

HONI SOIT

ISSUE 8 MAY 4TH 2011

**WOMEN'S
EDITION**



WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THIS LAND, THE GADIGAL PEOPLE OF THE EORA NATION.

WE STAND HERE TODAY AS THE BENEFICIARIES OF A RACIST AND UNRECONCILED DISPOSSESSION.

WE RECOGNISE BOTH OUR PRIVILEGE AND OUR OBLIGATION TO REMEMBER THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST, ACT ON THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY AND BUILD FOR A FUTURE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION.

LAUNCH PARTY FOR WOMEN'S HONI

Hey there boys and girls, come along to the launch of the 2011 Women's Edition of Honi Soit.

FRIDAY 6th May, 6pm

HERMANNS BAR, Sydney Uni

Light refreshments & Drinks will be provided

WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE WANTS YOU

We are an autonomous group of diverse wom*n*-identifying Usyd students who come together to share experiences and ideas, draw strength and support from each-other and plan activist campaigns and events to advance the feminist cause.

If you're wom*n*-identifying and interested in joining or want to discuss any of the issues raised in our edition of Honi Soit, come along to collective.

EDITORIAL

How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?

One to change the bulb, and three to write about how the bulb is exploiting the socket.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the women's edition of Honi Soit.

If I were to mention that I was a feminist to most of you there would be many groans, probably some laughter and reactions such as "Pfft... women's issues? Do they even exist anymore?" or "here we go, another ranting lefty". But the fact of the matter is that in this modern, 21st century world we live in equal pay still isn't a thing, abortion continues to stay illegal and casual sexism haunts the campus everyday and these aren't just issues for the radicals.

This special edition of the paper was written and edited completely by female identifying individuals on campus, giving them the opportunity to submit pieces that present the issues that effect them. The versatility of the articles is dense providing perspectives on women's issues from both ends of the spectrum. Read about the position of women in sport and hospitality, appreciate some artistic pieces created by students and get passionate over the controversial articles scattered throughout.

Hopefully by the end of this publication your view on feminism will fall into a positive light and this stereotype of winging women that don't wear makeup and burn their undergarments will begin to decompose.

AVANI DIAS



We meet on Wednesdays at 1pm in the Holme Women's Room.



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WHY JANET ALBRECHTSEN IS SCREWING IT UP FOR US SISTERS.

VIVIENNE MOXHAM-HALL takes a hit at a so-called feminist

In September 2009, Janet Albrechtsen wrote an article titled 'Feminists Screwing it up for Sisters,' in which, she writes about how traditional feminist values are holding women back. She finds the political discussions, such as the glass ceiling in corporations and parliament that women face, to be 'petty'. In fact, she believes that it degrades women to raise these issues rather than empowering them and proves that 'often, women are their own worst enemy'. How dare we challenge the idea that we are entitled to the same positions as men. Instead of seeing the issues women face today as relevant, she sees them as man-hating exercises where feminism has grown to actively exclude men.

It is not just these 'petty fights' to which Albrechtsen is opposed, but the era of feminism which she believes has passed, where the 'agenda was, and sadly remains, one of man-hating'. On the Q&A panel on the 28th of April with Germaine Greer this year, Janet explained that for these reasons feminism has gone off and is turning women away. She explained further, that 'a lot of young girls are not finding feminism attractive... The debates around quotas and discrimination are all part of a wider debate about feminism and we have to ask what it is that's turning young girls away.' Before I answer her question, I think it is pertinent to look at what Janet Albrechtsen believes modern feminism looks like.

In an article titled 'Feminism is Finally Growing Up' Albrechtsen writes about how the TV sitcom 'Sex and the City' is a prime example of the modern liberated female; 'four smart, rich women spending every waking hour dissecting their latest romp in the sack and their longer term desire to hook up with a man'. She elaborates further, that 'Sex and the City' proves that intelligent women 'can obsess over girl stuff. They can pine for Mr Right (or, in Carrie's case, Mr Big) and the perfect pair of shoes. They can mooch around in trackies, reading Vogue and Cosmo rather than Gloria Steinem and Andrea Dworkin. They can aspire to

marriage and motherhood.' This is what feminism is about. Modern feminism and femininity, for Janet Albrechtsen, go hand in hand. Modern women are always going to have to compromise when they have children, we shouldn't whine about not getting jobs because we have to juggle part time motherhood, instead, we should accept the world as it is, get married, have kids and not worry too much about work because 'society's bias makes it easier for women to work part time if their preference is to rear children' anyway – so stop screwing it up!

Let us now come back to the question Janet asked of the Q&A panel – why are younger generations being turned away from feminism? I would like to say it is the views of people like Janet herself. She presents the exact opposite views to what people like De Beauvoir and Betty Friedan wrote of women's suffrage. Albrechtsen presents modern feminism as a regression from the all-out war waged on the state of inequality and submission of women that stems from the history of feminist tradition. The bra-burning days of feminism are not something to be ashamed of, they symbolise a movement and were necessary for the change of which we are fortunate enough to be beneficiaries. Without such a radical movement Janet Albrechtsen would not be able to write her views on how outdated the feminist movement is, she would not have a job writing for 'The Australian'. Who is she to criticize the movement that has allowed her and so many other women to emancipate themselves from a society where they were not taken seriously by men? TV sitcoms like Sex and the City have evolved because women have fought against the term 'slut' being used in conjunction with characters such as

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT IN OUR BACKYARD

ELIZA PARANTHOIENE explores the problems in our own backyard

Maybe I'm just a bleeding heart social worker, and a shit-stirrer, but when I see social injustice and gendered discrimination, I get outraged, and the urge to jump on my little social justice soapbox is irresistible. I've heard all about the radically extremist sheikhs, and the USyd college douche bags (sorry to single you out, St. Paul's, but when you rely on the word 'rape' to indicate victory, you're failing at life). But I suppose you don't expect archaic, ignorant responses from people that are intelligent and respectable, people that are essentially in a position of power over you. Not in 2011.

I lived at Sydney University Village for a year. It was a relaxed, friendly place, and I met incredible people. It was a safe haven, right in the middle of Newtown. But when I was visiting friends a few weeks ago, we witnessed an attempted sexual assault, which proceeded to be swept under the rug by the seemingly approachable and respectable Village Director, Todd Handy. It was an incredible coincidence that a friend happened to see a male resident attempt to drag a visibly frightened female resident into his apartment complex. We were able to pull the girl away and walk her home. The next day, as is exceedingly common in cases of sexual assault, the girl felt embarrassed, not wanting to 'make a mountain out of a molehill' by reporting the incident to the police. Abuse victims often internalise blame, believing that their consent, once given, is not retractable, and that the way they dress and their level of intoxication mitigates the fact that a male has attempted to force himself on her. I expected that.

What I didn't expect was for Todd Handy to corroborate the remarks of this girl. He seemed fairly happy with the fact that because no actual assault had occurred, that there was little that needed to be done. I have a fair idea that if the girl had been his sister or daughter, his response would have been different. Maybe we should have waited until the guy had dragged her inside and started to rape her before we stepped in – maybe then he would have responded with the immediacy and urgency that we were hoping for. I'd like to point out at this stage that people have been placed on probation and community service at SUV for breaking picture frames and urinating on doors. This Todd guy, a thirty something, intelligent, nice guy, was telling us that because he was drunk, he 'didn't mean to' force himself on her, and that he was satisfied that the 'lengthy discussion' he had had with the guy was sufficient in addressing the problem.

Todd also infuriatingly took this incident as an opportunity to pat himself on the back for killing all SUV social events that involved alcohol so as to 'limit these sorts of things'. Let me ask you, Todd, how many times have you been drunk? Mhmm... interesting.... And how many women have you raped? A culture that equates a solution to sexual violence with ignoring any incidences of it is the real problem.

Samantha Jones. But is Sex and the City truly liberating? It is essential to remember that Sex and the City is fiction. A fiction based solely around Sex. And the City. Written, directed and produced by men. If Janet Albrechtsen believes that these mottos make for a more 'appealing' feminism and enforces that we should actively work against the traditional roots of feminism, then I can see why young girls are so confused. They are told that they won't be attractive if they read Gloria Steinham and Andrea Dworkin, that they should always be thinking about the next time they can have sex so that they can obsess over it with their girlfriends and that bras should be lacey, even if they itch, because men like lace and women still need to service the desires of men in order to be loved. How truly liberating is this scenario?

Ripping into one of the founding mothers of the feminist movement Germaine Greer in one of her articles, Albrechtsen likens the reading of The Female Eunuch to watching a "look at moi, look at moi" scene from Kath & Kim. She continues on to complain about how grumpy Greer seemed to be around her – which was in such contrast

to her loveable TV persona. This must be because she is a feminist "wedded to a bitter philosophy about men, women, love and life". Greer may be successful and beholden to no one, but the most pertinent question is... 'is she happy?'. Obviously not seeing as all she is capable of doing around Albrechtsen, it seems, is grunt and grumble. After all she has done to destroy the message of equality and independence that Germaine Greer set up she has quite the hide to expect anything more from

the seminal writer who she describes as 'the intellectual version of Paris Hilton'. I admire Greer's composure. If it had been me I would have thrown a shoe at her.

I believe women are free to exercise their choice and control their own lives, whether that means being a Samantha, Carrie or Miranda – but that shouldn't mean being ignorant of feminism, it should not mean that women are not going to stand up and discuss quotas and discrimination, because this is part of a bigger discussion, and that bigger discussion starts at the beginning of the feminist movement. It is a discussion that does not shy away from Greer's 'Female Eunuch' but encapsulates it in an ever changing (and possibly never-ending) fight for female equality. This movement is only scary if people like Janet Albrechtsen tell those girls that this history is bad and will leave them lonely and unhappy and without a man (just look at Germaine Greer!). I agree, often women are their own worst enemy, but it is not because of feminists – rather, it's because of non-feminist writers like Janet Albrechtsen.



KEEP YOUR ROSARIES (AND THE PATRIARCH) OFF MY OVARIES!

CINDY CHONG on a woman's right to choose

When I say I support 'choice', that means I support each individual woman's ability to make a decision (after being informed of risks/benefits) about how she is going to responsibly care for her pregnancy.

When she first becomes pregnant, that usually means she is choosing between having an abortion and giving birth.

'Abortion is an essential, legal and medical procedure that women desperately need, not only to give them control over their bodies and lives but to preserve and improve the lives of their families'

If she chooses to have an abortion, then she gets to make a decision whether she

wants to have a medical or a surgical abortion. If she chooses to carry to term, then she gets to make a decision about whether she wants to use a midwife or an OB/GYN. She chooses between a homebirth, hospital birth or birthing center. She chooses whether to have an all-natural birth, whether to use an epidural, whether to be induced. Towards the end of the pregnancy, if she has chosen to carry to term, she must make a decision about whether she wants to keep the infant after birth or give it up for adoption. If she chooses adoption, she gets to decide if she wants an open or closed adoption. She gets to choose which adoptive family her child will become a part of. If she chooses to raise the infant herself, she gets to choose her parenting style; will she breastfeed?

Of course, there are also choices to be made before a woman becomes pregnant. She has to choose what type of contraceptive (and I include abstinence among them) she wants to use, for instance.

None of this "40 Days of Life, March 9 – April 17, 703 Babies Saved" business. None of the screenshots of that episode of House aborting a baby used as an Anti-Choice material. The comparison of Abortion to Genocide is not only highly offensive to the people who were victims of real genocide, but also highly incorrect. Genocide is a violent and intolerable act of hatred against a particular community of people. It is an inexcusable crime. Abortion, by contrast, is an essential, legal and medical procedure that women desperately need, not only to give them control over their bodies and lives but to preserve and improve the lives of their families.

As you can see, choice is about so many different things. But in the end, it really all comes down to supporting one thing: trusting women to make the best decisions for themselves. And allowing womyn their right to autonomy over their bodies.

This is Choice.

Contraceptive Services

Level 1 195 Maquarie Street

Abortion hotline: 9221 1933

www.contraceptiveservices.com.au

Preterm Foundation

Cnr Elizabeth Street and Randle Street

Phone: 9217 8700

www.preterm.org.au

Xpress Clinic

Sydney sexual health centre

Level 3, Nightingale Building

Sydney Hospital

Phone: 9382 7440

IT'S A BARBIE WORLD

CADEN PENNY wrapped in plastic, it's fantastic

Like many little girls in the 90s, I was the proud owner of dozens of Barbies. I brushed their hair (and sometimes cut it), dressed them up in extravagant gowns and created elaborate scenarios for them to act out.

However, since those glorious days, I have heard many complaints about my buxom childhood friend. Barbie has often been considered to be an icon of the pressures and unrealistic expectations that society inflicts upon women. She is famous for her large breasts, tiny waist and blonde hair. Barbie is associated with all things pink and so-called 'girly'.

I remember a particularly awkward Personal Development class at my all-girl middle school. We were to write down our weight, height and bra size. Next; the teacher provided a list for a real-life Barbie. We were informed that Barbie's estimated proportions would render her anorexic and malnourished to the extent that she would be unable to menstruate. She would be so top-heavy that she would have difficulty standing up.

The odds of a woman having such a figure are thought to be less than 1 in 100 000. Apparently this exercise was to 'reassure' us that it was normal to not fit such a mould.

The presence of Barbie as an idealistic representation of women has created many body image dilemmas. Due to this

increasing social pressure, many women are turning to plastic surgery in hopes of transforming themselves into popular culture's image of beauty. Sarah Burge, a 50 year old British woman, has broken the world record for the highest number of plastic surgeries. She has spent over £1 million in her pursuit of becoming a real-life Barbie.

Barbie did have a bizarre conception. She was based on a 1950s German comic strip (and later a doll) called Lilli. Lilli was a highly sexualised character that was intended for the enjoyment of adult men.

Barbie has found herself caught in many controversies in the media. There was a special edition doll 1963 that came with the weight-loss advice "Don't eat!". Then later there was the infamous 'Teen Talk Barbie' in 1992 that spoke several phrases including "Math class is tough!". (You may remember the talking Malibu Stacey parody in the Simpsons). Even more embarrassing for Mattel, was that the box for first African-American Barbie in 1997 featured an ad for Oreos. Oh dear.

In more recent years, Barbie has become a better role model. Slowly her waist has increased as her bust decreased. Mattel has also produced many friends who appear to be different ethnicities. There was even 'wheelchair Becky' in 1997. However, there are yet to be any with a plus-size figure. Barbie has (among a lot of careers)

been a doctor, a swim teacher, a United States Army officer, a President, a fire-fighter, a palaeontologist, a ballerina, a McDonalds cashier and an astronaut. It was a radical move of independence when she dumped Ken and briefly shackled up with an Australian body boarder named Blaine.

But does any of this matter? Are children actually impacted by this toy or is it a case of adults overreacting?

I consulted an Early Childhood expert from Macquarie University. She said that children are exposed to so many influences, such as from their family and the media, that it is too difficult to

ascertain the effects of one toy. Simply: Barbie does not exist in a vacuum. Individual results may vary.

My boyfriend's cousin is five years old and she is the sweetest little girl in the world. Last Christmas she asked for a Bratz doll. Although we were unfamiliar with this toy, we obligingly visited the nearest Toys R Us. I was absolutely horrified with what we found. Bratz dolls wear leather, lace and thigh-high fish nets.

We bought her a Barbie instead.



The Purity Movement

LIZ MULHALL tells us everything

There is just so much wrong with the Purity Movement that I don't even know where to begin. The Purity Movement, begun in Colorado, sees young girls and pre-teens sign a covenant that they will remain a virgin (some pledge they will not even kiss a man) until their wedding day. This does not seem so out of the ordinary, considering most of the major religions demand the same thing. Where it starts to get more out of the ordinary is that they pledge their virginity to their fathers, who swear to protect their daughter's honour during a formal "Purity Ball". Obviously this is an extreme example of an idea that is quite widespread, and I disagree with any doctrine that treats women's bodies in this way. I firmly believe that a woman has the right to do whatever she wants with her body, and that includes remaining a virgin until marriage. It is important however to assess the reasons why remaining a virgin until marriage is considered to be a virtue, is considered to be necessary to a large section of society. This is where I start to cringe. The rationale behind the Purity Movement (and I use the word rationale very loosely) is that women need to be pure in mind, speech and heart. This word "pure" is basically an incredibly aggravating euphemism for "virgin". The idea that a woman's virtue and value is irrevocably tied to her body (and what she does with that body) is an idea as old as time.

As far back as the Ancient Greeks, women's bodies have been theorised as empty vessels, waiting to be "filled" by the procreative capacity of man. Women's bodies are passive, they are simply vessels which men have

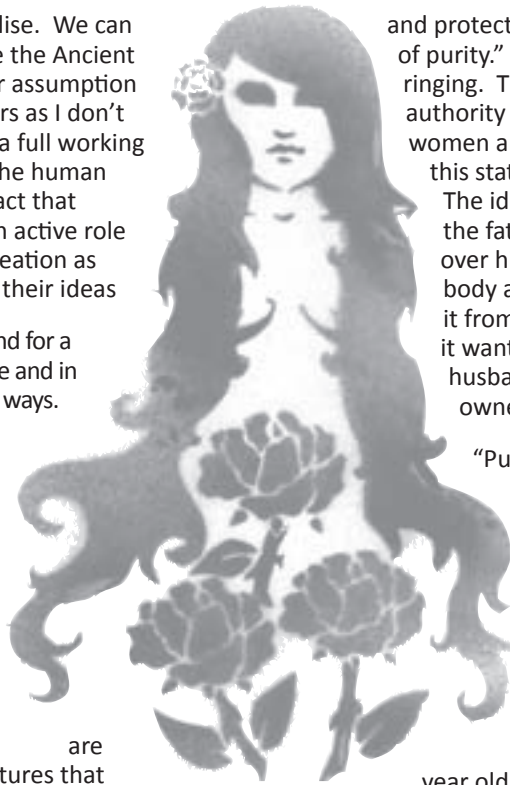
to actively fertilise. We can perhaps forgive the Ancient Greeks for their assumption on these matters as I don't think they had a full working knowledge of the human body and the fact that women have an active role to play in procreation as well. However their ideas

have stuck around for a terribly long time and in many damaging ways.

More recently, from the

Enlightenment and through to Freud, it has been noted and "proven" that women are emotional creatures that are incapable of logical thought and impartial decision-making, because of all those womanly hormones raging through their bodies. Again, women are framed as victims of their own body, "trapped in immanence", as de Beauvoir would say.

And so as "science" tells us, women are tied to their bodies and cannot escape their biological function. Under this logic, a woman's identity is inherently tied to her body and therefore, what she does with that body. The fathers of the women who take a Purity Covenant repeat the same phrase before signing the covenant: "I choose before God to cover my daughter as her authority



and protection in the area of purity." Alarm bells are ringing. The implications of authority and domination over women and their bodies in this statement is staggering.

The idea, essentially, is that the father has ownership over his daughter and her body and can prevent her/it from doing what she/it wants, basically until her husband proceeds to have ownership of her/it.

"Purity for me is purity of the mind, purity of speech. It's what I spend my time doing: emotional purity in the heart. It's a complete wholeness. I have chosen a higher standard for my life." Khrystian, 21

year old devotee of the Purity Movement

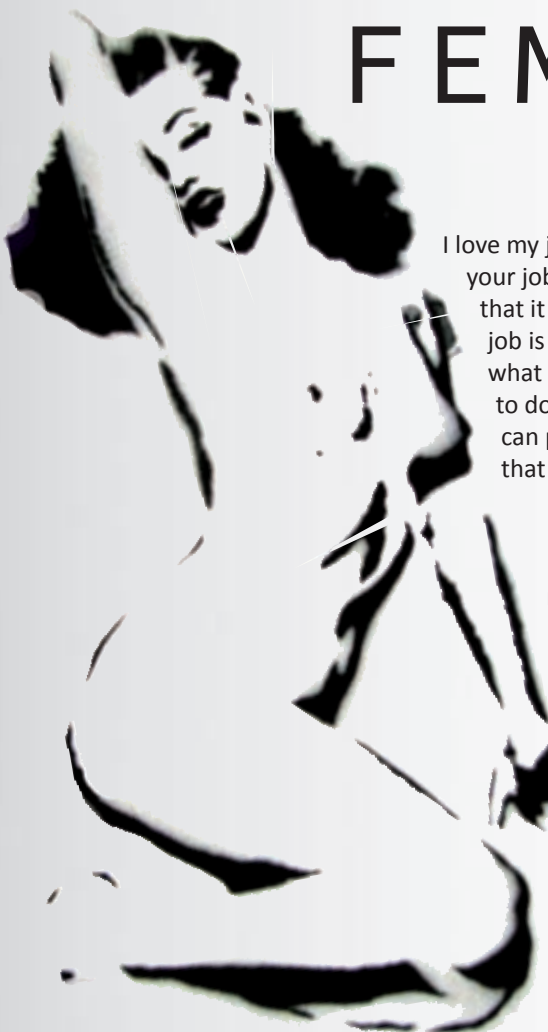
One of the father's involved in the Purity Movement also simplifies a woman's identity down to one "core question that women have in their being". Is that question "Am I a good person?", is it "Have I been kind to my friends and family while also respecting and taking care of myself?" No, don't be silly. The question is of course: "Am I beautiful? Am I worthy of being pursued?" Ok so I'm going to let the "Am I beautiful?" question slide because the idea that all a woman can aspire to is aesthetic beauty opens up a whole other can of worms that I don't have the time to go into. However the question "Am I worthy of

being pursued" is incredibly problematic. Pursued? Like a predator would pursue its prey? Again, women are being placed in a passive role. Women are positioned as an object to be conquered and to be won by the active male.

The Purity Movement is an extreme example of the one idea, however the idea that women's value or virtue is tied to their virginity is pervasive and can be seen in many political and social discourses in our society (hello, Tony Abbott). The Purity Movement treats women's bodies like a commodity. Once it has been "used", the value of the woman's body (and therefore the woman) decreases.

So what can self respecting, feminist women and men do about such insidious and downright creepy regulation of women's bodies? Go about your normal business. Live your life as you always would and treat the women around you with respect. Don't assume that if a woman is a virgin and chooses to remain that way until marriage, she is a victim of the patriarchy or a prude. Don't assume that if a woman pursues sex and enjoys an active sex life (with as many or as little sexual partners as she chooses) that she has no respect for herself or that she is a slut. Remember that sex is many things; it is fun, it brings intimacy into relationships, it is good exercise, it can be gross, it can be kinky, it is a great stress release, it is the way people show their love for one another, it is the way people quite literally get their rocks off. What sex is not, is an act (or in the case of the Purity Movement, a non-act) by which we can judge women.

IS SEX WORK A FEMINIST ACT?



I love my job. You might think your job is cool and I'm sure that it is really neat but my job is better. It doesn't matter what kind of cool stuff you get to do at your job because I can pretty much guarantee that mine is cooler. Whilst my job is definitely cooler than yours mine is probably still more contentious.

Working as a professional dominatrix puts me in the middle of one of the biggest ideological conflicts in feminism. Sure, my work is incredibly liberating, I get paid pretty well to do something I love, and as a dominatrix I get paid

MISTRESS FREY GIVES AN INSIDE ACCOUNT

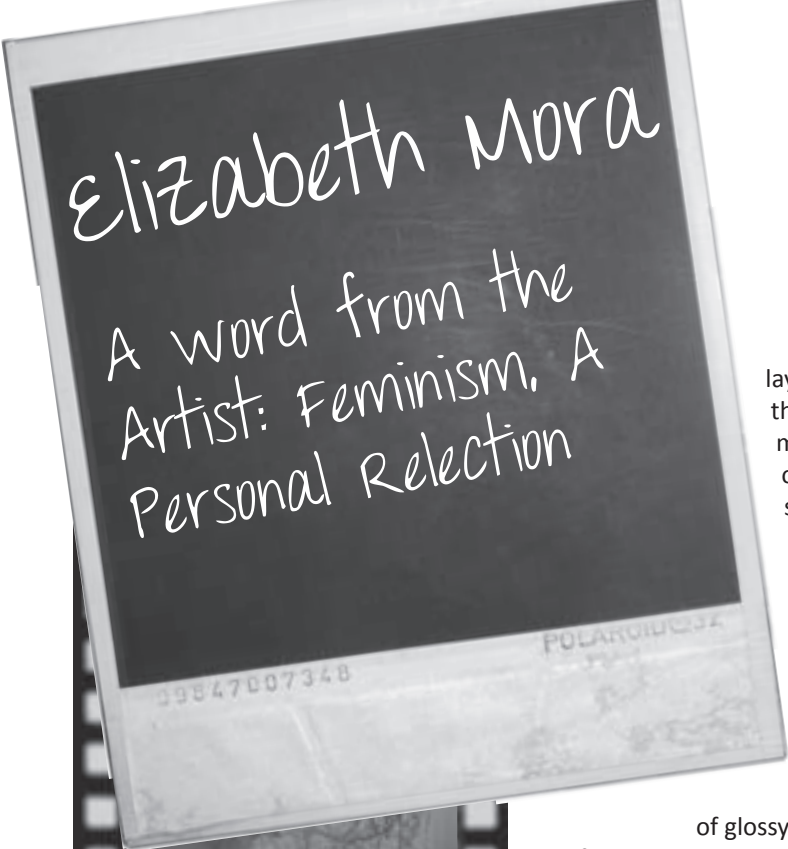
to inflict large amounts of pain on people who pretty much epitomise the patriarchy old, rich white dudes, but is it really feminist?

If you asked a radical feminist like Sheila Jeffreys then she'd likely tell you that sex work is coercive, that I'm violating my body and that the only reason that I would defend my work is because of a false consciousness implanted in my brain. If you were to speak to a pro-sex work feminist like Audacia Ray then she would likely tell you that it's my body, that sex work is just a natural extension of a capitalist system which forces everyone, not just women, to sell their bodies and labour and that sex work is a feminist act.

I fall somewhere slightly left of the middle. I don't agree with Sheila Jeffreys' assessment that I'm suffering from some patriarchal delusion so strong I'm agreeing to violate my body but I also don't entirely agree with those that suggest that sex work is some amazingly inherently feminist act.

My job makes me feel empowered, gives me the money to support myself and is a fuck load better for my mental health than working in an office could ever be but every time I start putting on make up at the start of my shift I have to wonder how much I'm fucking with the patriarchy and how much the patriarchy is fucking with me. Sure, I get paid to hit men but I do it whilst wearing a corset, a full face of make up and six inch stilettos. That's the thing about sex work, it just isn't possible to make a blanket declaration about whether or not it's feminist. Just like everything else.





lay in justifying that women are much more than our prescribed surfaces. Women are people too, I often thought, and our visual media was forgetting to include this amongst those many explicit images that mark our culture

of glossy magazines and fashion catalogues. Feminists like myself felt that our individuality was being compromised by this homogeneity of how we should look and behave. As a young feminist, I became more conscious of how I see myself as a woman and began to question the extent to which female expression in general is based on social and historical mores. I guess this was the point when I began to unfold the complex nature of feminism and add greater value to the comments made by Simone De Beauvoir.

By suggesting that women have not yet learnt how to forget themselves, De Beauvoir was suggesting feminism as an incomplete phenomenon, which had not yet succeeded in the struggle for self-definition. She was asking feminists to respond to the female identity as an unresolved dilemma.

Woman can continue to be dependent on the sensibility of society, or of she can forget this and she can begin to search for inner self, that mode of difference that distinguishes her individuality.

However, how does she search for our inner self? What distinguishes her individuality?

Perhaps the answers lie in simply acknowledging and advocating her ability to think, feel and seeing her essential humanity...

I think that at times, the chaos of resistance disables feminists from addressing this question. By becoming fixated on the negative interpretations of femininity that our society offers, feminist forget to propose a future self outside these negative interpretations and outside the extremity of complete self-obliteration.

My artwork attempts to propose the foundations for this "future self". Perhaps by reverting to nature or rather the universal inclinations that make us both female and human can we find solace in ourselves and alleviate the tension between conformity and individuality.

As a young woman, I acknowledge that the search for continual process- society proposes a set of criteria for how I should be, and my mind, my nature proposes another. But by forgetting who we are and instead concentrating on who we can be, can we- the female mind- evolve to become something greater, more sincere and more human.

A VIEW OF ONES OWN: WE NEED OUR WOMENS ROOM

CONNIE YE on spaces for female creativity, and why Jonathan Franzen is not a woman.

Let's start with a joke. A woman walks into a library at a venerable English university. She is immediately denied access because as a woman, she is allowed in only if she is accompanied by a Fellow of the College or carries a letter of introduction. Alone and empty-handed, the woman is turned away.

Seething with indignation, the woman writes an essay based on her own and other female experiences of writing and the barring of women from academia. The essay becomes a standard of feminist thought on creativity and touted as one of the most lucid accounts of women's writing. It is titled "A Room of One's Own" and written by celebrated author Virginia Woolf, the angry victim of that unfortunate library episode.

So what did Woolf mean - a room of one's own? Boiled down simply, her argument was that if there were any two essentials a woman needed to write fiction, they were money and a room of her own from which she could comfortably write. Nowadays money is a decreasingly gendered issue. But having this room of our own, for women alone to use, is less secure than we think.

When I first heard about the Women's Room at our university I considered it a charming quirk, a quaint relic from the days where women roamed the halls like rare exotics, and sought respite from the crowds of young men bustling with vim in this room they could call their own. But over the years the concept of a Women's Room has become more than simply the provision of a refuge from harassment and discrimination. It is a place for women to be alone and think and express.

Some men (and women) bristle at the idea of a woman having a public space for herself. They inevitably point out the lack of spaces reserved for men. Or to the dictionary definition of 'public'. And to an extent, it may seem strange that in 2011 women should still require our own space beyond the privacy of a home (and the female toilets). But the intention is not segregation - rather it is a necessary allowance in encouraging women to greater prominence and influence in the public forum, by providing a place where female expression might transcend gender.

Firstly, it is not difficult to see that a predominant part of public space is very much man's space. Consider the boardroom, the army, the NSW Legislative Assembly. If women are to continue making inroads through public spaces then they need a room without any hackneyed traces of sticky floors and glass ceilings. One does not mean to deny the existence of such social barriers facing women, but sometimes these repeated acknowledgements of overly-defined limitations negate any possibility of moving beyond these constraints.

That a certain value must be imposed on the supposed delegated responsibilities of each gender pervades our literature. When men write about war and politics, their input is assumed as 'important', equal in gravity to that of the content.

When women write about feelings and families, these articles are more likely than not to be banished to 'women's' magazines and frivolous gossip columns. It is unhelpful that there still is greater likelihood for men and women to each gravitate to writing about 'their' issues. But when a man writes about feelings and families, they often become these weighty fundamental issues. Why so?

Consider also the traditional compulsion to adopt a male or androgynous pseudonym many female writers feel. Take George Eliot, George Sand, P.D James, the Bronte/Bell sisters. Why should there have ever existed a fear that works written by an Amandine Lucile or a Mary Ann would not have sold or been taken seriously?

The answer is that the pen has been, throughout Western history, a symbol of the power wielded, consciously or not, by men over other men and women. Women's writing is still not being treated with the same attention that men are afforded. Women's voices in literature are still far easier to dismiss. Last year the Women in Literary Arts' statistical report on gender disparities in publishing found a consistently overwhelming majority of men reviewing literature and being reviewed in fourteen established trans-Atlantic publishing houses and magazines.

Earlier this year the LA Times reported on novelist Jennifer Egan's winning of the National Book Critics Circle Award by accompanying the article with a photo of ... Jonathan Franzen. The article preferred the angle of Franzen being usurped by Egan over details of the latter's win. Sure, it is easy to explain this with the fact that Jonathan Franzen is simply a more prolific, well-known writer. He has won far more accolades in the past - thus it was natural to focus on his loss over her triumph. But this begs the question: what if Jonathan Franzen was a woman? Would 'Joan' Franzen's work have become as celebrated as it is now? Would Joan even have been published, or become an author at all?

Woolf would say "No", just as it was "No" to the untapped genius of Shakespeare's hypothetical sister. What she proposes, and relevantly so, is that women need a space where one's gender neither dictates nor constrains one's writing, be it style or content. For as long as society remains patriarchal even in the slightest, the privileging of books "made by men out of their own needs for their own uses" carries detriment to women finding and expressing their own voice. An autonomous women's space is important for realising women's creativity and the female relationship with the written word, in absence of deference to or indeed any mention of 'otherness' to men.

So let's have and use this room for ourselves. Let's see it as the good sort of blank page. Let's make ourselves some money, buy a decent microwave for our room and get writing.

What does it mean to be a FEMINIST?

ANNABEL OSBORN has some ideas

What is feminism?

The Oxford Dictionary defines feminism as follows:

Feminism; noun; the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes

But what really springs to mind when you think about feminism?

Does it evoke images of angry, man-hating women with hairy underarms? Or maybe you think it is simply a radical movement that is out-dated and unnecessary. Perhaps you think feminists can only ever be left-wing political activists or hippie uni students.

'Modern forms of sexism are so insidious that many women of our generation believe gender equality has been eliminated and the feminist battle has been won'

As a generation, we've lost sight of what feminism really means. Feminism is a movement that fights for equality and choice for women. It's not a cult, there are no rules to adhere to (you don't have to abstain from shaving or having

a boyfriend) and you don't need to be violent or angry. It's about solidarity among women in demanding that they be afforded the same rights and opportunities as men and be allowed to choose how they live their lives.

That being said, feminism is not just one set of beliefs. Feminists often hold disparate views about many issues. For example, the debate surrounding the banning of the burqa (as recently seen in France) is very complex and there is no definitive 'feminist' view that all feminists must agree on. Being a feminist is about having your own opinions on how and why equality for women must be pursued.

But why and where are women still fighting for equality and choice?

We live in an era where the pay gap has just widened and women are grossly under-represented in parliament and in senior positions in corporations. Domestic and sexual violence against women is common. Women are objectified and sexualised in popular culture but authentic female sexuality continues to be stigmatised and reviled. Women's reproductive rights are constantly challenged and some mainstream politicians advocate the criminalisation of abortion.

These modern forms of sexism are so insidious that many women of our generation believe gender inequality has been eliminated and the feminist battle has been won. They thank the baby boomers for their good work and try to distance themselves from what they see as radicalism. It is this rampant apathy among young women that has crippled feminist action and allowed deeply entrenched inequality to go almost unnoticed and unchallenged.

For these reasons (and many more), being a feminist is still relevant and in fact crucial for us as young women.

So why would lots of young women rather poke their eye out with a stick than identify as a feminist?

A lot of young women think feminism 'isn't for them'. For one, they don't see how issues of inequality and repression directly impact them. Secondly, while they believe women deserve the same rights and opportunities as men, they think you need to be wildly passionate about it, in order to call yourself a feminist. Thirdly, a lot of women want to identify as feminists because the term has long-standing associations with hostility towards men and left wing politics.

These objections are based on misconceptions about feminism. Think about the fact that it is quite probable the guys in your degree will one day earn more money than you for the same work. Imagine that more than half your female friends will suffer from some kind of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Remember that less than one third of our SRC representatives are women. Try and count the number of times you've heard 'slut' used in the last week. The impacts of sexism are numerous and they affect everyone.

You don't have to be political or radical to care about feminist issues - being a feminist is about being aware of such issues, correcting peoples' misconceptions about the feminist movement, contributing to open dialogue about the challenges women face and being willing to defend equality for women.

So what do feminists do?

The feminist movement strives to actively fight for the political, social and economic rights of women. However, you don't have to sign petitions and participate in demonstrations to be a feminist. Feminists aim to pursue equality and choice in their own lives. This might mean pointing out to your friends that their sexist jokes are actually just offensive or it might mean confronting challenging issues of discrimination in your workplace or at uni.

Feminism is not a historical oddity - let's reclaim it as a modern movement that furthers the diverse and complex interests of women everywhere.

FEMINISM FAILED?

Kate O'Brien charms the sceptics

Unfortunately there is a common myth about feminism- that it is dead, over, caput, failed, done. Well, I for one am here to put the record straight. To say that feminism, in all its diverse glory, is alive and kicking (despite popular belief). That's right folks! All the sceptics seem to simply ignore the women (and men) who are refusing to let feminist ideals and aspirations die down- why is feminism still around? Because the fight is not yet over, equality has not been 'reached'.

I feel it necessary to wholeheartedly acknowledge our predecessors, especially those feminists who are as active now as they were when they were at our bleary-eyed, politically active, uni-student age. We have come a long way from the "stepford wife" predicament so clearly depicted in everyday life prior to the 1960s. And thank goodness for that! Women have brains- who knew?! In fact, we can be the main source of homecare AND tie down highly academic careers. Essentially, more choices are presented to women- we can choose to pursue academic or professional work; we can choose to be a nurturer as a housewife or stay at home mum.

I hear the sceptic ask, 'So then, how are women facing inequality?' Basically when it comes down to it, women still earn less than men, are often faced with a tough tug-of-war between work life and home life (since women still complete the majority of housework) and are victimised more than men - both in terms of physical and psychological violence and within media portrayals. Does this seem like a harmonious, equitable existence to you?

I suppose the other issue I mostly hear sceptics whinging about extends from the fact that feminism in contemporary society is unclear and varying in nature. It is almost undefinable as a concept and is a philosophy in itself, and it is this lack of unity at times (most often in relation to ethics surrounding issues in society or what feminism should actually mean) which sceptics seem to run with. Perhaps the hazy nature of feminism is a downfall, but it is an ambiguous concept with many varied opinions amongst subgroups. The unity in feminism comes from the common basic cause - that is, maintaining rights for women.

Negative past stereotypes (such as the crazed, bra burning, man-hating lesbian) have previously been endorsed by the media and have misrepresented women, let alone feminists as a whole. It is narrow-minded and unprogressive to remain unaware of real feminists and what the varying objectives are. It is this generalisation and blatant disregard of contemporary feminist branches that undermine the politically active feminist of today.

All too often I hear that feminism has failed us because the break down of traditional female gender roles has resulted in the collapse of the family

unit and the uprising of slutty, sexually promiscuous women. I'm sorry, but women taking a stand to violent or oppressive home environments can hardly be a negative societal progression - children are better off not having to live in unhappy households and witness fighting parents. There has been a switch of dynamics in society, which defies tradition, but it is too early to say that this is a negative consequence of women attaining rights as individual, valued and acknowledged members of society.

Moreover, sexual identities developed during the Women's Liberation Movement in accordance with the development of The Pill and other up-and-coming radical social movements during this period of time (1960s onwards).

I believe a woman's sexuality- be it sexual preference or her sexual being- has nothing to do with feminism. Too much emphasis is placed upon the physicality of women and the apparent 'immorality' of sexuality. Empowerment comes from all different mediums and it is ignorant to capitalise upon one development of women. Why don't we look at the academics that have achieved fame, prestige and respect due to their brains? Instead, we buy magazines and enjoy television centred around bust size or ditsy demeanour. If we all think this is wrong, why do these values still exist? Sexuality or 'skankyness' has become the misrepresented focus of the development of women. It is ridiculed and associated with feminism as a failure. But sexual freedom is only one element of feminism. The questions surrounding sexuality poses the over-stated question 'why is a sexually promiscuous man high-fived for his effort and a women condemned should she follow suit?' These are double standards that feminism actively seeks to redress, but are not the only associate to the feminist cause.

If feminism were dead or unneeded, why would a Women's Collective group exist in USyd? Why would an equal pay rally have occurred at Sydney in March 2011? And why on earth would there be petitions being signed surrounding pro-choice rights if feminists weren't ever-present? This is not to say that every feminist fights the same fight, but it shows the varying issues within society that call for feminist action. There are all types of feminists - the only criteria is the common goal and belief in achieving equality between men and women, and righting traditionally endorsed wrongs.

Feminism is a celebration of collective honour, empowered dignity and unwavering strength. It is about liberated women and men, fighting for rights and against injustice. Sceptics are simply refusing to open their eyes to the remaining injustices and to see the faces proudly fighting to right them. Feminism is not dead. Not by far.

ON COLOURED IDENTITIES

ASTHA RAJVANSHI talks feminism and race

"What are you from?"
"Castle Hill"
"I mean, originally"
"Well, I used to live in Caringbah when I was younger..."
"No, but, where are your parents from?"
"Oh, they're from India"
"So you're from India! Cool!"

I engage in this sort of dialogue with many people time and time again, and their desperate quest to locate and define my existence to one single ancestral element has always led me to question the extent to which my racial identity guides others' perceptions of myself.

My skin colour has paved the way for many complexities, curiosities and generalizations to arise that I, as an individual, cannot confirm nor deny. I am aware that it is difficult (often impossible) to ignore the politics of location and origin, but the dominance of these factors has often led many 'women of colour' to make negotiations in instances where they are faced with blatant (whether or not it is intentional) racism.

For one, the very term 'women of colour' makes me uncomfortable. Historically, the political term surfaced in the late 70s in an attempt to unify women experiencing multiple layers of marginalization with race and ethnicity

as a common issue. In recent years, however, this term has been pulled away from its original definition of solidarity for minorities and has instead introduced categorizes of 'otherness' amongst womanhood. It allows for exclusion, separating women like myself who are 'coloured' –those inclusive of (but not limited to) Asian, Middle-Eastern, African, Indigenous and Hispanic descent– from 'non- coloured' that is, white/ Caucasian.

When cross- cultural dialogue occurs between me and other women, regardless of our ethnicities, it reinforces stereotypes and associates phenotypes with exoticism. Upon telling others that my parents are originally from India, I often get naïve and generalized responses such as "I love Butter Chicken!" or "Do you watch a lot of Bollywood movies?" This may have be an innocent attempt to build common ground or bond with another, but instead it reduces racial identity to an exotic commodity, and congratulates individuals for having the skin colour that they were born with.

For this reason I have even often witnessed 'women of colour' going out of their way to avoid pressures of cultural conformity and racial stereotypes by dressing, speaking and acting in ways often associated with

'white people'. Sometimes I'm told by others "hey, you're not very Indian!" in an encouraging tone, perhaps because my skin colour isn't dark enough, or because I don't have a strong Indian accent to accompany our conversation. But, this doesn't reduce my family background as Indian, nor does it increase the fact that I very much live and participate in a strictly non- Indian (albeit multicultural) society.

As a counter-argument, many would say that these notions of racism are no longer an issue in today's globalized world, and have instead become a tiresome diatribe that interferes with their absorption and appreciation of other cultures. In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination*, Toni Morrison points out that, "Ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference." The unwillingness to openly address such issues of race, where differentiating one by their skin colour and heritage is seen as an accepting and friendly practice, leads 'women of colour' to negotiate their own identities through image and self-representation.

Not every coloured woman will align her thinking with other 'women of colour', for there is a stark variation between the treatment and expectations of each

culture and community, irrespective of having the shared experience of being non-white. However, lifting oneself out of that basic identity does not necessarily mean that we must negate the differences between white women and women of colour to make points.

Loretta Ross, from the Women of Colour Reproductive Justice Collective in the United States, comments:

"...Unfortunately so many times people of colour hear the term 'people of colour' from so many White people, that they think White people created it, instead of understanding that we self named ourselves. This is a term that has a lot of power for us, but we've done a poor ass job of communicating this history so that people understand that power."

There is of course no definite solution for bridging the gap between race and identity; every negotiation made by a coloured woman is an individual choice. But where women from many diverse backgrounds have fought hard to make space for themselves in the outdated space of white-dominated conceptions of feminism, being ignorant of characteristics that can empower (but not limit) one's identity is like taking a step backward.

WHY DOES BRITAIN STILL HAVE A MONARCH?

CADEN PENNY defends her country

The marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton has refocused attention on the British Royal family. Their smiling portraits adorn the covers of every celebrity magazine, 'Crown Jewels' condoms have featured on the news and there is a window full of 'Commemoration Mugs' for sale at the QVB. This fairytale union has captured the collective imagination of the Western World. However, alongside the vicarious excitement, there are smug and smarmy observations. Some people have asked "why does Britain still have a monarch?" It is being argued that the Monarchy does nothing; that they are outdated and irrelevant in the modern world.

I am British. And these comments bother me. In fact, I find them offensive and condescending. Britain has been overseen by a monarch for over one thousand years. This has established an inherent sense of continuity and stability. One that Australia, having been founded only 223 years ago, cannot understand.

Firstly, let's discuss the actual role of

the Monarchy. The official website of the British Monarchy says that "Her Majesty does not 'rule' the country, but fulfils important ceremonial and formal roles with respect to Government. She is also Fount of Justice, Head of the Armed Forces and has important relationships with the established Churches of England and Scotland." Clearly the Royal Family do not pretend to be active members of parliament or political legislature. Therefore statements like "they don't even rule the country" are not revelations or insightful discoveries. The Monarchy represents a philosophy.

The Queen is a symbol of British traditional culture. She espouses our sensibilities, heritage and pride in our country. The Monarchy stands for National unity. They are the face of the country and are how Britain represents itself to the rest of the world. The Royal family is also responsible for encouraging charitable donations, voluntary services and goodwill from the Brits. They do not vote nor can they stand for political election. The Royals remain neutral. Therefore

they are free to represent Britain – all of its differing political views, ethnicities and religions.

In response to arguments such as "they cost the government so much money": there are thousands of tourists who visit the Buckingham Palace every day (many of whom buy tickets for a tour, at £7 -17). All of these tourists pay for airfare, accommodation, food, goods and entry to other tourist spots.

One of my earliest memories is standing with my family on the side of a street. We were huddled together in the cold, along with a crowd of strangers. A black limousine drove past and opened its window. Out stretched the graceful arm of the Queen and she greeted her people. The crowd smiled, cheered, waved their Union Jack flags and jostled for a better view. I remember the sense of joy and togetherness.

The BBC twice conducted a poll that asked British people "would you favour Britain becoming a republic or remaining a monarchy?" The initial response was an

overwhelming 82% in 1993. Over a decade later, in 2006, the response was exactly the same. 82%. What percentage of Australian people are in support of Julia Gillard?

To ask Britain to give up their monarchy is like asking us to give up part of our identity. And why should we? Is it simply because Australia and the United States do not have monarchs? There are over forty countries that currently have some form of monarchy.

It is understandable if Australia does not want them as Heads of State anymore. The British Royals may not belong to Australian culture. In that case, they can be voted out in a referendum. (Even though Australia voted to keep them in 1999)

We love our Royal Family. Maybe one day that will change. But until then, Mr and Ms Complainer, remember that they live over 17 000 km away from you.

Feminism, Federal Pollies and Fashion Faux Pas

LANE SAINTY explains it all

Julia Gillard owns a shirt that I really, really hate. It's ugly. It's satin. It's an offensive shade of brown, it's unflattering and it clings in all the wrong places. Upon first glimpsing it a while ago, I couldn't help but exclaim "Oh Julia, that is a god awful shirt!" earning myself what I thought at the time to be an unfairly given glare from my mother.

"What?" I protested. "It IS an awful shirt!"

Mum somehow managed to simultaneously sigh and snap at me.

"You wouldn't be so quick to say that about a male politician! You of all people shouldn't be commenting on Julia's fashion choices!" she said, pointedly looking down at what I was wearing. Realising that my outfit consisted of faded pyjama pants and an oversized white t-shirt with a picture of Isaac Newton on it, along with the fact that my hair resembled a misshapen bird's nest, I felt guilty. Admittedly, I was not in a position to be criticising the attire of anyone, let alone the Prime Minister.

But that, obviously, didn't stop me. Or,

for that matter, the rest of Australia (who are, collectively, rarely accused of being well dressed). Since becoming PM, Gillard has been subject to a relentless stream of criticism regarding her personal appearance. Be it her clothes, her much maligned red hair or her nose- which seems to grow larger in every passing cartoon- it's been picked up on, pulled apart, and discussed by most of Australia. Surely this can only be interpreted as either incredible political apathy or a demonstration of how lucky we really are. All things considered, a PM with slightly unusual earlobes is a first world problem indeed.

That said, a small amount of personal criticism is occasionally justified. There's little harm in letting a polly know when a particularly appalling item of clothing should be stashed deep in their closet, never to emerge again. Really, it's being cruel to be kind. And sometimes, the spotlight is put onto male politicians too. Just look at the coverage received by Barry O'Farrell's shrunken waistline in the 2011 NSW election campaign. But these examples are exceptions to the rule.

Overall, the evidence overwhelmingly shows that high flying females receive

more scrutiny than they deserve. Julia Gillard has copped much, much more than a couple of well aimed remarks over one particular outfit. O'Farrell's weight loss may have had received some attention during the campaign, but the overall coverage of Kristina Keneally's trademark ski-jump hairdo was far more comprehensive. Political journalist Annabel Crabb was informed via Twitter last year "You will never be taken seriously unless you do something about your ridiculous hair." Would a male journalist be told that they will 'never be taken seriously' on a bad hair day? I think not.

It is, frankly, far more difficult for women in the public arena. Mia Freedman pointed out last year that women are simply faced with too many options. Dress, pants or skirt? Short or long hair? Make up or not? What about accessories? (The answer to the question "Brown satin shirt?" is, of course, always no.) It's a confusing maze, and one that I suspect Gillard detests having to navigate on a daily basis.

It's also more difficult to 'recycle' women's clothes; wearing the same jacket or dress over and over again gets picked up on over time. Men, on the other hand, armed with a couple of suit,

shirt and tie combinations, are just fine. They have far less pressure, far fewer choices to make, and therefore, far less opportunity for blunders. I mean, what can be said about Tony Abbott's hair? That there isn't much of it? It certainly doesn't inspire the same fusillade of commentary that Gillard's does. And an ugly dress will receive more coverage than an ugly tie every time.

And this is why I have done what every young person is loath to: admitted that my mother was right to chastise me. Julia Gillard deserves better than ongoing and unkind scrutiny of her looks, and indeed, to pretend that the flaws of any of our leaders are only skin deep is sadly incorrect.

Besides, one gets the impression that our pragmatic PM would much prefer our policy approval, or indeed our votes, than our endorsement of her clothes, hair or earlobes. Love her or hate her, she's remained remarkably unflappable in the face of unkind criticism that would probably reduce a thinner skinned person to tears. For that, if nothing else, Gillard deserves a break. And as long as that brown satin blouse stays firmly in the closet, I will happily give her one. Fair's fair, after all.

But don't worry bbg, I'm just being ironic

AMY PEREIRA tells you what grinds her gears

New Law lawns, Manning, Fisher stacks, your car, my room. You name it, it's happened there. Please, don't be so coy, so demure, so oblivious to what I'm referring to. Casual sexism, it's all the rage with the kids of today. As a student of USyd, I'm constantly astounded at the fact that just about every day I witness some douchebag saying something utterly inappropriate, offensive and positively outrageous. 'Make me a sammich, get back to the kitchen, get on your knees gurl.' What is this, I don't even... 'Haha don't worry baby girl - I'm just being ironic.' Oh I'm sorry I must have missed the giant asterisk hanging above your head with the disclaimer that the views and opinions expressed were not actually those of the speaker and did not necessarily reflect the official position of the speaker - FOR FUCK'S SAKE. 'But like you realise... I don't actually think like that, women are good for more than making a sandwich and blowjobs... like yeah sometimes they smell good.' Jkdahgakjdhgksdjhg. WHY DO I ATTEND UNIVERSITY WITH SUCH A SELECTION OF DIMWITTED NITWITS (always wanted to use that

phrase, don't mind me).

But seriously in a less assonant tone, sometimes I am simultaneously shocked and bewildered by both guys and girls alike who 'perpetuate these gender stereotypes.' In what way is it funny? How am I supposed to instantaneously recognise that the speaker is making a joke, subverting expectations, making a comment on current gender roles and stereotypes by trivialising it in the form of imperatives like 'get to the kitchen, bitch!' How am I supposed to be aware of the 'evident' fact that those words present a parody of what the speaker actually thinks about the role and value of women in society. Because in all sincerity, it just seems at face value that the speaker is being a misogynistic, condescending, snivelling, bulbous toad. A BULBOUS TOAD, y'hear me?

I just detest how despite going to one of Australia's most prominent and leading tertiary educational institution, these ideas are still manifest. If they exist here then surely the rest of the country has no hope. The concept that a woman's 'rightful' place is to be catering to a man's desire is so outdated and redundant, so why are people

still reproducing and reinstating these outdated modes of thinking concerning gender equality? 'Lighten up, Amy, it's just a joke' but why does it have to be joked about, why does it have to be mentioned at all? Just don't, it's that simple. [Insert token feminist banter right here] I believe that by joking about these things, it undercuts all the work and progress that women have achieved in the last century or so, it somehow becomes an amusing and undermined concept in .3 seconds. How is that right at all? If anything, it just reinforces gender inequality. I mean what am I supposed to respond with 'Oh...haha, I see what you did there! Reminds me of the good ol' days with no voting rights! And what about that old topical chestnut 'the glass ceiling'? What a right laugh it all is!

The more those kinds of statements are haphazardly blurted out, the more those ideas are emulated in the minds of the people who not only say them but hear them also. I don't care if you think everyone knows you're joking. Your joke isn't funny and no one is laughing. Your allegedly obvious comment, subversion and mockery of 'former' social norms, issues

and expectations is just plain annoying. If you're so passionate about demonstrating the contrast and progress of women in today's society as opposed to fifty years ago, please fulfil your feminist potential and write an essay on it, major in gender studies or read some Kristeva. Just don't tell me to genuflect, make you a culinary delight or attend to my rightful room in the house and expect me to fully appreciate and applaud the words of ironic 'wisdom' that emerged from your mouth because all your words make me want to do is drown kittens, pluck out my eardrum and then go home to leak frenzied words out of my own shriveled and fatigued mind onto a page [see also: this article]. So please people, in order to save my aural membranes, a tree and most importantly someone else's kittens (because I'm not going to lie, I don't actually own any kittens myself): take your oh-so-hilarious post-feminist irony elsewhere because here it's not amusing anyone, especially my neighbour's cats.

WHAT'S "LEFT" OF FEMINISM?: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

BRIGID MENEY says you don't need to be a lefty to be a feminist

In most respects I've been raised in the way every clichéd conservative girl has been. Emphasis was placed on knowing how to cook a variety of meals, iron efficiently and converse and conduct oneself in perfect etiquette. One of nine children, (all from the same mother and father *gasp*) I spent most of my childhood traipsing around the naval bases of the world with my military father, before attending an Independent Catholic school in the stereotypically middle class Hills district. I don't remember ever missing Church on Sundays and had seven years of classical piano instruction before anyone realised it was my younger sister who possessed all the musical talent I naturally lacked. However there is one element that is decidedly part of me that somehow makes me far from a conventional conservative: I proudly consider myself a feminist.

I can hear the outcries of "contradiction!!" escaping the mouths of conservatives as I write this. For alot of the twentieth century, and certainly all of my life time, feminism has been perceived as a dirty word particularly in right wing circles. My older sister was shocked last week that I might contemplate wearing my "this is what a feminist looks like" slogan t-shirt, down to my volunteer fire fighting base, alarmed at "what they might think!", due to the many negative connotations that come with feminism from a right wing perspective particularly. To put it simply, one can argue it's almost "unlady-like" for a good conservative girl to proclaim herself a feminist.

Too many conservative women use this as an excuse to right off the feminist movement altogether. Should we not be engaging in the movement to rid it of the negative connotations rather than writing it off completely? Being a conservative feminist therefore, has deemed itself to be a lonely role in the current climate. The numbers of females who have resigned themselves to the attitudes of the world are astounding. I've heard such comments as "I don't really see the point in my tertiary education; I'm just going to be a stay at home mum anyway." The point of this account is not of course to vindicate stay at home parents (I myself was raised by one and feel that not enough credit is given to the men and women who, where they are financially able to, sacrifice a career in order to raise the future generations). However for a girl of 19 to express openly that she didn't feel that she deserved to become the best most educated and intellectual woman she could, because of her lack of career plans, was cause for concern. One can only assume that her views were formed by the company she keeps (*cough* her boyfriend *cough*) and the society around her.

What perplexes me is how Feminism, in the truest sense of the word, that demanded equality for all women,

has now become only a left wing concern. Some of the most prominent Feminists in history were also great conservative women, many of high social standing. Abigail Adams, the wife of Second President of the United States John Adams, was a public fighter for women's property rights, and increased female opportunities particularly in the field of education. In March 1776 she proclaimed "we will not hold ourselves bound by Laws in which we have no voice or representation". In-between fighting the good fight, she also proved to be a formidable first lady while mothering six children, one whom would become the sixth president of the United States. Caroline Chisholm, a name recognised by many Australians as the face of the five dollar note for many years, was a Catholic conservative, as well as a woman of principle, who went on to set up immigration centres and employment agencies for struggling migrant women in Australia, in-between mothering her nine children.

So why, if we have a history of conservative women fighting for the freedoms we enjoy today, do we see not only a lack of activity, but a lack of interest among conservative men and women? (I say both men and women because feminism is not limited to gender just as it is not limited to political ideology. Human rights and preventing discrimination are a concern for all of humanity). Conservatives have gotten lazy and left (forgive the pun) the activism to others for far too long. Oh we'll bitch and moan about another pro-abortion protest or poster, but god forbid we actually have to activate and make a stand on women's rights and change the negative perceptions of feminism.

The other day, in response to a rant I was having about the sexualisation of women in the media, I was confronted with the statement, "sexualisation of women in the media is healthy as it promotes heterosexuality" (you know who you are). Last I checked, no political ideology, or religion, officially saw women as means to an end, and this statement propelled me significantly in my encouragement of more conservative women to embrace the feminist cause. I don't intend for a collection of women to bra burn (lets face it, they are practical), shave their heads, and start believing that they are the same as men (we are not the same, but we are most certainly equal despite obvious differences). What I do hope to see is a generation of conservative women develop strong minds and principles, with solid ideals, who can believe that they deserve more than what they have now, and to change society's attitudes towards women. This is not grotesque nor is it unladylike or a contradiction, but is in fact a creation of the ultimate conservative woman.

A CHRISTIAN FEMINIST?



GEORGINA HILDER takes a different perspective

When looking for who to blame for the inequality between genders across history, our accusatory finger quickly points straight on up to the big man in the sky; the ultimate patriarch, the god that created man first, that attributes the destruction of the world to the first woman, that tells husbands to lead the family and wives to submit. Yet, it is the same God blamed with these sexist tendencies I chose six years ago to inform who I wanted to be as a young woman. The content of the Bible in modern day society can often be regarded as a tool to oppress and create a hurdle for the fight for equality between the sexes. What does this say about Christian women? Are we a bunch of passive, submissive women skirting around the edges of church halls, arranging flowers, seen but not heard? Is that what God intended when He kindly placed Eve in the garden to keep Adam company? Heck, no! Contrary to common misconception, the Bible is an incredible go-to source for feminist values. Not only did it present a radical view of women for its time of composition, but from the creation story to revelation, a world view is embedded where women should be equally respected and valued as men, where the two genders were created to compliment one another in governing earth together. The world that God intended is not oppositional to feminist values, in fact it's entirely harmonious.

To begin with, the depiction of women in biblical stories was incredibly radical for its time. Written by Moses in a unquestionably patriarchal era, the creation story was radical in that man and woman were created equal in status in the image of God, appointed to rule earth together, perhaps the first ever example of equal opportunity. Powerful stories of women in the Bible, like Deborah who led the entire nation of Israel, continue to put women in the spotlight when most women sidelined or considered second class citizens. In regards to Jesus' resurrection, the Bible relies on the testimony of women, a testimony that never would have held water in a court of the time. The Bible is the original feminist text!

However, does this mean the Bible advocates gender homogeneity in society? I know it doesn't. Instead of a world where the difference between genders is absent, it pushes for a world where those differences are acknowledged and celebrated. But is this an issue? Is it a limit in freedom of choice? I don't think so. In my experiences it only consolidates my pride in being a woman, and in the unique skills and strengths women are blessed with. Our gender, whether by choice or by birth, does affect who we are, and where our strengths lie. Of course it is never as black and white as that, we now know that our sense of gender isn't necessarily a binary system. Nonetheless, the discussion and focus on the relationship between the sexes in the Bible is not God telling us who or what we should be, but letting us know that our differences should be valued, that men and women are both necessary for a successful and diverse society. When I read these passages, I see God telling me that He has created me as a woman for a very important purpose, of equal importance to man. As a Christian woman I act and fight for gender relationships as God intended them – relationships of co-operation, equal appreciation and respect.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

THE BURQA BAN

CINDY CHONG gives us a brief account

France's controversial ban on the full head-to-toe Islamic veil has come into force, with women who wear a niqab or burqa in a public place risking a fine of €150. Despite the recent warning by France's highest administrative body, the Council of State, that a total ban in public places would be unconstitutional, except in some cases, French President Nicolas Sarkozy decided that France would go ahead with the full ban. Citing the dignity of women and the respect of the values of the French Republic, Sarkozy asked his government to work on a bill that is expected to be introduced in the French parliament by July. Those who have been calling for the ban say the burqa is a mark of gender inequality, against other French values such as human rights, and a breach of the nation's secular foundation.

Last month, the French prime minister François Fillon said he wanted to "solemnly reaffirm the values of the republic", arguing that "concealing the face places the people involved in a position of exclusion and inferiority incompatible with the principles of liberty, equality and human dignity affirmed by the French republic."

The proposed ban has been contentious in France, where almost 10 per cent of the 62 million population are Muslim. Amnesty International opposed the measure, saying it "violates the right to liberty of expression and religion of those women" who wear the burqa and the niqab "as an expression of their identity or their convictions". In 2004, France passed a controversial law banning Muslim headscarves and other "ostentatious" religious symbols in the classrooms of the French public schools and other public buildings.

It's an issue that tends to divide opinion among feminists and secularists, both inside and outside of France, with views split between those who would welcome sanctions against what they see as a symbol of the religiously-justified oppression of women, and those who oppose the state interfering with religious freedom and the basic right of citizens to dress how they please.

DEFENCE DOES THE

DIRTY ON WOMEN

Nai Brooks airs ADFA's dirty laundry.

In response to the Australian Defence Force Academy's (ADFA) so called 'Skype sex scandal', political commentator Bob Ellis wrote:

**'BLATENT
DISREGARD FOR A
WOMAN'S CONTROL
OF HER OWN BODY
IS COMMONPLACE
IN AUSTRALIA'S
MILITARY
UNIVERSITY'**

"Is the young man to be sacked from the army now, and ruined, or wounded, or bruised, perhaps, for life? Driven, perhaps, to suicide, as young army men so often are? Is his crime, of going along with an undergraduate prank, so great? Is the young woman, moreover, to be named, and acclaimed, and promoted, and hereafter entrusted with frontline command on some field of battle? Who would trust her in any

high army position? Who would be sure she was truthful? Or sound of judgment? Or loyal? Or reliable under fire?"

Bob, dearest, is this a prelude to uploading videos of you and your wife to the internet? That would be the most delightful anniversary surprise – if your wife came across her friends looking at her writhing naked body. Because, bah, what's the point of privacy?!

For anyone who's not up to speed, a recent spotlight was cast on ADFA last month due to a male cadet broadcasting to six other cadets himself having sex with a female cadet. These men subsequently spread screen shots throughout the Academy. The female cadet was completely unaware of her contribution to soft porn, and certainly did not consent to it. To further fuel the fire, when the incident was reported to the Commandant (the military Dean of the academy), it was treated as a 'minor disciplinary matter'; a slap-on-the-wrist offence. Good to see our big guns in defence are watching out for their personnel!

The sad fact is, that this blatant disregard for a woman's control of her own body is commonplace in Australia's military university for our future officers. The reason I know this is because I used to go there.

Throughout 2009, I was an Army Officer Cadet at ADFA. I joined with the expectation that the Australian

Defence Force was a professional organisation that offered opportunities to create an exciting career whilst making a difference in the real world. The reality, however, was a different story.

Let me begin by introducing you to the ringleader of my division – Kane Smith*. His party tricks include fitting a 50c coin inside his foreskin, and dropping his pants, spreading his cheeks and hollering about how hairy his arsehole is. His favourite pastime is group porn watching sessions – who knew Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs doesn't have to be PG! Moments of pride include getting a pet rat and laughing as he watched his cum run down his girlfriend's thigh during Physical Training. Ladies and gentlemen – meet ADFA's finest.

While Smith is lorded as a legend amongst his cohort, women are treated as either sexually promiscuous, or sexually obscure . . . basically, sluts or lesbians. ADFA has a severely ingrained culture that is snap locked in time, only aware of third wave feminism insofar as women's presence is begrudgingly tolerated. To give you my experience in a snapshot; I had honey put on my doorknob, drinks thrown in my face most of the night I went out, and was threatened with being glassed – that same night, my sister had a jug thrown at her head and had to get stitches. My aggressors even organized a petition labeled "Go Fuck Yourself Brooks (GFYB)", but employed the crafty cover of Go For Your Best – one of ADFA's core value statements. Needless to say, a fine bunch of men and future officers of our country.

Because of this deeply rooted culture, it is hard for women to be heard or respected. In an effort to control the attitudes and behaviour of women, they are constantly sexualized. To add to this is the horror of the Rumour Mill. A process where the truth does not matter. Only what people say matters. And what people say is Mary-Louise had a devil's threesome with two 'good blokes' and loves a spit roast.

This culture does not just manifest itself in words. In 2009, two female Navy Officers were raped. One woman was knocked unconscious

between two accommodation buildings on campus, in sight of her bedroom window. The 'Big Guns' reaction to this incident was to order women to walk around the accommodation blocks in pairs – because deterrence through instilling civil society would be too much effort. During a leave granted to her due to the assault, an officer called her demanding she return to ADFA. If she did not, he said, then she would have demonstrated that she did not have the qualities necessary to be an officer.

On a separate occasion, another woman was assaulted in a Canberra backstreet. The following weekend she recognised her attacker in the ADFA watering hole Shooters. He turned out to be a 3rd year army cadet; a fellow officer. When I had taken her back to the division in tears, one of our fellow division member's response was 'just get over it already'. With a criminal system that puts the onus on the victim to provide proof coupled with a rumour mill that places a woman's sexual acts as the highest act of treason, it is not hard to understand why she did not pursue this beyond telling a psychologist.

Needless to say, both of these females and many more each year have left ADFA, and most have left defence altogether. Defence spending on encouraging women to join the military is useless unless they redress the sexist culture that drives women back out. It took a slanderous, sex scandal for the media to finally rivet its attention on ADFA and its old seated culture. Somehow, the regular incidences of harassment, assault and rape were not sensational or 'sexy' enough to make the news. Once the latest investigations get bogged down in time and drop off the news pages, the political impetus for change will be lost.

So this is my plea to you – do not let evil prevail. Demand a better future, free of sexism, racism and homophobia. All too often these offences slip into our day-to-day lives through sly comments and slips of the tongue. It may sound naïve and idealistic, but we need to make our voices heard and stand up to inequality. That's the only way we will make a change.

**Smith's name has been changed.*

AUSTRALIA IGNORES

VIOLENCE

AGAINST WOMEN.

Caden Penny investigates.

The International Violence Against Women Survey: Australian Component (2002) conducted interviews with a random sample of approx. 6 677 Australian adult women.

More than half of the women (57%) had experienced a violent or sexual assault

More than a third of these women (34%) experienced this assault from a current or former partner

Almost a fifth (18%) had been sexually abused before the age of 16

Only 1 in 7 women (14%) who had experienced violence from an intimate partner had reported it to the police and only 1 in 6 women (16%) who had experienced violence from a non-partner had reported it to the police. Overall, assaults against women are believed to be the most underreported crimes in Australia.

The most common reasons for not reporting it to the police were feelings that the incident was too minor, desire for privacy or fear of public embarrassment and shame.

'Female Hysteria' was a widely feared phenomenon during the early 20th Century. The term was used to describe women who experienced insomnia, depression, shaking fits or anything that men did not understand. It was attributed to the female weakness and lack of self control (This illness would later be called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in 1981). Freud coined the 'talking cure', wherein he would ask hysterical women about their lives and experiences prior to these symptoms. He came across the shocking discovery that an overwhelming number of these women were victims of violent or sexual assault. Many of these women benefitted from being able to talk about their trauma. Freud faced a decision that he found very difficult. If he were to expose the fact that women of all social classes were being abused, it would de-rail the ideas of the industrial revolution and moral superiority of

the middle class. He backtracked from the talking cure. Instead, he changed his theory that the abuse was the fulfilment of these women's

'YOU ARE NOT ALONE. YOU DID NOT DESERVE IT. NO MATTER WHAT YOU DID OR WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY'

sexual desires and fantasy. He then went on to describe how a shoe represents a vagina and that we all want to have sex with our parents.

Cathy Caruth (a prominent trauma researcher and feminist academic who attained a PhD from Yale University and has published papers in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University Press, Rutgers University Press and Emory University) describes this response as the epitome of society's desire to 'hear no, speak no, see no evil'. It is more comfortable to say that a woman is a liar, than to say that a man is a rapist or wife-beater. People do not want to admit that there is evil in the world. They also do not want to accept their own vulnerability. Caruth explains that to side with the victim is to share in their pain, horror, distress and trauma. Whereas to side with the perpetrator allows one to ignore the problem. Put simply: it is not what people do believe, but what they want to believe. There are many examples in the media:

Mike Tyson was convicted of the rape of an 18 year old girl and was given a 10 year sentence in 1992. He only ended up serving three. The year he was released: Mike Tyson's televised comeback fight was purchased by 1.52 million people (setting a new record) and grossed over \$96 million worldwide.

Matthew Johns admitted that he, along with 11 other Cronulla team mates, had group sex with a 19 year old girl. This young woman

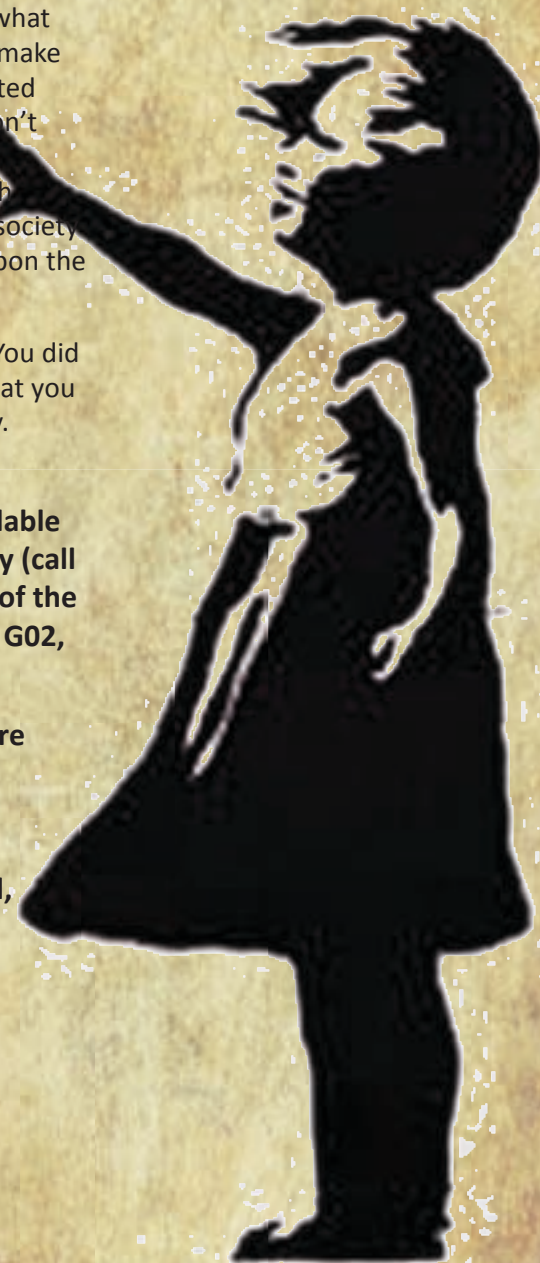
reported the incident to the police, attempted suicide several times and has been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. A year after this revelation: Matthew Johns was given his own self-proclaimed "family-friendly" television program.

The fact that you like a certain man's music, movies or sport skills does not mean that he would not hurt a woman. Neither is a male friend automatically innocent simply because you have shared a joke or eaten a meal with him. However- I am not suggesting that all men are automatically guilty. I am saying that it would be abhorrent to make any definitive judgment without knowing what really happened. It is vile to make comments such as "she wanted it", "she deserved it" or "I don't think he would do that". You have absolutely no idea. Such condemnation and scorn of society can inflict another trauma upon the victim.

Women: You are not alone. You did not deserve it, no matter what you did or what other people say.

A free and confidential counselling service is available at the University of Sydney (call 8627 8433 or visit Level 5 of the Jane Foss Russell Building G02, City Road).

The NSW Rape Crisis Centre provides a 24hr helpline (call 9515 6111) or visit the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (Missenden Road, Camperdown).



FEATURE

Lost in Hollywood...

LUCY RANDALL looks for a feminist voice in film

In 2010, for the first time in history, a woman was finally awarded an Academy Award for her best direction, for a film in which there was merely one speaking role for a woman. The winner, Kathryn Bigelow, is a director known for her male-orientated action pictures, and despite a relatively long career of making big-budget films, was virtually unknown by name until *The Hurt Locker*. Before her nomination and win, only three women in more than eighty years had been nominated for Best Direction. In the words of Australian filmmaker Jane Campion and previous nominee, with five nominations per year over eighty years, "you do the math". I do not have the muscle, authority or ego to be making films. I learned this in making my first short film last semester, after more than four years studying film theory. Every filmmaker encounters turns that are spirit-crushing, considering the demands of production, and for me, as a first timer, struggle was going to be inevitable. However, I was saddened as I found myself constantly in need of the assistance of the male members of my mixed crew in the handling of equipment, and being a girl who throws like a girl, it was very hard making verbal demands from my cast and crew, regardless of their sex and age. As one of two women in my class, I felt dwarfed by the panache of my fellow students.

Female film students are not alone: while the average number of women studying film is proportionally equal to that of young men, there is typically an average of less than 10% of films widely produced and distributed that are being directed by women. For the first time ever, just this year the Cannes Film Festival has four of its twelve films in Official Competition directed by women. If women who have successfully entered mainstream filmmaking

struggle, imagine the impact on women students. Despite my limited experience in directing films, I have directed for two years a festival of women's films, showcasing works that have featured women in major production roles, predominantly directing. Some audience members, regardless of gender, are puzzled by this purpose: why would I

where filmmaker Gillian Leahy spoke of her experiences teaching young women film studies. She remarked that female students felt timid in stepping forward to take control of the camera, while their male counterparts felt much more confident in doing so. Film is much like no other medium. Many try to discredit film as a common media, a medium

films cannot be made without financial backing, and it is no surprise that one of the most famous contemporary filmmakers is Sofia Coppola, the daughter of Francis Ford, Hollywood directing royalty. Despite a short career in film (director of four films, all of them big budget, incredibly rare for any filmmaker working in the industry for

less than fifteen years), Coppola was the first person ever allowed to shoot a film in the Palace of Versailles, indicative of her pull. To even get a short film off the ground is more than an arduous task, it is massively expensive, and beyond that, you almost always need a strong dose of muscle, authority and ego.

As is the case with any product that is unethically produced, our buying power can have an influence.

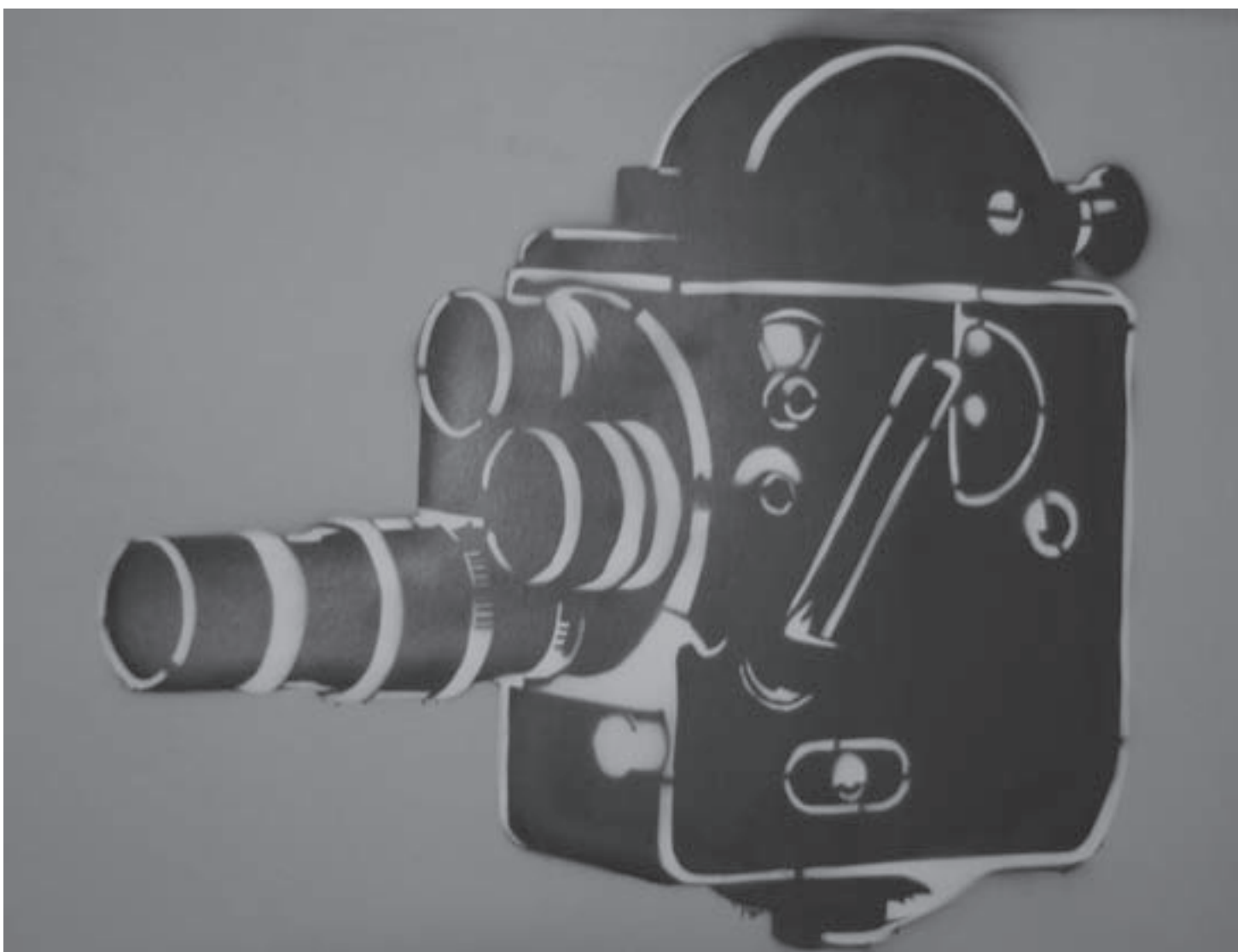
- Whether you're a filmmaker or not, consider who's making the films you're buying tickets to see: ask any filmmaker distributing a film by cinema, and they will cry, kiss and beg for you to buy a ticket and to tell all your friends to

buy a ticket. Buying power at the cinema is massively strong - the duration of a film's cinema run will depend on its success in its first few weeks. Consider signing up to the First Weekenders' Group, a mailing list which will inform you what films made by women are up for release.

- If you are a female film student and you feel a gender difference in the way your class is taught, speak up, whether you speak to your student centre or faculty to make a complaint, write anonymous letters, or make anonymous phone calls.

- Support film festivals that support women filmmakers and websites dedicated to the cause, such as *Movies by Women*, *Women* (www.moviesbywomen.com) and *Hollywood* (www.blogs.indiewire.com/womenandhollywood) and *Film Directing 4 Women* (<http://www.filmdirecting4women.com>).

Happy viewing.



choose to be exclusive in my decision making? Is this form of discrimination really going to solve a problem?

At this stage sadly, as far as I am concerned, the answer has to be yes. I've been asked, what if I had been approached with the greatest portrayal of women's desires, suffering and experiences of the mundane I'd ever seen, but it was directed, written and produced by men, would I choose not to include it?

Films from all over the world about "women's subjects" are often written and directed by men - a classic example is *The Color Purple*, a story of an African American woman's rise to personal empowerment, directed by a white man, Steven Spielberg; let alone one of the great feminist classics, *Thelma and Louise*, also directed by a man.

Women who have entered their films in the festival have often strongly identified with its purpose, writing to me to remark on the struggles they faced in making films. "Seen & Heard" was held last year at The Red Rattler in Sydney,

that is commercial beyond the point of artistry or intellectual credibility. Regardless of what credibility you care to give to film, there is no doubting its potential to speak to people. "Whether we like it or not, cinema assumes a pedagogical role in the lives of many people. It may not be the intent of a filmmaker to teach audiences anything, but that does not mean lessons are not learned," writes author bell hooks. "It has only been in the last ten years or so that I have begun to realise that my students learned more about race, sex, and class from movies than from all the theoretical literature I was urging them to read."

Despite films portraying, as hooks puts it, the "reimagined, reinvented version of the real" her students identified more strongly with the images seen in film than any written text. Arguably, works of visual art are the same. A movie can speak to us whether we have a knowledge of its context or not. Thus, my greatest concern for the industry is a lack of voice: if films speak to us, who are we being spoken to? Sadly,

VICTIM OR BUNNY BOILER

IS THERE ANOTHER OPTION?

CADEN PENNY discusses the place of women in horror films

I often find myself defending my love of horror movies. Men scoff and say "sif, girls are too scared". Women gasp, shift uncomfortably, and then invite me to Manning less often. I watch (at least) one new horror movie per week. I enjoy each subgenre from classic slasher to zombie swarms to psychological thrillers. I have seen every horror film

from Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954) to Scream 4 (April 2011). I laugh with glee, whilst my boyfriend hides behind me.

The overwhelming stereotype of horror movies is as follows:

An ensemble of unnamed scantily clad women are chased through the rain by a masked man. It begins to rain, of

course, so their clothes become see-through or inexplicably disappear.

The women are then chopped down or mutilated or tortured or raped or murdered by the man.

The lone survivor, if any, is a virginal brunette.

I don't think I need to explain the moral of that story. The other stereotype of women in horror movies is a cringe-worthy caricature of a jilted ex-lover who punishes the male object of her affection. These depictions of women, as victim or bunny boiler*, are the epitome of misogyny.

Horror movies are also accused of having 2D characters, terrible acting and flimsy or predictable plotlines. Horror films do tend to spawn sequel after sequel (each more

ridiculous than the last). Krueger and Voorhees are repeat offenders.

I admit that such storylines and poor quality filmmaking do appear in many horror movies. However, to the rest of the horror film industry, this B-grade subgenre is like the dorky and embarrassing younger cousin that your mum forces you to hang out with. It has little in common with the rest of horror; it was simply born in the same family.

Horror movies offer adventure, exhilaration and alternate perceptions of the world and reality. And let's not forget the tremendous special effects. In recent cinema (post-2000) there has been a new wave of horror movies that are brilliantly crafted and performed, loved by the critics ... and yes, feature kick-ass women. These are likeable women with character development, believable motives and the ability to kick the head off a baddie. The following list is comprised of high-quality pro-feminist horror movies (There are a few old-school movies included. I guess women's liberation did rub off on some people).

The Descent (2005)

Juno (Natalia Mendoza), Sarah (Shauna Macdonald), Beth (Alex Reid), Rebecca (Saskia Mulder) and Holly (Jane Noone) The Decent has an all-female cast. The first half of the film inflicts the claustrophobia of underground caving. And then, just when you think you can't take the tension anymore, the women encounter flesh-hungry creatures that appear far too human. The film exposes the strength of female courage and friendship.

The Exorcist (1973)

Chris MacNeil (Ellen Burstyn) and Regan MacNeil (Linda Blair) Whilst it may not be to everyone's taste (US cinemas offered 'Exorcist Barf Bags' to patrons at the original screenings), The Exorcist is arguably the greatest horror movie of all time. The film was nominated for 10 Academy Awards and features two outstanding female actors. It depicts the demonic possession of a young girl and her mother's pursuit to save her. The plot is flawless, intense and heart-wrenching.

The Loved Ones (2009)

Lola Stone (Robin McLeavy), Holly (Victoria Thaine) and Mia (Jessica McNamee)

An independent Australian film hailed as 'Pretty in Pink meets Wolf Creek'. It involves a pink satin dress, paper party hats and a drill to the forehead. The film ultimately explores the tribulations of youth, grief and relationships. Lola, the villain, is psychotic but sympathetically portrayed. Holly is determined to save her boyfriend. And then there is the mystery of the angst-ridden Mia.

Carrie (1976)

Carrie White (Sissy Spacek) Carrie received two Academy Award Nominations. It is the perfect film for anyone who was mistreated in high school. Carrie is an awkward teenage outsider. Her mother is a deranged bible-basher and her schoolmates are jerks. Then one day Carrie discovers she has telekinetic powers...

Zombieland (2009)

Wichita (Emma Stone) and Little Rock (Abigail Breslin)

Zombieland is hilarious – but it is not a satire. It is a genuinely scary zombie apocalypse movie that happens to be populated by amusing characters. Wichita and Little Rock, two sisters, are expert swindlers and con-artists. They are savvy, witty and can beat down zombie hordes.

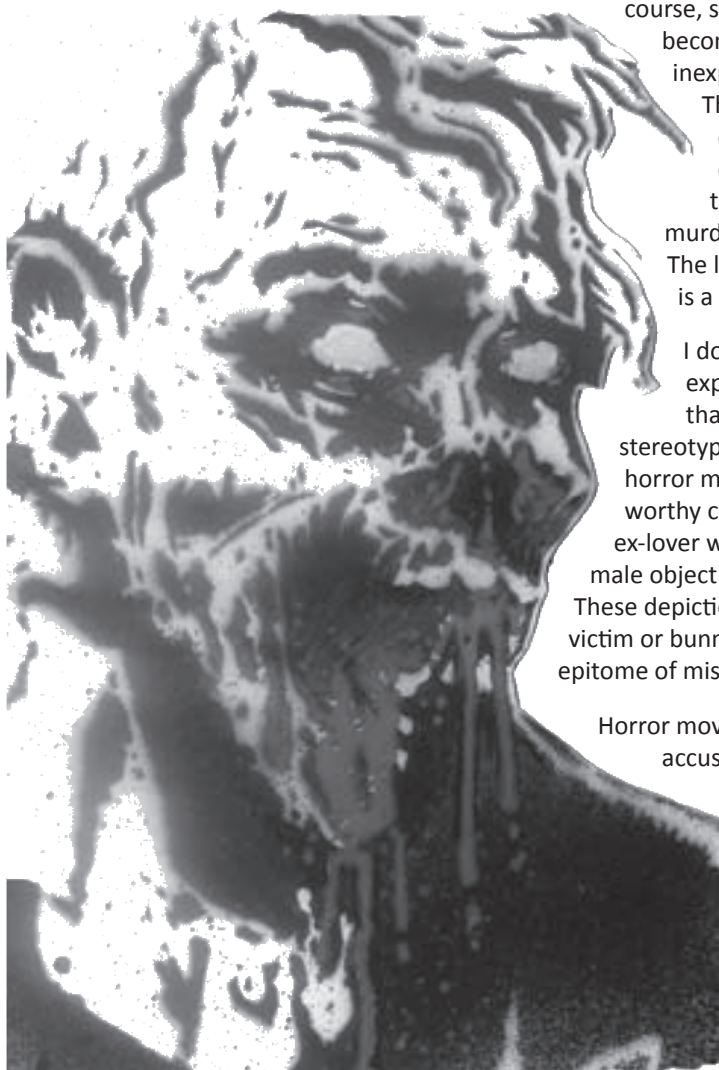
For more kick-ass women in horror: Kill Bill Vol. 1. (2003) & Kill Bill Vol. 2 (2004), Alien (1979), Saw II (2005), Hellraiser (1987), Jennifer's Body (2009), True Blood (TV series), Silence of the Lambs (1991) and Kick-Ass (2010).

[And for Arts Students who only watch foreign films]

El Orfanato (or The Orphanage, 2007), El Labertino del Fauno (or Pan's Labyrinth, 2006), Låt den rätte komma in (or Let the Right One In, 2004) and Ringu (or Ring 1998).

... And that's probably enough.

* The term 'bunny boiler' is a commonly used reference to the film Fatal Attraction (1987). Alex Forrest (played by Glenn Close) becomes obsessed with a married man with whom she had an affair. Ultimately, she boils his daughter's pet rabbit in a pot.





YEMAYA: CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



Yemaya is Sydney University Law Society annual interdisciplinary Women journal. This year the editors are pleased to invite contributions on the following theme:

INTERSEXTIONS

Contributors from all backgrounds (not necessarily law) are encouraged to explore this topic critically, touching upon the diverse and changing experiences of women in respect of the legal system, the legal profession or any other focus of public or personal life.

Submissions can be essays, short stories, interviews, book reviews, original artworks, poetry or any other creative format.

Final submissions due Monday 6 June at women@suls.org.au.

In 2011 Yemaya will be launched at Malletsons Stephen Jaques by The Honourable Justice R S McCall AO of the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of New South Wales. Prizes will be awarded at the launch for best submissions.



Women in Sport

PHOEBE DRAKE throws the ball around

I will be the first to admit I am not a terribly sporty person, despite having played a number of different sports throughout my childhood and adolescence. That said, however, I will watch tennis, rugby, swimming etc (basically anything with a competitive spirit) and enjoy it. After all, in a country that places emphasis on our sport and our sporting heroes, we are brought up to wear the green and gold and cheer on our teams as they compete and, for the most part, compete well.

Yet, since I was a child, I have always noticed a remarkable lack of cheer and, furthermore, media coverage, for our sportswomen. You will not be surprised to know that, during lunch with a male friend last week, I found myself somewhat offended when the subject of women in sport arose and he smirked and commented, 'Women playing soccer? That's hilarious.'

Interestingly, as I started my research for this article, I found this to be a reoccurring and largely unoriginal theme. Sports journalist and writer for The Age, Greg Baum, commented in

an opinion piece on the introduction of quotas for media coverage that, 'if women insist on playing sport at all, it should be beach volleyball.'

Whilst there are quite clearly a number of issues with this statement I could potentially comment on, the real problem seems to be that this is broadly symptomatic of wider society in general. Indeed, one could further question that if we do not take our sports women seriously, then why subject them to further derision through introducing a quota?

Ultimately, we need to take a stance somewhere. In an age where our sportswomen are playing at an amazingly high level (we need only look to the Matildas' outperforming their male counterpart by bringing home the Asian Cup in 2010 to see this), there must be a change in attitude and it must happen on a number of levels.

Earlier this year, the Australian government launched several alternatives in a bid to fight the gender divide in sporting organisations whilst

supporting and promoting a new generation of female sport leaders. Perhaps with a push to see more women receiving sporting scholarships and achieve leadership positions on various boards, we will indeed begin to see broader recognition of our women in sport.

Yet, it is also the role of the media to help foster this. As a media student, I am well aware of the role of the public interest, and despite opposing arguments to a quota for media coverage, I do not think it is out of the public interest to bring to attention the success of our sportswomen. Thus, although media coverage has increased, the latest study on reporting of women's sport revealed that only 10.7 per cent of sports reporting is dedicated to covering women's sport. I would argue that if this is the case, then Australia quite clearly has an attitude problem when it comes to acknowledging our sportswomen.

Getting a commitment to enforce a quota will never be easy. However, as our women continue to perform as

well as they currently are, receive more scholarships and are placed on boards, we will go some way to raising this as a legitimate issue within our society.



FACT

94 percent of local television news sports coverage goes to men's sports. Women's sports gets 5 percent and gender neutral topics 1 percent

Yes, Sir

A closer look at women in hospitality by ALEXANDRA COWAN

When I first began working in the hospitality industry about eighteen months ago I was merely a naïve girl from the country; I couldn't help but think the best of my colleagues and employers. When I was applying at pubs and was told that I couldn't work behind the bar because only boys worked behind the bar, I trusted that there must be a valid reason behind this, despite one not being specified. When I **was** employed and continually cornered by a male employee who wished to take me on a date despite my unwavering answer of "no", I thought it was my fault for hurting him and felt guilty. When I was asked to stand on a ladder so that the males could look up my skirt, I passed it off as a joke in bad taste. Working in hospitality has meant my ass has been pinched and my opinions have been looked down on. I've been called a plethora of names from condescending ones like sweetie and babe to the more nasty like slut and bitch. And **none** of this has been a shock to anyone – because that's "just how it is".

Hospitality is an industry that we are constantly surrounded by as students. Our on campus outlets employ students and a vast majority of those employed in the industry off campus, nation-wide are students. So how is it that we, as progressive young, educated people of the world, have come to accept the rampant sexist culture as the norm while at the same time letting perceptions that there is no place for feminism in our modern

world lie?

From my perspective, there are two, separate overarching problems in the hospitality industry that prove unquestionably that there is still a place for feminism.

The first of these is the perception and treatment of women by employers and colleagues. The examples I have described above show just a glimpse of a culture that is common throughout the industry, a culture that portrays women as purely sexual playthings to serve the men around them, with little regard for their thoughts or opinions. When discussing writing this article with a colleague he brought up a problem men often find in the industry – a struggle to be employed behind the bar when less experience, attractive women who attract customers and tips are available to work. While this is an example of gender discrimination, in my opinion, this is just another example of women being judged on their attractiveness rather than their skill or merit, perpetuating sexist culture.

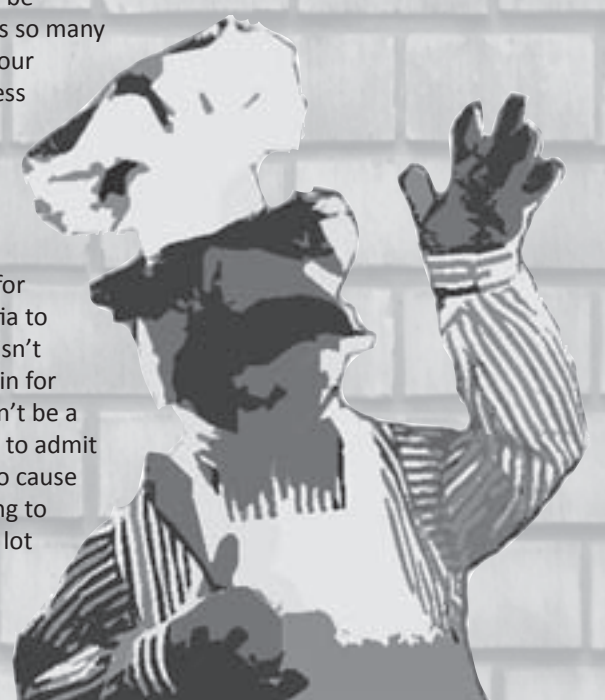
I strongly believe that these perceptions have helped create the second big problem: a lack of leadership roles. Though women are well represented in the industry, they are not well represented in higher-responsibility roles such as management. Personally, I have never worked under a female manager. A common argument for this occurrence is that in venues that

don't have security, a female doesn't have the physical strength to break up a fight – something that tends to happen when there are a lot of people drinking together. My question is: what guarantees that a male manager is going to be able to singlehandedly deal with physical violence anyway? If you just scratch beneath the surface, this argument does not hold together and it soon becomes apparent that one issue – physical violence and alcohol – cannot justify the other – sexism in hospitality.

A big reason this culture has not been addressed for so long is the casual nature of the workforce. Being a casual means that you have very little job security. If you were to make an internal complaint and were to be received with a bad reaction, as so many are, it would be very easy for your employers to simply give you less and less shifts and eventually "phase you out", with you having very little ground to stand on legally. On the other side of the coin, the idea of hospitality as a temporary job for many students creates an inertia to take action, as very often, this isn't the industry they plan to work in for the rest of their lives and it won't be a problems forever. I am the first to admit the rationale of "I don't want to cause trouble when I'm not even going to be here for very long" makes a lot of sense.

These very valid reasons for inactivity do not mean however, that we can

let the sexism continue to slide. For many people, hospitality is the first industry they work in. To have the youngest, most malleable minds in the workforce being exposed to some of the worst treatment in the workforce is simply unacceptable, and creates an acceptance of sexist cultures that can affect women throughout their lifetime. We need to lead a fight to push this issue higher in the public consciousness and have it discussed and debated; creating effective procedures to ensure it is dealt with in full force. Yes, it's very true that sexism in hospitality is "just how it is", but it's **not** how it should be.



SRC HELP: Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Abuse can take many forms and is widely understood to begin with more subtle controlling behaviours, such as possessiveness, intimidation and jealousy. He might regularly put you down, check your phone, tell you what to wear or what you can do. Abuse can take many forms and can involve one or more of the following: Physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, social isolation (cutting you off from friends and family), financial deprivation, property damage and stalking.

Regardless of what form it takes, is entirely unjustifiable. Regardless of what the perpetrator says before or after any abuse, no one is responsible for causing that abuse except the perpetrator.

It must be noted that abusive relationships are not always men being abusive towards women. Abusive relationships can also occur in same-sex relationships and sometimes women being abusive towards men. Whatever the relationship, it is simply not OK.

The first and most important thing to do if possible is to get out of that situation. If you are living with the perpetrator find somewhere to stay and get out of that situation ASAP. Stay with a friend or family member. If you can't stay with a friend or family, get a referral to a Women's Refuge. An SRC Caseworker can help with that.

If you're not living with your abusive partner still consider leaving that relationship. Don't wait around to see if he really is sorry and won't do it again.

If you are concerned for your own safety, even after leaving, you can take out an AVO (apprehended violence order) putting restrictions on them contacting you or coming within a certain distance of you. If they breach the AVO the police (Campus Security) will take further action. You may also want to consider pressing charges. The Police have Domestic Violence Liaison Officers who are specifically trained to support survivors and can advise you of the steps.

If you are receiving a Centrelink payment, you may be eligible for a crisis payment. Similarly Housing NSW may be able to help you with a RentStart payment that will cover the cost of bond for a new home, moving fees and connection fees for electricity, water and gas.

If you are concerned about your pet the RSPCA have a program called 'Safe Beds for Pets' that helps provide temporary accommodation. There may be a small fee for this service.

The University has processes and support services to help students in difficult situations such as this. You may be able to seek special consideration for any assessments you have at the time, and if you end up failing your subjects at the end of semester you can apply to have your marks converted from fails to DNF (discontinued not to count as fail). These processes require evidence, such as a police event number, medical certificate, or letter from a psychologist or counselor.

The SRC have caseworkers who can help you with advice, support, referral and advocacy around any of these academic processes, or with issues relating to Centrelink, housing etc. You can also access the SRC legal service to find out about your rights.

There is a range of telephone and internet support services you can access if you want counseling, information, advice or referral(s). Consider using a phone or computer that the perpetrator does not have access to.

Lifeline: 13 11 14
Domestic Violence Line: 1800 65 64 63
Domestic Violence National Hotline: 1800 200 526
Rape Crisis Service 1800 424 017
Police or Ambulance 000

If you, or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, take the next step. It's not easy, but neither is staying in an abusive relationship.



Sexual Harassment: What is it and what can you do to stop it?

If you feel uncomfortable when someone at university or work relates to you in a certain way, you may be being subjected to sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is against the law and is any behaviour of a sexual nature that:

- you do not want;
- offends, humiliates or intimidates you; and
- creates a hostile environment.

If this is happening to you you should come along to the SRC and talk to a case-worker to decide who is the best person to complain to about this behaviour. This may be the University's own Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit; the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW; or the Australian Human Rights Commission. You can also make a complaint to Fair Work Australia for Unfair Dismissal if you are dismissed because you complain about sexual harassment. An application for Unfair Dismissal must be made within 14 days from when the dismissal took effect.

Maggie Hayes, Solicitor, SRC Legal Service

NEW Immigration Service



A new pro bono Immigration law service is being offered twice a month by the SRC's Legal Service.

Malcolm Charlton of Charlton Lawyers, Level 29 Chifley Tower, Chifley Square, Sydney, will meet with students between 4pm and 6pm on the first and last Wednesday of each month at the offices of the SRC. The following is an article by Mr Charlton on the recently introduced skilled occupation list and the new GSM visa points test for permanent residency and associated legislative changes to protect students.

The New Skilled Occupation List introduced in mid 2010

In February 2010, the Australian Government announced a number of changes to its Skilled Migration program which took effect in mid 2010. These changes included the withdrawal of the Migration Occupation in Demand List and the introduction of a new Skilled Occupation List. These changes were not retrospective. Anyone who had applied for a General Skilled Migration visa before the announcement of the changes will be assessed on the basis of the old Skilled Occupation list.

Students

The changes included generous transitional arrangements which have been extended to current and former students. These transitional

arrangements are in place until the end of 2012.

They allow anyone who held or had applied for a Temporary Skilled Graduate visa (subclass 485) on 8 February 2010 to apply for permanent General Skilled Migration on the basis of the old Skilled Occupation List.

They also allow anyone who held a qualifying Student visa when the changes were announced on 8 February 2010 to apply for a Temporary Skilled Graduate visa (Subclass 485) on the basis of the old Skilled Occupation List. Qualifying student visas are subclasses 572, 573 and 574.

The Temporary Skilled Graduate visa (Subclass 485) provides a stay period of 18 months and allows the holder to work or study in Australia.

These arrangements provide current and former students with time to explore further visa options. Apart from General Skilled Migration, other visa options are available through employer or state/territory sponsorship. Information about other visa options can be found on the department's website.

Free Immigration Law Advice...

When: 4pm - 6pm on the first and last Wednesday of each month,
Where: at SRC office.
Contact: 02 9660 5222 (appointments required)

ASK LILY

Q & A with students who need help and a dog who has all the answers..
Send letters to: help@src.usyd.edu.au

This issue of Honi Soit is being written autonomously by women. As Abe is a male dog, and recognises the privilege he has enjoyed as a result, he is happy for this column to be written by his colleague Lily.



Dear Lily,
I am shy and hard-working. My parents have made many sacrifices for me to be able to come to University. I study whenever I can and I never go out so that I am not tired for classes. My teacher told me that if I spent some night time with him that he would help me to get better grades. He says that it is all right to do this because he understands being a student and will not do the wrong thing by me. Nothing wrong has happened but I just do not feel comfortable. Please explain to me if I'm doing the wrong thing by avoiding my teacher. I do not want to fail any classes.

Nervous

Dear Nervous,
If a teacher, or anyone else for that matter, asks you to do something that you are not comfortable doing, you do not have to do it. It does not sound like the teacher is being very professional by asking to spend "some night time" with you. It actually sounds like your teacher might be starting to harass you. There are many rules that can protect you from this. Talk to an SRC caseworker to make sure you are looked after. No one deserves to feel uncomfortable like you have described. Even if it is just a misunderstanding it is best to sort these things out as soon as possible.

Lily

Contact SRC HELP

phone: (02) 9660 5222 | email: help@src.usyd.edu.au
www.src.usyd.edu.au | Level 1, Wentworth Building
If you are not on main campus contact SRC on: 0466 169 664

Drop-ins (no Appointment required)
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1 to 3pm
Level 1, Wentworth Building





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Donherra Walmsley
president@src.usyd.edu.au
twitter: @srcpresident

Welcome back to the latter part of semester – that time of year when you realise that exams are terrifyingly close, and a week off is really not long enough to have a break and catch up on that backlog of uni work. Remember if you are struggling with uni work, there are a whole range of services available within the University to help you out if you need it – there is everything from workshops on how to cope with stress, to workshops on how to write an essay, as well as the SRC being available if you need help with academic appeals or special consideration and so on.

This week's edition of Honi Soit is an autonomous women's edition, which means that all content was produced by woman-identifying people, and all of the editors were woman-identifying. I'm not going to go into the queer theory on why I used the terms woman-identifying, I'll leave that for the queer edition, but if you want it explained don't hesitate to shoot me an email or tweet me (@srcpresident). Every year, there are inevitably complaints about the existence of this edition of Honi, and I'm going to use my report to address a few of the issues which grind my gears (which won't change the minds of anyone who's going to complain, but that's ok).

1 – It's sexist to have a women's edition of Honi Soit.

Incorrect. Sexism refers to the institutionalised and systemic oppression of women in society. Gender discrimination and sexism are NOT repeat NOT the same thing; so whilst it is true to say that this issue of Honi Soit discriminates on the basis of gender, it is not actually sexism, because men are not systematically oppressed by society. If you're going to complain at least be accurate about the terms you are using.

2 – We don't need a women's edition of Honi Soit because there are more female students at university than male students.

Whilst it is true that there are more women students than men at the university, that does not mean that barriers to women's engagement have been removed. Men are still much more likely to go on to postgraduate study than women. Men have higher starting salaries as graduates. The voices of men still dominate tutorial spaces both through the assigned readings, and in discussions. If you don't believe me, next time you're in a tutorial take note of the gender/speaking time ratio. Furthermore, even though the number of women graduating from Journalism/Media/Communications type degrees is far greater than the number of men, men still overwhelmingly dominate the media. The women's edition of Honi Soit is about giving a voice to women, and giving them a space to write and be published.

3 – Why do we need a specific edition of Honi Soit to talk about women's issues, why don't we have one to talk about men's issues, they have problems too!

No-one is saying that there are not issues that are specific to men. The one that always gets raised is men's mental health and the fact that men are more likely to commit suicide than women, and are less likely to seek help if they're mentally ill. YES THAT IS A HUGE PROBLEM. Yes, we as a society should be looking at addressing that problem. No, it does not mean that you need your own edition of Honi Soit. The fact remains that issues that affect women exclusively or predominantly are not given attention in 'mainstream' society. My favourite (or most rage-inducing, depending on how you want to look at it) example of this is the GST: there is no GST applied to men's shaving items, as they are deemed a "necessity", however, there IS GST applied to women's sanitary products (i.e. tampons) – apparently they're a luxury item. I think that this example pretty clearly illustrates that men's interests are looked after where women's are not. The point I'm making here is that in reality, the perspective of the white straight male is the normative

one in society, and that unless it is otherwise specified, it is the lens through which policy is formulated, and media generated. Women's Honi is about looking at things through a different lens once a year.

Also – the fact that whenever any issue that specifically affects women is brought up, people immediately start crying "BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MEN?!" (I've never heard the inverse) kind of demonstrates the dominance of the male lens in society.

4 – By having autonomous spaces/collectives/editions of Honi Soit you're ignoring men and without men nothing will be achieved.

It is completely true that the feminist movement will not achieve its ends without male allies. We need men to be a part of the movement if we're going to get anywhere. Furthermore, I believe that a society that the benefits of a society that has equal opportunities (and responsibilities) for men and women are felt by both men and women, so naturally men SHOULD be involved in the struggle to make our society more equal. The issue of autonomy is a fraught one. Fundamentally, the idea behind autonomy is about empowerment. We have autonomous organising collectives for campaigns, because we believe that it is the people who are affected most by the issue who should be behind the campaigns, and because we believe that one of the best ways of overcoming institutional oppression (and this goes for queer and indigenous and other groups as well) is by empowering people to feel that they can shape change. Autonomous spaces and organising groups are also about "safer spaces" – some women may feel more confident to speak up and have input when they are in a space without men. Autonomous spaces provide the place where they can have their voices heard, and it is often through building confidence in these "safer spaces" that people will then be



empowered to go out and communicate and argue their case in broader society. It's also important to recognise that autonomous organising is not done in isolation. Autonomous groups have alliances and relationships with groups that are open to everyone who believes in the cause. They are just one piece of the overall puzzle.

Personally, I can't wait for the year when we don't have a women's edition of Honi Soit, when we don't need affirmative action policies in elections, and when the fact that a leader of a union or a party or a country is a woman is not considered newsworthy - because when all of those happen, we will have reached equality. Unfortunately, we're not there yet. And until we are, autonomous editions of Honi and autonomous organising spaces have an important role to play.



SRC

Get involved!

Become a member of the SRC!

Join in person at the SRC Office or the SRC Bookshop

Buy Cheap Secondhand books NOW!

Visit the SRC bookshop
Level 4 Wentworth

Sign the petition for a National Student Transport Concession Scheme
<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/a-national-student-concession-card.html>

Get involved with the SRC's campaigns...

Tell us what you think about lectures being podcast. Fill in the survey at:
www.surveymonkey/s/podcastlectures



ANTI-RACISM COLLECTIVE REPORT

Following a week of rooftop protests and fire at Villawood detention centre in Sydney’s west, Immigration Minister Chris Bowen has announced Howard-esque changes to the Migration Act, effectively re-introducing Temporary Protection Visas.

Protesting refugees have been labeled as criminals, so the government responded by snatching 22 detainees from their beds last Friday night and taking them to Silverwater prison.

As Honi Soit goes to press they remain uncharged and in solitary confinement.

The fires in detention centres in the last few months were lit for the very same reason that Woomera, Port Hedland and Villawood burned under Howard. It is the government’s policy of mandatory detention that has pushed refugees to the brink. Months on end in detention, uncertainty about asylum claims and constant fear of deportation are the real crimes. Suicide attempts and self-harm are skyrocketing and mental health professionals continue to condemn the effects of the detention system. The refugees languishing in detention have nothing left but to protest.

On Easter Monday around 250 protestors rallied outside Villawood. The rally also coincided with a protest at Maribyrnong detention centre in

Melbourne and a convergence of refugee activists at Curtin detention centre in WA.

Serco tried to change visiting rules at Curtin to allow only one-on-one visits, despite a letter signed by 700 detainees requesting an activist delegation be allowed to meet with them. Over 300 refugees joined a sit-in and hunger strike while refugee activists blockaded the road in solidarity. The hunger strike ended on Tuesday afternoon.

Under Howard TPVs left refugees in limbo for up to five years, only after which they could find out if they could stay permanently. If the government has its way, any refugee that has been convicted of a crime while in detention will be unable to bring their family to Australia, and the government can deport them whenever it arbitrarily

decides conditions are improving in their country of origin. It will also be applied retroactively, so the change will potentially affect the refugees involved in protests at Christmas Island and Villawood in recent months.

The fires, riots, rooftop protests and hunger strikes are not going to end by enshrining more punitive measures in law. Only an overhaul of mandatory detention will. Under Howard, the refugee movement forced the dismantling of the detention regime— now we need to do it again.

The Anti-Racism Collective campaigns for the rights of refugees. We meet on Mondays at 12pm on the New Law lawns, and everyone is welcome. Call Clare on 0415 821 485 for more information.

CLIMATE ACTION COLLECTIVE REPORT

Liberal Councillors Declare War on Student Climate Collective

The SRC General Secretary and Liberal Chad Sidler has attempted to shut down two democratic student groups: the Climate Action Collective and Anti-Racism Collective. I doubt the average student knows that Liberals stalk the corridors of our SRC, much less that they are using their positions to wage war on grass-roots student activism. Sidler recommended “that the Climate Action Collective (CAC) and the Anti-Racism Collective (ARC) are to receive no funding, support or use of SRC resources or resources that are available to the SRC”.

I am a member of the Climate Action Collective. We campaign for 100% renewable energy and Green Jobs. We are against new coal fired power stations and nuclear energy. A few weeks ago 60 people attended our

forum “Lessons from Japan: the case against nuclear.” Without the resources of the SRC we could not function like we do. Now we are fighting Liberals on and off campus. While Tony Abbott is whipping up climate denier hysteria with his ‘people’s revolt’ against the carbon price, Chad Sidler is on campus issuing decrees to abolish a grass-roots climate campaign.

Thankfully at the last SRC meeting the council voted to overturn Sidler’s motion and granted the Climate Action Collective a budget of \$2000. Thirty students from all collectives turned up at the meeting to express their outrage. The Liberals (one of which was draped in an Australian flag) tried to avoid being held accountable to the SRC Council. When the policy went to a vote they tried (but failed) to leave to avoid quorum – the minimum amount of people needed to hold a vote – and stop the meeting. Democracy and accountability are evidently meaningless to them.

This is not the first time Sidler has resorted to undemocratic manoeuvres to undermine the Climate Action Collective. Against the decision of the SRC executive, he censored CAC’s report to the O-week handbook at the beginning of the year. In its place he put a two page spread by Liberal Environment Officer Adam Foda which did not mention the words ‘climate change’. Denier? I think so.

This is just one battle in the war Sidler is waging against all student collectives, which he has dubbed ‘extremist’. The Anti-Racism Collective (ARC), which Sidler also wants to abolish, was denied funding and a stall at O-week this year, and the Women’s Collective handbook was not allowed to be published in first semester. Given this report is being published in Women’s Honi, we would like to clarify our view that this has nothing to do with Sidler being a man. Hilton is an International Student and women who ran on Sidler’s ticket, is a member of the SRC executive

and has been supporting motions to expel activist groups. To defend women’s rights on campus, and student democracy in general, we need to fight men and women who support Liberal and right-wing politics. That is where the real problem lies.

The Liberals justify all this by saying they are keeping ‘students’ money on campus for students’ and not ‘partisan politics’. Leaving Sidler’s own partisan politicking aside, students are not docile creatures that exist only in lecture theatres and libraries. We have a history of leading the great social movements. We have a right to discuss politics, speak out and organise collectively for social justice. But we need SRC support to ensure we can carry out our campaigns. This week we will be raising awareness against Liberal attacks on student democracy – look out for us on campus!

Erima Dall
Climate Action Collective (meets 1pm, Chancellor’s Garden, Monday.)

WOMENS OFFICERS’ REPORT

womens.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

For the past few months the women’s officers’ inbox has been overflowing with hate mail from various men around campus that are very passionate about the fact that this special issue of honi is completely created and edited by women. “Why isn’t there a men’s honi?” “There are more female undergraduates around campus, therefore they don’t have issues that need to be dealt with” “Women’s Officers? That’s an oxymoron”. These are some of the direct quotes that stem from these complaints. There is an ongoing debate surrounding the autonomy of the women’s collective and consequently, that of this publication. And the ever-prevalent question arises: do men have a place in the feminist

movement? And is it still relevant?

In my opinion men within the feminist movement are a necessary facet in order to take things in the right direction. But that’s not to say the autonomy of the women’s collective and this edition of honi should be scrapped. To many, what the ‘safe space’ that the Women’s room in the Holme building provides is a valuable and treasured ideal. The women’s collective that meets at 1pm on Wednesdays, in that same room, is again a group of individuals that have a unique platform that allows them to showcase their opinions and organize events themed with ideas that are shared with the others within the collective. And lastly

the women’s special of Honi Soit is the one time in the year when women can highlight issues that affect them.

Sure, there isn’t a men’s collective, a men’s room or a men’s edition of Honi Soit... But the issue here is that women are still classified as the “inferior gender” and the options for women are definitely not as broad as they are for men. There may be more female graduates around university, but beyond the gates of USYD things aren’t so encouraging. Equal pay is still something we need to fight for, there is still an all time low in the figures of female representation in parliament, the rights for women workers are definitely not on par with men and domestic

violence and sexual assault continue to occur.

So I guess these tiresome nights that the collective has spent editing the paper were all done in an effort to stimulate discussion and maybe change your state of mind.

Everyone will never agree on the fact that women still have problems or that the women’s collective have an autonomous publication of Honi every year. But if nothing else we hope that students on campus will think about issues around the topic of feminism. Because when people talk, things begin to happen.

Naked women: Objectification or Art?

RUBY FENELEY explores nudity and art

A Senate inquiry launched by conservative Christian Guy Barnett in 2010 has proposed the extension of film and literature classifications to the visual arts as part of his proposed reclassification scheme. Barnett argues that films containing full frontal nudity should be refused classification and all artworks and literature depicting nudity should require classification, he also insists that the concept of “artistic merit” is void and should be made legally so in respect to the depiction of sex, violence and the naked body in art. If the proposed federal inquiry is accepted the Classification Board will potentially have the power to deny classification and distribution of films, novels and artworks deemed unacceptable by its standards. It is amongst this debate that the fraught subject of women’s bodies, frequently the subjects of art, and their treatment by mass media has once more come into play.

Senator Barnett referred to the Bill Henson controversy of 2008 suggesting that the “community angst” the image of a naked 12 year old girl excited was sufficient evidence to support his re-classification program. Henson’s polemic exhibition of May 23rd 2008 has long provided a playground for politicians eager to distract from scandals and or disquiet surrounding other policy issues. The Henson exhibition provided a welcome distraction from the resignation of then Aboriginal Minister Milton Orkopoulos in the light of drug and child sex charges, just 24 hours before the exhibition opened. Then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was quick to denounce the images as “revolting” and “without artistic merit”, his sentiment was uniformly echoed by a slew of politicians. Then Premier of NSW Morris Iemma referred to the images as “offensive and disgusting” while Hellen Polley, Senator for Tasmania proclaimed: “If we are to accept these photographs it may open the floodgates to more sinister pathways. “

The potential for a girl of 12 to suffer psychological harm at hearing national leaders publically denounce photos of her naked body as “offensive”, “revolting” or “disgusting” appears to have been lost on our leaders. However, it is Senator Polley’s statement that displays a particular, almost childlike ignorance. The suggestion that Henson’s non-sexual image of a naked child displayed in a gallery would somehow encourage an unseen escalation in the production and acceptance of images sexualizing children, implies a ludicrous naivety to the current state of the media. It is this depiction of women and girls in the media that has been determinedly ignored by politicians in discussion surrounding both Henson and the matter of censorship in art. I refer

to the prevalence of hyper-sexual images of children in the media and the promotion of the childlike form as the sexual ideal for adult women which, with the fetishisation of pornography and rape in advertising, has conditioned the contemporary audience to equate any nudity with sex. The furore around Henson’s images, which have been similar and largely uncontested for over twenty years, reflects less on the artist’s “sinister” intent and more on a contemporary audience that has lost their sense of innocence through a media avalanche of sexualised advertisements and entertainments.

Prominent Australian conservative fear-monger Miranda Devine, when speaking of the Henson scandal, bemoaned the fact that images presenting children in a “sexual context are so commonplace these days they seem to have lost the capacity to shock.” While this point is not necessarily applicable to Henson’s work it is well founded and points to the issues flanking the edges of the debate. One only has to look at the Zippora Seven Inquiry, made mere weeks before Henson’s exhibition to see the prevalence and “acceptance” of sexualized images of children in public media. In May 2008 images of models Zippora Seven (16) and Levi Clark (15) naked in a bath were published in Russh magazine. The shoot referenced the champagne bath Johnny Depp and Kate Moss allegedly shared in the mid-nineties. Both actor and model were in their early 30’s and 20’s respectively and both had well documented substance abuse issues. In the Russh editorial both models appeared naked with four empty bottles of Moet & Chandon in the foreground, Clark was posed as if unconscious. While there was some controversy surrounding the images, the shoot was cleared, director of the board Donald McDonald declaring that the publication was not “submittable” and therefore did not need to be classified, despite the fact that the Classification Act prohibits the depiction of nudity and sexual activity in minors under 18. Zippora Seven later said that her first kiss was with Clark under direction on the shoot.

I am of the opinion that nudity, especially in respect to the arts, should not be subject to a classification regime. The demonising of the naked body, particularly female, is something we should by now have relegated to a previous, less sophisticated age. Under Barnett’s direction our entire art history would require review, seminal images like Edward Munch’s Puberty, strikingly similar to Henson’s photograph, would be denied classification; the naked cherubs of da Vinci and Raphael would evaporate from the pages of art history. All the while “artists” like American photographer Terry Richardson, a man with almost as many sexual harassment claims against him as photographs to his portfolio, would continue to receive generous pay cheques for photographing 15 year old supermodels like Lindsey Wixon styled as scantily clad Lolitas, splay legged and open mouthed for labels like Opening Ceremony whilst

holding successful exhibitions of “self portraits” in which the artist receives fellatio from waif –like models in garbage bins (Dietch Gallery, Manhattan. 04) However artists like Richardson are protected by an industry that makes billions of dollars yearly undermining women and preying on their insecurities through the work he produces and so it is the more earnest, lest lucrative artworks of individuals like Henson that are more likely to be lampooned.

It is safe to say that the vast majority of Australians would have even seen Henson’s portrait had it not been so publically damned, in the meantime it is impossible to escape images of sexualized minors on bus stops, in magazines and at train stations. Even in the home the internet has enabled the easy access of links to “preteen model” websites, that promise complete legality due to the absence of total nakedness, were for a “small fee” users can gain access to hundreds of images of young Russian girls from as young as 3 to as “old” as 12 mimicking Pamela Anderson poses in skimpy bikinis. The naked body of a child is damned in art while only two years before the death of Brazilian model 1.72m Ana Carolina Reston, encouraged by her employers to starve herself to the expected weight of a 12 year old girl no more than 1.5m tall, and the subsequent, almost identical, deaths of the Ramos sisters, both models, between the years 2006-07 are treated as “freak occurrences”. While it would be inaccurate to assume all models suffer eating disorders it is true that approximately one in 100 adolescent girls will develop anorexia nervosa, a disease with a one in five mortality rate, a 15-25% relapse rate and the promise that, even if recovery is achieved, physical and mental health will be left permanently damaged and it is certain that very few of those girls will be paid for their efforts. When US Glamour surveyed 300 women and asked them to write down every negative thought they had about their body throughout the day, 97% came up with between 35 to a 100 such thoughts, not nearly as many millions as the fashion industry made last year.

I am hopeful that the extreme and censorious nature of Barnett’s proposal will illuminate the hypocrisy and cowardice of egomaniacal public figures, attacking individual artists on meagre incomes whilst avoiding real confrontation with industries that are deemed either too powerful like fashion and advertising , or too hard to control, like internet pornography. I do not believe that a 12 year old has the insight or autonomy to agree to have photographs of her naked body publically displayed but as usual this has not been the centre of the debate and as usual it is the image and not the individual who is the focus of attention. Barnett’s plan will do nothing but inconvenience artists, gallery owners and art appreciators simply because art is not a great enough focus of interest to the general public. It will not prevent women being and feeling objectified and it will not stop production and consumption of child pornography. I am yet to hear of a paedophile going to a national gallery to sate their yearning, less conspicuous avenues are simply far too accessible.

poetry night & day

afflicted in the old ebb and flow of
the night, saddened roads stretch
their skinny arms
out, open wires, wrists bare across
the water.
bearing all of our weight yet still
desperate for affection
we drive thoughtlessly, high and
above.
in passing parks they gather,
small animals huddle at tree roots.

tonight,
the moon more than it was before
illuminating paws and steeping into
me -
I’m lowered, I cover and shy away
(still savouring its sallow resonance)
mind,
limb...
the messenger
gets lost gazing at scenery in

white
pillowed and billowed on the green,
the sun is in the ground now, it
palpitates
and then it speaks
to us like a holy ghost, but the dirt
funnels its meaning into
polymer roses and clay grass
the vehicle and the surrender
reaching towards a sunless sky
and small animals huddle closer at
tree roots.

for there to be
hours clicking like doors opening and
closing all day and all
night, and all night and all day
allnightalldayallnightallday
until night becomes reason enough
to leave
I’ll find you here but you won’t know
it
until your eyes drop their stiling
distance
you are taking yourself away from me

Mia Dyson

dwelling

sat in front of an old tyre -
a lost cat,
tired by
counting
its scratches
its ridges
dreaming of its motions
along highways and driveways and
I am
vicarious through its characters
laughing and crying
always laughing and crying.

the warm glow of a dwelling
I am yet to find
finds me instead. it reddens me,
I am flushed, docile by its luminosity.
it flexes
at my wrists
and lingers at my sleeves,
winding itself thread by thread
through the hairs on my forearm.
it asks me questions of the daytime
and of nature and its
musings
and asks, cringing, why I do this
to myself.
it sits in the crooks and folds
of my sides
and tries to make itself comfortable.

Mia Dyson

FEMMO-VISION

ALICE DIXON does a feminist reading of Eurovision

Feminism’s always been about music. Helen Reddy, The Slits, Bikini Kill - they’ve all beaten the drum for women’s lib and gender equality. But the Eurovision Song Contest has never been an obvious forum for feminist debate.

It’s often hard to extract a distinctly political message from lyrical crackers. This is patently obvious in Germany’s Lou who in 2003 sung:

Let’s get happy and let’s be friends,
for tomorrow never never ends,
and our world will be all new
Let’s get happy and let’s be gay,
all our troubles they will fade away,
and the promise I will send you,
hits you on a brand new day

Astonishingly she even successfully managed to depoliticise the word ‘gay’ in her arcane composition.

For many other female contestants the songs themselves are secondary to the aesthetic styling. From the hyper-sexualised to the hysterically insane, presentation usually involves theatrical makeup, ankle-snapping heels, and costumes that could be politely described as vampy.

It may be pushing cultural studies too far to apply a feminist reading to an event that has never dealt with gender issues explicitly. Yet despite claims of political neutrality, the Eurovision Song Contest has always been a divisive and a contentious space. Voting blocs traverse

post-Soviet rivalries and nationalist identities. Formative state Montenegro explicitly cited entry into Eurovision as a cause for secession. Tomas Thordarson from Denmark caused a stir in 2004 by publically thanking his husband during the dress rehearsal. It seems remiss then to completely ignore the potentiality of femmo fighting on the dance floor.

Most obviously, Lena Meyer-Landrut, last year’s teen winner from Germany, rebelled against the ‘feminine norm’ by wearing an office-appropriate black dress paired with opaque tights. Her totally mundane appearance, matched by a scaled down solo performance, left her to win on her skills alone – an idiosyncratic singing voice and that awkward style of dancing that only another teenage girl could sympathise with. It was on these skills that she won; cuteness sure, but she was also talented.

Yet it is in the winning entry from 2004 that we find some of the most fruitful feminist analysis. Ruslana Lyzhicko, a respected composer and musician in her home country Ukraine, dressed up in a revealing Xena-esque costume, and with the assistance of whips and fire violently leapt across the stage for three exhausting minutes. Hardly ‘I am Woman’. Yet it’s amazing how empowering the song is. Sure, Ruslana and her ‘wild dancers’ bear resemblance to the Amazons. Further, Ruslana is a well regarded politician and philanthropist, concerned particularly with sex tourism and child trafficking.

What is particularly striking however is that her creation of the erotic wild dancer is very much a culturally distinct expression of feminism; that of a joyful, but fearsome woman.

This is a very different image to how Eastern European women are usually depicted in the Western media, not to mention the pervasive patriarchy they face at home. Mail-order brides, non-verbal sex objects, and occasional Soviet assassins take up most of the airwaves. In February a New Zealand radio station ran a competition to ‘win a wife’ in the Ukraine. It faced international condemnation, and not just from human rights groups. The (un)lucky winner was greeted by angry topless activists with placards yelling ‘Ukraine is not a brothel and Ukrainian women are not prostitutes.’

This unique group is called ‘Femen’. Known for their outlandish protests, Femen argues that gaining attention requires them to strip down. Unsurprisingly this has caused some ire amongst feminist groups. Yet while some argue that Femen’s actions reduce them to sex objects, their objective is the exact opposite – to question the pervasive global attitude that has reduced Ukrainian women to prostitutes and mail-order brides. Provocatively subverting these cultural attitudes, their shock tactics can be seen as more than just attention grabbing; it’s an act of women reclaiming their bodies.

Ruslana and Femen share only superficial similarities, and would probably resent any links being drawn between them. Yet both use a common

tactic; uniquely surfing feminism’s third wave as a means to command power and respect. These scantily clad women don’t beg for attention. Rather the body is presented as a site of pride, autonomy and power. Metaphorically they are constructing themselves as Ukrainian Warrior Princesses, challenging these sexist attitudes toward Eastern European beauties that, thanks to internet dating sites, have gone viral.

I do not personally subscribe to the feminism of Femen. But that’s because it occurs within a cultural framework I can’t pretend to understand. These unique manifestations represent the certain ideologies and needs of distinct communities. Without promoting total cultural relativism, these regional blossoming of feminism are crucial for strengthening the movement. They are confronting traditionalists with ‘non-western’ forms of gender agitation, as well as highlighting the highly variable plights of the women of the world. Yet these ripples can be felt in Australia forcing all feminists to consider reprioritising, reorganizing, and reframing aspects of women’s liberation.

So, why Eurovision? In many ways the choice of participants, songs, staging and presentation represent debates occurring within participating nations. Ruslana represents a radical reconfiguring of female power. This opens up further questions regarding how certain communities, cities and countries represent and reject certain ideas of gender. Eurovision is a cacophony of distinct pop-stylings. Equally, we must recognise that the cause of feminism may be shared, but the war is waged on many fronts, and requires a variety of strategies.

As Ruslana shouts:

Forever and ever
Go, go, go wild dancers!!

A BMX BIKE FRAME

The only thing I ever won was a bmx bike frame and at the time my dad owned a bike shop and traded me it for some small change. The bike was definitely worth more but he was always looking for clever money making strategies.

Growing up i used to work for Dad in the school holidays. he mainly had me working on scooters that needed little assembly, but I wore those grease marks with pride and was happy to pump tires all day listening to bad mainstream radio. when lunch came, fast food from across the road tasted well deserved.

I pocketed spare ball bearings for alternative plans me and my brother had to make slingshots out of broken bike frames and tubing. He had aspirations to shoot at birds but I just aimed for chipped away letters on the skip bin out the back while dad was serving customers. My hero was dennis the menace but I never earned enough in dad’s books to work off a bike trailer.

I think my brother and i broke my dad’s heart when he chose to take up unicycling over racing downhill mountain bikes, and I found a greater love for skateboarding, and later, women.

prose

When I discovered basketball and became obsessed with Michael Jordan I had somewhat of a gender identity crisis. I remember looking in the mirror and pulling my singlet down while flexing every muscle in my two scrawny arms. It gave me a sense of false hope that I’d be able to fight the development of my apparently female body if I kept practicing my dribbling skills. It was a shame I didn’t know then that it was the sexism that was insufferable, not the sex.

The closest I got to playing for the NBA was high school girls try outs with a homophobic 5 foot tall coach who also taught cooking classes and hated me because she thought I was a dyke and knew my parents weren’t seventh day adventist. Big surprise I didn’t make the cut. I didn’t even bother the following year.

I made out with my girlfriend in the art room instead.

Lock

TWO QUEER PUNKS

When I befriended two queer punks from my favourite folk rock band, life seemed to get a hell of a lot better, louder & heaps more vegan.

Their housemate was one of the most amazing women I’ve ever met & was a refreshing mesh of femme, leopard print, punk & radical politics. She introduced me to crisis plans, self care & rescue remedy.

Little blue, the house where they all lived was a house I eventually moved into after having to leave the warehouse.

I lived with ghost & I booty who soon became my best friends. L booty and I spent most of our time coming up with projects & going around the house pretending to be tradies threatening to fix things, but actually just drinking lots of beer and wearing tool belts.

The house was rickety but full of character- it was a well lived in, mildly Spanish-esque overgrown cottage. But it was in the heart of industrial broadmeadow. We let the lavender bush grow unprecedented out the front, to seclude us from the engineering

jocks we were surrounded by.

In the backyard there was a mulberry tree & a towering industrial warehouse that pumped out mainstream radio and the clashing and clanging of metal. It was almost an illusion with its series of windows, all fitted with constantly silhouetted workers mundanely operating heavy machinery.

You got used to it after a while, but were reminded of the industrial jockness when a silhouetted worker paused to look or whistle at you while you hung out your clothes in your underwear.

The times when ghost and L booty started to fight a lot seemed to coincide with the slow deterioration of this romanticised cottage that was slowly falling apart. Whether it was the constant detaching of the pipe from the toilet or the point at which I found myself driving one of them from the danger of a suddenly volatile relationship, little blue soon grew cold and unhomey. and I found my self care not resilient enough to withstand the truths that dawned on me about love, relationships and home.

I didn’t really have one.

Lock

REVOLUTION GRRRL STYLE

NOW!

RACHEL BUTTON unleashes her inner riot grrrl

I'm sitting in my room staring around in procrastination at the many posters I've managed to cram onto every inch of my wall -Nirvana and Iggy Pop scowl down with fierce PUNK ROCK attitude, sweet Pink Floyd smile mysteriously, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant ooze male bravado, and the Beatles are too busy crossing Abbey Road to give a shit about anything. To put it simply, I want to tell you that these people's music has changed my life. To quote Almost Famous (an essential source), I think I know what it feels like '...to truly love some silly little piece of music, or some band, so much that it hurts' (I met Dave Grohl last year and cried all the way home).

It only just recently occurred to me, however, that I've surrounded myself with idols who are paradoxically inspiring and yet incredibly limiting. Their presence only further emphasises my social conditioning from seeing MEN behind the drumkit, MEN sha-redding the guitar, MEN in all the lineups of gigs and festivals and MEN writing and being written about on the pages of music publications. In fact, the closest I can apparently get as a woman in music is the status of a 'muse' (groupie) - someone to be written about in songs, but never the one to write them. And that makes me fucking angry.

Music, especially rock 'n' roll, has since its beginnings been dominated by a fiercely masculine discourse. Mina Carson in "Girls Rock! Fifty Years of Women Making Music" puts it adroitly that 'the guitar is still synonymous with male'. But why? Its idea, I think, that music and male sexuality are overtly intertwined. That's why they named it rock, you know...cause it rhymes with cock. Yep. Oh, you didn't know that? Wow, where have you been? But seriously, think of the word 'rockstar' and what is immediately conjured up in your mind? It sure ain't a lady. The typical expectation of femininity - that

women should be quiet, demure and humble, doesn't mesh well with the incredible force and power of a distorted guitar or bangin' a set of drums.

With the explosion of mainstream rock 'n roll in the 50s the dominant idea was that men started bands and women stayed home and did the knitting. David Segal, in an article in the Washington Post (2004) suggested that the minority of female musicians in our world today stems from them being 'sidelined during the first 20 years of the development of the rock guitar'. Try catching up with Jimmy Page after 20 years. Maaan. That's disheartening. This, of course, is why only two guitarists, Joan Jett and Joni Mitchell (hey, maybe I should change my name to Joan?) made the Rolling Stone list of 100 Best Guitarists. According to this list 'You're pretty good, for a girl,' is about as generous as the dominant social discourse gets towards women rock musicians.

'Girls don't see guitar heroines and, in the absence of role models, they never bother to pick up the instrument' (No Girl Allowed? Washington Post, 2004). However, I don't think it's an "absence" of role models, but rather the dominance of male "role" models which makes aspiring to be a musician for women so difficult. It's a process of idolisation that has disconnected me from the real truth: these men, albeit incredibly talent, are just people. 'WHAT? EXCUSE ME, WHAT? They knew about the Clash when they were 2 years old? They started learning guitar in the womb? How did they get that guitar in that uterus?! Holy crap, I'm lightyears behind! I'll never be that good!' I think that's why it's so important to bring back some kind of feeling that was developed in the 90s, particularly from the riot grrrl punk movement, to support, rather than patronise, any girls who want to play music. I for one have been confronted with this idea many times. REAL LIFE EXAMPLE:

Scene: I'm sitting with three of my guy friends who are talking about pedals, amps, guitars, technical stuff.

Guy: You look bored... we must be boring you...

Me: Nah, you're not. I play guitar. I want to learn about it--

Guy: You're probably thinking about shoes and stuff right now, right?

Me: ...

This is why the philosophy of punk rock is so cool - riot grrrls wanted to "destroy the myths that support boy rock - like, that you have to spend your developing years alone in your room playing along to the records of your heroes." (Kathleen Hanna, Bikini Kill) Somehow, according to male perspectives I've encountered, if you don't know every classic rock album or what pedal Steve Vai used you apparently don't have the same level of love for music. But try telling me that all the girls screaming for the Beatles loved them any less. Imagine giving them all GUITARS! Imagine allowing them to channel that Raw Power (heh...geddit) - that pure excitement and love for music into a hundred kick arse bands! It could've started a REVOLUTION, man! It could've changed the way we think about music forever! But since we're here, stuck in 2011 without the convenience of time machine, I urge you, talented, wonderful reader, to take action! If you love music, voice those feelings, learn an instrument, start a band! I want revolution girl style now!

Satisfaction Season 1

You may have missed Satisfaction because it was only shown on Foxtel. It follows the lives of sex workers and their managers at a high class brothel in Melbourne. Satisfaction Season One manages to defy the common clichés about sex workers. The women are not oppressed, victims of child abuse, alcoholics or drug addicts. And on the opposite end of the spectrum, there are also no Pretty Woman-style delusions of a fairytale ending. There are captivating storylines, dynamic personalities and believable character developments. The focus is on the lives, emotions and relationships of the women. It is not simply a new bizarre sex request each week (like Secret Diary of a Call Girl). The show is shocking and intriguing, but avoids becoming exploitative or sensationalised. It is almost worth watching for the visuals alone: exquisite lingerie, haute couture dresses and fantasy room decor.

Each of the female leads has their own motivations and perceptions regarding their vocation. Lauren is a mature woman who finds that sex work allows her to assert her independence, find freedom from social constraints and to explore her sexuality. A young mother, Chloe, found herself engaging in sex work ever since she ran away from an unstable home at age 14. The adorable aspiring author, Tippi, sees sex work as an opportunity to expand her mind and learn about the world. Tippi says "I have a family; they know what I do and love me". And Heather is in a devoted lesbian relationship, but is a fetish specialist for male clients at work. The actresses are up-and-coming young Australian women.

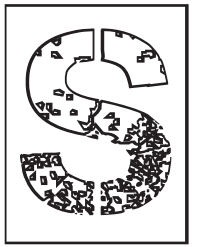
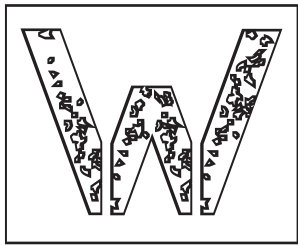
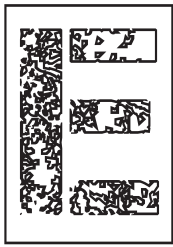
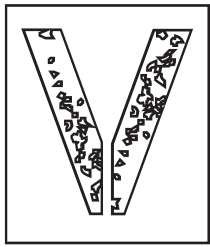
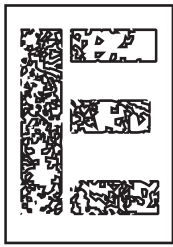
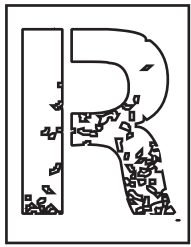
Satisfaction Season One is sexy, witty and emotionally touching. Watch it.

Cut Dr. Duncan Graham

"Cut," Belvoir St Theatre's new one woman play starring Anita Heigh aims to create "not a play as such...but a kind of mindscape that offers access into our collective dark matter." (Sarah John, Director) It follows a cyclical structure flicking between reality and a surreal dream world experienced in the mind of "The Woman," a character who leads the audience on a journey through her mundane life, her job as an airhostess, and as she is followed by the threatening presence of a haunting man with "eyes like ash."

As a whole, the piece can best be described as shockingly visceral. It opens and remains in almost complete darkness - the kind of stifling blackness that makes one wonder whether they've simply fallen into a black hole, lost forever in a void. It's this sensation that's used so brilliantly as the audience delves into the deep consciousness of "The Woman," exploring tales of her childhood as well as memories and strange symbolic dreams. The soundscape is one comprised of strange white noise, which keeps the atmosphere on edge to the point of nervous agitation. As a whole, this landscape of light and sound creates an interesting abstract set where a physical one is actually absent.

Anita Heigh's performance is incredible to watch - her calculated movements, piercing primeval screams and delicate grasp of the tricky dialogue switching between second and third person is expertly controlled. Her performance is paradoxical - in speech, she's disconnected from the events she's retelling and yet physically, inherently involved. The immediacy of her confronting performance commanded my attention from start to finish, aided by the small and intimate space of the Downstairs Theatre. As a whole, the existential themes and jarring Agit-prop style of "Cut" make the piece an extremely memorable experience, which in a unique style forces the audience to question the true nature of reality.



Wounded Rhymes Lykke Li

The Swedish pop songstress has shown how she has grown up. The stripped back arrangement and old-school girl pop-feel shows how her first album ‘Youth Novels’ has come full circle to a full-blown heartbreak in ‘Wounded Rhymes’.

The songs aren’t all about heartbreak and sadness, though. Take the lead single ‘Get Some’, blending licentious lyrics with a sound that sits very comfortably between 60’s girl group and 80’s riot grrl. Lykke Li’s illuminating melodies make the song sexy, confident, and fun. “Unrequited Love” is a beautiful set up track to the single “Get Some”. The two tracks together really show the description of the character Li is illustrating. “Unrequited Love” has a folky type melody, with a three-part harmony featured in the chorus. The section in which Li hums a counter melody perfectly captures the introverted nature of the singer. After this somber ode to indifference, “Get Some” comes in and solidifies the idea that nothing matters.

“I Know Places” brings you back to where “Youth Novel” left off, with a very bare and gentle acoustic sound supported by a male backup vocal which really gives the first taste of that heart-felt sound that I was waiting for. The song transitions into an instrumental piece, which flows on beautifully from the first part of the song. It continues with that warm tone on “Jerome” which takes a move in a more up tempo direction, with more interesting electronic sounds that keep folding back through the track and reflects well off the vocal.

Borrowing heavily from the sixties pop resurgence, the album on a whole is thought-provoking, dark, and addictive. It’s a pleasant surprise after her first record, as it’s all topped with her Scandinavian quirkiness, unselfconsciously insane melancholy, and creativity.

Let England Shake PJ Harvey

If there’s one thing you can guarantee about a PJ Harvey album it’s that it won’t sound like anything you’ve heard before. Full of surprises, so far in her 20-odd year career she’s recorded 7 albums and though her voice is instantly recognisable and the records might have a common thread in that they’re generally intensely personal, they all sound remarkably different.

The music behind Harvey’s bombed-out message has universal resonance. She tweaked and distorted the vernacular of old protest songs just enough to shake off the quaintness of age. The pieces find root in centuries old Celtic songs.

“The Colour of the Earth” marches to the doomy drumbeat of Irish folk songs, but its use of autoharp creates something shimmeringly surreal. “The Glorious Land” lays a snaking, psychedelic bass line under a battle-cry trumpet, played menacingly off-key. But the most telling nexus arrives in “The Last Living Rose,” which bridges medieval chords and the modern primitivism of the Velvet Underground. “Let England Shake” has a sound all of its own. It’s a perfectly pitched tonic to all the nitpickers that sit on every note.

Musically, the album is rich with horns, autoharp, violin, and xylophone joining bass, drums, and guitars. All of that results in as difficult and demanding a listen as you’re bound to get from a modern pop record (at least since ‘White Chalk’), but one that is ultimately quite rewarding and uplifting despite the dour undertones. Let England Shake is anything but conventional or contrived, another bold, confident release by an artist that continues to amaze and astonish us all, no matter how ready we claim to be for her continual right turns. This is one of Harvey’s most accessible albums released yet.

R.I.P. Poly Styrene Punk angel and heroine

She typified the feminist punk movement of the 70s with scathing lyrics about male-dominated music. Sadly, the punk world lost one of its great pioneers on the 25th April, as X-Ray Spex’s iconic leader Poly Styrene (aka Marian Joan Elliott-Said) succumbed to breast cancer. She was 53 years old.

Rumors of her death became increasingly credible, when her UK spokesperson confirmed the news on her Facebook page. The statement was, “At the centre of it was Poly Styrene, a bi-racial feminist punk with the perfect voice to soundtrack rebellion. Poly never sacrificed the intelligence or the fun in her music and style. Her trademark braces and dayglo clothes were a playful rejection of the status quo and of conformity and complacency. She dissected gender politics, consumer culture, and the obsessions of modern life in a way that made us all want sing along with her.”

Loaded with witty, anti-establishment sentiments that seemed to dismiss proper feminism in favor of fierce individualism, Styrene transformed the Riot Grrrl movement that would follow, long after she abandoned X-Ray Spex in 1979. The band’s hit, ‘Oh Bondage, Up Yours,’ remains a key track in punk history, having proved itself a timeless classic. Like many punk bands from the era, their career lasted just three years with few, intermittent reunions thereafter, but their mark on the genre, the culture and music history at large is immeasurable.

Poly Styrene will be best remembered for the raucous opening line of ‘Oh Bondage Up Yours’, which became a rallying cry for women artists battling to make it in a sexist industry. Stirring up millions of fans, she belted the lyrics “Some people think that little girls should be seen and not heard, well I think, ‘Oh bondage, up yours!’”

Protest singer Billy Bragg said, “Punk without Poly Styrene and X-Ray Spex wouldn’t have been the same.”

Super wild horses

A little bit pop, a little bit punk, this female duo from Melbourne signal hope for the weathered feminist music fan. On drums and guitar, Amy Franz and Hayley McKee pump out punchy melody lines and hand clapping rhythms underneath vocals which switch from scratchy-sweet to shouting. Their music contains threads of the raw, stripped-back anarchy of the 80s Australian post-punk scene and the DIY female attitude of riot grrrl with an at times poppy inflection, all swirled around in a grungey inner city garage in Melbourne.

Super Wild Horses shout, bang out loud drums and bass lines and play with rhythms in a way that doesn’t pay too much attention to musical exactness or technical skill, a steadfast facet of the all-boys club of heroic classic rock. At their Repressed Records show last year the pair launched into a song half-way through their set only to lose their groove a few moments in and spiral in to a slight clusterfuck of runaway rhythm. They chucked it in and started again after a few seconds, going on to finish an awesome set. It reminded me of how rarely that happens in modern live music, and how harshly they’ll probably be judged because of their gender. But also of how refreshing it was – they are human beings! Real people, women, can create music just like them! So maybe I can too..?

The two also regularly swap instruments and share vocals, posing a pretty fucking kick-arse challenge to the pop patriarchy – to masculinist domination, stylistic rigidity and the exclusionary primacy of technical prowess, valuing instead creative collaboration and an honest, inclusive approach to making music.

As a queer feminist music fan, it’s easy sometimes to slide into apocalyptic narratives about the demise of female music since riot grrrl. But no! There’s still hope! It’s just less unified, less specific, less overt than Kathleen Hanna’s DC. More subtly feminist. And perhaps, for exactly those reasons, more revolutionary both in the plurality of voices expressed and the challenges it posits. Super Wild Horses gives me hope for women in music and fighting the bullshit of cock rock tyranny and women as raunch/groupies-not-musicians. Listen to them now!



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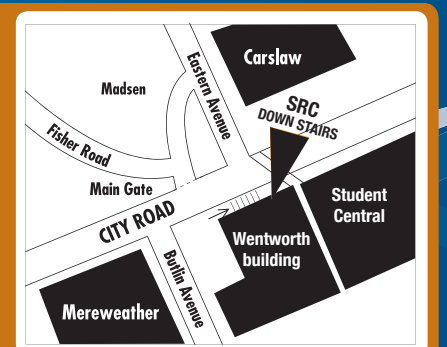
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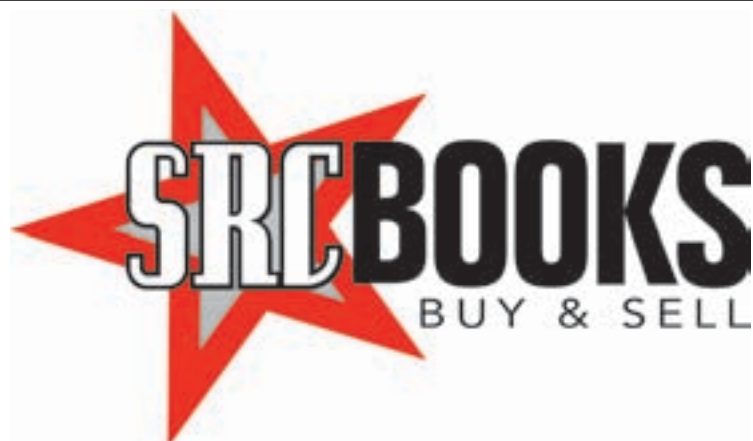
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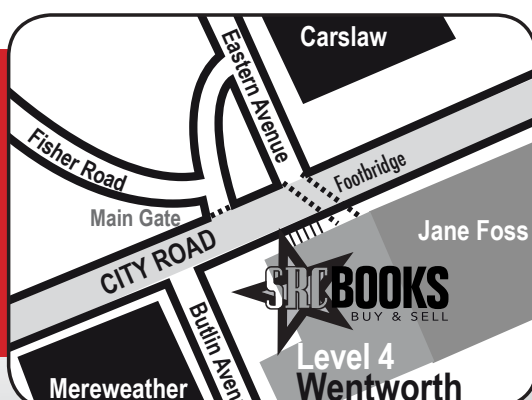


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