*:

"So, do you still think you're gay?"

And no, I still won't go out with you. You're male.

*Name changed.



Noonan's opinion

Katie Noonan

I nearly missed the snippet on page 25 in *Tharunka's* third issue, Fabrication, about the man donating his "long and hard member" to an anonymous organ recipient, bravely (or shamelessly) admitting the fact that this organ is his "least used".

What needs to be taken into consideration now is the recipient. Firstly, I hope he gets a discounted price. If it really is in need of regular use, then surely it is not in tip-top shape. Who does the quality control on this sort of transaction? And why isn't it used? Is it damaged in some way? An old model now gone out of fashion perhaps?

However, the far graver aspect worth taking into account is, what if organ memory really does exist? We hear amazing stories of heart recipients 'inheriting' a love for poetry or change in diet, but one must fear what personality traits the recipient will inherit from a Christian's unused penis! I wonder if, in a few years time, the recipient will one Sunday morning be guzzling red wine, singing in high-

pitched tones and wondering why he has never bothered to play with his new toy.

As for the mother with the keen eye, she should really be counting her blessings: no more horrifying visuals to go to sleep to and no more worrying about medical bills for sustained wrist-fractures, as for why she witnessed "him using his penis many times before" is an area best left unexplained!

If I'm not a lesbian, what am I?

A hearing is set in June for residents of the Greek island Lesbos, who are trying to claim the name 'lesbian' back from the gay and lesbian community. If they win, the queer community will no longer be able to use the title 'lesbian'.

Of course, the knowledge of this potential loss of something I hold to be dear to me (i.e., the easy summation and categorisation of my entire sexuality and gender in one over-simplified name) somersaulted me into the seven stages of grief.

1. Shock or Disbelief – "This is an article in the *Sun Herald* after all, usually less informative and intelligent than *Big Brother Up Late*".
2. Denial – "Maybe If I'm not from the island of Lesbos, and I'm not a Lesbian, I don't really like girls!"

3. Bargaining – “They can keep the name Lesbians and we can keep Lesbians”.

4. Guilt – “Fine, we can be the Lesbians, they can be the Lesbians”.

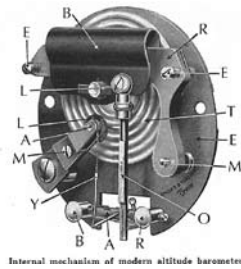
5. Anger – “Fuck that! I am already reduced to drinking sparkling wine, what more can ‘they’ take from me?!”

6. Depression – “Without my only means of identifying myself within a community what am I? The binaries are gay and lesbian, straight girl and lesbian... I need this title to feel worthy!”

7. Acceptance and Hope – “I have an idea!!!” Surely this title needs to be replaced by something new?! The options are endless!

8. I would now like to introduce the suggestion box and open the forum up for ideas and debate. If we are forced to rename “lesbians” what title would you choose?

In all seriousness, this current debate does raise a lot of really important questions. How attached do we all get to a name? And how much of our identity is held within this? Could the loss of an identifying title result in a breakdown of the community? Why do the people of Lesbos have such disdain toward sharing the name? Is it a homophobic fear so great that it is worth wasting resources and greatly offending a worldwide community to break any possible associations?



Internal mechanism of modern altitude barometer

Jess Bellamy

The Bellamy Barometer:

HOT or NOT

People in Women's and Gender Studies tutes **HOT**

I did a subject once called “Women, Gender and World History”. It was great. It was full of sexy historical romps, and P.C. terms for vaginas, and ‘women’ was spelt the normal way, which left a LOT of people feeling a bit iffy. Especially me, because I don’t think ‘y’ is used NEARLY ENOUGH for vowel-like purposes. But anyway, one of my favourite parts of this subject were the tutorials. We’d all file in wearing our token grey t-shirts, smelly hats and grim expressions. “Subjugation of womyn is not cool”, our tight faces would silently scream, “and we’re taking this class, really earnestly, and we’ll say stuff in tutes about how hardcore we are, and we’ll think about going to a protest or two and shaving our heads except we probably won’t because Christie’s having

that party on the weekend and I hate being ‘The Ugly One’ at Christie’s parties.” So, all this would whirl around in our angry heads as we pulled out our unread study kits and opened our notebooks, untouched except for the words “Gender is oppression at birth” scrawled in bubble letters on the first page. And then, once it became clear to the tutor that we weren’t exactly experts on the Kristeva article we’d been given to read that week (“Why write with breast milk if you can get a pen for, like, sixty cents?”), we started the inevitable decline into “talking about our personal lives”. And as a writer, it was AWESOME to hear. I’m not going to share those stories in this article, because there was a solid foundation of trust, support and womyn’s liberation that swore me to secrecy, and also I have a really shit memory. Suffice to say, I learnt a whole lot about my fellow classmates, a lot more graphic detail about them and their partners and their Friday nights out than they would probably have shared during “Imagining the City” or “Introduction to Film”, though on second thought, probably a lot less graphic than some of the things I’ve seen in “Performance Making”.

Lindsay Lohan's choice of same-sex partner **NOT**

Those who are fans of my column, or my blog, or just me as a person (SHUCKS, you guys!) will know that I am a BIG BIG FAN of Ms. Lindsay Lohan. Ever since I saw her first movie while sitting in a guest room in Suburban New York with (useless trivia) the very friendly Scheer family, not knowing that later that week I was going to eat something that made me go vegetarian - well,

I knew from that moment that Lindsay was someone special. Perhaps the fact that she was playing twins in this cheesy movie set in all my favourite locations - summer camp, posh estates, five star hotels and England - led me to realise that one Lindsay was never enough: The more Lohan the better. So I have been quite distressed to see Lindsay’s progressive slide into a drug-addled puddle of piss and sweat and cocaine. Don’t get me wrong: I’m totally excited about the fact that she’s dating a girl, I mean WAY TO SUBVERT THE HOLLYWOOD HEROINE HETERONORMATIVE STEREOTYPE, LINDS! But it shouldn’t have to be with your drug-dealing DJ bestie Samantha Ronson who parades you around Rodeo Drive with her smeared eyeliner and too many severe bracelets and bags of nose-powder which end up in your car for the fuzz to find.

Lindsay, you can find a much nicer girl, one of those well-adjusted ones who get photographed for the cover of *InStyle*, like Rachel Bilson or that one who plays Veronica Mars. Or you could just go back to your jewel of an ex-boyfriend Wilder Valderrama and maybe make him shut the hell up about how big his Tool of Oppression is, because frankly, Lindsay? I don’t want to know.

IMAGE Anastasia Zaravinos
LIVE PERFORMANCE
BFA
Ghetto Pussy





IMAGE Petra O'Holloran
PHOTO
COFA BFA
Alice Sleeps



'My Knife Is My Dick And Your Worst Nightmare...'

Kelly Azizi

When I - a woman - grip a knife and hold it close to me, why do you interpret the gesture as a representation of self-destructive tendencies, of personal 'angst', as an infliction of self-bodily harm? Why do you even think I am self-destructive? I have a womb; I could nurture life and much of the time I have had to nurture life whether I wanted to or not. I nurtured you; I have worked in the kitchen all my life, I prepared the meat that you have gorged upon all these years. I am quick, precise, and efficient; I make clean cuts, there is little blood, and a minimum of mess. I prepare a multitude of dishes at once. I can wield a knife with a deftness that you have never seen. When you see me with a knife in hand, I think you know what I could achieve with such a weapon; I could penetrate, violate, dominate. Instead of nibbling your ear, I could stab you in the back. But I do not want to stab you in the back. With a knife in hand, I want to get close to you. I want to look you in the eye. I want to touch you. I want to nibble your ear. I want to smell your fear. We are so close now; even with my knife in hand, I am just as fearful of you as you are of me. And your knife cannot even kill me in the same way that my knife can kill you. I only want you to know that I am your mirror image.

IMAGE Ella Condon
PHOTO
COFA BFA Photo Media
Amanda



what lies between us

Kate Duffy

she lies tonight
it's not the first time

she lies tonight
it's not the last time

putting on her corset
so tight she won't feel it
when she loses her breathe
and her heart sinks in her chest

she cries tonight
it's not the first time

she cries tonight
it's not the last time

well hello there old friend
disappointments struck again
smile and nod be courteous
knowing next time it could be worse

she hides tonight
it's not the first time

she hides tonight
it's not the last time

don't remember her breasts
up against your chest
cos there's a war inside her head
and you're the one who has to play dead

she writes tonight
it's not the first time

she writes tonight
won't be the last time

untitled

Chantel Cotterell

stockings tear flesh shows
the cold bites and the gazes
linger – vulnerable

scarlet lipstick smeared
on their neck and white collar
marks of desire

their sex and gender
is unintelligible
to most, but not me



IMAGE Tess Barnard
PHOTO

COFA BFA Honours

A Child's Garden of Versus

suicide

Lesley Chandler



Consciousness - slowly

unfamiliar stench

sight - floor level

distant muffled crying

tile - cold against my cheek

limbs - leaden

failure - I am breathing



untitled

Floor Soudijn

unconnected you,
have no reception
surrounded by an invisible fence
of untouchable essence
Indifference

version 2

Ivana Rnjak

Hands, fingers, how did we get so comfortable already?
I'm in your room, you're in my head, our fingers entwined beneath us.
Soft words about beliefs and non-beliefs and music.
How did it get so late already?

STUDENT GALLERIES



COFA SPACE

Open
Mon to Fri 10am-4pm
UNSW College of Fine Arts
Campus
Ground Floor E Block Rm EG04
Greens Rd Paddington
Ph 02 93850797
Email eps@COFA.unsw.edu.au



KUDOS GALLERY

Open
Wed to Fri 11am – 6pm
Sat 11am – 4pm
Mon & Tue by appointment
6 Napier Street
Paddington NSW 2021
Ph 02 9326 0034
Email kudos@arc.unsw.edu.au



IVAN DOUGHERTY GALLERY

Open
Mon - Sat 10am - 5pm
Selwyn Street
Paddington 2021
Ph 02 9385 0726
Email idg@unsw.edu.au



3 FOOT SQUARE GALLERY

Open 24/7
Main Entrance UNSW COFA
Greens Rd Paddington 2021
Contact: Dominique Serisier
threefeetquare@unsw.edu.au



AWESPACE II

Open 24/7
Open for 2008 Proposals
UNSW Main Campus Kensington
Located on the Basser Steps
Contact: Penny Spankie
pennyspankie@gmail.com

STUDENT PERFORMING ART SPACES



Io Myer Studio

UNSW Kensington Campus
Gate 2 High st Kensington

UNSW main performance and exhibition space. This space is used for production teaching, hosts residencies and creative developments and research into performance and cross media.



Studio 1

UNSW Kensington Campus
Gate 2 High st Kensington
(next to Lo Myers Studio)

Studio 1 is the performance space for a number of student theatre societies on campus including NUTS and STUDIO 4.

Contact Ms Su Goldfish

EMPA - School of English, Media & Performing Arts

Phone 02 9385 5684

Email s.goldfish@unsw.edu.au

STUDENT ART EXHIBITIONS

Opening night **Tuesday 26 May 5.30-7pm**

COFA SPACE

"Imaging the Urban Landscape"

Continues till 30 May

Opening night **Tuesday 27 May 5-7.30pm**

KUDOS GALLERY

"Naminma"

Indigenous artists currently studying at COFA

Presented by Nura Gili Indigenous Programs

Continues till Saturday 31 May

Opening drinks **Thursday 29 May 5-7.30pm**

IVAN DOUGHERTY GALLERY

"Concrete Culture" Curated by Felicity Fenner

Sponsored by Australian Government: Australian Research Council, UNSW Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics, Biennale of Sydney, Casula Powerhouse

Continues till Saturday 5 July

Opening night **Monday 2 June 5-7pm**

COFA SPACE

"ILIRI" Continues till 6 June

Opening night **Tuesday 3 June 5-7.30pm**

KUDOS GALLERY

"10year Birthday Celebration" Showcasing previous

exhibitors of Kudos Gallery alongside emerging artists from COFA.

Continues till 14 June

STUDENT SHOWS

Opening night **Wednesday 28 May 7.45pm for 8pm Start**

STUDIO ONE

Presented by UNSW ARTIST COLLECTIVE

"The Dark Show" is coming

The Beginning: amoeba. idea-full. vague with naivety. first words written, idea nascent and frothing at the mouth. A promising start; pregnant with... something. rolling down a hill.

The Middle: medium, average, standard. churning out 2500 on post-consumer aesthetics in Weimar Germany... fuck. previous searches for experiments, collaborations, terrifying originality prove untenable. forgotten beauty of nascent idea, of frothing at mouth. suddenly, and however::: masterclass and dark show. flashing masterclass and dark show. coming out like a masterclass and dark show. evolve end

Part of the nu dub art col. (a student run collective for original student art and art workshops: english, dance, theatre, music, film, visual art and performance art)

Watch the show, join the group: unswartistcollective@gmail.com

The Museum of Modern Art

Ling Jun Toong

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a writer in want of material must be in possession of the skills of plagiarism."

When G____ S____ woke up one morning from unsettling dreams of academic plagiarism, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin - a university student.

Alas! On his head sat an over-confident beret, and in place of his modest work shoes was a pair of Birkenstocks. He walked out of his apartment with a profoundly different outlook, proclaiming communist ideas from a well-leafed manifesto.

As his Birkenstocks led him to a university walkway, he was engulfed by a myriad of sub-cultures fluttering to-and-fro in a multitude of colours. Suddenly, a silver and gold bejewelled throng of androgynous teenagers came beeping past him, fiddling their fingers on devices faster than their eyes blinked.

They reminded him of a couple of bleating billygoats teetering on the brink of oblivion. "Yeahhhh... like... like...like...", and the like.

The chaotic day turned to a hot summer's night. G____ S____'s Birkenstocks pressed on further still, towards the sour-smelling beer garden of the university. He arrived in time for the happy hour beer service which was met with utmost keenness by a group of lingerie clad boys. At the head of this undergarment cult was a hairy, beefy lad squashed into a shiny pink petticoat. His turquoise veins that popped out of muscles in frenzy lent a sharp contrast to the pinkness of their fabric prison, while

the sweat beads dancing upon his pinker skin challenged the sight and smell of the beholder. Everyone of his cronies, not unlike him in odour and appearance, suddenly huddled together (homosocially - one must not contravene this code), beer cans in hand, to chant in defence of inebriation.

The next day, G____ S____ awoke to find himself still a monstrous vermin. He was once again at the university. While he entered one of the university buildings through a glass door, he couldn't for the life of him decide if he should hold the door open for a freckled girl behind him. She was dressed like a mime artist; an alternation between colours: straight black hair, white face, white blouse, black pinafore, and black and white socks. Against her black pinafore stood out the following words in white: "Revolutionary Socialist Existentialist Animal Rights Activist". Printed identically on both matching pockets of her dress was Che Guevara's face. G____ S____ tugged at his beret nervously and held his manifesto closer to his chest, while his mind frantically ran through different scenarios. If he held the door open for her, why, would it appear chauvinistic? He didn't want her to think that he was infantilising her. If he, on the contrary, left the heavy door to swing suddenly into her face, that would surely seem aggressive. While he deliberated she caught glimpse of his manifesto. Its title seemed to please her for she smiled eagerly at G____, stood a little straighter so as not to obscure her dress' slogans and portraits, hoping he understood that she was into manifestos too.

... no lines marked

Lesley Chandler

My earliest recollection of art making involves the advent of a colouring book and a range of brilliant pastels. I was instructed to work carefully within the lines.

One colour swamped my vision – a peculiar sickly pink – a monkey bum pink. I was enchanted. My infantile visual world had never experienced this shade. The colour poured onto the page and soon filled the available little black spaces. I couldn't contain its vibrancy and found it rushing around the book – all over the lines and across proscribed edges. Soon other shades joined the riotous movement – crashing up against each other or sometimes intermingling and creating impossible moods.

But the pink prevailed. As I write - I can still recover the feeling that was conceived in that moment. I had seen a world of my own invention.

I was soon made aware that I had failed as I had not stayed within the lines - but I somehow understood that there was another place outside those restrictions made by others – a place where monkey bum pink could tell the story.

At the commencement of my Postgraduate degree program my supervisor told me that he understood his role as one that would prepare me for a lifelong love and practice of art – a journey that could self support beyond the walls of the university. My only guideline was to ask what if? I was confused.

Where were the directives - the how to - the passing on of pearls of wisdom?

Where were the lines for me to work within?

The research I am undertaking for the Master of Fine Arts program references Leonardo Da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man' and the inherent implications of the mathematical strictures embodied in this iconic image.

One evening - on the long journey home from COFA - I passed some road works. A sign flashed into view that stated NEW WORK – NO LINES MARKED. Suddenly I understood. For the recent past I had been trying to please some ancient authority by working formally within those tyrannical lines – both theoretically and technically. I had been placing the very structures and restrictions upon my work that I was seeking to critique within the project. What if I coloured outside the lines?

New Work – No Lines Marked.



IMAGE Anna Pogossova
ILLUSTRATION
COFA BFA Honours
Big Wall Paper



TITLE "Revealer" ARTIST Penny Spankie - BFA Sculpture, Performance & Installation