Spiral Collectives

PROJECTS 1975-2025



SOME STORIES

SPIRAL COLLECTIVES: SOME STORIES 1975-2025

& Spiral 8 (continued)

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Cover image Matariki mural painting at The Women's Gallery, 26 Harris Street, Wellington Te Whanganui-a-Tara, 1981. Workers paint Heather McPherson's 'Have you heard of Artemisia?' poem. L-R from top Anna Keir, Marian Evans, Marg Leniston, Fiona Lovatt, Susie Jungersen, Bridie Lonie. Photographer unknown.

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PREFACE: 'SPIRAL 8', 'SOME STORIES' & OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Spiral 8 exhibition Charlotte Museum Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland October-December 2025. Photographer Joanna Osborne.

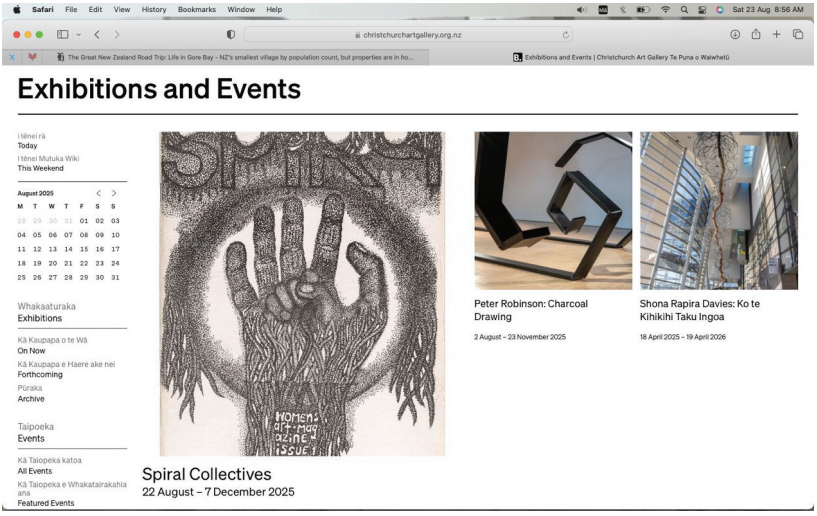
Spiral Collectives, or just 'Spiral', is a series of small and autonomous artist-led collectives based in Aotearoa New Zealand. We educate, awhi embrace and tautoko support, with patience and persistence and without payment.

To celebrate our 50th birthday, we've produced *Spiral 8: Setting the [Work] Table ('Spiral 8')*, about Spiral contributors whose influence endures and whom we cherish, even though they're no longer with us;[1] and *Spiral Collectives Projects 1975-2025 — Catalogue* ('the *Catalogue*'), designed as a comprehensive reference resource.[2]

These have been complemented by the *Spiral 8* exhibition at the Charlotte Museum in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, co-ordinated by Joanna Osborne with the museum; and *Spiral Collectives*, an archival exhibition in Ōtautahi at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, co-ordinated by the gallery's archivist and librarian Tim Jones.

Events accompanied both exhibitions, with delightful, engaged, audiences. In Tāmaki, Joanna gave a floor talk and poets Janet Charman, Miriam Saphira and Sue Fitchett read poems and Becca Barnes (narrative facilitator) and Cathasaigh Ó Fiannachta (fundraise facilitator) spoke about their work on *the bone people* adaptation as a graphic novel.

1. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/spiral-8-setting-the-work-table
2. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/spiral-collectives-projects-1975-2025-catalogue



Spiral Collectives, *the archival exhibition at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, from the gallery's website, October 2025.*

In Ōtautahi, celebrating both Spiral's 50th and 40 years since *the bone people* won the Booker Prize, Spiral veteran Tiffany Thornley spoke with art historian Gwyn Porter; Tim screened some footage of Keri and *the bone people* history — some from the Booker Prize documentation and a short film made by Irihapeti's children Peter Burger and Pirimia Burger;[3] and Becca and Cathasaigh spoke, again compellingly, about their project.[4] Keri's voice from a reading at the Library of Congress in 1985 closed the evening. Thanks to Keri's whānau, some books from Keri's library were offered to the audience; and a cup of tea with wonderful biscuits followed.

3. https://youtu.be/rElyN7K-4g4 Made for a 2005 seminar to celebrate 20 years since *the bone people* won the Booker prize.

4. In associated publicity, Philip Matthews wrote a feature article for *Stuff* https://www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/the-post-1022/20251025/281831469963073; Claire Mabey wrote an essay in *The Spinoff* https://thespinoff.co.nz/books/31-10-2025/youre-pulling-my-leg-forty-years-ago-today-keri-hulme-won-the-booker-prize; and Dale Hubbard interviewed Cathasaigh for *Waatea News* https://waateanews.com/2025/10/29/the-bone-people-reimagined-as-graphic-novel-and-animated-series/



A long view of the exhibition at Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery. The cabinet on the left included Keri's work, and the screen at the far end showed posters from the Women's Gallery. Image from the gallery's website.



Closeup of some of the Spiral books on display.

Spiral Collectives Projects 1975-2025 — Some Stories ('*Some Stories*') complements the other two books and the exhibitions, looking back and beginning to move forward. It has a spillover from *Spiral 8: Setting the [Work] Table*, with sections for Hilary Baxter; Allie Eagle;

& Lynne Ciochetto, last-born three of a group of 19 and equally beloved. Their sections couldn't fit in *Spiral 8*. Here, they fit well with their still-living contemporaries. The other stories selected are mostly from our open research project in *Medium*, established when founder Heather McPherson became ill, in 2016[5]: some have been lightly edited for republication.

There are four sections. The first has the three *Spiral 8* sections. The second is about significant moments in Spiral's life since 1974, when Heather McPherson started the Christchurch Women Artists Group. The third is about individuals who are still with us, and is partly inspired by the principle that 'Each woman must repeat her story at least once in her life, with passion and with hope, as a kind of inscription'[6]. The last one reflects on Spiral's relationship to screen work and screen workers.

Each chapter is intended to stand alone, to allow for casual browsing. As a result, if you're an enthusiastic reader and attempt a sustained engagement with any or all of the three books you may notice some repetition across some sections and chapters. You may also notice the inclusion of online comments or text messages here and there.

One aspect of the selection surprised me a little: my desire to incorporate stories about other groups whose work resonates with and has touched Spiral's, because some of them, like some of the individuals included, may be at risk of being under-documented and under-appreciated. These stories are about the Waiata Koa collective's contribution to *Karanga Karanga* in 1986 (added to Arapera Blank's section of *Spiral 8*); the Haeata Collective (added to Keri Kaa's section in *Spiral 8*) and a group of stories below, about: Miriam

5. Spiral Collectives 2016- https://medium.com/spiral-collectives
6. Nicole Brossard 'Access to writing: ritual of the written word' *Trivia 8* 1986.

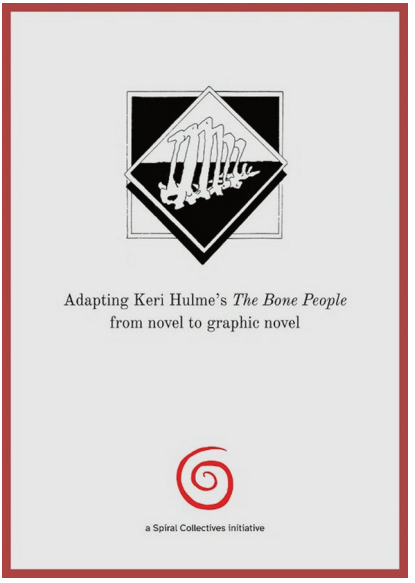
Saphira's long-lasting publishing initiative, Papers; the Media Collective, where Women's Gallery workers loved to play; Auckland Women's Community Video of the 1970s and 80s; our projects with Mokopōpaki from 2018; and the many webseries groups and individuals who separately and collectively transformed screen representation in Aotearoa in the second decade of the 21st century. Like *Circle* and *Broadsheet* magazines, all these initiatives deserve to be remembered with love and deep respect by more appropriate researchers and writers, and with much more detail than offered here.[7]

As with the other two books, I'm aware that the choices made and the emphases within those choices have been mine, with my limited lived experience, perceptions and language. Lots of room for disagreement. But I've done my very best to be accurate and to provide references to support my statements where necessary; as noted in *Spiral 8*, I've fallen in love with scholarship lite, thanks to one of the loveliest things about the privilege of working with generous Tim Jones at Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery, where these books are hosted online. That is, the books exist in a space which is social media as well as almost-conventional publication.

Finally, I just realised that we've achieved FIVE books this year, one for each Spiral decade. The first of the other two was a second edition of *Women's Film Festivals and #Womeninfilm Databases:a Handbook*, with a new preface and a third section that covers #DirectedByWomen #Aotearoa and its Spiral connections.[8] The second was *Adapting Keri Hulme's The Bone People from a novel to a graphic novel*, a detailed pitch document by Cathasaigh Ó Fiannachta, with support

7. https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together/broadsheet-collective
8. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/womens-film-festivals-and-womeninfilm-databases

from Andrew Todd, Becca Barnes, Madison Kelly and Keri Hulme's whānau.[9]



A comprehensive list of acknowledgments for *Spiral 8* and *Some Stories* is in the Introduction to *Spiral 8* but again our warmest thanks to all who've helped in any way with *Some Stories*; and especially to the estates of Heather McPherson and Keri Hulme, who relieved financial pressures on other aspects of Spiral's work in the last two years. Because of this, more time and energy was available for these books. Thank you also to all those who responded to requests for help on the Spiral Facebook page, for transcribing and for identification of individuals in just-surfaced photographs and footage.[10] A special thanks to my intrepid, much-loved and very patient fellow trustees: Cushla Parekowhai; Fran McGowan and

9. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/keri-hulme-the-bone-people-a-graphic-novel For quick reference, an overview of the project is at https://www.spiralcollectives.org/concept
10. https://www.facebook.com/groups/1304706129559197

Joanna Osborne; and our lovely friends and relations, including the generous denizens of St Gerard's Monastery Te Whanganui-a-Tara.

NOTES

'ATL' when used in captions refers to the Alexander Turnbull Library, which houses many of our archives. Tōhuto are used unless an earlier version omitted them. I wish now that I'd created an index for all three birthday books, but because these are .pdfs you can probably use the 'find' option to reach a person, collective, place or event that interests you.

ADDENDUM: CHARLOTTE MUSEUM SPIRAL BIRTHDAY TEA

A big thank you to Mokopōpaki's gang, led by legendary Tea-Lady Extraordinaire Cushla P, and to Prairie, whose very loving work included making the cake and running the scones-with-cream-and-jam station. The sandwiches gave homage to Heather McPherson's boiled chicken in some fillings and the vegan vege rice rolls and fruit platter were also pretty special. And thanks too to all those who sang 'Happy Birthday to Spiral' with vigour and harmonies!



Spiral's birthday cake, Charlotte Museum, October 2025.



Prairie, the cakemaker, cuts the cake.

Ngā mihi nui, ngā mihi maioha to Mokopōpaki, to the Charlotte Museum and to Heather's dear friends who came to the party, with a special mention for Jenny Rankine, who has so often supported Spiral as well as Heather!

Heather would have been quietly delighted, I think.

—Marian Evans, co-ordinator, 21 December 2025

Part One

SPIRAL 8 (CONTINUED)



HILARY BAXTER

1949-2013



Hilary Baxter at Brendan Beach Pukerua Bay. Photographer Stephen Mybre.

Taranaki, Whakatōhea, MacMillans of the Western Highlands. 'A grandmother, occasional writer, labourer and traveller'.[1]

1. Back cover and introduction Hilary Baxter *The Other Side of Dawn, Spiral* 1987 Juliet Raven and Jane Bowron eds.

HILARY BAXTER: NOTHING HUMDRUM ABOUT HILARY

Judith Galtry



Hilary Baxter, around 1987.

Hilary Baxter, a powerful but not widely recognised poet, was a Paekākāriki identity.

. . .

Hilary came from illustrious literary stock. Her parents, James K. Baxter and Jacqueline C. Baxter (née Sturm) were both prominent poets, while her paternal grandparents, Archibald and Millicent Baxter, were renowned pacifists. She described herself as 'descended, through her mother, from the Taranaki and Whakatōhea tribes and, through her father, from the MacMillans of the Western Highlands; [with] a strong affinity with these ancestral ties.'[1]



The Baxter family in the 1950s. James K. Baxter kneels at the centre of the photograph, with Jacquie standing at right rear beside James's parents, Archibald and Millicent Baxter. Jacquie and James's son John kneels in front of James, and their daughter Hilary kneels at right. James's brother, Terence, his wife, Lenore, and their children, Katherine, Helen, and Kenneth, are also pictured. https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/47027/the-baxter-family

1. Back cover, *The Other Side of Dawn*, 1987.

Soon after Hilary's birth on 18 June 1949, her father wrote to his parents: 'She seems so fragile and small that I am afraid to touch her. It is a great privilege to have a child to look after.'[2]

In 1952, renowned painter and family friend, Colin McCahon, gifted a painting of Mary with her child, Jesus, to the Baxter family to mark the McCahons becoming Hilary's godparents. Baxter reciprocated with a poem dedicated to the painter: 'To Colin McCahon'.[3]

In 1949, the same year that Hilary was born, Jacquie completed her B.A. A couple of years later, in 1952, Jacquie gave birth to John and gained a M.A. in Philosophy (first class honours), thought to be the first degree of its kind awarded to a Māori woman. This balancing of motherhood and study was no small achievement for a woman in postwar New Zealand. At the same time, Jim Baxter was completing his B.A. at Wellington's Victoria University and his teacher's qualification certificate at Wellington Teachers' College.

When Hilary was born, the Baxters lived in a cold flat in the Lower Hutt suburb of Belmont. A move to Wellington followed, first to Wilton, then the purchase of a home in Ngaio in 1956. By then, Jim's alcoholism was taking a huge toll on his family until he stopped drinking through AA in the mid-1950s.[4]

In 'Daughter' her father describes giving Hilary a shoulder-ride after picking her up from playcentre—

2. McKay, 1990: 121.
3. Simpson, 1995.
4. Conversation with John Baxter, 2020.

You'd ride like a jockey up Messines Road
Thumbs in my eyes ...
A red-suited penguin![5]

Hilary harks back to this happier time in one of her own poems, 'Reminiscence'.

I remember as a child
my father would carry me
high up on
his shoulders or head
I would suffocate
in the red knitted jumpsuit
and father wearing
his old gabardine coat
He would gallop through
the Karori bush
with me precariously above
across the paths banks
lost streams
made of wet brown leaves.[6]

By 1957, Jim and Jacquie had separated. But a year later, Jacquie took Hilary and John to India on a P&O Liner where they reunited with their father, who had a visiting fellowship with UNESCO. Back in New Zealand, at age 12, Hilary was removed from Onslow College

5. *Collected Poems,* 1979: 354-5.
6. *The Other Side of Dawn*, 1987: 20.

against her will and sent to Marycrest, a Catholic boarding school for 'wayward' girls near Ōtaki. Monthly visits were permitted, and her parents would usually take her out on those Sundays. But Hilary's unhappy experience at Marycrest affected her for the rest of her life. Her brother recalls Hilary as a 'lovely and protective older sister', at least until the time she left for boarding school. After then, he felt that he had lost her or, at least, the sister to whom he had once been close.[7]

Throughout her life, Hilary maintained a lively correspondence, including with old family friends such as the composer, Douglas Lilburn. Between 1964 and 1966, she wrote several letters to Lilburn. The first, written at Marycrest, addressed him as 'Dear Godfather' and thanked him for his Christmas gift of £5, which she had used to buy some 'chunky, tan-coloured wool to knit a jumper for myself.'[8] In a later letter, Hilary, by then living in Dunedin, asked the composer in his role as 'her godfather and a bachelor' for a loan: 'I've managed to incur several debts at different dress stores in Dunedin...and if I don't finish paying before Christmas I'll be definitely brought up in court... I'm too scared to tell Dad and Mum about all this and anyway I know he wouldn't help me out'.[9] Two collect telegrams followed seeking an urgent loan of £30, addressed to Lilburn's workplace at Victoria University's Music Department.[10] In a terse reply, the composer asked her to refrain from any more financial requests, reminding her of the help he and Charles Brasch had already given her.

7. Conversation with John Baxter, July 2020.
8. Lilburn's correspondence, 26 August 1964.
9. Lilburn's correspondence, 4 December 1966.
10. Lilburn's correspondence, 28 December 1966.

Spending beyond her means became a lifelong pattern for Hilary. Down on her luck and with debts mounting, she would approach friends and acquaintances for a loan. Sometimes, she held true to her guarantee of repayment. But even many of those sympathetic to her plight eventually became irritated, and sometimes even alienated, by these requests.

When she was 17, Hilary rejoined her family in Dunedin where her father held Otago University's Burns Fellowship. A brief stint at St. Philomena's Catholic Girls School as a day pupil was abandoned for a series of boyfriends and adventures. Around this time, Hilary underwent a harrowing and life-changing experience: she was gang raped by a group of bikies in an event which caused significant and lasting trauma.[11]

Despite her transitory and challenging early life, Hilary's spirit remained strong. Fearless about expressing her beliefs, she did not shy away from society's rejects. In his eulogy, the publisher Roger Steele describes how 'Hilary was attracted to society's outcasts and the downtrodden'—

> During the 1960s, she 'half-adopted a wild-child persona, but to an extent had it thrust upon her. She was a product of the '60s — when a new order was emerging, and it was time to challenge the old. She was a rebel, with a cause.[12]

11. Conversation with John Baxter, July 2020.
12. Roger Steele, eulogy for Hilary, 2013.

In 1968, Hilary gave birth to a daughter, Stephanie Te Kare Baxter. Soon after, she was admitted to the Waikari adolescent mental health unit where she was given several doses of LSD: an experimental treatment being carried out in Dunedin at that time. This 'therapy' led to religious hallucinations. It was also the beginning of her involvement with the psychiatric services, according to her brother.

Hilary had just turned 19 when Stephanie was born. In a poem entitled 'Lioness,' her mother describes how Hilary, a former bikie, transformed into a protective mother. Like a lioness, she was ever alert to signs of danger.[13] Jacquie brought up Stephanie, formally adopting her when she was two years old. In 1970, Hilary gave birth to a son, Stephen Joseph, but later finding herself unable to cope, gave him up for adoption; a source of great sadness for her.[14]

Jim Baxter died of a coronary thrombosis on 22 October 1972, aged 46. A devastated Hilary was 23 years old at the time.

13. *Dedications*, 1996: 42.
14. Conversation with John Baxter, July 2020.



James K. Baxter's tangihanga, Jerusalem, Whanganui, with Jacquie and Hilary Baxter sitting next to the coffin. Westra, Ans, 1936-2023: Photographs. Ref: AW-0707. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand /records/38425661.

The year after her father's death, Hilary wrote a poem entitled 'October 1972' dedicated to him—

My joy is a tribal joy
My loneliness is strong loneliness
and my sorrow
is pathways of flowers
leading to the river
where the taniwha moves
And the moreporks called
for a barefoot father
My father
disciple of the Māori Christ
I hear an old man singing
and there is sunlight in his hair[15]

15. *The Other Side of Dawn*: 32.

THE POET

Hilary began writing at 14. In the 1960s, her poems were published in university and counter-culture magazines, including *Earwig* and *Salient*, which published 'North Winds Blowing' and 'For You Know Who' in 1969.

Her only collection of poems, *The Other Side of Dawn,* was published in 1987 by the Wellington-based Spiral Women's Collective. Her brother, John, illustrated its cover.[16]

Spiral editors, Juliet Raven and Jane Bowron, describe how Hilary - 'a grandmother, occasional writer, labourer and traveller... [spoke] for voices that are seldom heard in our community: 'the people of the invisible dark'.[17]

Among them were the junkies of Auckland's Grafton in the 1960s and the world of New Zealand's bikie gangs, written from an insider's perspective. Hilary's trajectory away from her literary lineage towards being a poet in her own right is described thus—

> She sees what she has written as recalling many stages of her life to date; moving out from the shadow of her literary background and parentage: – the writer J C Sturm and the late poet-playwright, James K Baxter – into her own creativity.[18]

16. *The Other Side of Dawn* can be read online through the Christchurch Art Gallery https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/media/uploads/2024_01/OtherSideOfDawn.pdf
17. Introduction, *The Other Side of Dawn*: 3.
18. Back cover, *The Other Side of Dawn.*

Following her death, the Poetry Archive of New Zealand Aotearoa (PANZA) paid tribute to Hilary—

> The poems show the influence of American minimalist and free verse forms of poetry such as the Beat Movement of the 1950s that used Asian forms like Zen haiku and the I Ching/Book of Changes.[19]

THE WANDERER

Eternally restless, Hilary lived in many parts of Aotearoa and Australia: Dunedin, Auckland, Cape Rēinga, the Whanganui River, and Darwin. She also worked on prawn boats in Western Australia and as a cleaner, labourer and barmaid.

By 1987, when *The Other Side of Dawn* was published in Wellington, she was living in Darwin, having developed 'an unexpected attachment' to this northernmost Australian city. Several poems evoke the strange mix of intensity and listlessness of life in the extreme heat and humidity of Australia's far north and the foreignness of its 'stingers and sea wasps' and 'the great wondrous Timor Sea'.[20] She dedicates one poem to Johnno, her then Australian lover and father of her third child, Jesse. The last verse of 'For Johnno' reads:

> And sultry nights incognito
> Nights derelict at the pub
> Nights the roughest
> I have known and I

19. 'Tribute to Hilary Baxter', 2014: 13.
20. 'Darwin', *The Other Side of Dawn*: 4.

A wanderer from way back[21]

Jesse was born in 1989 in Sydney. Soon after, Hilary moved into a special unit for women suffering postpartum depression. Here she was able to bond with Jesse in a way that had not been possible with her previous two children.[22]

Despite her peripatetic life, Hilary reported that, '[h]er feelings for Aotearoa are, however, very strong. She knows there will, one day, be a final homecoming'.[23] And indeed, there was: to Paekākāriki where, off and on, she spent a significant portion of her adult life.

For a time, Hilary, Johnno and their young son, Jesse, tried to make family life work in Paekākāriki. On summer evenings, they would often sit on the seat at the end of Ocean Road watching the sea, with Jesse in his pushchair. These weathered-looking parents, who had both led unmistakably hard lives, and their young son seemed an unlikely but poignant trio. No matter the strength of her feelings, motherhood was never going to be smooth sailing for Hilary.

Johnno worked briefly as a conductor on the Wellington trains, where he soon became known for his cheeky, Ocker manner. On boarding the train, many female passengers, whatever their age, were surprised to learn that they looked 'as fresh as a bunch of spring flowers' or some other such kindly meant flannel.

21. *The Other Side of Dawn*: 44-45.
22. Conversation with John Baxter, July 2020.
23. *The Other Side of Dawn*, back cover.

PAEKĀKĀRIKI: HILARY'S FINAL PERCH

The Paekākāriki seascape — dominated by Kāpiti Island and, to the south, the sloping hills of Pukerua Bay — was a strong reference point for Hilary. This was where her mother, brother, daughter, and whānau lived.

One of Hilary's poems 'May she at the heart' refers to Paekākāriki—

> May she at the heart
> Of your true dream move
> So, I, in the dark shunting
> Paekākāriki night
> Turn no more to the candlelight[24]

The 'dark shunting Paekākāriki night' conjures up the heavy goods trains that run past the village, a frequent occurrence in those days before trucks carried much of the freight previously taken by train. Until 1983, Paekākāriki was also the end of the electrified line, a noisy shunting yard where train carriages and engines were regularly unhitched and reassembled.

'Hils', as she was sometimes known, was a distinctive feature of the Paekākāriki landscape. I first met her in the mid-1970s when she was living in a cottage on a steep section at The Parade's southern end. She arrived, the worse for wear, at my friend's house late one night and began to recite her poems while swigging from a bottle of gin. She herself possessed tons of bottle and was a powerful, larger-

24. *The Other Side of Dawn*: 34.

than-life performer. That night, she told of how when she was young, her father, in a fit of rage, once dragged her by the hair through the house.

Rain or shine, Hilary strode along the seafront from various rented abodes in the village. These frequent walks from home to the shops or the hotel usually involved picking up any rubbish on the way, an indication of her care for the local environment. Hilary also had a keen awareness of, and empathy for, the less fortunate in society, those who had been washed up and abandoned by the tide, like the plastic, cans and litter she collected on her walks. This heightened social awareness harked back to the strongly held pacifist and communal Māori values on both sides of her family.

Her living conditions were usually lean. Many a local has a story of Hilary approaching them for a small loan for food or to use their phone to call Jesse in Australia. Trans-Tasman toll calls were costly then, and her requests were often met with refusal.

Hilary was a regular traveller on the 'unit' between Paekākāriki and Wellington. In later years, she took to hitchhiking to Paraparaumu to do her shopping, often appearing lost in the bright lights of Coastlands mall. Several Paekākāriki locals have stories of picking Hilary up from the main road, where she would stand with her thumb out, tall and long-legged in her leather jacket and jeans. Biblical references peppered her effusive thanks for these rides. Jesus, she proclaimed, was central to her life.

Paekākāriki poet Apirana Taylor tells of Hilary in her earlier, wilder, bikie days. Once they were busted for smoking dope on their return

from the Māori Artists and Writers Hui, held at Tauranga's Hūria Marae in 1980. When confronted by the police, Hilary flew into one of her eloquent and litigious rants concerning their individual rights, as well as the general oppressions of society. Apirana was amused to witness the attending police officers beating a hasty retreat, having been verbally whipped by this virago. He described—

> the impressive dignity and calm of the Māori elders who came to the police station. It was worth getting in trouble just to hear Hilary in full flight.

Once charges were laid, Hilary harangued Matiu Rata of the Mana Motuhake Party for months to have these lifted, to no avail.[25]

Paekākāriki local Paul Callister describes Hilary calling out to him across Ocean Road on a grey and blustery northerly day. Apologising profusely for putting him, 'a man of facts', wrong about the date of Jesus' second coming, she proffered, 'in the spirit of seeking forgiveness,' a revised and, this time, certain date. Another Paekākāriki resident recalls Hilary crossing The Parade to talk and pulling open her leather jacket to show a bottle of clear-coloured fluid nestled in its inner pocket. This, she claimed, contained 'what one might suspect to be gin, but is actually water.' Whatever the bottle's contents; the smell of alcohol was inescapable for Hilary struggled with alcoholism for most of her life.

A complex and often confronting personality, Hilary tended to polarise people. Yet many also felt strangely protective towards this

25. Conversation with Apirana Taylor, July 2020.

unique, far-sighted, articulate, but afflicted, character. Once you got beyond the often-chaotic surface there was a deep humanity, intelligence and kindness to Hilary.



Hilary (seated in red top) at an exhibition opening of her brother John Baxter's work, Paekākāriki's One Eye Gallery, 1998. The woman in the centre, with spectacles, is one of the editors of The Other Side of Dawn, Juliet Raven with her daughter Te Raukura to the right, back to camera. https://Paekākāriki.nz/diamond-in-the-rough-one-eye-gallery/

Hilary had huge hurts and losses in her life. One of these was losing Jesse to his Australian dad, Johnno, followed by years with little or no contact. Hilary's formidable litigious energies were useful once again, and many an unsuspecting local was regaled with the details of her case to have Jesse returned to New Zealand through the Hague Convention. Another crippling blow came in 2009 with Stephanie's sudden death, in her early forties. A couple of months later, Jacquie died. Already ill, Jacquie was heartbroken at the death

of her treasured granddaughter who, by then, had also become her main caregiver.

The Other Side of Dawn includes Hilary's poem to Jacquie, 'To My Mother'—

> The moon lowered itself
> round and gold hugely
> to your window
> Let you see its caverns of ice
> And you knew
> that in watching
> too long it would
> burst through the window
> to take you back. [26]

Rising house prices and the changing nature of the village meant that Hilary could not afford to live in Paekākāriki. Kind friends put her up and, for a brief period, she camped out at the corner of Wellington and Ocean Roads using a borrowed tent, cooking gear and raincoat. In early 2012 she found a small flat in Ocean Road, but, not long after, she was diagnosed with inoperable cancer and given only a short time to live. After a cut on her leg became infected, sepsis set in. Hilary died, aged 64, in Wellington Hospital on 19 November 2013.

On her death, Hilary achieved her wish to reunite with her tribe—

26. *The Other Side of Dawn*: 10.

Oh people of my ancestry
remember your Arohanui
Your brown dove
Astray in a strange land
one day of cold
I will return to the tribe
never leave again.[27]

Paekākāriki's St Peter's Hall overflowed with mourners at her memorial service held a week later, on 25 November 2013. Her son Jesse came from over The Ditch and spoke movingly of his happiness at reuniting with his mother, and of his love for her.

Hilary's strengths were enormous. But her life was mostly one of struggle of the kind that would have overwhelmed most people—

> [H]er early loss of innocence, encounters with violence, the loss of children, brushes with mental illness — she wrestled with stuff and demons most of us never have to. But no matter what life threw at her, she would always get up the next morning ready to face the next challenge. She was undefeatable, until the end.[28]

Jack McDonald, Hilary's grandson, read an affecting elegy penned by Paekākāriki poet and friend, Michael O'Leary. It concludes:

27. 'I sing to myself', *The Other Side of Dawn*: 46.
28. Roger Steele, 'Eulogy for Hilary', 2013.

Through the dark forest of your
imagination, and the light
Of your Lord leading you towards and
away from the abyss
It's difficult to say, but we all loved you
in our own way.[29]

In sum, there was nothing humdrum about Hilary. She stood out in every way.

Hilary is buried at Whenua Tapu Cemetery in Pukerua Bay.



Thanks to John Baxter and Roger Steele for their contributions.

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29. Michael O'Leary, 'Sonnet to Hilary Baxter', 2013.

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HILARY & SPIRAL & JULIET RAVEN

It was a delight to see, in Judith Galtry's essay, a photograph that included Juliet Raven, a Kidsarus 2 worker sometimes based in the Women's Gallery; and the co-editor of *The Other Side of Dawn*. Juliet, who loved Jacquie, Hilary, her brother John and Stephanie, suggested publishing Hilary's poems.[1] (Some of us already knew Hilary from other contexts, like Ngāti Pōneke; or in Ōtepoti Dunedin; I know I loved her glorious laugh and remember her tenderness towards others.)

Back then we had royalties from *the bone people*'s co-publication by others, and were free to do what we liked without applying for funding. So we said YES to Juliet and her mate Jane, and on publication brought readers to Pōneke to launch *The Other Side of Dawn* and Saj's *Amazon Songs.* They read and we recorded and recently the Alexander Turnbull Library digitised the audiotapes. It was another

1. See also 'Allie, Juliet, Kāterina Mataira's *Ka Haere A Mereana Ki Te Kura*; & Gaylene' in Allie Eagle's section, below.

delight to listen to Stephanie, Hilary and Jacquie read.[2] (Some of the readers aren't on the poster, including Jacquie and Frances Cherry; some weren't recorded or were absent; and there were others present who spoke but may not have read, like Tungia Baker and Keri Kaa.)

2. Alexander Turnbull Library OHC–003764. Hilary's reading is unlisted at this link on Spiral's YouTube site https://youtu.be/hPP6-vqIRRY.

Spiral invites you
to a series of readings
to celebrate
the publication of

Hilary Baxter's *The other side of dawn*
Kathleen Gallagher's *Tara* (Nag's Head Press)
Saj's *Amazon Songs*

and the work of some of the writers
who have supported us

3pm Saturday 5 December
Hilary Baxter, Kathleen Gallagher, Stephanie Baxter, Janet Potiki, Rangitunoa Black, Hinewirangi

10.30pm Saturday 5 December
Saj, Heather McPherson, Hinewirangi, Rangitunoa Black, Alison Laurie, Kathleen Gallagher

7.45pm Sunday 6 December
Maaka Jones, Joy Cowley, Bub Bridger, Fiona Kidman

All at Circa
1 Harris Street, Wellington
Admission free, koha (cash or kind) welcome
Enquiries 859 540

Nau Mai Haere Mai

Poster paste-up.

HILARY & STEPHEN MYHRE

I first met Hilary 1975 in Wellington. She introduced me to Jacquie and John. The photos were taken at my home at Brendan Beach Pukerua Bay. Unsure of date but must have been c1986 or 1985. Hilary used to come to stay sometimes when the city got too much. She would sleep and I would feed her brown rice and vegetables cooked over my open fire. Just two or three days and she would be ready to go back— Stephen Myhre, carver & sculptor.



Hilary Baxter at Brendan Beach Pukerua Bay. Photographer Stephen Myhre.

ALLIE EAGLE



Allie Eagle Self with heart on trial *1977. Watercolour on board, felt pen heart 755 x 565 mm. ATL C-009-023.*

Since last September I've been painting colour/movement essences of experiences I live and feelings I receive. I make

the paintings up as I go and I get surprises. Sometimes when they seem to be making themselves up I wonder where they come from. I agonist a bit too, because in their primitive spontaneous way of coming out I do not experience them with others at the time of 'birthing'. They are painted alone, then they are shared.

I imagine creative activity being done in trust of collective dream/unconscious/awareness with others, as tribal integral/non-private people might do this. I've worked with other women here looking for a shared thread.

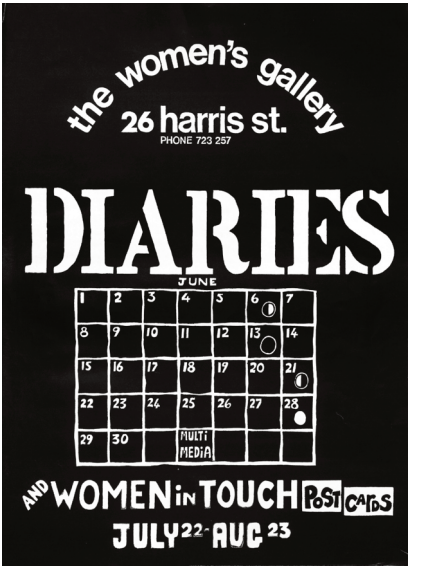
But something in making my 'own' paintings has to mean I embrace solitude as a source of life. When I've made pictures of women's movement struggles I've articulated feelings I know I share with other women. But the making process is still the same as that which goes into the abstract paintings, one does it in quiet and solitude. I was going to say 'alone'. But I always feel there is the presence of a friend. A loved one, nature and something else too. Some deep and gentle encouraging process that could be as much, but I think is more, than myself.

Personal note

I live in a bach in the bush by the sea
And that's all you need to know.

— Allie Eagle in Women's Gallery *Opening Show* catalogue January 1980.

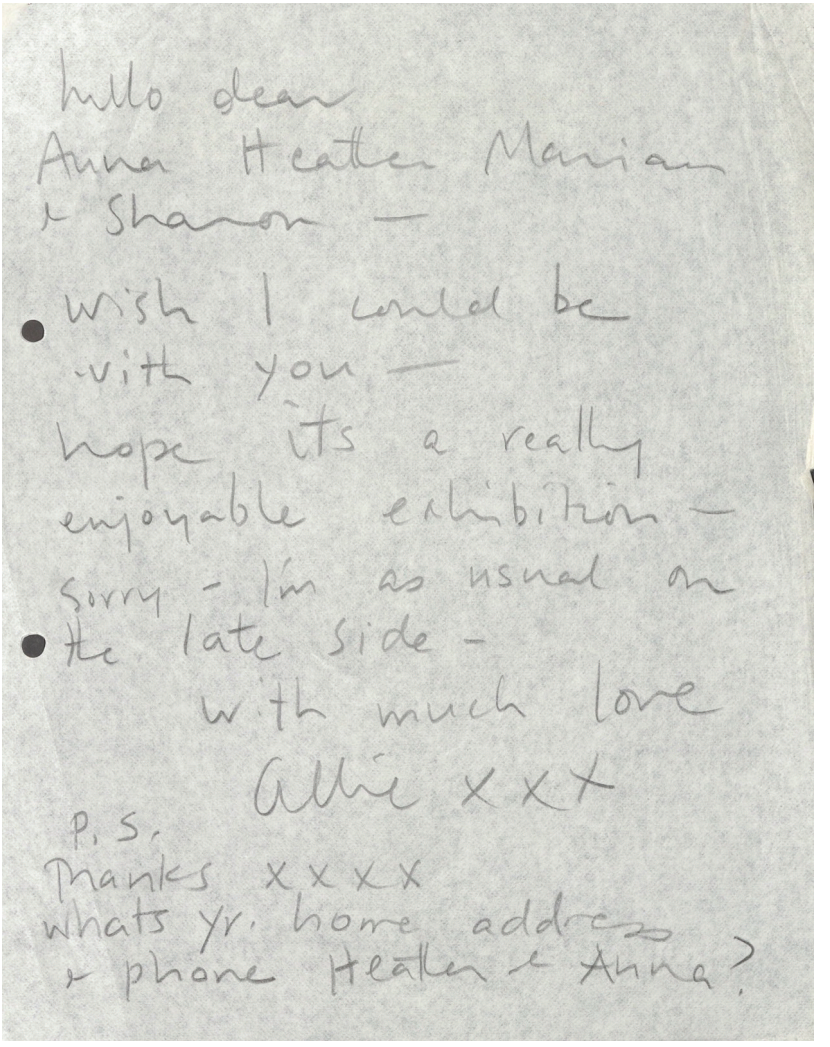
ALLIE & 'DIARIES' (1980)



Diaries *poster 1980 designed by Anna Keir & Marian Evans and printed by Anna at the Media Collective, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*

Just a few months after the Women's Gallery *Opening Show*, Allie's

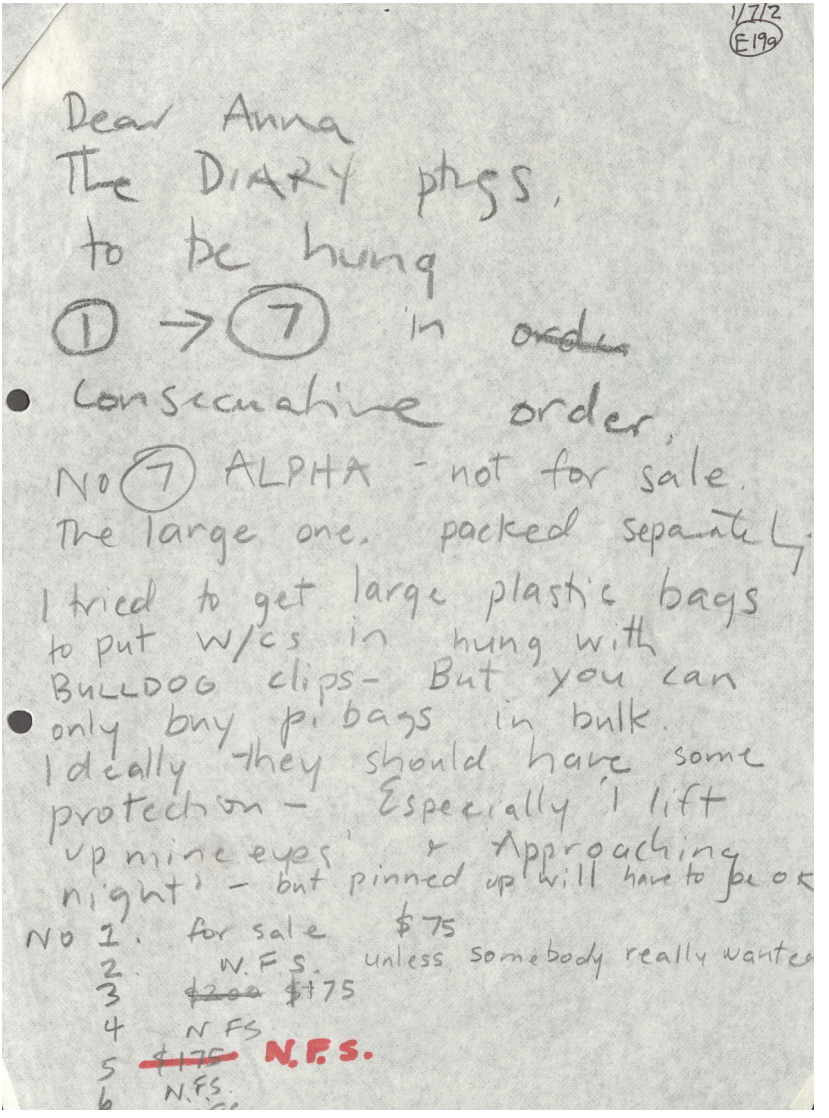
Diaries work confirmed that her direction had changed, as she moved away from lesbian feminism.



hello dear
Anna Heather Marian
& Sharon —

- wish I could be
with you —
hope its a really
enjoyable exhibition —
sorry - Im as usual on
- the late side -
with much love
Allie xxx

P.S.
Thanks xxxx
whats yr. home address
& phone Heather & Anna?



1/7/2
E19g

Dear Anna
The DIARY pkgs.
to be hung
① → ⑦ in ~~order~~
Consecutive order,
No ⑦ ALPHA - not for sale.
The large one. packed separately
I tried to get large plastic bags
to put w/cs in hung with
BULLDOG clips - But you can
only buy p. bags in bulk.
Ideally they should have some
protection - Especially 'I lift
up mine eyes' & 'Approaching
night' - but pinned up will have to be ok
NO 1. for sale $75
2 N.F.S. unless somebody really wanted
3 ~~$200~~ $175
4 N.F.S.
5 ~~$175~~ N.F.S.
6 N.F.S.



Allie Eagle Diaries *watercolour 2. Photographer Mary Bailey 1980. Women's Gallery exhibition slides featuring Allie Eagle's work. Ref: PA12-5335_09. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand Te Whanganui-a-Tara Aotearoa.*

Text—

Did painting of the puriris up at the lake.[1]
ANGRY WORDS
MY LACK OF sensitivity
I fell over in mud trying to retrieve the situation

Prayer

1st July

Needing time apart to think on a daily routine working/landscaping at Lake Wainamu. Now that the tracks are mostly made and the Diary must be done very soon. = concentrate.

think

Beyond self-expression —

McCahon said all of his work was to do with the steps of Jesus.

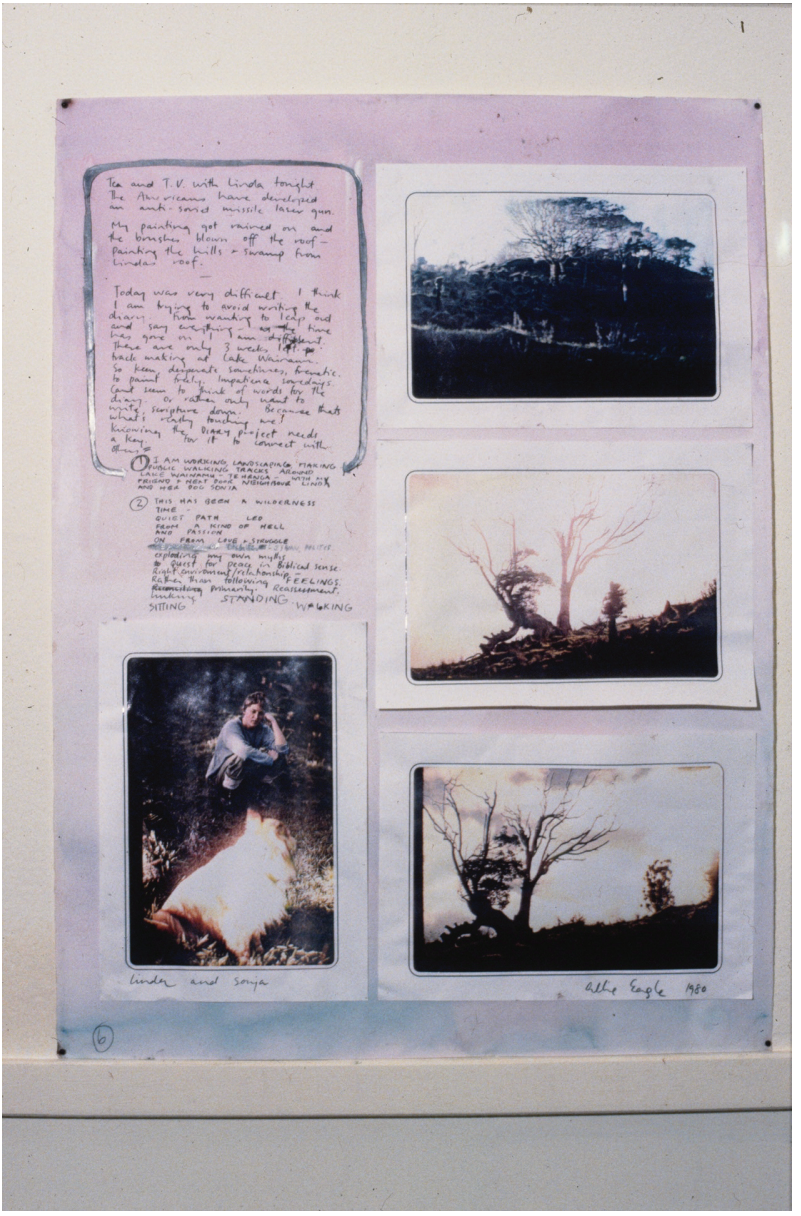
Remembering the pressure not to be self-interested abstract painter but a painter for women — and how I resolved that.

Thinking of what it means to be led in the spirit.

Rembrandt drawing Jesus with Martha & Mary.

Once I got rid of (nearly) all my books by men. But I kept the Rembrandt drawings.

1. Lake Wainamu is the largest natural lake in the Waitākere Ranges. It was formed by the damming of deep stream valleys by sand blown inland from the coast.



Allie Eagle Diaries *watercolour 6. Photographer Mary Bailey 1980. Women's Gallery exhibition slides featuring Allie Eagle's work. Ref: PA12-5335_04. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand Te Whanganui-a-Tara Aotearoa.*

. . .

Text—

Tea and T.V. with Linda tonight.[2] The Americans have developed an anti-soviet missile laser gun.

My painting got rained on and the brushes blown off the roof — painting the hills & swamp from Lindas roof.

Today was very difficult. I think I am trying to avoid writing the diary. From wanting to leap and say everything — as the time has gone on I I am diffident. There are only 3 weeks left track making at Lake Wainamu. So keen, desperate sometimes, frenetic, to paint freely. Impatience some days. Can't seem to think of words for the diary. Or rather only want to write scripture down. Because that's what's really touching me.

1 I AM WORKNG, LANDSCAPING, MAKING PUBLIC WALKING TRACKS AROUND LAKE WAINAMU - TE HENGA WITH MY FRIEND AND NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOUR LINDA AND HER DOG SONIA.

2 THIS HAS BEEN A WILDERNESS TIME —
QUIET PATH LED
FROM A KIND OF HELL
AND PASSION

2. Linda Landis was the model for Allie's *Stone Belly Woman 1979 (SPIRIT BODY LAND connections)* Plate 18 1-4 *AWPB*.

ON FROM LOVE AND STRUGGLE
Exploding my own myths
Quest for peace in Biblical sense
Right environment/ relationship —
rather than following FEELINGS:
primarily Reassessment.
Linking SITTING STANDING WALKING

ALLIE EAGLE & I (1977-2022)

Marian Evans



Women's Gallery 26 Harris Street Te Whanganui-a-Tara January 1980. L-R Marian Evans, Allie Eagle, Nancy Peterson, Juliet Batten, Anna Keir, Heather McPherson, Bridie Lonie, Keri Hulme. In front Brigid Eyley & Claudia Pond Eyley. Absent Helen Rockel, Joanna Margaret Paul, Kanya Stewart, Tiffany Thornley. Photograph Fiona Clark & Women's Gallery

I've left this section till last. In a week, the events around the Spiral celebratory exhibition at the Charlotte Museum will be over, and

Spiral 8 may or may not have been launched. And Allie is complicated. I don't know where to start and what to include. (Thanks to Khady Harvey I know where to end.) Two other Spirals, Cushla Parekowhai and Joanna Osborne are much better placed than I am to write this, but unavailable.[1] I thought that it would be easier once I'd organised the second-to-last, Joanna Margaret Paul. But no.

I can't remember the first time I saw Allie's work, before we met. Perhaps it was her mandala in Joanna's *A Season's Diaries* project in 1977. Or *was it* a mandala? A few years back we couldn't agree about that.

And until I re-read Allie's letter, included below in 'Allie, Heather & *i do not cede*' — I wasn't sure about when we first met. According to Allie, it was in 1979 at the United Women's Convention in Kirikiriroa Hamilton. I was wearing a bright yellow PVC raincoat, she used to remind me — I can't remember what she was wearing. And that's where I also first saw Allie's *Self With Heart on Trial*; and bought it because I loved it. Back then the painting's heart was much more vividly scarlet. (It faded on the wall at our place and has further faded in its home in the climate-controlled Alexander Turnbull Library; I was tempted to touch it up when the file arrived to include here.)

I still love *Self With Heart on Trial*. And it is just the right work to illustrate our relationship, which ended very lovingly with text and voice messages, shortly before she died. Our hearts were always on

1. Joanna's beautiful obituary for Allie is in *Art New Zealand*: 'Allie Eagle 1949-2022', *Art New Zealand* 183, Spring 2022: 55-57.

trial when together, and from time to time we were too exasperated to continue to communicate.

(The year before, Allie had exhibited a different kind of 'trial' piece, her *Rape Trial* installation, in 3 *Women Artists* CSA Gallery Ōtautahi Christchurch 1978.[2])

2. The other two artists were Jane Zusters and Anna Keir. See Juliet Batten 'Emerging from Underground: The Women's Art Movement in New Zealand' *Spiral* 5: 24-28, 26-27.
https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/media/uploads/2023_06/Spiral_5.pdf





Empathy for Rape Trial Victim: for judges men and boys. For clear viewing/lie on mattress/lookup/WARNING!/DANGER! *1978. Steel table was made from unistrut modular bolted aluminum with rubber cushioning for the plate glass top. The tubular/alluminium shaft had black plasticine and sump oil over it. It squashed a mixture of eggs, spaghetti and jelly, and penetrated the underlying space, where the outline of a woman was drawn on a slashed mattress.Glimpses of other three-dimensional work* Live Limbs that Buttress the Patriarchy *appear in the background.*



Empathy for Rape Trial Victim: for judges men and boys. For clear viewing/lie on mattress/lookup/WARNING!/DANGER! 1978.
Allie on the mattress.

The next time we met, it was at the steps to a little beach near Ponsonby. She was staying or living at a radical lesbian household where as a heterosexual married woman with two sons I was not welcome. She was late of course, and slightly grumpy, as I remember. I think we talked about whether she wanted Anna Keir and Bridie Lonie and me to continue working towards a travelling exhibition for her and Joanna Margaret Paul. She didn't.

The next time after that was at the Women's Gallery. She took my photograph.



Someone else took a photograph of us out with Anna Keir, one of the gallery founders (with Bridie and me), who'd been part of the Christchurch Women Artists Group, had worked with Kidsarus 2 and was wonderful at being-supportive and getting-things-done, even when she would have liked to be making her own work.



Willis Street Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington January 1980 L-R Anna Keir, Marian Evans, Allie Eagle, part of Nancy Peterson. Photographer unknown.

Yet another photo, of Allie alongside her own work in the gallery, is a bit grim. As well as her stunning watercolours, she'd installed a hospital mattress and other objects on the floor. It was the first time I heard her stories about her incarceration in a psychiatric hospital, and about her mother's. Her mother came to the opening, apparently heavily medicated and sad, with a thermos of tea and a picnic for Allie. They picnicked on the hospital mattress and offered sustenance to others.



Woman in white [Allie Eagle] standing beside painting. *Photographed by Fiona Clark for Women's Gallery Jan 1980. Slides relating to Women's Gallery exhibitions featuring the work of Allie Eagle. Ref: PA12-5335_11. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand Te Whanganui-a-Tara Aotearoa. (Allie changed into white clothes for the opening.)*

But, as always with Allie, though it was often intense, it wasn't all grim. Although she was beginning to draw away from the women's art movement, she participated fully. She was happy to be around her beloved friend Heather McPherson, with whom she'd been on

adventures that included the *Spiral 1* collective and the women's art movement projects in Ōtautahi Christchurch. She stayed up most of one night to support Bridie Lonie as she completed her own installation and participated enthusiastically in every conversation she could find. I can remember fragments: we were on The Terrace so she could photograph sides of meat inside a refrigerated truck one evening. And one afternoon we went to the Women's Rest Rooms on the corner of Harris Street where they had individual bath rooms, to get clean. (Those installations were grubby work in that old building that was never clean however hard anyone worked.) As so often, we had different memories of the night we lay in our baths, exhausted, and talking through the wall. Allie was sure it never happened but I am sure it did because later I laughed at my naivety. 'You wouldn't want a relationship with an old girl like me', called Allie through the wall. Silence. Then 'Allie, we already *have* a relationship', I answered. Extended silence. Then each of us added water to our baths. In recent years, Allie claimed, yet again, that this could never have happened, because back then she already had a complicated love life.

Anyway, over all the time we knew each other and loved each other deeply neither of us ever (again?) considered becoming lovers. Allie's world had changed and regardless we each knew it wasn't for us. With our hearts forever 'on trial' we had intense good times and intense disagreements, sometimes because she wanted to teach me about things that didn't interest me and I wanted her to teach me things — like better framing skills when I used a camera — that she didn't want to teach me; and sometimes because she was late and/or unreliable and I was impatient and grumpy and wanted her to get stuff done after she'd agreed to do it. There were long periods when we didn't see each other or correspond or speak. But then one of us would visit the other and all ill-feeling would be forgotten. How I loved staying in her bus at Te Henga, and, sometimes, in her house;

I made my first short film lying in her bath as the muslin curtains across the bathroom's french doors floated to and fro in the open doorway.

One day, I'll go to ATL to look at and listen to the mini-DV footage Juanita Ketchel and I took of Allie re-visiting Porirua Hospital; and the long interview of Allie's mother Lorna that Allie and I filmed in Ōtaki. Did these tapes survive into a digital format? I hope so. I miss you, dear Allie.

ALLIE & HEATHER & 'I DO NOT CEDE' (2021)

Allie Eagle, Heather McPherson, Joanna Paul & Marian Evans



Allie Eagle Heather McPherson *Watercolour, charcoal, crayon on paper 73 x 54cm 1979 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. (D-008-030). Photographed by Adrienne Martyn.*

JOANNA & ALLIE'S SPIRITUALITY

Joanna Margaret Paul, writing to Allie in 'Letters from room to room', offers a useful summary of Allie's spiritual commitments—

> During the changes in your life your spirituality has found different voices. Your upbringing was baptist? I knew you first deeply imbued with zen. And we both read Jung. Then came the pursuit of the 'mother goddess'. Now a return to fundamentalist & charismatic christianity. Each stage characterized by absolute conviction & a determination to share it.[1]

Allie's 'absolute conviction & a determination to share it' caused ongoing conflict with some, especially with Heather McPherson, and Allie included one of Heather's poems about this in 'Letters from room to room'. Heather continued to write poems on this topic and give them to Allie. Their love for each other transcended this conflict but its effects continued after Heather's death.

FROM ONE OF HEATHER'S UNPUBLISHED POEMS

(ii)
Afterwards...
in bobbing
candle
eyes

1. Joanna Paul and Allie Eagle 'Letters from room to room' *A Women's Picture Book; 25 Women Artists of Aotearoa (New Zealand)* compiled, edited and with afterwords by Marian Evans, Bridie Lonie, Tilly Lloyd — a Women's Gallery/ Spiral group GP Books 1988 (*AWPB*): 79-98, 82.

we
tiptoe
over
old scars
& spars
about God
when you say
Christ & I say
Goddess
& red smudgy
cheeks cut off
from communities
once shared we
stare past each others'
unfamiliar faces
crowding heady memoirs
we don't say
boo to
but float over
pitfalls & assumptions
about whose story
lightens
our edgy
flickering darks[2]

When I asked Allie if the portrait of Heather which heads this chapter could be the cover image for Heather's *i do not cede* chapbook,[3] she didn't respond for a while. Eventually I received an essay which had taken Allie two days to write. She even typed it, unusual

2. With thanks to Joanna Osborne.
3. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/i-do-not-cede-by-heather-mcpherson-2022

for her, so I believe she intended it to be part of the archive. Here it is.

RE: HEATHER'S CHAPBOOK *I DO NOT CEDE*: AND THE INVITATION TO USE MY SELF PORTRAIT OF HEATHER (ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY) AS THE COVER.

> Very Dear Marian, **thank you** for your patience with me. I have been slow to come back to you.
>
> You have once again been **slogging away** to create a publication for **Heather**. I appreciate you have worked so hard to keep her work from obscurity. You have kept your commitment to her. What a faithful friend!
>
> I am **tender** about you doing that. I am touched how you have stayed with her archive knowing what a **huge** task it was going to be for you and knowing your own workload for your own publication looms and will take you a lot of energy.
>
> **Your kind well-crafted bio** for me is wonderful too, **thank you** and would have sat well with that suite.
>
> **I am so sorry**, though, after careful consideration, (I spent the whole of Saturday writing and thinking about Heath's poems) **I have decided this is not the publication I can 'cover'.**
>
> As clearly and as well as I remember the reasons for these musings of Heather's written at the end of her life and recalling what we shared years ago, I am clear about the reasons they are not in my raison d'etre now.

I couldn't give you a clear NO when you asked about the portrait of Heather (as I did about a possible image of X which would have distracted from my painting project on Kohine) because I hadn't really given any thinking time to wrestle with this alternative proposition. I do apologize for that as I know you are organised in what you are doing, and a publication doesn't just happen overnight. And this will be a delay. I spent all of Saturday thinking and writing about this, dear Marian and it was helpful to see Heather's ekphrastic poems which I do appreciate, but they do stir up old pain of 'those times' as well highlight Heather's and my differences.

MY RESPONSE TO HEATHER'S *I NOT CEDE* POEMS

To tell you the truth: I felt a little ill. Shocked at how Heath's words took me back to those conflicting times, with Heather and with Morrigan and other women in those early 70's and then of the disparity as well as tenderness between Heather and I after I had become a Christian.

Conversely, with respect, again, I am totally amazed, again at how she crafted with words and found her way to cobble her ideas of this time. I have re-read and re-read! Gosh!

Dear Marian, your inclusion of me in these projects over the years has both benefitted and challenged me.

Sometimes this process has been helpful in redefining my own boundaries and discerning critical issues about telling myself the truth and discerning who is benefitting from all of these exploits.

THIS INCLUSION OF ME HERE IN THIS INSTANCE WOULD NOT BENEFIT ME

I think that I could not, in all faith feel all right about lying down in the pages of this book anymore that the Māori kuia would have liked to have lain with Sharon's piece in *A Woman's Picture Book*. (I am dealing with women daily who have come out of all sorts of torn relationships where pornography and sexual license and ambiguity and so called "freedom" has led them into bondage.)

And considering this, I would feel unhappy about Heather's book of lesbian erotica bearing my work and name and bio endorsing her work. As well-crafted as it is. It would mean compromise for me.

(I have *the tongue of the friend who wants you whole.)*

My integrity as a celibate Christian is dependent on my obedience to Christ. And a resolve to help those who wish to re-evaluate their lives based on a notion of holiness. This has not always been an easy or consistent walk, as you know Marian, yet it holds true for me l today.

When I said I didn't want to use the images of X I had painted for the cover of Heather's book I was glad to have said no. I never painted those images with lesbian

erotica in mind as I explained to you. Now the Heather portrait is not problematic, but it lends itself to me giving my endorsement in an area of life that is fraught with tension for me: Heather's erotic poems relate to an intensely hedonistic part of our shared lives that brought havoc to both of us. Well to me, (I can't really speak for her). My misery was in direct relationship to being an adherent to a life that was antithetical to the peace I knew was available to me.

THE WOMEN'S GALLERY, *WOMAN'S PICTURE BOOK* & *THIS JOYOUS CHAOTIC PLACE HE WAIATA TANGI-Ā-TAHU*

> Though I have/we have benefited from the inclusions you have given me in the exhibitions and anthologies you have created, I think this has sometimes drawn me away from where and who I wish to most serve. This current invitation would be one of those times. On the other hand, you given me another space though to speak/show myself now and I am grateful for that. (I think psychologists call this dilemma cognitive dissonance!)

An interstitial space

When you, Cushla and Jacob were preparing the exhibition notes for *This Joyous Chaotic Place He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* I realised that while you have always had a loyalty to your commitment of my inclusion in the chronology of lesbian voices in New Zealand and allowing each story to be told...especially my 'shift' in position as per 'Conversations from room to room'

with Joanna in *A Women's Picture Book,*[4] Heather's story was what we were telling at Mokopōpaki and any contribution of mine needed to fit into that context. I am grateful for how you 'dealt' with my position on this. You gave me some space to speak of my differing (from Heather's) spiritual position. More importantly for you, was I think, the platform I had in a continuum of the story of Women's Art in NZ. And to own my roots as a lesbian artist activist with Heather.

The story of my memoirs of Heather and the conflict we had over my 'ceding' with the 'Enemy' (that is, becoming a follower of Jesus Christ), would not and could not be given much airing in your editorial position (for *This Joyous Chaotic Place He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*). I got that. (It was primarily a place of positioning for Heather and the editorial group. And a certain neutrality I felt was expected of me. You gave me a little space for that, and it meant I could be there.)

MY HOPE

"**I** would love the opportunity one day to put Heather and my conversations and art together, She and I had conversations about it. But, not at this time.

STAYING PUT

"So, I don't think I would be doing myself much service by being up there in *i do not cede* in this instance. Espe-

4·

cially as the poems themselves, as beautifully crafted and evocative as they are mostly reminding me of the sadness and torment really that I went through over those long hard years of lesbian relationships.

I have never lost my love for Heather or Morrigan or you or any of the other women I was close to, but I have not stayed in that place and I can't see the value of me sounding and looking as if I am a subscriber to the Queer movement when, if I am a part of it at all, it is in the role of antagonist. Frankly, I don't want to be in a firing line for this. Right now. I am staying on my own turf. Staying put.

PRICKING RELATIONSHIP

"What had been sisterhood for Heather and me, became bitter-sweet push and pull later. You know this. We did not agree. Same for you and me. Heather sniped at me over the years onwards of 1980 till her death. I might have seen it as friendly fire. I am sure I probably fired as many shots back. Perhaps because we persisted with each other in our "Pricking relationship" we worked on our differences and our shared joys.

When she came to stay with me here at Te Henga, she would rest from the relationship weariness that she had and then start writing and I think my contentious 'conversion' to Christianity would stir her writers' juices and she wrote some tough pieces out here regarding that. They were in corollary to our spoken and unspoken conversations. We would wander around

the garden, often arm in arm, chatting in the native bush about our cares. We ate and drank together, I drew and painted her, together we were companionable with plenty of laughter and then she would repair to the bus or a guest room where she would beaver away again on her writing, again, sometimes for quite a few days at a time. Doing those curious little spirally corrections with her ballpoint pen as she went, while I worked on my projects or produced the next meal, and we would emerge again to take off where we left off. Do you know she even came to church with me once?

Often a draft of her poems would appear in my letter box some time later after her departure.

BELTANE FEASTS

“We began, Heather and me and Morrigan and Kathryn, Joanne, and others, oh yes, and Paulette with those Beltane feasts at Trafalgar Street and then later repaired to the Canterbury East Coast beaches for our circles around the fire. I remember these with a mixture of feelings.

We imagined and grew out of our women’s art and writing our own authentic practice of ‘Remembering’. Holding hands around our first fires and the first chants and Holding onto each other’s lives. Wicca journeys that we imagined we had always had.

We let go soon enough when the seasons of our desires changed.

I hadn't realized then that the next generation's thought and sensibilities were to some extent potently formed with and through us. Kids doing Halloween. Girls growing into witches. Well, I did. It was fulsome and intentional and a deep thing to extricate myself from.

I shudder recalling those practices Marian. Not at the memory of Heather herself who I held a love for all through her life and to the end but for the sense of where that exploration was leading us.

Some creepy things happened over those years, and I had some sinister encounters with the death trap that witchcraft perversely performed through and in us. You may not have experienced these things at all.

I don't know. I never remember you being part of the woman spirit movement as much as being a kind of facilitator helping give volume and clarity to women's voices. (Even to my Mum, Lorna, you included in the *Mothers* exhibition.)

'YOUR BODY WILL HAUNT MINE'

> So, I have pain and a certain revulsion I am sorry to say remembering the separations, infidelities, and jealousies that went with the politics of the lesbian body politics and the ethic of (y)our collectiveness.

Pain thinking about that phrase of hers

your body will haunt mine

Pain as I remember my own incredible attempt to stay loyal to an ideology of sexuality which still had and has the hallmarks and traces of the way that men had power over woman through manipulation coercion and infidelity.

Were we really that different as we changed partners? Did the goalposts of our shifting loves rejig our values? I think they did.

The pain of the truth of it smudged and erased our direction, well it did mine. I dare not make my clearly defined lines now blend and smudge to make us look good for some future sapphic feast. This is a feast I will not be a part of.

It was a building shift for me that did not shake foundationally Heather's and my friendships. It was though, after that, really a place of red zone for us, our friendship, after I came to Jesus, I think. We could not really be in that same place anymore. Though there were shared lovers and past times and tender moments there had been there was also that great divide.

My shift of identity and the schism of allegiances and my restlessness about my growing sense that all was not well in Lesbian Nation that had nothing to do with patriarchy but everything to do with pretend promises and allegiances and yes, *the ghosts of my lover's bodies haunting mine*. And me wishing to be done with it. And to sever my loyalty to that unfortunate curse.

'OUR GALLOPING WILD NIGHT MARE'

> Might allude to a poster Morrigan sent me of two young amazons mounted on a mare in full fury called welcoming the Goddess into the 21st century. Someone in America from Lesbian Nation made that poster in 1974 and when I received it in the post it became our icon at Trafalgar Street. It struck a spell on us all so that we grew in triumphant power over the enemy: straight men, the enemy church and the enemy, God the Father.

I did the painting *we will resist; we will resist (the patriarchy)* owned by Sandra Coney a few years later and Heather wrote a poem (did she call it *i do not cede?* I am interested to know when she wrote this poem, as it sounds very familiar?). We influenced each other, egged each other on. Shared stories, acted them out together in the living room at no 54 and made new pathways of resistance as well as a mythology around our own sexuality and the sexuality of heterosexuality that we believed had been imposed on us.



Acting a play about Radcliffe Hall, by Alison Laurie called *Between the Ears* 1970s.A few years ago Alison told Morrigan that she'd lost the work. L-R Allie Eagle, Morrigan Severs & Joanne King. Photograph Kathryn Algie.

> We were to make all things new in our image of Ourselves and Our bodies and Our lesbian sex.
>
> (Later that poster was pinched from the wall of my installation of my paintings and drawings that I showed outside the Lesbian Suite at the 1979 United Women's Convention in Hamilton. I never saw it again, but it was iconic for us at the time. Someone souvenired it.)
>
> (I chose NOT to be included in the 1979 exhibition lesbian suite space because I needed to address a wider audience bigger than the separatist lesbians. Did you see it?)

And my images included some thoughts about boy children, who shared a common herstory with Carrick, Heather's son. And your three sons too really.)

I met you there at that Hamilton 1979 Women's Convention. It is 42 years ago now. That is another story.

A deep love for you my dear Marian Evans! Thanks for releasing me!

ALLIE, JULIET RAVEN, & KĀTERINA MATAIRA'S 'KA HAERE A MEREANA KI TE KURA'; & GAYLENE & JULIET

Allie Eagle, Gaylene Preston, Marian Evans



Allie and Juliet at Women's Gallery January 1980: A typically intense conversation. Screenshot from raw footage by Kanya Stewart and Nancy Peterson, Auckland Women's Community Video. Courtesy ATL.

On 21 July 2019 Juliet Walker/Krautschun/Raven died. Her obituary notice described her as 'beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunty, cousin, friend and heroine'.

. . .

I was often in awe of Juliet's intellect and wild energy, when we worked together on the Kidsarus 2 project, developing and publishing books like Patricia Grace's **T***he Kuia & The Spider Te Kuia Me Te Pūngāwerewere* (1982, illus. Robyn Kahukiwa, trans. Hirini Melbourne & Keri Kaa) and Miriam Smith's *Kimi and the Watermelon Ko Kimi Me Tana Mereni* (1983, illus. David Armitage, trans. Sonny Waru).[1] Other Spiral workers who contributed to the project included Anna Keir and Lynne Ciochetto.

When the project grew beyond our kitchen tables we needed a little office to finish the work and found a warren of spaces at 26 Harris Street Te Whanganui-a-Tara. The space we didn't need became The Women's Gallery.

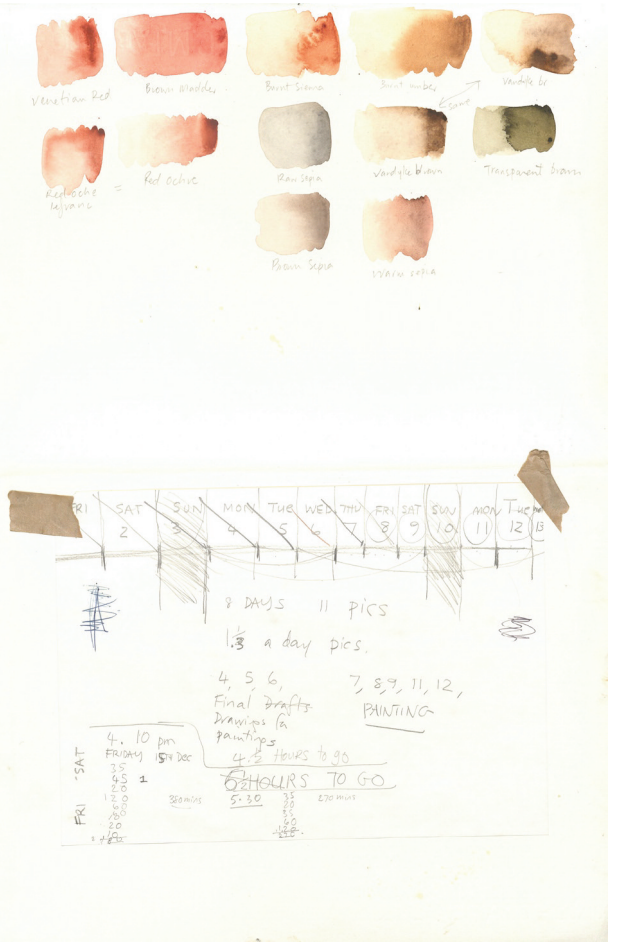
Juliet was one of the first two people I gave *the bone people* manuscript to read, immediately after I read it. She, like the 'literary' man I shared it with, thought it needed editing. But when Spiral decided to publish it without editing, she helped. And in 1987 she and her friend Jane Bowron edited and introduced Hilary Baxter's collection of poems, *The Other Side of Dawn*, also for Spiral.

Building on Kidsarus' commitment to provide resources with high content and production values for local children, Juliet went on to found Totika Publications with Piripi Walker, where they produced books in te reo and some beautiful educational resources. Allie illustrated one of their picture books — *Ka Haere A Mereana Ki Te Kura* by Kāterina Mataira (1932-2011, Ngāti Porou, later 'Dame Kāterina'), published in 2000.

1. https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together/kidsarus-2

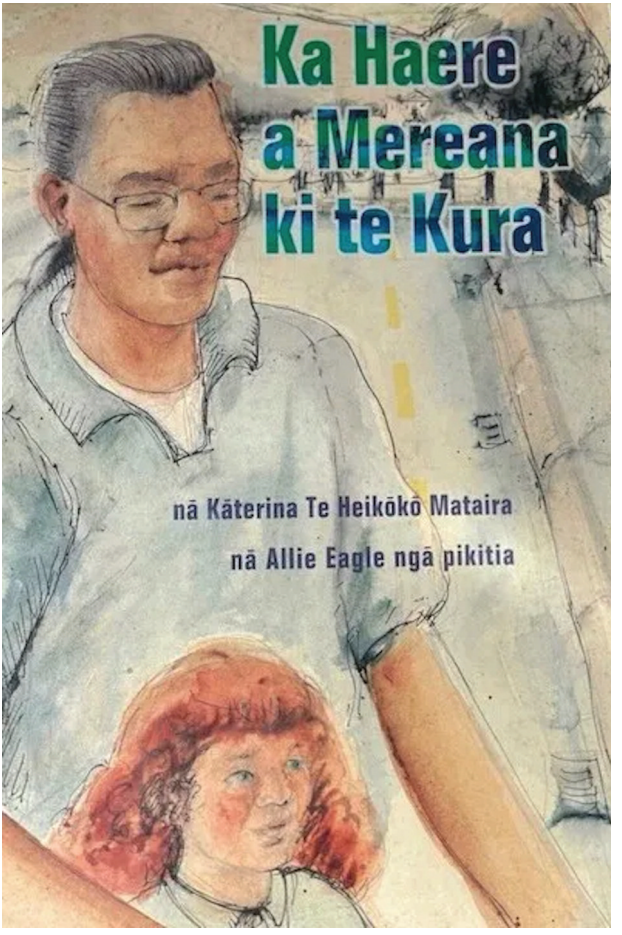
ALLIE & 'KA HAERE MEREANA KI TE KURA'

When Juliet invited her to illustrate *Ka Haere A Mereana Ki Te Kura,* Allie came to Te Whanganui-a-Tara and set herself up in our front room for some weeks, working hard.



One of Allie's colour palettes for Ka Haere A Mereana Ki Te Kura, with a work plan below. Spiral Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library *MSI-Papers-7493*.

'8 days 11 pics' she wrote. '1 1/3 a day'. The eight days became ten days.



ALLIE & JULIET

According to Allie—

> When I was at art school [in Christchurch], I used to see Juliet at the Gresham Hotel quite a bit, a vibrant

person, full on: short skirts, black tights, thigh-high boots and fluffy jackets. She was good friends with the *Canta* crowd, a bright inflamed generation, a strong activist group. I was in an adjoining bar, with the camp women: transsexuals, lesbians and other gay persons like Sharon Alston.

In 2001 Juliet invited me to illustrate Kāterina Mataira's book and we had a lovely time talking through the images before I went hunting and gathering in kura in Te Tairawhiti and in Wellington city, to ensure I made authentic portrayals. She had a huge amount of commitment and passion for her work at Totika, doing the very best she could, with associated awkwardnesses that I related to very well.

Just remembering a few short interludes where Juliet and I met in Ōtaki, too. We connected both in her home and Mum's at Kapiti Lane. She gave me her editor's copy of *My Little Māori Home* by Wally Carkeek.

As Huriana Raven, Juliet also edited *Te Tū a Te Toka: He Ieretanga nō Ngā Tai e Whā* 2006 with Piripi Walker, a collection of work in te reo by senior writers. It won the Māori Language Prize at the Montana Book Awards in 2008.[2]

2. https://publishers.org.nz/maori-language-prize-winner-announced-at-montana-book-awards/

GAYLENE & JULIET

Like Allie, Gaylene Preston knew and appreciated Juliet and her work, all her adult life—

> Once seen, never forgotten. I met her at a party on the hill in Napier. The place was pumping. All the windows were open and the Beatles maintained a hard days night to disturb the neighbours. Juliet was in the white main bathroom sitting on the vanity, long legs elegantly crossed, her shoes hanging off her feet like flags flapping, a glass in hand, waving her cigarette about, telling stories. She had a way of holding a smoke as if it was in a cigarette holder.
>
> I was on my way down to art school in Christchurch. In this crowd of seasoned students home for the holidays, I was a wide-eyed newby. Whenever I mentioned Canterbury University, her name came up and here she was, the legend herself. Glorious Juliet, holding court in the only place in the house where the spoken word ruled. She was mid-tale, her voice already raspy with a sly laugh always threatening to erupt.
>
> Five minutes in her company and that razor sharp wit could challenge and invigorate even the dullest conversation. This was Juliet Walker, the brightest star in any room. She committed. To English literature, to life in all its complexity. Her fearlessness left me gasping. I had my defences up, I was watchful, Juliet seemed to be in boots and all. She was ahead of the crowd.
>
> Later we lived in the same flat, me with my first husband, she with a very clever political scientist who

was her equal in an argument. When you are that clever, you need the debate to let your brain have a brisk run around the field every day. Juliet was writing a thesis on Shakespeare's women — trailblazing but under-appreciated by her largely male compatriots. Life can be lonely when you are so outstanding and haven't found your gang. Many years later the world caught up with her and she found one among the women of Spiral Collective and through her great love of Te Reo Māori.

We were travelling parallel paths living in the same little city on different ridges bringing up our children. Fate dealt Juliet hard blows and when she lost her daughter to SIDS it seemed like the last straw.

She was brave. Courageous. Never surrendered. She left a remarkable legacy. I'll never forget her.

THE LAST DECADE

Allie was busy during this time, often with arts-oriented HelpX helpers who documented her work.[1] I got to know some of them and enjoyed them: Lina Wang and Song Lin and Julien Casenove.

1. https://www.helpx.net/



Allie and model-with-agency at work Te Henga in 2015. Photograph Julien Casenove.



Allie at work Te Henga in 2015. Photograph Julien Casenove.



Allie painting Heather McPherson & Marian Evans 2016. Photograph Lina Wang.

(I disliked this unfinished work, and in 2025 asked Khady if I could take a chainsaw to 'my' bit, as a performance at the Charlotte Museum. Khady laughed and said No.)[2]

This session might have been the one where Fiona Lovatt joined us and portrayed Allie at rest.

2. See also 'In the beginning there was Heather' in *Some Stories* section 1.



Allie by Fiona Lovatt, using Allie's ink, watercolours and paper 2016.

I have lovely memories of Allie's support for Mokopōpaki's and Spiral's exhibition for Heather McPherson, *This Joyous Chaotic Place He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*, in 2017. Her inherent generosity came to the fore. She made some special works to sell, to help offset the costs for Mokopōpaki and for Spiral. She came to the opening and she and Khady came to the poetry reading and afternoon tea. She gave a dynamic workshop. [3]

3. See 'SPIRAL RETURNS 2016-2021', below.

Before her death in 2022, Allie refused chemotherapy partly because as a painter she didn't want to risk neuropathy. She often communicated with me by Messenger, often with voice messages.

In February—

> I'm relieved there's no pressure from Dr Tom to have chemo. I'm confident that God is going to be part of a much bigger healing than I/we can ever possibly imagine. For now I am going to concentrate on getting better and getting on with my life.

In April—

> I am embarrassed I sent you my look alike Alice Neal photo when I had all that cancer fluid around my belly! What a crazy thing to do! Laugh.

A little later—

> Am going into hospital again today as fluid has built up again around my belly as in the Alice Neal lookalike photo I sent you. I have gained 7 kilos in as many days eating as a mouse. Can you tell Cushla and Fiona what's up with me please Marian?

26 April

> I have been brave Of Course. And cared for Of Course.
>
> I want to think about radical remission and faith.

> At the moment I'm writing complaint forms, not in a nasty way but in a friendly feedback way. There's been some terrible things that have happened in different times in my life in hospitals and I just thought I'd get it all done and dusted. You know I've kept all my medical records, all of Mum's medical records, all of Nan's medical records. I'm still wanting to say some definitive things about mental hospitals and how people treat people. And I still want to do the thing about the rape trial piece and how I changed my mind, but not so much that, more the whole way of looking at trauma. My mind's working all the time, I not really interested in cvs and the bigger picture.

And that was the last message.



Allie Eagle [Self portrait] *oil on canvas 350 x 240mm not signed or dated.*

> This is how I knew my Allie for the last decade.

— Khady Harvey.

. . .



Allie & Khady Te Henga 2020s.

LYNNE CIOCHETTO

1950-2024



Lynne Ciochetto after delivering Heather McPherson's This Joyous Chaotic Place: Garden Poems *to the printers 2018.*

A Tangata Tiriti pākehā sociologist, graphic designer & writer, ardent teacher, traveller & learner, philanthropist, gardener.

LYNNE CIOCHETTO



Lynne Ciochetto in 1970s. Family photograph.

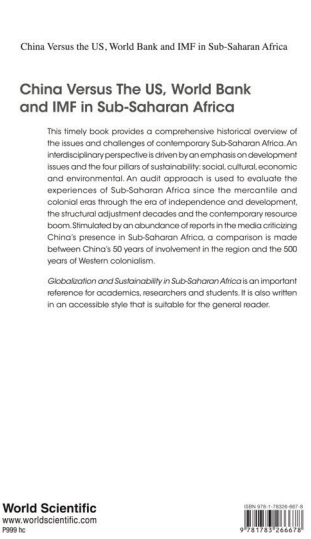
The only self-descriptions I can find come from Lynne's entries in *Academia* (before she retired) and *LinkedIn*.

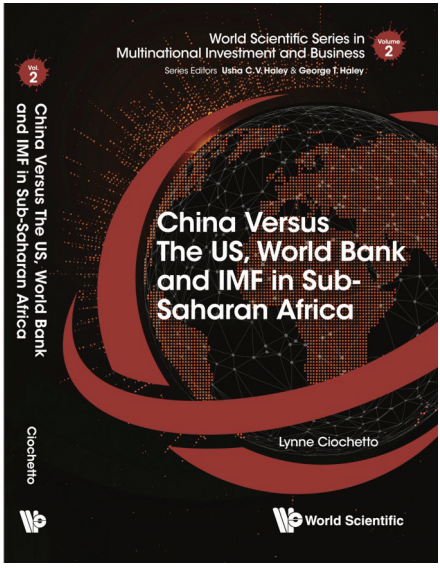
> Lynne Ciochetto is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Communication Design, Massey University, New Zealand. Her research interests reflect her interdisciplinary background: sociology, anthropology, development studies and graphic design.
>
> Her recent focus has been the exploration of advertising and globalization in terms of social and cultural change. Two key areas have emerged: case studies of the globalization of advertising in specific countries: Russia, India, China, Vietnam and Thailand. Complementing this approach are thematic studies of the market sectors: men, children and women.
>
> Her latest research direction is an exploration of the environmental impact of the growth in consumption in emerging economies and the role advertising plays in the growth of consumerism. Her book *Advertising and Globalization in the Emerging Economies of Brazil, Russia, India and Chin*a was published by Routledge London in December 2011. Other book chapters include: 'Advertising and marketing of the Indian Cinema' in K.M. Gokulsing and W. Dissanayake Eds. (2013) *Routledge Handbook of Indian Cinemas*, London: Routledge; 'Profit, People, Planet and Global rebalancing: the environmental implications of the next decades of development in the East Asian nations of Japan, South Korea, China and India', in *Global Rebalancing*, Pieterse, J. and Kim, J. Eds. (2012) New York: Routledge; 'Advertising and globalization in India', in

Globalisation: Indian experience, The Institute of Chartered Financial Accountants India, ICFAI, Hyderabad (2006).

2014 The 2014 International Award for Excellence for new and innovative research was awarded at the 7th Global Studies Conference, Shanghai.

Lynne's last book, *China Versus the US, World Bank and IMF in Sub-Saharan Africa*, was published in 2022.





LYNNE CIOCHETTO & SPIRAL

Marian Evans and Cushla Parekowhai

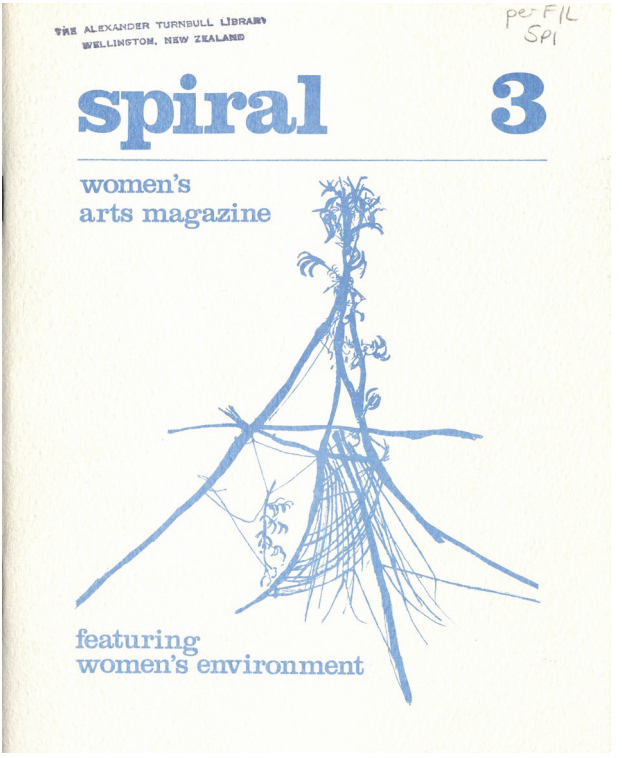


Lynne Ciochetto 1970s. Family photograph.

Somehow, I — Marian — met Lynne through the Kidsarus 2 collective — which morphed into the Wellington Spiral — when our group was developing children's picture books like Patricia Grace's

The Kuia & the Spider, back in the 70s. I remember her enthusiasm, her warm greetings: 'Babe!' and 'Treasure!'. Her verbal eyerolls: 'That's a bit Mickey Mouse, M!' Her organisational flair and style: 'So What's The Plan?' Her hard work. Her reliability. Her kindness. Her generosity. Her laughter. None of those things ever changed. Towards the end of her life she regularly added an explicit imperative to the subtext that was always part of her: 'Don't waste a minute'.

Lynne was part of the very early Christchurch Spiral collectives. She laid out *Spiral 3* and designed the cover with Allie Eagle. She laid out *Spiral 4* and designed the cover with Tiffany Thornley.



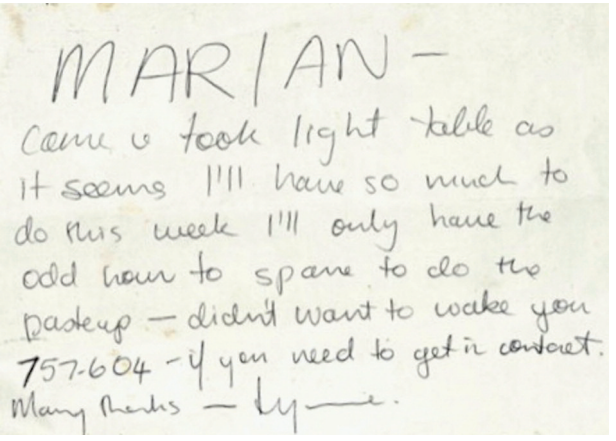
. . .



She was ever-helpful with the Kidsarus project until she went overseas, and when I visited Ōtautahi in the late 1970s she introduced me to writer Elsie Locke and then to Spiral founder Heather McPherson. Heather lived in Browning Street Sydenham then; and made us dinner: macaroni cheese and weed salad. Was that back when we gave a presentation at the United Women's Convention in 1977, which I'd completely forgotten about until Lynne mentioned it

in *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu?*[1] Later, Lynne became part of *The House of the Talking Cat* and *the bone people* collectives in Wellington, leading Anna Keir and me through the design and pasteup.

At this time, a 'pasteup' before printing a book involved cutting up sheets of phototypeset text and pasting it within pre-set margins drawn lightly in non-photographic blue pencil. The text was applied to stiff white card using rubber cement applied with a brush or using a machine that would apply a wax adhesive. To amend any errors the relevant correct line or lines would be cut from a new sheet of text and pasted over the top of the old one(s). Together we physically cut-and-pasted it all on a single shared light-table. Back then we also lived safely without ever locking up our homes.


MARIAN –
Come & took light table as
it seems I'll have so much to
do this week I'll only have the
odd hour to spare to do the
pasteup – didn't want to wake you
757-604 – if you need to get in contact.
Many thanks – Lyn –

The repetitive text layout for books meant it was quicker to paste up onto paper which was thin enough to see through when it was placed on a light box, an essential piece of equipment. The page margins and columns were drawn on tracing paper and could be seen through the pages as you were pasting them up.

1. See 'the bone people' chapter at the end of this section.

When Lynne wrote about her work for *the bone people*, for Spiral's *Keri Hulme: Our Kuru Pounamu* (reprinted in the next chapter), she described her mixed feelings about this very challenging project. And when recently I saw Spiral's marked-up *the bone people* copy, now in the McMillan Brown Library at Canterbury University, I was very moved to see all the familiar handwritings in the margins, including Lynne's.[2]

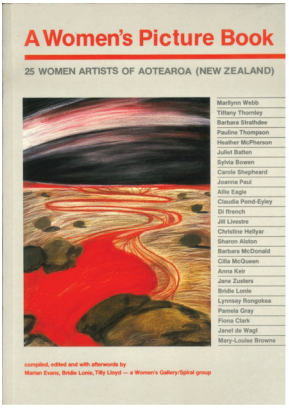
Keri herself wrote about Lynne, when expressing her thanks to all who'd helped with *the bone people*'s production—

> A special individual thanks to Lynne Ciochetto. She's obviously helped a helluva lot. When do I get to say a personal thank you, make a personal koha to these loving people, these deep people?[3]

But alas, Lynne and Keri never met because when we finally launched the book, Lynne was off in Basel, studying design.

In the late 80s she was back, and designed *A Women's Picture Book*, for Daphne Brasell at GP Books, and Spiral.

2. 'Annotated Spiral typescript of the bone people' McMillan Brown Library: 86954.
3. Unpublished letter 1983.



Cover A Women's Picture Book *1988. Designer Lynne Ciochetto.*

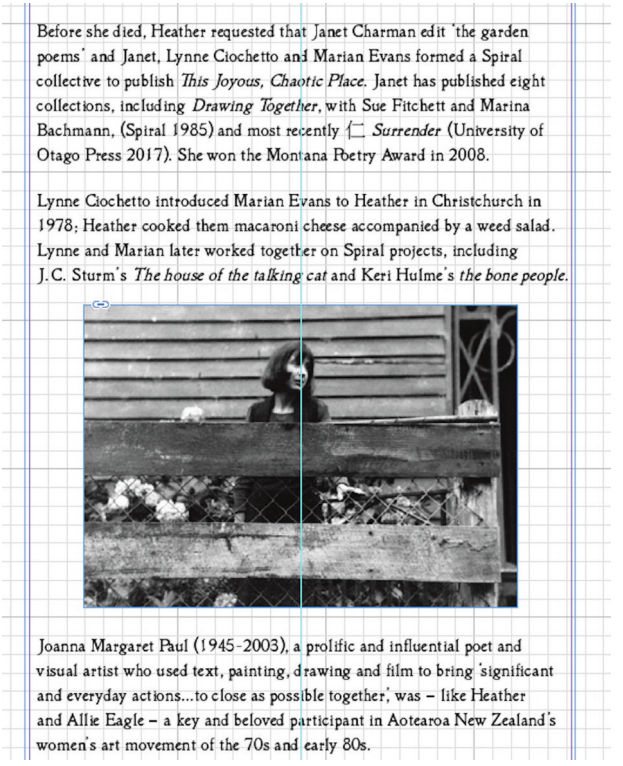
For many years, Lynne was working hard as an academic; indulging her love of travel; and caring for her mother; and I was off doing other stuff too. We didn't see each other.

I don't remember where and when we met up again. But, somehow, in 2018, to complement the *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* exhibition at Mokopōpaki about Heather and her peers, a Spiral collective — Lynne, poet Janet Charman, and I — published Heather's *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: Garden Poems*, with a cover illustration by Heather's old friend Joanna Margaret Paul.[4] It was a great combo, and Lynne's response to the invitation was typical: Her email response when approached to design the cover of *This Joyous, Chaotic Place* was typical.

4. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/this-joyous-chaotic-place-garden-poems-by-heather-

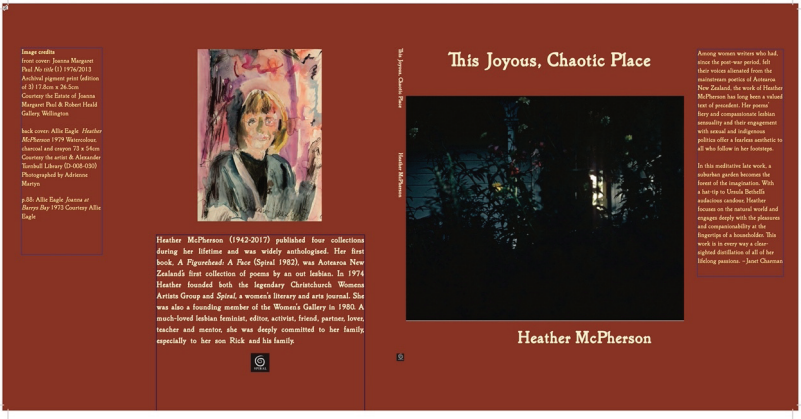
Dear Marian, OF COURSE I WILL DO THE PROJECT! I am currently in Indonesia for 2 weeks! Will be back in Wellington about 19th October....catch up then for lunch. Would love to be involved in the project...Love, Lynne[5]

This time, Lynne learned InDesign and consulted with her long-time collaborator Hamish Thompson. In the photograph that heads her section here she's taking refreshment after we delivered the proofs to the printers. (I had a cuppa and some lemon slice.)

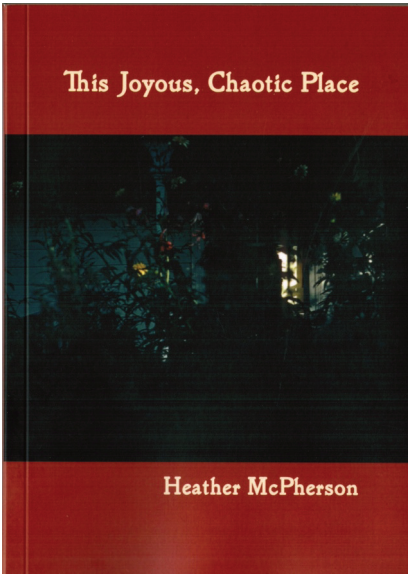


Lynne's design for interior of This Joyous, Chaotic Place.

5. 17 October 2017.



Lynne's cover design for This Joyous, Chaotic Place.



The final cover.

Then, in 2021, Lynne advised on the cover of Spiral's first eBook, *Women's Film Festivals & #WomenInFilm Databases* and in 2022 on the cover of *i do not cede*, a collection of Heather's erotic poems, selected and introduced by Emer Lyons.



And, as LMC, also in 2022, Lynne sponsored the proofreading for *Keri Hulme: Our Kuru Pounamu*.

'LMC' had already quietly sponsored other Spiral projects, like #DirectedByWomen #Aotearoa, between 2018 and 2020. Her generosity meant that we could work with Script to Screen to bring Wanuri Kahiu to Aotearoa with her feature film *Rafiki*, banned in Kenya, for screenings in an Auckland cinema, at Parliament and Te Auaha in Wellington and at Māoriland in Ōtaki. We could also celebrate a selection of groundbreaking women-directed webseries.



Designer uncertain.



Designer Louise Hutt.

. . .

As often happens with long and nourishing Spiral relationships, Lynne and I had nice times together outside of Spiral stuff, since Covid especially. Shared lunches, exchanges of crime novels and seeds for our gardens, shared stories and laughter: I loved hearing about her writing, her watercolours and her art teachers, and her trips to Venice and Paris and Vietnam and elsewhere.

And I'd fall over her at odd times, once when we were both in a slow Dunedin airport queue. ('Like a lift home, M?') and once after I'd spent a difficult night at the police station. Even that early in the morning, and busy, she was exactly who I needed, listening carefully, responding thoughtfully, making me laugh.

Lynne was a shining presence at a Spiral dinner at Everybody Eats late in 2023.

Cushla Parekowhai, who met Lynne for the first time that evening, writes—

> I remember she sat at the end of the table closest to the pass where the chef in charge was sending out orders and calmly running the brigade. Lynne was wearing a striking red and struggled slightly to stand up as she embraced me warmly.
>
> I did my best to encourage her to save her strength and made a joke about why was it that fabulously good women and true like us who did the work and declined the glory were 'always in the kitchen at parties'?

She laughed and I knew she got it.

With or without tea-towel...

The last time I saw Lynne she popped in with her beloved sister Susan. I miss her, lots. And remember her good heart and good humour, always. Thank you, Lynne. From me and from Spiral. What a star you were.

'THE BONE PEOPLE'

Lynne Ciochetto

I was a member of the Spiral Collective in the 1970s before I went overseas to study design. Marian and I gave a presentation on children's books at the United Women's Convention in 1977.

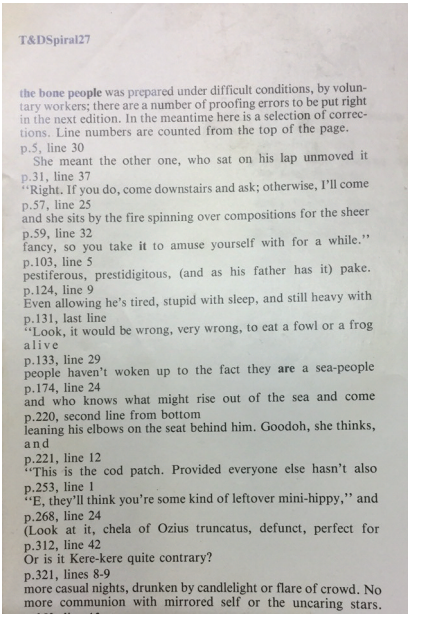
I got involved with the *Bone People* project when I returned to New Zealand. I offered my Spiral friends Marian and Anna to help with pasting-up the book. Marian and Anna started the paste-up at the Arts Centre in Upper Willis Street. At the time the book was nearly ready to go into production they were both pregnant.

They had arranged for the typesetting to be done at the offices of Salient, the Victoria University student newspaper. Salient allowed us to do the corrections on the light table in their office space. As mentioned by Mark Cubey[1] there were problems with the typeset-

1. *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu* Spiral 2022-2024: 298-391. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/keri-hulme-our-kuru-pounamu

ting machine and when the time came to strip-in the corrections, the corrections were a different tone than the original text.

I was always mortified when later reviews criticised the production! While pasting up the book I was quite shocked by snippets of the text that were quite violent. I didn't read the entire book until years later and regretted that early decision not to read it as soon as it was published! I was so proud of the Spiral accomplishment, and over the moon when Keri won the Booker!



T&DSpiral27

the bone people was prepared under difficult conditions, by voluntary workers; there are a number of proofing errors to be put right in the next edition. In the meantime here is a selection of corrections. Line numbers are counted from the top of the page.

p.5, line 30
She meant the other one, who sat on his lap unmoved it
p.31, line 37
"Right. If you do, come downstairs and ask; otherwise, I'll come
p.57, line 25
and she sits by the fire spinning over compositions for the sheer
p.59, line 32
fancy, so you take **it** to amuse yourself with for a while."
p.103, line 5
pestiferous, prestidigitous, (and as his father has it) pake.
p.124, line 9
Even allowing he's tired, stupid with sleep, and still heavy with
p.131, last line
"Look, it would be wrong, very wrong, to eat a fowl or a frog
a l i v e
p.133, line 29
people haven't woken up to the fact they **are** a sea-people
p.174, line 24
and who knows what might rise out of the sea and come
p.220, second line from bottom
leaning his elbows on the seat behind him. Goodoh, she thinks,
a n d
p.221, line 12
"This is the cod patch. Provided everyone else hasn't also
p.253, line 1
"E, they'll think you're some kind of leftover mini-hippy," and
p.268, line 24
(Look at it, chela of Ozius truncatus, defunct, perfect for
p.312, line 42
Or is it Kere-kere quite contrary?
p.321, lines 8-9
more casual nights, drunken by candlelight or flare of crowd. No
more communion with mirrored self or the uncaring stars.

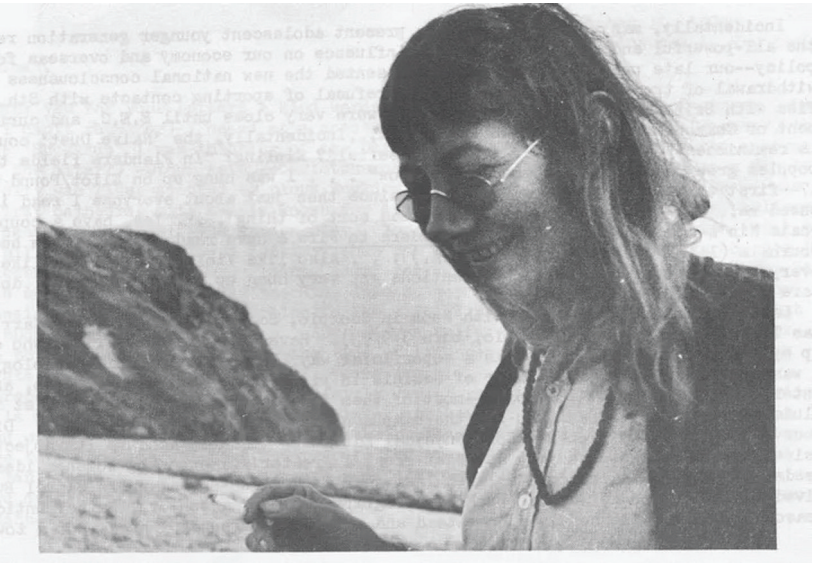
Corrections to the bone people *text to be 'stripped in'.*

First published in 2022 in *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu*.[2]

2. *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu* Spiral 2022-2024: 302-303. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/keri-hulme-our-kuru-pounamu

Part Two

SPIRAL COLLECTIVES 1974-PRESENT



Heather McPherson at beach 1974. Photograph John Saxton.

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS HEATHER (2016)

Heather et al.

This is the very first entry in Spiral's open research project, dated 31 May 2016. Like so many Spiral projects, this one has taken a while to reach book form.[1]

Poet Heather McPherson lives in Auckland New Zealand. This series celebrates her and her founding of Spiral 40 years ago; and is research for an eBook due later this year or in 2017. But it's not your 'normal' Festschrift because Heather will contribute work as well, among women's texts and images from the 1970s to now. Often the posts interconnect. Sometimes they contradict. (Conflict is normal.) Regardless, it's all for her, with love and gratitude and delight. As well as for you. — Marian Evans

1. 'Spiral Collectives' *Medium* 2016- . https://medium.com/spiral-collectives



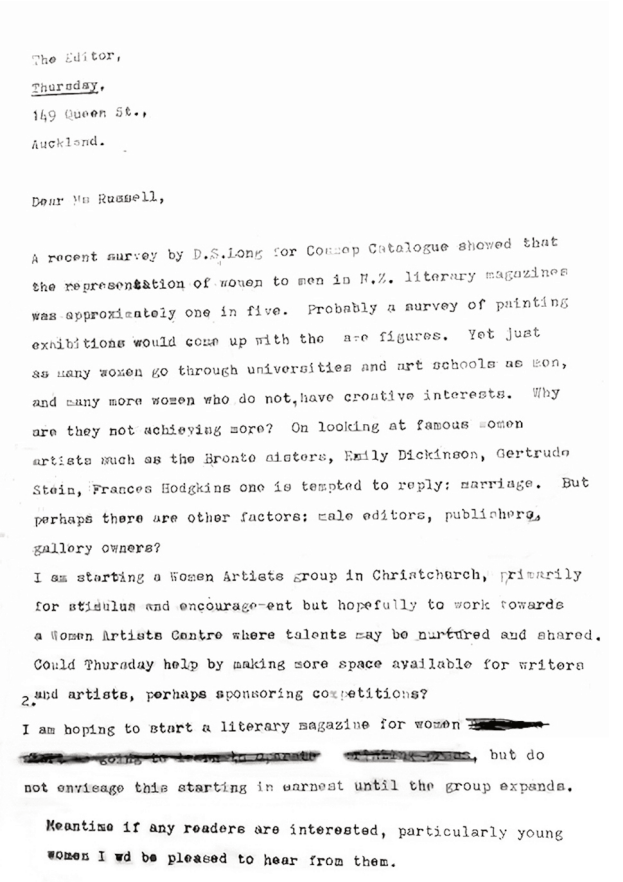
Allie Eagle works on a portrait of Heather McPherson, Te Henga 2016. Photographer Lina Wang.

When Heather attended a Christchurch arts festival in 1973, she told Tilly Lloyd in an interview for *A Women's Picture Book*—

> They had this poets' evening as part of the festival and there were these twenty young men getting up on the stage one after another and they were so interchangeable. There was only one who stood out as reasonably individual [...] and that was when I knew women artists' voices had to be heard'.[2]

2. *A Women's Picture Book; 25 Women Artists of Aotearoa (New Zealand)* (*AWPB*) compiled, edited and with afterwords by Marian Evans, Bridie Lonie, Tilly Lloyd — a Women's Gallery/ Spiral group GP Books 1988 : 38. The book is freely available online here https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/a-womens-picture-book

In early 1974, she advertised the formation of the Women Artists Group in the personal column of *The Press*, Christchurch's morning paper (sometimes in its history the group's name has an apostrophe).



The Editor,
Thursday,
149 Queen St.,
Auckland.

Dear Mr Russell,

A recent survey by D.S.Long for Comcop Catalogue showed that the representation of women to men in N.Z. literary magazines was approximately one in five. Probably a survey of painting exhibitions would come up with the same figures. Yet just as many women go through universities and art schools as men, and many more women who do not have creative interests. Why are they not achieving more? On looking at famous women artists such as the Bronte sisters, Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein, Frances Hodgkins one is tempted to reply: marriage. But perhaps there are other factors: male editors, publishers, gallery owners?

I am starting a Women Artists group in Christchurch, primarily for stimulus and encouragement but hopefully to work towards a Women Artists Centre where talents may be nurtured and shared. Could Thursday help by making more space available for writers and artists, perhaps sponsoring competitions?

2.

I am hoping to start a literary magazine for women [redacted] going to [redacted] but do not envisage this starting in earnest until the group expands.

Meantime if any readers are interested, particularly young women I wd be pleased to hear from them.

Christchurch Women's Artists Group — Correspondence, submission, notes and plans for exhibition Alexander Turnbull Library Ref No:84–072A-1/03: 1974–1977.

I haven't found the ad,[3] but I did find the letter she wrote to Marcia Russell, the legendary editor of *Thursday*, a women's magazine, outlining the background and her intentions. The Women Artists Group first, then a literary magazine, to be printed by her.

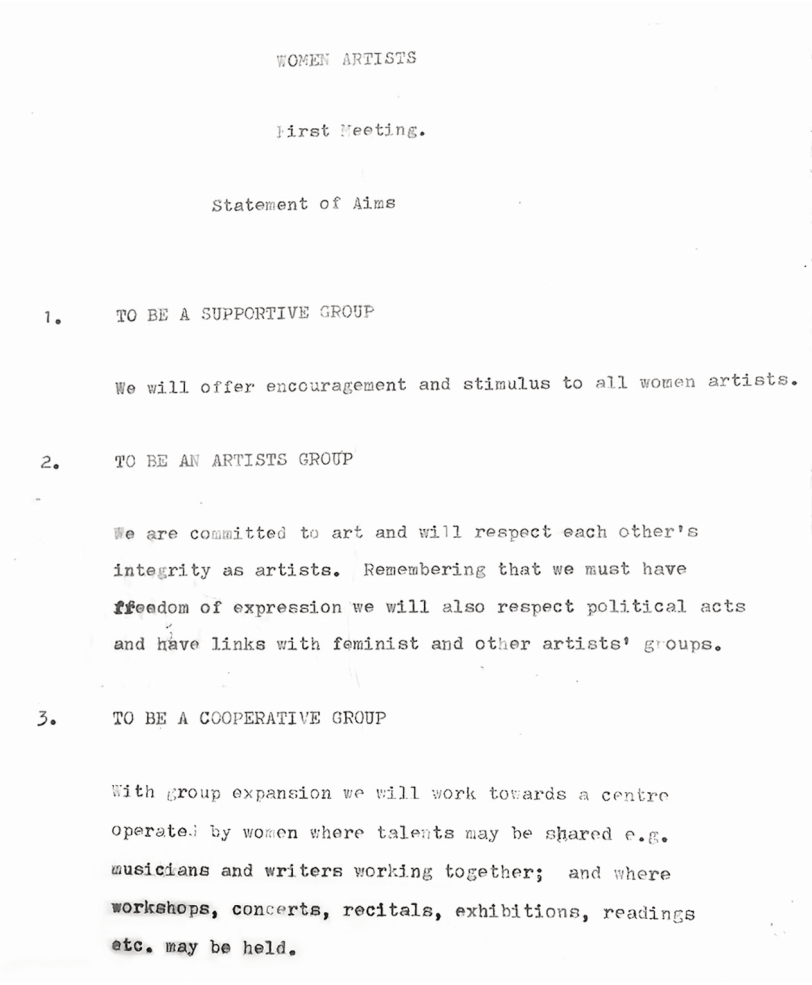
That deletion of Heather's plan to learn to use a press is hers. Because, she says, she'd visited Don Long's press and realised she didn't have the physical capacity to run a printing press. As well, Herstory Press had started up in Wellington.

The *Christchurch Star* reported the first Women Artists Group meeting. 'New group to stimulate women artists' read the headline, on 17 July 1974. The short article starts—

> Encouragement and stimulus for women artists is the aim of a new Christchurch group. Set up by a young mother and poet, Ms H McPherson, of Dover Street, the group is exclusively for women. Ms McPherson thought of the idea after hearing of a similar group in Australia and through her contact with various feminist groups. The group met for the first time last week, and although only four women were present, Ms McPherson was pleased with the result. "We are committed to art and will respect each other's integrity as artists," she said.

3. 2025: See Heather's section of *Spiral 8* for further news about the ad. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/spiral-8-setting-the-work-table

So far, I can't confirm who was at that first meeting. Heather, of course, and probably Joanna Paul (1945–2003); others often associated with the Women Artists Group, like Allie Eagle, Anna Keir, Rosemary Johnson, don't appear till midway in its minute book. Here's the record of the Statement of Aims the four of them decided on.



WOMEN ARTISTS

First Meeting.

Statement of Aims

1. TO BE A SUPPORTIVE GROUP

We will offer encouragement and stimulus to all women artists.

2. TO BE AN ARTISTS GROUP

We are committed to art and will respect each other's integrity as artists. Remembering that we must have freedom of expression we will also respect political acts and have links with feminist and other artists' groups.

3. TO BE A COOPERATIVE GROUP

With group expansion we will work towards a centre operated by women where talents may be shared e.g. musicians and writers working together; and where workshops, concerts, recitals, exhibitions, readings etc. may be held.

Christchurch Women's Artists Group — Minute Book Alexander Turnbull Library Ref No:84–072A-1/02: 1974–1977.

The *Star* article continues—

> Ms McPherson believes women are a "disadvantaged group" because very few women reach the level of success of many males. "Lack of confidence is the main thing," she said. "I had difficulty gaining confidence and I think a lot of women are the same way. We want to give creative women the support they may think is lacking," Ms McPherson said. She said the group intends working towards a centre operated by women where talents may be shared, with musicians, painters and writers working together. The group also intends to have contact with feminist and other artist groups.



Heather and her son Carrick (Rick) sitting in park, 1976. Photographer possibly P. Barr.

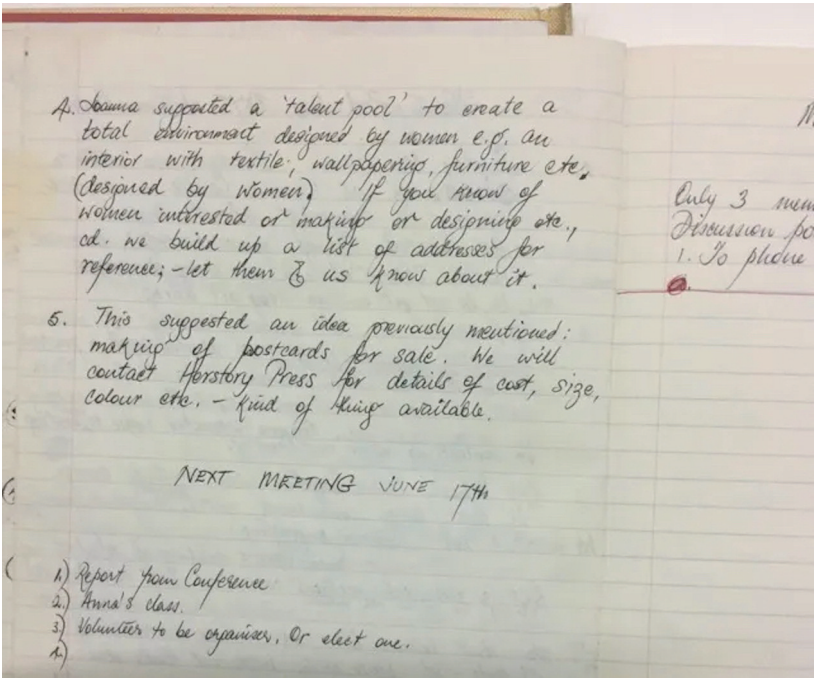
For a while, the group struggled. A newsletter placed towards the beginning of the early minute book, perhaps from late 1974, gives some of the reasons. Headed DO WE NEED A WOMEN ARTIST'S GROUP it reads—

> Participation in the group has not increased, partly because many women are afraid of being thought feminists, partly because most of us have families, artistic and other commitments, partly because none of us has have made an effort to enlist new members.
>
> We now have a permanent place to meet and are asked to make only a small contribution for its use: the Women's Centre, 249 Kilmore Street, which is thriving. Five groups of women use it regularly for meetings, it has many women staying overnight or longer and it has passed its sixth month of operating with a growing membership. One of the original aims of our group was to work towards a place where creative women can meet and talk together...the cooperative. The Women's Centre is a great starting place — one of the smaller rooms can be used when the main room is taken — and there is no reason why we should not join in activities of other groups by providing speakers or readers...by offering paintings for.. hire??
>
> NEXT MEETING
> Women's Centre, 249 Kilmore St, 7.45p.m.
>
> Visitors:
>
> Meantime, please think over the following questions for next meeting — if you can't come could you possibly post replies back?

> 1. Tuesday still seems rather a difficult night — which night suits you best.
>
> 2. Have you any ideas for enlivening either/or increasing membership. One suggestion: that we each take responsibility for one night: either to provide a speaker or show/talk about own work.
>
> And — work well. Remember there are others out there, [& a deleted word ?'too'?, in a characteristically-'Heather' way.]

And look at that 'And — work well. Remember there are others out there'. Decades later, working alone at home, I'm still warmed to read this.

The group grew, eventually, and produced the Women's Art Environment at the Canterbury Society of Arts in 1977, probably inspired by Judy Chicago's 1972 *Womanhouse* and perhaps building on Joanna's suggestion at an early-ish Women Artists Group meeting.


4. Joanna suggested a 'talent pool' to create a total environment designed by women e.g. an interior with textile, wallpapering, furniture etc, (designed by women) If you know of women interested or making or designing etc, ed. we build up a list of addresses for reference; - let them & us know about it.

5. This suggested an idea previously mentioned: making of postcards for sale. We will contact Herstory Press for details of cost, size, colour etc. - kind of things available.

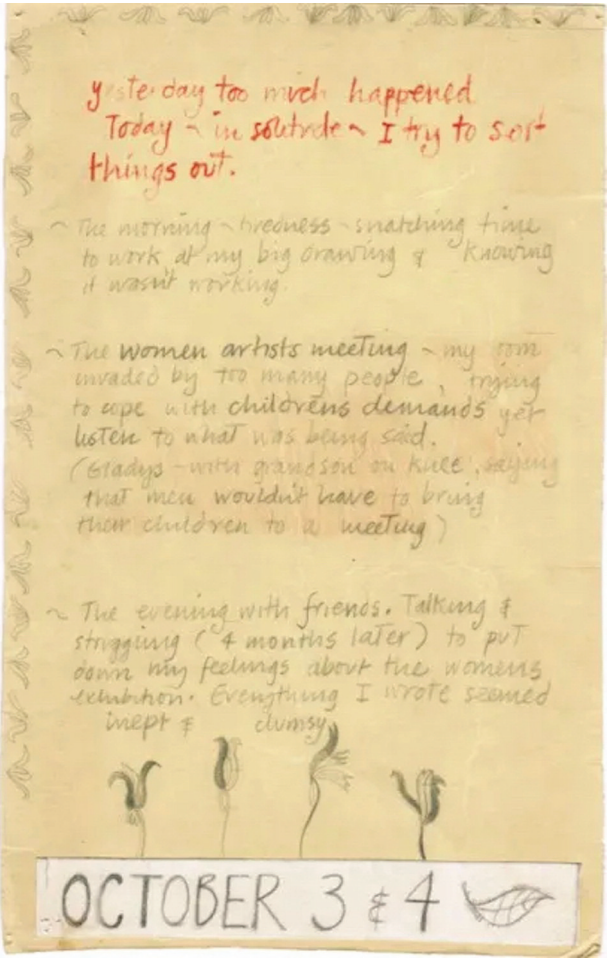
NEXT MEETING JUNE 17th

1) Report from Conference
2) Anna's class.
3) Volunteer to be organiser. Or elect one.
4)

Only 3 men
Discussion po
1. To phone

Christchurch Women's Artists Group — Minute Book Alexander Turnbull Library Ref No:84-072A-1/02 (1974–1977) ?1975, in Heather's handwriting.

When Joanna organised *A Season's Diaries* — exhibited at the Victoria University Library in Wellington in late 1977 and later in Christchurch and Hamilton — five of the seven artists included were also part of the Women Artists Group: Joanna, Heather, Allie Eagle, Anna Keir and Gladys Gurney. (The other two were Bridie Lonie and I.)



Anna Keir A Season's Diaries (1977, detail) 22.5 x 14cm at widest points pencil & watercolour on light card. All Anna's A Season's Diaries *work now owned by Auckland Art Gallery, and all Saj (Gladys) Gurney's by the Alexander Turnbull Library.*

And from Women Artists Group's modest beginnings came seven issues of Spiral, the women artists' journal Heather planned. Spiral was a 'floating' imprint. The collective for each issue — and later

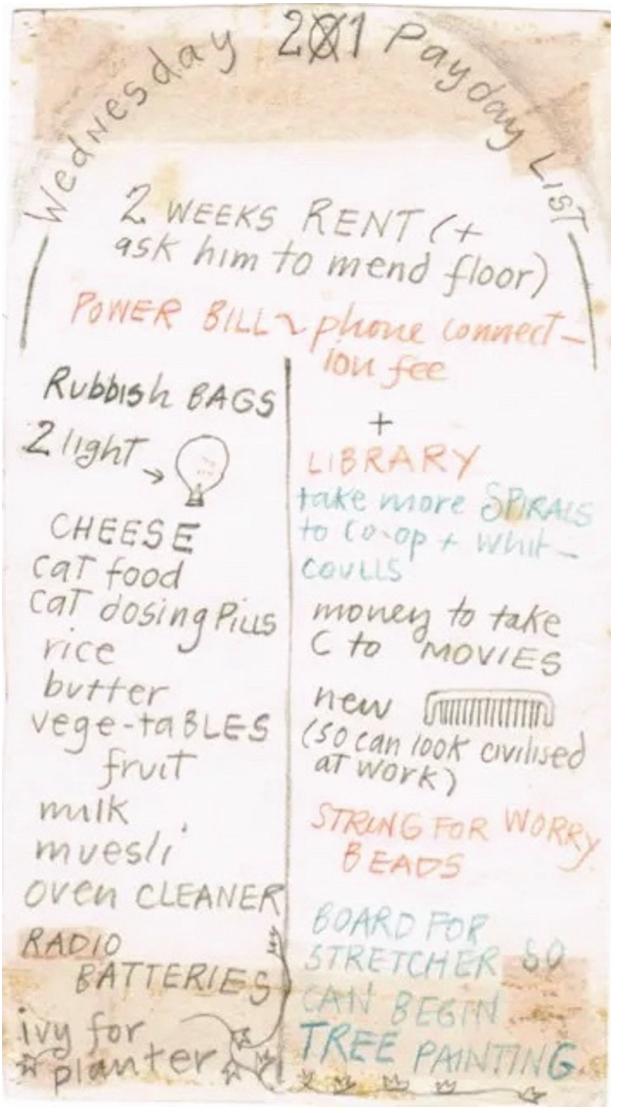
each book, video or audio project — was autonomous, whether in Christchurch or in Wellington, the Coromandel or Dunedin.

Anna Keir describes her experience of joining the Women Artists Group and of Heather's support in *AWPB*—

> My first contact with someone who was consciously thinking about the issues surrounding art and gender was in 1974: Allie Eagle who was then Exhibitions Officer at the Robert McDougall Gallery and documenting women's work came and photographed some of my stuff. Then in 1975 I began going to meetings of the Christchurch women artists group. I was twenty-four, had just finished art school and teachers college and was teaching part-time and trying to do my own work as well. I can't remember a lot about those early meetings but I do remember Heather McPherson... ringing me and asking how my work was going. I immediately started telling her about teaching until she said 'I don't mean that'. It seems such a minor thing but it meant a lot to me then.[4]

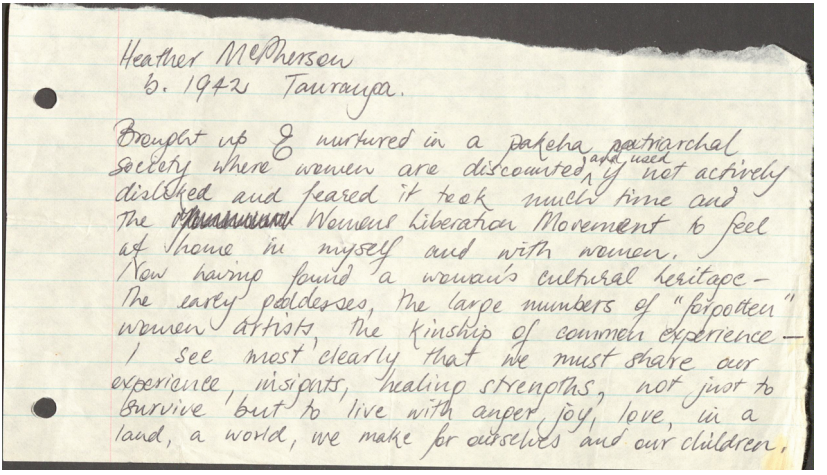
Anna helped distribute *Spiral 2*, late in 1977; and she took Heather's son Rick ('C' for 'Carrick') to the movies.

4. *AWPB*: 157.



Anna Keir 'A Season's Diaries' (1977, detail, 15 x 8.5 cm lead and colour pencils on paper, with double-sided tape marks from attachment to fabric)

Heather was also one of the founding group of the Women's Gallery in Wellington (1980–84) and unlike most of the founding group she worked there for a time, as in-house co-ordinator of Women & Violence in 1981. Around then, she drafted this bio.



Heather McPherson
b. 1942 Tauranga.

Brought up & nurtured in a pakeha patriarchal society where women are discounted, and if not actively disliked and feared it took much time and The Women's Liberation Movement to feel at home in myself and with women. Now having found a woman's cultural heritage — the early goddesses, the large numbers of "forgotten" women artists, the kinship of common experience — I see most clearly that we must share our experience, insights, healing strengths, not just to survive but to live with anger, joy, love, in a land, a world, we make for ourselves and our children.

Heather's draft bio.

After its first four issues from the Christchurch collectives, Spiral became a floating imprint, often a publisher of last resort. Collectives Heather wasn't part of, based at the Women's Gallery, published her first collection of poems, *A Figurehead: A Face*, New Zealand's second book of poems by an 'out' lesbian, and two more books, *The House of the Talking Cat* by J. C. Sturm in 1983 and *the bone people* by Keri Hulme in 1984. After the gallery closed, two more Spiral collectives published *Amazon Songs* by Saj (Gladys Gurney) in 1987 and Hilary Baxter's *The Other Side of Dawn* in 1987. In 1999, Jane Zusters & Sue Fitchett used the Spiral imprint to publish their poems and images in *Charts & Soundings: Some Small Navigation Aids*.

. . .

Spiral also represented groups of New Zealand women writers at three international feminist book fairs. Writer Bub Bridger went to London on Spiral's behalf in 1984. Two years later, Heather travelled to the 2d International Feminist Book Fair in Oslo with a Spiral group that included Arapera Blank, Irihapeti Ramsden, Jacquie Sturm, Patricia Grace, Stephanie Baxter and me; and Heather wrote about travelling with Arapera.[5] And in 1988, Irihapeti and I lugged more suitcases of books to the 3d International Feminist Book Fair, in Barcelona.

From the late 90s to the early 2000s, Heather advised and supported the Spiral/Women's Gallery *Getting Free* project. Bridie also lovingly supported Juanita Ketchel's oral history-based inquiry into violence, resilience and recovery, in Dunedin; and a video component in Wellington recorded aspects of the lives and work of Irihapeti Ramsden, as the architect of cultural safety who, with Miriama Evans and me was a member of the Spiral collective that published *The House of the Talking Cat* and *the bone people*; matakite Wai Turoa Morgan; artist Maria MacKay; Allie Eagle and her mother Lorna Mitchell; and Galvan Macnamara (James Mack) who as an advisory officer at the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council had years earlier advocated strongly for taxpayer funding for the Women's Gallery. Another Spiral group worked on the archives of actor/painter/filmmaker Shirley Grace (Gruar, 1949–2000).

5. See Arapera's section of *Spiral 8*. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/spiral-8-setting-the-work-table



Allie Eagle. Photographer Shirley Grace.

Heather once articulated her motivation to produce Spiral in this way –

> I worked with the material we received — that it didn't reflect our own reality didn't bother me too much, it was the idea of women working together for women's voices to be heard, positively, that was the aim, and the amalgam of arts — photographers as well as poets, writers, painters etc. Not so much the content as the fact of presence and capability.[6]

And for me, Heather's motivations also seemed to permeate, subtly and not-so-subtly, the Women Artists Group, Spiral and Women's Gallery projects that followed, from the Women's Art Environment and *A Season's Diaries* in 1977 to exhibitions like *Women in Violence* or *Mothers* and their associated programmes (both 1981), to the refusal of one Spiral collective to 'edit' Keri Hulme's *the bone people* and the development of individual chapters in *A Women's Picture Book* (produced by a Spiral/Women's Gallery group). On and on.

As this series attempts to record aspects of the lives and work of some of the many women affected by Heather's initiative, ideas and warm support and by her ongoing influence, it particularly endorses the idea that Canadian feminist Nicole Brossard expressed, in *Trivia* in 1986—

> Each woman must repeat her story at least once in her life, with passion and with hope, as a kind of inscription (*Trivia 8*).

6. *AWPB*: 40.

It also celebrates each woman's sovereignty, that her story is hers; every woman is the authority on her own life.

As photographer Mary Bailey wrote on Facebook the other day, after she told some of her story—

> My efforts were a small part of a whole that many women invented and drove.[7]

That's true for everyone who's part of this complex 40-year story. Although this is the moment to acknowledge one of us, Heather, who started a movement that morphs and continues, the digital revolution means it's easy to include your work too. Please feel very welcome to share any information you have, or to email if you'd like to contribute a post of your own to this project.

7. See Mary's story at 'Momma Don't Allow Me To Whistle' below.



Heather and Lina Wang, Te Henga 2016, after a portrait session, perhaps the last session. Photographer Allie Eagle.

THE BLUE HOUSE (1974-76; 2016)

Heather McPherson & Marian Evans

I haven't been able to check this with Heather. But an old mate who visited the Blue House and worked at the Women's Gallery and at Spiral listened to my argument and said 'Oh no. You're mistaken about the Blue House's influence on Heather's work and ideas'.

'I've based this on the available documents,' I said. 'And I'm not saying that only the Blue House was significant. But she mentioned it and published poems about it, in several places'.

After a longish chat, my mate absolutely wasn't persuaded that the limited documents available provided a robust framework for my argument. I thought they did and I at least wanted to give it a go. Because of that conversation, I welcome comments even more than usual, on the Spiral Collectives Facebook page. — Marian Evans

> It's not about knocking on closed doors. It's about building our own house and having our own door.

— filmmaker Ava DuVernay (*Selma*, *Queen Sugar*, *13th*, *A Wrinkle in Time* on its way, filming partly in New Zealand; and founder of Array,[1] which distributes and amplifies independent films by people of colour and by women, globally).

When I read documents women send me for this project and re-read what Spiral founder Heather McPherson herself has written, I'm struck by some similarities between Spiral's beginnings and Ava DuVernay's inspiring statement. Spiral, and later the Women's Gallery, were also about 'building our own house and having our own door' and in the 1970s the Blue House in Christchurch — and its associated culture — was a precursor of that.

The Blue House was on the corner of Trafalgar Street and Dover Street. It was already a women's house in 1974 and still a women's house in 1976, before a fire. Its full story waits to be told and I haven't yet seen a single photograph.

Heather describes the Blue House in the index to *A Women's Picture Book* (*AWPB*)–

> The Blue House was a women's house in Christchurch where Saj [Gladys Gurney, 1934-, a contributor to *A Season's Diaries*] and other writers/artists/lesbians lived. There was a dancing party there most Friday or Saturday nights; because of its central location and

1. https://arraynow.com/about-array/

spacious living room it was also a women's meeting place. No longer extant.[2]

As a women's meeting place the Blue House was central to various lesbian activities, so it's not surprising that the first issue of the *Spiral* journal was put together there. According to Heather—

> The physical putting-together was done by a group of lesbians circling great stacks of pages in the centre of the Blue House sittingroom floor.[3]

And the culture within that community, spread over multiple sites, affected how Spiral developed and later how the Women's Gallery developed. Take selection, for instance. In selecting for that first Spiral, Heather —

> ...worked with the material received — that it didn't reflect our own reality didn't bother me too much, it was the idea of women working together for women's voices to be heard, positively, that was the aim, and the amalgam of arts — photographers as well as poets, painters etc. Not so much the content as the fact of presence and capability, in my head at least.[4]

2. *A Women's Picture Book: 25 Women Artists of Aotearoa (New Zealand)* edited by Bridie Lonie, Marian Evans and Tilly Lloyd, a Women's Gallery/Spiral group 1988: 266. Wellington, Government Printing Office. Available to read and download — https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/a-womens-picture-book
3. *AWPB*: 40.
4. *AWPB*: 40.

That philosophy certainly carried over to the Women's Gallery although we also made individual invitations to women whose work we believe would suit a particular theme or form. Community participation — through assistance with putting together Spiral and with fundraising — also implies accountability to the wider community for something that represents them.

> It seems to me artists are representative of groups of their culture, that they are in fact the spokeswomen or spokespeople of their culture, of their particular group, and to do this they must have the input, the feeding from the group too so that is a participatory process.[5]

For Heather, this meant that when she became interested in Gertrude Stein's language experiments, 'so innovative, and containing what you might call a gut of amazing meaning', and experimented with something similar, and found that she was 'no longer accessible to the women around me', she modified her approach. Nevertheless, two of her experimental stein songs for the blue house were included in *A Figurehead: A Face*, the first monograph Spiral published and New Zealand's second collection of poems by an out lesbian.[6]

5. Heather, *AWPB*: 41.
6. The first was Miriam Saphira's *I Ask of You* Papers 1978.

stein songs for the blue house

(i)

O daughter o sister sweet mothering muddlefoot

pull back the door Glad
plug in the jug Kit
roll up the rug Susie
turn up the gram Mill

shake out night's hide for sound to pour out

here women are spreading toss heading and shedding
undoing the room in a tanglefoot bangledin laughing
and lark rudder
bottom bunch arm flock and gleam into eyelids and
crylids drop streamers and maze
blood beats a much dance a wild dance thrive o alive
dance goes wheeling and snapping uncracking exacting
the stiff spine to undulance knees and slip hips
loosing old overcoats worn wan past wanting to long
skirt the floorboards softly for falls
while light bulbs spill tipsy and discs on the wall
splash and deep coloured air waves entice and derange
in a spell dance the well dance the drown dance down
swell under wrist under elbow and flare
to open the the blue house is opening and blooming
on Friday the blue house blooms steep dancing red
rooms the women are dancing a dancing red moon

9

from Heather McPherson's A Figurehead: A Face *1982.*

(ii)

Could anyone any one love anyone any one?
Any one anyone love one for loving and any one
love one and love one another an other like birth?
In dancing in changing of partners
o reach –
needing and heeding not needing though reading
half search half grasp unclasp and gone –
move and remove and intrude with the feet beat
the pink beat the eye sweet prospecting whose
fetching a body breed –
sweet lead to power plead: release o increase
me go under go higher go wanting o wanting come
in till I join you in more till you join me o
cloister the join –
till touch the guitarist softens the strum till
a sleeve sweeps her cheek –
till touch the tight stringer disentagles her
theme –
out of a red fist whose clutch stifles luminous
clutch augurs ominous tossed to the harper who
kindles a grace note whose eyes swing a monsoon
to spin in a fingertip spin out of foliage under
a breast dip where breakers change role –
then might be any one any one anyone might be a one
to be knowing with growing any one might be a love

10

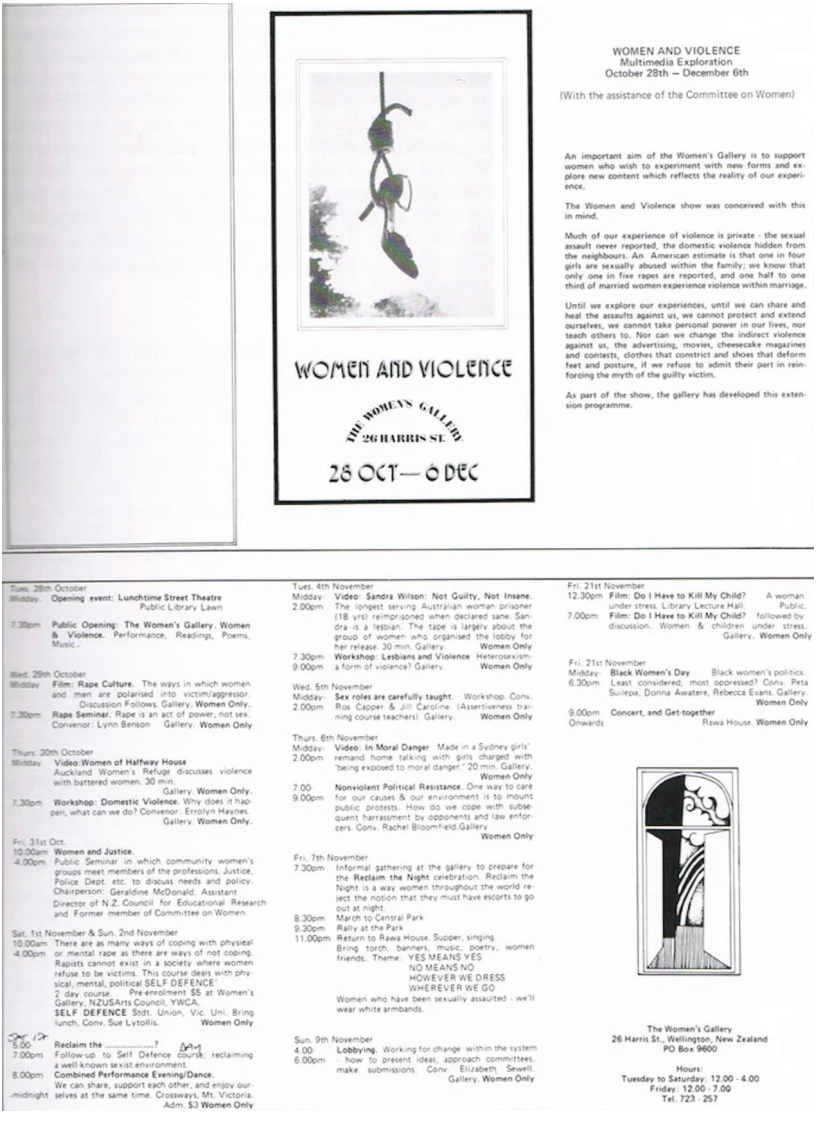
from Heather McPherson's A Figurehead: A Face *1982.*

SIMILARITIES WITH THE WOMEN'S GALLERY

Community participation and accountability were key at the Women's Gallery too as 'our own house with our own door', first at 26 Harris Street, an industrial building in central Wellington from 1980-81, and then in an old house on the other side of the central city, at 323 Willis Street from 1982-84.

And community participation and accountability were things that made working there very challenging, because the diversity of participation meant there were also very diverse views on accountability. Everyone had her dream of what a women's gallery could be and what we should be doing about it. Often we couldn't meet expectations.

On the other hand the support and ideas and artistic and political contributions offered were often sustaining and beautiful and illuminating, as when Heather initiated and shared co-ordination of *Women & Violence*.



WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

THE WOMEN'S GALLERY
26 HARRIS ST

28 OCT — 6 DEC

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE
Multimedia Exploration
October 28th — December 6th

(With the assistance of the Committee on Women)

An important aim of the Women's Gallery is to support women who wish to experiment with new forms and explore new content which reflects the reality of our experience.

The Women and Violence show was conceived with this in mind.

Much of our experience of violence is private - the sexual assault never reported, the domestic violence hidden from the neighbours. An American estimate is that one in four girls are sexually abused within the family; we know that only one in five rapes are reported, and one half to one third of married women experience violence within marriage.

Until we explore our experiences, until we can share and heal the assaults against us, we cannot protect and extend ourselves, we cannot take personal power in our lives, nor teach others to. Nor can we change the indirect violence against us, the advertising, movies, cheesecake magazines and contests, clothes that constrict and shoes that deform feet and posture, if we refuse to admit their part in reinforcing the myth of the guilty victim.

As part of the show, the gallery has developed this extension programme.

Tues. 28th October
Midday. **Opening event: Lunchtime Street Theatre** Public Library Lawn

7.30pm **Public Opening: The Women's Gallery. Women & Violence.** Performance, Readings, Poems, Music.

Wed. 29th October
Midday **Film: Rape Culture.** The ways in which women and men are polarised into victim/aggressor. Discussion Follows. Gallery. **Women Only.**
7.30pm **Rape Seminar.** Rape is an act of power, not sex. Convenor: Lynn Benson Gallery. **Women Only**

Thurs. 30th October
Midday **Video:Women of Halfway House** Auckland Women's Refuge discusses violence with battered women. 30 min. Gallery. **Women Only.**
7.30pm **Workshop: Domestic Violence.** Why does it happen, what can we do? Convenor: Errolyn Haynes. Gallery. **Women Only.**

Fri. 31st Oct.
10.00am **Women and Justice.**
4.00pm Public Seminar in which community women's groups meet members of the professions, Justice, Police Dept. etc. to discuss needs and policy. Chairperson: Geraldine McDonald, Assistant Director of N.Z. Council for Educational Research and Former member of Committee on Women.

Sat. 1st November & Sun. 2nd November
10.00am There are as many ways of coping with physical or mental rape as there are ways of not coping. Rapists cannot exist in a society where women refuse to be victims. This course deals with physical, mental, political SELF DEFENCE
2 day course. Pre-enrolment $5 at Women's Gallery, NZUSArts Council, YWCA.
SELF DEFENCE Stdt. Union, Vic. Uni. Bring lunch. Conv. Sue Lytollis. **Women Only**

5.00 **Reclaim the .....?**
7.00pm Follow-up to Self Defence course; reclaiming a well-known sexist environment.
8.00pm **Combined Performance Evening/Dance.**
-midnight We can share, support each other, and enjoy ourselves at the same time. Crossways, Mt. Victoria. Adm. $3 **Women Only**

Tues. 4th November
Midday- **Video: Sandra Wilson: Not Guilty, Not Insane.**
2.00pm The longest serving Australian woman prisoner (18 yrs) reimprisoned when declared sane. Sandra is a lesbian. The tape is largely about the group of women who organised the lobby for her release. 30 min. Gallery. **Women Only**
7.30pm- **Workshop: Lesbians and Violence** Heterosexism-
9.00pm a form of violence? Gallery. **Women Only**

Wed. 5th November
Midday- **Sex roles are carefully taught.** Workshop. Conv.
2.00pm Ros Capper & Jill Caroline (Assertiveness training course teachers) Gallery. **Women Only**

Thurs. 6th November
Midday- **Video: In Moral Danger** Made in a Sydney girls'
2.00pm remand home talking with girls charged with 'being exposed to moral danger'/ 20 min. Gallery. **Women Only**
7.00- **Nonviolent Political Resistance.** One way to care
9.00pm for our causes & our environment is to mount public protests. How do we cope with subsequent harrassment by opponents and law enforcers. Conv. Rachel Bloomfield Gallery **Women Only**

Fri. 7th November
7.30pm Informal gathering at the gallery to prepare for the **Reclaim the Night** celebration. Reclaim the Night is a way women throughout the world reject the notion that they must have escorts to go out at night.
8.30pm March to Central Park
9.30pm Rally at the Park
11.00pm **Return to Rawa House.** Supper, singing. Bring torch, banners, music, poetry, women friends. Theme: YES MEANS YES
NO MEANS NO
HOWEVER WE DRESS
WHEREVER WE GO
Women who have been sexually assaulted - we'll wear white armbands.

Sun. 9th November
4.00 **Lobbying.** Working for change within the system
6.00pm - how to present ideas, approach committees, make submissions. Conv. Elizabeth Sewell. Gallery. **Women Only**

Fri. 21st November
12.30pm **Film: Do I Have to Kill My Child?** A woman under stress. Library Lecture Hall. Public.
7.00pm **Film: Do I Have to Kill My Child?** followed by discussion. Women & children under stress. Gallery. **Women Only**

Fri. 21st November
Midday- **Black Women's Day** Black women's politics.
6.30pm Least considered, most oppressed? Conv. Peta Suilepa, Donna Awatere, Rebecca Evans. Gallery. **Women Only**
9.00pm **Concert, and Get-together**
Onwards Rawa House. **Women Only**

The Women's Gallery
26 Harris St., Wellington, New Zealand
PO Box 9600

Hours:
Tuesday to Saturday: 12.00 - 4.00
Friday: 12.00 - 7.00
Tel. 723 - 257

Women's Gallery Women & Violence *leaflet 1980 designed by Sharon Alston, image by Mary Bailey*

And later, when Barb McDonald, Sharon Alston and others were co-ordinators, there were wonderful Blue House-type women's parties, up at Willis Street. They were more regular than the 26 Harris Street exhibition openings and events 1980-82, for women only or for the public, when performances or dances were held at other venues, like the *Women & Violence* performance and dance at Crossways, in Mount Victoria. Was the socialising different because the gallery was in a house in Willis Street and in an industrial building in Harris Street?

Among documents given to me this year is a letter from 1976 that provided another dimension to my reading of Heather's stein songs and my knowledge of Blue House life. It was written by one *A Season's Diaries* participant to another and there's at least one more letter with similar content, written by another participant. This letter's author has agreed to have it reproduced in full, with names replaced by initials.

> Dear X
>
> I was so glad to hear from you, have actually been contemplating writing myself. Y started smoking again, though less than before. I ripped some tablets off from the chemist which were supposed to help you give up but no way, so we're all still smoking.
>
> Sorry.
>
> I've been busy writing an article for Circle [lesbian feminist magazine] on Wimmins Music. Been stoned just about every day.

Plenty around. Getting a $17 deal tonight.

Spent 2 days this week with Z getting speed thru her & swapping for dope.

Got several books on Dyslexia out of the library and started a program of teaching A to read. Very hard going.

It was B's birthday last Sunday. Tues. night Y got C to mind D and shouted B to dinner for her present (Birthday). I dropped speed that night because I was feeling really pissed off so took off with [four friends] & we picked up some booze & went out to E's. [Three more friends] were already out there so had ourselves a good time. Stayed the night, because I don't like driving when I'm drinking, so five of us bunked down there.

I was absolutely frozen and never slept a wink.

So went to bed at 8.30pm last night, after getting stoned with Z during the day and going to the Ramada. F's into some good art now I really like it.

Went to see G the other night to pick up some hessian for boards to paint on. She cracked up over Y & I felt terrible. I didn't tell Y & please don't tell her either. G is a really nice person when her defensive exterior drops.

Hope you can come down again soon, I love it when you're here. Don't forget you're always welcome to stay with me. Lots & Lots of Love, [letter writer]. xx

. . .

The Blue House occupants' and visitors' partying and their relationships of various kinds aren't obviously represented in the work shown in *A Season's Diaries*, the CSA women's art environment of 1977, or published in Spiral, or exhibited at the Women's Gallery. But I think that the Blue House's influence persisted in other ways, thematically and theoretically.

For instance, a focus on mothers and children, in Women's Gallery exhibitions like *Mothers* and *Children & Childhood*. A focus on 'the (then) 'unmentionables'. A focus on the ephemeral, as also in *A Season's Diaries*, shaped by the ideas of its initiator Joanna Paul–

> I don't wish to separate the significant and everyday actions but to bring them to close as possible together. It is natural for women to do this; their exercise and their training and their artistry is in daily living. Painting for me as a woman is an ordinary act — about the great meaning in ordinary things. Anonymity pattern utility quietness relatedness.[7]

According to Heather–

7. Written for *Woman's Art*, curated by Alison Mitchell (Allie Eagle) for the Robert McDougall Gallery 1975 and reprinted many times since. The preceding part of the statement reads: 'For a woman painting is not a job, not even a vocation. It is a part of life, subject to the strains and joys of domestic existence. I cannot paint unless the house is in order; unless I paint I don't function well in my domestic roles. Each thing is important. The idea that one sacrifices other values for art is alien to me, and I think to all women whose calling it is to do and be many things. To concentrate all meaning and energy into a work of art is to leave life dry and banal. I don't wish to separate the significant and the everyday actions, but to bring them as close together as possible.'

> Some women...like Joanna Paul had been using/exploring their domestic interiors through their paintings. I'd initially stepped over that — the child-rearing bit, as being outside the artists' scope...Anyway, Linda Nochlin's article 'Why are there no great women artists?', we discussed in a lot in 19675. And we, or I, wanted to redefine greatness in terms of content and its relative place in our lives. The main thing was that we saw art as artist's process, it has to arise from a specific focus, and the unmentionables, whether childcare or menstruation, being part of our lives should be part of our art. And the art was made among children and dishes, that sort of thing...[8]

But the issues for mothers associated with the Blue House, where 'even women who didn't have children were often connected with women who did'[9] were different than for those who weren't, like Joanna and me, who met when we were both married to artists and living in tiny Seacliff around 1971–72.

I re-found a paper bag of 1970s letters Joanna wrote me when I researched my PhD thesis, where I included excerpts from some of them.[10] They refer to completely different environments than the Blue House's was at the time. In one letter from January 1976, Joanna, pregnant, wrote–

8. *AWPB*: 40.
9. *AWPB*: 40.
10. http://www.victoria.ac.nz/som/study/postgraduate/publications/MARIAN.EVANS.PHD.FINAL26Februarythesis.pdf

> I shall simply sit up on our green hill & enjoy having a baby. The yellow bassinette under the plum tree, knowing too that Maggie who was terribly strenuously bored will be much happier for a young one. & all will be well if I put painting & films & such nonsense out of my head more or less for a while. It's only when I sit down at a painting & Maggie awake that the clash comes. When ones so terribly directed one way, the pull when mummy come & see Polly Dolly asleep in the [?possum] room–is frustrating to breaking pt. How does Bill cope? Jeffrey has more tolerance & feeds Maggie magazines while he paints, quite happily. Anyway, Im no more a natural child rearer than Jeffery [sic] is a 'natural' bread winner.

My world was different then, too. A few years later, perhaps around the time that the Women's Gallery started, in another undated letter, Joanna wrote–

> Your note unnerves me, the pain in it. I can feel you jangled tired strained by all you do. Other — that mystery of domestic misery which is always so private. However I have my other vision of you, stepping thru the fence holding daffodils, silver spring sea light everywhere. , & coming from the shower with wet hair and the little leather skirt. How those luxurys told didn't they in that raw place & the struggles with money & babies — the flowers cake camembert & brief meetings[.]

We never had the same issues, especially around our male children, as mothers who were associated with the Blue House. Heather again–

> I'd leapt from liberal academic to lesbian separatism, but then the younger lesbians without children said 'Hey, how come you're a lesbian separatist but you're bringing up male children?' And this forced a rethink, those of us who continued to bring up male children had to modify our positions.[11]

But I think we did share Heather's belief, in 'building our own house and having our own door'. Joanna did so collectively only briefly, I believe, although she certainly continued to do so as an individual artist and writer in many mediums, possibly more successfully than any New Zealand artist of her generation. But during those few years from about 1974, when she joined Heather's women artists group, until about 1980, she was intermittently a highly effective activist in the women's art movement, as I was reminded this year when I read the relevant documents in the Alexander Turnbull Library: her initiatives even included approaching the local film society to suggest that it show slides of women's work before its screenings.

For Heather, beyond welcoming community participation and accountability from diverse women ('that it didn't reflect our own reality didn't bother me too much'), there seems to have been two elements to 'building our own house'. The first was eliminating the distinction between 'artists' and 'others', as also happened in the

11. *AWPB*: 40.

CSA Women's Environment in 1977, originally proposed by Joanna, and in her *A Season's Diaries* in the same year—

> I feel that we are all artists in some way, and at the time we were all much more idealistic in saying look there is no barrier between galleries and women, that in fact, women belong in galleries, that is, women as artists, and you are all women as artists essentially anyway. We were trying to democratise and radicalise the whole art scene as being not something removed and precious and part of an establishment patriarchy, hierarchy, we were trying to say, look, this is our space and look, you are us. We are not 'here we are and there are you' as consumers; taking away the whole product and consumer meaning from it..[12]

The other element, which I certainly didn't share at the beginning of my involvement with the Women's Gallery, was the bringing together of the connections of a women's heritage, of a spirituality, of women's relationships in this enormously long context, a culmination of a very long herstory.

Because of this framework, when Heather exhibited at the Women's Gallery Opening Show in early 1980, 'the opportunity for me as a writer to work in a visual medium [for the second time] was really exciting'. And she was–

> ...trying to say — this is where you start. And if you're trying to make a new concept it is going to look raw

12. *AWPB*: 41.

> and home-made. As Gertrude Stein said about Picasso, you start to make something new and it's ugly. Those that come afterwards can make it beautiful but when it is new it is raw.[13]

For the Women's Gallery *Opening Show*, in 'our' house with its own door, Heather made a symbolic goddess figure..



Heather and her goddess figure, Opening Show *Women's Gallery 1980. Photograph by Fiona Clark for the Women's Gallery.*

> [It] incorporated a lot of the ideas we'd been working on [at the Blue House, at the CSA exhibition and elsewhere], for example she had a hairdresser's head that was faceless and on the table beside her were cut out face shapes for women to fill in themselves, to put

13. *AWPB*: 41.

> their own face on them. And they did. So when I actually came to write the poem about doing that [the 11-part '(*Having seen past the gods, their power, we make a goddess, ours...*')], it seemed to me a beautiful culmination — that I did the thing and then wrote about it, and that was my most important poem for bringing in so many ideas...We were working on a supposition — discovery, certainty — that our spirituality was in ourselves, that it was not outside ourselves, that its manifestation was political. As were the myths, so was the manifestation of any kind of deity, as the rulers were political so the deities took the face of the rulers. The man-made god, or, as we were trying to say, the woman-made goddess. This was the whole point of having women put their own faces on her. There were some very angry ones. There were some quite beatific ones. There were some very querying (or querying?) ones. It was lovely. Then too, as in the early constructions it was made out of the scraps of the patriarchy, using an extension of pop art, ready-mades, it was a bit like that, partly because we had so little resources that once again we were using scraps, and trying to vest them with new meaning, so others could vest them with new meaning.[14]

To end this tiny Blue House party, here's two pages of 'Chant from the Goddess Stand', the last poem from *A Figurehead: A Face*.

14. *AWPB*: 41. For '(*Having seen past the gods, their power, we make a goddess, ours...*)' see *A Figurehead: A Face* https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/a-figurehead-a-face: 31.

Chant from the Goddess stand

I have been humankind
have seen more years
than I care to count
in the bandled showcase stand
the shadow behind the man

ignored or ridden or raised
a hen in a wire coop
what I have been defaced
what I shall be
is at stake

who can be your own

She who has hatched the future and reflects it
she who has clung to her vestment, never coerced
she who has been reborn and discards old skins

She of the beak sharp mind and lidded sight
she of the porcelain smile, propped in family plate
she of the stringy arms and unlaced laugh
she in the dark

She in a flowery dress and she in worker's gear
she in a bride mask, smiling
she in a scar frieze, staring
she in a gorgon's glare and elaborate sleeves
she on the roadside
she in the refuge
she in the window waving a white-gloved hand

She who was laid bleeding on white sheets
she who thrusts a wet head into the world
she who has sung a step ahead of climbers
she who moves silently, silently, barely seen

2.

She who is Nine white seasons, she who is Three
who is Rake and Rage and Tender, Holder of feeling
Keeper of the first found Key, who is abundantly
the Lovers, and the Separation Mountains, Midwife
of the dying and the Dead, who spreads the Glad
Watch open, for living Breath . . .

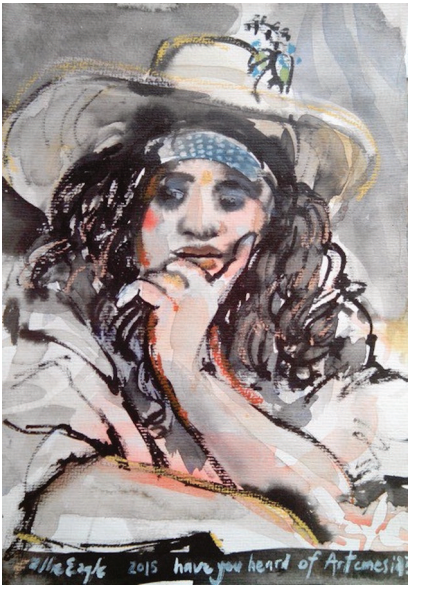
This is her journey, this is her journey
this is the journey of the woman with the bound
head freed
this is the journey of the seabird landbird
daughter sage
explorer inheritor creatrix
this is her long trek, this is her saga
this is her dream and her assumption
and her apotheosis
since she reclaimed her self
I am She is I am

who was adjunct and opponent
who was possession and white jug
who was vessel mould made soulless
now I have crossed the shallows
now I have come back
I Am I Am I Am

Heather always read the final 'I Am I Am I Am' in a way that made my hair stand on end.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF ARTEMISIA? (1979-2025)

Allie Eagle, Cushla Parekowhai, Heather McPherson, Marian Evans



Allie Eagle 'Have You Heard of Artemisia?' portrait of Kōhine in straw hat with forget-me-nots watercolour & pastel on paper 29.7x21cm 2015.

IN THE BEGINNING

Heather McPherson's 'Have You Heard of Artemisia?' was first published in *Spiral* journal;[1] then in *Herstory Diary 1980*; in *A Figurehead: A Face* Heather's first collection and Spiral's first book by a single author; in *A Women's Picture Book*.[2] In 1981, a group of women painted the poem on the side wall of the Women's Gallery, 26 Harris Street, Wellington, as part of my Matariki mural for *Women & the Environment*, co-ordinated by Bridie Lonie. Yes, that's us, on the cover of this book and the *Spiral Catalogue*.

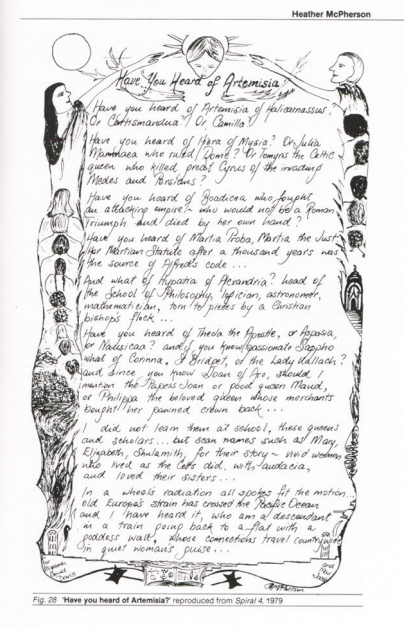


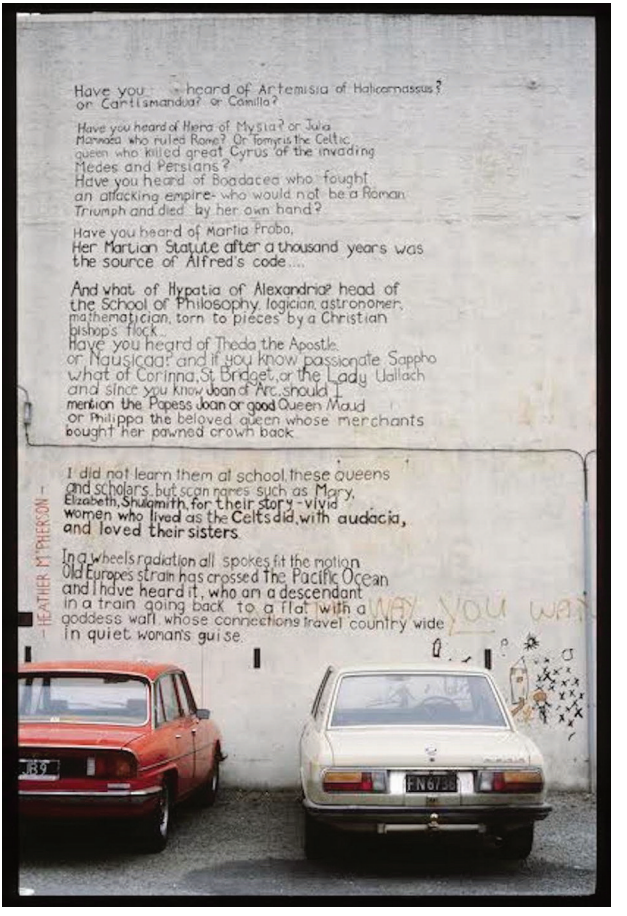
Fig. 28 **'Have you heard of Artemisia?'** reproduced from *Spiral* 4, 1979

Heather's handwritten and decorated version of Have you heard of Artemisia?

1. *Spiral 4*: 17.
2. *A Women's Picture Book: 25 Women Artists from Aotearoa New Zealand*, compiled, edited and with afterwords by Marian Evans, Bridie Lonie, Tilly Lloyd — a Women's Gallery/Spiral group GP Books 1988: 37.



From top, at work, left to right: Anna Keir, Marian Evans, Marg Leniston, Fiona Lovatt, Susie Jungersen, Bridie Lonie. Women's Gallery 26 Harris Street Te Whanganui-a-Tara 1981.



The completed section of the mural 1981. Photographer unknown.

& A WHOLE LOT LATER...

...Allie Eagle and Cushla Parekowhai worked on a collaborative methodology that gave an artist's model agency and the space to contribute to a painting.

. . .

Cushla contributed a lot. Sometimes, Cushla sat for Allie's class at Corban's in Henderson...



L-R foreground, Allie and a student, nd. Facing them, Cushla. Photographer unknown.

At other times Cushla taught the class. Cushla also spent many hours in Allie's studio at Te Henga, working and playing with her.



Allie & Cushla in Allie's studio Te Henga 2015. Photograph Julien Casenove.

On one of these days, 20 May 2015, Allie painted 'Have You Heard of Artemisia?'.

And within the text series that follows they refer to that painting

Allie Eagle

How did it go

yesterday

Cush?

Received:02:33:53pm

18–02–2016

From: Allie Eagle +64**********

CUSHLA PAREKOWHAI

Gd I think

Mde thm wrk tho– gt well underway

&n2 session ahed of tme

Louise

is vry compatible

were abl 2collabor8

str8 off the bat

Qte diff vibe

2 A Eagle avec moi

bt studnts themselves

recognised influence of yr teaching

Sum resistance

2intro ‘swift’ contour

drawing exercises

particularly

when tme frame

was shortend2

<20 sec per view

Plan 2concentr8

on drawing
nxt wk as well

– consolid8n of skill base
useful discipline 4all
@ths stage
Bn asked 2write
sumthn 4Marians
Spiral retrospectve projct
Wnt to 2do
a piece around
the drawing
u did of me
N10did as a gift
4Heathr
bt I'll talk 2u
abt tht L8r

OK u shd
go bck 2
'retreating'
& relax.
U deserve it
xcush

Sent: 03:09:34pm

18–02–2016

Delivery details

unavailable

ALLIE EAGLE +64**********

Oh

actually

I was in hospital

again

with a.f.

which I hope

has righted

on its own.

My drawing for Heather:

hmm the title

didn't please me

as it is an old difference

between us

and it wd be not so likely

I'd call it that.

We might rework that

eh, Cush?

When does Marian

want your writing by?

Glad class worked

well

Living Wisdom

is very rigourous

by no means

a retreat.

More like an advance.

Big hug

AExx

Received:03:34:57pm

18–02–2016

Cush

Crikey

didn't realize

u ws n horse-pital!

All th more reason

4u

2relax

& nt worry

abt class

Re:Heathr's pic

i wll do th writng 1st

thn show it 2u

– my idea is

more abt ME

as opposed

2u &me

Wht i'm considering

Is hw 2talk abt

wht Spiral meant

4my gener8n

& those nt directly

involvd

n th collectve

bt I wll discuss

wht I cme up wth

whn u gt bck

i like th idea of yr pic

mde now

speaking of a time

whn baby Cush

ws being influenced

by th wrk of feminists

like Heathr

bt only knew

of thm in bks

No deadline as such

bt soonr th bettr

4Marian's purpose

methinks

Gt well

Kia kaha

xcush

Sent: 04:03:14pm

18–02–2016

Delivery details: unavailable

Allie Eagle +64*********

Allie Eagle: Yes

that's all Gud

just remember

the title

we put on the pic

was not one

I was

happy w.

It came out of the bag

suddenly

and I

wrote it on

as per
your impulse
but really
it brings up
a lot of dissonance
for me
and I
would rather have
had a 2nd
go at it
with the time
to look
at options

Ata Mari-e! Allie
i remembr
hw it ws 4u
& wd like 2undrstnd
th issues more
Hwevr wht i wnt
2write abt
is th fact tht
th only
lines of Heathr's
poetry/wrk

i cd quote
or access
ws th title of th poem
in th Womens Picture Bk
i rememberd it
only becos
it lookd like 1of those
hand drawn recipes
found in 70s Hippy cookbooks
wth loads of chickpeas & illustr8ns
in th margins

That's ALL I cd do
4Heathr
& only becos
th Divine Ms Marian Evans
hd shown it 2me as a 20sumthng
with publication of
The Womens Picture Bk
i did nt engage
wth th content
of th poem
in any way
Stroppy Maori girls

like me

hd no interest in Pakeha

goddesses

witches & warrior princesses

we had

our own

& they were alive &meaningful

4us

qte diffrntly

Altho

i did nt identify

wth Artemis th huntress

i did identify

with Artemisia the Grl paintr

in her Dad's shop

surrounded

by needy boys

Thts my idea in txt!

xcush

Sent: 07:42:59am

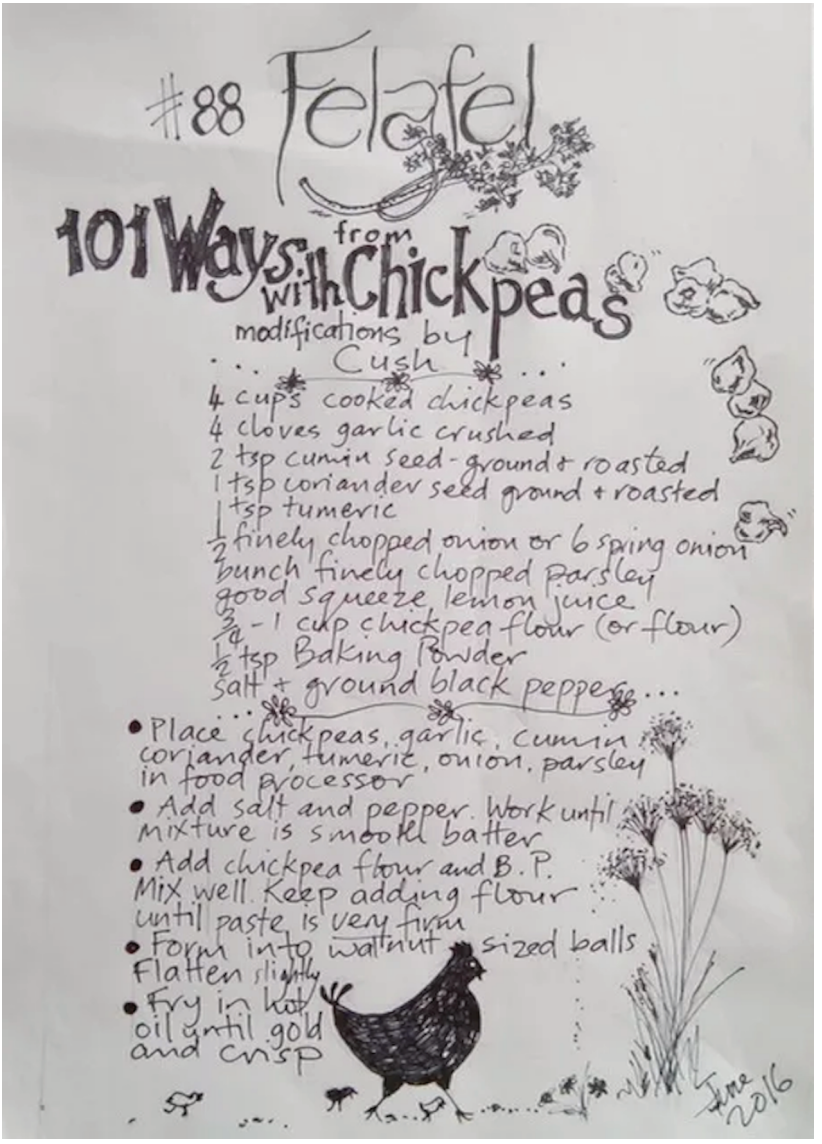
19–02–2016

Delivery details unavailable

Allie Eagle: I see

Artemisia,

that Heather
is talking about in her poem
was the Greek
goddess Artemis
but I am happier
if you reference
the Gentileschi,
Artemisia.
Since the title
goes on
my drawing…
Mmm.
Oh well
carry on
regardless!
Received: 09:46:39pm
19–02–2016



Cush's recipe.

& EVEN LATER...

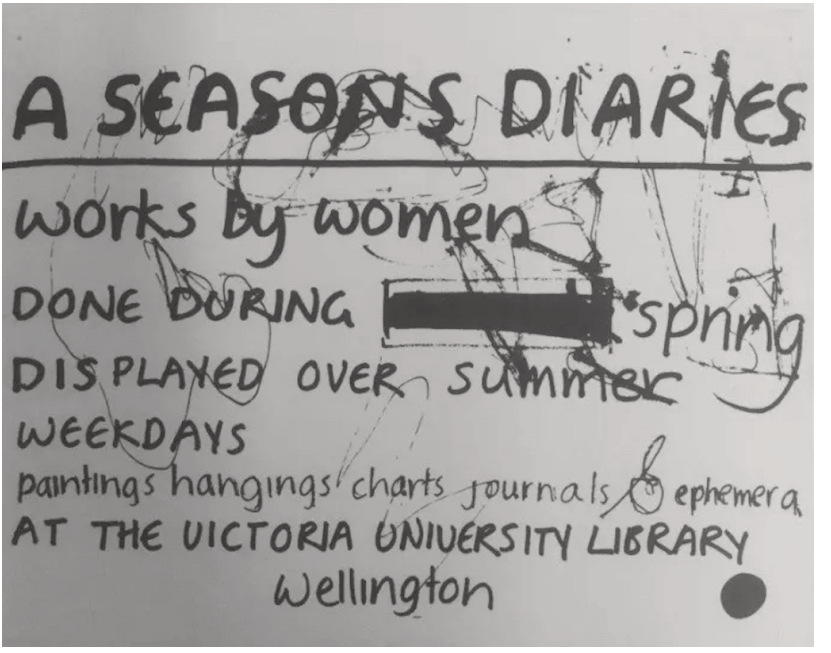
In 2019, Emer Lyons, the poet who later selected and edited Heather's *i do not cede*, wrote a beautiful tribute to 'Have You Heard of Artemisia?', as a 'classic poem' within Paula Green's *Poetry Shelf* series.[3]

In 2025, poets Janet Charman and Sue Fitchett each read the poem at the Charlotte Museum as part of the opening weekend of the Spiral exhibition co-ordinated by Joanna Osborne, who is considering setting the poem to music as a Spiral anthem.

3. 'Poetry Shelf Classic Poem: Emer Lyons on Heather McPherson' *Poetry Shelf* https://nzpoetryshelf.com/2019/02/27/poetry-shelf-classic-poem-emer-lyons-on-heather-mcpherson/

A SEASON'S DIARIES 1977-2016

Bridie Lonie et al



Joanna Paul's poster for the Victoria University Library 1977.

1978

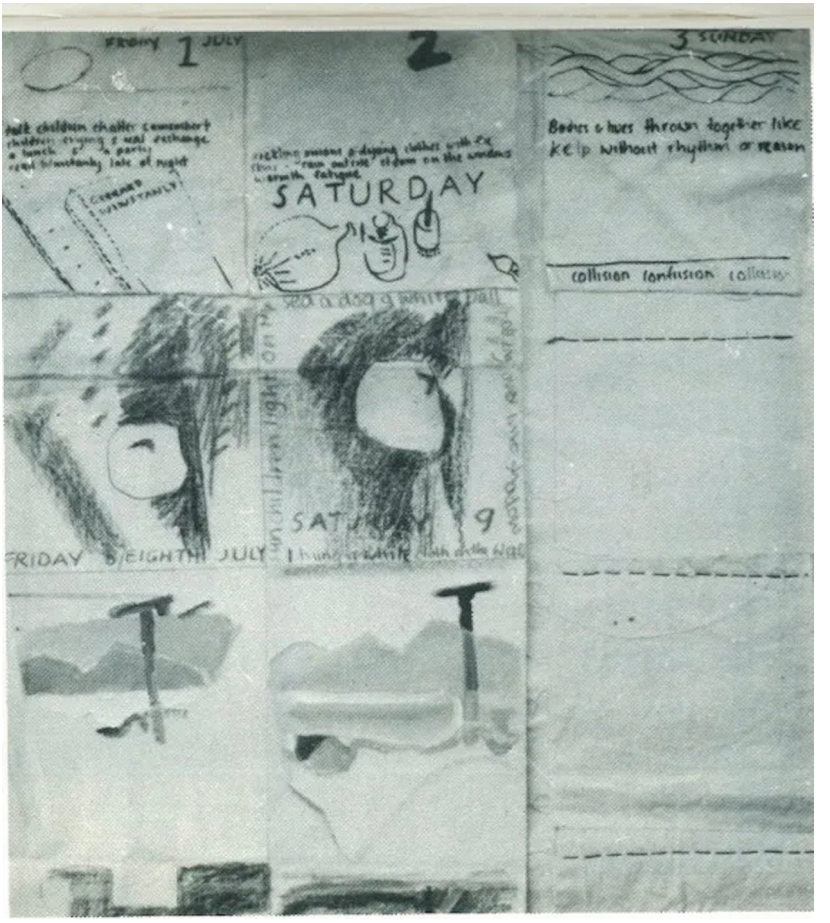
Bridie Lonie—

Six women took part, and their work was exhibited in the library of Victoria University, Wellington, in December.[1] The proposal was 'to find a form to fit the changes of each day'. Several approaches were suggested.

1. Three or four women to take a canvas or other surface measuring 3' x 3' or 4' by 4', divide the area into regular intervals or sixths numbered like a calendar, the whole to represent one month, and the named and numbered squares to be filled systematically day by day with words, marks or images that conform to and outer/inner record of the maker's life. No day was to be documented except on that day, but each square was to contain at least one element that was continuous with the previous day and at least one that was new.

2. Two women to take a canvas surface 3' x 4" or 4' x 8" and divide the area, horizontally or vertically, into seven days to represent one week.

1. Actually 7: Allie Eagle, Anna Keir, Bridie Lonie, Gladys Gurney, Heather McPherson, Joanna Paul, Marian Evans.



Joanna Paul from 'A Season's Diaries' 1977 media and dimensions not known, but canvas on canvas?

3. One woman to take a circle, diameter 3' or 4' or 6' to represent a season; the circle to be divided into three regular concentric rings, each representing one month.



Anna Keir from 'A Season's Diaries' 1977, detail, coloured pencil on paper, 22 x 14 cm.

4. One woman to make a poem or diary in which each day's entry contained something continuous with, and something different from, the day before.

5. One woman to make a montage, 6" or 8" square, or circular, and divided into twelve to represent the hours of one day.

After having worked within the discipline suggested for a month or a week or a day or a season, each woman was asked to choose and

map in her own way a second interval of time. The whole was to be regarded as susceptible to change even while it was being exhibited.

The woman who initiated the project [Joanna Paul] says of her own painting—

> For a woman painting is not a job, not even a vocation. It is a part of life, subject to the strains and joys of domestic existence. I cannot paint unless the house is in order; unless I paint I don't function well in my domestic roles. Each thing is important. The idea that one sacrifices other values for art is alien to me, and I think to all women whose calling it is to do and be many things. To concentrate all meaning and energy into a work of art is to leave life dry and banal. I don't wish to separate the significant and the everyday actions, but to bring them as close together as possible.

The women who participated hope that this exhibition will lead to others.[2]

2. Reprinted, with kind permission, from *Landfall 125*, March 1978: 63-66, except for Anna Keir's image, reproduced courtesy of the artist; and Joanna Paul's poster, from a private collection. https://medium.com/spiral-collectives/diary-of-a-season-a-proposal-for-a-womens-exhibition-fab0d373a3a0



Anna Keir from 'A Season's Diaries' 1977, detail, pencil & coloured pencil on paper 22 x 14cm.

NOTE

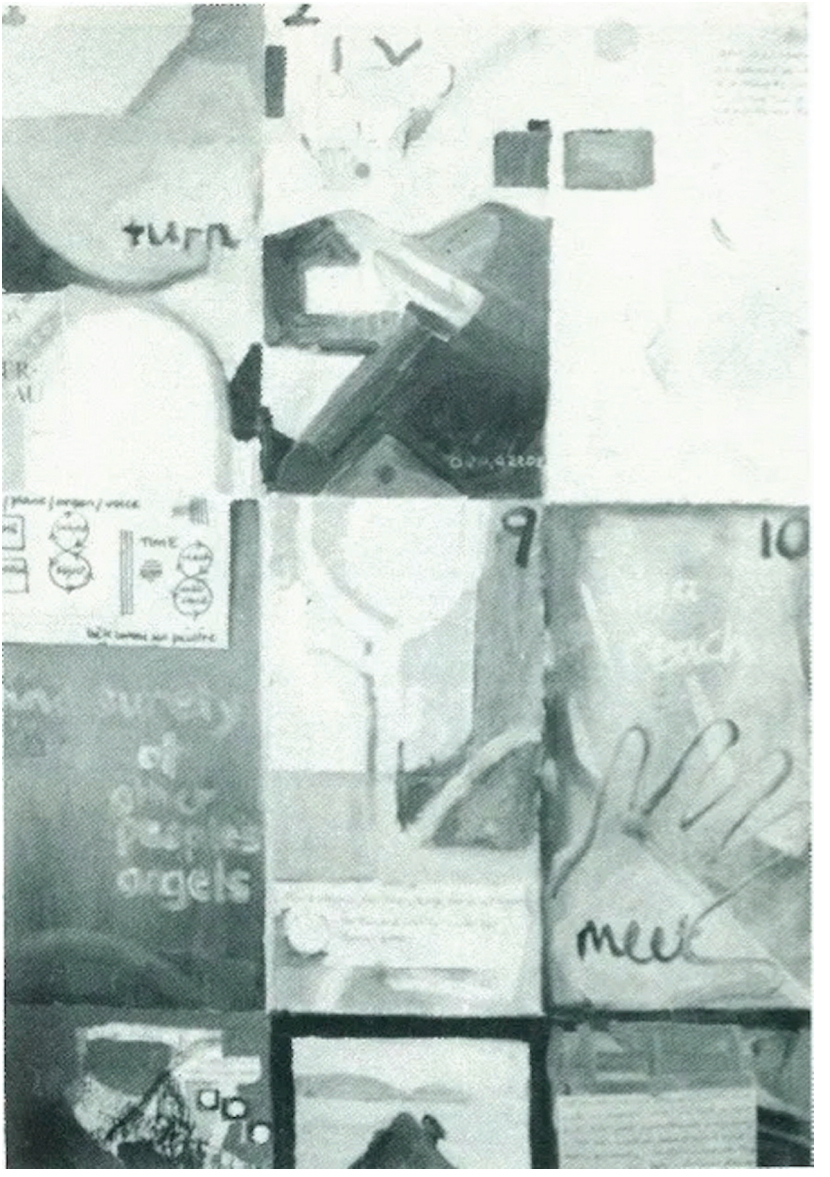
Victoria University Library asked Joanna to remove the exhibition early. It was later shown at the Women's Studies Department, Waikato University 1-7 September 1978; and in Christchurch. *A Women's Picture Book* says that *A Season's Diaries* was shown at the Canterbury Society of Arts during the Allie Eagle/Anna Keir/Jane Zusters exhibition, 1978. But Anna Keir says 'No'.

1988

Bridie Lonie–

> In 1977 Joanna Paul asked me to participate in *A Season's Diaries*: in this I had to talk about myself (paint about myself): and for years now I'd hidden myself from my work. I used the landscape as a metaphor, timidly: but the exercise brought me in touch with the women's art movement, the Christchurch women, in particular Anna Keir and Allie Eagle: Marian [Evans] I'd known for years by then. That was the first time I'd seen anything Marian had done: she seemed to find no difficulty in bringing herself openly and explicitly into the chart she wrote, with its references to the moon, to Greek poetry and to her garden. I saw that as her particular gift: I remember Joanna pointing out that it was the women who weren't 'artists' who made the most direct and effective statements (Gladys Gurney was the other). I still had too much belief in the art hierarchy to see the point.[3]

3. *A Women's Picture Book: 25 Women Artists from Aotearoa New Zealand*, compiled, edited and with afterwords by Marian Evans, Bridie Lonie, Tilly Lloyd — a Women's Gallery/Spiral group GP Books 1988: 168.



Bridie Lonie from 'A Season's Diaries' 1977, 2 x 1m acrylic on plyboard

2016

Marian Evans—

> I've looked, several times, for more information about *A Season's Diaries*, most recently at the Alexander Turnbull Library, the research library within New Zealand's National Library.
>
> So far, I've found no record of Joanna Paul's invitations to Allie Eagle (Allie), Anna Keir (Anna), Bridie Lonie (Bridie), Gladys Gurney (Gladys, aka Saj), Heather McPherson and me to join her, seven of us, altogether. I did find a *Comments Book* — the already partly-used 1976 diary of Joanna's mother Janet — that travelled with the exhibition. It is among the library's manuscripts, reference number 84–072–10/05 and tucked inside its front cover is a copy of Joanna's instructions.
>
> And the diaries themselves are mostly lost. Bridie's disappeared somewhere in Wellington's Aro Valley. In the eighties I gave mine to Joanna in Dunedin, with a later, larger, diary; she later told me someone threw them out. Gladys has hers, in a cupboard. Anna found hers, which had been broken down into its individual images and the two large cloths she attached the images to, with double-sided tape, the cloths weighted down by shells hanging from string. Heather promises to look for hers when she can. As I remember it, Allie Eagle's was a single mandala painting (see embedded Facebook dialogue below). When I remember the process of making my diary, the brief entries remind me of today's tweeting, or writing a Facebook post.

It's uncertain why Bridie isn't named as the author of the *Landfall* article. It was heavily edited by poet and editor Lauris Edmond and the last lines of Joanna's statement above — first published in the catalogue for *Woman's Art*, curated by Alison Mitchell (Allie Eagle) for the Robert McDougall Gallery in 1975 — are missing. They should read—

'I don't wish to separate the significant and everyday actions but to bring them to close as possible together. It is natural for women to do this; their exercise and their training and their artistry is in daily living. Painting for me as a woman is an ordinary act — about the great meaning in ordinary things.

Anonymity pattern utility quietness relatedness.'

Conceived two years after she wrote this, was *A Season's Diaries* part of Joanna's inquiry into 'Anonymity pattern utility quietness relatedness'? I love it that we were all anonymous when the work was shown, partly because it collapsed the boundaries between those of us who identified as artists and those who didn't. It also made it very safe for me, as someone who didn't identify as an artist, to take my domestic life into the public sphere. And was that fundamental anonymity perhaps why Bridie chose to be anonymous when she wrote about the project for *Landfall* (she can't remember)?

We had a wee email chat about it.

ME: *What do you now remember of* A Season's Diaries?

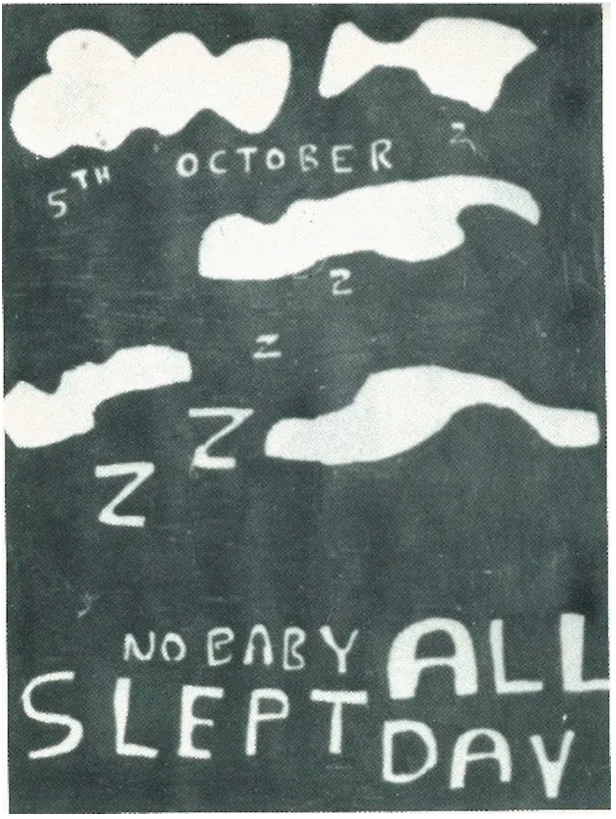
BL: My memories of *A Season's Diaries* are of its diversity, a diversity that in some ways contradicted Joanna's careful strategy. She sent us a page of handwritten instructions, asking us (or so I read them) to create a new work each day, constructed (from the second day) of an element from the previous day and the introduction of a new one. From memory, only a few of us followed this advice; indeed I couldn't quite discern the rule in Joanna's own work.

I drew up a 30 day grid on a 2 x 1 m piece of plyboard and took or discarded either shapes or objects from one day to the next. I was quite depressed about painting at the time, and found the ritual activity very helpful. It entailed a consideration of past, present and future that was grounded in what probably for Joanna would have been designed as a primarily visual record; that is, objects that conveyed meaning, symbols, and views.

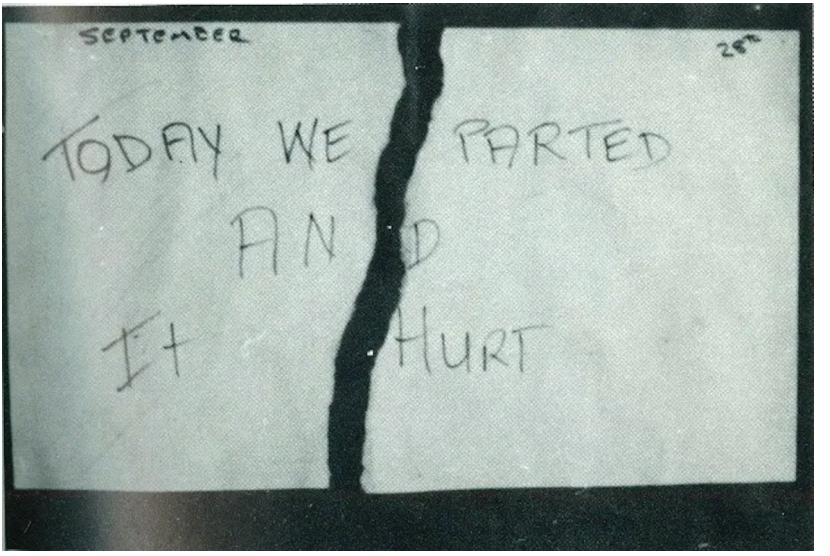
I remember how completely Gladys's work rejected the approach and how vividly it synthesized her experiences.

The later work of the Women's Gallery moved toward a more activist politics, as the roles that we played out in our private lives were aligned with the identity politics of gender and the need to resist violence against women in its many forms. Heather's exhibition *Women & Violence* was very powerful example of the confluence of artworks and political activism and representation. Wellington as the centre of lawmaking provided a core of expertise and activism. The contested position of the Women's Gallery as a women-only gallery and at times a women-only, at times a lesbian-only, space,

meant that risks could be and were taken. Heather came and stayed in Wellington, at times, as I remember, connecting the hard edge of shelters and places of refuge with a poetics that seemed blessed in its clarity and kindness.



Gladys Gurney from 'A Season's Diaries' 1977, detail, paper on A3 card.



Gladys Gurney from 'A Season's Diaries' 1977, detail, paper on A3 card.

ME: *Gaylene Preston took the photos, on the floor of our house in Oriental Terrace. And you printed them?*

BL: I was too amateur to print the photos properly — we paid Gaylene I think to photograph them but not to print them because we didn't have the cash, and then I made a truly godawful job of them at the Erskine [College, where Bridie was teaching] darkrooms, so I have always felt ashamed of that article. Not that that has anything to do with the fact that it's a piece of history.

I can just remember hanging the exhibition...I remember your delicate black ink tracery that was like staves of music, and the work of building the garden that you recorded, on the slope, and the

writing as the planting grew up the slope over the period you recorded — but that is what I remember and probably not accurate! Anna's I remember as both delicate and sinewy, people and often a wind brushing their clothing. Angels. Allie's was a round one, quartered, with yellow and reddish purples I think — it was one thing, but then as I read the instructions I realised that we had different instructions–I had forgotten that. I can only remember thinking that Heather's was like a text, but I am not even sure of that.

It is hard to remember how contested stylistic choices were. At art school I had painted abstracts for the curriculum — and for the love of them — but also diaristic images that were not for the record because figurative work was seen as an opposition, and undercut any apparent commitment to abstraction. Joanna's work was grounded in an ethics of the immanence of the everyday and honoured the recoding of life. The politics of the exhibition lay in its capture of the space of the personal in the then intrinsically political form of a women's only exhibition.

15 JUNE 2016

And then, after all the above was published online, Allie had a look at her archive![4] Check out the comments [transposed into the next chapter]!

15 JUNE 2021

The surviving *A Season's Diaries* items, including Heather's found by chance in the Alexander Turnbull Library (fMS-Papers-6435; illus-

4. https://medium.com/spiral-collectives/diary-of-a-season-a-proposal-for-a-womens-exhibition-fab0d373a3a0

trated in *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* catalogue)[5] , were exhibited in *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* at Mokopōpaki in early 2018.[6] Auckland Art Gallery bought Anna Keir's diary[7] and the Alexander Turnbull Library bought Gladys Gurney's (Saj's).[8]

14 NOVEMBER 2025

Saj's diary is reproduced in full in her section of *Spiral 8*.

5. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/this-joyous-chaotic-place
6. https://gallery.mokopopaki.co.nz/post/171854878889/this-joyous-chaotic-place-he-waiata-tangi%C4%81tahu
7. https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/artist/11242/anna-keir
8. 2025: not yet catalogued.

ALLIE EAGLE, JOANNA PAUL & 'A SEASON'S DIARIES' (2016)

Allie Eagle et al

On 13 June 2016 Allie Eagle responded on Facebook to Bridie Lonie's 'Diary of a Season', about *A Season's Diaries*, organised by Joanna Paul in 1977.[1] This reproduces our conversation about her own contribution, with a couple of interjections from others. It is unedited except for occasional [ ] additions: I decided not to fix most of our typos.

AE: Thanks for all the hard work you have put into this project Marian… Finding new linkages to the work that was done then… The possibilities of archiving become very apparent when you work like this! (I can give you a photo of the mandala "a season's cycle returns" ..?

1. See above and https://medium.com/spiral-collectives/diary-of-a-season-a-proposal-for-a-womens-exhibition-fab0d373a3a0#.m18cifwvd

ME That would be fantastic. Thanks! I could slot it straight in! Where is the original? Can you also supply medium and dimensions?

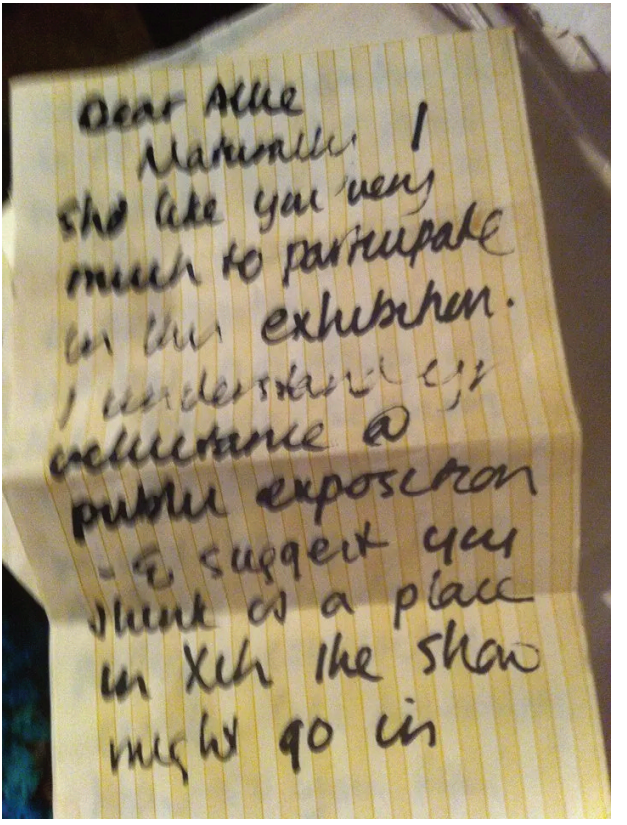
AE Tonight I found Joanna's handwritten invite to be in that Victoria University event Marian. I think maybe Jenny Harvey owns that painting. I have a photo of it. My scanner is playing up but I could send you a rum pry [sic] cell phone image. And also Joanna's little invite letter?

ME That would be excellent! Thank you to both! Can you contact Jenny Harvey re the size, or can you remember the size and media? I do love an addendum (or two) and am purposely making many of the images poor quality so they are less likely to be copied/misused, though I imagine that skilled people could make them useable!

AE Ha ha…u reckon! Well that sideways pic I just sent you [see below]. I will write a quick little provenance note and then look at my records to see if that is who has the pic.

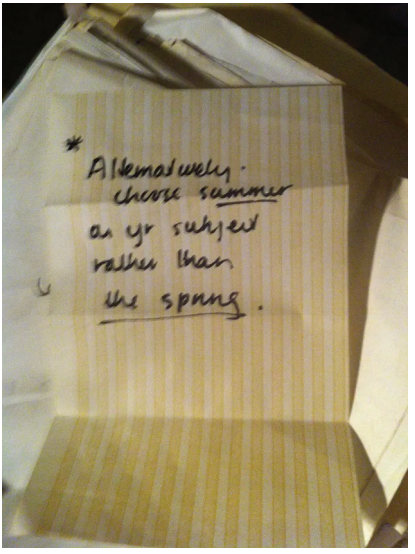
ME Great!

AE Joanna sent me this little note, page 1 of 4.

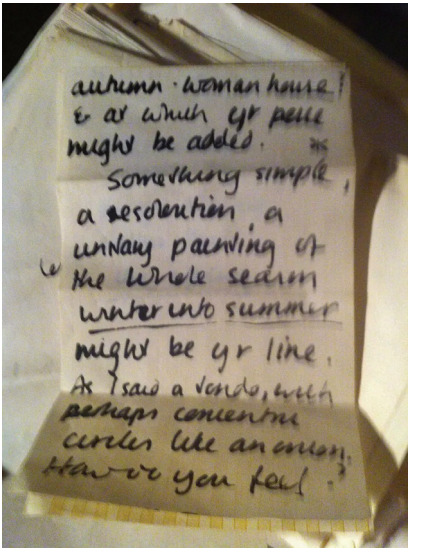


ME Ta. Looks as though it's ok quality to reproduce. It's your iPhone, isn't it? FB turns files v small though, so if y could photo all 4 pages and email them to me (which will ensure the files stay a reasonable size, if you just export as 'maximum' or 'largest' depending what the menu offers) that'd be fab. There must have been another document with the letter, about the exhibition, because of the way the letter's worded? Is it still there?

AE Page 2. See Bridie Lonie's essay above for provenance of these little invites.



AE Page three: now I will just have to hunt up the pic of the wee oil painting. It's all very instant and rather public this kind of Rchiving isn't it Marian?



ME Did you make the painting especially for the show?

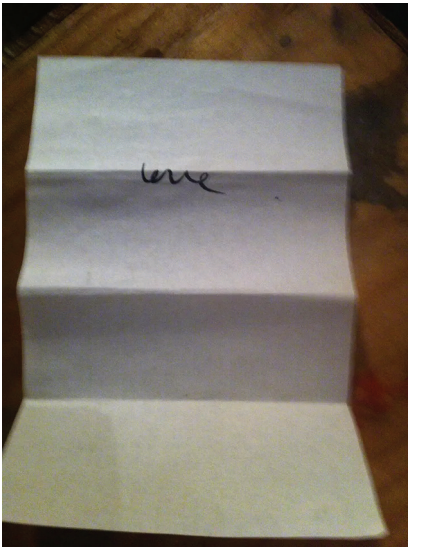
AE Yes.

(just wish my typos were not so permanent!)

ME I just blame autocorrect. It even adds apostrophes now and then, very embarrassingly for me today, on instagram, where it's not possible to edit, as we can here.

Are there actually only 3 pages?

AE There is another one…I will send it now(one word)



love

ME Aw. Any envelope with a date?

AE No dear. Nothing as well archived as that! But it is the Season's diary show cos it says so and u have the dates. U n Bridie! Xxx

This is A very very faded 70, a photo of the oil I did for Joanna's Show… Um no size notes available right now. I think I sent the mandala as well. Judging by the note I was a little reluctant showing in public spaces… Must've still been holding onto separatist allegiance at that point.



ME I remember only one, I think a mandala, at Victoria [University Library]. It was a circle. And had some blue, less red? Possibly you did this one for Christchurch where they were hung together?

Morrigan Severs: Jenny Harvey has the michelmas daisies painting.

AE Yes they showed at the 77 convention, women's environment …both of them…so I am afraid I didn't specifically paint for The Season's Diary show…hmm! Heather has the mandala.

ME That must be why I remember it! Will ask her for a pic.

AE That was such a lovely brief of Joanna's… I am wondering why I didn't engage in it more. The Mandala and the Season's cycle pic were in the 77 woman's art show at the CSA so the 67 yr old Allie is giving her younger self a bit of a ticking off for not giving the JP an October image!!!

AE Blegh… U need to turn yr head sideways to see that. Very faded photo! Yes I did it for that show. And another.

ME Regardless, please email all and I will add them. And will add some text and let you know when have done. Can I quote from here (if I fix the typos?) :)

AE It was Autumn. And the season was turning into winter gradually. They are Morrigan Severs Nicomas daisies at our house in Trafalgar street in front of the garage. The circles are indicating the season is on the turn. I always enjoyed deadheading those purply daisies as they sprouted more flowers almost instantly. The painting was oil on a fine particle board. Probably has the date and signature on the pic lower left or right corner.

ME That's strange, because everyone else did October!

AE Hmm….I don't remember it being in Ch ch was it?

ME Might that be why I remember only one, that it was a spring mandala and you did this one to add when they were all shown in Chrustchurch? Oh well am going to bed now. Look forward to the images in an email.

AE I have spent the last two hours unearthing everything that could possibly relate to this and the early Christchurch Women artist's group Marian. Now I am totally unconvinced that I sent A season's cycle returns to Joanna's Season's Diary….show…it was such a lovely brief and I cannot imagine why I didn't or couldn't paint to the brief. But I think you are right… Only the mandala went in…I will parcel up some material for you that might be useful. My apologies …40 years have lapsed and the written trace I have is more accurate than my memory!

Joanna Osborne: this is great!! hehe …been meaning to talk with/ask all of you about a season's diaries — oh my dear dissertations.

ME Hello, Joanna Osborne! Jo! Glad you enjoyed this! Allie, I'm wondering about just adding all of this convo as a couple of screenshots to the original post. What do you think? I'll ring you soon. Many thanks for all the tracking down. I think A Season's Diaries was shown at an exhibition of 3 artists which included Anna, in 1978, but need to track the details. Xx

AE Last night I found some folders… Some sort of ground hog went through my studio last night! Help !!Joanna Osbourne! I am gradually sorting all of my correspondence from Joanna Heather and you Marian into three distinct boxes. Good that I have been a bit of a hoarder but no cigar for the methodology!

Ha ha!

ME And did you find that paper bag? I'm sure that I left it with you and only just really why I'm sure: it had a couple of letters in it I couldn't quite bring myself to destroy but didn't want to have at home. (AE as depository-for-the-formerly-broken-hearted!)

AE Jane Zusters might remember about the 3 woman artists show. One very interesting letter came to light from Joanna Paul's correspondence with me… Where she tells of having become friends with a woman who is a Burns Fellow and building an octagonal house in Okarito !

There is a lot in my records that shows what a thorough hunter Joanna was for a sorierity of women artists. She introduced us to Jacqueline Fahey.

Yes… That sounds a great way to go. Pretty straight up. I am working from my phone cos my computer is getting repaired so my typos are embarrassingly frequent and auto correcting… And I am trying to do other stuff… You know how it is!

Hmm yes it is here. A very big bunch of letters from you to me from 1979 onwards. Of course you are the true champion of all this immense work. You should get a gong with Lilly Kraus but not posthumously!

ME Thank you dear Allie. Did you come across any letters re the proposed exhibition with you and Joanna, 1978–9. Am looking at that file on Friday at the Turnbull. I think we were/are all champions. And by 'we' the many many women who connected in some way to Spiral. Thank you, Dear Heather!

AE Oh that's right! When you arrived in Auckland at Pilar Albas place earnestly interested in you getting a show for Joanna and myself and having James Mack interested in us showing(where?) and we did look at it but then thought the best use of your energy should be spread over far more women rather than showcasing us… When there was much work to done building a wider community….well I wasn't reading any of that correspondence that I shovelled through last night(I tried not to) just hunted for Joanna's seasons diaries stiffens Any breakaway HeatherMcph letters! Next time…!:)

ME aha. I love the variations in the stories! My memory is that you and Joanna just didn't have the energy for/interest in a show that toured public galleries! :) it was when James was an advisory office at the arts council and also very keen. Let's see what the documents show (eventually)!

Anna [Keir] says ‘no’ re the diaries being shown alongside you and her and Zusters in 1978.

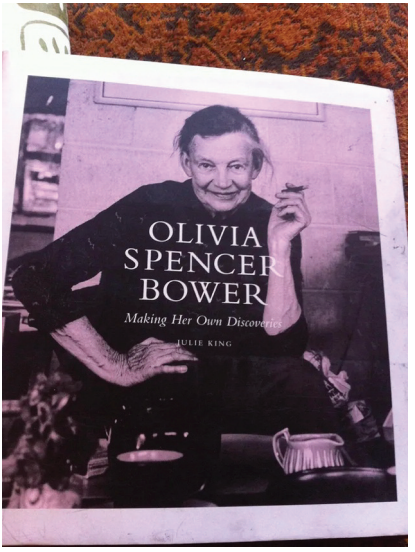
AE Yes I agree…and I have regained a sense of what I was doing in late 77 . My”other mother role” was fully amped so I don’t think my focus could have been on JP’s show at all… Still working on the OSB exhibition as well at the McDougall I think…

ME I wonder where and when they were shown in Christchurch… someone will tell us! OSB is ‘Olivia Spenser Bower’?

AE Spencer Bower…yes Julie King has just recently published a really wonderful book on her through Canterbury University Press (ISBN 978–1–9727145–07–4)

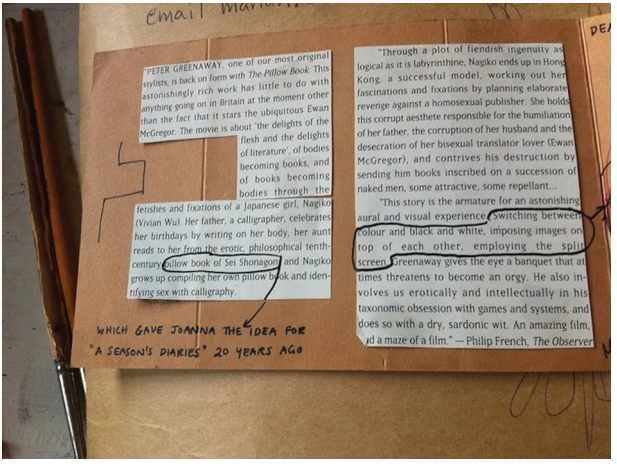
The publication I put together in the 77 was OSB’s Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch exhibition. It showed also at the Auckland Art Gallery.

I don’t feel as if the Women’s Diaries show got an airing in Christchurch unless it was the following year. I left Christchurch in 78 so if it showed some others were looking out for it.



ME Glorious cover, isn't it? I read and enjoyed it.

AE Do u remember sending me this [ca 1997]?

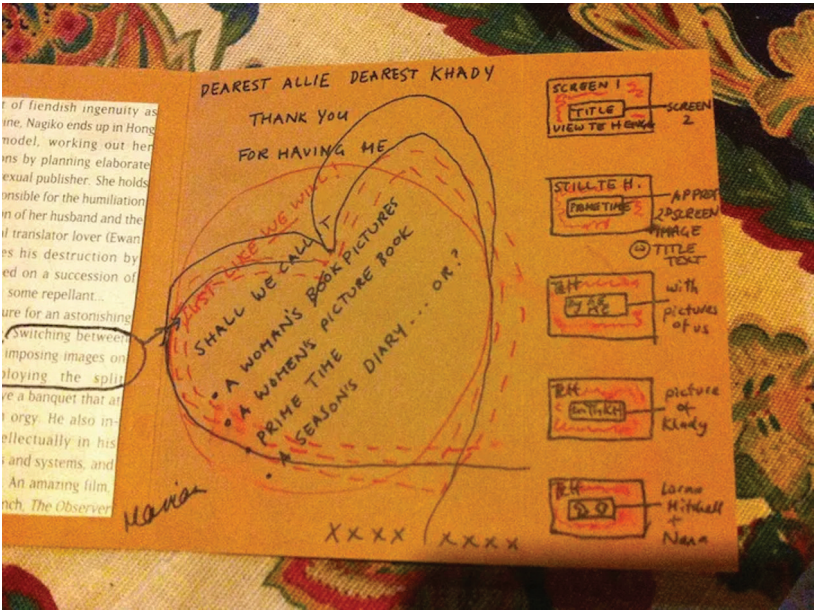


ME No! But that is absolutely true. Something I'd forgotten. And haven't found any other document that supports that (yet!) xx What's on the other bit of the cardboard?

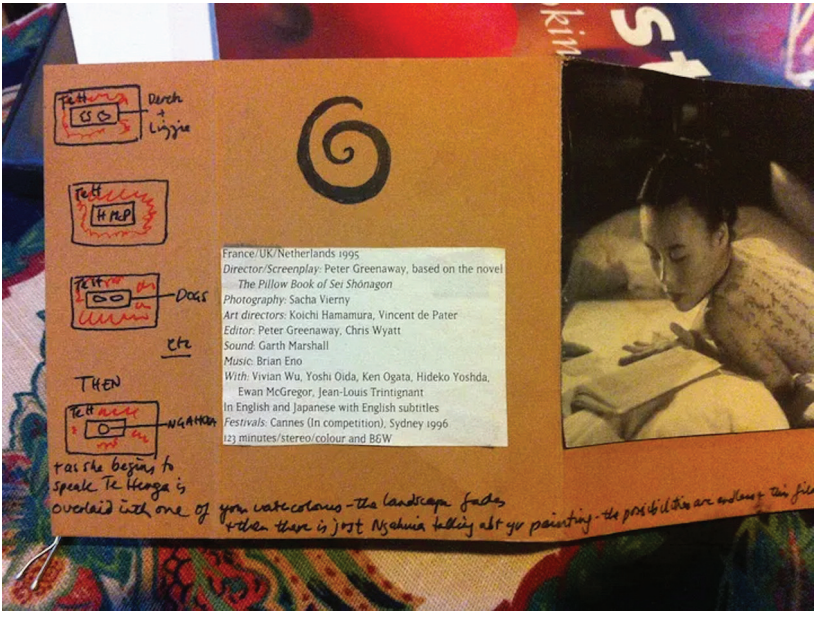
AE I will photograph it for you when I go upstairs again. Gotta put the fire on! It's cold today!

ME Ta! Stay warm! Xx

AE A card you sent after you had been filming a little spiral doco u did on the invasive weeds project/the story my Mum , Porirua and other material.

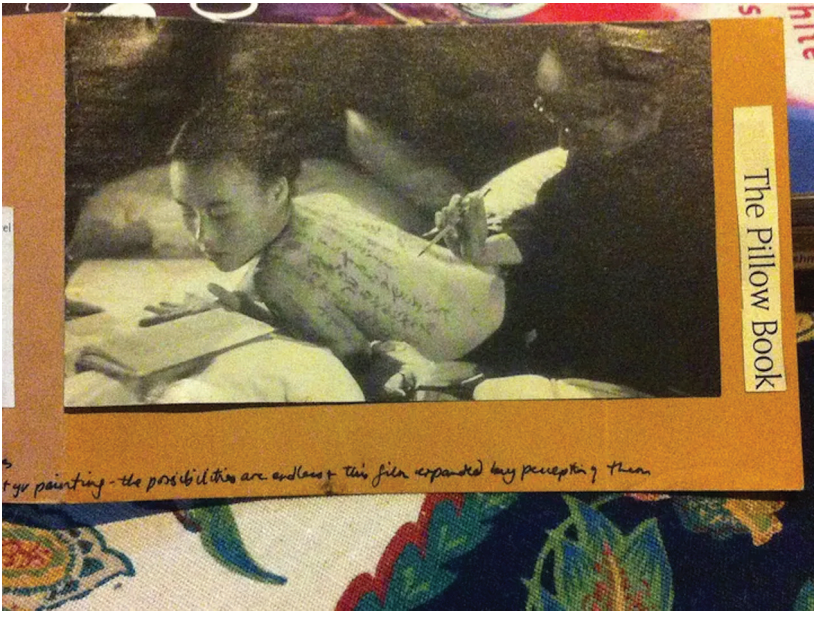


ME O GOSH. Forgot all about that, too.



AE Looks like thumbnails for how u were going to sequence that footage.

AE I remember you loving the Peter Greenaway movies. All that techy new digital stuff had you inspired. U were on the way in filming Irihap[e]ti [Ramsden] and I think were using "my" material as a way of learning to excercise your own visual skills! (?)



I wish I'd followed up more, with the mandala, and the other images that as far as I know Allie didn't email. O well.

WHY A WOMEN'S GALLERY? (1980)



Outside 26 Harris Street Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington January 1980 — L-R Marian Evans, Allie Eagle, Nancy Peterson, Juliet Batten, Anna Keir, Heather McPherson, Bridie Lonie, Keri Hulme. in front, Bridget Eyley, Claudia Pond Eyley photographed by Fiona Clark for the gallery. 'The Women's Gallery' sign by Helen Wilson and Linn Latta. Elsewhere, Joanna Paul, Kanya Stewart, Tiffany Thornley.

The Women's Gallery Inc. opened in January 1980, in the bottom floor of an old building at 26 Harris Street Wellington, New Zealand, co-ordinated by Anna Keir, Bridie Lonie and Marian Evans. In January 1982 it moved to 323 Willis Street; and then closed in January 1984. The catalogue for the *Opening Show* provided a collective manifesto written by some of the exhibitors.

WHY A WOMEN'S GALLERY?

Women artists have been seen to have been in the minority throughout history.[1] Men have defined the human experience through their art and women have often felt excluded. Men have also defined the female experience — we have seen ourselves through men's eyes, whether it be the famous female characters of literature, the celebration of the virgin mother in our religion or the female nudes painted by men throughout history.

Art must express the whole person, but all too often women, in suppressing their femaleness, fail to express their wholeness.

When we undertake the task of breaking out of the images men have presented to us and exploring our exclusively female experience, then we become vulnerable. We uncover private and previously unexpressed areas of ourselves. We lack a positive tradition to encourage and confirm us in what we see. There are few women artists to endorse our new vision. The only tradition we have to draw on is one where women have been suppressed by a predominantly male culture.

This means that we need to withdraw and gain confirmation from each other before we are ready to announce our insights to the 'outside world', i.e. our

1. Some of those who wrote the manifesto had been at art school, where the art history text was E.H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art* https://www.phaidon.com/en-anz/products/the-story-of-art-pb?srsltid=AfmBOooXaFoVNRj1TmNvbROQo-ZADekqYEf1pQXBO_e4LUhpUCnmPoHft

culture, which, despite the changes that have taken place, is still undoubtedly male dominated.

Hence at certain key moments men may be excluded from some event, not out of spite (as some would have it), but because we need to draw on the special advantages of being exclusively among women. An all women gathering makes the audience participants and includes everyone in our event. This separatism is not an end in itself, it is simply part of a process. The process is one of self-discovery, of building our traditions by going back to the roots of our experience.

In the end we hope to redefine not only what is female but also what is the human experience.

Helen Wilson designed a poster for us that lists the participants and was probably printed at the Media Collective. She also designed and printed a concert poster.



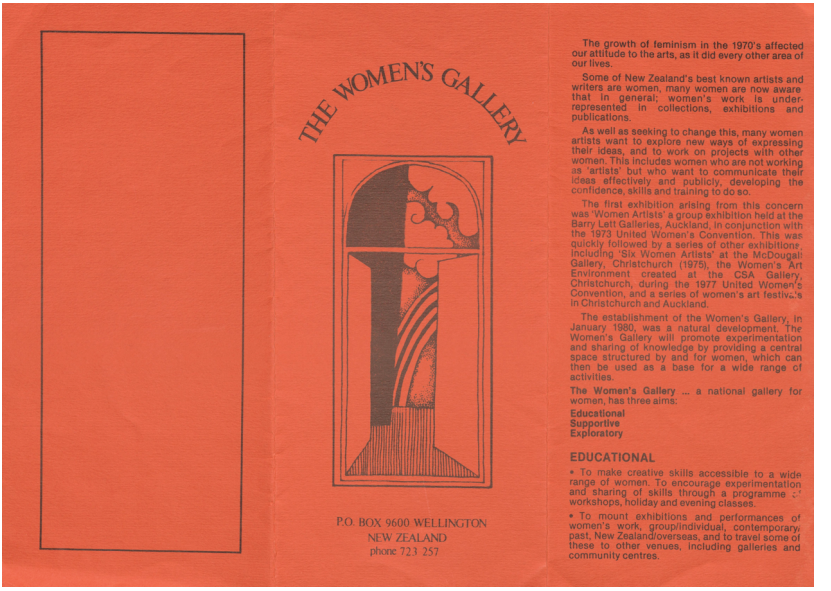
Opening Show *poster 980. Designer Helen Wilson.*



Stepping Out *poster 1980. Designed and printed by Helen Wilson.*

Some of the concert was recorded by Kanya Stewart and Nancy Peterson of the Auckland Women's Community Video and is available in our archives at ATL.

Our first leaflet, outlining our practices.



THE WOMEN'S GALLERY

P.O. BOX 9600 WELLINGTON
NEW ZEALAND
phone 723 257

The growth of feminism in the 1970's affected our attitude to the arts, as it did every other area of our lives.

Some of New Zealand's best known artists and writers are women, many women are now aware that in general; women's work is under-represented in collections, exhibitions and publications.

As well as seeking to change this, many women artists want to explore new ways of expressing their ideas, and to work on projects with other women. This includes women who are not working as 'artists' but who want to communicate their ideas effectively and publicly, developing the confidence, skills and training to do so.

The first exhibition arising from this concern was 'Women Artists' a group exhibition held at the Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland, in conjunction with the 1973 United Women's Convention. This was quickly followed by a series of other exhibitions including 'Six Women Artists' at the McDougall Gallery, Christchurch (1975), the Women's Art Environment created at the CSA Gallery, Christchurch, during the 1977 United Women's Convention, and a series of women's art festivals in Christchurch and Auckland.

The establishment of the Women's Gallery, in January 1980, was a natural development. The Women's Gallery will promote experimentation and sharing of knowledge by providing a central space structured by and for women, which can then be used as a base for a wide range of activities.

The Women's Gallery ... a national gallery for women, has three aims:

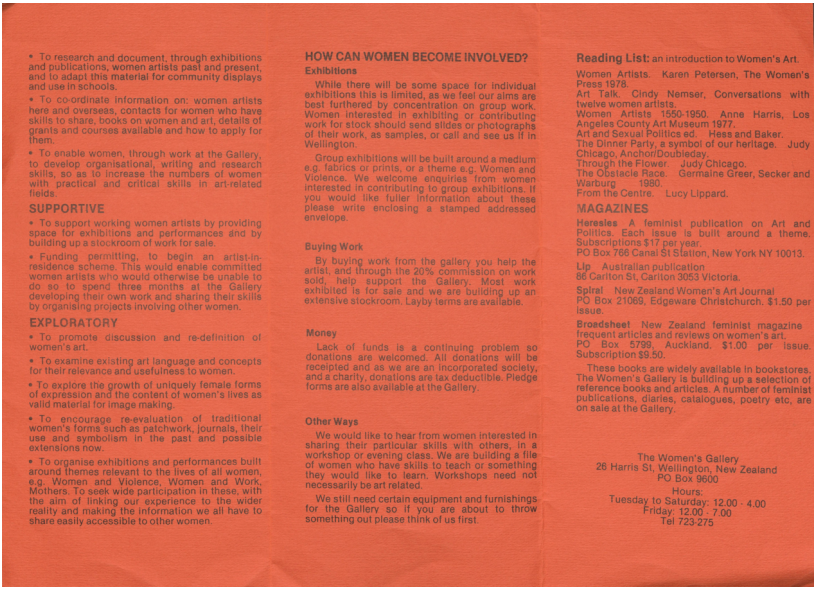
Educational
Supportive
Exploratory

EDUCATIONAL

• To make creative skills accessible to a wide range of women. To encourage experimentation and sharing of skills through a programme of workshops, holiday and evening classes.

• To mount exhibitions and performances of women's work, group/individual, contemporary/past, New Zealand/overseas, and to travel some of these to other venues, including galleries and community centres.

Women's Gallery leaflet *1980: 1. Illustration Anna Keir.*



- To research and document, through exhibitions and publications, women artists past and present, and to adapt this material for community displays and use in schools.
- To co-ordinate information on: women artists here and overseas, contacts for women who have skills to share, books on women and art, details of grants and courses available and how to apply for them.
- To enable women, through work at the Gallery, to develop organisational, writing and research skills, so as to increase the numbers of women with practical and critical skills in art-related fields.

SUPPORTIVE

- To support working women artists by providing space for exhibitions and performances and by building up a stockroom of work for sale.
- Funding permitting, to begin an artist-in-residence scheme. This would enable committed women artists who would otherwise be unable to do so to spend three months at the Gallery developing their own work and sharing their skills by organising projects involving other women.

EXPLORATORY

- To promote discussion and re-definition of women's art.
- To examine existing art language and concepts for their relevance and usefulness to women.
- To explore the growth of uniquely female forms of expression and the content of women's lives as valid material for image making.
- To encourage re-evaluation of traditional women's forms such as patchwork, journals, their use and symbolism in the past and possible extensions now.
- To organise exhibitions and performances built around themes relevant to the lives of all women, e.g. Women and Violence, Women and Work, Mothers. To seek wide participation in these, with the aim of linking our experience to the wider reality and making the information we all have to share easily accessible to other women.

HOW CAN WOMEN BECOME INVOLVED?

Exhibitions

While there will be some space for individual exhibitions this is limited, as we feel our aims are best furthered by concentration on group work. Women interested in exhibiting or contributing work for stock should send slides or photographs of their work, as samples, or call and see us if in Wellington.

Group exhibitions will be built around a medium e.g. fabrics or prints, or a theme e.g. Women and Violence. We welcome enquiries from women interested in contributing to group exhibitions. If you would like fuller information about these please write enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

Buying Work

By buying work from the gallery you help the artist, and through the 20% commission on work sold, help support the Gallery. Most work exhibited is for sale and we are building up an extensive stockroom. Layby terms are available.

Money

Lack of funds is a continuing problem so donations are welcomed. All donations will be receipted and as we are an incorporated society, and a charity, donations are tax deductible. Pledge forms are also available at the Gallery.

Other Ways

We would like to hear from women interested in sharing their particular skills with others, in a workshop or evening class. We are building a file of women who have skills to teach or something they would like to learn. Workshops need not necessarily be art related.

We still need certain equipment and furnishings for the Gallery so if you are about to throw something out please think of us first.

Reading List: an introduction to Women's Art.

Women Artists. Karen Petersen, The Women's Press 1978.
Art Talk. Cindy Nemser, Conversations with twelve women artists.
Women Artists 1550-1950. Anne Harris, Los Angeles County Art Museum 1977.
Art and Sexual Politics ed. Hess and Baker.
The Dinner Party, a symbol of our heritage. Judy Chicago, Anchor/Doubleday.
Through the Flower. Judy Chicago.
The Obstacle Race. Germaine Greer, Secker and Warburg 1980.
From the Centre. Lucy Lippard.

MAGAZINES

Heresies A feminist publication on Art and Politics. Each issue is built around a theme. Subscriptions $17 per year.
PO Box 766 Canal St Station, New York NY 10013.

Lip Australian publication
86 Carlton St, Carlton 3053 Victoria.

Spiral New Zealand Women's Art Journal
PO Box 21069, Edgeware Christchurch. $1.50 per issue.

Broadsheet New Zealand feminist magazine frequent articles and reviews on women's art.
PO Box 5799, Auckland. $1.00 per issue. Subscription $9.50.

These books are widely available in bookstores. The Women's Gallery is building up a selection of reference books and articles. A number of feminist publications, diaries, catalogues, poetry etc, are on sale at the Gallery.

The Women's Gallery
26 Harris St, Wellington, New Zealand
PO Box 9600

Hours:
Tuesday to Saturday: 12.00 - 4.00
Friday: 12.00 - 7.00
Tel 723-275

Women's Gallery leaflet *1980: 2*.

ART BY MAORI WOMEN, WOMEN'S GALLERY (1981 & 2024-5)

Marian Evans



> Life for all of those who come from minority or different cultures is often spent on an emotional and spiritual frontier. Identity is a constant series of borders, of crossings and recrossings [... A]s long as people insist on retaining their own way of being human, there will always be borders, frontiers and negotiations. I do have complete faith in the human will to continue and the determination of human beings to express their realities and their truths

through the unique framework of their cultures.— Irihapeti Ramsden[1]

> Literature is no-one's private ground; literature is common ground. Let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves...literature will survive if commoners and outsiders like ourselves make that country our own country, if we teach ourselves how to read and how to write, how to preserve and how to create.— Virginia Woolf[2]

2024 – A SURPRISE RETURN

I didn't expect to explore the linked Women's Gallery and Spiral and Kidsarus 2 collectives' archives at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), the National Library's research library. Ever again. But this year two accomplished researchers asked me some excellent questions that I couldn't answer without reference to those archives. And sometimes not even then. And, now it's almost Spiral's 50th birthday and I'm helping with *Spiral 8 Setting the [Work] Table* to celebrate Spiral-connected women we cherish but who are no longer with us, in their own words as much as possible.[3] So I've been back in the ATL reading room. Regularly. Often very very surprised by what I've read. Surprised too by the visual material, photographs,

1. Irihapeti Ramsden 1992 'Borders and Frontiers' *Te Ao Mārama; Regaining Aotearoa: Māori Writers Speak Out* v2 ed Witi Ihimaera, contributing editors Haare Williams, Irihapeti Ramsden, D.S. Long, Reed 1992: 344-351, 345, 351. It is reprinted in Irihapeti's section of *Spiral 8*.
2. V. Woolf 'The Leaning Tower' (essay) 1940.
3. *Spiral 8* https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/spiral-8-setting-the-work-table

transparencies, video. The documents reminded me of experiences I'd long forgotten.

Art by Maori Women was one of the surprises. 2024 was a stunning year for Māori women artists' expression of 'their realities and their truths through the unique framework of their cultures': the Mataaho Collective won the Golden Lion at the 60th Venice Biennale[4]; and Ana Iti won the Walters Prize, our 'largest and most prestigious contemporary art award'. Now, as I finish this, in 2025, it seems beyond question that wāhine Maori have achieved critical mass in the art world and are highly successful there. But there's always more to be done. Chelsea Winstanley's *Toitū: Visual Sovereignty* feature documentary about curator Nigel Borell's vision for *Toi Tū Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art* (2020-2021), demonstrates this, capturing 'both [the exhibition's] record-breaking success and the behind the scenes conflicts that arise when Indigenous sovereignty challenges institutional power'[5]. Many Māori women writers shine brightly in public spaces, too.[6] So it's been a little weird to be plunged back to the 1980s and 1990s when the world of Māori women artists and writers was very different.

4. mataahocollective.com

5. https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition/toi-tu-toi-ora-contemporary-maori-art (exhibition); https://www.thistooshallpass.nz/toitu (film)

6. This year, 2024, there are, I think, more books by women than ever in te reo across a range of genres, including *Ko Lisa Carrington me te Toa Whakaihuwaka* from Lisa Carrington and *He Kupu nā te Maia: He Kohinga Ruri nā Maya Angelou*, he mea whakamāori e ngā Ika a Whiro o te Panekiretanga o te Reo. Marilynn Webb's big and bilingual book was one of three Ockham Award finalists for Best Illustrated Book. Children and young people's literature flourished in te reo and in English. Prose in English for adults came from many — Becky Manawatu, Michelle Rahurahu, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Shilo Kino, Stacey Gregg, Talia Marshall, Tina Makereti, to name just a few.

Almost all I'd remembered about *Art by Maori Women* was a beautiful, vibrant, opening in the very crowded gallery, where Harata Solomon (Harata Ria Te Uira Solomon, 1925-1993) powerfully led our celebration; and the pleasure of seeing Patricia Grace eat — with apparent enthusiasm — one of the egg-in-Mollenberg-bread sandwiches I'd made for the visitors. But there's lots more to the story. Because, thanks to finding the exhibition again, I fell down a rabbit hole labelled 'Haeata', the extraordinary wāhine Māori collective (1983-1993), and freshly appreciated its dedicated and transformative work as writers and artists, editors, publishers and curators. Here's the first part of the story, from my limited perspective, inspired by the (incomplete) documents about *Art by Maori Women*; by Irihapeti Ramsden on borders and frontiers; and by Virginia Woolf's statement. The chronologically second part of the story, in Keri Kaa's section of *Spiral 8*, is about the Haeata Collective itself.

ART BY MAORI WOMEN

The Women's Gallery opened in January 1980. By the end of the year we had sustained a continuous run of themed exhibitions and associated programmes.

At the same time, the Kidsarus 2 collective's children's picture book programme, based at the gallery and also part of Spiral's history, was moving ahead in a demanding process for everyone. It became the foundation for every publishing adventure that followed.

Its first book, *The Kuia & the Spider Te Kuia me te Pungāwerewere* by Patricia Grace, illustrated by Robyn Kahukiwa, translated into te reo by Hirini Melbourne & Keri Kaa was published in 1982, won the

very first Children's Picture Book of the Year award in the same year, and has been in print continuously since.[7]

But our relationships with a variety of established publishers stretched us: from the outset they didn't believe there was a market for full colour 'local' picture books, nor for picture books in separate te reo and English editions. They would co-publish the books with us only if we funded the illustrators we chose and subsidised printing costs for separate Māori and English versions. And our relationships with the authors and illustrators weren't always easy for them.

We weren't of course alone, negotiating borders and frontiers, as commoners and outsiders making publishing our own country, in trespassing and finding our own way for ourselves. For instance, about the same time, activist, musician and writer Mereana Pitman and others were part of the legendary Women's Web Collective.[8] They wanted to make an album of acoustic music. They needed sixty thousand dollars. But all the normal channels — recording companies, music groups and others — wouldn't lend them any money. According to Mereana, this was because of the belief that a group of women musicians weren't seen as a sound investment —

> "In the recording industry women are treated like shit, they're seen as slinky bodies or backing vocals. Us women were able to gain strength from each other and from the women's movement around the country. We

7. https://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Kids/LiteraryPrizes/Aim/PictureBook/
8. Graham Reid 'Out of the Corners: the Web Women's Collective LP' *Audioculture the noisy library of New Zealand music Iwi Waiata te pātaka korihi o ngā puoro o Aotearoa* 2023 https://audioculture.co.nz/articles/out-of-the-corners-the-web-women-s-collective-lp

> did the album and arranged our own distribution ourselves, and now a year later we've broken even with a bit to spare. The point is that to do all of this we had to do things we'd never done before, and that took finding information and breaking it down into simple language.[9]

Like the Women's Web Collective, and other publishers like *Broadsheet*, *Circle* and *Bitches, Witches & Dykes*, the Herstory Press, early *Herstory Diary* collectives and Miriam Saphira's Papers Ink, once we'd leaned across the publishing frontier, found the necessary information and and broken it down into simple language we were away, teaching ourselves and learning from experience.

In that first year at the Women's Gallery we also curated and found funding for *Mothers*, about mothering as perceived by mothers and by daughters, with a substantial catalogue; and held the exhibition and associated programmes in the gallery. And we organised a *Mothers* national tour that continued into 1982, where the participating galleries also generated associated programmes. The specialised skills the tour required were new to us. But again, we gathered information and taught ourselves to do new things, like how to create conservation reports and how to build high quality crates. We leapt across that frontier and then back, for more projects. With Roma Potiki, we were planning the Matariki Tour, too, a national tour by contemporary women poets and musicians, led by kuia Kohine Ponika (1920-1989), who named the group,

9. Mereana Pitman 'On the road to find out' *Tu Tangata* 19 (1984): 15 https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/imageserver/periodicals/P29pZD1UVVRBTkcxOTg0MDgwMS4xLjE3JmdldHBkZj10cnV1

whose other members were Heather McPherson, Keri Hulme, Adrienne Dudley, Mereana Pitman. At an advanced stage in the planning it was cancelled when we couldn't find enough funding.[10]

In the 1980-1981 summer some of us worked on those *Mothers* crates: Yvonne Williamson, Sharon Alston[11] and Mary Bailey[12], with Bill MacKay. Others negotiated more venues, organised publicity and did those necessary conservation reports for the works that went in the crates: Anna Keir and I, with Marg Leniston. We sent off *Mothers* to its first venue, the Hastings Art Gallery & Museum, and began to organise the programme for the rest of 1981. And around then, according to surviving copies of letters we sent to artists, we were asked to organise an exhibition of art by Māori women, to coincide with a Māori Artists and Writers hui at Pipitea Pā, not far from the gallery.

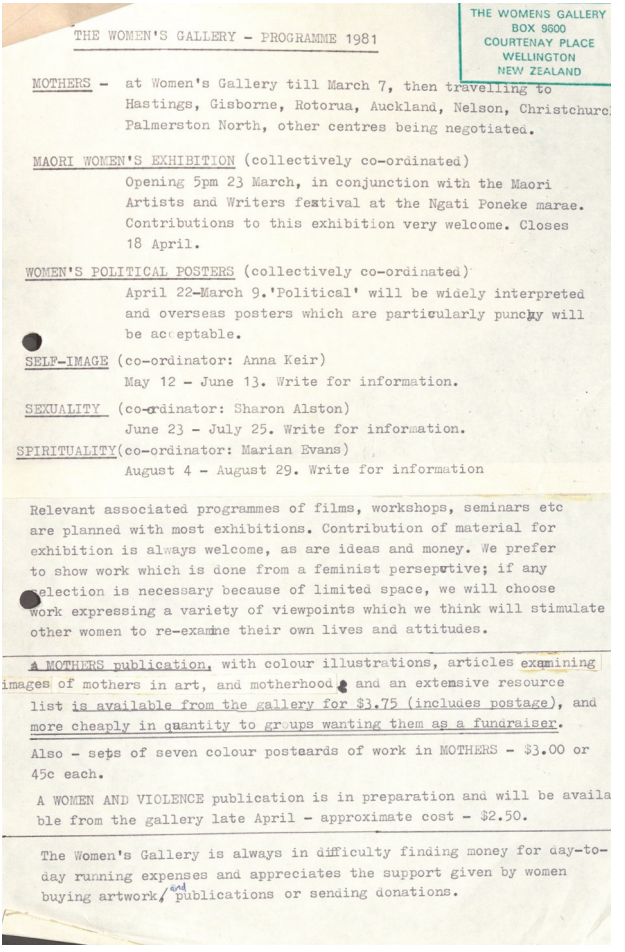
I've seen no record of who invited us to do this, at short notice. It could have been Patricia Grace, Robyn Kahukiwa or Keri Kaa. Those of us involved in preparing *The Kuia & the Spider Te Kuia me Te Pūngāwerewere* for publication, as members of both the Kidsarus 2 and the gallery collectives, were in contact with them all. Patricia is perhaps the most likely, because she sometimes initiated possibilities, like asking J. C. Sturm to read at the gallery's *Opening Show*; and

10. I re-read the files in ATL, full of extraordinarily detailed planning by Roma and by us, re-read the glowing references from Hone Tuwhare, Ian Wedde and Professor S M Mead and then the Literary Fund's letter refusing to fund us, even though the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council agreed to support us if the Literary Fund did too; and McKenzie Trust offered funding unconditionally. And again felt sad we had to cancel the tour and a little bit sad again when I read a formal rebuke from the Literary Fund's Secretary, for the wording of the cancellation letter we sent to schools.

11. See Sharon's section in *Spiral 8*.

12. See Mary's essay below, 'Momma Don't Allow me to Whistle'.

she was part of an artists group at Hongoeka marae, where a group of *Art by Maori Women* contributors was based, too. Patricia Gunson, who made the exhibition's poster, came from there, too. There's also no record of *why* we were asked at such short notice.



THE WOMENS GALLERY
BOX 9600
COURTENAY PLACE
WELLINGTON
NEW ZEALAND

THE WOMEN'S GALLERY - PROGRAMME 1981

MOTHERS - at Women's Gallery till March 7, then travelling to Hastings, Gisborne, Rotorua, Auckland, Nelson, Christchurch Palmerston North, other centres being negotiated.

MAORI WOMEN'S EXHIBITION (collectively co-ordinated)
Opening 5pm 23 March, in conjunction with the Maori Artists and Writers festival at the Ngati Poneke marae. Contributions to this exhibition very welcome. Closes 18 April.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL POSTERS (collectively co-ordinated)
April 22-March 9.'Political' will be widely interpreted and overseas posters which are particularly punchy will be acceptable.

SELF-IMAGE (co-ordinator: Anna Keir)
May 12 - June 13. Write for information.

SEXUALITY (co-ordinator: Sharon Alston)
June 23 - July 25. Write for information.

SPIRITUALITY(co-ordinator: Marian Evans)
August 4 - August 29. Write for information

Relevant associated programmes of films, workshops, seminars etc are planned with most exhibitions. Contribution of material for exhibition is always welcome, as are ideas and money. We prefer to show work which is done from a feminist perspective; if any selection is necessary because of limited space, we will choose work expressing a variety of viewpoints which we think will stimulate other women to re-examine their own lives and attitudes.

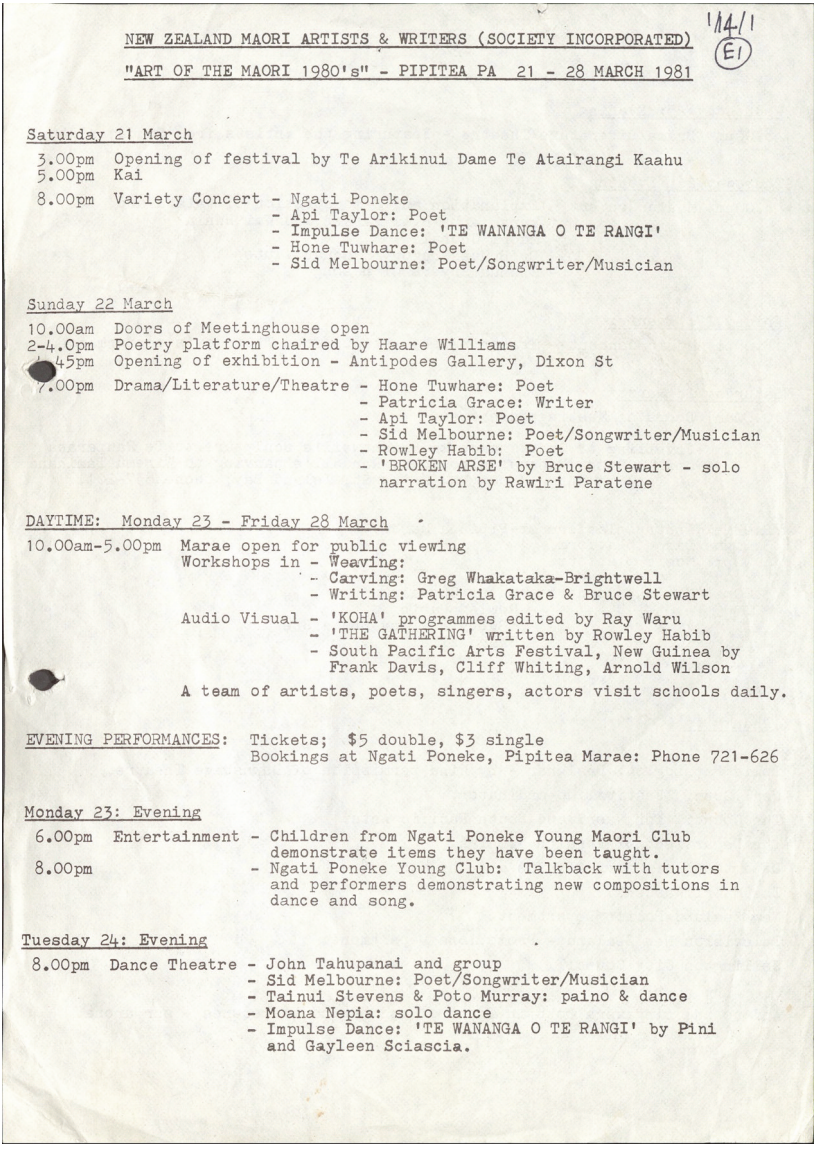
A MOTHERS publication, with colour illustrations, articles examining images of mothers in art, and motherhood, and an extensive resource list is available from the gallery for $3.75 (includes postage), and more cheaply in quantity to groups wanting them as a fundraiser.

Also - sets of seven colour postcards of work in MOTHERS - $3.00 or 45c each.

A WOMEN AND VIOLENCE publication is in preparation and will be available from the gallery late April - approximate cost - $2.50.

The Women's Gallery is always in difficulty finding money for day-to-day running expenses and appreciates the support given by women buying artwork, and publications or sending donations.

But there in the archives is the programme for the Maori Artists and Writers hui. And there are few women represented. So perhaps that was at least part of the reason, I decided when I found it.



NEW ZEALAND MAORI ARTISTS & WRITERS (SOCIETY INCORPORATED) 114/1 (E1)

"ART OF THE MAORI 1980's" - PIPITEA PA 21 - 28 MARCH 1981

Saturday 21 March

3.00pm Opening of festival by Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangi Kaahu
5.00pm Kai
8.00pm Variety Concert - Ngati Poneke
- Api Taylor: Poet
- Impulse Dance: 'TE WANANGA O TE RANGI'
- Hone Tuwhare: Poet
- Sid Melbourne: Poet/Songwriter/Musician

Sunday 22 March

10.00am Doors of Meetinghouse open
2-4.0pm Poetry platform chaired by Haare Williams
4.45pm Opening of exhibition - Antipodes Gallery, Dixon St
7.00pm Drama/Literature/Theatre - Hone Tuwhare: Poet
- Patricia Grace: Writer
- Api Taylor: Poet
- Sid Melbourne: Poet/Songwriter/Musician
- Rowley Habib: Poet
- 'BROKEN ARSE' by Bruce Stewart - solo narration by Rawiri Paratene

DAYTIME: Monday 23 - Friday 28 March

10.00am-5.00pm Marae open for public viewing
Workshops in - Weaving:
- Carving: Greg Whakataka-Brightwell
- Writing: Patricia Grace & Bruce Stewart

Audio Visual - 'KOHA' programmes edited by Ray Waru
- 'THE GATHERING' written by Rowley Habib
- South Pacific Arts Festival, New Guinea by Frank Davis, Cliff Whiting, Arnold Wilson

A team of artists, poets, singers, actors visit schools daily.

EVENING PERFORMANCES: Tickets; $5 double, $3 single
Bookings at Ngati Poneke, Pipitea Marae: Phone 721-626

Monday 23: Evening

6.00pm Entertainment - Children from Ngati Poneke Young Maori Club demonstrate items they have been taught.
8.00pm - Ngati Poneke Young Club: Talkback with tutors and performers demonstrating new compositions in dance and song.

Tuesday 24: Evening

8.00pm Dance Theatre - John Tahupanai and group
- Sid Melbourne: Poet/Songwriter/Musician
- Tainui Stevens & Poto Murray: paino & dance
- Moana Nepia: solo dance
- Impulse Dance: 'TE WANANGA O TE RANGI' by Pini and Gayleen Sciascia.

Wednesday 25: Evening

8.00pm Drama/Literature/Theatre - Featuring the artists from Sunday night.

Thursday 26: Evening

8.00pm Music Concert - Explanation and demonstration of waiata and karakia by Bill Parker and Wai Hunia
- Maori Chorale
- Dr Bruce Gregory: kaauau flute
- Rhonda Bryers with song

Friday 27: Evening

8.00pm Music Concert - Featuring the artists from Thursday's performance.

Saturday 28 March

10.00am Doors of Meetinghouse open

10.00am Unveiling of Greg Whakataka-Brightwell's sculpture to Te Rauparaha and Te Rangi Haeata: also Johno Randall's carving to Wiremu Tamihana at Tapu te Ranga Marae, 44 Rhine St, Island Bay; phone 837-201.

2.00pm Poetry platform at Pipitea Marae
3.00pm Dance platform " " "
4.00pm Music platform " " "

8.00pm Variety Concert - Maori Chorale
- Rowley Habib
- 'Bubby Boy' by Bruce Stewart
- Grand Finale....

Thanks to

Tolis Papazoglou: Designer - by kind permission of Downstage Theatre.
Neal Gunn: Festival Co-ordinator.
The Council for Maori and South Pacific Arts.
The Department of Foreign Affairs.
Department of Maori Affairs and the Maori Trustee.
The Maori Wardens.
New Zealand Police Department.
Television New Zealand - Promotions Department.
Wellington City Council.

And to the ringawera both in front of and behind the scenes - our aroha.

CO-ORDINATING THE SHOW – BACKGROUND

We knew from experience that we wanted to issue our invitations to *Art by Maori Women* face to face. But that wasn't possible in the time frame we had. So we did our best. Sharon Alston and I got busy on the phone and by mail, to build a list of Māori women artists, to invite them to participate and to gather some of their work, both customary and contemporary.[13] As always, we invited these artists to contribute whatever they wished to share and, with each invitation-by-mail, included our brand new *Mothers* catalogue with Robyn Kahukiwa's *Hinetitama* looking stunning on the cover.

We could have felt daunted, but not within the culture that had developed out of the Christchurch Women Artists Group of the 1970s and its initiatives. These included the the original women's art and literary journal *Spiral* founded by Heather McPherson in 1975, and Joanna Paul's *A Season's Diaries* project in 1977, which reflected Joanna's philosophy of bringing 'the significant and the everyday as close as possible together' *and* opening and holding spaces for women's stories, whether or not they identified as artists.

As in those earlier initiatives, at the Women's Gallery some of us turned towards reading only literature written by women and avoided 'traditional' art history and its arbitrary divisions into 'art' and 'craft' and we knew that the stories we'd been told, by and about women — in text and/or in images — were just a tiny fraction of common and unique stories about women's lives. Especially stories about women artists, especially in art history. Usually motivated by

13. Terminology from Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, 'Contemporary Māori art – ngā toi hōu - Beginnings of contemporary Maori art', *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/contemporary-maori-art-nga-toi-hou/(22 Oct 2014; accessed 4 October 2024).

intense curiosity about what was 'out there', we too focused on women's lived experience and celebrated and supported women who portrayed it in words and/or images, seeking a critical mass of images by and about women, self-selected by each contributor; and then meticulously cared for them once they reached the gallery. The work of makers who didn't self-identify as artists appeared alongside those who did, some of them established artists who were happy to contribute to our theme shows because they wanted an opportunity to experiment with work that didn't interest their dealers within a welcoming space, where it was contextualised. Exhibitions were almost always accompanied by workshops and by related readings of stories and poems, films and performances.

At the gallery, as within many other feminist projects back then, primarily run by volunteers — women's refuge, women's health groups, women's centres, the legendary magazine *Broadsheet*[14] and *Spiral* — activist lesbians were strongly represented and influential.[15] Invited by co-ordinator Anna Keir to join the collective, Sharon was one of these: energetic, elegant and highly competent as an artist and an organiser. She'd worked at *Broadsheet* for a long time, creating covers, cartoons and other art works, and had designed the *Mothers* catalogue. Like Anna Keir, a feminist who also identified as an artist, alongside the other ongoing hard work of being a gallery co-ordinator she seized any opportunity to 'make stuff' including posters to design and (usually) screen print at the Media Collective[16] and art work for theme exhibitions. It wasn't easy to balance the demands of being a co-ordinator *and* an artist, while existing on a very low

14. https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together/broadsheet-collective
15. "Wellington's Women's Gallery was supported by many lesbians and was an important venue for the expression of lesbian culture." Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, Shirley Tamihana, Julie Glamuzina and Alison Laurie 'Lesbian' in *Women Together* 1993 https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together/theme/lesbian
16. https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/agent/41571

income from the dole or from a government-funded programme like the Temporary Employment Programme. But Sharon and Anna both made key art works for *Mothers* and many other shows.[17]

Lesbians who worked at the gallery brought with them a deep commitment to all women's well-being and were acutely aware that just as they were doubly discriminated against as artists who were women *and* lesbians, there were multiple factors likely to compound the discrimination they experienced. If they were Pākehā lesbians, as were co-ordinators Sharon, Heather McPherson and Barb McDonald, they knew life and work conditions were often especially harsh for Māori women and women from Te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa; for women with disabilities; for immigrant women; for single mothers; for women like them, from within the working class; for survivors of violation of various kinds; and knew that membership of any one of these groups often meant membership of more than one of them. I watched Sharon, Heather and Barb, each very different than the others, act with tenderness and good humour towards all visitors, whether or not those visitors were artists or feminists, supportive or aggressive. At a deep level they were committed to support 'the determination of human beings to express their realities and their truths through the unique framework of their cultures'. They also encouraged the use and affirmed the value of everyday language when responding to contributors and their work; and daily gallery practices that included an understanding that any hierarchy was probably temporary and roles were flexible, depending on the skills a project or task required and co-ordinator availability.

17. For more about Sharon, see her section in *Spiral 8*.

From this background, we did our absolute best and from the level of participation, from what I now remember of that opening and from the responses of the many visitors, it seemed to work well.

THE WORKS IN 'ART BY MAORI WOMEN'

The responses to our approaches were generous. Kokiri marae lent us weaving, some of it by anonymous artists; the Hongoeka group's selection of works on paper filled an intimate and much-loved room that opened into the central space. (We invited the weavers of Waiwhetū, too, but they already had their own exhibition organised.)

We got lucky with individual artists' works. The collectors who owned Robyn Kahukiwa's *The Migration* hadn't wanted to lend it for *Mothers*, because of the exhibition's long tour, but kindly lent it for this single-venue exhibition. Shona Rapira[-Davies], invited because we'd seen her work in the City Gallery's recent *Aramoana* exhibition and thanks to Joanna Margaret Paul supplying her address, offered two of her Hōne Heke works. Toi Te Rito Maihi sent prints. Susie Roiri lent three works, one of them owned by her mother, writer Bub Bridger, who had probably put us in touch with her. And just before we installed the show, I had a little trip to Tūrangi on the paper bus — in one of the few seats accompanying many bundles of the *Dominion* newspaper — to pick up paintings by Aroha Greenland and her mother Rangi Emory. 'I'm arriving 8.20', I wrote. 'I'll have breakfast ready for you,' Aroha responded.

The National Museum, the precursor of Te Papa, was supportive, and lent us 1920s kete from their collections, also by anonymous artists. Frank Davis, based at Massey University, helped us find Mereana Morton's work, perhaps from the Massey collection; and

suggested Elizabeth Ellis and Freda Kawharu, but I think his letter about them arrived a little late.

Someone donated the most beautiful small kete to raffle to defray costs. And at least one night we had a reading, thanks to a donation from Kidsarus 2 towards the readers' expenses: to Fiona [perhaps Fiona Kidman, who was a wonderful supporter]; Fran[?]; Keri Kaa; and Bub Bridger.

There are photographs of some of the works in the Women's Gallery's archives at ATL but those in a group of three that I think were Mereana Morton's aren't labelled. So I've been trying to locate Mereana, without success so far. Please get in touch if ever you see this Mereana.

The surviving catalogue looks a bit the worse for wear, hate those cup marks and tea stains—we always offered cups of tea at a distance from the work but some visitors were careless.

GALLERY COPY 1/14/1
Please do not remove. (E4)

MAORI WOMEN'S ART

The Women's Gallery, Wellington, 23 March - 6 April 1981

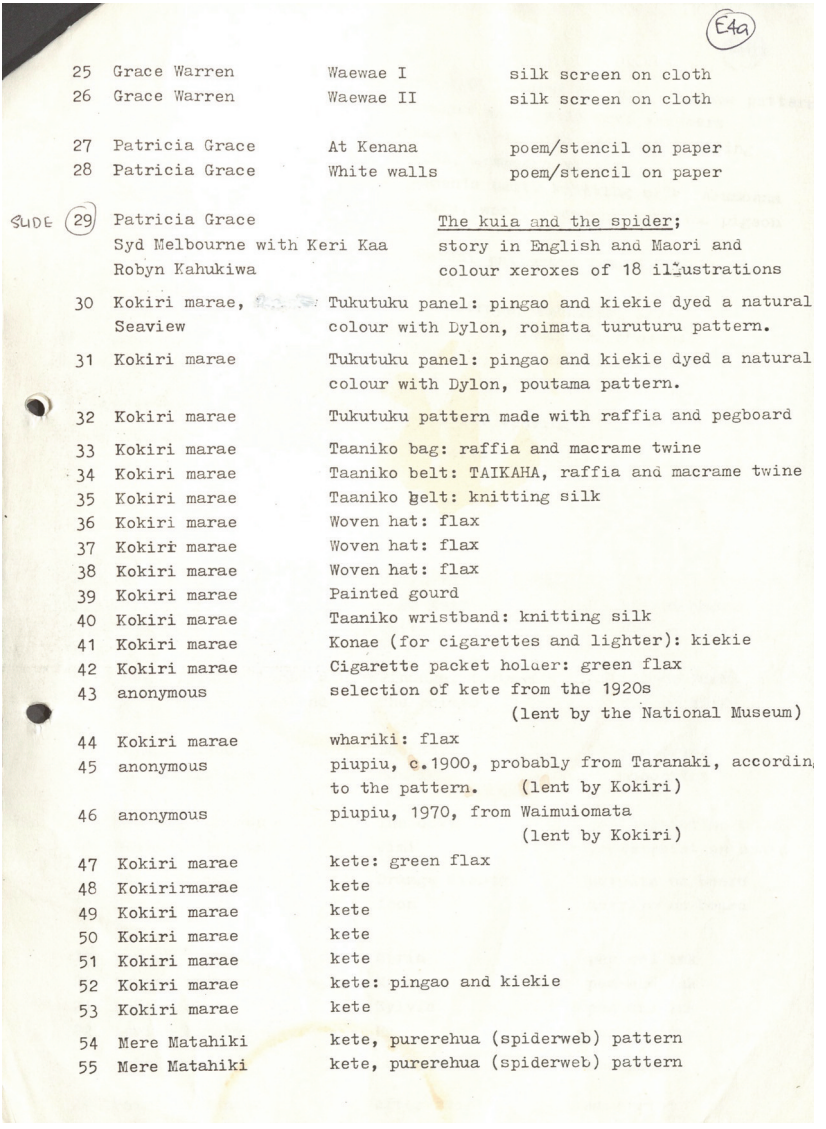
Please note: None of the work in the exhibition is for sale
Tickets for the kete being raffled are available from the office:$1.

SLIDES : see 1/14/4

•Duplicates

	1	Toi Te Rito Maihi	Koitareke	print
	2	Toi Te Rito Maihi	Waiwaitorea	print
	3	Mereana Morton	untitled	acrylic on paper
	4	Mereana Morton	untitled	acrylic on paper
	5	Mereana Morton	untitled	acrylic on paper
SLIDE	6	Shona Rapira	Hone Heke II	oil on canvas
SLIDE	7	Shona Rapira	Hone Heke IV	oil on canvas
SLIDE	8	Robyn F. Kahukiwa	The migration	oil on board
	9	Rangi Emery	Neighbour's garden, Te Kuiti	oil on board
	10	Rangi Emery	Waiteti	oil on board
	11	Aroha Emery Greenland	Pihanga, Turangi	oil on board
	12	Aroha Emery Greenland	The potter	oil on board
	13	Harata Solomon	Doorway	monoprint
	14	Harata Solomon	Hongi	monoprint
	15	Michelle Gunson	The dove	posterpaint on board
	16	Michelle Gunson	Jimi	posterpaint on board
	17	Sue Sullivan	Orange flower	acrylic on board
	18	Sue Sullivan	Icon	acrylic on board
	19	Louise Pomare	Miria	pen and ink
	20	Louise Pomare	Miria	pen and ink
	21	Louise Pomare	Sylvia	pen and ink
	22	Louise Pomare	Ra	pen and ink
	23	Jolie Gunson	Daisy	monoprint
	24	Patricia Gunson	After rain	monoprint

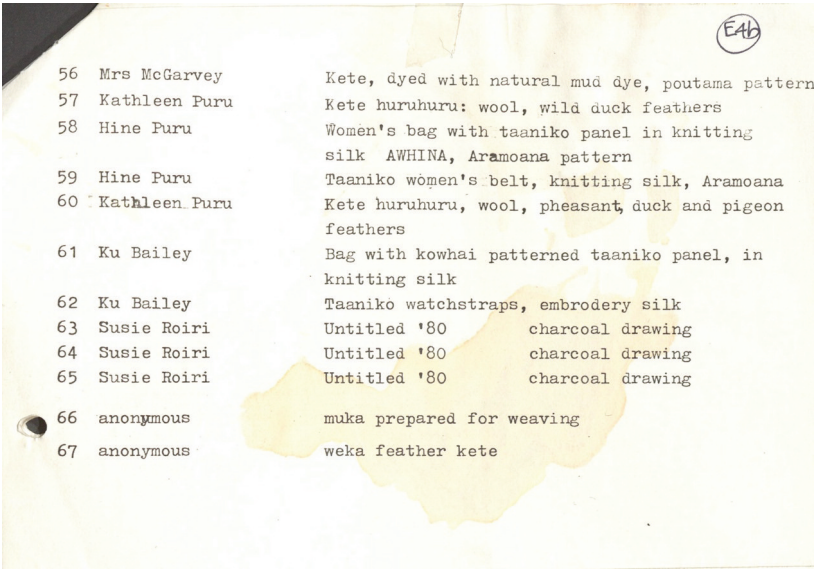
[Art by Maori Women] catalogue: 1.



E4a

25	Grace Warren	Waewae I	silk screen on cloth
26	Grace Warren	Waewae II	silk screen on cloth
27	Patricia Grace	At Kenana	poem/stencil on paper
28	Patricia Grace	White walls	poem/stencil on paper
SLIDE (29)	Patricia Grace Syd Melbourne with Keri Kaa Robyn Kahukiwa		The kuia and the spider; story in English and Maori and colour xeroxes of 18 illustrations
30	Kokiri marae, Seaview		Tukutuku panel: pingao and kiekie dyed a natural colour with Dylon, roimata turuturu pattern.
31	Kokiri marae		Tukutuku panel: pingao and kiekie dyed a natural colour with Dylon, poutama pattern.
32	Kokiri marae		Tukutuku pattern made with raffia and pegboard
33	Kokiri marae		Taaniko bag: raffia and macrame twine
34	Kokiri marae		Taaniko belt: TAIKAHA, raffia and macrame twine
35	Kokiri marae		Taaniko belt: knitting silk
36	Kokiri marae		Woven hat: flax
37	Kokiri marae		Woven hat: flax
38	Kokiri marae		Woven hat: flax
39	Kokiri marae		Painted gourd
40	Kokiri marae		Taaniko wristband: knitting silk
41	Kokiri marae		Konae (for cigarettes and lighter): kiekie
42	Kokiri marae		Cigarette packet holder: green flax
43	anonymous		selection of kete from the 1920s (lent by the National Museum)
44	Kokiri marae		whariki: flax
45	anonymous		piupiu, c.1900, probably from Taranaki, accordin to the pattern. (lent by Kokiri)
46	anonymous		piupiu, 1970, from Waimuiomata (lent by Kokiri)
47	Kokiri marae		kete: green flax
48	Kokirirmarae		kete
49	Kokiri marae		kete
50	Kokiri marae		kete
51	Kokiri marae		kete
52	Kokiri marae		kete: pingao and kiekie
53	Kokiri marae		kete
54	Mere Matahiki		kete, purerehua (spiderweb) pattern
55	Mere Matahiki		kete, purerehua (spiderweb) pattern

[Art by Maori Women] catalogue: 2.



56	Mrs McGarvey	Kete, dyed with natural mud dye, poutama pattern
57	Kathleen Puru	Kete huruhuru: wool, wild duck feathers
58	Hine Puru	Women's bag with taaniko panel in knitting silk AWHINA, Aramoana pattern
59	Hine Puru	Taaniko women's belt, knitting silk, Aramoana
60	Kathleen Puru	Kete huruhuru, wool, pheasant, duck and pigeon feathers
61	Ku Bailey	Bag with kowhai patterned taaniko panel, in knitting silk
62	Ku Bailey	Taaniko watchstraps, embrodery silk
63	Susie Roiri	Untitled '80 charcoal drawing
64	Susie Roiri	Untitled '80 charcoal drawing
65	Susie Roiri	Untitled '80 charcoal drawing
66	anonymous	muka prepared for weaving
67	anonymous	weka feather kete

[Art by Maori Women] catalogue: 3.

In the archives, Susie Roiri's letter about her contributions (not photographed for our archives) made me smile, because of what she said about returning one of them that belonged to her mother directly to Bub. Aroha's letter about her mother Rangi Emery and the effect of Rangi's death on Aroha's art practice affected me in a different way. I wanted to ask both of them if I could reproduce their letters, which fitted so well within our ever-present *Mothers* theme. But I couldn't find either artist. And when I searched online for Susie, in one of the few links to her, I stumbled on senior Māori artist Darcy Nicholas's long essay, 'Contemporary Maori Art', published at an unknown date.[18]

18. Darcy Nicholas 'The Contemporary Maori art movement' https://darcynicholas.co.nz/the-contemporary-maori-art-movement/ nd

DISCOVERING A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Later, when the Women's Gallery was at 323 Willis Street, 1982-4, Darcy was working up the road at the busy and supportive Wellington Arts Centre. But I was surprised he referred to us in his essay—

> During the later 1970s and early 1980s, government-sponsored employment programs had sprung up. The Wellington Women's Gallery developed and grew in profile and membership to the extent that its impact was felt throughout the country.

(I was especially surprised, and flattered, that he thought our impact was so widely felt.[19] That's not how it seemed to us: we had our heads down struggling to survive, and had to close in early 1984, when the Minister for Internal Affairs declined to fund us, because 'the active involvement of the gallery within the community at large is as yet at a very early stage'.[20])

Darcy continued—

19. I was also surprised to read Ian Wedde's assessment in an essay for Webb's: "I'll close with two key memories: the New Zealand born but US-naturalised-citizen and New York-based sculptor and film maker Len Lye's bequest of major works and archives to the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Zealand on his death in 1980; and the opening of the Women's Gallery below Photoforum in Harris Street, Wellington, also in 1980.[...] the gallery's decade-long influence contributed momentum to an ongoing shift in dealer economies and demographics." Ian Wedde 'There Was No Met Here: The Art Scene in 1980s Wellington' *The Bank of New Zealand Art Collection* Webb's 2022.

20. *A Women's Picture Book: 25 Women Artists from Aotearoa New Zealand* eds Bridie Lonie, Marian Evans, Tilly Lloyd 1988: 251.

> At the same time, small groups of contemporary female Maori artists were emerging [...]
>
> The Maori women's art movement was mainly Wellington inspired. It adopted the name 'Haeata' and was a strong and focused group under the driving force of educator and expert in Maori culture Keri Kaa. The women challenged a wide range of Maori issues and wrote their own female 'herstory' instead of accepting male-biased 'history'.

The next sentence really got to me—

> Most of the leading male artists preferred to keep away from the women's group and in many cases were guilty of male chauvinism that is not unusual among Maori men.

Darcy concluded that—

> [E]ventually the contemporary Maori male and female artists formed a peaceful space between them and worked alongside each other to create a series of major touring exhibitions throughout the country.

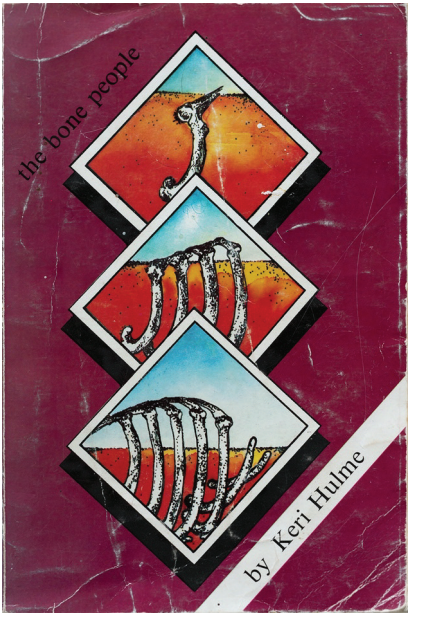
When I read that some of the vibrant, visionary and highly creative women who founded Haeata had had this hard time I wondered if *Art By Maori Women* was part of Haeata's story arc. Was *Art by Maori Women* where they also asserted their self-determination, in response to multi-systemic challenges within a colonial context? I went back to Haeata's published documents with another layer to my deep appreciation of their work as 'setting the table' for the next genera-

tions. Some of my research and reading is recorded in Arapera Blank's and Keri Kaa's sections of *Spiral 8*.

I didn't find Susie Roiri. Susie, if you ever see this, I'd love to be in touch.

THE BONE PEOPLE (1981-2010)

Marian Evans



My battered copy of the first edition

I wrote this in 2010, for Wellywood Woman;[1] *and amended it as new information came in, republished it on* Medium *in late 2013. A more recent and layered account is in* Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu*, available on the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū site as a free .pdf.*[2] *It includes Keri's early stories* Moeraki Hillside *and* Moeraki Hilltop, *with themes that foreshadow those of* the bone people. *A free .pdf of* Moeraki Hillside *is also available, as a teaching resource, with contextual material by Keri herself and photographs by Robin Morrison and Kate Salmons.*[3]

1.

Sometimes, it's hard to resist. I've got lots to do, but something else clamours for attention. Today, it's *the bone people* (always lower case), the only New Zealand novel to win the Booker Prize [since this was written, Eleanor Catton also won the Booker Prize, in 2013, for *The Luminaries*].

First, I had a big cleanup and found a newspaper clipping from 1 November 1985. Here it is: the late Irihapeti Ramsden, me, and Miriama Evans, shortly after we received the Booker Prize on Keri's behalf. Irihapeti and Miriama wearing korowai lent by George (Geordie) Fergusson. Me in my Moss Bros tuxedo and white leather sneakers with pink satin laces, best pair of sneakers I ever had. And a tiki that Irihapeti asked me to wear. If you slide the clipping onto your desktop and zoom in, you can read the text. My main memory of the photograph is that the photographer suggested that we stick our tongues out. I think he wanted us to pukana.

1. My film activist blog that closed four years ago https://wellywood-woman.blogspot.com/.
2. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/keri-hulme-our-kuru-pounamu
3. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/moeraki-hillside-by-keri-hulme



Keri Hulme — Disbelieving Prizewinner Loses a Big Bet on 'Bone People' Book

L-R Irihapeti Ramsden, Marian Evans, Miriama Evans, after the Booker Prize ceremony. NZ Herald 1 November 1985.

It was a strange night. No-one knew what to make of Miriama's and Irihapeti's karanga (we were described as 'keening harpies' later, in one newspaper). We wanted to talk about the generosity and love that had brought *the bone people* and us to the Booker ceremony, but we were not permitted to speak (probably a time thing: it was televised and Keri was on the line to speak, from the States). And it was surprising and weird to hold the leather-bound copy of *the bone people* they gave us, but wonderful later to pack it into a kete for Keri. I think we were also handed a cheque. Did we tuck it inside the book, along with the piece of heather a gypsy gave me, when Miriama and I were coming back from Moss Bros?

Then, the other day, I posted about Keri Kaa and remembered her work for *the bone people* launch.[4] Then, I had a request from American student Jessica Brandi through LinkedIn: would I answer some questions about *the bone people*, from a publishing viewpoint?

. . .

4. For more about Keri Kaa, see *Spiral 8*.

And then, last week, Keri Hulme and I fell over each other at the Public Address Hobbit party. Inevitable that there were a few accidents there, with that slap slap slap of comments down the page (where I lurked now and then to read what other writers and filmmakers were saying). And inevitable because New Zealand is soooo small.

I didn't recognize Keri at first, because she wasn't there as Keri Hulme. She thought I might be me; I wasn't there as Wellywoodwoman. And the way we confirmed who we were was with dates. A quarter century since *the bone people* won the Booker Prize (me); more than a quarter century since Spiral published it, on 18 February 1984 (Keri). And Keri told me that although her American publisher had put out a celebratory edition last year, there'd been no celebration in New Zealand.

So, by way of celebration, here's a story, addressing Jessica's questions. From my perspective only of course. Keri's story is different. Irihapeti told her story in Chapter 3 of her PhD thesis, which I can no longer find online.[5] Miriama has her story.[6]

5. 2025: It's back online— Irihapeti Merenia Ramsden *Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Wai Pounamu* 2002 https://www.croakey.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/RAMSDEN-I-Cultural-Safety_Full.pdf
6. 2025: As far as I know, this remains unwritten.



L-R Irihapeti Ramsden, Miriama Evans, Marian Evans 53 Waitoa Road, Hataitai Te Whanganui-a-Tara 1985. Photographer unknown.

There are many related documents in the Alexander Turnbull Library, New Zealand's national research library; collectively they tell another story, too.

Jessica, there are a LOT of names in this post. You, and others, may feel that they're unnecessary. But, because I don't want to write about *the bone people* again, I want to be sure to acknowledge everyone I can remember. (Any other readers: please feel free to ask questions too, and to add information in the comments.)

2.

As you might imagine after all this time, there are more dates involved than those that Keri and I recalled the other night. So here's some backstory, before I address Jessica's questions.

Back in the late 70s, I was involved with Kidsarus 2, looking for New Zealand stories with women as central characters (surprise!), to publish as picture books. Someone suggested I get in touch with Keri Hulme. So I wrote, and eventually got a lovely letter back, about a story Keri had written called (I think) "The woman, the watcher, & the whale". (Never got to read the story.) About the same time, the other Keri — Keri Kaa — introduced me to Miriama Evans.

Then Kidsarus 2 found an office space in Wellington's Harris Street, where the Wellington Central Police Station is now, just across the road from the old Circa Theatre. The space was too big for a single office, and artists Anna Keir (the very same Anna Keir who just featured in the *Sunday Star Times* short story awards) and Bridie Lonie (now teaching and writing at Otago Polytechnic's art school) and I decided to start a national Women's Gallery there. And we invited a group of artists and writers to come for an *Opening Show*, at the beginning of 1980. One of them was Keri, who draws and paints alongside all the other things she does. Here are most of us in a photograph by Fiona Clark (Joanna Margaret Paul, Carole (Kanya)Stewart and Tiffany Thornley were elsewhere that night).



Outside 26 Harris Street Wellington January 1980 L-R Marian Evans, Allie Eagle, Nancy Peterson, Juliet Batten, Anna Keir, Heather McPherson, Bridie Lonie, Keri Hulme. In front: Brigid Eyley, Claudia Pond Eyley. Absent, Carole (Kanya) Stewart, Helen Rockel, Joanna Paul, Tiffany Thornley. Photographer Fiona Clark for Women's Gallery.

At the end of 1980, we had a show called *Mothers*—which later toured to public galleries round the country—and I met Irihapeti when she visited the Women's Gallery to see it. Irihapeti had a lot to say about one of the images, Barbara Strathdee's portrait of her (Barbara's) mother, and after that we sometimes met at exhibition openings at other galleries.

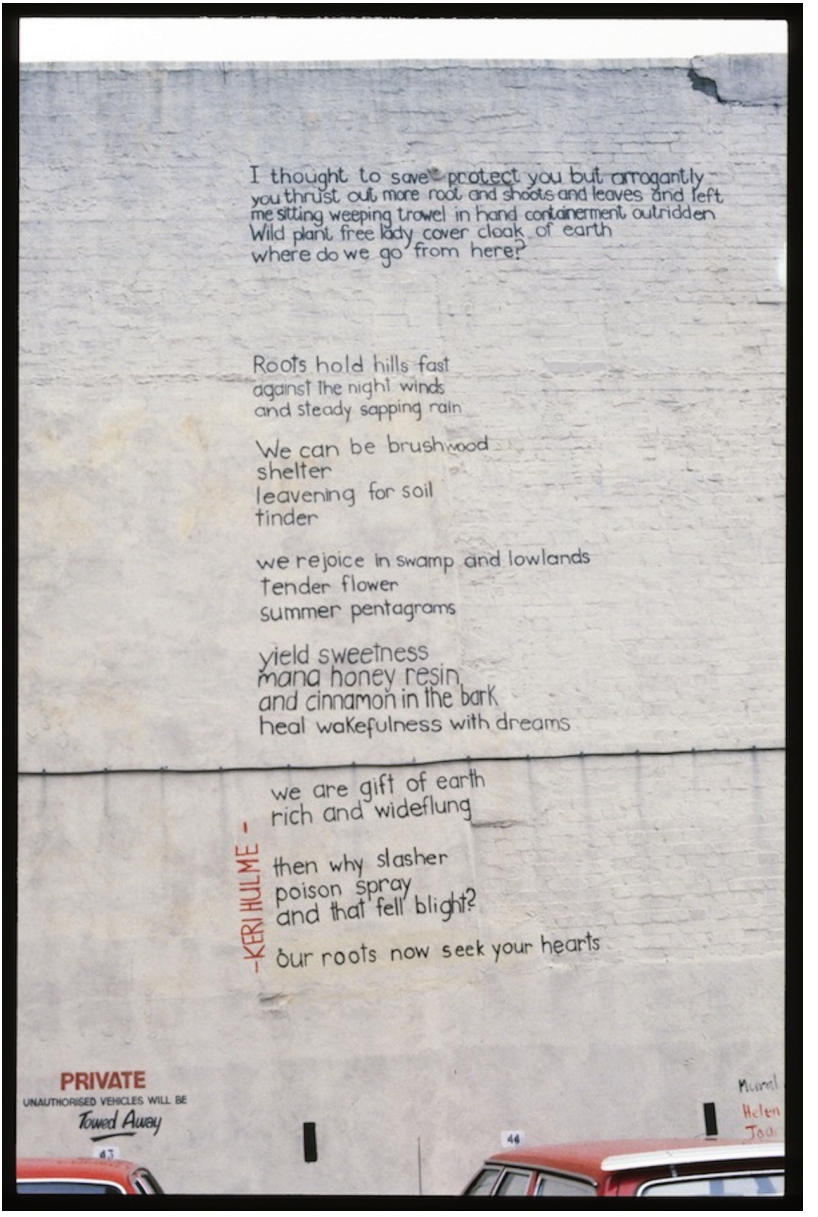
The Women's Gallery always had programmes for writers as well as artists, and we came to understand that women writers and artists were often facing similar difficulties in getting their work to readers

and viewers. Women writers, for instance, didn't tour, though men did. In 1981, Roma Potiki and I attempted to organise a women poets tour, including Keri, Kohine Ponika (in another bit of synchronicity, Ngahuia Wade recently told me that Kohine was her grandmother, and subject of a film Ngahuia has made[7]), Adrienne Dudley, Heather McPherson, Mereana Pitman. Kohine called the group Matariki. We couldn't get funding. I was bitterly disappointed, and Keri sent me *the bone people* to read, to cheer me up, a fat parcel of a manuscript she planned to encase in resin and use as a door stop.

I was working in a women's refuge at the time — just before the 1981 Springbok Rugby Tour — and very tired, but once I started reading I couldn't stop: I lay in bed making my way through the loose pages as fast as I could, dropping each one over the side of the bed after I read it. I think now that *the bone people* engaged me so strongly because of its violence: it spoke to me about behaviour that was then part of my day-and-night working life.

Later that year, thanks to Bridie's *Women & the Environment* exhibition, and with a lot of help, I was able to make a huge mural of texts from Keri, Sappho, Eileen Duggan, Heather, and Mereana, with a dedication to Kohine, Matariki's 'mother'. After that, I was over the Matariki disappointment.

7. https://medium.com/women-filmmakers-interviews/keri-kaa-an-interview-with-ngahuia-wade-225e1e4d73a1; http://www.kohine.com/



Keri Hulme ['I thought...'] Matariki Mural *1981*.

. . .

But *the bone people* niggled at me.

Jessica, now I've reached your questions.

3.

Heather McPherson founded *Spiral*, as a literary and arts journal for women, in 1976. Herself a poet, she was galvanized when she attended a Christchurch festival poetry reading and counted 13 men and no women poets on the stage. A lesbian feminist, when she came to Wellington for the Women's Gallery *Opening Show*, she had been unable to find a publisher for her volume of poems, *A figurehead: A face*. Also at the Women's Gallery *Opening Show*, we'd heard J. C. Sturm (the late Jacquie Baxter) read some wonderful stories she wrote in the 1950s and 1960s, and learned that she too had been unable to find a publisher for her collection of them, *The house of the talking cat*. Early in 1981 Anna Keir and I decided to publish *A figurehead: A face*, using the Spiral imprint, which then became a floating imprint, moving from collective to collective. *A figurehead: A face* sold out. With Heather's book, and then with Jacquie's book, and *the bone people*, Spiral became a publisher of last resort.

I hoped for a long time that another publisher would take *the bone people*, because it was so long, and therefore expensive to produce. I remember using the phone box near the Women's Gallery to talk with one of our Kidsarus co-publishers, who was adamant that *the bone people* needed to be edited, though he hadn't read it. He didn't want to see it unless Keri had changed her mind about working with an editor. (A feminist publisher had already turned it down because

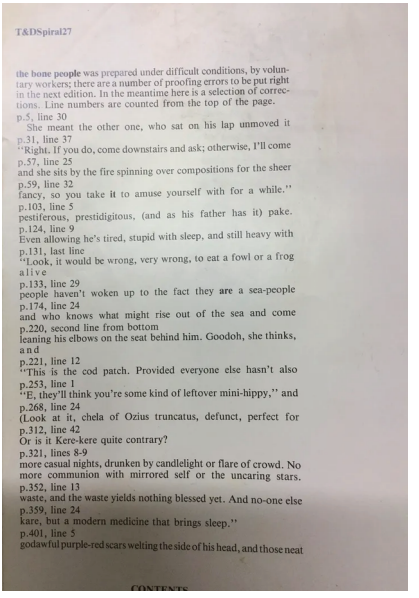
it wasn't feminist enough.[8] At least two more publishers rejected it unless Keri was willing to edit it. It's always intrigued me that just as readers tend to respond strongly to different aspects of the book, so each publisher wanted to edit different aspects.)

But because we'd had success with Maori/English editions of the Kidsarus children's picture books and with selling women's art works, I'd come to understand that some decision makers didn't want to take risks with writing and images that were too 'different' in some way: their view of 'literature' and 'readership' was limited and problematic. At the Women's Gallery and as a publisher of last resort I trusted, we trusted, the eye of the artist and the voice of the writer. I knew that, as Jane Austen wrote in *Persuasion*, "Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story" for public audiences, whether in words or pictures. Sometimes some of our stories and images were going to look and sound different, odd, sometimes when they explored experiences about which there is often silence. But something very special can come out of apparent awkwardness.

And I was intrigued to experiment with ways to make change. The starting point was to trust my own judgment that *The house of the talking cat* and *the bone people* had potential audiences (just as the Women's Gallery collective trusted our judgment daily, about art works); and I decided to invite Maori women to be part of the collective for Jacquie's and Keri's books. I thought that as publishers they would perceive and do things differently than those who had rejected the books and, who knows, there might be other books out there as well, that I didn't know about but they did. I passed the manuscript on to Irihapeti and to Miriama, not then realising that they knew each other and that they and Keri were related.

8. Eventually there were two, one in the UK as well as the one in Aotearoa.

Irihapeti and Miriama read the manuscripts and wanted to help, and from then on we were a collective of three who visited potential funders and made decisions together. And Anna and I organized the making of the physical objects: the paperwork involved in applying for grants, the proof-reading (oh yes, it was uneven, dependent on the skills of various helpers), the paste-up, led by Lynne Ciochetto (Jacquie's when Anna and I were heavily pregnant, Keri's with the two babies under the light table).



T&DSpiral27

the bone people was prepared under difficult conditions, by voluntary workers; there are a number of proofing errors to be put right in the next edition. In the meantime here is a selection of corrections. Line numbers are counted from the top of the page.

p.5, line 30
She meant the other one, who sat on his lap unmoved it
p.31, line 37
"Right. If you do, come downstairs and ask; otherwise, I'll come
p.57, line 25
and she sits by the fire spinning over compositions for the sheer
p.59, line 32
fancy, so you take **it** to amuse yourself with for a while."
p.103, line 5
pestiferous, prestidigitous, (and as his father has it) pake.
p.124, line 9
Even allowing he's tired, stupid with sleep, and still heavy with
p.131, last line
"Look, it would be wrong, very wrong, to eat a fowl or a frog
a l i v e
p.133, line 29
people haven't woken up to the fact they **are** a sea-people
p.174, line 24
and who knows what might rise out of the sea and come
p.220, second line from bottom
leaning his elbows on the seat behind him. Goodoh, she thinks,
a n d
p.221, line 12
"This is the cod patch. Provided everyone else hasn't also
p.253, line 1
"E, they'll think you're some kind of leftover mini-hippy," and
p.268, line 24
(Look at it, chela of Ozius truncatus, defunct, perfect for
p.312, line 42
Or is it Kere-kere quite contrary?
p.321, lines 8-9
more casual nights, drunken by candlelight or flare of crowd. No
more communion with mirrored self or the uncaring stars.
p.352, line 13
waste, and the waste yields nothing blessed yet. And no-one else
p.359, line 24
kare, but a modern medicine that brings sleep."
p.401, line 5
godawful purple-red scars welting the side of his head, and those neat

CONTENTS

Some amendments for the second printing of *the bone people* 1985.

Some of the work at 323 Willis Street, the Women's Gallery's new home, some of it in the room where I'm writing this. Irihapeti and

Miriama were then students with families and other commitments, with little spare time.

Here's the list of supporters of *the bone people* and *The house of the talking cat*, from the back of *the bone people*'s original title page:

Amster Reedy; Bill MacKay; Joy Cowley, whose generous help was given "in gratitude for over twenty years of support for women writers"; Juliet Krautschun [now Juliet Raven]; Kathleen Johnson; Keri Kaa and the Maori students at Wellington Teachers College; *Maori Writers Read* participants and the series organizers Janet [Roma] Potiki and Patricia Grace; [the late] Pauline Neale; and Commission for Evangelisation, Justice and Development (Wellington Diocese) [thank you, Manuka Henare]; Kidsarus; Maori Education Foundation [thank you, Sir John Bennett]; New Zealand Literary Fund [thank you Pat Stuart, especially]; Willi Fels Trust.

In retrospect, I think that David Burger and Andrew Evans could, should, have been added to this list. They were always quietly there, helping.

Huirangi Waikerepuru deserved a paragraph of his own. Here it is, with deep appreciation.

In the process of finding these supporters we learned that we often encountered generosity when and where we least expected it, that supporters within institutions were especially valuable, and that almost all the support came with love attached (which was pretty special).

. . .

Then there were the production credits, and the people within some of the organisations involved. Keri provided the cover illustration. Basia Smolnicki designed the cover. The Victoria University Students Association gave us a really cheap rate for the typesetting: thanks especially to Margie Thomson and Deanna McKevitt, and to Vanessa Jones and Victoria Hardy there. Thanks also to the printer, Bryce Francis (and to the printer of *A figurehead: a face*, whose shoddy work helped us learn a lot). And thanks to the Government Printer, and to Daphne Brasell who worked there then and negotiated a heavily subsidised price for beautifully sewn books. (Or did she persuade the Government Printer to *donate* all the binding costs?) I have only one enduring gripe about *the bone people*: one of the Watties Book Award judges claimed on national radio that his copy of *the bone people* came apart in his hand, and when I tracked this information back to the chair of the judging committee I found that this was not true. There was plenty about the production that was problematic (that proofing, the way some of the paste-up faded in the light because we didn't know we had to protect it, the cut marks on some pages). But the binding wasn't.

Like me, Irihapeti and Miriama trusted *the bone people* as it was; we knew Keri had tested it thoroughly and that her mother Mary Miller, particularly, had been a rigorous reader. For me, the structure felt 'right', and I thought that if I — not a 'serious' reader — could read it through the night without pause, others would be drawn in too. There was only one little bit towards the end that I didn't get. At the beginning of 1983 (a date again!) I went down to Ōkarito and talked with Keri. Went to bed, and in the morning, there was a new page or three that fixed the problem. (I think the change involved Li the cat.) And then Keri taught me to clean a gun and to shoot. Keri's "Standards in a non-standard book" preface puts the rest of it well:

. . .

> The exigencies of collective publishing demand that individuals work in an individual way. Communication with me was difficult —I live five hundred miles away, don't have a telephone, and receive only intermittent mail delivery, — so consensus on small points of punctuation never was reached. I like the diversity.

And then Keri wrote about her feelings about...oddities, the shape of words, how "OK" studs a sentence and "okay" is more mellow, and so on. Finally, "Great! The voice of the writer won through". Keri wrote further on in her preface:

> To those used to one standard, this book may offer a taste passing strange, like the original mouthful of kina roe. Persist. Kina can become a favorite food.

Jessica, you asked about the marketing challenges. There weren't any. By then, we were reasonably media savvy and Keri was anyway very attractive to interviewers. I think the big launch at the Teachers College in Wellington helped, thanks to Keri Kaa. And thanks to help I remember from Bridie Lonie as we made many many filled rolls from baguettes and ham and tomatoes and cheese.[9] And with support from many guests: Keri's family, the collective's families and friends, from Ngāi Tahu and elsewhere, Wellington

9. 2025: Recently I realised that we filled those baguettes for another Teachers College launch organised by Keri Kaa: the launch for *The Kuia & the Spider Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere*, by Patricia Grace. Please see *Spiral 8* for more.

artists and writers. We sold lots of books as cheaply as possible ($12.50), having by then learned that it helps to sell books at a launch or directly, to receive all that income rather than to share it with sales reps etc. We also delivered many cartons of books to Unity Books, a Wellington bookseller which then — as now — was immensely supportive of New Zealand writers.

A few days after the launch, Keri and I drove from Christchurch to Dunedin, approaching booksellers along the way. When we reached a little Dunedin bookshop, I went in with my sample copy. The book seller was saying "I suppose I could try a couple" when we were interrupted by a customer, who said she'd heard about a book on the radio (did she refer to a Sharon Crosbie interview with Keri?), and started to describe what I knew must be *the bone people*. I held up the book and said "This one?" So I sold five there. Later, Arapera Blank — Keri Kaa's sister — and Joy Cowley wrote wonderful parallel reviews for the *Listener* (12 May 1984) that were influential. But before then there was a New Zealand-based viral effect. And all without the internet. Or mobile phones. Or personal computers: we had one typewriter at the Women's Gallery, which we shared. For instance, at the *Opening Show*, Anna and I typed up the catalogue with help from some of the visitors, and Keri used it to type up her *He Hōhā* poem. When I first wrote this post, I wasn't sure if there were photocopiers then. But Anna can remember constantly using one, in the old public library which is now the City Art Gallery, in the big downstairs room to the left of the foyer. She recalls being in there with me and Pauline, and often on her own.

We sold out the first printing of *the bone people* very fast, and had to do another. But we hadn't taken into account that some of the reprint costs wouldn't be covered by the income from the books we'd sold. Again, the Literary Fund helped. And again, we sold out.

Rather than attempt another reprint, we invited commercial publishers to propose co-publication. I think three publishers made formal proposals and eventually Keri chose Hodder & Stoughton, with full support from the rest of us. Hodder & Stoughton in New Zealand was then run by a very lovely man called Bert Hingley, and we all felt very safe and happy with him. He also reprinted *The house of the talking cat*.

I learned recently that when *the bone people* was first published Joy Cowley sent a copy to Bert Hingley, then her publisher. He was not sure about it. But his wife, Cheryl, insisted that it was the best thing ever. Bert later wrote a nice letter about that to Joy; the letter is stored with her papers in the Mugar Collection at the Boston University. So, as Joy says: Cheryl was "part of the powerful impetus of Keri's great book". Several times, I've tried to find Bert, who went to Australia. I think Keri has too. If you or Cheryl read this Bert, we'd love to hear from you.

I don't know why *the bone people* was so successful. People enjoy it (and strongly dislike it) for different reasons. It spoke to some people's Maori-ness. I think that its compassion for deeply damaged people is important; it gives space for readers to reflect on the pain in their own lives, including the pain they've caused, and to imagine what might bring healing. I like it that it probably can't be adapted for film, that the story stops there in the novel. I like the place of food in it. I've read it right through only twice, that first time, and when there was a seminar five years ago. I discovered at the second reading that I appreciated the structure better than I used to; I always found it seductive and satisfying, but now I understand how it works.

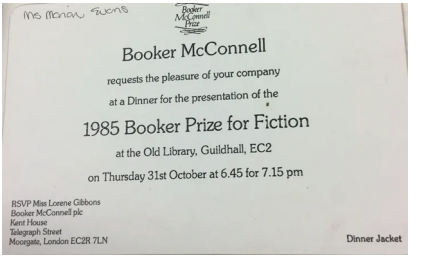
. . .

The Spiral imprint is still there for anyone who wants to use it. I know women writers have problems in the States, but most New Zealand women writers can find publishers and many do well in awards. I think *the bone people* helped make some changes here, within a literary context that includes other significant women writers: Katherine Mansfield, Janet Frame, and Patricia Grace among others, and because of the institutional support associated with the International Institute of Modern Letters, which I wrote about a while ago.[10]

In many ways, *the bone people* and those other projects provide the model we're now using for *Development*.[11] They were all non-profit projects, funded by charitable organizations, individuals, and (sometimes) by the state. The people who managed the projects took women writers and artists seriously, took account of their diversity, and usually worked without payment. They also paid attention to audiences that the 'mainstream' tended to ignore. I used Spiral as the charitable umbrella for my *Sister Galvan* film, and we're in the process of establishing Spiral Screen Media as a non-profit of last resort for women who want to make feature films.

Whew. This has been harder than I thought. May have to change it later on. I hope you feel that this celebrates your wonderful work, Keri. I hope the information is useful for you, Jessica. I hope that the people who helped Spiral will see this and take a moment to congratulate themselves for the glorious outcome of their loving generosity a quarter of a century ago: Aotearoa New Zealand's only Booker Prize. And thank you all from me, for your contributions to what I learned and can now use.

10. http://wellywoodwoman.blogspot.com/2009/12/moving-forward.html
11. *Development* was a feature film that I wrote as part of my PhD; it was never made.


Booker McConnell

requests the pleasure of your company

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at the Old Library, Guildhall, EC2

on Thursday 31st October at 6.45 for 7.15 pm

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Telegraph Street
Moorgate, London EC2R 7LN

Dinner Jacket

COMMENTS

Keri Hulme November 1, 2010 at 9:54 PM

Marian — as you know, Irihapeti, Miriama & self called you "The Dream-maker" as in, you make dreams happen. This celebration of tbp — and it is truly a celebration! All the people who helped along the way — is perfect. Thank you so much. A/n/n Keri- (The kete which holds the Booker prize still has the piece of lucky heather in it. It's kept at a family place, south. O, and while a renewal of contract was signed last year, the 25year celebratory Penguin Putnam edition came out this year.)

Giovanni Tiso November 1, 2010 at 11:03 PM

Thank you, Marian — what a wonderful post.

wellywood woman November 2, 2010 at 1:33 PM

@ Keri. Thank you very much. Was a little anxious, & now am reassured. I've wondered now & then why I don't see tbp at airports any more. Now I know. And it's good to know I wasn't imagining the heather & what happened to it.

@Giovanni. Thank you, lovely to read this from someone who specialises in memory & technology.

. . .

Helen Rickerby November 2, 2010 at 9:08 PM

Marian, it's wonderful to have read your story of how it all happened. It's inspirational. Thank you!

wellywood woman November 4, 2010 at 12:53 AM

Thank you, Helen. I hope nothing directly contradicts that interview of yours, so long ago. My memory not the greatest after all this time, and have been glad to receive some emailed information and then to amend the post. More is always welcome.

TK Roxborogh November 16, 2010 at 7:08 AM

"I don't know why the bone people was so successful... And then Keri wrote about her feelings about...oddities, the shape of words, how "OK" studs a sentence and "okay" is more mellow, and so on."

As I have said to Kiri, it is THIS that makes the story so wonderful. Simon's story, started as a short story and fleshed out in this book is, to me, up there with To Kill A Mockingbird.

Both Harper Lee and Keri Hulme use language so wonderfully to convey truth and to put us in the place. I have, proudly so, the bone people, eight times. And, each time, as I myself, grow as a writer and a teacher of English, become more in awe at the vocab and the syntax but most of us, as you say, THE STORY.

. . .

I feel still the Westcoast sand between my toes; the weather; am affected by the small community.

When I present a lecture on the power of words and I say this: The first time I was really conscious of how words could be shaped and manipulated by the writer was when I read the bone people. I loved that Keri Hulme decided how a word could look on a page — that if you were trying to explain the colour bluey-type greeny-type colour you could write bluegreen; that the rhythm of your sentences could (and should) reflect the meaning of your sentences so, when Keriwan is describing her ascent up the stairwell, I marvelled that I was not only being led up visually, but phonetically and syntactically. I loved that about her writing. Funny eh, how people either love or loathe the bone people but, for me, it was like my quirky, whacked out way of looking at the world and words had found its home in another's writing.

Negative comments about the bone people? It's actually about tall poppy stuff. How dare a woman, with Maori connections, beat the man to the top prize?

Those who didn't 'get' the book, never had a life exposed to the underbelly of society. the bone people, in my opinion (which, I suppose, means nothing) is one of the most significant books ever published.

Like 'To Kill A Mockingbird', the bone people would have to be one

of the most signifciant reads for me. Yeah, Jane Austin and George Elliot yaddi yaddi yaddi.

Keri Hulme and Harper Lee just pissed off some peeps. IMHO

TK Roxborogh November 16, 2010 at 7:10 AM

sorry about typos! wahhh hate that. Please, readers, don't go — and she's an English teacher! It's just that I'm shoving this in between teaching and writing and parenting and life!

wellywood woman November 17, 2010 at 1:25 PM

Thanks Tania. One of the reasons "I don't know why..." is that when I hear people talk about — or read what they write about — what draws them to the book, the reasons are so varied. For me it was the way Keri wrote about the violence. For you it's the language. For others it's the structure. etc etc. And I'm intrigued you refer the "To Kill a Mockingbird", one of those books I re-read when I have flu, and which inspired me to become a lawyer — & as for your typos, no worries. Anyone who's read this blog more than once has had to get used to mine. I love this kind of publishing because I can fix typos over time, and re-write. And I can delete posts, too, as happened the other day when I discovered that *The Hollywood Reporter* did not want me to embed its videos (embarrassing, that, when I was so pleased that I'd worked out how to do it).

Kyna December 23, 2010 at 5:05 PM

Hi, Marian (just catching up on my late fall reading of Wellywoodwoman!) Loving this convo about The Bone People. I started

the book in 2003 while I was living in Seattle and remember the long drive to the South Seattle branch of the public library to find it and pick it up. Just the search for the book led me into a topographically beautiful, and economically poor, area of the city. I started in earnest to read it, then put it down to work on a friend's film and didn't finish it until this year. I returned the book of course, then after my move back to Indiana, I was lucky enough to find a used copy for cheap, determined to read it through. While it's such a rich book (pain, silence, memory, hope...) I found it to be quite stark in its expression of those elements. They are obviously there, but the way they were represented didn't evoke much within me. Maybe I didn't come to it with an open-mind, expecting some romanticized view of New Zealand? Or maybe I'm a sucker for clearly defined heroes and heroines? I found it difficult to find the redeeming qualities within both the characters of Kerewin and Joe. Later, after finishing it, I was angry at myself for wanting such a simple, binary portrait of characters. The characters painted by Keri Hulme in The Bone People, I've come to realize, are some of the most real and most beautifully drawn in any book I've ever read. They DEMAND something of the reader in a way that I'm not sure I've ever quite experienced in my reading before. And not just the characters, but the style and structure — Hulme's literary aesthetic challenged me. I shall re-read it in the coming years, perhaps even in 2011, to see what a second go at it produces. Enjoyed reading your blog post about your experience of the book's recognition.... (and would love to chat with you about it in a few months when I'm in Wellington!)

wellywood woman January 9, 2011 at 3:09 PM

Thanks for this response Kyna. Maybe we can both re-read tbp before you visit, and chat about it over a vegan tbp-type meal. Keri showed me a vegan recipe once that I still use, & wd love to cook for you! And when there was a seminar to celebrate 20 years, I went through tbp looking at all the recipes, to see if we could have them

for lunch, so can flick through the bookmarks and see what's possible.

kynaJanuary 15, 2011 at 9:48 AM

You're on! I'll take it with me to Vancouver next month and will have it fresh in my mind for my July visit to Welly. The food sounds delish, and I'd like to cook for you, too, if you'll let me! It's one of my artistic outlets :) By the way, has anyone ever tried to make The Bone People into a film? I don't think it ever should be, myself, but I thought due to its acclaim that someone might have attempted that. I haven't heard anything about it if they have.

wellywoodwoman January 15, 2011 at 7:34 PM

Well, Kyna, I remembered that Keri always retained the film rights, and thought I knew the reasons, but wanted to be sure, so I emailed Keri. This is what she wrote, with many thanks to her:

> I haven't altered my thinking very much apropos tbp as a film: cg graphics are now getting very good (and that's the only format I would consider BUT I am very well aware that such is a huge — and hugely expensive — team effort, and I'm not a team player. And there's no way I'd just give — or sell- the rights without deep input.) The one thing that does attract me is using very subtle soundscapes...but hey, that isnt a goer (e.g via audio books — you have the associated problem of actors' voices setting up a character (plus it's a bit awkward when one character — while not voiceless — doesnt actually speak (more than 1 word.)

> I still feel the story works best — to use my cliché — behind human eyes, not in front of them. While various media are coalescing in very interesting ways, there are texts/stories that wont be enhanced by film-type adaptations.

The 'cliché' is absolutely Keri's own I believe; I've never heard anyone but Keri use it, and I love her idea that some stories work best 'behind human eyes, not in front of them'. Am trying to think of what other stories fit in that category. Maybe you can think of some?

FriendlyFire March 31, 2012 at 8:17 AM

Speaking for myself, it is precisely the intriguing nature of the story and the problems of portraying it 'in front' that make it a compelling subject for film. The book works so well on so many levels, but I think that much could be also gained from portraying Keri's New Zealand, the bachs, the fishing, the Tower and so forth. The bone people invites the reader to dwell on the painful, the (super)natural, the personal and interpersonal worlds of Kerewin, Simon and Joe. I can't think of other stories that do this. But I'm willing to bet that any number of talented actors and directors would love to take on the challenge.

Kyna January 17, 2011 at 2:14 PM

Thanks for this Marian. I like her phrasing, too. It's a beautiful way to say, I think, that tbp is something to experience rather than witness. I think most stories of people with extreme and complicated pain work best in word form, not visual form (film). When it comes to film, I think it's the very rare filmmaker who can portray

the type of pain and layers of human experience in a powerful way, akin to how it's done in tbp as a novel. Film always has its limitations since it's us filming ourselves, trying to make it as real as possible. The human imagination is much more vast than film could ever be, though what we put on film arises from our imaginations.

Mercedes Webb-Pullman March 23, 2014 at 5:10 PM

I'd love to talk to you about Spiral's publication of Hilary Baxter's book of poetry The Other Side of Dawn. I want to write about Hilary.

Amended October 2013.

SPIRAL'S INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS (?2005-2012)

Marian Evans & Bridie Lonie



PĀNiA! The True Artist Helps the World by Asking for Trust *(After Bruce Nauman) 2019. Neon (production sketch). Courtesy the artist, Te Tuhi and Mokopōpaki, Auckland.*

2019: Looking for information to complete Spiral's history for the Women Together *site,*[1] *I found this. I have no memory of why I wrote it, or exactly when, sometime after 2005 and before Juanita Ketchel's death in 2012. But Bridie and I think it fills a useful gap in the information about how Spiral projects worked. So here it is, with a few amendments and with warm thanks to PĀNiA! for a right-up-to-date inspiration.—Marian*

I wasn't well prepared for the interview, squeezed between other commitments at the end of a long year. So when a panel member asked 'Could you tell us about your resolution of an ethical issue?' immediately after we'd been discussing the *Getting Free* research, I addressed the protocols Bridie and I developed for that project. If I'd been more alert, I'd have chosen something simpler.

Because to answer the next question accurately, about our reference points for the protocols — I realised later — I had to traverse a thirty-year history of our exploration of power relations. A history of friendships, art history and the women's art movement; my involvement as a lawyer with the Domestic Violence Act and clients who were seeking compensation under the Accident Compensation Act in the early nineties; Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi; Irihapeti Ramsden's theory of Cultural Safety and its application in nursing. Without that history, at least part of the *Getting Free* project would have been managed according to the standard National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ) agreement, using principles congruent with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1994.

1. *Women Together: A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand Ngā Rōpū Wāhine o te Motu* edited by Anne Else Historical Branch of Department of Internal Affairs & Daphne Brasell Associates Press 1993 and https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together/spiral 2018.

This article describes the *Getting Free* project, how we came to formalise our protocols, refers to the historical development of the principles behind the protocols and briefly outlines the protocols themselves.

THE 'GETTING FREE' PROJECT

Getting Free started as a response to two events: Irihapeti Ramsden (1946- 2003) was ill; and relatively inexpensive digital cameras capable of producing broadcast quality videotape became available. And Irihapeti was coming out of a very demanding time, following challenges to the theory and implementation of Cultural Safety that included an inquiry into Cultural Safety by the Government's Education and Science Select Committee in 1995.[2]

Realising that Irihapeti was very ill, and surprised that no-one had recorded her life in depth,[3] I suggested to Bridie that I do so as a Women's Gallery/Spiral project[4], on digital video, to show Irihapeti in person, with the option of turning the material into a documentary.

. . .

2. Irihapeti and I had worked together on and off over a long period, and were two of the three Spiral collective members who published J C Sturm's *The House of the Talking Cat* and Keri Hulme's Booker Prize winning *the bone people*, with Miriama Evans (1944-2018).

3. In 2002, Irihapeti published an autobiographical chapter in her PhD thesis *Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu*, as well as an account of how she developed and established cultural safety. https://www.croakey.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/RAMSDEN-I-Cultural-Safety_Full.pdf

4. Spiral was founded in 1975 by poet Heather McPherson (1942–2017), in Ōtautahi Christchurch and became a 'floating' imprint. From 1980–2005, The Women's Gallery was an incorporated society with charitable status and an umbrella for Spiral publications.

Juanita Ketchel (1946–2012), another old friend, agreed to help when the project became more complex, and Irihapeti, her son film director Peter Burger and I went to Europe to track down aspects of Irihapeti's family history.

Irihapeti's project led to other oral history projects, audio as well as video, that became known collectively as the *Getting Free* project. Each project recorded resilient individuals who had transcended the emotional effects of some kind of violence, ranging from the colonising process and verbal abuse to sexual and physical abuse, in institutional or domestic contexts.

Artist Allie Eagle's project started when I asked her to help me understand better the principles in framing a shot. Her filmed oral history included material about her mother Lorna Mitchell's and her own experiences in psychiatric institutions.

Then a matakite, Wai Turoa Morgan, asked me to ghost write her autobiography and this too became part of the project, with a long audio oral history process as well as some video recording. Her story demonstrates how her matakite inheritance manifested itself in spite of and in some ways because of difficult childhood experiences, including exposure to colonising processes.

Around this time, Juanita started her audio oral history of a group of individuals who defined themselves as resilient, working largely

autonomously, with support from Bridie (in the same city, Dunedin) and to a lesser extent from me, based in Wellington.[5]

HOW WE CAME TO RESIST THE PROVISIONS OF THE COPYRIGHT ACT & FORMALISE OUR PROTOCOLS

Each *Getting Free* project was negotiated on an apparently ad hoc basis with the individual concerned. There were two exceptions. Wai's ghost-written biography involved a contract because — as a fundraiser for the overall *Getting Free* project — we provided her with some services she paid for. And in her audio *Getting Free* project, Juanita decided to use the consistent, industry-standard agreement provided by NOHANZ to manage her relationships with a group of sixteen individuals.

At first Bridie and I supported this, although Bridie, whose own interviewing had alerted her to potential damage to vulnerable interviewees, was concerned about an interviewer's — and the Women's Gallery's — legal position if the general public had access to unedited oral histories about abuse.[6] But when I looked closely at the NOHANZ agreement I realised that our apparently ad hoc way of working was based on a number of principles that we could have articulated to Juanita from the outset, as well as some others we had not articulated to ourselves or to other participants in *Getting Free*.

In the past we had created and held spaces for women to research and tell their stories on their own terms.

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5. For an account of the *Getting Free* audio oral history see Ketchel, J. 'Getting Free: Oral Histories of Violence, Resilience and Recovery' in *Remembering: Writing Oral History* eds A. Green and M. Hutching, Auckland University Press 2005: 90–103.
6. Lonie, B. *An Examination of the Image and Spoken Word in the Production of Meaning in Art Therapy*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Otago 1998.

But now Juanita and I were the 'authors', asking the questions, and were likely to be shaping the interviews to make a film or publication from which we would benefit. In particular, once I had access to that digital camera, the excitement that I'd felt behind the Auckland Women's Community Video Inc[7] camera seventeen years previously had as much to do with me as a potential filmmaker as with opening space for others' stories.

Given these conditions and our established principles, spoken and unspoken, the NOHANZ agreement seemed not appropriate. As those with primary accountability for the overall project, Bridie and I then took responsibility for traversing our shared history and creating formal protocols that expressed an appropriate ethic for *Getting Free*, in spite of some concern at compromising Juanita's autonomy and complicating the processes within her project.

The main reason we rejected the NOHANZ agreement was that it was based on an interpretation of the Copyright Act provision giving ownership of an interview to the person who 'arranges' it. The Act says that the author of a work is the person who creates it and 'In the case of a sound recording or film, the person by whom the arrangements necessary for the making of the recording or film are undertaken'.[8]

This is generally interpreted as giving authorship (copyright) to the person who suggests that the interview takes place, and then edits it

7. 'Auckland Women's Community Video' chapter below outlines its work.
8. Copyright Act 1994 section 5 (1) and (2).

for publication, whether as text or sound or in association with images. Our view was that this provision was inadequate in our oral histories, for several reasons. Firstly, the interviewer is interpreted as being the person who undertakes 'the arrangements necessary' as the author of a sound recording or film. However, making an arrangement for an interview involves two people. It is a negotiation between the interviewer and the interviewee. To reduce this two-sided arrangement to a single-sided one, made by the person who (probably) initiated it denies the agency of the individual interviewed.[9]

Secondly, the interviewee shares her or his intellectual property by agreeing to be interviewed. However well an experienced interviewer has researched and structured the interview, the material generated is arguably a collaboration, the creation of both parties, or owned by person being interviewed, who may be conveying precious ideas they have spent years developing as well as a story that is uniquely theirs.[10] Why should the interviewer alone benefit from this, as sole author? In a long interview or series of interviews where the interviewee, like Irihapeti or Galvan, is a well practised communicator on complex topics the interview can be reproduced almost without editing, whether in sound, chapter, video or book form.

9. In a ghost-written — and commercially lucrative — autobiography of an All Black (say) where the ghost writer may have undertaken arrangements to make sound recordings and use oral history techniques, there are no doubt contractual arrangements about the benefits generated by publication. These may rely on the ghost writer being commissioned by a publisher. Without these arrangements, the ghost writer would be 'the author' of the autobiography. A commission changes ownership of copyright: Copyright Act 1994.

10. The Copyright Act section 6(1) provides for joint ownership in the following way: 'in this Act, the term 'work of joint authorship' means a work produced by the collaboration of 2 or more authors in which the contribution of each author is not distinct from that of the other author or authors'.This could be useful for oral history recordings except that an interviewee's story is readily distinguishable from that of the other 'author', the interviewer.

Furthermore, 'authorship' of the interview allows the interviewer to present the material generated in the context of the interviewer's choice without reference to the person interviewed. The interviewee may then feel misrepresented or in some other way uncomfortable or exploited.

Finally, in general the artefact created in the interview remains in the ownership of the 'author', who in the case of film, is likely to ask the interviewee to sign a release form giving the interviewer all rights in the material. The interviewer (or the interviewer's employer, if an interview is made in the course of employment, including a commission) can then offer the interview to others to use, for a fee. As a result, the interviewee, who was unlikely to have been paid for the interview, does not benefit from its sale. The interviewee who does not negotiate otherwise also loses any right to use the material in future without paying the interviewer, to have it copied for private use without cost, or to prevent its use in another, inappropriate, context where the interviewee's story, or ideas may be misrepresented.

Use for the interviewee's own publication purposes can be prohibitively expensive. For instance, Galvan Macnamara was interviewed many times by TVNZ. One of these interviews showed him in the 1980s demonstrating how a master potter obtained glazing effects. The interview was a fine example of Galvan's insight and skills. We wanted to use it for his film. He wanted it included in his film. At the time TVNZ filmed him, he had not signed a release form. The footage had already benefited both him and TVNZ. TVNZ got a vivid interview; Galvan got publicity for the exhibition and artist he wanted to promote. However when we asked to use 86 seconds of the interview, TVNZ charged us $4000 for a five year

license.[11] TVNZ was completely within its rights to do this under the Copyright Act as generally interpreted. And as the TVNZ Archive pointed out, TVNZ had had costs in making the recording. However, those costs would have been far less than $4000.

The NOHANZ agreement provides for deposit of the interview tapes within an institution and for the interviewee to share decision making about access. However, if anyone wants to use the tapes in future, any payment made for their use goes back to the 'author', the interviewer, unless the interviewer has given the rights to the institution concerned, who then can charge for the use of the interview.

It was our view that an interviewee should share ownership of the entire interview, an essentially collaborative experience; and have the opportunity to share decision making about and any financial benefits from its use by the interviewer in the short term and by others in the future. The interviewee and those the interviewee nominated should also be able to copy and use the material freely.

This view devolved from our thirty year history already referred to, within art history and the women's art movement and in the uniquely New Zealand legal context including the presence of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document and the development of a jurisprudence around domestic violence.

11. We were told that this was 'mates rates', following the intervention of one of Galvan's old friends who approached Ian Fraser, then CEO of TVNZ, who had worked with Galvan.

The principles we based our decisions on overlap with some of those behind the New Zealand Film Archive's *Mana Tuturu* document, as articulated by Barry Barclay in his eponymous book,[12] but were developed independently, from another reality. In particular, they share Barclay's view that each person's story is a treasure now and for the future; what he refers to as 'stewardship' or 'guardianship' of that story requires a kind of tenderness in recording, storage, access and use. Inevitably this tenderness can be at odds with commercial or academic use; it demands that oral historians acknowledge the collaborative nature of the work created, negotiate carefully with collaborators and be flexible about agreements and outcomes.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE PROTOCOLS

In the seventies, Bridie and I were associated with a gifted artist whose father had been drawn to the ideologies of Mao Tse Tung and the Russian view of art as a having primarily a political function. Bill MacKay was himself an ardent reader of Marxist theory and writers like György Lukács and John Berger around art and capital. He generally refused to negotiate the institutions and commerce of the visual arts community of the time.

This was challenging in relation to his domestic arrangements with which I, as the mother of his children, was intimately concerned.

Bill also alerted us to the kinds of practices that then (as now) meant that artists could sell paintings very cheaply and receive no benefit

12. Barclay, B. *Mana Tuturu; Māori Treasures and Intellectual Property Rights* Auckland, Auckland University Press 2005.

when they were resold at a profit.[13] I remember being excited by an article in (I think) *Art in America* that proposed a system to give the artist a share of the sale price each time a painting was sold. Bridie and I began to ask, as a matter of course 'Who benefits?' from an individual's creativity.

Bridie and I also became involved in the Wellington Artists Co-op, which supported artists by providing an ongoing community as well as exhibition space and audiences for their experimental work without the expectations inevitable from dealer or an institution, with commercial and/or curatorial agendas. We came to understand the benefits of self-determination for artists.

Then, in 1977, artist Joanna Margaret Paul (1945–2003) invited a small group of women to document a month in their lives in some way, for an exhibition called *A Season's Diaries*, at Victoria University.[14] Some of us were serious artists, some not artists at all. I was one of those who didn't identify as an artist, and was surprised to realise that the gap between 'artist' and 'non-artist' could be surprisingly small. While the more accomplished technical facility of the artists among us was obvious, the ideas and some of the images created by those who did not identify as artists were as interesting as those who did.

13. 2025: This is no longer the case in Aotearoa. Resale Royalties Aotearoa Toi Huarau (RRA) is a not-for-profit organisation established to administer the Artist Resale Royalty scheme in accordance with the Act, and the Regulations. RRA is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Copyright Licensing New Zealand (CLNZ) a non-government, not-for-profit organisation. https://resaleroyalties.co.nz/about/

RRA were appointed by the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage as the collection agency for the purposes of the Act.

14. See also the *A Season's Diaries* section, above.

We learned that creativity and the ability to communicate visually was not limited to a chosen few. Around the same time we read Tillie Olsen's *Silences* and learned to recognise silences and invisibilities in our own lives and those of other women, often because we had limited access to resources from the past and in the present.

When Anna Keir, Bridie and I set up The Women's Gallery in 1980 we took the opportunity to build on what we had learned although we did not then articulate this fully.[15] We, and the other co-odinators who followed, organised exhibitions on themes relevant to women in New Zealand at the time, with titles like *Mothers*; *Women & Violence*; *Art by Māori Women*; *Women & the Environment*; *Diaries*; *Spirituality*, and so on. Rather than focus on individual artists and only on artists, we offered space within the exhibitions to any woman who wanted to contribute a work on the theme and we organised associated theme-based performances, film and book events, workshops and seminars as well as professional development opportunities.

Many established artists used the exhibitions to experiment, as we had hoped. Two exhibitions toured.[16] The gallery began to sell work with considerable success but took a far smaller percentage of the sale price than a dealer gallery, though we did not develop contracts that gave artists a proportion of any subsequent resale of their work.

Because of our previous experience, through all the work with artists, writers and other contributors we encouraged experimenta-

15. 26 Harris Street Wellington 1980–81; 323 Willis Street Wellington 1982–84.
16. *Political Posters* to university venues within New Zealand 1981; and *Mothers*, to public galleries and other spaces around the country and to Sydney 1981-2.

tion, individual autonomy and the representation of a diversity of views, knowing that the individualistic and male artist-oriented arts economy did not at the time work well for women or for others whose lives and work did not 'fit' within the economy. We were also aware, along with many others, that art history did not include enough of our 'cultural grandmothers' as models and that because we had so few mentors we generally had to mentor ourselves, often with less success than we hoped for. Exhibitors and visitors often had expectations that we did not have the resources to meet and that seemed not to be met elsewhere either.

The experiences from this process informed two major projects. One was the Spiral Collectives' publication of Heather McPherson's *A Figurehead: A Face* (poems, 1982), J C Sturm's *The House of the Talking Cat* (short stories, 1983), Keri Hulme's the bone people (novel, 1984), as publishers of last resort. Where we could, we also helped to find publishers for other projects we were offered, like Joanna Paul's *The Lone Goose*. The second major was *A Women's Picture Book; Twenty-five Women Artists From Aotearoa New Zealand* (1988). The projects further developed our knowledge of and commitment to self-determination and the question 'Who benefits?

Before we started the Women's Gallery, Anna and I had been involved with Kidsarus 2, producing children's picture books that were counter-racist and counter-sexist. While working on that project I'd learned that the publishing process was surrounded by a mystique that masked its realities: publishing is a straightforward process and filled with power relationships similar to those in the visual arts communities. At the time, local publishers believed that children's books set in New Zealand including picture books with Māori characters, whether in Māori or English, would not sell. We found New Zealand stories and illustrators, produced camera-ready

picture books and raised funds to subsidise their publication with established publishing houses. One, Patricia Grace's *The Kuia and the Spider*, was particularly successful. It won the Children's Book of the Year award and has become a classic.

Around the same time, Keri Hulme, who had been a founding member of the Women's Gallery, gave me *the bone people* to read. She had had the manuscript rejected by every publisher she sent it to because she was not prepared to edit it. Each publisher wanted Keri to change the book and as I remember it, each wanted different changes.

I was deeply moved by *the bone people*, loving its structure and its themes, and, because of the Kidsarus 2 experiences, was distrustful of the publishers' judgement, as I was of those who — years earlier — had rejected J C Sturm's *The House of the Talking Cat*. It seemed no coincidence that the publishers who rejected *The House of the Talking Cat* and wanted to change Keri's book were not Māori and mostly men.

From *A Season's Diaries* and on into the Women's Gallery we had learned to trust and support the artist/writer: she knew what she was doing. We learned that responses to art works varied considerably according to who the viewer was. We also knew that viewers who did not usually go to art galleries were often drawn to art works by their content rather than by who the artist was or the extent to which the artist's work reflected contemporary art practices. Experience told us that this was likely to be true with readers as well.

. . .

We saw that *The House of the Talking Cat* and *the bone people*, like the art works we showed, were part of significant community-based conversations and needed to be out in the world. With all this in mind, and support from a great many individuals, as well as a lot of opposition, Irihapeti Ramsden, Miriama Evans and I published first the *The House of the Talking Cat* and then, without substantive editing, *the bone people*.[17] It won won the New Zealand Book Award for Fiction in 1984, for which *The House of the Talking Cat* was one of two other finalists; and three major international awards: the Mobil Pegasus Prize, which included US publication and a promotional tour; the 1985 Booker Prize — the first time a book from Aotearoa had won; and the 1987 Italian Chianti Ruffino-Antico Fattore Prize for 'renowned literary works' that best express the values of the environment and nature.

Our publishing experiences encouraged me to experiment further with ways of creating and presenting material, to trust artists and writers, including those who did not primarily identify professionally as an artist or a writer, and to take risks. Regardless of conventional publishing wisdom there was an audience for lots of books that were either rejected by publishers or unwritten because 'that isn't how it's done'.

A Women's Picture Book, a mixture of oral history and an exhibition, was the experiment that followed.

17. While we did well, I believe, not to edit the book substantively, we did not so well with our copy editing. Some chapters were copy edited by skilled editors like Juliet Raven and Pauline Neale; others were not. Much of the subsequent controversy about editing confuses substantive editing with copy editing.

Bridie's choice to include herself as an artist as well as an editor, with her own chapter, and the inclusion of writers as well as visual artists continued the affirmation of fluid artistic identities that had characterised our own and others' involvement at the gallery. We also wanted the artists, as well as ourselves, to benefit both from the process and the outcome. The cover of the book reflects this with each artist's name as prominent as those of the editors.

Rather than represent each artist in a standard format we offered her the opportunity to contribute in a way that felt appropriate to her. Some chose to be interviewed. Two artists worked together on their chapter, another handwrote and drew her contribution. Contributors who wished to could work with Irihapeti Ramsden the Māori editor, or Tilly Lloyd, the editor with closer connections to lesbian communities than mine (I was always more committed to my identity as a single mother than to my identity as a lesbian with non-binary gender tendencies). Those who chose to be interviewed could also choose to edit their own interview. All participants had the final say on their chapters. Image selection was made collaboratively. The long process involved included the Irihapeti's eventual withdrawal and the withdrawal of most of the Māori contributors, who found that part of one artist's contribution was unacceptable because of their deeply held beliefs and that nothing she could do, like omitting the work, could change their decision.[18]

Eventually I was glad for this experience, to learn to accept that commitment to an ethic of self-determination presupposes mutual ease with one party's withdrawal from a shared project, without

18. In 2019, while perusing our archives held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, with Bridie and Tilly, I was reminded of another major conflict, about whether to include a poem written by a man about one of the artists, within her chapter. The artist had no strong feelings either way and the poem was not included.

necessarily a loss of goodwill. As well, I learned how quickly a shared, safe space for engagement could become dangerous to one or more parties.

THE LAW & OUR PRINCIPLES

While all this was happening, New Zealand's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi was becoming increasingly significant in the daily lives of New Zealanders, following a series of landmark cases. The Waitangi Tribunal was preparing a series of reports into claims based on breaches of Treaty provisions. The Treaty, signed in 1840, guaranteed Māori sovereignty (self-determination) in a number of areas, including sovereignty over their taonga or treasures, including their language and their stories. The colonising process, which continues, often ignores Treaty rights and compromises Māori health. It is a violent process that compromises the safety of Māori as individuals and as a nation.

At the same time, led by feminists, women were drawing attention to violence against women and demanding changes to the law and that public resources be used to help women who had been violated. In 1995 New Zealand's Domestic Violence Act acknowledged the many kinds of violence that do not involve physical contact and addressed 'patterns of behaviour'.[19] As a lawyer, I became aware that

19. The kinds of injuries covered by the Domestic Violence Act 1995 involve exercise of power and control through a 'pattern of behaviour designed to damage someone by depriving them of resources essential to well being and a sense of physical, spiritual and emotional integrity. Common tactics (as well as or instead of physical and/or sexual abuse) include sexual or racial harassment; making someone do something humiliating or degrading; threats; insults; controlling someone's time, space, material resources, speech, body language or gesture; through defining their reality and motivations; through shame and blame; through assigning status. Some of these behaviours are also addressed in other legislation, for instance the Human Rights Act 1993.

all other kinds of violence are subsets of psychological violence, the desire to exercise power and control over another individual. I found Heather McDowell's elegant exposition of this view useful as well as her definition of abuse. She describes abuse as 'an act of omission or commission that is judged by a mixture of community values and professional expertise to be inappropriate or damaging'.[20] I also learned that violence compromises the immune system: for instance, every one of my sexual abuse clients had an immune system-related illness: asthma, eczema, chronic fatigue, cancer.[21]

Around the same time, Irihapeti Ramsden, who trained as a nurse and an anthropologist and was by nature a philosopher, deeply committed to the principles of Te Tiriti and influenced by the work of Paolo Freire among others, developed the nursing education concept that came to be called 'Cultural Safety'.

This environment influenced Bridie and me, both consciously and subliminally. It reinforced what we had learned from experience, that as interviewers, arts workers and publishers, we had to do what we could to honour individuals' stories and images. We wanted to ensure that as project organisers we found ways to ensure that we created patterns of behaviour that avoided compounding the effects of violence on people who had been abused in other processes.

We became committed to finding ways to work with individuals that enhanced their well-being rather than compromising it, to be aware

20. McDowell H. *Emotional Child Abuse and Resiliency: An Aotearoa/New Zealand Study* Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Auckland 1995: 88.
21. See Romans, S., Belaise, C., Martin, J., Morris, E., & Raffi, A. 'Childhood abuse and later medical disorders in women: An epidemiological study' *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics,* 71(3): 141–150. https://doi.org/10.1159/000056281

of ways we might compromise their integrity. It helped that we had learned to trust the capacity of individuals to present their own stories and images in ways that satisfy audiences. We had also learned that offering space for people to tell their life stories — within or outside an interview — sometimes liberates them through the use of narrative. Telling a good, careful, listener an otherwise unarticulated and unstructured life story gives that story power, and may embed resilience.[22]

Finally, we appreciated that for us our daily lives did not depend directly on economic benefits from our projects. We have always worked without payment, apart from intermittent, small, shared, project payments at the Women's Gallery. Economic dependence on income from our projects might have led to different principles.

THE PRINCIPLES

By the time we articulated our formal principles in 2003, developed from the gallery's original incorporation document and practices, we felt able to state that we worked from a philosophy that aimed to give individuals control over their own stories.

The preamble to the principles states that the women who founded the Women's Gallery in 1980 wanted to hear, present and preserve stories, particularly stories by and about women that might otherwise be untold or disappear, because the existence and telling of the stories threatened established ideas of the way things are. We'd also learned that those with resources to record, present and preserve material often did not value certain kinds of stories.

. . .

22. Ketchel 2005: 100.

We noted that the stories might be fictional or non-fiction and that we wanted them to collect them in a public archive for the use of future generations, so that people looking, as we had, for cultural grandmothers and their work, could find what they wanted.

We also acknowledged that the ways the stories were recorded gave them a degree of intimacy that amplified and enriched them, and that in their telling distinctions between the public and the private were neither attempted nor considered possible. The combination of volume and texture offered by unedited material would allow future researchers to explore processes as well as endpoints, with the stories emphasising connections rather than being organised hierarchically (i.e. stories by self-defined 'authors' were collected on the same basis as stories by those who did not identify as 'authors').[23]

Within this context, the protocols provide that anyone included in a Women's Gallery project had the right to decide where their stories are stored and who can access all or part of their words or images. While the artefacts created in these projects — tapes, transcripts and so on — belong to the Women's Gallery, deposit of and access to the artefacts must be negotiated with each contributor. The National Library's research library, the Alexander Turnbull Library, holds almost all of the Women's Gallery/Spiral archives. However if anyone wants to have their videotapes deposited at the New Zealand Film Archive under the Mana Tuturu protocol or other conditions, that can be negotiated. If contributors choose, their

23. In 2019 I realise that these principles also influenced our unedited collection of archives from our projects, deposited at the Alexander Turnbull Library; and generated challenges associated with access to and use of them, because in a collection that mixes the personal and organisational over many years, some material may be hurtful to individuals and/or their families.

work can be destroyed or access closed to all or some for a defined period.

Contributors also retain the right to decide who would use their stories and how they are used; and to negotiate payment for use. In practice this has usually meant that the raw material is available for those who 'arrange' the project, who initiate the collaboration between interviewer and interviewee. However the context in which the raw material is used may also have to be negotiated and its final form subject to approval. The gallery reserves its own right of access to all open access material it helps create and to restrict access to secondary material generated by its workers, for instance, transcriptions, copies of tapes and abstracts.

THE PROTOCOLS IN ACTION

Although the work — and ongoing negotiation — with them was well under way when we started thinking about formal protocols, Irihapeti Ramsden's and Galvan Macanamara's decisions offer contrasting examples of how the protocols, now formalised, work. Both were living with cancer when we recorded them, aware of their mortality and focused on what they wanted to leave behind them. Both projects were careful collaborations between peers, involving similar negotiations but contrasting outcomes, with the interviewers and interviewees acknowledging the need to address who was to benefit and how, while recording and in the future.

Irihapeti's project, an 80 hour oral history created over six years, included film of her teaching and lecturing as well as casual footage, formal interviews and film of family and about family issues. She called it *Something For the Grandchildren to Hold*. Generously funded by a wide range of institutions and individuals, the project generated

material for several possible documentaries. Annie Collins and Keri Hulme assembled a rough cut of one. Then Irihapeti consulted with her family and decided that the material needed to settle before being further developed for public viewing. She hoped that Peter would make a documentary after her death. When Irihapeti died without our having made a formal agreement we came to an arrangement with her children about ownership of the material, where the tapes and associated material should go, and under what conditions of access and use.

Galvan wanted his oral history developed into a documentary, preferably before he died, and he did not want to see it before its first public showing. The content was entirely the interviewer/producer's responsibility. Galvan chose to focus on making the process as interesting as possible for all concerned. He also gave the gallery copyright ownership of all the material generated, now lodged at the Alexander Turnbull Library, and the right to decide access issues. He had no children and no interest in what happened after his death. We showed the feature-length *Sister Galvan*[24] about six months before he died and he was able to share the joy that others felt in viewing it.

In both cases it has been intensely satisfying to reach the end of the projects and know that gathering the histories and archiving them for future use has been worthwhile. Sometime in the future a young researcher will find the raw footage of Sister Galvan and perhaps find it illuminating. And I believe that even though it may not be completed in my lifetime *Something For the Grandchildren to Hold* will be a stunning film. I like to think that the tenderness that accompanied negotiations about creation, use and access of the material for

24. See the *Sister Galvan* chapter below.

both projects will extend to other projects using the protocol we have formulated.

(from the original piece, before Juanita's death) With many thanks to Bridie Lonie and her challenge, support and stimulus for all this time. I have tried to include her views as recently expressed but acknowledge that they are probably inadequately represented here. Thanks also to Juanita Ketchel, for many things.

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THEY MIGHT HAVE COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN US (2013-2016)

Maran Evans



Cushla Parekowhai at Te Papa Tongarewa 2013. Photographer Marc Bos.

As Sarah Polley said a while back, 'It's really lonely being a female filmmaker, there really aren't that many women doing this job'.[1] If we can't connect to our women filmmaker histories, it's even lonelier. Women's histories disappear so quickly. We — and our intellectual and artistic achievements — get forgotten. Often because of lack of resources.

1. http://thenewspaper.ca/the-inside/item/971-canadian-film-features-few-women-on-top Link broken 2025.

The other day I stumbled on the bilingual *Canadian Women Film Directors Database* and was astonished to find it included 975 women who've directed at least one short or feature film.[2] Created in 2006-2007 by Margaret Fulford, a librarian at the University of Toronto, the database provides additional information about 145 of the directors. It states that 'more detailed records will be added over time'. I suspect that one golden year of funding made it possible to get the database this far, and that will be it — a tantalising glimpse into a rich history of filmmakers and films we may never know more about. (*Happily I was mistaken: check out Margaret Fulford's comment below!*)

Women's histories so often get lost within institutions which, unlike the Canadian database, are not focused on women. There, women's work is often entirely ignored, or framed in a way that obscures our contributions. Take, for instance, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand. Te Papa describes itself as—

> "...New Zealand's national museum, renowned for being bicultural, scholarly, innovative, and fun. Our success is built on our relationships with and ability to represent our community.

But there's strong evidence that the institution hasn't built strong relationships with its communities' women and women artists and that it fails to represent them adequately. In 2009 I wrote about Te Papa and how it fails women artists in an article about *We Are Unsuitable For Framing,* its exhibition of women's work.[3] But the insti-

2. Still going! http://femfilm.ca/about.php?lang=e Now 1746 directors, and most recently updated in 2022.

3. Marian Evans 'We Are Unsuitable for Framing, Te Papa, New Zealand' Material

tution's relationships with women artists' history have also been unsatisfactory in more general exhibitions. For instance, in 2004, Te Papa created an exhibition called *Out On The Street: New Zealand In The 1970s*.[4] According to Te Papa, this show—

> ...takes in the Māori renaissance of this decade, investigates the radical influence of women's liberation on Kiwi culture, and canvasses the alternative voices that rose to challenge the Establishment...New Zealand took to the world stage, sending a navy vessel to Moruroa in protest at the continued French nuclear testing on this tiny Pacific atoll...everyone seemed to be out on the street, making their views known on, among other things, sporting contacts with South Africa, gay rights, the Vietnam War, abortion, social welfare benefits, and 'US imperialism'.

Out On The Street included posters, many of them made by women artists, but as I remember it a high proportion were unattributed. For example, the posters that women's art movement leader Sharon Alston designed were not attributed to her. And a classic Herstory Press poster was displayed without naming the prolific photographer — Mary Bailey[5] — and the women in the poster's photograph. In less than thirty years two accomplished women artists and five women who posed for one of them had become 'anonymous', even though there were many people in Wellington who could have provided names. Can Te Papa's self-description be taken seriously if it isn't scholarly enough to research and provide the names of those

Histories n.paradoxa July v24: 49-58 2009. https://www.ktpress.co.uk/article-search.asp

4. In 2025 I could find no trace of this exhibition on the Te Papa website.
5. See Mary's chapter below, in the 'Each woman must repeat...' section.

who create the artworks it displays? It's possible to argue that posters aren't 'art works' so that it isn't important who created them, and there were probably posters men made that were also unattributed. But I think that if posters are shown in an arts context they *become* art works and it's important to identify who made them; given the underrepresentation of women in Te Papa's exhibitions and women's somewhat fragile art history the institution should be especially scrupulous in naming the women makers of works it does show.

More recently, last year [2012] Te Papa added images from its collections to *Google Art.*[6] The selection includes 166 art works. Seventy-eight artists are named, and only two are still alive (both men). Of the named artists, **eight** are women and **seven** are New Zealand women — around 10%, a little less than the proportion of feature films written and directed by women, in New Zealand and around the world.

None of the named artists were Maori women, although the anonymous works include twenty fabric works most of which Maori or Pasifika women probably created and forty-five anonymous carvings, any of which a Maori or Pasifika woman might have created. The selection offers nineteen images of women including five of Maori women (plus possibly another within one of the carvings, it's a little difficult to see). A single image of a woman is **by** a woman: Mina Arndt's painting *Red Hat* (c1914). Does anyone benefit from Te Papa's minimal representation of women artists and their work, and when its images do not represent women as seen by women? And if

6. http://www.googleartproject.com/collection/te-papa/ In 2025, there are 5201 Te Papa images on this site; I'll leave it to someone else to do the counting this time!

so, who and why? Did the women's art movement have no effect at all?

Also last year there was Cushla Parekowhai's talk at Te Papa,[7] followed by singer Mere Boynton. Cushla's a long time collaborator with her brother Michael, and Te Papa invited her to speak about Michael's installation *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, which represented New Zealand at the last Venice Biennale. I went because Cushla's a mate and I knew she'd be interesting. But she wasn't just 'interesting'. It was the best talk I've ever heard at Te Papa, superbly performed with an accompanying pianist Catherine McKay and visual images.



Cushla Parekowhai and Catherine McKay. Photograph Marc Bos.

7. 2025: link now broken.

. . .

As a storyteller I was blown away by Cushla's mesmerising and intricate structure. It was the first time ever that I felt as though I'd had an experience that matched listening to Homer. So I was shocked to learn — but not from Te Papa — that although Te Papa filmed Mere Boynton's performance (with *two* cameras) it did not record even an audio of Cushla's talk and its accompanying music. More women's art and literary history lost: it's impossible to replicate that kind of once-in-a-generation performance.



I hate it that Te Papa perpetuates a long art history where women artists like Cushla are defined as less significant than men, where women's images are represented primarily by men and where women artists are often anonymous. And I'm interested in the role of women there and in other institutions.

Te Papa has always employed and continues to employ women in key roles and I wonder about their decision-making processes, in view of a recent question in the *CoUNTess* blog, which compiles and reviews gender equality in the Australian art world. The question seems as relevant here as in Australia (and other parts of the world) —

> CoUNTess wonders why the art world is a place where the majority of administrative, curatorship and promotion positions at art institutions are filled by women (...the top job is more often than not a man) [but exhibits] in the majority male artists, CoUNTess believes, at the expense of their female colleagues? [8]

The 'art world' is not of course the only world where women in powerful positions do not support their female colleagues by seeking out and selecting good work by and about women. Just last week, Margot Magowan responded to a *Hollywood Reporter* article on the 'female-driven' DreamWorks animation studio, with the question "If DreamWorks is a 'female driven studio,' where are female

8. http://countesses.blogspot.co.nz/2012/12/educating-and-exhibiting-artists.html

protagonists?", and lists DreamWorks' recent movies, of which **two** out of twenty-one have female protagonists (that 10% again!).[9]

In her most recent post, the *CoUNTess* also writes about the role that publicly-funded institutions have in the market, and their influence on women artists' income.

> Anyone who visits art fairs, commercial galleries and auction houses can take note how often the price point for women artists is significantly lower than for work by men... One way to influence collector bias is to ensure that public funding of art institutions is shared more equitably. If publicly funded galleries collected and exhibited with equitable recognition female artists, would certainly raise the artists profile and elevate a collectors confidence to buy work by female artists. CoUNTess believes our public galleries should also be taking an interest in collecting and exhibiting art that is representative of what is being produced not just art that is being speculated upon.

This too is as relevant in New Zealand as elsewhere: according to Creative New Zealand's research published in *Portrait of the Artist* (in 2001 and not yet replicated, alas), the median income for all women artists from their principal artistic occupation was **less than a third of the income earned by men from their principal artistic occupation and 7.5 percent of the national median**

9. http://reelgirl.com/2012/12/if-dreamworks-is-female-driven-studio-where-are-female-protagonists/

income.[10] [2025: The most recent Creative New Zealand research shows a 32% pay gap between men and women artists.[11]]

The cumulative effect of the long history of what we see in public galleries, of what art work is bought and sold, and who receives support — including financial support — to continue working, is that stories by *and* about women disappear from 'the grand narratives'. As Odessa Kelebay wrote recently–

> The lack of gender equity in filmmaking [and in other arts] is perhaps a self-sustaining cycle. Movies shape the way that people see the world and by extension, the way that people see women.[12]

And the way women see themselves and women's roles in their artistic traditions. What does this 'disappearance', this 'forgetting' do to our individual and collective self image?

I didn't — couldn't — read all of Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton*, but one paragraph has stayed with me because it refers to both 'the grand narratives' *and* control over 'the story'—

> At the heart of the dispute over *The Satanic Verses*...was a question of profound importance: Who shall have

10. http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/en/arts-development-and-resources/research-and-arts-sector-resources/portrait-of-the-artist 2025: link broken.
11. Creative New Zealand & New Zealand On Air, A Profile of Creative Professionals [2022/23]: 15.
12. 2025: link broken.

> control over the story? Who has, or should have, the power not only to tell the stories with which, and within which, we all lived, but also to say in what manner those stories may be told? For everyone lived by and inside stories, the so-called grand narratives. The nation was a story, and the family was another, and religion was a third. As a creative artist he knew that the only answer to the question was: Everyone and anyone has, or should have that power. We should all be free to take the grand narratives to task, to argue with them, satirise them, and insist that they change to reflect the changing times. We should speak of them reverently, irreverently, passionately, caustically, or however we chose. That was our right as members of an open society. In fact, one could say that our ability to retell and remake the story of our culture was the best proof that our societies were indeed free. In a free society the argument over the grand narratives never ceased. It was the argument itself that mattered. The argument was freedom. But in a closed society those who possessed political or ideological power invariably tried to shut down these debates... The storytelling animal must be free to tell his [sic] tales.

I limp-and-stumble through this [*Development* film] project,[13] but in the last little while I've felt better able to recognise consistent patterns of day-to-day behaviour that control 'the story' and affect the grand narratives and women storytellers' ability to reach audiences.

. . .

13. Best forgotten now.

I always hesitate to suggest that individuals within institutions and organisations set out to discriminate against women artists and storytellers. Very often, I believe, we all perpetuate those grand narratives benevolently and I've written about my experience of this process elsewhere.[14] But some consistent, institutionalised, patterns of behaviour around women's story-telling nevertheless remind me of the abusive patterns that I learned about as a lawyer working with people who had been abused, in particular some of the more subtle patterns of control that don't leave physical marks but which affect an individual's freedom. These are the patterns that restrict women's freedom to present our stories publicly, 'our ability to retell and remake the story of our culture'.

The MANALIVE list of controlling behaviours specifies the kinds of harmful things people do when they have the power to make decisions that adversely affect others. I found this list in a book (Patricia Evans'– no relation) and can't find it online.[15] Here are some of the MANALIVE behaviours with some film-related examples; it's not hard to think of similar examples in other mediums. There's the control of time (when for example women become the default and poorly resourced carers of the very young, the disabled and the very old); the control of space (including intellectual or spiritual space, by belittling ideas, beliefs or capacity and by making our work invisible in public spaces, on gallery walls, on screens, in books); control of material resources ('We can't risk resources on a film or book or artwork that doesn't fit our perception of the grand

14. https://medium.com/wellywood-woman-diary/a-singer-may-be-innocent-never-the-song-967a85fb98d0

15. Patricia Evans *Verbal Abuse Survivors Speak Out on Relationship and Recovery* https://womensbookshop.co.nz/p/emotional-verbal-abuse-verbal-abuse-survivors-speak-out-on-relationship-and-recovery 2003.

narratives'; not allocating resources to research about women and their creative works); control of speech, body language and gesture ('You can't have a character/behaviour/structure like that in a script, and even if you could there's no audience for it'); control of reality and motivations by making someone responsible when they are not ('It's your fault your film can't get funding'; 'You're not competitive enough'; 'You aren't successful because you're not prepared to be a writer-for-hire' etc etc); and control by assigning status ('Most women can't write films that sell/find an audience' etc etc).

In the 1970s and 1980s various women fiction writers and poets addressed similar mechanisms used to underestimate and to undermine women writers [and artists]. Tillie Olsen's classic *Silences* did this wonderfully and Joanna Russ also identified common strategies in her *How To Suppress Women's Writing*. These included ignoring women writers completely; dismissing women's work because we write about the 'wrong' things, condemning us for writing in the wrong genre, blaming us for what others have deleted from our work, or simply joking about us.

All of these mechanisms are generated by fear and themselves generate fear, the kind of fear that often makes it less likely that women support one another.

Te Papa's failure to identify women artists and their subjects in *Out on the Street* is an example of one pattern, because through not allocating resources to the necessary research it denies women access to our history and the opportunity to feel pride in and to build on women-specific traditions. Its *Google Art* selection is another, because it assigns a lesser status to women every time it prioritises male artists and male images of women and perpetuates a grand

narrative of art history where work by and about women is less valued than men's. This too has consequences for women artists and for their potential audiences and income. Its failure to record Cushla's talk is a third example, which uses similar mechanisms and has similar consequences. In all three examples, it's possible that women within the institution were either independently involved in the decision-making or colluded with the men there. (And I too have at times failed to support other women,[16] colluded with behaviours that reinforce the white male grand narrative at the expense of women who tell stories.)

I believe that these patterns of behaviour towards women exist to some degree in all media and institutions though I'm forever grateful that I studied at the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML), a New Zealand creative writing institution, led by Bill Manhire. IIML welcomes women and teaches us very well.[17] And it helps us make the transitions to publication and to readers through its advocacy and strategic partnerships, in particular with Victoria University Press (unfortunately there's no parallel relationship for the scriptwriters: the processes involved in getting a script to screen, stage or game are more complex than making a manuscript into a book); and with philanthropists who provide awards and other support.

It's thanks to IIML, I believe, that New Zealand's women writers for the page have such a strong presence among our commercial and/or critical success stories. And as a consequence — unlike many other countries — New Zealand has a critical mass of contemporary

16. http://wellywoodwoman.blogspot.co.nz/2012/03/tautoko-for-unknown-woman-for-women.html
17. http://wellywoodwoman.blogspot.co.nz/2009/12/moving-forward.html

women writers with strong publication records behind its internationally known names like Katherine Mansfield, Janet Frame, Patricia Grace, Keri Hulme. It's not matched in film. There's no equivalent critical mass of New Zealand women filmmakers behind our internationally known filmmakers — Jane Campion, Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Alison Maclean, Niki Caro and Christine Jeffs.[18]

I often observe the use of the MANALIVE patterns of behaviour when I talk with and about and read about women artists, scriptwriters and directors. But because the patterns of behaviour are endemic it's hard to know how to make change beyond talking and writing about them, wherever they occur. (And I've experienced the effects of some of the mechanisms directly. This being tiny New Zealand I've heard about the language some powerful men within some institutions and outside them use to describe me and my work. And I know about some women who collude with their behaviour. It ain't pretty. Fortunately, I understand the reasons for the language and the collusion. I'm fortunate too that I also feel much loved and have strong links to allies within and outside New Zealand, some of whom have similar experiences. So even though the language is hurtful, usually I move on quickly from the shock and/or hurt and/or my anger. Especially if I can laugh about it.)

And now, *We Will Work With You: Wellington Media Collective 1978–1998*, another local art exhibition.

18. http://wellywoodwoman.blogspot.co.nz/2012/11/a-problem-or-two.html

II. 'WE WILL WORK WITH YOU: WELLINGTON MEDIA COLLECTIVE 1978–1998'

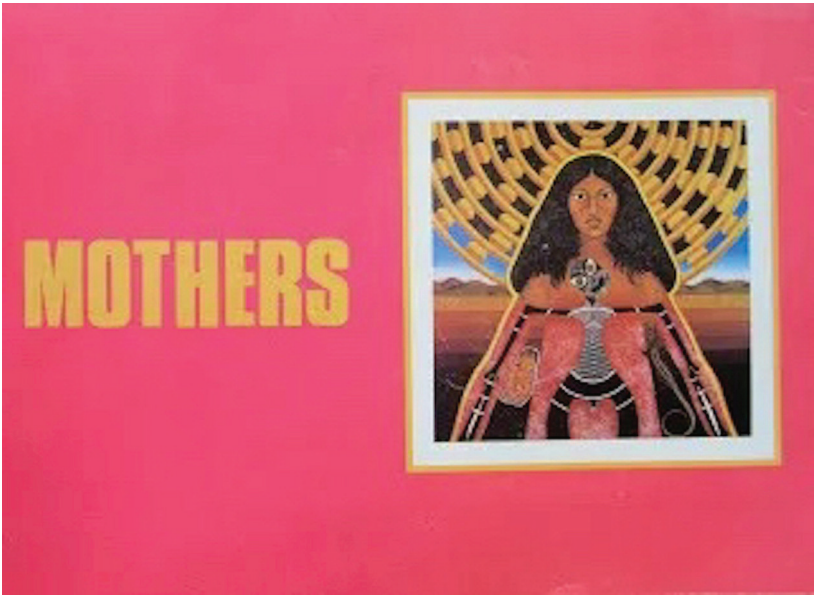


Anna Keir Self Image *poster silk screen on cotton 58×43.5)*

When I saw that the work of the Wellington Media Collective was on show at Victoria University's Adam Art Gallery, I was very excited, because the collective's contribution to the women's movement in Wellington was and is legendary, including its contribution to 'our' tiny bit of it, the Women's Gallery (1980–1984).

Anna Keir, Bridie Lonie and I set up the Women's Gallery as a non-profit, 'to support and promote women artists'. It embraced all media, women who defined themselves as artists and those who didn't, and usually presented group rather than individual artist exhibitions. Many were themed, like Anna's *Self Image*, Heather McPherson's *Women & Violence*, *Diaries*, Bridie's *Women & the Environment*, the collectively curated *Art by Maori Women* (both traditional and contemporary), *Sexxuality* (sic) curated by Sharon Alston, *Women's Disarmament*, *Children & Childhood* curated by Sarah Parkinson and *Lesbiana*, Mothers, all of them with extensive associated programmes.

We also counted the gender proportion of artists whose work was reviewed, having learned about the value of counting from (Dame) Janet Paul (1919–2004) and fellow artist Barbara Strathdee, who analysed and wrote about gender and funding at Creative New Zealand (then the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council). Janet, Heather McPherson and Allie Eagle — also put us in touch with our 'cultural grandmothers', New Zealand women artists who were unknown to us, like Edith Collier (1885–1964). An exhibition of her work was one of our few solo shows.



Mothers catalogue 1981. Cover image: Hinetitama by Robyn Kahukiwa (1980 oil on board 1180×1180). Photography Mary Bailey, design Sharon Alston.

Working at the Women's Gallery was never easy, because of the varied expectations of artists and other participants, our lack of money, our own differences, and the antagonism towards our work, sometimes offset by warm and generous support. But for the artists who worked there it was especially difficult, because instead of doing their own work they spent their days and often evenings and weekends supporting other women — the 'professional' artists who saw the gallery as somewhere they could take risks that wouldn't be supported by their dealers, the women like me who didn't define themselves as artists but wanted to make and show their responses to the themed exhibitions and the many women who didn't want to contribute to the exhibitions but were drawn to the associated programmes.

. . .

Sometimes artists who worked at the gallery, like Anna and Sharon Alston, got to contribute to a group show. But mostly they had no free time. So it helped a lot that the Wellington Media Collective, especially Dave Kent and Chris McBride, was along the road. Anna and Sharon and others would escape for a bit, walk over to make posters for the Women's Gallery exhibitions and — for a little while — to be artists and have fun. I remember their happiness when they made the posters and I enjoyed it when they asked me to suggest ideas and images. And I loved their posters, the A3 sheets and the intensity of the inks; and the other Media Collective posters around the place, in public and on walls in friends' homes. I especially loved the posters printed on brown paper and on fabric.

So I was delighted when I read about *We Will Work With You: Wellington Media Collective 1978–1998*.

At first, I was so busy I wasn't able to go anywhere and didn't think I'd be going anywhere for a while, so I asked for a pdf of the catalogue and was again delighted when it arrived. A little surprised by the selection of the Women's Gallery posters, which I felt were not the strongest of the many made (and later labelled and deposited at the Alexander Turnbull Library, the research collection at the National Library — not yet catalogued except for two you can find if you search 'Women's Gallery' on tapuhi). But looking forward to seeing many old favorites from other groups, 'in the flesh'.

And then, weeks later, I went to visit someone nearby and got to see the show, which I later learned was sourced only from the Media Collective's own extensive collection.

. . .

I didn't look again at the catalogue before I went. Just walked in. It was like a homecoming. A long list of the groups the Media Collective had worked with fell down one wall and through the gallery's two storeyss and, like the show itself, included many many women's collectives and groups from the Women's Gallery time, like *Circle* (lesbian magazine), Haeata (Maori women artists), Hecate (women's health), the Lesbian Centre, The Women's Place (bookshop), Women for Peace, Women in Schools & Education, Women in Print, Women Make Music, Women's Resource Centre, WONAAC (Women's National Abortion Action Campaign), the Working Women's Alliance. There were also posters for campaigns where women's activism was central: campaigns for child care, against violence towards women, anti-apartheid and nuclear testing ('Take the Toys From the Boys! A Feminist World is a Nuclear Free Zone!'). There were posters associated with the Maori Rights movement and the Maori Renaissance, often known as Te Puawaitanga, The Blossoming. There was a fantastic series of photographs and an accompanying text entitled Women Under Capitalism, by Mary Slater, Hilary Watson and Audrey Young. Some lovely limited edition screenprints by Robyn Kahukiwa and Debra Bustin.

And on a large display panel on the end wall, a reinterpretation of the Media Collective's 1982 letterhead, incorporating a Dave Kent illustration from 1981 and a quotation from Keri Hulme's *the bone people*. I can't see the text clearly on the pdf I have, and the gallery's closed at the mo, but I think it was from THE END AT THE BEGINNING—

> They were nothing more than people, by themselves. Even paired, any pairing, they would have been nothing more than people by themselves. But all together, they have become the heart and muscles and mind of something perilous and new, something

> strange and growing and great. Together, all together, they are the instruments of change.

O, I thought, that's beautiful! And especially beautiful because the book was an instrument of change that linked the women's movement with Te Puawaitanga, through Keri's participation in the Women's Gallery and the connection between the gallery and Spiral, which published the bone people.

But then I came to another display panel. It said (and I'm using the words from the catalogue, which I think are the same) –

> The Wellington Media Collective will be remembered for its contribution to three major success stories of New Zealand political activism: the anti-Apartheid movement, notably opposition to the 1981 Springbok Tour; the campaign against nuclear testing in the Pacific; and the Maori Rights movement and Maori Renaissance following the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1981.

I gasped. Surrounded by artefacts from the women's movement, I couldn't believe what I read. Why didn't the curators of the exhibition identify the women's movement as the fourth major activist element, the one which contributed strongly to the success of the other three? Did they not look carefully at the content of the posters and the list of organisations that the Media Collective worked with? Did they not know about — for instance — Robyn

Kahukiwa's and Debra Bustin's connections to the women's art movement through the Women's Gallery, and in Robyn's case also through Haeata, primarily part of the Te Puawaitanga? Or did they decide that the women's movement in all its diversity could not be defined as 'a major success story'?



Women's Gallery collective 1982 L-R Celia Elizabeth Thompson, Linda Pearl, Linda Hardy, Barb McDonald, in front of Debra Bustin's sign for the Women's Gallery 323 Willis Street Wellington. Photograph Marian Evans.

My delight turned to sadness. And I began to notice other troubling details. The inaccurate date given in the catalogue for the *bone people*'s publication. No artists' names attributed to the Women's Gallery posters. (Mechanism: Belittling carelessness with women's work — the date of publication easily established online and the posters' makers readily established through straightforward research

at the Turnbull Library or by making a couple of phone calls.) The label for Women Under Capitalism, which referred to its exhibition 'at an event put on by a women's trade union group' — what group? It wouldn't have been hard to find out its name. (Mechanism: Ignoring us.) And the complete absence of posters from at least one outstanding woman poster-maker who often chose to be anonymous. (Mechanism: Ignoring us.) I went home and DM'd her. Has she seen the show? Was I overreacting? She messaged back –

> Yes I felt a bit peeved that [our groups] didn't get a mention, but it was quite a select group of people, not that the other women weren't feminists. I think they might have completely forgotten that we used their resources...

Perhaps the curators forgot about that artist and those groups because they didn't leave copies of their witty and beautiful posters in the Media Collective's collection. Or perhaps because, in controlling the narrative about the historical reality (unlike those who curated *Out On The Street*, which addressed a similar period and similar themes) those who created the framework of the exhibition completely forgot about the significance of the women's movement and to recognise the Media Collective's contribution to it. Yes, the collective worked with us. Beautifully.

I sent the gallery an email with the details re the Women's Gallery posters, each one of them printed by Sharon Alston. One of them included a Mary Bailey image, one an image from me, with overall design by Sharon. The third — for *Sexxuality* (sic) — was entirely Sharon. And then I asked Anna if she still had a copy of her *Self*

Image poster. She had, along with some related drawings which she much prefers. The poster arrived in the mail a few days later, smelling of earthquake. I washed it, admired the sprigs of flowers on the cotton, photographed it, pinned it in a prominent place in the kitchen near a big painting by Joanna Margaret Paul (Janet's daughter, 1945–2003). And thought some more about Sharon.

III. SHARON ALSTON 1948–1995

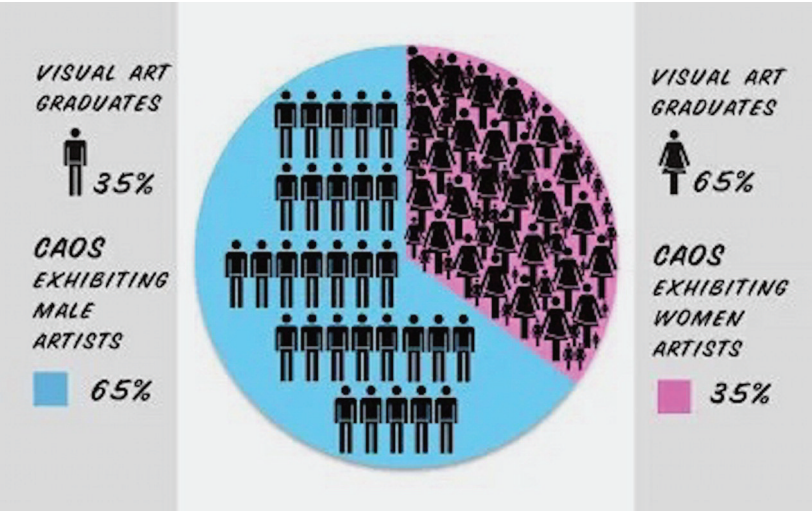
Incorporated into Sharon's section of *Spiral 8*.

First published in *Wellywood Woman* 15 January 2013; edited 19 January 2013 to incorporate responses in the comments and by DM, Twitter and Facebook. Many thanks to all who helped. And slightly amended again in January 2016.[19]

NOTES

The *CoUNTess* has just provided an update to her regular analysis of the gender representation at CAOs (Contemporary Arts Organisations Australia), a national network of twelve independent art spaces funded by federal and state governments. And this time, she relates the representation to gender representation at art schools. Here's the infographic.

19. https://medium.com/spiral-collectives/they-might-have-completely-forgotten-us-26b55cd68e69

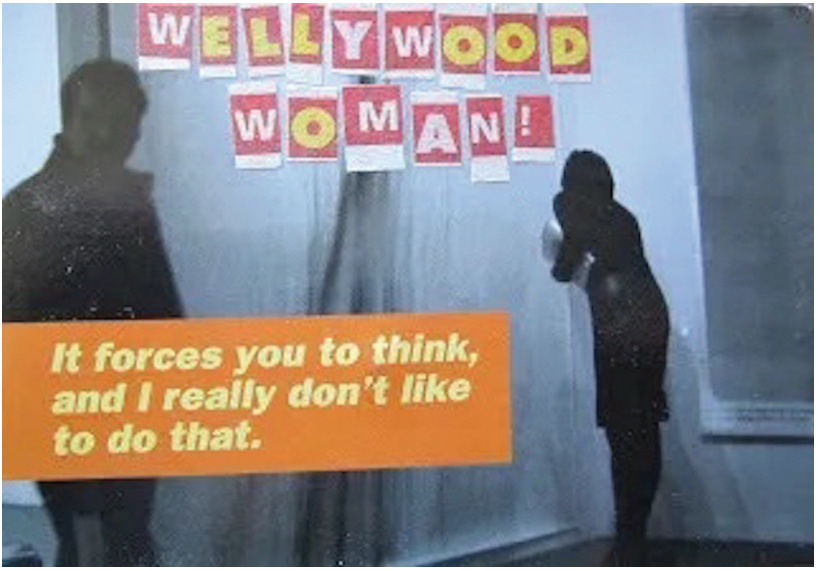


It reminds me of a statistic from New Zealand's New Zealand Time Use Survey, which I used the other day: it shows that the majority of women's work (65 percent) is unpaid and the majority (63 percent) of men's work is paid.[20] At the moment I have no idea if there's any correlation between the two but I'm thinking about it.

PS 31 January One of the most beautiful responses ever?

Went out the front door and tripped over a box. This is the front of the card inside the box.

20. http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/time_use/TimeUseSurvey_MR2009-10.aspx 2025: link broken.



From Overheard at the Museum *series by Judith Henry. Bespoked by a beloved friend.*

Also in the box, her homemade jam and some of their freshly gathered honey. And two packs of Moro bars (one already consumed).

Sweet surprises as I plod my way through the second part of the second act of the second draft of *Throat of These Hours*, my play about Muriel Rukeyser and two women in a Wellington radio station. Hardest thing I've ever done.

Thank you, my very dear friend.



Kate KaminskiJanuary 15, 2013 at 5:34 PM

This is amazing and inspiring and sad and wonderful.

Kim CummingsJanuary 16, 2013 at 9:30 AM

Marian, you bring up many good points here. It seems that a lot of women don't value the work of other women, whether it's because they've been socialized to believe that all important work is created by men, or they believe that "women's work" isn't important. And many women don't feel empowered to help other women, even

successful women. I recently attended a talk of a very successful producer and although she talked about her mentors, not once did she mention mentoring others. Until we all take responsibility for helping and promoting other women, I don't believe things can change. As my 11-year-old daughter said the other day, "Of course women are important — without us to give birth, people wouldn't exist." We need to own that.

wellywood womanJanuary 16, 2013 at 12:25 PM

Thanks, Kate. Thanks, Kim. I've been astonished that filmmakers from outside New Zealand have responded to this, here and on FB & Twitter, because it felt like a very local issue and not directly 'movies'.

Kim, I think that many women in institutions and organisations do just 'forget' about gender. Some don't, like Ruth Harley who used to be CEO of the New Zealand Film Commission and now heads Screen Australia. And some of them have a huge day-to-day struggle to survive and don't have time to mentor. But I wish wish wish that even when women in institutions and organisations haven't got time to mentor, they would consistently keep track of gender within frameworks and policies and allocation of resources, record statistics, ask the hard questions and be strong advocates for women. And let's not forget the men who do all that (which once the habit's formed is not significantly time-consuming!) I know that I've benefitted hugely from generous men who have mentored and advocated for me. And I was interested the other day when Thuc Nguyen (the Bitch Pack, in the last post) named her personal supporters and they too were often men.

. . .

Margaret FulfordJanuary 17, 2013 at 11:05 PM

Thanks so much for your positive words about femfilm.ca, the Canadian Women Film Directors Database. I want to reassure you that the Database will continue to grow. Librarians at the University of Toronto, like professors, can take research leave ("sabbatical") every seventh year; I created the database during my first research leave (2007), and before long I should be able to take my next one, which I'll devote to expanding the content of femfilm.ca! I've actually added quite a lot of content since 2007, as time permits (with the help of several terrific "practicum" students from U of T's Faculty of Information) — but I'm really looking forward to my next opportunity to devote some serious time to femfilm.ca. Thanks again.

wellywood womanJanuary 18, 2013 at 12:33 AM

Lovely to hear from you, Margaret! Huge congratulations and many thanks to you on finding ways to keep the database growing! Now all we need is an online source for all those films! I'm still kinda gobsmacked that Canada has so many women directors and hope your work will be replicated in other countries, so we understand more about the range of women's ways of seeing the world.

wellywood womanJanuary 19, 2013 at 1:07 PM

Tasha Haines sent through this comment. Many thanks Tasha!

. . .

A wonderful piece of balanced and thought provoking writing Marian. The 65% women grads ex art school with 35% exhibiting versus the inversion of that for men, is astounding (when I was at art school, being a white female was about as 'uncool' as you could be). Especially in an art world which prides itself on being cutting edge. It seems even 'cutting edge' is entrenched in power-mongery. I guess however that there is something to be said for the invisibility of women in arts being due to child-rearing. Such invisibility doesn't necessarily equate to 'gone' — but it does for some women as their values change or as they find that society does not make it easy for them to stage a return...The powers-that-be don't typically value or make way for child rearing, and so it isn't easy for women to return and find a place.

On the balance of things, we need an 'art world' less driven by fashion and the spurious striving for quantity over quality. And one more interested in art that reveals and encourages a realistic breadth of socio-cultural goings on. At least as much as it currently cries out to sidle-up to the ego-centric plottings of an uber-cool minority.

AnonymousJuly 12, 2014 at 7:58 PM

I have a painting that Anna Keir did when a student in Christchurch. Every now and then I see if I can find Anna on the net, in case she would like the painting back. Maybe this will reach you, although it's a year and a half since you wrote this piece?

My email address is dandelionleaf@hotmail.com and my name is Jacqui.

. . .

wellywood womanJuly 15, 2014 at 12:26 AM

hello Jacqui! I've taken a screenshot of your comment and will send it to Anna right now! Thank you.

SPIRAL RETURNS: REMEMBERING SPIRAL 2015-2021

Marian Evans et al



From around 2005 to 2015 Spiral was in hiatus. This is a slightly edited & updated version of an article from the Spiral open research project.[1]

2022: Some beautiful things happened for Spiral in 2021. Poet and academic Emer Lyons offered to select and introduce a major collection of Spiral founder Heather McPherson's poems: some already published and others that Heather left ready for publication when she died in 2017. Emer calls the collection *Dirty Laundry* and Spiral will publish it. Before then, we'll publish *i do not cede*, its eBook taster, with Heather's title, Emer's elegant introduction and Biz Hayman's also elegant cover.[2] (I've been learning about making eBooks on Vellum, practising with a Spiral handbook, *Women's Film Festivals & #WomenInFilm Databases*.[3])

And there were some surprising and affirming moments from 'outside'. In her review of Patricia Grace's *From the Centre: A Writer's Life,* Emma Wehipeihana wrote, 'If you consider the history of New Zealand writing, it is both frightening and inspiring how influential the Spiral collective has been'[4]. Out here, under the radar, that was so special to read. And then @chocmilk, after making J C Sturm's Wikipedia page[5] a most glorious thing, created another glorious

1. https://medium.com/spiral-collectives
2. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/i-do-not-cede-by-heather-mcpherson-2022
3. 2d edition now available and includes a new preface and a third section that covers #DirectedByWomen #Aotearoa, including interviews with local directors Kathleen Winter, Rouzie Hassanova and with Maria Giese, who instigated the biggest industry-wide Federal investigation for women directors in Hollywood history. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/womens-film-festivals-and-womeninfilm-databases
4. https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/books/300301283/book-review-from-the-centre-a-writers-life-by-patricia-grace
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacquie_Sturm

page, for Spiral[6]. It documents Spiral's history as one that includes Kidsarus 2 (children's picture books), many iterations of Spiral collectives — in Auckland, Christchurch, Colville, Dunedin and Wellington — and The Women's Gallery, in Wellington from 1979-1984.

There were some great questions, too. The most intriguing one came from a distinguished older writer. She asked me 'How does Spiral work?' I liked the question but couldn't immediately answer her. After discussion with others, I asked what lay behind her question and attempted to articulate an adequate response. Coming to the end of this report-writing marathon, in progress for a couple of years, and after more discussion with others, I've added some thoughts about how I think Spiral has worked, from within and outside the collectives I'm most familiar with. Spiral's 'unruly' nature means that everyone involved will have a different take, based on the collective(s) they worked in, their expectations and their lived experience.

2025: In this period, many beloved people connected with Spiral left us: Heather McPherson; Keri Kaa; Jane Paul; Juliet Raven; Marilynn Webb; Miriama Evans. Some brief tributes are included below. More detailed appreciations in *Spiral 8* add to and reinforce the relationships recorded in the 2018 list of our cultural mothers, grandmothers, aunties and sisters who are no longer with us, chalked on a wall in *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata-Tangi-ā-Tahu* , a multi-media exhibition about Heather McPherson and her peers in collaboration with Mokopōpaki, 454 Karangahape Road, Auckland.[7] As I (almost)

6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiral_(publisher)

7. https://gallery.mokopopaki.co.nz/tagged/thisjoyouschaoticplace'; and reproduced in its eponymous publication 2019 https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/this-joyous-chaotic-place

finished writing this article, in late December 2021, Keri Hulme died. Cushla Parekowhai (Cushla-Kararaina Parekowhai AKA Dr P, Cush etc) and I wrote an obituary for the *Guardian*; and learned a lot.[8] *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu* followed,[9] and the Booker Prizes site introduced their new Keri Hulme section.[10]

This story begins in 2015, when embargoes expired on some Spiral and Women's Gallery archives held in the National Library's research library, the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL). It derives mostly from my own lived experience as a regular collective member in Wellington and Dunedin who's familiar with the archives, and there are of course many gaps. It comes with deep gratitude for assistance from all those who have helped.

It seems a little strange to remember now, but when Spiral began in the 70s, we wanted to connect to and learn from our cultural grandmothers, mothers, aunties and sisters here and around the globe. Because, as stated in the Women's Gallery 1980 manifesto, written by a group that included Heather McPherson: 'We lack a[n accessible] positive tradition to encourage and confirm us in what we see.'[11]

We needed to know who these women were and to make well-informed connections to their lives and work. But they were often very very difficult to find and some will now never be found.

8. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/feb/01/keri-hulme-obituary
9. See *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu* https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/keri-hulme-our-kuru-pounamu
10. https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/keri-hulme
11. See 'Why a Women's Gallery?' above.



Heather in the circle that created the Women's Gallery manifesto, 1980. Screenshot from raw footage by Kanya Stewart and Nancy Peterson, Auckland Women's Community Video. Courtesy ATL.

Some of us committed ourselves to reading only writing by women. And various Spiral collectives and individuals committed our/themselves to retaining our own archives and to depositing them — unexpurgated — in a public collection, so those who followed us would have a little less of the painful gap that we'd experienced.

But our domestic and Spiral lives were often intertwined and some of the many letters in the archives — often written when phones were attached to the wall, there was no email and a distance call was rare and expensive — had the capacity to hurt living people or their families. Others, documenting episodes where we'd hurt others or felt hurt, were too tender to expose. Some could be exploited by an

unscrupulous researcher: any ATL researcher is allowed to photograph documents 'for research purposes' and if one of them then reproduced a document or image without permission, online or on a t-shirt, the legal and emotional costs of challenging that would be beyond what any of us — or our families — could afford. These risks can be mitigated but not eliminated by requiring a researcher to seek permission to view material from whomever deposited it. But that isn't always enough and we wanted anyone to be able to access our files easily: no gatekeepers or special privileges. So we embargoed some folders for decades.

When the embargo ended in 2015, Bridie Lonie[12] and I had to review the relevant folders. It was a while since we'd had anything to do with Spiral and the Women's Gallery; we'd been off living very full lives elsewhere. How would we best approach this? How could we make the most material freely available, without permissions required? Was some of it still too sensitive to be listed in the public catalogue and available to researchers? Some of those who wanted an embargo had died. Others were absent from our lives. How could we plan future care for any archives that we want to embargo until after our deaths? (In early 2022, we're still finalising the project.[13])

Also in 2015, my writing buddy Michele Amas and I made pompoms for a hat I'd knitted; and I visited Auckland to deliver it to my new grandchild. I stayed in Jane Zusters'[14] peaceful bach on Waiheke (thanks again, Jane!) and commuted to Mountain View Road in Western Springs, where the grandchild and his parents lived. Just up

12. https://www.odt.co.nz/entertainment/arts/stepping-out-not-back
13. In 2025, there are still uncertainties among the ATL deposits.
14. See Jane Zusters 'Where Did You Go To My Lovelies?' below.

the road, very conveniently, Heather McPherson lived in one of Aorewa McLeod's garden flats.

Heather was her usual warm and welcoming self, much as she was a year later when Allie Eagle photographed her speaking with her beloved friend June.



Heather McPherson at home November 2016. Just right of Heather's head the Anna Keir drawing of the Women's Gallery collective 1980 now held at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Photograph Allie Eagle.

The visit wasn't all sociability. Asked to do so by Allie Eagle, Heath and I gave Cush our peer review of her draft MLIS thesis, a brilliant great beast of a vibrant thing that was/is more of a PhD really.[15] It

15. Cushla Kararaina Parekowhai *The Story of the Story of The Story of a New Zealand River An Annotated Bibliography of Resources Informing Interpretation of The Artwork He Korero Purakau mo Te Awanui o Te Motu by Michael Parekowhai* 2011 https://ir.wgtn.ac.nz/items/a9f1f443-7f83-4a14-8c05-5d8a949ffb47

was Heather's last sustained evaluation. And, looking back, this connection between Heather and Cush was a major turning point, the reason for Spiral's renaissance after that decade or so in hiatus.

Cush gave us her parcel for the new baby — pūkeko gumboots; super small sized pūkeko-plumage-inspired royal blue and red long sleeved t; and a pre-loaded North Shore Libraries pukeko junior membership card on the end of a handy, hard-to-loose-down-the-back-of-the-stroller 'I'm Union' lanyard — and stayed at Heather's to absorb the more challenging aspects of our assessments. And Khadisha Harvey joined Allie Eagle, Heather and me for a visit to the baby. We had a happy time around the kitchen table, where Khady performed some magic from her days as a Karitane nurse.

Not long after, Heather's lung cancer returned. In January 2016 I started this Spiral site for her.

Tiffany Thornley[16] was also in touch with Heather in 2015—

> ...because I wanted to write about the early days of the women's art movement...She was very open to writing and sharing information. I read about the first exhibition held in the CSA Gallery in Christchurch at the time of the third Women's Convention 1977. I was at university and very involved with the political workshops and though I was at art school and had made contact with the women around Trafalgar Street I was more involved with the radical feminists from

16. https://www.facebook.com/Tiffany-Thornley-Artist-1401398066799476/

> Dunedin, so I missed out being part of that exhibition. No Facebook in those days.
>
> It's all a bit of a blur and that was another reason to contact Heather. I read what she had written about that exhibition and I loved the phrase 'From the scraps of the patriarchy I made myself anew'. When I asked her about it she felt sure it wasn't just from her, it must have come from someone else.

Tiffany also remembers that Heather didn't hold grudges. When she described a poetry evening of mostly men reading their poems—

> [S]he didn't seem bitter or angry as so many us could be about the imbalance. She just got on with it and organised things for women...Heather had such acceptance and didn't push herself forward, she was supportive and loving.

Tiffany made a quilt.

> I had been using patchwork and embroidery around that time and I had these lovely scraps of old fashioned material that a friend had given me.



Tiffany Thornley, *From the scraps of the patriarchy I made myself anew*. Embroidery, stitching on textile, 99 x 110 cm 2016. Courtesy the artist.

> I really enjoy doing needlework [but] I'm not an expert. I mostly do simple stitches such as chain or blanket stitch. I treasure older pieces of embroidered household stuff, table clothes and aprons particularly.
>
> I sew for pleasure and I collect fabric and small embroidered items like tray cloths and combine them in to patchwork hangings. Even in the early days I made soft patchwork doors as part of an installation for the first Christchurch Women's Arts Festival in 1978. I'd forgotten that, so it's good to write about this.



Tiffany Thornley, *From the scraps of the patriarchy I made myself anew 2016* (detail).

When Heather left Mountain View Road in late 2016, en route to a rest home in Hamilton, I packed up her archives for deposit at ATL.

Cush kindly organised disposal of the non-archival residue and drove the big boxes of files and manuscripts (and me) to Wellington, with a farewell visit to Heather en route.



R-L Cush and I on the roadside: a shared selfie.

Back home, I set to work listing the contents of the boxes on a spreadsheet, as instructed by ATL.

MICHELE AMAS 1961–2016

Just after Christmas in 2016 Michele Amas died.[17] Our writing buddy relationship was fluid, laughter-filled and informed by our lived experience as single mothers. When she became ill it encompassed gardening as well as making those pompoms.

17. https://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/culture/88154632/a-life-story--actor-michele-amas-dies-55

Michele was never directly involved with Spiral. But her vibrant example as a remarkable actor and poet and playwright inspired me and many other women. Her plays, *Mother Goose* and *The Pink Hammer*, are available to license through Playmarket. Her poetry collections were *After the Dance* and *Walking Home*. In 2025 I miss her often.

HEATHER MCPHERSON 1942–2017 & 'THIS JOYOUS, CHAOTIC PLACE: HE WAIATA TANGI-Ā-TAHU'

And then Heather died. Cush represented Spiral at Heather's funeral.

A little later, at the Māori dealer gallery Mokopōpaki, Cush, as Dr P its licensed Tea-Lady, and Jacob Tere, Keeper of the House, began to develop *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*.

Mokopōpaki, open from March 2017-March 2021 — 'the smallest but warmest and brownest dealer gallery in Auckland city' according to Dr P — had two main rooms. You stepped into a light grey showroom and then moved into the Brown Room.

Jacob defines the 'brownest' colour as the gallery's point of difference compared with the traditional sterile, white-walled exhibition space—

> The brown walls represent the earth and speak of a world with a Māori centre. So many of us come from other places and other locations, but all of us have a story to tell. Here is where they can share and talk about them, and where they have come from.

Whanaungatanga is the connection that holds everything together.[18]



This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi–ā–Tahu 2018. Courtesy Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photo: Arekahānara.

Jacob finds artists who have been marginalised, or worse, forgotten, and Heather and her peers fitted right into this category.

And of course I was happy to help with *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*. As Bridie and I reviewed those restricted

18. https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/north-shore-times/92388640/grandmother-showcases-colourful-spirit-at-new-gallery-in-aucklands-k-rd

folders at ATL — sometimes with help from Tilly Lloyd[19] and others — I collected copies of almost-forgotten images and documents that Jacob and Dr P might like to see and consider for inclusion in the exhibition. The multi-media and Creative New Zealand-funded exhibition opened 1 March 2018 and closed 14 April.

In a celebratory follow-up show, *Domestic #3 Ahimaru*, 17 October-30 November 2019, the space was once more opened up to a group of women artists. As customary, tea was served, accompanied by green herb and onion muffins, soft curd cheese and pickles.

Mokopōpaki wrote—

> It's out with the old and in with the new as across generations the conceptual advantages of an exuberant spring clean are vigorously embraced. Re-energised and freshly aired, Mokopōpaki again acknowledges the ongoing influence of Heather McPherson.

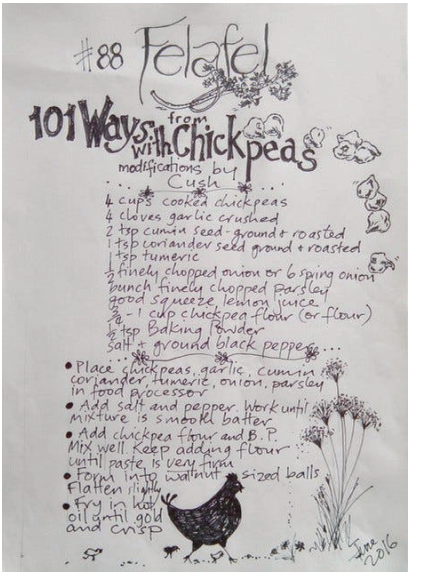
During *Ahimaru*, Dr P's *Natura Abhorret Vacuum: Nature Abhors a Vacuum* filled the Shop Window, accompanied by *Knowing me, Knowing you*, a sound and mixtape compilation by Diana Byrami.

19. Our co-author of *A Women's Picture Book: 25 Women Artists from Aotearoa New Zealand* 1988.



Dr P, *Natura Abhorret Vacuum: Nature Abhors a Vacuum 2019*. Mixed media installation, overall dimensions variable. Diana Byrami, *Knowing me, Knowing you 2019*. Sound, mixtape compilation. Courtesy the artists and Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photograph Arekahānara.

Staying with the chick pea theme, Dr P also wrote out a recipe, and later made some objects, using a photo from our road trip to Wellington with Heather's files.





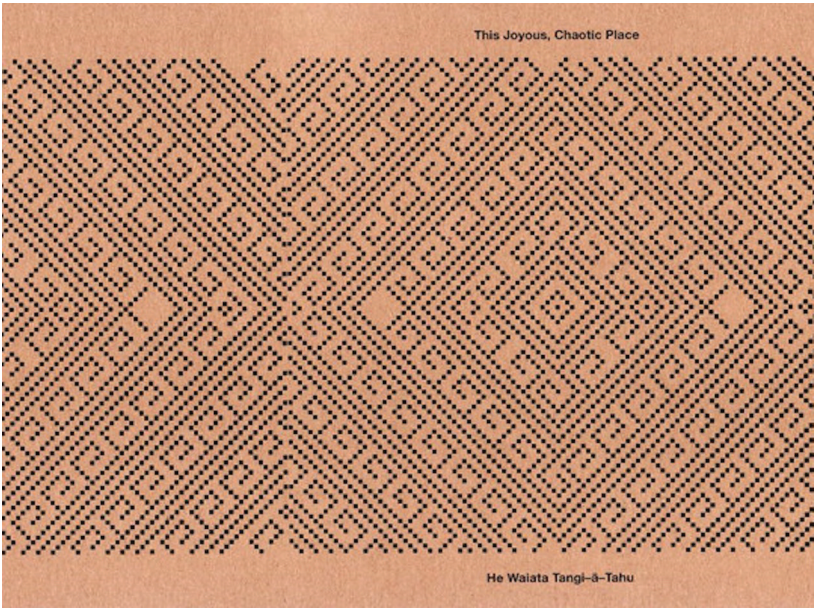
Cushla Parekowhai, *Dr P's Organic Chickpeas 2020*. Photograph A.A.M. Bos.

Heather's symbolic return to Mokopōpaki included the long awaited blessing and launch of *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*, the richly illustrated catalogue that documents the earlier exhibition.



L-R Aunty Eva and Whaea Lilla in front of PĀNiA!'s *The True Artist Helps the World by Asking for Trust (After Bruce Nauman) 2019*. Photo: Mokopōpaki November 2019.

Ample trays of warm post colonial sweet and savoury muffins with signature low-sugar fruit platter were then served. In the catalogue, Dr P wrote about the intense critique she received during the Mountain View Road session in 2015, describing herself as Heather's last little chick pea.



Dianne Rereina Potaka-Wade, *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi–ā–Tahu,* front cover and cartoon for tāniko and screenprint *2018*. Courtesy the artist, Mokopōpaki & Spiral.

'THIS JOYOUS, CHAOTIC PLACE: GARDEN POEMS'

To complement the *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* exhibition, a Spiral collective — Janet Charman, Lynne Ciochetto and I — published Heather's *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: Garden Poems*, with a cover illustration by Heather's old friend Joanna Margaret Paul. It was a great combo.

. . .

Janet, Marina Bachmann and Sue Fitchett had used the Spiral umbrella to publish their *Drawing Together* poetry collection in 1985. Janet was a dear friend of Heather's and her visits and regular delivery of an overseas literary journal brightened Heather's days during her final illness. Lynne, once the editor of *Canta*, Canterbury University's student paper, and about to publish *What Are US, World Bank, IMF and China doing in SubSaharan Africa?* had been part of Spiral since the very early Christchurch Spiral collectives.[20]

HOW WE PUT TOGETHER 'THIS JOYOUS, CHAOTIC PLACE: HE WAIATA TANGI-Ā-TAHU'

Putting together *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* was a challenge for everyone: selecting which of Heather's peer relationships and activities to focus on; finding and not-finding various art works; and seeking permission to exhibit some of those we found. It brought joy into the sometimes tedious, sometimes amusing and sometimes painful survey of those embargoed files in ATL.

A highlight was finding and then copying Heather's journal for *A Season's Diaries*[21] listed in the Turnbull Library catalogue under a title that obscured its history. It joined the other surviving contributions, by Anna Keir and Saj Gurney. Joanna's, Bridie's and mine had long disappeared and there was some uncertainty around Allie Eagle's contribution.[22]

We loved making connections. For example, one of Heather's journal entries referred to one of Allie's watercolour series. Juliet

20. See Lynne's *Spiral 8* section, above.
21. See above.
22. See 'Allie Eagle, Joanna Paul & 'A Season's Diaries' above.

Raven[23] had owned one of the watercolours then gifted it to a friend, and it too was exhibited, above the mauve arrow in the next image.



A Season's Diaries 1977 (detail) at *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu 2018*, with original poster by Joanna Paul, a Facebook conversation between Allie Eagle and Marian Evans and excerpts from Heather McPherson's journal. Courtesy Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photograph Arekahānara.

23. See more about Juliet in Allie Eagle's section, above.



Allie Eagle, *[Cup OCT'77] 1977*. Watercolour on paper, 51 x 55 cm. Courtesy the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photograph Arekahānara.

Other highlights were the conceptual frameworks Dr P and Jacob developed and the meticulous loving care that Jacob and A.A.M. Bos took with the works and of the space they were shown in.

The opening was wonderful. Bridie and Tilly came, Tilly spoke — an amazing speech like those she's regularly given at Unity Books book launches — and Bridie posed with a poster (there were other colours, too).



Bridie Lonie with a screenprint of *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi–ā–Tahu 2018*, a tāniko cartoon by Dianne Rereina Potaka-Wade.

Mokopōpaki's Tea-Lady did her usual excellent thing. Women crowded into the shop-front cinema to see related movies and some wild footage, some of it 'tidied up' by Annie Mein.[24]

24. See Annie's 'Rakiura Sketchbook' below.



Dr P, *'Alas there is no karanga, only me'*. Doorway and Shop Window Cinema, Mokopōpaki, 454 Karangahape Road, Auckland, April 2018. Courtesy Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

A whole lot of us posed in the Brown Room.

Then Dr P and I, pretty knackered, went off for dinner.



This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi–a–Tahu 2018. Exhibition opening, Mokopopaki, Auckland. Back, L-R Jane Zusters, Dr P, Jacob Tere, Dianne Rereina Potaka-Wade, Marian Evans; middle, L — R: Allie Eagle, Adrienne Martyn, Tilly Lloyd; front, L-R Annie Mein, Bridie Lonie. Photograph Sriwhana Spong, courtesy Jane Zusters.

Our sense of having done the best we could for Heather was reinforced when we read Francis McWhannell's comments in *Pantograph Punch*—

> *This Joyous, Chaotic Place* blasts the archive open, countering the silence of the library and the standoffishness of the vitrine. As the title suggests, the exhibition is raucous, celebratory, even as it acknowledges marginalisation, oppression, and violence. It serves to remind us of the roots of contemporary feminist movements like #metoo. We stand on the shoulders of Artemisias — and of Heathers.[25]

We were also very warmed by Jenny Rankine's support in the *Tamaki Makaurau Lesbian Newsletters* for March[26] and April[27] and by generous, indefatigable Paula Green's *Poetry Shelf* posts: her own lovely review;[28] Emer Lyons with 'Have You Heard of Artemesia?';[29] and an announcement about the catalogue as—

> ...a magnificent book and catalogue...[a] meticulously

25. Francis McWhannell 'The Unmissables' *Pantograph Punch* 2 March 2018 https://pantograph-punch.com/posts/unmissables-march
26. https://lesbianaotearoa.wordpress.com/news/poututerangi-march-2018/
27. https://lesbianaotearoa.wordpress.com/news/paenga-whawha-april-2018/
28. Paula Green *Poetry Shelf* https://nzpoetryshelf.com/2018/03/28/poetry-review-heather-mcphersons-this-joyous-chaotic-place/
29. *'Poetry Shelf* Classic Poem: Emer Lyons on Heather McPherson' *Poetry Shelf* https://nzpoetryshelf.com/2019/02/27/poetry-shelf-classic-poem-emer-lyons-on-heather-mcpherson/

> referenced legacy document and a most luscious record of a period of cutting edge aesthetic ferment.[30]

We appreciated Jaimee Stockman-Young's *Art New Zealand* review, too—

> [The exhibition] presents the actions and outcomes of lives lived whilst upholding a dedication to social change...through the power of community and the growth of self...holds little respect for the hierarchies of the art or literary worlds. It speaks more to the value of people than to the arbitrary ways in which we privilege varied forms of creative expression, or privilege certain practitioners over others. This body of work and the women it represents present a radically simple thesis: a life well lived is a work of art...[it] is a valuing of the passing over of generational wisdom, and respect for the labour invested in making change.[31]

I had reproduced my 1981 greeting to Kōhine Ponika and 'all women poets, all women, who have flown up against a patriarchal wall and been bruised or broken' on the gallery wall, in chalk. And I was intrigued to hear that my 'mihi mai, mihi mai, mihi mai' greeting to

30. Paula Green "This Joyous Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu, Celebrating the life and work of Heather McPherson', Mokopopaki Gallery and Spiral, 2019' *Poetry Shelf Noticeboard* https://nzpoetryshelf.com/2019/12/01/poetry-shelf-noticeboard-this-joyous-chaotic-place-he-waiata-tangi-a-tahu-celebrating-the-life-and-work-of-heather-mcpherson-mokopopaki-gallery-and-spiral-2019/
31. *Art New Zealand* 166 Winter 2018 80–83, 81 & 83.

them all, long ago learned from Wiremu Kaa, was read as instructing the viewer to mihi to the work, when I intended it to invite the viewer to mihi to Kōhine! (Maybe the previous sentence was poorly constructed?? Or I just didn't learn well.)

Later again, it was beautiful to read Don Abbott's assessment of the catalogue as '...a significant addition to this country's literary and artistic landscape' in *Art New Zealand*.[32] And Emer Lyons' perspicacious *Landfall* review of Heather's new book.[33]

HEATHER'S PEERS CELEBRATE

The Saturday after *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* opened, a group of Heather's poet peers read at the Ellen Melville Hall in central Auckland.



The readers: front L-R Tatai Rangi, Cushla Parekowhai, Aorewa McLeod, Nicky Taylor, Mary Paul, Sue Fitchett. Back L-R Miriam Saphira, Janet Charman, Michele Leggott, Riemke Ensing, Ila Selwyn 2018. Photographer unknown.

32. *Art New Zealand* Autumn 2020: 110–111.

33. Emer Lyons 'Gardens and Gloom' *Landfall* 1 December 2018 https://landfallreview.com/gardens-and-gloom/



THIS JOYOUS, CHAOTIC PLACE:
He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu

Poet & lesbian feminist **HEATHER McPHERSON** (1942-2017)

& some of her writer and artist peers, in association with publication of her new book, *This Joyous Chaotic Place: Garden Poems.*

MOKOPŌPAKI Ground Floor 454 Karangahape Road
1 March-14 April

Image:
Painting Heather's 'Have You Heard of Artemisia' on Women's Gallery wall, Wellington 1981.

This Joyous, Chaotic Place: Garden Poems

Readings **Saturday 3 March 2-4pm**

Pioneer Women's Hall, Helen Melville Centre
1 Freyberg Place Auckland Central

10 women: each will read a poem from Heather's book & a related poem of their choice. Afternoon tea to follow.

Orders Mail order **only**, from wellywoodwoman@gmail.com: $25(incl. p&p)

Promotional poster *This Joyous, Chaotic Place 2018.* Image:Women paint the *Matariki* mural, Women's Gallery 1981. L-R from top: Anna Keir, Marian Evans, Marg Leniston, Fiona Lovatt, Susie Jungerson, Bridie Lonie.



Dr P at the podium 2018. Photographer unknown.

We heard these poems from *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: Garden Poems*—

> 'What can I dream up for your birthday' Aorewa McLeod
>
> 'There is a mirror on my wall' Sue Fitchett
>
> 'A birthday re/arrangement [Tryptych for Fran]' Michele Leggott
>
> 'A Frosty Morning' and Arapera Blank's 'bone song' Cushla Parekowhai representing Miriama Evans
>
> 'April is the Loveliest Month' Mary Paul
>
> 'The sixth month' Nicky Taylor representing Saj Gurney
>
> 'Difficult Times' Riemke Ensing
>
> 'Aging and the Family Story' Miriam Saphira
>
> 'The snowmen' Ila Selwyn
>
> 'Friends, you give me a window through green

foliage in a green yard' Tātai Hinekura Rangi, representing the late Kōhine Ponika's whānau.

Kōhine's whānau presented us with a beautiful kete, made by their Nanny Kura Walker.

Later, an invitation went out for an Allie Eagle event.

Still Life with Autumn Flowers, Māori Bread and Hummus

Have you heard of Artemisia? Or seen Allie Eagle?

Now's your chance Whānau.

Mokopōpaki invites you to a special event to tautoko **This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi–ā–Tahu**, our current exhibition of women's art and writing celebrating the life and work of poet and activist **Heather McPherson** (1942–2017).

Join us for an 'at home' with accomplished watercolourist and artist **Allie Eagle**. From 11am–3pm this Saturday, 7 April 2018, **Allie** will be at the easel in the **Brown Room** working on a new set of watercolours. During this time, **Allie** will give a series of demonstrations and short talks where she will discuss her process and approach in relation to well-known New Zealand women artists **Frances Hodgkins**, **Margaret Stoddart**, **Olivia Spencer Bower** and **Joanna Margaret Paul**.

The artist welcomes you to ask questions and kōrero. Join her for a cup of tea with bread and chickpea paste.

Nau mai, Haere mai!



Allie Eagle in full flight at her workshop. Photograph from social media, unknown photographer.

Finally, we were blessed that Jacob's entrepreneurial and business skills match — and are intertwined with — his housekeeping excellence. He brought Te Maari and PĀNiA! into our world and we enjoy their burgeoning success.



This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi–ā–Tahu 2018. Work by Jane Zusters, Te Maari (second from left at top), Keri Hulme; archival material from ATL. Courtesy Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photograph Arekahānara.

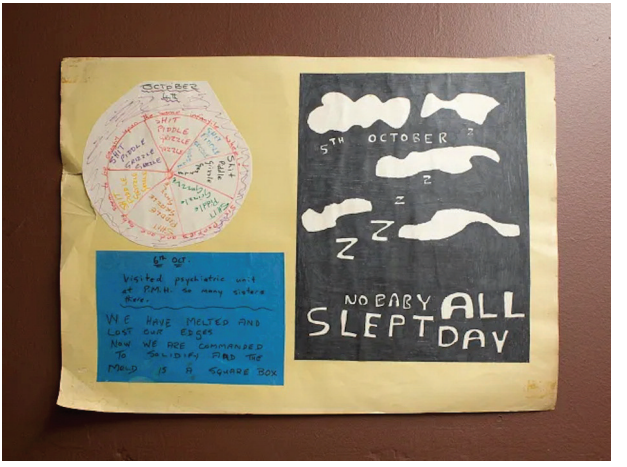


PĀNiA!, *Kiss Me, Hardy! (but not like that) 2021*. Courtesy the artist, The Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatū, Nelson and Mokopōpaki, Auckland.

Jacob also added to our public archive, through placing Anna Keir's work from *A Season's Diaries* and her drawing of the original Women's Gallery collective in the Auckland Art Gallery; and helping to place Saj's work in ATL.



Anna Keir, *A Season's Diaries (September)* coloured pencil on paper, cotton cloth, string, shells, 65 x 125 cm *1977*. Courtesy the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photograph Arekahānara.



Saj (Gladys) Gurney, *A Season's Diaries* 12 mixed media entries on paper, 51 x 63.5 cm each piece *1977* (detail). Courtesy the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photoograph Arekahānara.

. . .



Anna Keir *Women's Gallery Collective* graphite drawing on paper 24.1 x 29.5 cm 1980, based on a January 1980 photograph by Fiona Clark for The Women's Gallery L-R: Marian Evans, Allie Eagle, Nancy Peterson, Juliet Batten, Anna Keir, Heather McPherson, Bridie Lonie, Keri Hulme. Courtesy the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photograph Arekahānara.

Adding more archives to the ATL collection, I include copies of the Spiral pages from a huge publication associated with *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007, MIT Press, op). It published illustrations of *Spiral* covers (issues 2-5), describes *Spiral* as 'the lesbian-oriented feminist journal...produced annually between 1976 and 1979' and quoted Heather from the first issue: 'We have become separatist to become ourselves: to grow past conditioning, to test assumptions of roles and capabilities, to resurrect rights neglected or suppressed through centuries of male hegemony'.[34]

. . .

34. The first institutional exhibition to examine comprehensively the international

But whoever wrote the entry wasn't aware of Heather's statement in *A Women's Picture Book*, where Heather said in conversation with Tilly Lloyd, 'I worked with the material we received — that it didn't reflect our own reality didn't bother me too much, it was the idea of women working together for women's voices to be heard, positively, that was the aim, and the amalgam of the arts...Not so much the content as the fact of presence and capability, in my head at least'.[35]

(At ATL I also find Heather's description of me, in a never-published review of *A Women's Picture Book*. Some of it's harder to read than this bit—

> Often my heart has ached for Marian as I've seen the vein in her forehead throbbing and her skin with that stretched papery look of women functioning over the edge of tiredness and overload.

She adds her habitual ellipsis—

---

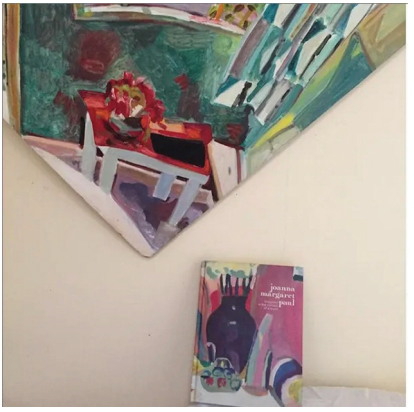
foundations and legacy of art made under the influence of feminism. This groundbreaking and long-awaited historical survey focused on the crucial period of 1965 to 1980, when the majority of feminist activism and art making took place around the world. *WACK!* describes the Woman's [sic] Gallery as 'the first feminist art cooperative in New Zealand', which isn't true. As noted, 'feminist' was a problematic descriptor. And depending on how 'cooperative' is defined and how they defined themselves, the first feminist co-operative was Wellington's Ngā Tuahine Marama (uncertain dates), or the group that ran the CSA exhibition in 1977. Or even the women artists group Heather founded in 1974. Or another group that's dropped out of sight.

35. *A Women's Picture Book: 25 Women Artists of Aotearoa New Zealand* (*AWPB*) eds Marian Evans, Bridie Lonie, Tilly Lloyd GP Books 1988: 40.

> ...hanging on in by nervous rather than physical stamina. And Marian's slender, slightly hunched figure, wild mop of hair and eccentric clothes hastening down Courtenay Place with an absent-minded handful of mail, off to front up to the Arts Council or the Labour Dept or the Lit Fund yet again for another project grant.

There's embarrassingly more. Eeeek.)

'Tired and strained' in late 2021, as I seem to have been ever since that visit to Mountain View Road six years ago, I'm nourished daily by Joanna's painting of her kitchen and kitchen window, above the table in my kitchen.



In the kitchen: part of Joanna's painting of/from her kitchen in Beta Street Dunedin and the book that accompanies the major exhibition of her work at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery (*joanna margaret paul: Imagined in the context of a room* 7 August–14 November 2021) Thanks to Bridie for the book!

MIRIAMA EVANS, NGĀTI MUTUNGĀ, NGĀI TAHU, 1944-2018

Miriama's death was a very sad loss. I loved her. Feeling more than usually inadequate, I've done my best with her section in *Spiral 8*. And sometimes when she's on my mind I watch and listen to her reading and then singing her waiata *Te Puawaitanga* at a seminar in 2005, written for the launch of *the bone people*.[36]



Keri Hulme, Miriama, Riki Pitama at *the bone people* seminar Victoria University of Wellington 2005. Photograph Bruce Harding.

36. Miriama & *Te Puawaitanga* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8AIlPRoOlU; Miriama's Kōmako page https://komako.org.nz/person/199; Wikipedia page https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriama_Evan; death notice https://deaths.dompost.co.nz/nz/obituaries/dominion-post-nz/name/miriama-evans-obituary?pid=189937896; obituary https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/107201042/wahine-toa-published-the-bone-people.

A LITTLE SIDE STORY

In early 2018 I'd started a #directedbywomen #aotearoa pop-up series, as part of the annual global #DirectedByWomen celebrations, a Spiral-inspired initiative funded by two former Spiral members; and also kindly supported by many others, including MPs Grant Robertson (then Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage and now Deputy Prime Minster) and Green MP Jan Logie, a brilliant supporter of women. The first Parliamentary screening was of Auckland Women's Community Video's *Even Dogs Are Given Bones* 1982 directed by Kanya Stewart. It documents a group of women workers during their 11-week occupation of the Rixen clothing factory in Levin, after its owner made them redundant and closed the factory without giving them redundancy payments and it screened alongside Kathleen Winter's *Minimum* a web series about women who are minimum wage workers.

And after that, thanks to Lynne Ciochetto (LCM), we helped bring Wanuri Kahiu to Aotearoa for a series of screenings of her joyful feature film *Rafiki*. *Rafiki* had debuted at Cannes and because of its queer content was banned in Wanuri's home country, Kenya, and we organised screenings at Parliament, Māoriland and Te Auaha in Wellington; and at Rialto Cinemas in Auckland, the day before Wanuri gave the keynote at the annual Big Screen Symposium.

Mokopōpaki's Keeper of the House kindly designed a logo for #DirectedBy Women #Aotearoa, featuring the kete Kōhine Ponika's whānau had given us.



Kura Walker née Rua, *Ringa Werawera* harakeke, dye, 35 x 41 x 16 cm *2018*. Photograph Arekahānara. Design: Mokopōpaki. Ngā mihi maioha ki a koutou katoa!

And, the day before the *Rafiki* screening and close to my heart, another Rialto Cinemas event. *Women & Webseries*, with help from filmmaker Louise Hutt, who designed a poster and chaired the Q&A that followed: a screening of episodes from local webseries which had collectively revolutionised representation on our screens. Deep respect to them all.



#DirectedByWomen #Aotearoa 2018. Designer Louise Hutt.

I flew to Auckland to take part, fell down a steep flight of steps in Ayr Reserve in Parnell and broke my leg. Got through the webseries screening and then Annie Mein drove me along Karangahape Road to eat and then to hospital.

Mokopōpaki to the rescue! The Keeper of the House brought in some mint dental floss (etc). And, with the Tea-Lady and Annie

Mein, took care of Wanuri and her husband. Dr P kindly joined Dr Ella Henry who ran the Q&A after *Rafiki* was screened.[37]

JANE PAUL 1958–2018

On 13 November Jane Paul died. She wasn't part of Spiral, but intersected with some of us, as Joanna Margaret Paul's younger sister and a good friend.



Jane Paul nd. Photographer Allie Eagle.

Allie Eagle and Joanna Paul wrote about Jane in their 'Letters from Room to Room' in *A Women's Picture Book*. Allie began—

37. For more about #DirectedByWomen #aotearoa, '*Radiogram* at Parliament', in the Screens section below and *Women's Film Festivals and #WomenInFilm Databases* https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/womens-film-festivals-and-womeninfilm-databases

> And Jane...so exciting to see what she's producing. She may even eclipse your talent Joanna! An amazing inventor/researcher of new forms. A regenerator. Work books full of connections, findings, patterns, workings, letters, invented shapes, daring & confident & definitely from the Pauline school! Vigour plus! Like apples taken from the family bowl — Janet [Joanna and Jane's mother, artist, publisher and archivist Dame Janet Paul] peels, slices and hands them around — Joanna's red/green apple on a white plate, edge of hand thinking — Jane — I see her eating hers as she leaves the table![38]

Joanna responded—

> I like what you say about Jane. I acknowledge that — feel happy — proud — Am not competitive. Am continually refreshed, surprised by her work (that freshness, inventiveness & I otherwise get only w Killeen — Pattern/meta pattern; in flight from the frame/onto cloth toys, furniture, papier mache.[39]

But Jane went to Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, where her gifts as an inventor, researcher and regenerator were used in other ways, to benefit the institution, the wider community and individuals. At Ngā Taonga she had kept track of the Women's Gallery tapes that the Auckland Women's Centre deposited and was the go-to person

38. *AWPB*: 83.
39. *AWPB*: 95.

when we were tracking down clips for *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*'s Shop Window Cinema. She organised Ngā Taonga's search for Auckland Women's Community Video's archives, too.[40]

Jane also cared for Joanna's film archive and did a lot of work on her stepfather Michael Nicholson's book, *Visual Language Games*.

According to her family, she continued her art practice, but 'doing more drawings than screenprints, and the screenprints she did do used different techniques'. She was always a joy to be with.[41]

In her last email to me Jane sent this photograph of her leading a group along a beach.

40. See Auckland Women's Community Video in Part IV, below.
41. Ngā Taonga obituary https://www.ngataonga.org.nz/about/news/jane-paul-19-january-1958-13-november-2018



Beach trip foreground Karl Severs, L-R two unknown women, Morrigan Severs, Jane Paul, nd. Photographer Allie Eagle.

HEATHER'S ARCHIVES & 2019

By Christmas-time 2018, I was tired of waiting for ATL to pick up Heather's boxes and sent them up north to her son Rick. I love the workers at ATL. I love researching there. But the library appears to be significantly under-resourced. I hope we don't lose Heather's herstory because ATL is permanently beyond capacity.[42]

42. 2025 update: Heather's archives have been safely at ATL since 2024.

Most of 2019 is now a blur. It took longer than I expected to recover from that broken leg, though Bridie and Tilly and I had a session with the archives at ATL. Filled with surprises and laughter, as before.

But Bridie's fragile, never-fired clay sculpture, exhibited in *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*, and to be photographed for ATL, now exists only in fragments. It shattered in transit to the photography session.



This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi–ā–Tahu 2018. Work by Annie Mein, Adrienne Martyn, Bridie Lonie (clay sculpture) *Man with hands around woman's neck 1981*. Courtesy the artists and Mokopōpaki, Auckland.

JULIET RAVEN 1946–2019

On 21 July 2019 Juliet Walker/Krautschun/Raven died. Her obituary notice described her as 'beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunty, cousin, friend and heroine'.[43]

Here's Juliet with two of her beloved friends.



L-R Rose Beauchamp, Juliet Raven, Jackie Wotherspoon (& thermette), nd. Photograph Di McMillan.

43. More about Juliet in the Allie Eagle section, above: 'Allie, Juliet Raven & Kāterina Mataira's *Ka Haere A Mereana Ki Te Kura*'.

2019 CONTINUES

Through 2019 Dr P, Jacob and I work hard to finish the catalogue, launched at Mokopōpaki's *Ahimaru* opening in November.

Some of my writing for the catalogue just didn't cut it. To my regret, I couldn't focus properly. But generosity and goodwill prevailed: Jacob and Dr P did their bits brilliantly and a benefactor very kindly paid for the printing. The catalogue sold out.

There's a photo of Jacob preparing a mailout of the catalogue. Too personal to share but OK to write about, he says. He's in profile, shadowed, backlit by PĀNiA!'s neon work, *The True Artist Helps the World by Asking for Trust (After Bruce Nauman)*, leaning over a card table covered with a beautiful cloth. On the table are a framed photograph of Heather, copies of *This Joyous Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*, some sturdy manilla envelopes, a stamp pad and a stamp. (I know that the stamp is the old Women's Gallery Inc stamp.)



Women's Gallery Inc seal, now at ATL.

. . .

What light there is falls on Jacob's left hand holding open an envelope, and his right hand sliding a catalogue into it. He's already stamped the title pages of each catalogue and closed the stamp pad so it doesn't dry out. It's a fine portrait of an artist paying close and tender attention to the task of helping other artists' work out into the world. And a reminder of what a beautiful thing it is when an artist responds from the heart and with integrity to other artists who ask for trust. I wish Heather could see the image too. (Down in Welly, *#directedbywomen #aotearoa* continued until the Covid lock-down in early 2020, with some of Dr P's chick pea works offered as koha to filmmakers and the kind people who helped.)

KERI KAA 1942–2020



L-R Patricia Grace, unknown, Keri Kaa, nd. Photograph Pearl Sidwell.

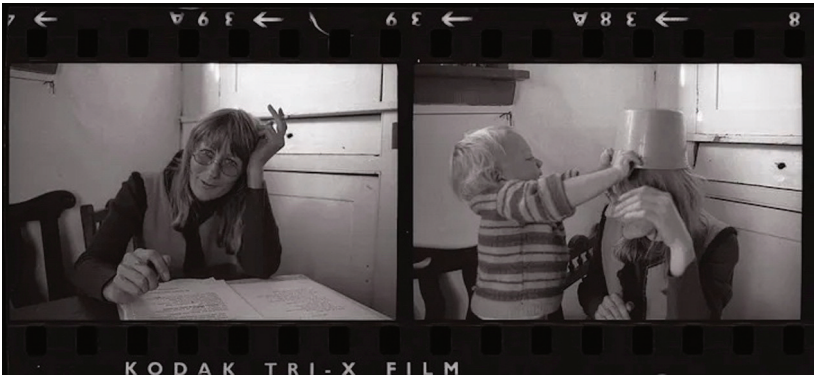
Keri Kaa's death during the Covid restrictions of 2020 meant it wasn't possible to attend her tangi. But it was possible to celebrate

her in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, and is now very special to be able to include her section in *Spiral 8* and in the associated exhibition.[44]

2021

Most of Spiral's 2021 was spent working quietly. With a very sad moment when Marilynn Webb died on 16 August. Bridie had often written about Marilynn and her work, for instance in *Marilynn Webb: Prints & Pastels*; and she sent us a Spiral tribute.[45] She also wrote a full obituary for *Art New Zealand*.[46]

HOW DOES SPIRAL WORK? WHY HAS IT LASTED?



Jane Zusters, *Heather McPherson and her son Carrick, Christchurch*, giclée print, edition of five, 31 x 50.5 cm 1975. Courtesy the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland.

SPIRAL AS A GOOD NEIGHBOUR: 'HOW CAN I HELP?'; 'WOULD IT HELP IF?'; 'WHAT IF?'

I've concluded that Spiral works, and has lasted, because it's neighbourly, a simple idea and a practice that for Pākehā Spirals started in

44. See 'Keri Kaa' in *Spiral 8*.
45. See Marilynn's section in *Spiral 8*.
46. *Art New Zealand* 180: 52-53.

family and church practices; in the counter-culture of the 1970s; and in the lesbian community that supported Heather. Of course, others have different ideas.

Spiral often has been Pākehā-based. But there's been a strong, influential, strand of Māori women embedded in Spiral projects as collective members, or supporting Spiral in other ways, and the generosity and patience of their multidimensional manaakitanga, their 'neighbourliness + +' has consistently embraced, affirmed, enriched, influenced and extended those of us who are not Māori. So it's not surprising that one wahine Māori, an early reader of this, said 'Ugh, neighbours, I hate that word,' 'Why not manaakitanga, since we live in Aotearoa?' I thought about that and told her that yes, in my experience, Māori associated with Spiral, in collectives and as neighbourly collaborators, have always brought their manaakitanga with them. But, in my view — which could of course be entirely mistaken — manaakitanga, like kaitiakitanga, is for Māori, just as karanga, mana wahine, moko kauae and takatāpui are. And possibly kaupapa?

I remember Irihapeti Ramsden's pain when Pākehā women stepped up to karanga; and her suggestion another time that none of us should speak Māori until all Māori had their language back. She wrote in her thesis—

> Cultural knowledge belongs in the culture and as such, cultural identity and traditions should remain in the culture.[47]

47. Irihapeti Ramsden *Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu* A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing 2002: 113.

This seems to me to support the idea that Tangata Tiriti Spiral workers, who haven't got whakapapa, who aren't Māori, can't claim that we practise manaakitanga. But I know that we've often been inspired by its inclusiveness, generosity and effectiveness: the wāhine Māori among us set a high bar for our neighbourly practices, based on the Biblical golden rule of loving your neighbour as yourself and/or the practices of rural communities and/or 'sisterhood' experiences.

We can also aspire, I continued in that conversation, to offer appropriate responses to manaakitanga's expression by Māori who initiate Spiral projects and associated events; and when involved in projects within Māori contexts. Like *the bone people*'s launch at Te Ako Pai, the Wellington Teachers College marae, where we followed Keri Kaa's, Irihapeti's and Miriama's direction in all things. Like *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* where we also collaborated, under direction.

I reckon, I concluded, while acknowledging that as usual in Spiral we hold a range of views, that the primary challenge for those of us who love and are inspired by manaakitanga and aren't Māori, is to identify, build on and consistently improve on our own 'neighbourly' practices, some of them inherited, some learned or developed. These might include offerings like prayers, songs, and hospitality, and safe spaces where precious things are cared for, aiming for a vital 'in-our-own-lane' integrity of appropriate action and expression that is uniquely and beautifully ours. Contemporary models for some of

this are the Common Unity Project[48] and Everybody Eats[49]. This view also resists appropriation of any Māori language as a kind of garnish, while supporting and working towards the vision of a world where we all can converse in Māori every day. Imagine if we lived in a country like others with more than one language, where people switch to and fro with ease and when a conversation started with 'kia ora' it continued in Māori![50]

Good neighbours help if they can. As a series of women and non-binary artist- and writer-led collectives tangata Tiriti, Spiral sometimes initiates neighbourly projects and sometimes responds to — often unexpected and sometimes surprising — requests for help from artist and writer neighbours.

Say a neighbour's car is stuck in a ditch (a manuscript stuck under her or their bed, an artwork significant to women stuck in her or their back room because no agent, publisher or dealer gallery is interested). It's a functional vehicle but needs to reach the road and start its journey, maybe after a minor repair or two.

Spiral members may have little in common with the car owner except their own arts practitioner life experiences, including their own unmet needs they may need help with. We *and* our neighbours almost universally have significant lived experience as members of groups that are mis-represented and under-represented in the arts, and as individuals discriminated against, under-resourced and vulnerable for multiple reasons. Heather, for example, founded

48. https://www.commonunityproject.org.nz/
49. https://everybodyeats.nz/
50. In 2025, Spiral's commitment to awhi and tautoko, embrace and support, attempts to connect to both 'manaakitanga' and 'neighbourly', as desired.

Spiral as a lesbian single mother and abuse survivor, an educated woman from a working class family, as a feminist and a poet inspired by a stage filled with poets who were all men.[51]

But whatever our position, we ask 'How can I help?' or 'Would it help if...?' Or engage with a phrase often associated with a new initiative: 'What if?'. Or we might say 'Gotta rush now, but I can help later...' (to find you a spare wing mirror in my garage, put you in touch with a great mechanic, help touch up that paintwork). Or, 'Can't help this time, but ask me another time'. And though she may be constrained by other commitments: 'I have to get these kids to bed'; 'I have to get to work' (etc), a good neighbour is usually reliable. It may be necessary to knock on other neighbouring doors to ask for help; and there may be unexpected passers-by, offering necessary resources, temporary 'neighbours' who may become mates. Somehow, the artist's problem is addressed and the job gets done.

HOW DOES GOOD NEIGHBOURING WORK IN PRACTICE?

I wasn't there. But I think the first issue of the *Spiral* journal established Spiral's ethos by working in a neighbourly way — and that influenced the six issues that followed, each with a different collective. Heather noticed that women artists' creative vehicles — including her own — were usually excluded from the road. In effect she asked, 'What if a group of us made a modest pathway for them/ourselves, so they/we could 'grow past conditioning...test assumptions of roles and capabilities'? As noted above, for Heather

51. It's not surprising, given the hard-lived experience of most Spiral members, that so many of us had or have chronic illnesses and so many of us have died too young.

> ...it was the idea of women working together for women's voices to be heard, positively[...]with the material we received — that it didn't reflect our own reality didn't bother me too much. It was not so much the content as the fact of presence and capability, in my head at least.



Poster for a fundraising event for Spiral 1 (possibly made by Anna Keir) ca 1975. Courtesy ATL.

And her lesbian separatist community were good neighbours to Heather and the artists and writers who sent their material. They helped with fundraising and other tasks, even though many of them — as I understand it — weren't much into literature or the arts, nor into material that didn't reflect or illuminate their realities.

. . .

From that quiet beginning the Spiral logo itself became a neighborhood resource, a kind of shared ladder, available to women writers or artists who like the idea of 'women working together for women's voices to be heard', want to make something together and ask 'What if?' So the Auckland, Dunedin and Colville publications happened and the *Spiral 5* collective (Anna Keir, Daphne Brasell, Marian Evans and Vicki McDonald) decided to become 'publishers of last resort' for monographs. (These days, the logo may be most useful for self-publishing by individual writers whose work still falls outside what publishers are looking for and who want to feel part of something larger, less isolated.)

Some underlying ideas persist in conjunction with the neighbourliness, too: a version of Doris Lessing's 'any human anywhere will blossom in a hundred unexpected talents and capacities simply by being given the opportunity to do so'; an emphasis on questioning everything and trying everything and welcoming the unexpected even when it appears to be unhelpful; and an acknowledgment that the very worthwhile often attracts the very difficult (via Irihapeti Ramsden). Plus patience, patience, patience.

Whatever the current conditions, Spiral's good neighbouring is often a separatist practice, as in the fund-raising event for *Spiral 1*, illustrated above and as later explained in that manifesto created by a group including Heather at the Women's Gallery's *Opening Show* —

> Men have defined the human experience through their art and women have often felt excluded. Men have also defined the female experience — we have seen ourselves through men's eyes[...]

> When we undertake the task of breaking out of the images men have presented to us and exploring our exclusively female experience, then we become vulnerable. We uncover private and previously unexpressed areas of ourselves. We lack a positive tradition to encourage and confirm us in what we see. [...]The only tradition we have to draw on is one where women have been suppressed by a predominantly male culture.
>
> [...]We need to withdraw and gain confirmation from each other before we are ready to announce our insights to the 'outside world', i.e. our culture, which, despite the changes that have taken place, is still undoubtedly male dominated...This separatism is not an end in itself, it is simply part of a process. The process is one of self-discovery, of building our traditions by going back to the roots of our experience.[52]

The specific 'vulnerability' referred to was and is real. It takes tenderness and practice to encourage and confirm artists who feel vulnerable and perhaps isolated, which is true for most artists, I think, at some time. Heather was a champ: she'd ask 'How's your work going?', confirm that she was referring to the artistic work, not the day-to-day money-making job; and listen attentively and without hurry to the response, with many 'hmmmmm's and an occasional clarifying question. And Keri Hulme's interview with Kanya Stewart about her batik work, at the Women's Gallery in 1980, demonstrates a similarly tender and superb quality of attention that may help support self-discovery and contribute to a positive tradition.[53] (Kanya, later the director of the feature documentary *Even Dogs Are*

52. For full text of this manifesto, see 'Why a Women's Gallery?' above.
53. https://youtu.be/jU4ksdP-pKw

Given Bones,[54] was also part of the Auckland Community Women's Video team that filmed the Women's Gallery *Opening Show* and **t**here's a lovely interview of Keri by Kanya and Nancy Peterson done at the same time.[55])

NEIGHBOURLINESS AND 'DAILY LIVING'

Heather's initial ethos has also reinforced, or been reinforced by, practices that inspired Joanna Margaret Paul's well-known manifesto. Joanna was probably one of the four women present at the first meeting of the Christchurch women artists group started by Heather in 1974, which became Spiral. This is what she wrote for the Allie Eagle-curated *Six Women Artists* at the McDougall Gallery in 1975. It was reprinted in *Spiral 1*–

> For a woman painting is not a job, not even a vocation. It is a part of life, subject to the strains and joys of domestic existence. I cannot paint unless the house is in order; unless I paint I don't function well in my domestic roles. Each thing is important. The idea that one sacrifices other values for art is alien to me, and I think to all women whose calling it is to do and be many things. To concentrate all meaning and energy into a work of art is to leave life dry and banal. I don't wish to separate the significant and the everyday actions, but to bring them as close together as possi-

54. In 1981 a large number of workers staged a 14-week occupation of the Rixen Manufacturing clothing factory in Levin in protest of unfair redundancy.

Ngā Taonga, https://www.ngataonga.org.nz/search-use-collection/search/F264385/ The documentary includes includes candid interviews with: Lyn Woods, Lettie McDermott, Ann Waddell, Colleen Harper, Helen Horitipa, Theresa Corner, Janine Reid, Bernice Cornell, Wendy Clifton. There is coverage of the day-to-day activities of the group and the soundtrack includes a protest song by Mereana Pitman.

55. https://youtu.be/5pjBK8jkT8s

> ble. It is natural for women to do this; their exercise and their training and their artistry is in daily living. Painting for me as a woman is an ordinary act — about the great meaning in ordinary things.
>
> Anonymity pattern utility quietness relatedness.

In the best kind of neighbourliness, the 'how can I help?' practice is also 'part of daily living', bringing the 'significant and everyday actions... as close together as possible'. It's low-key. Reciprocal, sustainable and family-friendly, informally organised. Takes time. Is often joyous, associated with food and fun. In a wider context, it might respond to housing needs, to lack of food, to climate emergency, to COVID and to safety issues of various kinds including — at Spiral — protecting and sustaining individual women artists' sovereignty. Projects were and are non-profit, although writers are paid royalties and artists are paid for works sold; specialists like printers and sometimes designers and photographers are also sometimes paid. And, like most helpful neighbours, collective members are unpaid except, occasionally, for specific specialised work or, at the Women's Gallery, intermittently through a government employment programme. Because of this, they don't waste a minute, though sustainability means that there may be delays. Since the Women's Gallery closed in 1984 every Spiral project is a one-off, a pop-up, often after a gap of years, and each small group is autonomous and uses eclectic resources.

THE 'WHAT IF?' QUESTION

The 'What if?' question, the creative curiosity that characterised Heather's initiative, has been especially productive. Distinct from 'Would it help if...?' in relation to an artist's request for assistance or

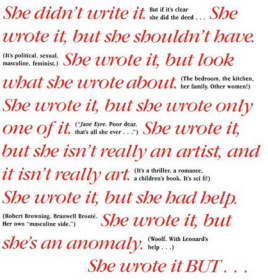
a collective's essential basic tasks like a mail out, a design for an invitation, Tea-Lady responsibilities or a budget, a 'What if?' prompts a fresh, independent initiative that may or may not take a project a step further, and may make the questioner or questioners unavailable for essential basic tasks. A 'What if?' project may reconfigure the area round the ditch so fewer vehicles will get stuck in future. Change the driving conditions around it, or on the dodgy road itself. Sweep up gravel that might cause a skid. Fill potholes, plant the verges with wild flowers. Set up a lemonade stand. Make signs.

'What if?' at Spiral has also often involved what Virginia Woolf described as 'trespass' —

> ...let us bear in mind a piece of advice that an eminent Victorian who was also an eminent pedestrian once gave to walkers: 'Whenever you see a board up with "Trespassers will be prosecuted", trespass at once.'
>
> Let us trespass at once. Literature [or any art] is no one's private ground; literature is common ground. It is not cut up into nations; there are no wars there. Let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves. It is thus that English literature will survive this war and cross the gulf — if commoners and outsiders like ourselves make that country our own country, if we teach ourselves how to read and to write, how to preserve, and how to create.[56]

56. Virginia Woolf 'The Leaning Tower' 1940.

UNDERSTANDING AND RESISTING RESPONSES TO TRESPASSING



For me and some others, the trespassing and the creative elements of 'What if?' became informed and invigorated by the analysis in Joanna Russ's *How To Suppress Women's Writing*. Her analytical framework justifies trespassing. It helps understand and deal with responses that attempt to undermine it. It encourages questions about whether and how conventional publishing, filmmaking and gallery practices adversely affect women artists who experience established systems as inequitable, often for multiple and complex reasons. It affirms the search for fresh approaches.

Joanna Russ identified eleven methods used to ignore, condemn or belittle women creators' work: prohibitions; bad faith; denial of agency; pollution of agency; the double standard of content; false categorizing; isolation; anomalousness; lack of models; responses; aesthetics, each method, as fully described below.[57] All are very familiar. 'Prohibitions', for instance, is right here and now: 'pre-

57. 1. **Prohibitions** Prevent women from access to the basic tools for writing.

venting women from access to the basic tools for writing' (and making art). Women artists struggle for time, space and equipment, including computers, and during the pandemic it became even worse, especially when libraries closed or limited the time visitors could spend there.

WHAT IF?': TRESPASSING EXAMPLES

Sometimes that 'What if?' trespassing is quite a small thing that could make a big difference. For example, at one of the early Christchurch Women Artists group meetings, as recorded in the minute book, Joanna — then using her married name and in her activist phase — asked something like:'What if we ask the Canterbury Film Society to show slides of women's work before screenings?' At that time it was often much more difficult for women to show their work than it is now. She offered to approach the film society and at ATL the other day I fell over the response to her initial inquiry. (We don't know what happened next.)

. . .

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2. **Bad Faith** Unconsciously create social systems that ignore or devalue women's writing.

3. **Denial of Agency** Deny that a woman wrote it.

4. **Pollution of Agency** Show that their art is immodest, not actually art, or on subjects that shouldn't have been written about.

5. **The Double Standard of Content** Claim that one set of experiences is considered more valuable than another.

6. **False Categorising** Incorrectly categorize women artists as the wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, or lovers of male artists.

7. **Isolation** Create a myth of isolated achievement that claims that only one work or short series of poems is considered great.

8. **Anomalousness** Assert that the woman in question is eccentric or atypical.

9. **Lack of Models** Reinforce a male author dominance in literary canons in order to cut off women writers' inspiration and role models.

10. **Responses** Force women to deny their female identity in order to be taken seriously.

11. **Aesthetics** Popularize aesthetic works that contain demeaning roles and characterizations of women.

Joanna's *A Season's Diaries* was another of her 'What ifs?' with an element of trespass. What if, she thought, I invite a group of women to document their lives for a month and exhibit the results in the Victoria University of Wellington Library exhibition space, where 'serious' artists exhibit in a continuing programme? What if a couple of the women (Gladys Gurney/ Saj; Marian Evans) don't even define themselves as artists? I don't know how Joanna persuaded the library to accept this exhibition, way back then. But Anna and I helped Joanna hang the works one weekend. I think there was some electrical tape used that the library wasn't happy with on aesthetic grounds; the exhibition didn't last the full summer, as planned. But it did travel to Waikato University and to Christchurch.

A little later, Julie Grenfell, a teacher at a central city school asked 'What if?' we developed local picture books with high production values that reflected the experiences of her students instead of children on the other side of the world; and began the Kidsarus 2 project.

Numerous other examples of Spiral 'What if?' trespasses followed. What if children's book illustrators were paid a royalty (with an advance) instead of by commission, the usual practice back then? What if we subsidised commercial publishers so they would risk co-publishing Māori editions of our picture books and perhaps learn that 'Yes there's a market for them!' (something that Patricia Grace, Miriam Smith and the rest of us really really wanted)?

'What if we have an exhibition of women's work in the Beehive?', asked Sharon Alston back in 1981, the forerunner of 2018's 'What if we screen women's films there, with Q &As?'. What if we offer our *Mothers* exhibition to public galleries?

. . .

Other kinds of 'What ifs?' come from the manaakitanga of generous passersby, like Roma Potiki and Patricia Grace's 'What if we organise a *Maori Writers Read* series to help fund J C Sturm's *The House of the Talking Cat* and Keri Hulme's *the bone people?*'; and Keri's other tahu-tuhituhi — as she called them — who contributed to the readings. They also came from individual writers like Joy Cowley and Janet Frame; and other women who offered specific support on principle, like Juliet Raven, Kathleen Johnson, Pauline Neale.

Our audio and video projects, grouped together under *Getting Free*, came from a substantial series of collective 'What ifs?' and explored resilience following violation of various kinds, including colonisation, including Juanita Ketchel's *Getting Free* oral history project and *Sister Galvan*, a documentary about the gay man who as James Mack supported our projects through the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, the forerunner of today's Creative New Zealand.



Galvan, then James Mack, at The Women's Gallery *Opening Show* 1980, in Bridie's stocks, with a blurry Bridie at right. Screenshot from raw footage by Kanya Stewart and Nancy Peterson, Auckland Women's Community Video. Courtesy ATL.

The courage to 'trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves' also demands that we accept the reality that not every 'What if?' will work out.

Anna's, Bridie's and my 'What if we organise a Joanna/Allie exhibition to tour public galleries, in 1978-9)?' got quite a long way thanks to James Mack and a public gallery director, before Allie and Joanna decided it wasn't for them. But, like many disappointments, it morphed into something else: The Women's Gallery, which benefited many of our artist neighbours rather than just two; and then *Mothers* and its tour, building on the neighbourly relationships established, among ourselves and with others like James and that public gallery director!

The cancelled Matariki poets tour of 1981 was another unsuccessful attempt to 'trespass freely and fearlessly'. The Matariki poetry mural responded to this, for Bridie's *Women & the Environment* show. And Keri Hulme responded too, by sending me *the bone people* to read, an example of how working with the unexpected and moving on from disappointment can be surprisingly positive.

Another of my own 'What ifs?', about the lesbians photographed in a classic Herstory Press (Wellington) poster from 1977, is the only Spiral audio project not archived. I saw the poster in a Te Papa exhibition, was disappointed that those in the photograph weren't even named and got funding from the Armstrong and Arthur Trust to interview the women depicted in the photograph. Later, only Mary Bailey wanted to share her interview; the rest are lost forever.[58]

58. See Mary's chapter below 'Momma Don't Allow Me To Whistle'.

FOCUS ON PRESENCE AND CAPABILITY

The good neighbour concept fits well with Heather's lack of concern about whether her reality was shared by the writers who submitted to the first *Spiral* journal and her focus on 'presence and capability'. Spiral's support of artists and writers echoes other kinds of unconditional neighbourly support by placing editorial responsibility on the car's owner, whose presence, capability and wishes are central. Helpful neighbours don't debate the origins, engine capacity, fuel consumption or upholstery of that beloved and uninsured vehicle in the ditch. Or check whether they share its owner's political beliefs.

Mostly because of this history, commonality of lived experience as under-resourced arts practitioners required 'to be and do many things' has usually but not always loved and transcended difference. For example, some artists liked the idea of experimenting in the Women's Gallery space with work that didn't interest their dealers. But they didn't want to share the space with women who didn't identify as artists, but had stories they wanted to tell. And those women who didn't identify as artists in turn didn't engage with a definition like 'using the methods of art as an interrogative tool', as Bridie once described the gallery's function. But in the end, both groups exhibited together. Some artists and visitors who were ambivalent didn't become engaged neighbours: Tilly Lloyd wrote in *A Women's Picture Book*—

> I remember controversies at the Women's Gallery, in particular that we [lesbians] felt the gallery was very heterosexual, and that the heterosexual women found it very lesbian. [59]

59. *AWPB*: 244.

I remember wanting to establish a Tampax artist-in-residence programme at The Women's Gallery. The question generated a debate where differences could not be accommodated or transcended; and was resolved by abandoning the idea. The Māori editor and most of the Māori contributors to *A Women's Picture Book* withdrew from the project because of a lesbian image of menstrual blood that offended them and is a memorable example of a painful difference with consequences that endured.

But there's been minimal debate about and no policing of, for example, participants' 'feminism' — many participants haven't defined themselves as 'feminists', though most find some feminist analysis useful. If Spiral had had a feminist-only agenda, it's possible that (for instance) it might not have published *the bone people*: New Zealand's New Women's Press and the British feminist Women's Press both rejected it, at least one, I understand, because it wasn't feminist enough. When Allie Eagle exchanged radical lesbian feminism for 'celibacy & church going' in 1980 she no longer worked in Spiral collectives but, like Joanna who had also moved on, she continued as a Spiral neighbour. Both were included in *A Women's Picture Book* and at the turn of the century Spiral recorded Allie and her mother at length about her mother's experiences within the mental health system, as part of the *Getting Free* project. And of course she appears in this story and has an individual section in this book. In a current and parallel issue, in today's pandemic some artists associated with Spiral who are anti-vax and anti-mandate and some aren't, but that doesn't affect any support given, just adds a bit of grit to day-to-day relationships at times.

. . .

As another simple and day-to-day example of holding space for difference, at the Women's Gallery, within a physical space described in an early leaflet as 'educational', 'supportive' and 'exploratory',[60] ,the offerings to visitors depended on the perspective of the co-ordinator(s) making the arrangements and on the resources currently available, not a set organisational position. We always offered tea and conversation to visitors passing through. But at openings and other events one co-ordinator might offer tea, juice and food. Another would offer wine (or better wine) and juice and generic snacks. One party lover used to organise sale of a range of alcoholic drinks (and tea). From memory, there was no alcohol at the launches of *The House of the Talking Cat* in a little central Wellington theatre and of *the bone people* at Te Ako Pai, the Wellington Teachers College marae.

ORGANISATIONAL SIMPLICITY & ITS CONSEQUENCES

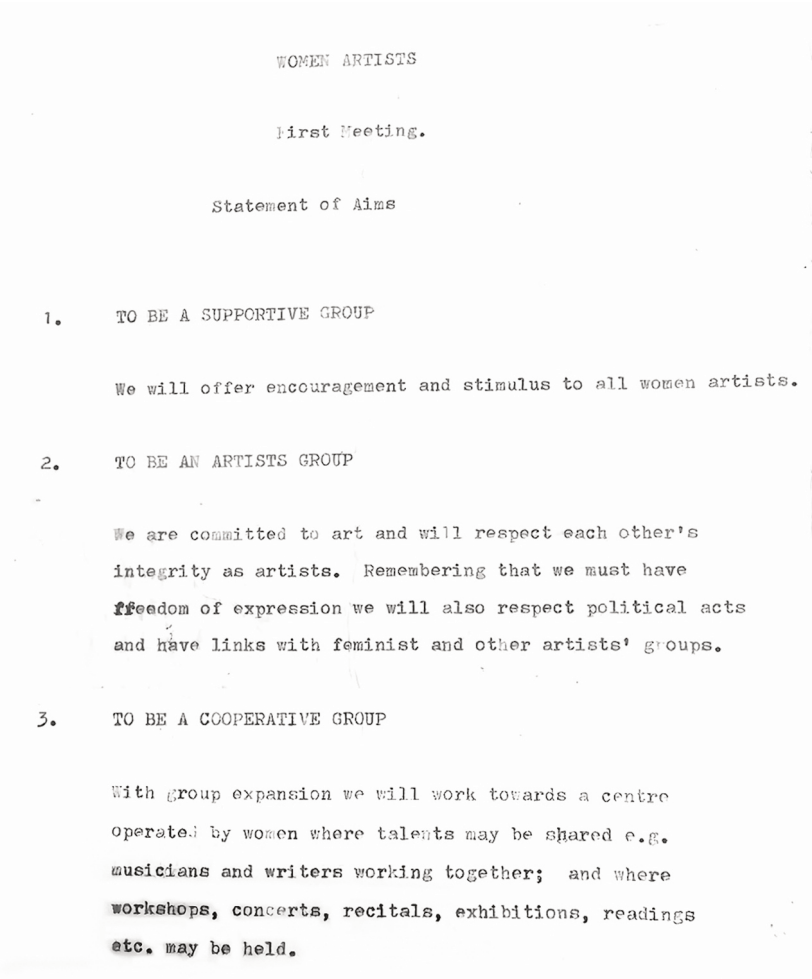
Historically the legal system and its associated corporate and institutional frameworks have often damaged women. These structures are also largely irrelevant to neighbourliness. And artist actions, in particular, from their hearts and gut feelings, as expressed as neighbourhood 'charity' (in its earliest meaning as an act of love), don't go well with regulation. As a result, like many other artist collectives, Spiral has always minimised its bureaucracy and resisted becoming institutionalised within corporate structures and behaviours. This is consistent with Keri Hulme's attitude to charitable actions, expressed in a letter in the 1980s—

> [How]...can you have institutional charity? At best you have one human being capable of helping another, and doing so — and no looking into motives, politics, or prejudices. A kind of charity by osmosis.

60. See the leaflet in 'Why a Women's Gallery?' above.

But, in a bare bones operation, the Women's Gallery/Spiral was an incorporated society 'to support and promote women artists' and registered as a charity for about 25 years from 1980. This broad purpose, without any modifier, affirmed Heather's original aim of 'women working together for women's voices to be heard, positively' and, implicitly, her focus on 'the amalgam of the arts'. The structure was a necessary resource, with the sole function of making sure that funds raised were meticulously disbursed only for the purpose of supporting and promoting women artists and if available for a specific project only, to that project only; and that the associated records were meticulous.

Spiral's purposes and organisational simplicity continue to affect collective practices and the language (not) used. Within the overarching 'support and promote' idea, any statements in the archives aren't described as 'vision' or 'mission'. They are formulated only occasionally, at the beginning of projects and are not again referred to. Here's the first known statement, from the Christchurch Women Artists Group's log book.



WOMEN ARTISTS

First Meeting.

Statement of Aims

1. TO BE A SUPPORTIVE GROUP

We will offer encouragement and stimulus to all women artists.

2. TO BE AN ARTISTS GROUP

We are committed to art and will respect each other's integrity as artists. Remembering that we must have freedom of expression we will also respect political acts and have links with feminist and other artists' groups.

3. TO BE A COOPERATIVE GROUP

With group expansion we will work towards a centre operated by women where talents may be shared e.g. musicians and writers working together; and where workshops, concerts, recitals, exhibitions, readings etc. may be held.

There's also Women's Gallery's manifesto and that early leaflet which referred to its 'educational', 'supportive' and 'exploratory' aims.[61] In another example of 'What if?', every now and then some

61. See 'Why a Women's Gallery' above for a copy of the leaflet.

of us also respond to a particular problem by formulating a 'best practice' for a specific project or kind of project, e.g. Spiral's interview protocols, developed for our *Getting Free* projects[62].

There are no five-year or even annual plans, let alone a 'strategic plan', just a flexible plan for each project as it arrives, with its built-in self-determination and sustainability, and plenty of space for 'What if?'s that offer positive change. Unless absolutely necessary for legal reasons, no use of corporate terms like 'board', 'brand', 'affiliate', 'governance', 'chair', 'stakeholder' and their associated practices, all alien to the spirit of egalitarian neighbourliness and its quiet practices.[63]

62. See 'Spiral's Interview Protocols' chapter above.

63. This necessity mostly happened in relation to the incorporated society and most regularly at the Women's Gallery, the closest Spiral and associates came to 'building our own house'. But even at the Women's Gallery the 'Chair' role at our brief 'official' meetings circulated; and plans were almost always quite short term because of our precarious resources (some co-ordinators were paid a basic wage for a few months via the Temporary/Project Employment Programmes; some of that money was often shared with another full-time co-ordinator with a smaller income). Mostly those plans were made in response to someone's 'What if?' question about a particular issue that affected women, like *Women & Violence*, 1981, initiated by Heather and completed by Sharon Alston and others, Anna Keir's *Self Image*, 1982, or Bridie Lonie's *Women & the Environment* 1981. For these and many other theme exhibitions and their associated programmes, co-ordinators aimed to be the kind of neighbour who went from door to door, to offer a warm welcome and space to contribute to a diversity of artists, to others who didn't define themselves primarily as artists and for women with an informed and interesting opinion to share within associated programmes, almost always with child care available on-site or nearby. For instance, *Women & Violence* and *Women & the Environment* had especially strong associated programmes with contributions from many individuals and community groups. For *Mothers*, I remember an ongoing relationship with the New Mothers Support Group and how each of the public galleries the exhibition toured to developed unique associated programmes. Often artists used their participation as an opportunity to experiment, to make and show work/content that did not interest their dealers. Sometimes they did this anonymously or pseudonymously.

There's never a CEO or CFO (or UFO), or even a manager, just 'collective member' or 'co-ordinator' (this is probably why I and others from Spiral felt and feel so at home with Mokopōpaki's 'Keeper of the House' and 'Tea-Lady'). The neutral 'collective member' or 'co-ordinator' terminology makes it easy to share responsibilities; to move from offering and giving help to another artist to receiving help with a personal artistic project; from leading to following; to be unfazed and flexible when other commitments or interests require a neighbour to withdraw for a while or permanently; and to experiment with 'roles and capability' as Heather wanted. Artist and writer neighbours focus on the task at hand and on supporting one another to make and distribute their best work; and further flex their generous and creative selves by playing with 'What if?' when they can.

SPIRAL AND 'CAREER'

Another question I got asked this year was why my Spiral experience didn't appear in a cv someone had seen. Unsurprisingly, Spiral collective members' neighbourly practices aren't career oriented. I do include Spiral projects in my cv sometimes, to explain some of its gaps, or if I'm part of a Spiral application for funding. But not often. And I'd bet that most of those involved with Spiral, even Heather, who intermittently made her living as an editor and proof reader, didn't and don't have Spiral projects in their cvs. There was once a Women's Gallery co-ordinator who sometimes described herself as a 'gallery director' but that was rare. Yes, being a good neighbour does provide useful experience and develop useful skills. But it's done for love, not as a career booster. This doesn't mean that it has no benefits beyond the feel-good factor.

HOW PARTICIPANTS BENEFIT

Again and again I've heard that Spiral benefits both artist-writer neighbours who help *and* those who are helped. As examples, from a period I studied in early 2022 while co-writing Keri's obituary, Irihapeti and Miriama told an interviewer, before *the bone people* won the Booker Prize, that as its publishers they didn't measure its success in dollars; they had received new skills, a new outlook on literature and an abundance of aroha.[64] Later, in her PhD thesis, Irihapeti wrote—

> I learned very valuable lessons from the experience about pushing out parameters, staying true to beliefs, and hard nosed international literary contract negotiation.[65]

In an earlier letter, around the time *Spiral 5* came out, with Keri's review of *The Kuia & the Spider/ Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerere*; her long poem 'Trying to Appease Mother Earth'; and an excerpt from *Bait*, illustrated by Robyn Kahukiwa, Keri Hulme wrote—

> Is it a coincidence that since the Women's Gallery opened I have been read more, indeed have written more openly? What would have come about, without Spiral, the Gallery?'([?1982]

64. *New Zealand Herald* 11 September 1984.
65. Irihapeti Ramsden *Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Wai Pounamu* 2002: 44.

But, even for those of us who've participated in many projects, our Spiral contributions are intermittent. As good neighbours to Spiral, collective members also happily stay in or move on or back to larger scale institutions and to organisations that default to different 'Rules'. Often they remain good neighbours from wherever they are.

Daphne Brasell is an outstanding example. She worked at Government Print from 1979–1984 and was a member of the *Spiral 5* collective. Later, within Government Print, she worked hard to support *the bone people*'s first edition (all binding beautifully sewn) and *A Women's Picture Book*. Later still, Daphne Brasell Associates published *Spiral 7*. None of these would have happened without her, and the embargoed archives show that — unsurprisingly — it seemed sometimes a challenge for Daphne and her associates to sustain both systems, neighbourly collectivity and commercial imperatives.

Bridie and Lynne Ciochetto remained good neighbours from within their academic worlds; Tilly from her bookselling, too. As practitioners, individuals move on in other ways, often to experiment and trespass further with ideas and skills learned with Spiral.



Opening course in one of Dr P's series of dinners for writers.

THE KITCHEN TABLE ELEMENT

As just 'a part of life, subject to the strains and joys of domestic existence', Spiral's neighbourliness also comfortably aligns with the careful, domestic, kitchen table practices of many women artists and writers. With 'Ladies a Plate', too. Dr P, apron on and going for it on our single gas burner and elsewhere, again and again. Irihapeti through the door with a huge pot of chilli con carne. Tiffany and a delicious deep dish something. Miriama's menu and shopping list (now in ATL) for *the bone people* launch. Bridie and I with our modest sandwiches for many guests, with French bread, cheese and tomatoes, with Vogel's bread and sundry fillings, like mushrooms and aioli. Joanna with a home-made sweet loaf in a rectangular tin, wrapped in a threadbare tea-towel. Heather with macaroni cheese and weed salad on the day Lynne took me to meet her for the first time; and her legendary boiled chicken. Lynne with her delicious vegetarian food.

GIFTS

Beyond sharing with one another, being good neighours to artists and writers, and making available the floating imprint, Spiral makes neighbourly loans and gifts outward to projects where we otherwise have no direct involvement. Like passing on the Spiral's first digital movie camera and accessories. Like connecting people to other people and providing information of various kinds, including responses to academic researchers. These activities are often treats.

There are neighbourly gifts inward, too, often when least expected. Warm thanks always to those generous neighbours and helpful passers-by for these and, often, the associated gift of relationships that last decades. As regular neighbours-in-need Spiral members always remember these people with special gratitude and can only reciprocate through a public acknowledgement and sharing the gifts in the very best way we can. This morning I think of three who offered us spiritual or material resources and who died not long ago: Huirangi Waikerepuru (1929–2020), Lydia Wevers (1950–2021) and Manuka Henare (1942–2021). I also think of Ross Wilson, who as a young lawyer at Bell Gully helped us form an incorporated society in 1980 and reappeared to Spiral this year, in another helpful hat. And reflect with gratitude on all the other generous lawyers, from Ross's colleague the late Ruth Charters onwards.

I think too of Alison Laurie, who didn't know us but offered *Getting Free* a useful space at Gender & Women's Studies at Victoria University in the late 1990s including space on the university's website for various projects including *Lesbian Landscapes, Getting Free* and our *Mahi Ata: Mahi Ahua* film festival and for beloved people, like Irihapeti Ramsden and Shirley Grace; and this week continues to

invite people to join the Spiral Facebook page (also focused on getting women's words and images out into the world!).

FROM SMALL SCALE TO LARGER?

Spiral's contributions have been small-scale, usually reflecting Joanna's 'anonymity...utility quietness relatedness'. Today, I'm intrigued to explore how would it be possible for artists to to hang on to the knowledge that 'to concentrate all meaning and energy into a work of art is to leave life dry and banal' and retain and amplify neighbourly practices, in particular their essential elements of sustainability and family friendliness, within a larger project. Without having to adopt corporate structures, language and behaviours. I know for instance, that at the Women's Gallery the artists who worked there full-time, seizing every opportunity available to support other artists and writers, found it a challenge to sustain their own arts practices. Mostly we resolved this by creating our own works for theme exhibitions or by designing and printing publicity materials, at the Media Collective's studio. Our personal financial situations were problematic, too: even when we were paid a basic wage through a government employment programme our incomes were low and often shared. Cumulatively, the demands of our neighbourly commitments sometimes upset the balance of 'daily living': sometimes our domestic lives became difficult to sustain and that particularly affected our children in the immediate and in the long term.

But to consider scaling up seems especially urgent when women artist income continues to be much less than men's — our gendered pay gaps are significantly greater than it is for women in many other occupations — and when our wellbeing is often at-risk in arts environments. And especially urgent when the effect of Covid on

women's wellbeing is now also pervasive. Experts Clare Dale and Susan St John reported recently—

> ...the economic burdens of Covid-19 fall disproportionately on women, making the gender pension gap worse.
>
> "Women's employment in hospitality, childcare, cleaning of places like universities and schools that were all closed, work that can't be done remotely — it's primarily done by women," Dale says.
>
> "At the same time, closure of childcare facilities made a lot of women unable to work. And then the thing that was particularly irritating was that the [150 government-funded] shovel-ready projects were geared entirely to male employment."[66]

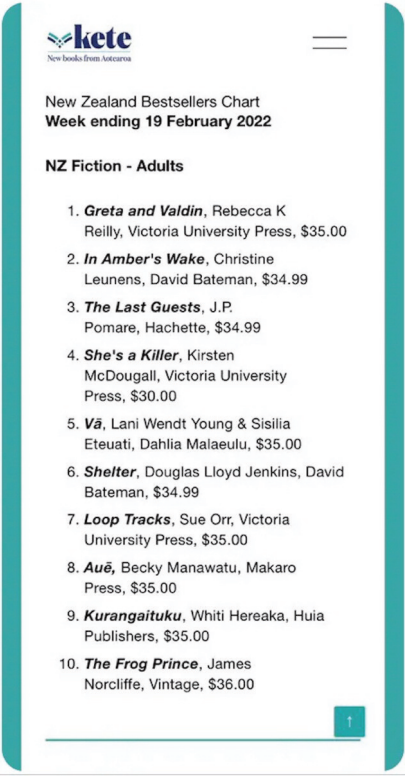
Spiral is usually shovel-ready and one of these projects would encourage scaled-up development of our neighbourly practices.

THE FUTURE

Doris Lessing's emphasis on providing opportunity to blossom, already referred to, still holds true and remains how part of how Spiral works in 2022, as well as many other groups — thinking particularly today of Home Ground, 'a collaborative creativity and wellbeing initiative for women who have experienced incarceration

66. https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/in-depth/458102/bad-then-worse-now-how-covid-19-will-hurt-retired-women

or are engaged in the justice system'.[67] And the Te Korowai Trust's Māra Kai project, with its unstructured processes that provide productive outcomes for the women involved.[68] But as already noted, Spiral as publisher is perhaps now redundant. The books we've published, overwhelmingly by Māori and/or queer women or by mixed groups that included some heterosexual Pākehā women, would probably appear today via inspiring and innovative publishers like Huia, Mākaro, Seraph, Tarahekel|BushLawyer, or many other long-established publishers. For evidence, just look at this list!



kete
New books from Aotearoa

New Zealand Bestsellers Chart
Week ending 19 February 2022

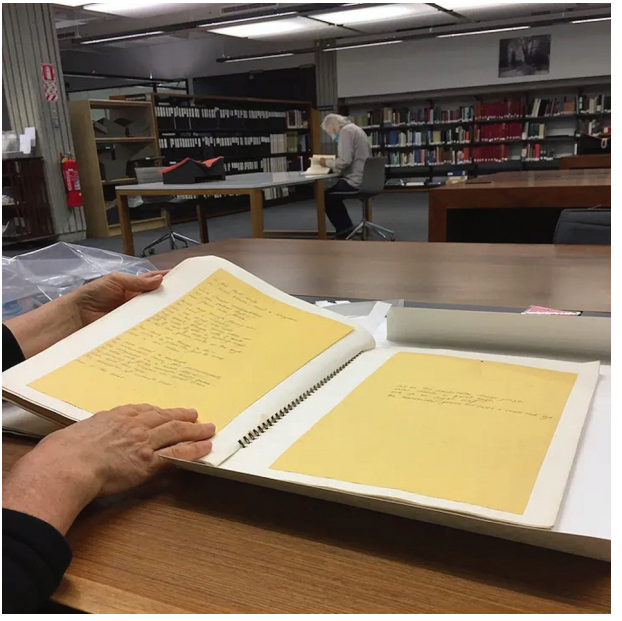
NZ Fiction - Adults

1. ***Greta and Valdin***, Rebecca K Reilly, Victoria University Press, $35.00
2. ***In Amber's Wake***, Christine Leunens, David Bateman, $34.99
3. ***The Last Guests***, J.P. Pomare, Hachette, $34.99
4. ***She's a Killer***, Kirsten McDougall, Victoria University Press, $30.00
5. ***Vā***, Lani Wendt Young & Sisilia Eteuati, Dahlia Malaeulu, $35.00
6. ***Shelter***, Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, David Bateman, $34.99
7. ***Loop Tracks***, Sue Orr, Victoria University Press, $35.00
8. ***Auē,*** Becky Manawatu, Makaro Press, $35.00
9. ***Kurangaituku***, Whiti Hereaka, Huia Publishers, $35.00
10. ***The Frog Prince***, James Norcliffe, Vintage, $36.00

67. https://www.homegroundnz.com/about
68. https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/300549293/whine-finding-connection-and-growing-roots-through-kai-cultivation

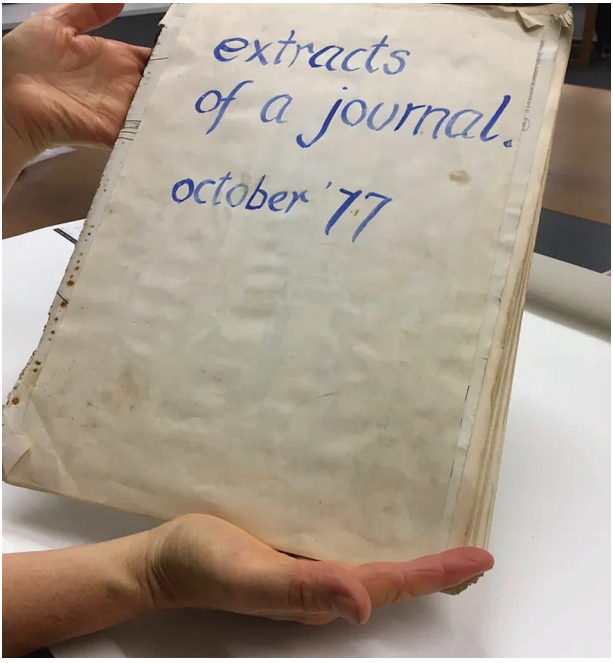
Lots of self-publishing writers and entrepreneurial artists, too. Even in the most expensive art form, screen storytelling, there's a flowering for women of all kinds. But I don't think a conventional publisher would have taken on *Women's Film Festivals & #womeninfilm Databases*; and I've had a lovely time with Emer and with Biz, working on Heather's *i do not cede* eBook+audiobook that probably wouldn't interest another publisher. Emer and Biz were instinctively and immediately 'good neighbours' to Heather, to each other, to me from 'old' Spiral; and to Spiral. The system still works well and brings joy, even when the primary communication takes place on Zoom.

I visited ATL with Biz in late December 2021, to look at Heather's handwriting.

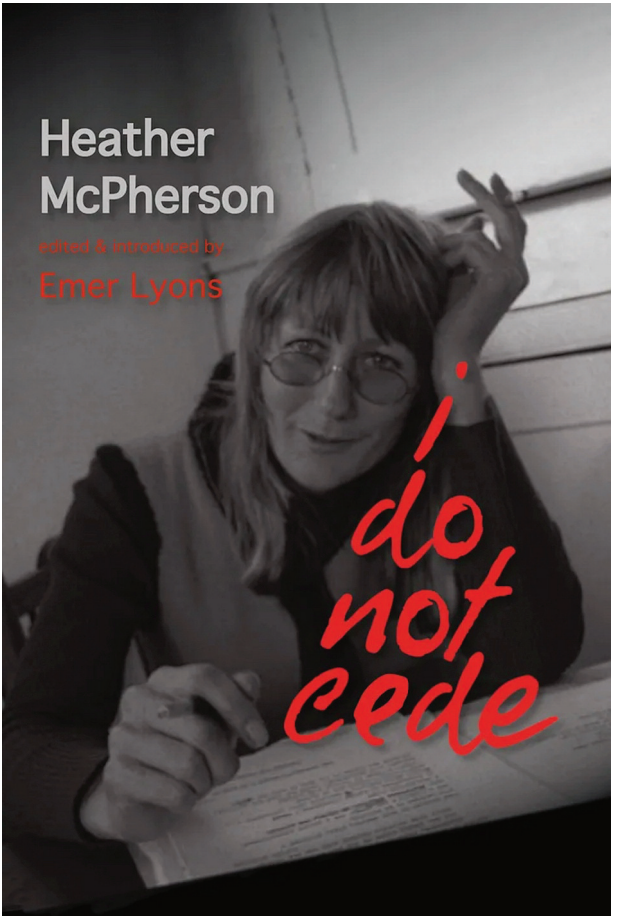


. . .

I loved hearing her font designer responses to it.

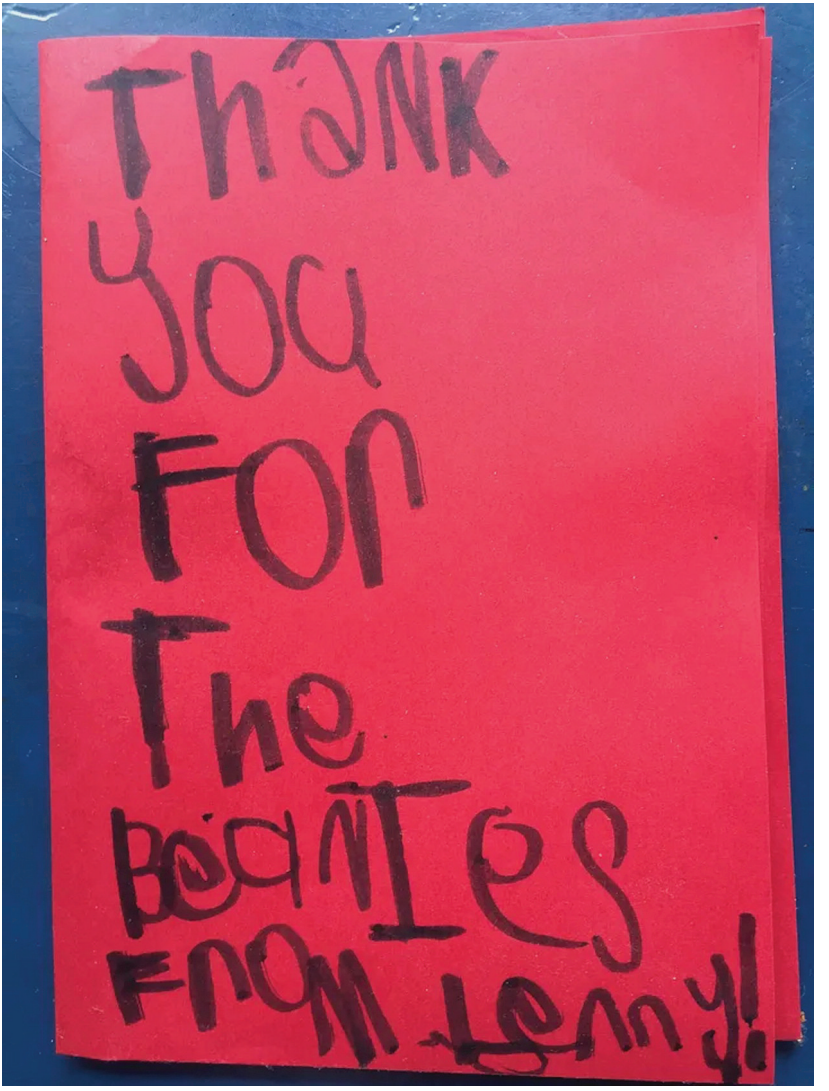


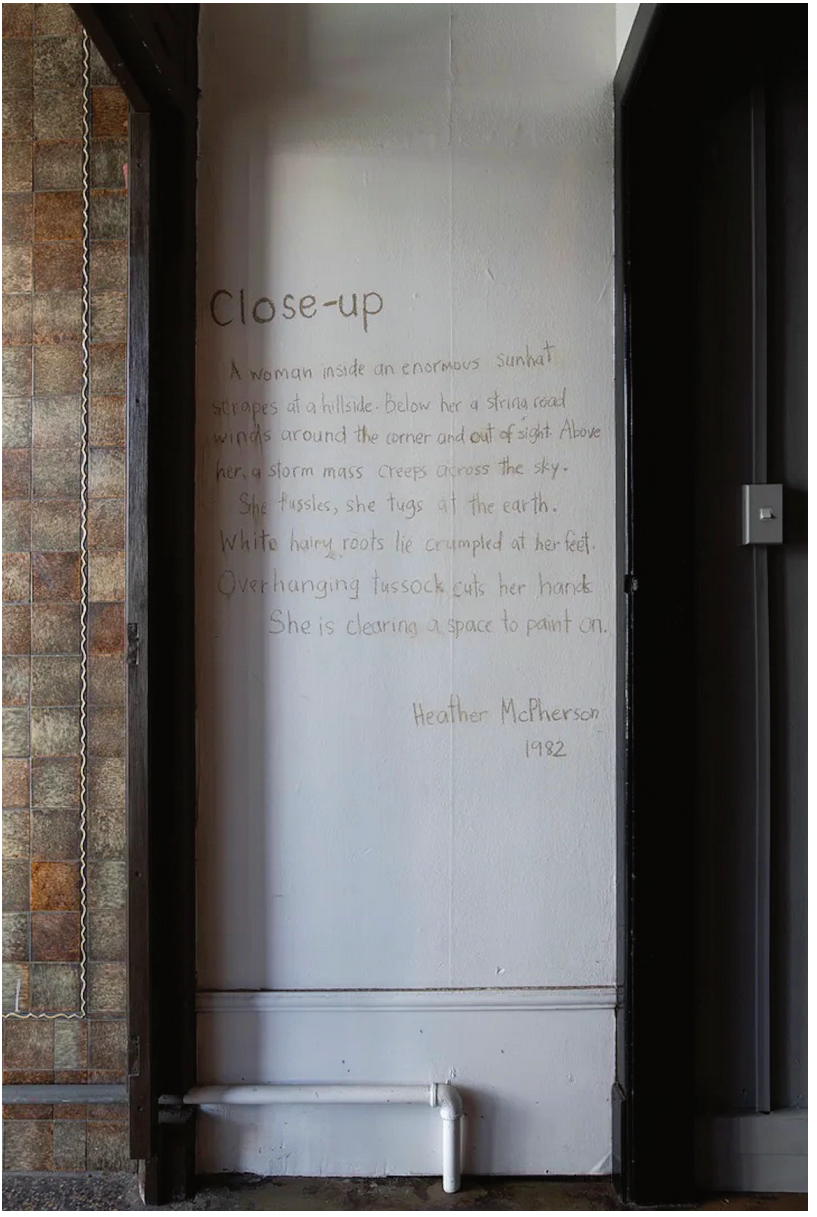
She went home to work on the cover of *i do not cede*.



In the meantime, the recipient of that 2015 beanie has learned to write and did so in response to my parcel of new beanies in mid-2021, for him and for his younger brother.

The world moves on.


THANK
YOU
FOR
THE
BEATLES
FROM Lenny!



M, *And I'm done with the chalk*. Threshold inscription, Mokopōpaki, Auckland 2018. Courtesy Mokopōpaki, Auckland. Photograph Adrienne Martyn.

First published in 'Spiral Collectives' in *Medium* 26 October 2021 — shortened and lightly edited in 2025.

HELP A WOMAN ARTIST TODAY? (2020-2025)

Spiral Collectives



L-R Bridie Lonie with Maeve in front pack, Anna Keri, Barb McDonald, Marian Evans Women's Gallery 323 Willis Street 1982. Photographer unknown but possibly Tilly Lloyd.

Tēnā koutou katoa.

The gender pay gap in the arts is an old story. From 1980-1984 the determined women pictured above tried to change that. And made a difference, thanks to government employment programmes, run by the Labour Department.

But almost forty years later, the latest figures show that women artists, including women writers, earn 21% less overall than men artists: 79 cents for every dollar a man artist earns. If only arts-related income is counted, the gap is an extraordinary 45%, 55 cents for every dollar (*Creative New Zealand A Profile of Creative Professionals 2023*, slide 9)[1]. I can't find information about the intersections of gender and ethnicity for artists, but imagine that they're similar to those that affect the whole population's average hourly earnings, as in this infographic.

Gender and ethnicity pay gaps in average hourly earnings, HLFS June 2020*

All women	All men	Ratio	All Māori	All Pākehā	Ratio
$30.30	$33.77	89.99%	$28.28	$33.40	84.67

	Women	Men	Average
Pākehā women	$31.32	$35.54	$33.40
Māori women	$27.73	$28.81	$28.28
Pacific women	$26.52	$27.28	$26.91
Asian women	$28.78	$31.03	$29.98

	Pākehā women	Māori men	Pacific men	Asian men	Pākehā men	All men
Pākehā women	--	108.71%	114.8%	110.93%	**88.13%**	92.75
Māori women	88.54%	96.25%	101.65%	89.37%	**78.02%**	82.11%
Pacific women	84.67%	92.05%	97.21%	85.47%	**74.62%**	78.53%
Asian women	91.89%	99.90%	105.5%	92.75%	**80.98%**	85.22%

1. 2025: Link broken.

Anecdotally, Covid made this worse. And not one of the Ministry for Culture & Heritage relief packages for artists referenced the gender pay gap and attempted to address it. As a result, women, who also often not only have more caring responsibilities than men — for children and for the elderly — and less time for their arts practices, are now less able to pay for dental and medical care, for transport including car repairs; and for appropriate work space.

And there are now more women artists than ever who can't afford to repair or replace their computers. They have to manage large projects on their phones. If they don't live within walking distance of a public library with computers, if libraries aren't open at the only time they have available for their art work, they're stuck. If library computers don't have the programmes they need, they're stuck. If they haven't got smart phones, they're truly stuck.

Have you upgraded your computer recently? Are you undecided about what to do with your still-in-excellent-condition old desktop or laptop computer or smart phone? Or do you know someone else with surplus equipment?

If so, please consider contacting Spiral on spiralcollectives76 [at] gmail.com. We'll find a welcoming home for that surplus. And you'll have done a beautiful thing.

(And if you're a woman artist in need of some gear, we'd love to hear from you, too.)

Ngā mihi mō te tau hou!

2025 UPDATE

The pay gap for 'all women' has decreased recently, from 8.2% in the June 2024 quarter to 5.2% in the June 2025 quarter. In the same period, in relation to 'all men', the gap for wāhine Māori is 12%, for Pacific women is 15.8%, for Asian women 10.2%, for MiddleEastern, Latin American and African women 5.8%. For disabled women the gap is 14.8%.[2]

Creative New Zealand and New Zealand on Air last researched the gender pay gap in the arts in 2022, and found that it was ***32%***.[3] It's unlikely to have changed much, because all artists have struggled since Covid and Creative New Zealand funding has become more limited than it was.

Please help if you can, by cherishing women and nonbinary artists and writers wherever you can. Our website offers you some ideas if you're interested, which you can experiment with via us or independently.[4]

2. Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women *New Zealand's Gender Pay Gap* 2025 https://www.women.govt.nz/gender-pay-gaps/new-zealands-gender-pay-gap The closest this analysis comes to 'artists and writers" is in their very amorphous 'Art, Recreation & Other Services' section, where the 'all women' gap is measured 6.6%.
3. *Creative New Zealand & New Zealand On Air, A Profile of Creative Professionals* [2022/23]: 15.
4. https://www.spiralcollectives.org/copy-of-t%C5%ABhono-mai-join-us

REMEMBERING SPIRAL 2022-2024

Spiral Collectives

Endings. Grief. Beginnings. Delight.

GRIEF & GRATITUDE

Keri Hulme died at the very end of 2021.

Allie Eagle died in May 2022.

Later in 2022, with her characteristic fine style, Renée launched our founder Heather McPherson's posthumous *i do not cede*.

In December 2023, Renée died.

In early 2024 Lynne Ciochetto died.

. . .

And then in March 2024 Saj, Gladys Gurney, died.

All these Spiral treasures embodied Heather's description in her well-known poem 'Have you heard of Artemisia?'. They were 'vivid women...who lived with audacia, and loved their sisters'. They also were and are beloved by many, and at Spiral we feel deep gratitude for their lives and their work and miss them very much. Each one of them is represented in *Spiral 8*.

From Spiral, two of us wrote the *Guardian* obituary for Keri[1] and Spiral produced an eBook *Keri Hulme: Our Kuru Pounamu* for her, a selection of writing from people who knew Keri, with her own voice well represented. Kim Hunt wrote an obituary for Renée[2] and Marian contributed to another one, paywalled.[3] *The Spinoff* published more — a rich selection.[4]

COMMUNITY

As Spiral remembers those who have left us — our role models — and approach our 50th anniversary, accompanied by a third generation of creative women, we know Spiral's work is still necessary. Creative New Zealand and New Zealand on Air research published this year shows that women artists and writers earn 32% less than men, whether measured overall or as income only from their art practices; and that there are no policies planned to close that gap.[5]

1. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/feb/01/keri-hulme-obituary
2. Republished in Renée's section in *Spiral 8*.
3. https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/350130618/trailblazing-writer-carved-out-special-place-nz-literary-history
4. https://thespinoff.co.nz/books/13-12-2023/moe-mai-ra-tributes-to-renee
5. *Creative New Zealand & New Zealand On Air, A Profile of Creative Professionals* [2022/23]: 15.

This limits public access to women's storytelling and other creative work and we want to help change that, in any way we can. All our activities draw on Spiral's collective memory and enhance our capacity to help, as an organisation and as individual artists.

We have a programme that recycles used devices, especially phones and computers,[6] to provide them to women artists and writers, because many practitioners can't afford essential hardware. And we enjoy our Facebook community, where artists and others seem to like a page that—

> ...aims to be restful and nourishing. It's for appreciation and gratitude for women artists and writers from all over, information for and about them, and celebration of them. Not for fierce debate — it's too demanding to moderate; and there are plenty of other sites for it!

It also puts women in touch with one another and with us. Our instagram is less used and our Tiktok not at all yet. But thanks to access to our archives and online opportunities to disseminate them, the whole world is our community.

ARCHIVES

Spiral's commitment to our archives started at the very beginning: keeping them, looking after them and depositing them at institutions where others can use them. The women who founded Spiral had struggled to find their creative foremothers and wanted to be sure things were different for future generations. And Spiral's archives are useful now, especially for establishing sometimes

6. See *'Help a Woman Artist Today?'* above.

surprising facts that might otherwise be forgotten. We know, for instance, that the immediate precursor of Spiral, the Christchurch Women Artists Group, aimed to be 'for all women artists': it's recorded in that group's minute book, at its first meeting in 1974. We can (re)learn many other details about our herstory and others can engage with it.

Our collections at the Alexander Turnbull Library include a full record of our work and the women who were part of it: correspondence and other documents, ephemera like posters and catalogues, video and audio oral history projects, art works and photographs. Almost everything in our collections is available to any researcher; a very few files are unavailable to anyone at all for a couple of decades, to protect living people from disclosure of sensitive information.

And in 2023 Tim Jones, archivist and librarian at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, invited us to add to the Spiral page they'd created on their library site, where almost all our out-of-print publications are available now, for anyone to read and to download. For free.[7]

7. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral



The Spiral journal online, issues 1-7 (detail). Spiral books are listed below them.

Individual researchers sometimes send us information about related archival material, too, like Rhodes Scholar and poet Riley Faulds, researching Keri Hulme, who told us about the Library of Congress recording of Keri Hulme reading at that library, just before she won the Booker Prize, with Australian Lee Murray and introduced by eminent writer Gwendolyn Brooks. The recording, of excerpts from the bone people, includes Keri singing her first 'Wine Song', which 'fell out of a bottle of port' when she was 18.[8]

Because we can amplify archived content online, our commitment to documentation and archiving it has now come into its own. As one example, anyone interested in distinguished writer J C Sturm (1927–2009) can download a .pdf of her first book, *The House of the Talking Cat*, a collection of stories she wrote in the 1960s, rejected by publishers until Spiral published them in 1983.[9] They can watch a 1980 interview with her on our YouTube channel,[10] and watch her

8. https://www.loc.gov/item/89741346/
9. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/the-house-of-the-talking-cat
10. https://youtu.be/lBsm24BDeTk?si=wH17O40e602Aj9tL

read — in the same year — one of her extraordinary short stories from *The House of the Talking Cat*, 'A Thousand and One Nights'[11].

We also link where appropriate to special recordings, hidden from public view on our Youtube channel, especially a short film about Irihapeti Ramsden, Keri Hulme, Spiral and *the bone people* made by Irihapeti's children Peter Burger and Pirimia Burger for a 2005 seminar;[12] and a video recording of Spiral's Miriama Evans, made at that seminar, singing 'Te Puawaitanga', the waiata she composed for the launch of *the bone people* in 1985.[13] More audio recordings are coming soon, from a 1987 series of readings when Spiral launched books by Saj Gurney and Hilary Baxter.

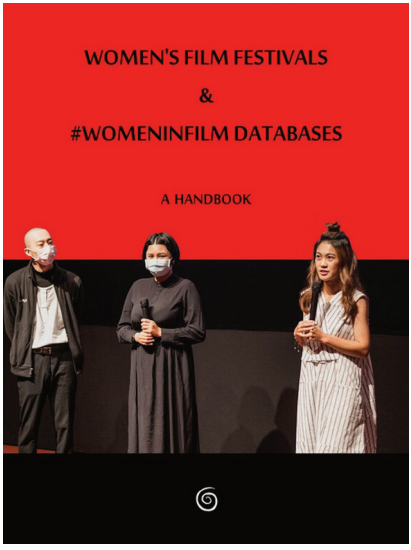
SPIRAL PUBLICATIONS

The core Spiral group continues to publish, to co-publish, and to umbrella others to use the Spiral logo to publish their own work as independent collectives.

Although some of those we umbrella or co-produce with may choose to publish in hard copy, it's unlikely that we'll publish 'conventional' books again, because we've fallen in love with eBooks, for their potential to generate new Spiral content with Vellum's speedy and inexpensive production process — the main cost is proofreading.

11. https://youtu.be/k-etVkLqoBY?si=CqpuAJAzt7MZFpjs
12. https://youtu.be/rElyN7K-4g4
13. https://youtu.be/S8AIlPRoOlU — we wish the sound was better but it wasn't digitised until very recently and the mini-DV tape had deteriorated.

So far, we've published four substantial books, heavily illustrated and in .pdf form.



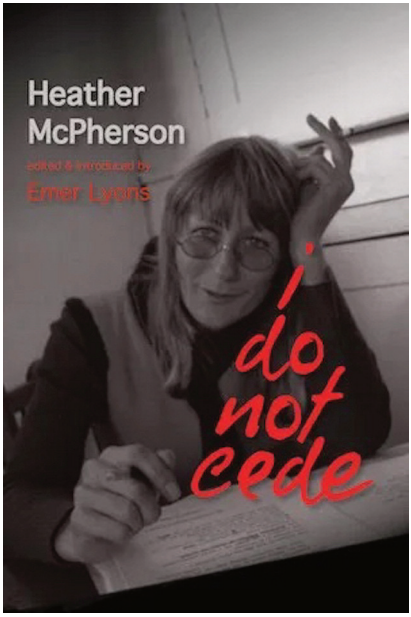
Cover by Gary Morris with Lynne Ciochetto.

This, second, edition of *Women's Film Festivals and #WomenInFilm Databases* follows our series of very successful #directedbywomen #aotearoa film screenings and extended Q&A events at Parliament and elsewhere from 2018–2020, ended by Covid restrictions.[14]

The next book was *i do not cede*, a selection of Heather McPherson's

14. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/womens-film-festivals-and-womeninfilm-databases

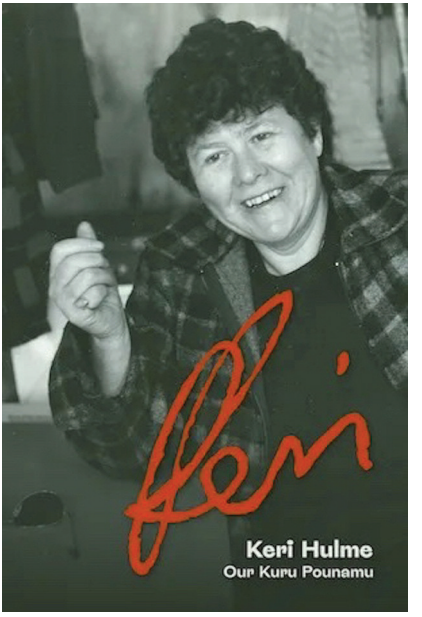
erotic poems, chosen and introduced by fellow poet Emer Lyons.[15] It has an audio book on Youtube.[16]



Cover by Biz Hayman, cover image by Jane Zusters.

Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu is now in its third edition; and includes Keri's schoolgirl writing: 'Moeraki Hillside' and 'Moeraki Hilltop'.[17]

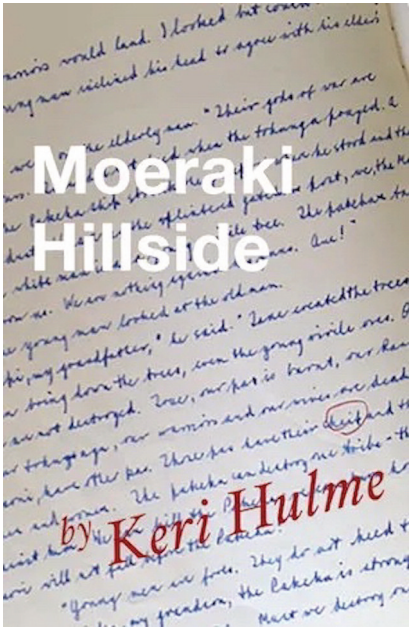
15. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/i-do-not-cede-by-heather-mcpherson-2022
16. https://youtu.be/c7qrP4dmvUA?si=hjmqUPxn_5SJV3uG
17. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/keri-hulme-our-kuru-pounamu



Cover by Madison Kelly.

'Moeraki Hillside' is also published alone, as a teaching resource for high schools. It introduces Keri's imaginary conversation between ghosts, with a colonisation theme, written when she was 13.[18]

18. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/moeraki-hillside-by-keri-hulme



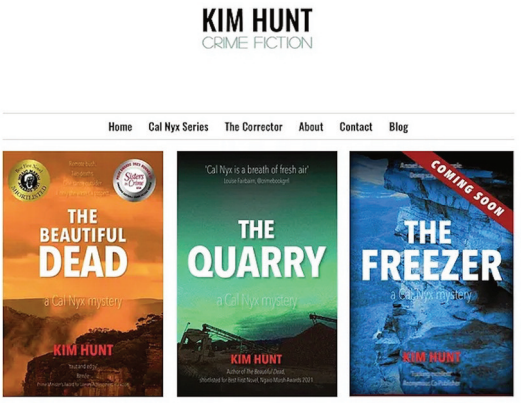
Cover by Biz Hayman.

Preparations for *Spiral 8* are also underway, for our 50th anniversary: a substantial and free eBook that is both a marketing tool and a celebration of the Spiral women who have gone before, making sure they are appropriately remembered.

UMBRELLA BOOKS

To date, these have been a selection of Kim Hunt's crime fiction.[19]

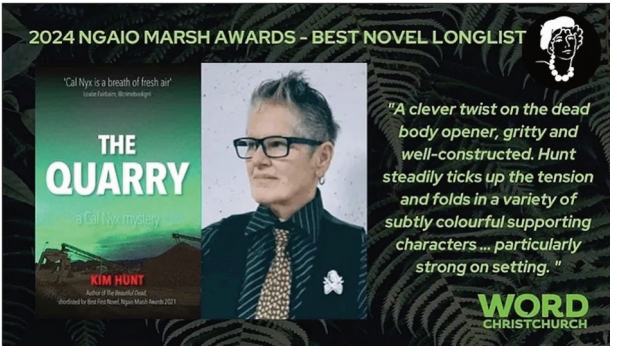
19. https://www.kimhuntauthor.com/



Covers by Biz Hayman.

> While aiming for damn good page-turning yarns, Kim Hunt's Cal Nyx series foregrounds those who rarely get to see their uncompromised selves written on the page.

The Beautiful Dead was short-listed for a Ngaio Marsh Award, in 2024 Kim's work to date was runner-up in a prestigious international Sisters in Crime Award and *The Quarry* was long-listed for Best Novel in the 2024 Ngaios.



. . .

Kim has more on the way.[20] Other umbrella-ed collectives are also working on their books independently.

EVENTS

Following Keri Hulme's death, Marian was, in 2022, invited to represent Spiral at WORD Christchurch and the Nelson Arts Festival. She did so remotely and played Keri's 1981 recording of 'Trying to Appease Mother Earth'[21], made for *Women & the Environment* at the Women's Gallery. She also accompanied Keri's sister Kate when Kate presented the inaugural Keri Hulme Award to essa may ranapiri, at the Pikihuia Awards in 2023, and the rest of the Spiral trustees were also present for this beautiful occasion.[22]

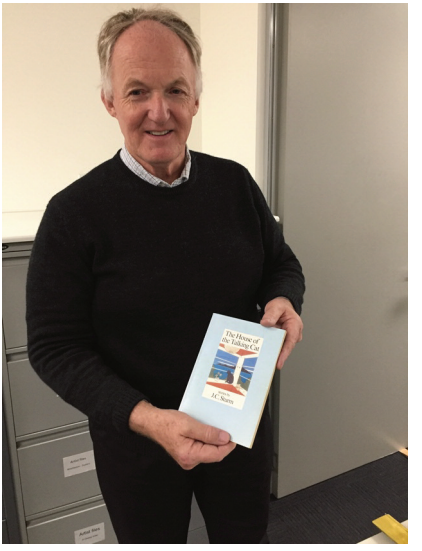
In early 2024, Keri's whānau presented Keri's school bag and books to Haeata Community Campus in Ōtautahi, built on the site of Aranui High School, demolished after the earthquakes, where Keri had her secondary education.[23] Spiral trustees Joanna and Marian represented us at the dynamic ceremony. Among Keri's school books were the exercise book with 'Moeraki Hillside' and the school magazine with 'Moeraki Hilltop', written when Keri was 16. Later, Keri's sisters Diane and Kate kindly took us on a fascinating trip round the neighbourhood, where the whānau lived for an extended period.

20. See 'Kim Hunt & Her Badass Characters', below.
21. https://youtu.be/R1t0FX11yWs
22. https://thespinoff.co.nz/books/30-10-2023/essa-may-ranapiri-wins-inaugural-keri-hulme-award-all-the-other-prize-winners
23. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1404712236853671&ref=sharing

On the same trip, we visited legendary Morrigan Severs, a significant figure in the early women's art movement, a strong supporter of Allie Eagle, Heather McPherson and others.

We also visited Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Banks Peninsula to offer tribute at the graves of Joanna Margaret Paul and her daughter Imogen; and at Irihapeti Ramsden's graveside.

We got to meet Tim Jones at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū library, on the same day as a copy of J C Sturm's *The House of the Talking Cat* arrived to be digitised, kindly donated by Daphne Brasell and Maureen Marshall. He opened the envelope for us, to check...



Tim in his library and archive Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery.

For a few years we had promised to present at the Featherston Booktown Karukatea Festival, close to Spiral's heart because of its connection to Joy Cowley, whose support was transformative during a difficult time long ago. In 2024, we made it.

Cushla held the afternoon train to the Wairarapa until Joanna and Marian reached the platform and off we went, to beta test our 'Moeraki Hillside' programme for senior secondary students, at Kuranui College and Wairarapa College. It was a moving experience, learning about the students' ghosts and a demanding experience, evaluating what we could improve. A kaiako friend has taught the story at a kura kaupapa and provided some preliminary feedback from there, too.

As well, Marian spoke on a panel about adaptation with novelist Becky Manawatu and Italian translator Francesca Benocci. It was a joy to hear them speak, to hear Becky read an extract from her new novel *Kataraina*, and to finish with the recording of Keri's ending to that Library of Congress reading; and to meet up with other Spirals, Kim Hunt and Biz Hayman, who were there for the weekend and having a very wonderful time.

We loved the Royal Hotel, the pies from the Clareville Bakery and the book tent, with a fascinating variety of books we'd otherwise miss: we were especially taken with Baggage Books' *The Mother's Child*: a picture book for mothers about connecting with their creative child, written by Moira Wairama when she was 'a solo mother with three children struggling to survive on a reduced benefit and trying to wake [her] own creative child'.[24]

. . .

24. https://www.baggagebooks.co.nz/portfolio-item/the-mothers-child/

Kim enthused about the Te Tiriti session and its rousing waiata tautoko. She and Biz even went to the gala! Biz wrote—

> The gala was great. A lot more sitting down than I'd anticipated, which was fine, just had expected to be moving around more. Spectacular dance, poetry, singing and performance from a team of young Pasifika folks. The result of a three-day workshop. Looked like they'd been working on it for the past three months. Stunning spontaneous acknowledgement from them to their workshop leaders at the end. So dignified. The kōrero between Moana Maniapoto and Linda Clark was refreshingly frank. Explicit example of how each has gone about their interviewing techniques — really interesting and contrasting approaches. All that and we had three different types of slam poetry too, Grace Teuila Taylor particularly interesting. Miss seeing that stuff, nice reminder for Kim too. Tāme Iti was amazing on Sunday morning, to a packed out Anzac Hall. Denis O'Reilly was a masterclass in interviewing approach. Got to do some papermaking Sunday arvo which was a lovely counterbalance for my hands after all that brain-work!

As always we felt nourished by engaging with the wider arts community; and by planning and presenting, with a special pleasure in working with young people.

. . .

Moving forward, as always, we continue with our archival work, publications and events because we know they help the Spiral communities. And we have a major project, adapting *the bone people*.

ADAPTING THE BONE PEOPLE FOR A NEW GENERATION

Spiral was very honoured when Keri Hulme offered us the rights to make an animation of *the bone people*, and we've quietly developed it for a while now, with seed funding from Manatū Taonga's Te Urungi fund. We've laid a strong foundation for continued development, based in being sustainable and whanāu-friendly, both well-established Spiral practices, and in accountability to Keri and her whānau. Keri wrote the book for both sides of her family: for her they were always her primary readers. Mirroring this, we're making the works with Keri and her whānau as their primary audience.

We started development — Annie Collins, Cushla, Lorna Kanavatoa and Marian — with close readings of the novel on Zoom, followed by careful deconstruction of Keri's 'netlike' structure: we took the entire narrative into Final Draft scriptwriting software in chronological order, using Keri's own words whenever possible. We wanted to understand the structure better: when and how did Keri play with time and place? In a script format we could also easily identify what was visual, to be shown visually — place, people, action — and the shifts between interior monologue and dialogue. We now have an 800-page document of *the bone people* in scene form, and a new appreciation of the breathtaking glories of the work and — for instance — Keri's humour, as well as the information we wanted. We better understand the adaptation challenges and the risk that any writer will want to transform Keri's work in a way that reflects their own as much as hers.

. . .

Madison Kelly is now establishing the visual elements of the central characters and their environment. Becca Barnes has analysed our progress. Both of them, like Keri, are uri of Kāi Tahu. A graphic novel will come first, to establish the story line in a visual medium and to generate story-board material. And we're building audiences for Keri's work by taking her 'Moeraki Hillside' into schools. All slow but sure.

Alongside the creative development we've established an organisational framework that will help us scale up our sustainable and whānau-friendly practices; and a succession plan, because the project will take a while. Spiral is now registered as a charity and its four trustees are in place.

SPIRAL COLLECTIVES CHARITABLE TRUST & SUCCESSION



Signing trust deed day — L-R trustees Marian Evans, Fran McGowan, Cushla Parekowhai, Joanna's witness Bridie Lonie, trustee Joanna Osborne, Russell McVeagh's Florence Wilson and Beth Murfitt.

It took a while to establish the Spiral Collectives Trust: Spiral has always been a little unruly and matching us up with charitable trust law wasn't easy. But we made it! It would have been impossible without consistent very generous support from lawyers Russell McVeagh, over our three long years of challenging introspection and discussion. The trust is artist-led and its guiding principles derive from the wisdom of women who were part of Spiral and are no longer with us to consult in person. In summary, we educate about women's creative practices and legacies, and awhi, tautoko and embrace and support them with publications, exhibitions, events,

film, websites and archives.



At the signing L-R: Marian Evans, Cushla Parekowhai & Russell McVeagh's Meghan Grant.

Our succession plan is underway, with a spread of ages, backgrounds, and skills among our trustees; and the two trustees with less Spiral experience are quickly becoming familiar with our practices.

SPIRAL COLLECTIVES WEBSITE

Spiral last had a website in the 1990s. Designer Biz Hayman has just created, and will continue to build, a site that's new and beautiful, authentic and authoritative and will help keep everyone up-to-date and in touch.[25]

25. https://www.spiralcollectives.org/

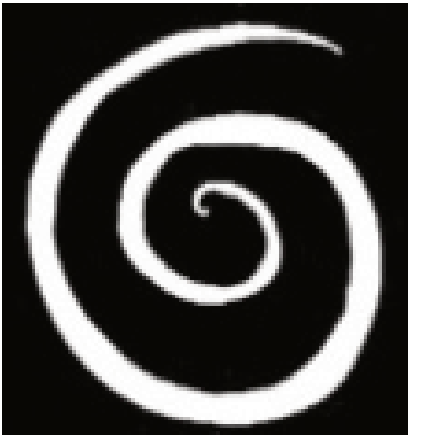
WHAT'S NEXT?

Keeping on keeping on. The terms of our trust deed allow us to undertake all things that are by definition charitable, which include the relief of poverty and as women artist poverty broadens and widens, we'd love to have programmes that address it directly.

But we're small and voluntary and national, so we just have to do what we can: continuing to build and maintain our online community and communications; experimenting with publication, event, exhibition and marketing strategies and systems, to learn about how to use them to their full potential to benefit as many women creatives as possible and increase their share of artist income; developing audiences among young people, especially for Keri Hulme's work, but also for other artists and writers who follow her. *Spiral 8*, *Moeraki Hillside*, and our other publications are vital elements in our movement forward into the next half-century.

PRINCESS-IPLES (2022)

Cushla Parekowhai



KO MANA WĀHINE TE PUTAKE

GROWING PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES OF WOMEN ARTISTS

SPIRAL@KORU PRINCESS-IPLES

MOERANGI A PLACE TO DREAM

Be mindful. Remember why we are here.

IWI TAHI TATOU EVERY DAY IS WAITANGI DAY

We are all at the table.

As partners to Te Tiriti. As advocates for action and believers in the small print.

KIA KAHA, KIA TOA, KIA MANAWANUI BE BRAVE, BE THE BEST BE FEARLESS

We lead from the front.

No karanga, no movement.

E TIPU E REA

OUR MAHI MUST GROW WOMEN ARTISTS AND THE WHĀNAU OF WOMEN ARTISTS.

. . .

Put women's voices first and use the power of their storytelling to resource and sustain colourful, healthy, prosperous, bee-friendly community gardens.

MANA WĀHINE PRINCESS-IPLES OF WHOLE EARTH GARDENING

WE ARE 'THE VILLAGE OF THE HAPPY PEOPLE'

We prioritise strong growth for women and strong growth for the whānau of women artists. We work together, put people before profit, compost responsibly and enjoy the creative benefits of fresh, truly nourishing, well-made community garden salad.

HE HUI AROHA THE ADVANTAGES OF A LONG LUNCH AND LUSH HOMEGROWN GARDEN SALAD

We make space for the cultural safety of women. Tend all our relationships. Season well. Toss together gently with different opinion and belief. Share. Celebrate her achievement.

MĀRA KAI PERMANENT PERMA-CULTURE

We are organic. Prefer no-dig cultivation. We seed bank. Establish nurseries. Raise rangatahi and cuttings with care. We flourish when funded and generously watered.

Part Three

‘EACH WOMAN MUST REPEAT HER STORY AT LEAST ONCE IN HER LIFE, WITH PASSION AND WITH HOPE, AS A KIND OF INSCRIPTION’ (NICOLE BROSSARD)

Some of the contributors in this section continue to tell their stories. Others do not, as far as I know. But each one has been special for Spiral.

VICKI MCDONALD & SPIRAL 5 (1982-1986)

Vicki McDonald

> My life has been and is one of many contrasts that have allowed me to fit into the various layers of society. I am a lover of art, nature and animals and my four sons have provided me another joy, grandchildren. Love, loyalty, honour and respect are my guiding principles. — Vicki in *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu*.[1]

1. Vicki McDonald. 'Keri' *Keri Hulme Our Kuru Pounamu* Spiral 2024: 316. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/media/uploads/2024_11/Keri-Hulme-Our-Kuru-Pounamu-FINAL_14_11_24.pdf



Vicki McDonald.

1982

How I feel about myself now, and my different lifestyles.

Last year I was so stereotyped into a bush person land girl even when a mother — an outdoor person alienated from the other world of literary comments, attitudes. We never even had a newspaper in the house.

. . .

I'd been painting since I was seven. When I was sixteen Dad died. I did a painting for Mum. It got ripped up. Old Sam asked me to paint. I painted a little Maori boy playing in the dirt. That was one and a half years before I was married. The last.

John had the same attitude as Mum's. Painting is a waste of time and money. It should be crushed, never make money from it.

So I stayed with horses and never thought about it. It was easy for a while because Dad wasn't there. And my love for Art just ceased to be. I suppose that is why I was so emotionally unbalanced. I was hard to get on with. Frustration, because that part of me couldn't get out. It was the frustration of not being able to piant. In a thunderstorm I would strip off and ride the horse straight into the waves for about two hours, get out pent up feelings and come home. I used to forget. To me it was a split second in time and yet it would be two or three hours.

When I was fencing everyone I knew in that world used to say fencing is a man's world. I was as good as everybody else. So to them that was fine.

Now I've changed. I've crossed the boundary. It's scary.

I sit there thinking, you know people's ideas change too. Like when before they'd say 'What d'you do?'.

. . .

'I'm a fencer, a scrub cutter.' They'd say 'O yeah', and realise that I was.

Because I mixed with those people I was treated as an equal, accepted. Now they say 'What d'you do?' and I say 'I'm an artist' and I get an abrupt barrier.

At our drinking table 3 or 4 guys are pleased I'm an artist, not the usual — I've changed my whole pattern of people. Computer operator, that sort of thing, people who've dabbled in art are interested. Others say 'You are not in our league'. If I hadn't done art I would have thought it's a different lifestyle, too, not been interested. But I was always interested in art. Art was always there. When I married John it was a case of putting it away. I managed that. I lived so long in that other world. Now I've crossed over. I just don't fit in. Art people can't handle my being a fencer. Neat, Wow, but not interested because they don't understand.

I had the choice when I was a kid (some of my relatives are rich, I used to stay with them, housekeeper, art works) of living that way of life or being with Dad. I chose Dad because I believed that was real people. They said 'You don't know any better'. I said 'I've had the choice of lives: being phoney and uptight like you or being with the down and outers'. I think the down and outers when coming up (not going down) have more to offer. Really appreciate friendship.

If ever I go back to live in Auckland I will probably have to go back to live with rich relatives. Like Thorndon elite, velvet walls, spa pool, colour TV room. Uncle said to me 'you're still a rebel aren't you, you haven't accepted this family'.

. . .

Now I'm on the boundary. I'm hopping backwards and forwards. It's lonely. I haven't found anyone who's there. Others are in their own limbo but not sharing the same thing with me.

It's a different life and worlds.

I gave a drawing to Brian. I said that was him. He said 'no that's not me. I'm not into contemporary art'. I said that wasn't the point, it was my feelings towards him. He said our lifestyles were completely different whereas in February they were the same. Yet that part of me is still the same, still longs to be on the fence line, cutting scrub, riding horses, mustering sheep.

They say I've changed. If I want to go back it's not a case of still having my art with me because that sort of life style would never accept me. They would say I was strange.

That's what I am, strange.

I've seen it before. When I was shepherding people up the road were known as hippie come weirdo come hermit. It's accepting loneliness to live either way. To the art world I'm different and weird. I don't fit into their life style either. It's spooky. Makes you wonder if it's all worth it. I've seen so much of life. I should have fitted into one slot or another. I fit into many circles, wandering. I feel like a piece of rubbish in space floating from galaxy to galaxy.

. . .

I know so much, but where can I put it. Been there, done that but what use is it to me. A guy came up to me the other day. He was getting his photo taken and asked me to hold his baby. It came naturally to hold the baby, hold it on my hip. Same as picking up a hammer, or picking up a paint brush, doing an etching, going to a horse that's been badly treated and knowing how to handle it. What do I do with all those things?

I feel alienated because I dress how I feel comfortable, in bush shirt, swany and steel capped boots. Everyone at the Arts Centre looks odd but can be put into an artistic category. You can pick them. Like coming over on the ferry I picked out two guys as being shepherds, they were really neat guys to talk to until they found out I did art. Instant barrier. You on that side, us on this. Yet I've spent my whole life with those people. I feel really lost. It's the same at the Arts Centre. To the whole lot of them I'm different.

Like my swearing. Swearing to me is a way of life. ninety percent of the time I do not notice what I'm saying. Like everyone I've ever worked with Father swore, school we swore, though Mum wouldn't tolerate it in the house. Every job I've had, you didn't say 'Come here you dumb dog', it was 'come here you fucking dumb bastard'. Now I swear, and people choke. I can't handle it. It's just me.

Brian was brought up in a middle class family where women don't swear, smoke in the street or walk on the outside of the pavement. Yet I can go into the pub and act the goat, not feminine and that's all right.

. . .

I just can't understand why one side or the other can't understand where I'm at. That letter I got from Don in prison was really nice. he was one of the Mongrel Mob. He said before going in 'I think the world of you but our life styles are different. I wouldn't ask you to come down to my level'. But ever since I've been a kid I've been on that level. When did I change. I get on with everybody and I get pissed off with it. I don't want to be me.

The only one I recognise is a bit like me is Keri Hulme. But though I'd love to live like that, in the bush, country way of life, doing my own work, I couldn't handle the isolation. I'm not at that point where I feel strong about where I am. I've never had that sort of security. I lived with John so long, a bad security. Now I'm lost. It was like being locked in a cage. Now I've been let out I've not got a safe cage to go back into when I can't take the knocks. I've friends but it's not the same. Scared I'll end up sort of a lost person. That's why it hit me so hard when Brian said our life styles are different. Because he represented security. To me the Marae would come first. But I can't go back there now. That whole part of my life has crumbled. It finished when my girl friend's grandmother dies. She was the elder. The old lady was the one who held us together. That's another thing people don't accept in me. My Maoriness. because I'm Pakeha but the way I was brought up was the Maori way. The Maori I know, know me, but to those I don't know I'm the honkey white trash, what are you doing among us. Pakehas say what are you talking about you are white not Maori. I'm asked where am I going to stand in a clash between Maori and whites. I'm stuck fair in the middle and I don't like it.

THE SPIRAL COLLECTIVE AND ME

Being asked to join the Spiral collective was a mixture of many feelings for me, from pleasure and happiness at the thought of being on

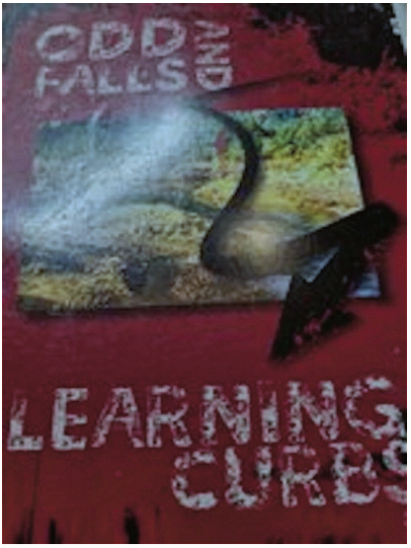
the team, to fear and worry that I wouldn't be able to help enough or pull my weight where matters that I didn't understand left me floundering.

But we have such a great team and all got on well so putting the thing together was a fantastic experience for me as never in my life have I ever been involved in anything like it. I have learnt so much from just being involved that I hope it will continue so I will improve my own views of of life and of the world we women live in. And be able to give more of myself to the magazine so in time I become engrossed in all aspects of it instead of being only able to understand the graphics and writing.

2016: FROM HORROR TO ACHIEVEMENT!!

From near death, to being saved and given hope and help, I was able to go on and achieve many more things in my life!!

After coming through Womens' Refuge, with their help, I sorted my art and achieved a 95% pass in School Certificate. Art — which has given so much pleasure to me and others: I've made many good paintings and even published a book on bits of my life with crazy animal stories etc.



Vicki Fletcher-McDonald *Odd Falls and Learning Curbs 2015.*

I had lost a lot — my 4 young sons, 4 lives I could have no part of except maybe a quick phone call on a birthday. No visits for years. But I was alive and FREE, not chained and beaten.

My way of dealing with it was work, work, work — not sitting on my bum and dwelling on it. I was able to make a life for myself that I thought my sons could be proud of me for achieving.

I went on to become a Zoo Keeper at the Wellington Zoo, then got offered the job of Hydatid Officer and Dog & Animal Control Officer — a combined job. This I excelled in, as I brought to the job my skills from my past life, e.g. Shepherd, Stock, Dog and Horse

Trainer. I then became one of the very few women to go through with both Hydatids and Dog Control Officer status.

I was given the opportunity to go to Tokoroa where the dogs were out of control because they hadn't had an officer there for 3 years and I brought Tokoroa's dog problem under control, after the worst of the lay-offs at the paper mill.

After nearly 12 months I was able to take stock of how good that turned out: with no prosecutions, 'and they all did it my way', that's not only the Pig Hunters but also the 4 major gangs in the area. Yes I had death threats etc, but remembering my past life made me strong. It just made me more determined to sort out all of the Dog and Animal problems within the (Council) area, bringing in Freeze Branding for pig dogs to help fight the pig dog stealing ring and broke up those rings, breaking up dog fighting, and petitioning Parliament to stop Pit Bulls from ever entering the country. It was NOT PASSED but it was brought into law that all dogs must be Micro Chipped as this helps to find or locate the owners of lost or stolen dogs. Also other problems that go with 'out of control dogs' e.g. stock worrying, attacks on people etc.

After achieving that I was about to take over South Waikato District, when I was diagnosed with Brucellosis and given 3 months to live. I was pissed off, as I had just been picked to become the first woman ever to be Field Advisory Officer for MAF for NZ, of whom, in those days, there were only 7 in New Zealand. But I couldn't do it because of the diagnosis and I was dying. This was the start of a long road on which there was support from many.

. . .

Looking back to that first terrible trip from the bush to Takaka then Nelson, flown to Wellington with police protection to start a new life in which I have achieved so much, 4 people have stood out in my turnaround. They gave me the will, the hope and the belief in myself so that I could do and excel in any of these things. and I want to thank these people with all my love and heart. Each one of you have helped me look to the future, not at what I have lost!! Thank you all for my life.

Shirley & Neil Goodman of Nelson, who were there for me at the beginning, with open arms. They gave me safeness, warmth and food, yet I was still flat back, caged, e.g. not able to go for a walk or go near a window in case I was shot!! And I never ran in a straight line, always ran amongst trees as a safety net from being shot! Terror & fear are a great teacher. These few little tricks saved my life but so did Women's Refuge — not only by giving me safety but by helping me come to terms with a life so different from my old one....the release...the freedom!!

Shirley and Neil flew me to Wellington Refuge where I was given support in finding a place to live, a job and a new life style, teaching me there was more to life than the 'bash' and having kids one after the other, support in my art & writing and enabling me to once again try School Certificate — and achieving it!! Getting jobs that I had always thought an 'unobtainable dream' — e.g. Zoo Keeper, Print Assistant (Wellington Arts Centre), being able to do writing courses and tuition writing and the overall feeling that I could go for any goal I wanted to obtain e.g. Hydatids Officer & Animal Control Officer. I was offered the job of a Hydatids Control Officer in the Amazon Jungle to the inland tribes — wanted to but my boys were getting big enough to need me at last.

. . .

All of this was possible because of the refuge workers, telling & showing me what it takes and believing that I could and did have what it takes to try and get any of these things — even thought I was a physical and mental wreck but with the support over the years by Marian Evans (my refuge worker) I was able to achieve.

Then through a friend, I met an amazing man — Ray, who didn't go on about how sick I was but 'what would it take to make me want to live?' '10 acres on the West Coast of the South Island', I said, as a joke. 'It has to be on the beach' was the reply, though neither of us had any money!! But by luck, meeting good people and hard work, also finding a Doctor who could treat Brucellosis two years later there I was, sitting in my Paradise just 20 or so kms north of Westport, Buller, South Island.

Nine years of hard work for both of us, we had it just about right. From no stock holding fences, no water supply etc. all and more had been achieved including house rebuild. Then Solid Energy came along with a multi-million dollar plan, pushed us off the land — with nothing — leaving us both broken, with nothing after 9 years hard work!!

We both never got over losing that. From there we have done 3 times around NZ and lived in many places, too many to list. We did buy 18 acres an hour west of Invercargill but after 2 years it failed to give us the pleasure and peace of mind we hoped. From Invercargill to North Auckland and back to the South Island, then over to Blenheim where we now live in a wonderful old cottage which was built in about 1890 and it's still very strong and sound — we are improving it.

. . .

From what I was, now I can look back at what I was to what I have become. TO ALL WHO HELPED ME ON THAT HARD ROAD....THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH.

Reprinted from *Spiral 5* where Vicki was a collective member, with Anna Keir, Daphne Brasell and Marian Evans, and republished in *Medium*, 30 December 2016 with the 2016 addition.

Vicki has a video in the Alexander Turnbull Library: OHDV-0175. I have two special memories of her. When Vicki was working just up the road at the Wellington Arts Centre in 1982 or 1983, and we had a Women's Gallery party at 323 Willis Street, with Audre Lorde as a visitor, Vicki danced with her, and read her some of her poems. I also remember accompanying her when she expertly raffled chickens in local pubs to raise money for *Spiral 5*.

‘WHERE DID YOU GO TO MY LOVELIES’ (2015)

Jane Zusters interview with Marian Evans



*W*here Did You Go To My Lovelies *cover.*

Mary Dore and Nancy Kennedy’s feature about the birth of the American women’s movement, *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry*,[1] screened at the New Zealand International Film Festival this year. Afterwards, I got a group email from someone who wrote–

> “ The younger ones wanted to know if there is a similar account of the NZ second wave of feminism.... can

1. https://youtu.be/UB54kDZg5to?si=tzYe8Q5ZtRev9wqG

anyone give us a reference?

Since then, I've become aware of Australian women's filmmaking in the 1970s and 1980s[2] and I've kept my eye out for films from and about the women's movement in New Zealand in those years. But the woman-made moving image record of New Zealand activities of those times, from those times, seems to be tiny.

I've searched in the Nga Taonga Sound & Vision collections and I now know, for instance, that there were at least three films made in 1975: *Meanwhile* with a crew that included Annie Collins;[3] Deidre McCartin's *Some of My Best Friends Are Women*;[4] and *You Wanna Talk Feminism?*[5] from the Auckland Community Women's Video collection awaiting cataloguing at the New Zealand Film Archive. In 1976, Stephanie (Robinson) Beth's *I Want to be Joa*n,[6] filmed at the 1975 United Women's Convention. A few others came later. I hope to find more.

*I*n the almost-absence of 'our' films, images in books become especially treasured resources. So I was thrilled that Christchurch artist Jane Zusters has just released a limited edition book called *Where Did You Go To My Lovelies,* of photographs and interviews of women, men and children she knew way back then in Christchurch, where there were radical communities and activities, some of them

2. https://wellywoodwoman.blogspot.com/2015/06/the-activist-complex-female-protagonist_11.html
3. Ngā Taonga F11332.
4. Ngā Taonga F3143.
5. Ngā Taonga F59890.
6. Ngā Taonga F44255.

feminist. In a city where many lovely buildings are now forever gone, following the major earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and their aftermath.

Where Did You Go To My Lovelies includes an essay by Andrew Paul Wood that places the work in its art historical and social context, but I was curious about some other aspects of the work. *Where Did you Go To My Lovelies*



pro-abortion protest 1978

You've always been a painter as well as a photographer, a ceramicist. Now film is sometimes part of your shows[7] *and some of your images are digitally altered. And* Where Did You Go To My Lovelies? *is your fourth book.*

7. http://www.janezusters.co.nz/view-my-films/

Why do you work in so many mediums and what inspired you to produce books? What do they do for your work that other mediums can't?

I work in so many mediums because I can. Like left brain as opposed to right brain, book production meets different creative needs. I have embraced the digital world and the democracy of that. Anyone can make a book now. The art ends up mostly existing in reproductions anyway.

I like books because anyone can buy one unlike one-off art works. In 1999 when I did the photographs for Sue Fitchett's *Charts and Soundings: some small navigation aids*[8] the scans and photoshopping cost Sue thousands of dollars. These days I photoshop and access my photo archive with my own professional scanner from the comfort of my living room.

My first book *Singing in the Lifeboat* was hard work as I was encouraged by Grant Banbury and Quentin Wilson to do an overview of my art life with commissioned essays. The subsequent ones have just made themselves. It is like composing music together when I rock up to my designer Mike Coker with all my text and images in folders. It happens very fast as we are on the same wavelength. Luckily for me I pay Mike with art, as designers as good as Mike cost an arm and a leg. Mike is an artist who walks the talk and supports me and my causes.

8. *Charts & Soundings: some small navigation aids*, poems by Sue Fitchett, photographs by Jane Zusters, introduction by Riemke Ensing. Published by Spiral in association with Island Bridge 1999. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/charts-and-soundings

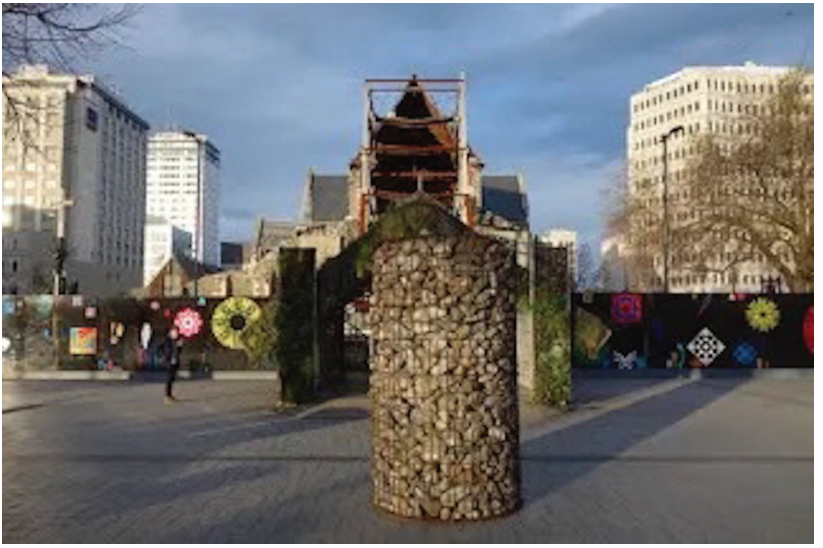


abortion demonstration Christchurch 1978

When I look at the front and then the back cover, I wonder if the 'lovelies' and the 'where did you go to' are equally about people and buildings and restoration and the natural environment.

Yes those photographs are pivotal. I was there in 1978 and then in 2010 I photographed the water protest when the cairn of stones was erected.

The protest was organised by Sam Mahon who is another water activist artist and author of *The Water Thieves*. I was at a water meeting chaired by Peter Beck at the Cathedral two days before the February 22nd 2011 Earthquake. In 2012 with the support of some Anglicans behind the scenes, I made a poster urging people to restore the Christchurch Cathedral.



water protest cairn of river stones, protesting loss of Environment Canterbury democracy 2010 Cathedral Square 2015.

Artists For Save Our Water[9] and *Mackenzie Guardians*[10] are both my websites. With Sally Hope I formed Artists For Save Our Water and used art to engage people to help save the Mackenzie Country, stop the Waianiwaniwa Valley being flooded for a reservoir for Central Plains Water and the level of Lake Sumner being raised for Hurunui River irrigation. Sally Hope and I had organised an exhibition about the Hurunui River in my studio when the February 2011 struck and destroyed the building.

The National Government abolished our water democracy in Canterbury to make water available for irrigation regardless of the

9. https://artistsforsaveourwater.co.nz/
10. Not found, 2025.

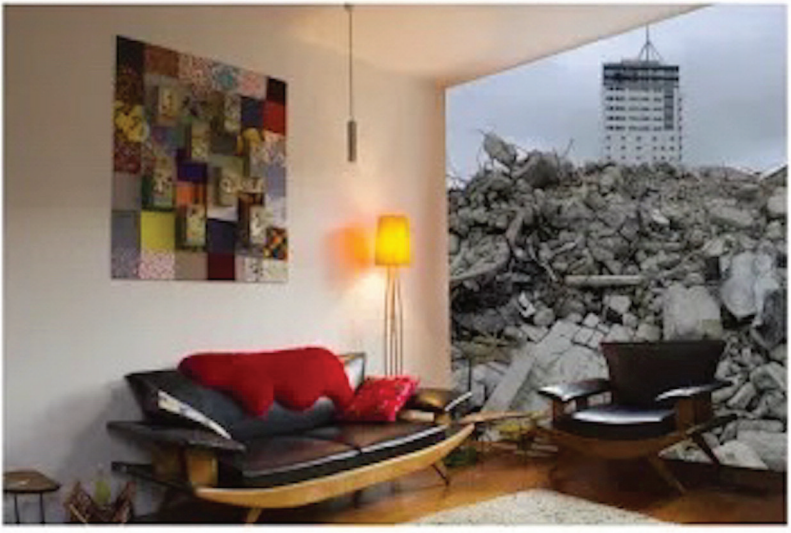
environmental cost as we were being too successful opposing the water taking. So that is the context to the river cairn photograph.



Manchester Street one minute after earthquake 22 February 2011 at home Estuary Road.

Have environmental concerns become more urgent for you over time? And the relationships between people and the built and ruined environment?

These days I am interested in the local/personal/political aspects. When I returned to live in Christchurch in 2004 I found the water only went up to my knees in the Waipara River swimming hole I almost drowned in when I was seven. I started asking questions and looking at our rivers. These days I make environmental images that reflect multiple realities. I am drawn to that uneasy edge where human beings co-opt or entangle with eco-systems.



from Where The Home Is: The Christchurch Earthquakes 2010–2012

In my project *Where the Home Is: The Christchurch Earthquakes 2010–2012* I put the devastation into the living rooms of my friends and family as a way of expressing the new reality in Christchurch. Everyone was affected by the earthquakes whether their home was wrecked or not. I followed my earthquake photographs back to the intact 70's Cathedral Square.

Long ago, in an interview for A Women's Picture Book, *you said 'I like to find some balance in my work between the roses and the black spots' and you seem to have done this again here.*[11] *What were your intentions for this book?*

11. *A Women's Picture Book: 25 Women Artists of Aotearoa (New Zealand)* edited by Bridie Lonie, Marian Evans and Tilly Lloyd, a Women's Gallery/Spiral group 1988: 162. Wellington, Government Printing Office. Available to read and download — https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/a-womens-picture-book



Tiffany Thornley in Chippenham Community Protest 1976

The demonstration photographs were the key. I had the brainwave to start with the picture of the cathedral and then follow some of the demonstrators into their personal lives. It all happened very quickly as I already had the raw material. I thought 'I will make another book' when Liz Eastmond invited me to exhibit at Tivoli on Waiheke Island, which is a bookshop/gallery. I included images that resonate for me now.

Now that the Cathedral has no spire, the intact Cathedral with its restoration appeal sign is the lightbulb image. The cityscape around the protestors has vanished. My editorial eureka moment was to include my friends lives in the book's structure. I wanted to include a slice of my youthful art community and life. I had to choose friends I had good photographs of.

. . .

Someone observed the work is back to front. The structure of the book has a Māori perspective. I stand in the present starting with Christchurch's ruined reality and then look at the past. Past comes before present in the European world view. I consciously reverse this order.

The book is the tip of the iceberg.

I unpacked my 70's photographs when I did an MFA at Whitecliffe College of Art and Design in 2001 to 2002. I re-photographed and interviewed twenty-five people I had photographed in my youth. It took me a while to work out that I had to reference the past in the new photograph. I still have the gun but I am wearing a Marilyn Sainty little black dress.



Jane 2002 and Jane 1975.

My first question would be, 'How do you want to be seen now?' Morrie said, 'I'd like to be photographed with that pou — that pou out there was carved by a cousin of mine — Teddy Nepia — he gave me that — it was carved out of an old tree that fell down at this property called The Palace at Awarua'.



Morrie 2002 and Morrie 1977.

Morrie was the last image in a sequence of photographs of graves in An Odyssey Beyond which was bought by the National Gallery (now Te Papa Tongarewa/Museum of New Zealand) in 1978.

In the original print a shadow obscures his face. With his palm showing the life line, he was man confronting death. In the 70's Morrie's face was masked by shadow. However Morrie was making a Maori gesture in that Westport cemetery 40 years ago. The upraised hand is a a Ringatū salute and conveys a message of peace, love and passive resistance. Te Kooti had instructed his followers to stretch forth their hands to glorify God rather than kneeling to pray. A

drawing exists of his ancestor, the pacifist leader of Parihaka, Te Whiti o Rongomai, making an identical gesture.

When you look at old proof sheets now, can you see that some things that mattered then are much less important now and some casual shots then have far greater significance than you realised at the time?

Today I find the picnic and life drawing more interesting than the abstractions I exhibited in the 70's.

These days everyone has a camera on their cell phone and snaps the food they eat and their lives, like Laurence Aberhart feeding the kids fish and chips wrapped in newspaper. He has gone on to be a major New Zealand photographer so this snapshot of the man from so long ago gets the gold star.



Lawrence Aberhart, Kamala and the Hammond boys 1976.

I also included nudity, as in the 70's I photographed people without their clothes a lot. If you look carefully you can can see Tiffany who is life drawing has no clothes on either. Away from art school Tiffany and I used to be naked while life drawing to make ourselves equal with our model.



life drawing at Jane's place, 49 Effingham Street, North Beach 1977.

I self-censored and I was not sure how Morrie and Tiffany and Paul would feel about their nudity. I was glad they agreed. There is the picture of Rana and Dave in the bath but other than this I did not include pictures of naked children as this is now seen as problematic. Sally Mann explores the issues around this in her autobiography *Hold Still*. I did not include the photograph of the man with 'trust me' tattooed on his forehead and 'power to the penis' on his belly.

In the 80's depicting the body especially the naked female body became a highly contested territory. French feminists such as Irigaray believed women could only talk in 'riddles' since 'the gaze' belonged to men. In New Zealand Lita Barrie demolished first generation feminist artists such as Carole Shepherd and Claudia Pond Eyley. Someone critiqued a pastel I had made of Allie Eagle

looking into a mirror and putting on lipstick as an example of 'narcissistic pre-feminist' art.

When John Turner requested permission to put pink nude in blue pool in *New Zealand Photography from the 1840s to the Present*[12] I was so ashamed of 'pandering to the voyeuristic gaze' I did not reply. Ironically in 2015 they put it in *Photoforum at 40* and forgot to ask my permission. I did not mind as I am proud of the image today.

In A Women's Picture Book *you say 'My work has always had a strong autobiographical element. I suppose that would be my connection with the feminist art movement — the personal is political'. In this book, you write about yourself as a demonstrator and about those who've influenced you as an artist, you mention your niece. But it seems to me that you've also purposefully made yourself opaque, a distanced artist. Did you feel unable include more about your own reality? I wondered whether, in seeking 'balance' and taking a slightly distanced overview, you may have edited out quite a lot of public and private emotion that were part of those times.*

I subscribe to the Diane Arbus's 'a photograph is a secret about a secret. The more it tells the less you know'. I have myriad identities. When I asked my mum in 2005 'What's your nicest memory?' she said, 'Being in love and being loved and I am still in love'. I aspired to that but these days I am in love with life rather than a special person.

So it's time for another version of 'Portrait of a Woman Marrying Herself?'

12. 1993



portrait of a woman marrying herself 1978.

In the 70's my significant relationships were mostly with men although I was friends with Allie Eagle who was a very out political lesbian.

I played with gender and wore both frocks and suits. I was queer before the word was used. Being an artist is the thread. I selected images typical of my world reflecting my 70's art practice which was

not a woman-only world. (I was minimally involved in [the women's literary and art journal] *Spiral*.)



Allie painting 1976.

I love all the beautiful print and other dresses worn by women and men. And that's a beautiful, tender, image of Tiffany, someone I've always known as heterosexual, holding hands with her mate Margaret.



Dave and Rana 1975.

Is that image of perhaps there to demonstrate that sisterhood has lots of close and to some extent physical relationships that fall across a spectrum of sexuality?

I included it because it is a beautiful photograph about Tiffany's life. In the 70's I was fascinated by gender and thought women should have more of the freedom of men. Sexual orientation can be fluid and shift throughout your life.



Tiffany and Margaret Flaws Punakaiki Festival 1978.

Were you aware of other artists documenting the same things as you at the same time?

Rhondda Bosworth and I were both photographing people with no clothes on but she did not come on the demonstrations. I have contact sheets where we are both naked and photographing each other and others at the same time. Glenn Jowitt, who was in my year at art school, was a documentary photographer but I did not see

myself as a documentary photographer in the way he was. I admired Judy Chicago, Diane Arbus and Ralph Eugene Meatyard. I wanted to be an artist and was making myself into an ARTIST. I used to make photo dates with people at a time of day there would be extreme light and shadow.



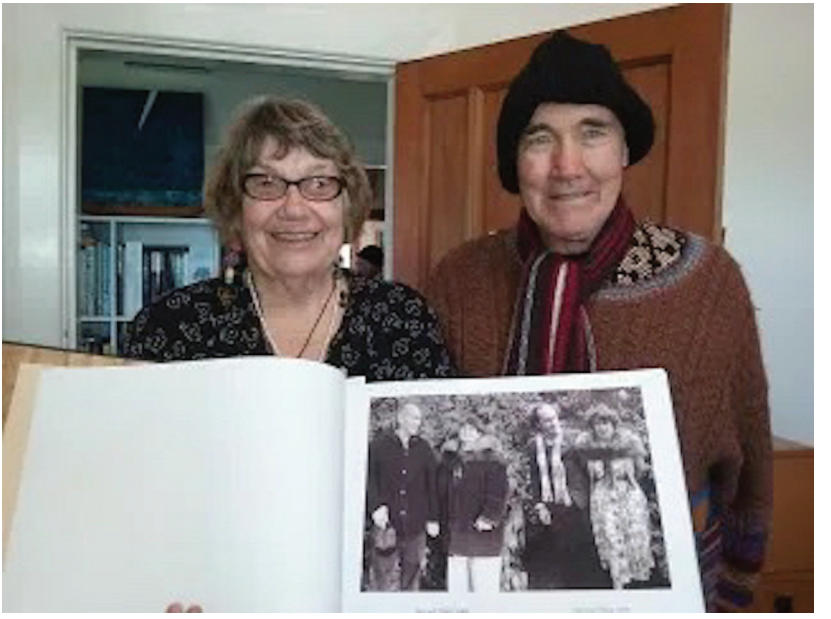
Allie & Karl 1975.

I made a tarot pack where my mates became the major arcana. I was also making etchings and did life drawing with Tiffany. I had to earn money as well which I did by being first a postie and then a Chippenham commune 'Vital Foods' baker.

What's next for you? In your exhibition where this book was launched I saw some intriguing small book-type paintings, a bit like one of the mountain works on your website. Are you continuing to experiment with hybrid forms?

. . .

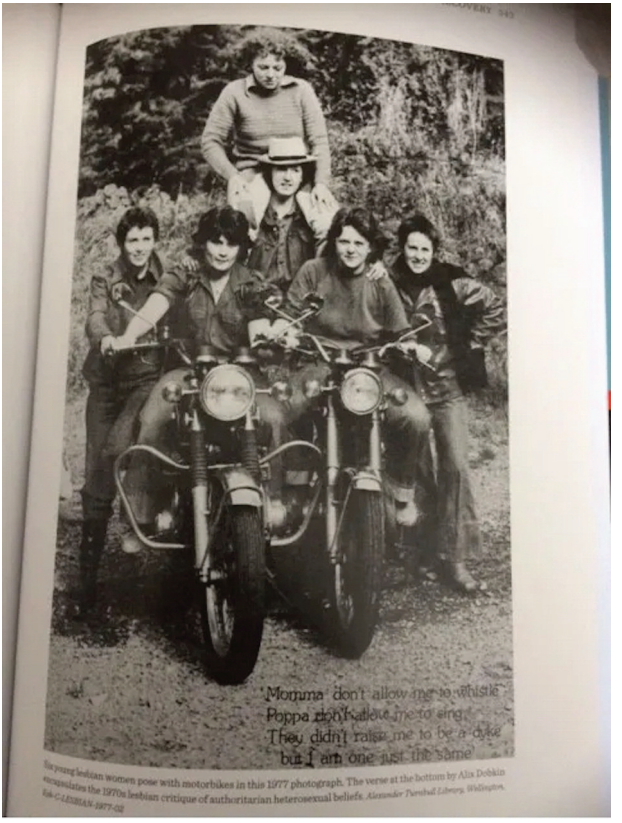
Yes I am making collages with bits of wood, working on photographic montages from a Department of Conservation artists trip to Dusky Sound that I was invited on as a water activist artist and scanning historic queer imagery for a show being organised by Stephen Lovett called rereading the rainbow. In January 2016 I will be on the walk that traces the footsteps of Te Maiharoa, the Waitaha pacifist prophet. In 1878 his village was burned to the ground and in the winter snow he and his people were driven out of the Mackenzie Country. My friend Ramonda Te Maiharoa wants my help to make a book about this.



Tiff & Paul the other day 2015.

MOMMA DON'T ALLOW ME TO WHISTLE (2015)

Mary Bailey



from Barbara Brookes' A History of New Zealand Women
2016

*T*his image endures. Made by Mary Bailey in 1977 and used in a poster by Herstory Press,[1] it's been exhibited at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand and included in Barbara Brookes' *A History of New Zealand Women,* each time without acknowledgement, though

1. Herstory Press 1974–1980 was a lesbian press that published the New Zealand editions of *Monster* by Robin Morgan (1974); and *S.C.U.M. (Society for Cutting Up Men) Manifesto* by Valerie Solaris (1976). It printed *He Said He Loved Me Really* by Auckland Women's Refuge (1979) and issues of *Circle* magazine, the first issue of *Spiral*, leaflets and posters.

(note from *A Women's Picture Book*, 1988.)

Mary will receive a credit in any second printing of *A History of New Zealand Women.*

Alix Dobkin says (May 2016) that she did not write the lyrics: they come from an old American folksong.

I interviewed Mary in 2015 and published the interview on *Medium* within Spiral's open research project.[2] — Marian Evans

Marian: When and where were you born?

Mary: Newfoundland, an island off the coast of Canada. At the time I grew up there people were very poor. There were a lot of overseas and Canadian companies taking the wealth out of the mines and forests leaving the people impoverished and the butt of jokes by so called mainland Canadians, because we were poor and lived in an isolated place. My joke was that we were so far behind we were ahead. The Canadian government deigned to give back a university and a highway out. I went to one and then took to the other.

Also at that time there was a rise in French separatism, sparking a movement by the Canadian government to hire French-speaking people and I had not had the option of learning French at school so everything was pointing to me finding greener pastures. A history of

2. https://medium.com/spiral-collectives/momma-dont-allow-me-to-whistle-b0a8e608a0b0 Ages ago, the Armstrong & Arthur Charitable Trust for Lesbians gave me a grant to research the Herstory poster. I thank them for the time it gave me to think about this image and the motivation to interview Mary when she came back into my life after many years, via Facebook.

being sexually abused and being shunned as a result of telling the truth created a strong drive to build a new life, too. Met some Ithacan (New York) lesbians in Canada and on invite visited and eventually stayed there off the books, going back over the border every couple of months to renew visa-free status. Loved the place and the women's movement between Ithaca, Cornell University, Montreal.

Looking for a new life, I met a woman in Ithaca who was a New Zealander who was returning home, so joined her as a friend (failed relationship) and arrived in Wellington in 1976. We came via Hawaii and American Samoa, my first taste of tropics, Wellington was a bit of a rude shock weather-wise but I liked the similarities to home, an island with independent resourceful people. I had $50 in my pocket and a few clothes.



Mary Bailey 'Self-Portrait' — 1976.

This photo of me was directed by me. I remember going into the garden and asking someone to shoot the shot but I can't remember at all who took it. It was at a house in Hataitai and not long after I arrived in New Zealand. It was my emotional response to the turmoil around me, My offering was that I would do my best to be my best. (Often not good enough at that time, for those who I held dear.)

Were you working?

I was working at the old Wellington Hospital in the Clinical Photography Dept. All I had was a degree (BSc) and as was said at

the time that was all very well but 'What could I do?' I had a little experience in photography as my sister had worked at the university photo club, so I threw myself into the darkroom work there, under a lovely man named Reese. He was an icon.

We processed photos of organs from autopsies and pictures of skin cancers. This experience helped me perhaps save someone's life. J was an acquaintance of lesbian friends. We were at dinner in a Hataitai house and I noticed a large mole on J's arm that my hospital work made me think 'melanoma'. I said as much and she did get checked. It was malignant and she had it removed. It was black and that is not good in a mole.

One of the women in the Herstory photo mentioned you as a musician. What kind of music were you making?

Well loosely speaking, it was really just a lark. Can't remember the whole story but I was dragooned into a punk rock band lead by Sue Lean, lady drummer. She is apparently in Korea now teaching English. She wanted someone who wasn't opera-trained, as they had a woman singing who had operatic tendencies and it was too unpunk. I can't sing but it was punk and I was up for the challenge of *I Wanna Be Anarchy*, and I remember enjoying immensely doing a punk version of *These Boots Are Made for Walking*. One of my finest moments if I do say so myself.

What else was happening in your life at the time you took the photo?

. . .

Just at that time was probably the best it was going to be for a very long time. I had work, I had a camera, I had a small motorbike. That was good as I was finally mobile. Up to that point I had been trapped with a surly ex. But around the time of the photo I felt optimistic. Gloria Hildred and Hilary King sang at a coffee house and I took photos of them singing. It was my first real commission. I did proof sheets and they ordered about 100 photos. Nice sepia tones, printed in my own darkroom. I was enjoying being a craftswoman. My technical mentor was Reese, my boss at the hospital.

Chris Poland was an inspiration to me as were the Herstory and then Hecate people. Jill and Tilly at Hecate were beacons of fierceness.

There was one funny incident at the consciousness raising group where a woman named R was speaking. She worked as a counsellor with 'women in suburbia' and I remember her saying that they were 'Coming along nicely'. The women in the room were outraged. The image that comes to mind is of a person who has a mouthful of liquid and hears something they can't swallow, so the water comes out in a spurt. That is the image I get when I remember the reaction to what she said. The very idea that women were seen as almost inanimate objects, tulips in the side garden, was abhorrent to those women who had a raw and clear idea of what 'women's liberation' meant. It certainly did not have anything to do with 'coming along nicely'. R also did 'rebirthing'. That was a memorable experience.

I attended the lesbian club and had a few drinks and a game of pool. I attended parties and played cricket because a woman who worked at the hospital recruited me as a 'trophy'. Anyway it was funny as when the bowler called out 'How's that?' I thought she was talking

to her captain who was disappointed with her form. I gave up after a stint in silly mid-on when the ball gave me a swelling the size of a cricket ball on my shin.

I went to parties and dances and remember once dressing as a feminist guerrilla for a fancy dress dance. I had dreamed of being a vigilante and killing rapists when I was at high school so I let that fantasy run for a little while under control.

Through it all though there was a feeling of being an outsider, a feeling that no one really cared, emotionally I was bereft. I cried a lot even when in social settings; I would sit in the corner and the tears would stream down my face. I cried for years and years. I felt so much betrayal and pain. It was complicated by a spectacular betrayal by an American woman who I had hooked up with just before leaving Ithaca. I had a torch for her ever since laying eyes on her but despite the sadness was prepared to leave her behind to start my 'new life'. This woman had been writing me regularly 3 times a week for a year, long love letters putting it on the line that she was coming to New Zealand. Over and over she made that claim. I just took it on board and let her run the line until the time of her arrival was imminent.

Finally I started to believe, to suspend disbelief. I was just about to start looking for a bigger place as I was living in a studio in Everton Terrace that had no bedroom and a darkroom in the corner, when I got a letter that she was now NOT coming. I snapped, it was a cruel joke. I became hysterical crying and laughing and went into a downward spiral for some months, suicidal and deeply depressed. I can't fit everything onto the time-lines but there was a lot of emotional torment. Why would

someone do that? I still can't work it out except to think it was a kind of predatory behaviour.

What else was important to you?

I was involved with Herstory Press just by doing photos and distributing material that Robyn Sivewright and Jill Hannah ran off on the Roneo. I was in awe of Robyn and Jill. I was an emotional feminist, coming to it from a point of view of fighting sexual violence and oppression as well as seeking to overthrow limiting stereotypes. I was always doing jobs that were crossing gender lines, taxi-driving, house painting and at that time pretty much everything including photography. No matter what I wore and how I looked someone always called me Sir or Mister.

Herstory were ideological and I felt I could not keep within the lines, but I was committed to promoting women's stories, improving the rights of women and improving the position of those who bore and cared for children (mothers). Anti-nuclear was a pet cause as I had grown up in the shadow of the bomb, the Cold War etc and had been just up the road when 3 Mile Island nuclear reactor had a melt-down. I remember leading a protest down the main street of Wellington calling out at the top of my lungs (I had the biggest voice, male or female, in the crowd) '2–4–6–8 We don't want to radi-ate!!' Repeat repeat repeat (not sure of the year). I remember surrounding a building downtown with wool with some women protesters at one time too. Michele Dales was one of the organisers I think.

. . .

I did a lot of dancing. Never felt up to the mark as a radical activist. There was a postcard going around with the conversation between an older and younger woman: 'What did you do during the revolution? I danced!!' I felt that was me. Perhaps the physical outlet was a necessary release of all that poisonous emotion, anger and sadness.

I was a big fan of the Topp Twins and attended as many of their shows as I possibly could. I did a lot of photographs of them including a show called The Dragon's Egg (as I remember). It was a magical story and quite a good production. Whatever became of those photos I have no idea, I would love to see any of them, don't know if there are any floating around.

A bit later, I also did, as you know, the photos for the exhibition posters for the Women's Gallery's *Women and the Environment* (co-odinated by Bridie Lonie) and *Women and Violence* (co-ordinated by Heather McPherson, whom I remember as a kind mentor and leader).

Sharon Alston designed and produced the posters (bless her soul). She was a great mentor to me and a technical guru who set the bar high.



Mary Bailey Women & the Environment *poster shot 1981. Photographer Helen Barlow*



Women & the Environment poster 1981. Design Sharon Alston.

. . .

The photo of me hanging from the tree, for the *Women & the Environment* poster, was taken under my direction by Helen Barlow. It was very comedic as I kept dropping down from the tree and having to climb back up. No digital preview in those days either.

And you know I also did the archival photography for the Women's Gallery especially for the *Mothers* exhibition. I was one of a few individuals who built the crates for the show to tour around New Zealand. That was a feat of endurance and a labour of love. I have never drilled and glued and screwed so much in a short period before or since. Anyway that is off topic but worth stating for the record. You inspired me to dig deep at that time. There was a deadline and a show to get on the road. I loved the Women's Gallery work, the people and the place. A true highlight of my life.[3]

3. In a later message, Mary wrote 'Mainly with the [Women's Gallery] photos I pretty much followed your orders. Get some indoor lighting setup and photograph all the work for archival purposes. I like a good director lol. I mostly remember the *Women & Violence* and *Women & the Environment* posters that I did. The *Women & Violence* one was a high heel in a noose. Sharon Alston sent me back to redo it. I had to go over the fence at my neighbour's to retrieve the noose that my sailor friend Lindsay Wright had tied and one of the girlfriends sprung me and had a fit. Anyway it was worth it, I got the improved photo. The *Women and Environment* ones I hung from a tree and had a separate photo of the tram lines. I superimposed my dangling self onto the tram lines to represent a person walking a tightrope. It was a lot of fun.



Mary Bailey at the Women's Gallery.

Where were you living when the Herstory photograph was taken?

I think I had moved into the studio in Everton Terrace, living alone. I think I shared that space with Maree Neale for a while but she moved on to much bigger and better things. We did a South Island trip together, Collingwood, Nelson, Blenheim. Great flight over the Kaikoura mountains. My first-ever real holiday as an adult. I loved the natural settings, and a highlight was buying fresh ocean scallops from the wharf at Collingwood and cooking them in the hotel in Greytown on New Years Eve.

. . .

I loved Collingwood and have this photo taken on top of Takaka Hill at probably one of my life's happiest moments. I was in heaven at that time. I directed it as I was aware of the moment and wanted it captured as it felt to me. (I took my camera everywhere, and did so for many, many years.) Photos of me were for me a form of communication of deep emotions and messages that I wanted to send into the world. At that time I would ask others to shoot a pose that sent a message I wanted to convey.



Mary Bailey Takaka Hill 1977. Photographer M Neale.



Mary Bailey near Kaikoura 1977. Photographer M Neale.

There were some naked ones taken at Kaikoura on the rocks there, showing the angles that I once had in my body blending with the natural rock formations. I wanted to portray how I felt at one with nature. It was a bit funny as I had to get naked and Maree was worried someone would see us (more social decorum than me). I didn't really worry too much as like many young women of the time I felt that the body was not something to be ashamed of but to be enjoyed and treated as natural. It was near Half Moon Bay. I think I have destroyed the photos, out of modesty in the case of my death. Hahaha, would it matter then anyway.

Maree didn't mind that I sang in the car and I loved her for that. Possibly the best road trip holiday I ever had.



Mary Bailey Fox Glacier 1977. Photographer M Neale.

Did you know all the other women in the Herstory picture?

I knew some more than others. Can't remember too much. One called me treacherous, not sure why. But I was desperate so maybe my choices were not always transparent to her. Two others were people I looked up to.

Can't remember how we got there to that place. I know it was near Chris Poland's house and next to where Herstory Press operated. I was excited, joyous and had a feeling of intense satisfaction and accomplishment to get that photo.

. . .

What time of year was it?

I can't remember. Hmmmm nothing comes to mind.

What do you remember about the clothes and shoes that you were wearing, that the others were wearing?

I was a desert boots, cords, blue jeans and wooly jumper girl. Had a Fair Isle oiled jumper that I bought in Newfoundland. Some sort of cap or hat. Standard issue clothing, nothing fancy. Practical with pockets, probably a grandfather vest with pockets for my photo needs, film cannisters in those days.

For the Herstory shot, I probably wore the blue jeans or green cords. I had a pair of beautiful rust coloured cords that I damaged in the knee and made them into shorts. Actually they weren't mine but I wore them on the motorbike and when I fell off they got damaged. Naughty me. Anyway I sprained both wrists in the fall and it was a riot for me at work. I had to take film from the small cannisters, place it on reels in the dark and put all the chemicals measured into the developing container. The thought of doing all that without hands still makes me laugh.

The tie dye singlet gets a fair run as well. The hiking boots were welded to my feet and I had a gold hoodie that I wore threadbare. Comfort and practicality always.

Who set up the shot?

I am pretty sure I set up the shot, I was excited.

What did you think when you saw the poster again?

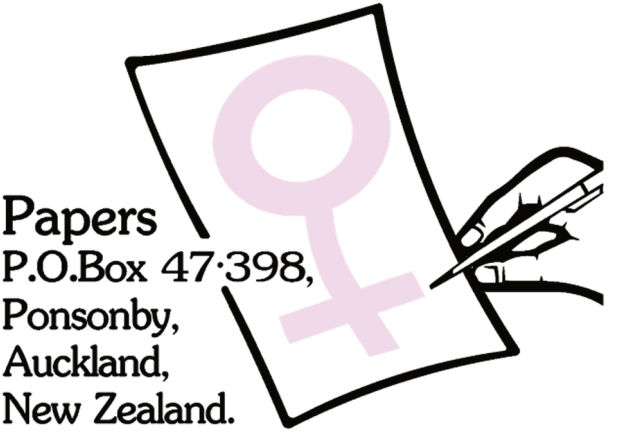
Now when I look at the poster I feel great, love the expressions and the composition. Proud and in wonderment.



Mary Bailey Wellington 1978 — photographer unknown.

PAPERS (2025)

Miriam Saphira



Papers logo, with now obsolete box number.



Miriam Saphira reads her work among the Spiral exhibition and Spiral workers & others, Charlotte Museum Tāmaki Makaurau October 2025.

Miriam is a lesbian activist, poet, artist and psychologist.[1] Her 1981 publication, *The Sexual Abuse of Children*, was the first book on sexual abuse in New Zealand. She was a good friend of writers like Heather McPherson and Renée who were connected with Spiral and she worked with Renée on *Broadsheet* magazine; Miriam and Renée were also part of the Womanspirit writers group. Her publishing house, Papers, is perhaps less well known than her other work so here's an introduction to it for those who've missed it, or missed its full range

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriam_Saphira

of publications. Miriam, awarded both a New Zealand 1990 commemoration medal and a New Zealand Suffrage Centennial Medal in 1993, was appointed a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for services to the LGBTQIA+ community, in 2022. — Marian

HERSTORY

We began in 1980 and set up to receive a grant from the Mental Health Foundation. I had assisted with a film they were making about the sexual exploitation of children. We called it Papers Inc but we never incorporated so we sometimes called it Papers Ink or later Papers and Books. Papers was set up as a collective of three but I did most of the work with Pauline Mellor as a signature on the bank account, although when Nicola, my daughter was 18 and in London during the early nineties she did some work at Turnaround which distributed our books so she helped at that end. I used my royalties for Papers to publish more books.

We still have the same box number but closed the bank account and I just use my art one unless someone wants to take it on. We did give Charlotte Museum and art groups I am involved in ISBN numbers and forms for the legal deposit box. I think Papers will die with me unless Nicola or Brent Jackson two of my five children use it.

From selling the *The Sexual Abuse Of Children* we were able to pay for *Amazon Mothers*. By 1985 Lynda Morgan joined us to publish *Katey's Yukky Problem* then *Megan's Secret* and *Daniel And His Therapist*. We also published Heather Chambers' book *I Have A Secret*.

. . .

Lyndy McIntyre did our logo and began doing illustrations for my book for teenagers but when Lyndy found it too much I was able to get Monica Van van Tuil to help finish the illustrations for *Look Back Stride Forward* aimed at teenagers to help each other but we found it very useful for women in prison.

In 1984 we published *Lesbian Literature In The Auckland Public Library*. It was a work of love going through two US bibliographies and checking the card index for an hour for lunch two days a week. It was followed in 1988 with *New Lesbian Literature 1980-88*.

After *Amazon Mothers* 1984, the first open lesbian prose book published in Aotearoa, we produced in 1987 *The Power And The Glory And Other Lesbian Stories*. We felt this encouraged Wendy Harrex to publish Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's *Tahuri*.

Papers went on to publish my writings for ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking) to go on the web, small books for the Jersey (COWS, which stood for Conscientious Older Women Students in 1994 when we were at art school) and Pulse art groups, as well as books for the Charlotte Museum.

The most recent was my fourth poetry book which Heather helped me with the selection for — *Words Don't Come Easy* in 2014.

I am currently working on *Saving Our Treasures*, a memoir of 20 years of setting up the Charlotte Museum Trust, which will be published by Papers, probably to be released early 2026. Then we might republish with updates *Stopping Child Abuse*, which Penguin published but

gave me the publishing rights after they remaindered it rather quickly — long story of paedophilic influence I suspect.

PAPERS LIST

We published the ones that have the same ISBN -980. Other books by myself and other women that were remaindered we took over the distribution for the authors. We distribute them in the UK by Turnaround and in the US by Inland Book People. We do not seem to have a full list. To order, please email miriamsaphira [at] gmail.com. A new address is due in 2026.

CHILDREN AND PARENTING BOOKS

THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

by Miriam Saphira
ISBN: 978-0-908780-05-1. 1981/84/85.

KATIE'S YUKKY PROBLEM

by Lynda Morgan
A gentle story about sexual abuse for children 3-10 years old.
ISBN 0-908-780-20-6. 1987.

DANIEL AND HIS THERAPIST

By Lynda Morgan
ISBN: 978-0-908780-21-1. 1987.

MEGAN'S SECRET

by Lynda Morgan
The story of Megan's courage to cope with incest
8 years and over
ISBN 0-908-780-35-4. 1987.

. . .

LOOK BACK STRIDE FORWARD

by Miriam Saphira

A lively fully illustrated self help book for abused teenagers and their friends

ISBN 0-908-780-06-0. 1989/93.

I HAVE A SECRET

by Heather Chambers

Illustrated in colour by Fran Marno. For young children.

ISBN 0-908-780-22-2.

FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAKE: UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ABUSE

by Miriam Saphira

A helpful book for parents.

Reed Books

ISBN 0-7900-0035-0. 1987/88/93. (Papers distributed the remaindered copies)

FOCUS ON YOUR FAMILY

by Sandra Neviouze and Jan Marsh

A child rearing guide.

ISBN 0-582-71814-7. (Papers distributed the remaindered copies)

STOPPING CHILD ABUSE: HOW DO WE BRING UP CHILDREN TO BE NON-OFFENDERS

by Miriam Saphira illustrations by Lindy McIntyre

Penguin: 0-140-16697-1. (Papers distributed the remaindered copies) 1992

THE LAVENDER LIST

AMAZON MOTHERS

Ilustrated by Lyndy McIntyre
Lesbian mothers, difficulties, custody issues.
ISBN 0-908-780-10-9. 1984.

LESBIAN LITERATURE IN THE AUCKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

(no ISBN) 1984.

LAVENDER ANNUAL

A collection of lesbian stories, puzzles, fashion and features.
ISBN 0-908-780-16-8. 1987.

THE POWER AND THE GLORY & OTHER LESBIAN STORIES

Compiled by Miriam Saphira.
ISBN 0-908-780-40-0. 1987.

NEW LESBIAN LITERATURE 1980-88

ISBN 0-908-780-311. 1988.

. . .

BEYOND THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW: TAKING THE SIRE OUT OF DESIRE

Prints and paintings by Miriam Saphira reviewed by Fran Marno.
ISBN 978-0-908-780-14-3. 1996.

A MAN'S MAN: A DAUGHTER'S STORY

by Miriam Saphira
Discovering the story of her father's life with another man.
ISBN 978-0-908-780-41-9. 1997.

REMEMBER US: FROM SAPPHO TO LIBERATION

by Miriam Saphira with intro by Heather McPherson.
ISBN 978- 0-908-780-69-9. 2008.

LESBIAN MUSIC OF NEW ZEALAND

by Doreen Agassiz-Suddens
ISBN 978- -0-908-780-01-3. 2011 with Charlotte Museum Trust.

THE HISTORY OF LESBIAN THEATRE IN NEW ZEALAND

by Doreen Agassiz-Suddens
ISBN 978- 0-908-780-00-6. 2009/2012 with Charlotte Museum Trust.

POETRY

I ASK OF YOU

poems by Miriam Saphira (under the name Miriam Jackson). No ISBN, 1978; the first-published collection of poetry by an out lesbian in Aotearoa.

GOOD MORNING I'M FINE

poems by Miriam Saphira.
ISBN 978-0-908-780-03-7. 1982.

MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

poems by Miriam Saphira
ISBN 978-0-908-780-26-5. 1992.

WORDS DON'T COME EASY

poems by Miriam Saphira
ISBN 978-0-908-780-03-7. 2014.

KIM HUNT & HER BADASS CHARACTERS (2021)

Kim Hunt



Kim Hunt

I loved Kim Hunt's crime novel *The Beautiful Dead* when I read it. Loved her protagonist, Cal Nyx. Could see the movie. Now *The Beautiful Dead* is short-listed in the Ngaio Marsh Awards, Best First Novel category. And Kim has completed the second in the Cal Nyx series, *The Quarry*, and is working on a third. She's also finished a standalone novel and has an elegant website that includes a blog

about cars, bikes, her stealth camper and botanicals: 'Looking for fierce female protagonists? Queer action heroes? A dash of butch femme romance? You've come to the right place'.[1] — Marian Evans

Where did Cal Nyx come from? What do you love about her?

I came to writing crime fiction kinda late. It had been suggested to me many years ago when I was an undergrad, possibly because of the dark nature of my work, but I veered away because of the generally disparaging attitude to genre fiction, that it's somehow a lesser form. Sometime later, when I cared less about those attitudes, crime fiction really appealed. The styles of the form meant there was a framework I could hang my stories from. It actually gave me enormous freedom to develop kick-ass queer characters with real depth and drop them into trouble and adventures.

Cal Nyx evolved from a long planning session. I tend to hit the road before I start a new project, clear my head, ponder ideas away from my usual routines. I wanted a really strong protagonist who worked solo, happy to move about in in both urban and rural environments. Being a park ranger meant she could move about freely and of course she's in the outdoors which I love. But she also has an inner-city base. She's complex.

There's that hackneyed trope of the female character in a sticky situation rescued by a bloke and I wanted very much to redress that. I wanted to write a highly competent, resourceful, if flawed, female protagonist. Cal is an 'amateur sleuth', someone not constricted by

1. https://www.kimhuntauthor.com/

the rules which bind police, though elements of police procedural do come into the story via Cal's lover, Detective Inspector Liz Scobie.

I love that Cal is so capable and courageous and has these colourful mates she can call on if she needs specialist, sometimes underground help. I love her imperfection and bravery. She's not without fear, but she somehow gets stuff done. She makes mistakes and she's a twit at times in her relationship with Scobie, but she's also very determined and driven. And I love that despite some awful things in her past, she's still open-hearted and decent. I love that she's so human and has excellent taste in cars.



I've had a number of fab classic vehicles over the years. I miss the ones I've had to sell, but enjoy my current 1976 Triumph TC2500.

On your website, you refer to your 'badass female characters'. What does 'badass' mean to you?

I think of the term 'badass' as applied to hot-rods and custom machines. They're utterly unique, total one-offs, often highly powered (over-powered even, but maybe there's no such thing.) So, when I say badass female characters, I mean women prepared to cross lines to get stuff done, I guess they're more or less a bit wayward, unorthodox, courageous and driven in any combination. As in cool, tough, awesome. Lots of different women could be considered badass. In my novels, Cal has those tendencies. In *The Quarry*, two of her band of 'helpful friends', Gina and Pirate, are kinda badass too, each in entirely different ways. My use of the word is a positive one, it's complimentary. Like a badass custom, they're really fast, awesome, almost scary, but cool. Excellent.



The Austin ute was my work truck when I was a floor and wall tiler in Sydney and doing undergrad study. I had the ute modified with a Datsun 180B engine, Holden Torana brakes and steering. The firewall and transmission tunnel were re fabricated to fit the new gear. The ute was strong and reliable and I had lots of great times in it.

You're from Aotearoa New Zealand but the series is set in Australia. Why's that?

I lived in Aus for much of my adult life, nearly 25 years in total. At the time I began Cal's story, I'd moved back to Aotearoa. I wanted to set something here, but my process seems to be that I can write about the place when I'm not actually situated within it, as if I'm remembering it. So, Cal's stories just seemed more comfortably sited in NSW.



The Triumph hardtail motorbike I used to ride to and from the South Coast of NSW where I was living to the University of Sydney when I was doing my Master of Letters. I had some long, cold rides home at night after my classes. The southern freeway through the National Park was dark and lonely at night. I felt very hardcore. No rear suspension on the frame.

It's that writing from a distance thing, I guess. I do have a standalone set here in Aotearoa and I want to write more stories set here, but maybe I'll need to move overseas to do it.

Have you always been a reader and has crime fiction always been what you love to read?

Sadly, I was never a big reader as a child. I was too busy immersed in full-throttle childhood scrapes with fort building and hammering

homemade trolleys down steep Wellington streets, wearing out my gumboots using them as brakes. When I did read, I loved myths and legends from other cultures and I loved comic westerns. But, when I eventually found her, I loved Agatha Christie's work for the mystery puzzles, racism and classism notwithstanding.

My first writing was literary fiction but it seemed so amorphous. Later, drawn to the darkness of crime fiction, I related to the structure of it. The narrative framework of crime fiction gave me a skeleton to hang a story from.

In terms of influence, as a reader I like crime fiction which has a spare style and I love tripping over a working-class protagonist (eg Emma Viskic's Caleb Zelic). I prefer action to psychological thrillers, so I guess my writing is influenced by what I like to read myself, though I don't just read crime fiction. Some of my favourite authors are Annie Proulx, Gregg Hurwitz, Michael Ondaatje, Joyce Carol Oates, S. A. Cosby. I still find Thomas Harris's Hannibal books astounding. What a feat to make such a killer sympathetic.

Currently I just write crime fiction, and my occasional blog, but I've recently begun accumulating material and plotting a new series and character which will have a slightly different flavour to the Cal Nyx series.

I don't write for trade journals but maybe I should serialise something for a hot-rod or native plant magazine. I don't really have huge expertise in those areas, just passion and enthusiasm.

. . .

In what ways is Cal a bit like you? I can imagine you being mates: you'd have lots of shared interests: love of the natural world, of automotives (and possibly stealth camper projects). Who could play her in a screen adaptation?

Cal's taller and braver and better looking than me but we definitely have shared interests. I'd love a mate like her when I falter with a project or need another pair of hands or know-how.

A screen adaptation would be fun. I guess an actor's job is to play any character, but naturally I would love to see a queer actor play Cal. It's so rare to see queer actors playing queer characters. Blew my mind in the Netflix series *Ratched*, the onscreen kiss between Sarah Paulson and Cynthia Nixon. Shouldn't be a big deal, but after 63 years on this planet, it was a first for me, it's not something I take for granted.

I'd love to see Cal played by someone with lived experience. Cal is butch and working class. It would be great to run through a list of actors who could more easily slip into that role, but sadly, there are very few examples that come to mind. I can't help but wonder, seeing some of Clea Duvall's older work, if she stepped off the Hollywood red carpet and was given a roughed up make-over, we might see a pretty good approximation of Cal.

You refer to eco-fiction in your twitter profile. What does eco-fiction mean to you and in your writing?

I take it to mean that the 'natural environment' is very much to the forefront in my stories. I've been told that the landscape appears

like another character in my work. Cal is attuned to her surrounds and the critters and plants that live there. I try not to be heavy handed, but the bushland is very present in my stories.

You're amazingly productive. What fuels you?

I'm fuelled by my environment, by peaceful surrounds and creatures. I'm also fuelled by other freaks and creatives, seeing them do their thing, being unique, just getting on and doing stuff no matter what impediments stand in their way. Doing things with few resources forces you to be creative. It's hard graft but it's intensely satisfying.

You live on the Kāpiti Coast, where there are many other hardworking accomplished writers like Renée and Mandy Hager and lots of artists. Does that environment support your writing practice?

Well, I love this part of the world. I was born at Mākara on Wellington's south coast. A wild, windswept and rocky place with rugged towering hills. Stunning, broody and magical. I could never live far from the sea. Hills and mountains, I don't feel hemmed in by them, in fact, I feel claustro if I'm on the flat. I also live surrounded by native trees I planted years ago to bring the birds, so I'm very much fed by those things. I love a gritty urban environment, it energises me in a different way. But I wouldn't survive very well away from trees and birds and insects.



The studio Kim built

I had some amazing peers in Aus and I miss them. But I have friends here who're creatives and my partner Biz is also a creative. I get that mentality. And Ōtaki is an amazing wee town. It's pretty chill, and there's so much going on in the community with the Te

Wānanga o Raukawa tertiary institution and the Māoriland Hub and alternative energy stuff.

First published on *Medium* 25 October 2021, with warm thanks to Renée (1929-2023) for her help.

The Cal Nyx Mystery Thriller series continued with *The Quarry*, 2023 and *The Freezer*, 2024. The Ngaio Marsh Awards[2] recognized *The Beautiful Dead* when it was shortlisted for Best First Novel in 2021 with *The Quarry* being longlisted for Best Novel in 2024. A fourth Cal Nyx mystery thriller is underway. *The Corrector*, 2025 is Kim's first book set in Aotearoa NZ. It kick starts the Evin Hart series, introducing a new cast of characters and a second in this series is also on its way. Kim was a runner-up in the 2023 Sisters in Crime USA Pride Awards, recognizing her as an Emerging LGBTQIA+ Crime Fiction Writer, the only awarded participant from outside the United States.

2. https://www.facebook.com/NgaioMarshAward/



MY PORTRAITS (2016)

Sarah Jane Moon



Self (late night studio) oil on linen 44 x 44 cm 2015.

I most often work within the genre of portraiture and narrative painting. My work explores notions of identity, relationship, sexu-

ality and place via naturalistic oil painting with a nod to traditional formal and painterly concerns whilst maintaining a contemporary aesthetic and politics.



Tigana & Egle oil on canvas 100 x 160 cm 2014.

Generally my paintings, whether featuring reclining male nudes or suited lesbian couples, are always bright, bold and celebratory in nature.



Jam & Emma oil on canvas 150 x 150 cm 2015.

The subjects I paint are those who I'm close to or intrigued by and as such my work is mostly autobiographical. I also enjoy painting still lives and landscapes.

. . .

The painters I admire most are almost too many to mention, but Paula Rego, Alice Neel, Maggi Hambling, Jenny Saville, Romaine Brooks, Joan Eardley, Rita Angus, David Hockney, Lucian Freud, Richard Diebenkorn, Toss Wollaston, Colin McCahon, John Bratby, Francis Bacon, Marlene Dumas, Cezanne, Matisse and Van Gogh are definitely key.

London has been home for the better part of the last decade though I am from Lower Hutt originally and retain strong ties to New Zealand as a place and source of cultural inspiration. I return most years in the summer for over a month. I'm fortunate that my work is increasingly recognised here in London, most recently with the Arts Club Charitable Trust Award in 2015 and the Bulldog Bursary from the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2013.



Louise & Hayley oil on canvas 96 x 119 cm 2012.



Stav B oil on canvas 87 x 153 cm 2015.

From 25th February-29th May 2016 I am exhibiting 'Late Night Studio (Self)' at the Adam Portraiture Award, NZ's foremost portraiture exhibition, at the New Zealand Portrait Gallery. The award is judged by Mette Skougaard, Director of The Museum of National

History, Frederiksborg Castle, Denmark. I'm also staging and participating in an exhibition of 12 women representational painters and sculptors in London at the Menier Gallery called 12@Menier late February and in March donating a large painting to the Terrance Higgins Trust auction at Christie's to raise money in support of people living with HIV.

First published in *Medium*, 24 February 2016. Sarah Jane contributed a large portrait to *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*, a Mokopopāki and Spiral collaboration in 2017, celebrating Heather McPherson and her peers.

Sarah Jane is a New Zealand born British painter who specialises in portraiture and figurative painting. Her work explores identity, gender and connection to place. Working at scale, her paintings are suffused with bold colour, dynamic surface and gestural use of her chosen medium: oil. Her work is held in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, Soho House and the James Wallace Trust. She has exhibited widely, including with the National Portrait Gallery, Royal Society of Portrait Painters, New English Art Club and the New Zealand Portrait Gallery. As a prize winner in the Queer Britain Art Awards and recipient of the Arts Charitable Trust Award and the Bulldog Bursary for Portraiture her work has consistently been recognised for its ambition and singularity. It has also been featured in Time Magazine, The Guardian, Wallpaper*, Studio International and other publications. She is Chair of the Contemporary British Portrait Painters. In the UK, Moon works in London and Sussex and when in New Zealand she paints in the Bay of Plenty.[1]

1. https://sarahjanemoon.com/

RAKIURA SKETCHBOOK (2016)

Annie Mein



Annie Mein. Rakeahua Tarn.

The landscapes are from Rakiura, Stewart Island, Aotearoa New Zealand. I had had an idea of being a hermit artist down here for some years, and finally got the chance to make that happen. I came

to Rakiura to enjoy the freedom, quiet, open-spaces, waves, sky, colours etc. I spent many childhood holidays here, and as an adult am overwhelmed by its huge, expansive, ever changing beauty.



Annie Mein. Table Hill.

I didn't know what my intention was. But I decided to start with what was outside my front door. The landscapes are not literal, but more a sensation of recognisable features.

I was an art student in the early 1990s at Otago School of Art. At art school, in addition to drawing, I was a photography student, but good photographs are stand-alone works. Here, I use my bad photographs from excursions to inform the sketches, influenced by wood block prints and local artists Colin McCahon, Nigel Brown and Toss Woollaston.



Annie Mein. Mount Rakeahua.



Annie Mein. Pryse Peak.

. . .

I simplified the drawing media I chose. Charcoals, conte, addition, subtraction, no added white, with only the compositional ideas and tonal shifts to use. But how do you do justice to those colours, shapes, textures and grandeur with only black? This was the challenge I took on.

First published in *Medium* 15 February 2016. Annie's work was also represented in *Spiral 7*[1]. She has supported Spiral and Spiral workers at various times since, with enthusiasm and energy, for instance with art work and with preparing the film programme for *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*, a Mokopopāki and Spiral collaboration in 2017, celebrating Heather McPherson and her peers. Today she is teaching in rural Australia.

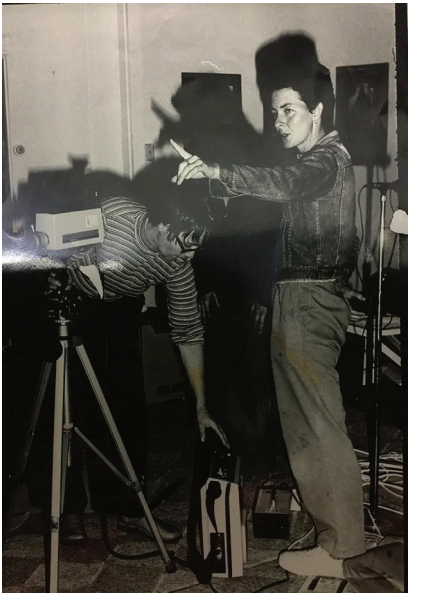
1. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/spiral-issue-7

Part Four

SCREEN WORK

AUCKLAND WOMEN'S COMMUNITY VIDEO (2017-2025)

Auckland Women's Community Video members & Marian from Spiral



L-R AWCV's Nancy Peterson and Carole (Kanya) Stewart, Women's Gallery Harris Street Wellington January 1980. Photographer Fiona Clark for the Women's Gallery.

A LOST ARCHIVE?

In 2016 Auckland Women's Community Video (AWCV, 1976-about 1986) had become a kind of ghost in the herstorical archive, far too soon. I (Marian) hated it that accessible evidence of the group's work was fragmentary and lots of it seemed to have disappeared. So did others. From 2016, I tried to track down what still exists, with some great help. Now, in 2025, I've added everything I've learned but not yet published, hoping it will provide future researchers with breadcrumbs they can use to access to this wonderful collective work.

But there's lots that's uncertain and lots still missing: 1985's *Slipping Away* for instance, about The Freudian Slips, a feminist band Jenny Renalls formed in 1981.

The band released two EP records, in *On the Line* in 1983 and *Are You Laughing* in 1985, covering topics that included periods, women and Catholicism, how super-heroes are always men, the right of women not to have orgasms, and police harassment. Its membership varied: between five and nine women, sometimes all-lesbians and sometimes a mixture of lesbian and straight women. According to Doreen Agassiz Suddens' *Lesbian Music of New Zealand*, AWCV completed *Slipping Away* in the band's last three weeks; and Hilary Haines' description of the video, published in *Broadsheet*, is intriguing–

> ...imaginatively filmed and set against a soundtrack of Freudian Slips music. Members of the band do a bit of talking here and there, but mostly it's music all the

way and it sounds great. What a shame they've disbanded — I've just become a fan.[1]

And yes, there are some entries in the National Library catalogue that refer to sound tapes. But no film.



Freudian Slips pictured on the back of their On the Line *LP, L-R Mary During, Cathy Sheehan, Nikki Lancaster, Paula Connolly, Elizabeth (Biddy) Leyland and Donna Fletcher (Savage). Photographer Jane Zusters.*

It's possible raw footage from *Slipping Away* is in Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision.[2] It would be great to know for certain. (There's also another short Freudian Slips film in the collection, *Deviance*.[3])

Or, consider AWCV's *Single Mothers Speak Out*, a 50 minute tape for the Council for the Single Mother and her Child, commissioned by the medical school for its community health lectures, as material on how single mothers felt about their treatment from doctors. Is there

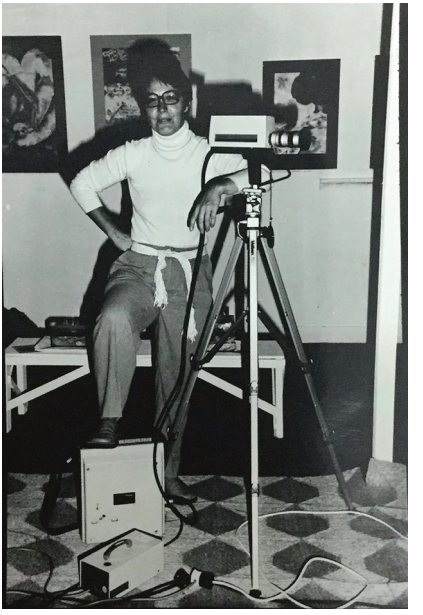
1. Apologies, I've lost the full reference and *Broadsheet* is now often — like today — a challenge to source.
2. https://www.ngataonga.org.nz/collections/catalogue/catalogue-item?record_id=104864
3. https://ngataonga.org.nz/collections/catalogue/catalogue-item?record_id=96544

a copy anywhere in the world? A playable copy, that has been conserved, or even digitised? Haven't found one so far.[4]

And there were lots more AWCV tapes, including a collection from the *Opening Show* at the Women's Gallery in Wellington in 1980, deteriorating in the National Library, uncatalogued and unviewed for 35 years or so before being digitised for *This Joyous, Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu*, an exhibition at Mokopōpaki[5] in early 2018. Until then just a few interviews with writers like Jacquie Sturm had somehow survived and been digitised.[6] I looked for more, without success, remembering a list that Sylvia Baynes had made before depositing the Auckland Women's Centre's video collection at Ngā Taonga, with many AWCV tapes. Haven't been able to find that list.

Although I'm deeply disappointed so much has been lost, thanks to some Fiona Clark images taken for the Women's Gallery and held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, I was thrilled to see the two AWCV women who taped us all — individually and as a group — at the *Opening Show*. One photograph shows Kanya (then Carole) Stewart and Nancy Peterson and heads this chapter. Here's another, of Nancy, next to some of Juliet Batten's watercolours.

4. 2025: There is an item called *Single Mothers Speak Up* at Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision: F59870. No further details in the catalogue, see discussion below.
5. http://mokopopaki.co.nz/
6. http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/sturm-j-c. See also Jacquie's section in Spiral 8, and an edited version alongside other Spiral Collectives' moving image, here https://www.youtube.com/@spiralcollectives6077



AWCV's Nancy Peterson at Women's Gallery Harris Street 1980, with their portapak. Photographer Fiona Clark for the Women's Gallery.

So what's the story of the AWCV? I know only a little bit, thanks to what I've been told by various AWCV members and to the ever-trusty *Broadsheet*.

BEGINNINGS

Back in 1975, a group of women in Auckland took part in a video workshop that had been advertised outside the cinema where an International Women's Film Festival was screening.[7] After that, the

7. For more on this festival see *Women's Film Festivals & #WomenInFilm Databases: a Handbook*: ix-xii. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/womens-film-festivals-and-womeninfilm-databases

group used borrowed and rented equipment to cover conferences, hold workshops and make tapes and became the Auckland Women's Community Video Incorporated in 1976.

This is how Liz Eastmond became involved—

> After attending and helping with the posters etc for the International Women's Year Film Festival 1975, I remember seeing a notice at the cinema (Lido, Epsom, from memory) for a 'start-up' womens video group, with the aim of covering mainly women's issues from a feminist (prob 'Women's Lib' at the time) perspective. We were initially I think supported — or maybe it was advertised by — Robin Scholes, who then, like me, was a lecturer at the University of Auckland's Art History Department. She then became a lecturer in the Film and Media Studies Dept and one of New Zealand's major film/documentary makers.

According to a *Broadsheet* report, uncredited, but apparently provided by the group, many of the twenty or so members were feminists and saw video as a way to disseminate feminist views. Others were more interested in the technical side.[8]

Some were interested in video's artistic potential and some more deeply involved in filmmaking than others. Kanya Stewart began work as a filmmaker at the National Film Unit (sold in 1990) where she—

8. *Broadsheet* July 1978: 13–14.

> ...worked as one of the first women editors in the 1970s, and then worked as documentary editor in television. *The Street*, *Some of My Best Friends Are Women* and the *Women* series were some of the films I worked on during those years, all ground-breaking films which were controversial in their time. The *Women* series was commissioned by TV One, and for the first time ever was made by an all-women crew at a time when it was still rare for women to work as directors, and on camera and sound'[9].

9. *Women*, as described by Deidre McCartin, (in Deborah Shepard's Reframing Women: A History of New Zealand Film, 2000) —

'I went to the Department of Education and told them that Television One wanted to make a major series of documentaries on women but of course that was a very expensive operation and it clearly had a high educational component and we wondered whether the Department of Education would care to support it. They were wonderful ... and came up with a figure of $15k to support it [$120k nowadays]. I hightailed it back to Television One and said "there's a strong pressure growing in both the public and in government departments that we are not serving women's needs in television adequately ... The Department of Education feels so strongly about it that they would like to put $15k into it" which was a very exciting idea for poor old broadcasting controllers worrying about budgets.... And then I told another lie and I don't mind being quoted because if you live in a Machiavellian society you have to learn a few tricks. I said, "of course, the Department of Education have made it conditional on it being an all-female crew" which was my own notion of course. At first, I was told, "no way babe. There aren't any sound people. There aren't any camera people". Then I lost my temper, "look, I'm tired of hearing this. I want an all female crew and I'm going to keep fighting until I get one" ... Finally, they agreed.'

The series includes: *When the Honeymoon is Over* (domestic violence); *When Did You Last See Yourself on TV?*; *Māori Women in a Pakeha World*; *Marriage: Is it a Health Hazard?*; *The Woman in Your Life Is You (Women's Sexuality)*; *Who Cares About Childcare?* According to the wonderful Louise Hutt (maker of *Online Heroines*, see chapter below), when the series screened in 1976, Helen Clark wrote into the Auckland Star newspaper to defend it after a bunch of letters to the editor were super critical of it: "Unfortunately, Garth Gilmour's wounded pride prevents him from making a rational assessment of the merits of the programme"!

The *Women* episodes in the TVNZ Collection are on Digibeta and Beta SP. TVNZ transferred its archive to the Ministry for Culture & Heritage in 2014 . It is based in Avalon and Ngā Taonga runs it. TVNZ and Ngā Taonga are consulting about digitisation of Women. *Sheilas: 28 Years On* (2004), directed by Annie Goldson



Women *crew at work L-R Lorraine Engelbretson (sound recordist), Margaret Moth (camera), Julie Thompson (research) and Deidre McCartin (director).*

As a member of AWCV, Kanya, with Huia Lambie and Mary Hancock, also produced and directed *Even Dogs Are Given Bones,* 1981,[10] about the women workers at the Rixen clothing factory in Levin, who occupied the factory in protest against its failure to pay redundancy when it closed. Huia liaised with the women who were occupying the factory and did the interviewing. According to Kanya—

> "...racism was very much an issue...Huia was the perfect choice for the role and she was also involved in decisions around editing.

Even Dogs Are Given Bones includes a classic Mereana Pitman song and Kanya 'has a feeling' that Mereana was invited to write the song as well as to sing it.

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and Dawn Hutchinson, with Maire Gunn on camera, follows some of the women in *Women*.

10. Now online at Ngā Taonga Send & Vision: https://www.ngataonga.org.nz/search-use-collection/search/F264385/.



From Even Dogs Are Given Bones.

The group's focus on audience and distribution was crucial. For *Even Dogs Are Given Bones*, trades unions and women's groups throughout New Zealand were key, with Australian distribution via 'a women's group in Sydney'. Kanya made contact with TVNZ sometime after *Even Dogs Are Given Bones* was completed, to discuss the possibility of having it screened on national TV. 'They were keen to show it', she says, but told her that the quality of the medium wasn't up to broadcast standard, very disappointing.[11]

For Jessica Skippon, who joined the group in 1976 or so and left to move to the UK in February 1978—

> AWCV represents a high point in my feminist socialist collective life and career [...]I t was already formed

11. *Women's Film Festivals & #WomenInFilm Databases: a Handbook*: 280-289.

> when I joined, about the same time that we started a women's street theatre group. [...] The collective worked in a very supportive manner, without hierarchy. A member would come to the group with an idea and there was no censorship – she could do it if she could organise it. Members offered help and equipment was borrowed from various sources. Those were the days [...] Those really were the days, when you could develop something worthwhile without needing money. To be fair, as soon as I moved to London I found that you needed money to do community video. No one lent you equipment.[12]

MEMBERS

Among the known AWCV members, in alphabetical order, are—

- Briar (Miller/Millar?) 'who was a very talented camera woman', according to Mary Debrett.
- Christine Dann
- Dianne Percy
- Elizabeth (Liz) Eastmond, an art history academic at University of Auckland was also a member and is the woman featured in the *Broadsheet* article.
- Glenda Northey
- Jade Furness

12. 'I've been lucky to have had a great career, mostly in educational and social documentary video. I've also kept ties to New Zealand, working with Jennifer Bush-Daumec (Bushcraft) who had once been my London PA, as her Location Manager on *Lands of Our Fathers* (Zimbabwe, 2003 and 2005) and *Night After Night* (Germany, Netherlands and UK, 2007), both for NZ on Air, doing UK archive searches for Gaylene Preston and UK inserts for Sunshine Books (Wendy Pye being a long-time friend)'. Personal correspondence July-August 2018. Jessica died in 2023 and her daughter Caitlin wrote an obituary for the *Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/film/2023/feb/17/jessica-skippon-obituary

- Jessica Skippon who was responsible for organising the group's incorporation.
- Mary Debrett — 'Jessica was married to Tom Cook who was the head of Via Com, then the premier commercial video production facility in Auckland–later changed hands and became Communicado I believe...Jessica brought some professional TV know-how to the group... She now lives in London'.
- Jill and/or Glenda Northey
- Kanya (Carole) Stewart 1979–1982. 'At some point in the late '80s someone asked about what to do with the tapes. I was by that stage in no position to do anything.'
- Lea Barker
- Lee Lee Heah
- Mary Debrett — 'I probably left the group around 1980 when I went to work for TVNZ as a videotape editor. I made my documentary *Land Girls* in 1981 and it screened in a Country Calendar slot in January 1982 I believe. It is recorded in the Ngā Taonga catalogue [and in the National Library catalogue]. I must have given the off-cuts to WCV — sorry long time ago so I don't recall the details. There are a few other credits for me on Ngā Taonga, and one on NZ Screen — edited a *Koha* doco on Ramai Hayward, directed by Chas Toogood.[13] I left NZ in 1997 and enrolled in a PhD at La Trobe where I taught Media Studies until retiring in 2015.
- Mary During/Miriam Kauders, who saw *When The Party's Over* in the Ngā Taonga catalogue and told me that it is a fiction about a young woman getting pregnant and was written by Ana Harrison. Clare O'Leary and Louise Rafkin were both involved and Louise took the primary director role.

13. https://www.nzonscreen.com/person/ramai-hayward

- Mary Hancock
- Nancy Peterson — 'I had tapes at Keppell St but ran out of energy to do anything with them. Lele had gone home and come back and was pretty disappointed the group had collapsed. I can't remember when that was, my involvement was about 1977 to 1982 or so.'
- Nina Dallaway
- Pauline Buchannan (McGregor) who introduced Mary Debrett to the group in 1975- 76 'but dropped out soon after I recall', writes Mary.
- Rosalie Hicks
- Sue Fitchett — 'I suspect that the women who took over WCV from Kanya (Carol Stewart) and my cohort had the tapes in a shed. I asked one woman Jade Furness (she lives in Wellington now - I'm not in contact) and she didn't know what had happened to them eventually. Maybe, they deteriorated?'[14]
- Wendy Vaigro, an art history academic and enthusiast of the avant garde — now living in or near Napier, Mary Debrett thinks.

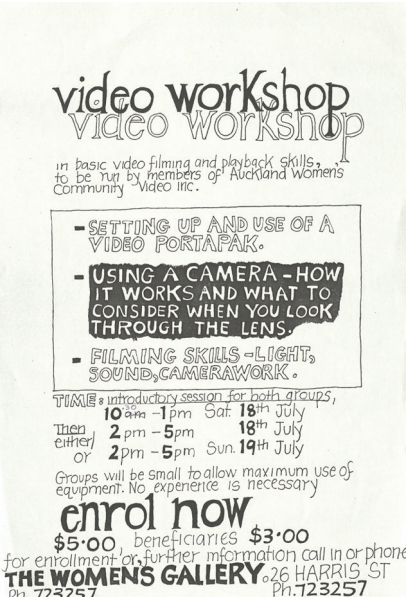
MOTIVATIONS

For Kanya—

> ...becoming involved with Women's Community Video in the late 1970s was a way of working at grass roots level, teaching and working with women who wanted an accessible vehicle of expression for their own reality at a time when the media reflected primarily male, heterosexual views and values. Film can be a powerful means for positive change. That was my motivation

14. Personal communication December 2025.

for becoming involved, to present a view point which was not mainstream, one that I always hoped would make people think and see things in a different way.



Anna Keir poster for AWCV workshop, Women's Gallery Wellington (?1980).

Jessica Skippon wrote—

> Watching the videos [in 2018 I felt] such anger welling up in me — how dominated we were then in the male culture. Men ruled everything, controlled the prism through which everyone saw the world. *Single Mothers Speak Up* was the first time they had a public voice. Government was not interested, nor were newspapers or television/radio. For two years I worked at Peach Wemyss Astor, as production manager for 35mm commercials. Men wrote the commercials, directed and produced them. Women did the dressing and the

organisation. I wrote an article (argh, now I have to go look for that!) for the NZ advertising magazine, 1976, about the portrayal of women in advertising.[15]

For Mary Debrett—

> All of the members of the group were feminists when I was a member. That was the point of it. We wanted to empower women and to promote women's rights and aimed to do this by producing tapes that could be used to facilitate discussion within other community groups and to produce tapes that would assist with consciousness raising.

Liz Eastmond has a similar view—

> I see the group as a part of the then wider 'consciousness-raising' movement women were involved in in mainly western countries in the late sixties and early seventies. Meetings, discussion, research and the topics covered inevitably 'empowered' us as a group, with the screenings informing others and generating debate and, critically, we hoped, social change. Basically taking our own experience and histories into our own hands was, at the time, a genuinely exciting experience, with the acquiring of technical skills necessary also giving us a liberating sense of agency in the context of a wider society still very much male-dominated and in charge of the media.

15. Personal correspondence July-August 2018.



Jill Northey, centre & ????. Photographer Jessica Skippon.

RANGE

Liz Eastmond remembers—

> As a group of women — I remember now mainly Pauline McGregor, Nancy Peterson, Dianne Percy, Sue Fitchett — we met regularly and covered a number of feminist and other related events, including women's experience of the health service, on abortion, on ECT therapy, solo mums, on Ivan Illich's lectures at Auckland University,[16] on Shere Hite's, various women's conventions, a trade union meeting at Eden park(?), and produced a series of screenplays! which we

16. A series. Challenging writer Ivan Illich (amongst his books was *Medical Nemesis* — in which he wrote about the risks of things like antibiotic resistance) — gave several lectures at Auckland University and AWCV filmed them all.

performed and filmed at Vidcom studios. (The latter made possible by one of the group's husband being employed there.[17] We had never used this type of equipment before, but nevertheless launched into it with the result one days use of this studio!) This included a mock newscast, a rape trial and other sequences I can't remember now. I do remember the screening of this took place at the University's Maidment Theatre.

As well as the tapes already mentioned, over about a decade, the group made many other tapes.



Glenda Northey and Nina Dallaway. Photographer Jessica Skippon.

17. This is probably a reference to Jessica Skippon's husband Tom Cook: see below.

In 1976, the group taped the Pacific Islands Women's Conference and the Women's Festival in Albert Park. It made a tape on Women and the Medical Profession for NOW (National Organisation for Women, founded 1972 and modelled on the United States NOW, with its last branch, in Christchurch, closing in 2002).

AWCV collaborated with the Women's Centre Drama Group for a Suffrage Day performance of Herstory, at the Maidment Theatre. For Herstory, it made *The Game of Life* about abortion, along TV gameshow lines,[18] *The Rape Trial,* [19] and *The Committee*,[20] about how the story of Adam and Eve came into being.



Screenshot from 'Her Story C': The Game of Life. Jessica Skippon collection.

18. Probably *'Her Story C': The Game of Life* from Jessica Skippon https://youtu.be/i2k-R0N0yzrA?si=0aeC0xWpb1eysPiK , alongside *'Her Story A: Backstreet Theatre'* https://youtu.be/whHCQet00S0?si=ga14z2TAthEqlKgC
19. Probably *'Her Story B': Tarnished Goods*, via Jessica Skippon: https://youtu.be/L1u-SH4LK9lU?si=EbhtbEEjL6wLsq9I
20. This 20-minute piece is so far unfound.

Jessica Skippon—

> The street theatre group[21] would work up an idea – like a committee of men writing a history of the creation – then take it out to the street in Parnell or Ponsonby – act it out a couple of time, go back to the Women's Centre, rework it, change roles and take it out again in the afternoon. *Game of Life, History or Herstory* came about this way. I was working with both groups [the Backstreet Theatre and AWCV] at the time of a women's gala at Auckland University. Backstreet Theatre, a strong feminist choral group were booked to appear in Wellington at that time and I would be travelling overseas. The solution was to record *Backstreet Theatre*, *The Game of Life*, and *Herstory* to be projected at the university event. (*Herstory* was a back projection with the nomadic men writing Genesis while a confused group tried to act it out in front of the video.) [...] Our pieces were shown at the Auckland City Art Gallery and acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for their videotheque.

21. From the identified participants in *Her Story A: Backstreet Theatre'* this was, at least initially, the legendary Backstreet Theatre group that toured New Zealand:



Screenshot from 'Her Story B': Tarnished Goods [Rape Trial]. *Jessica Skippon collection*.



Deb Filler in screenshot from 'Her Story A': Backstreet Theatre *ca 1976*.

From the identified participants in *'Her Story A': Backstreet Theatre* the street theatre group was, at least initially, the legendary Backstreet Theatre group that toured the country.



L-R Deb Filler on guitar, Back row Jo ?, Sharon Alston, Sand Hall, Leah Poulter, Miranda Coates. Front Row Vicki Carmichael, Maggie Eyre, Rose Wood. Screenshot from Her Story A: Backstreet Theatre.



Back row Jo ?, Sharon Alston, Sand Hall, Leah Poulter, Miranda Coates. Front Row Vicki Carmichael, Maggie Eyre, Rose Wood. Screenshot from 'Her Story A': Backstreet Theatre.

In the mid 80s, AWCV interviewed women active in the campaign for homosexual law reform, including a Māori and Pacifica group;

and filmed an associated concert, MCed by Jools Topp, and the rough footage is held by Ngā Taonga, thanks to the Auckland Women's Centre. According to Sue Fitchett, there was one video on the Auckland women's refuge and another that she made about ECT, with money from women psychologists. 'There were some memorable interviews with rape survivors', says Nancy Peterson, 'but if those surface, can't show them without permission of the survivor'.

Mary Debrett remembers—

> ...being involved with a production that was a discussion amongst women who had received shock treatment in Auckland having all been referred by the one doctor, a rather overly enthusiastic exponent of its use. Their testimony was truly shocking. Some would likely have been diagnosed as suffering postnatal depression today. One spoke of how as a newly arrived migrant, young wife and new mother she had been isolated; her doctor's response to her understandable depression was electro convulsive therapy. It was very shocking testimony. Giving voice to women who had suffered at the hands of overbearing male authority figures was pretty radical at that time.It was also a time when we were fighting for the right to choose. I can remember going to an abortion speak-out at the then Jean Batten Women's Centre in Auckland where women who had had backyard abortions spoke out. They were horrific stories. No men or media were allowed in and I can't remember if WCV recorded anything. I suspect not but I mention it as context to the times.

I was part of the group when we recorded *Single Mothers Speak Out About Their Lives*. Joss Shawyer, who was the driving force behind the Auckland Single Mothers Support Centre at the time was part of that discussion. It is possible that she would have a copy of the tape. I was also part of the group when we recorded Shere Hite, which was extremely interesting particularly for the male responses, and also part of the group recording the United Women's Convention at Christchurch [?Hamilton]. I was also a member of the Auckland Women's Centre at the time and I recall we were all quite closely interconnected with feminist events and activities.

Jessica Skippon was also part of *Single Mothers Speak Out*—

> I don't remember any organisation putting money into the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child video, although they may have put it up later for the distribution. We didn't need money for the production, the university lent us their studio for a day and the rest of us did what we normally did – volunteer and take on the roles the director asked us to do. What did stand out for me from that production was the difficulty of being able to work with the group without favouring any particular person. We were limited to a few handheld microphones and two or three cameras in a proscenium setting. I think Nancy Peterson was directing and I was assisting her. The solution was (not altogether satisfactory) having them sit in an open semi-circle and pass one mic from speaker to speaker.

Members of the group filmed visiting feminists, too: Charlotte Bunch at the United Women's Convention in Hamilton (held in Ngā Taonga); and interviewed Shere Hite. ('We were amazed how how striking she was in real life', says Sue Fitchett.)

The collective also purchased and screened and rented feminist videos made outside Aotearoa New Zealand.

EQUIPMENT

'The most attractive thing about video is its simplicity', wrote the group, in Broadsheet. The members used a portapak, something like 'an ordinary tape deck', with a camera plugged in for taping and with a monitor: 'apart from the special care with which everything is handled operating is very straightforward'.

At the time of the *Broadsheet* article all tapes were 1/2" black and white and some could be played on a 'cartridge machine' as well as a portapak. But, as the *Even Dogs Are Given Bones* experience showed, quality was a problem; and changing technology affected the work's longevity.

According to Liz Eastmond—

> We acquired (a grant? I can't remember) a Portapak open reel film system (not correct description) — a revolutionary new (ish) development in film technology (from around late 60s early 70s, America) which immediately made film-making accessible to ordinary people/community groups because it was cheap, portable and easy to learn to use. It was seen as

enabling major social change in keeping with counter-cultural and left politics of the day.

Mary Debrett explains further—

> I am afraid there will not be much left of the work of WCV — a problem of the rapidly evolving analogue video formats of the time. The group mostly shot on the half inch open reel using the first video portapaks, the first truly democratic video format. This would need to have been transferred to another format to have been playable on a cassette machine. The open reel half-inch format was quite rapidly replaced by the U-matic cartridge which was 3/4 inch at first then became the half inch home video format that proliferated across homes until the DVD displaced them — but of course there were also 1/4 inch Hi 8 as well in there somewhere before the digital revolution. Basically that's why nothing much remains of the work. It rapidly became an orphan format and nobody much outside AV centres ever had the portapaks.

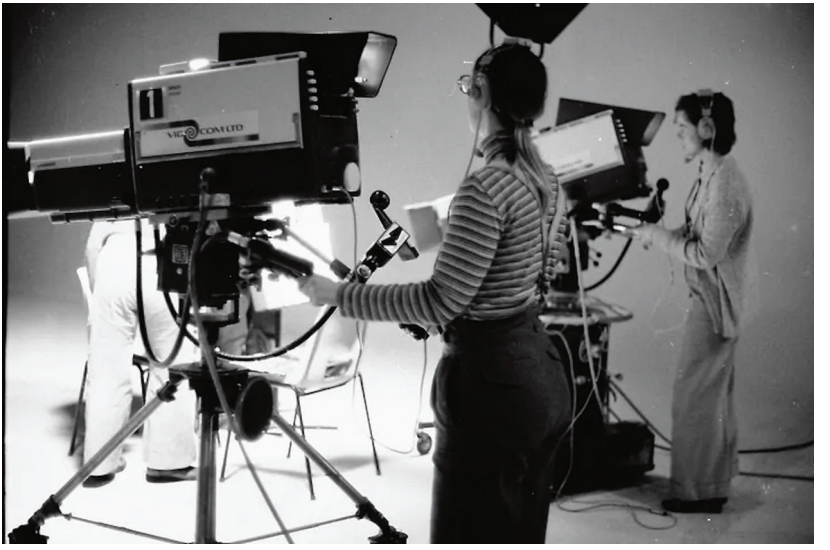
Some assistance came from her husband Tom Cook, Jessica Skippon recalled—

> I was a film production manager and my husband, Tom Cook, was managing director of NZ's only video facility, VidCom, in Boston Road, Auckland. Tom was easily persuaded to lend the video collective the

> facility — sound stage and recording equipment — 2" tape, for a Saturday. We could provide camera operators and a director calling the shots, lighting and sound support but not a vision mixer or sound engineer, never having used professional equipment. As I remember, [we] shot [*Backstreet Theatre*, *The Game of Life*, and *Herstory*] live and there was no editing except to put in the titles. In thanks we gave the men who had helped us that day handmade wooden plaques declaring them honorary women and guaranteeing them safety 'come the revolution'.

Other assistance came from educational places. Sue Fitchett remembers that—

> ...the University of Auckland Video studio was helpful to us but I have forgotten the names who helped us with equipment; editing etc. and then there was the school out in South Auckland and their video suite — where I filmed some of the ECT tape — was it Otahuhu College? Memories of our showings at e.g. Auckland Women's Health Centre include the fears and actualities of equipment breaking down — the vagaries of reel to reel.



Foreground Nancy Peterson and background ??Christine Dann Photographer Jessica Skippon.

Sound was an issue, too, according to Nancy Peterson—

> We had a tape of Charlotte Bunch speaking at the 1979 Women's Convention in Hamilton but the sound quality was awful, some kind of interference in the auditorium at Waikato University. Sound was always the most difficult part of taping.

2025 UPDATE: NEW CONNECTIONS

Jessica Skippon's emails in 2018 are already integrated above; her daughters' assistance in finding three tapes and some photographs has made all the difference. Thank you, Caitlin and J'aimee!

. . .

In February 2019, Liz Eastmond, Sue Fitchett, Pauline McGregor and Mary Debrett met to discuss videotapes that Liz Eastmond had found and deposited in the Auckland Art Gallery Special Collections, which was going to digitise the tapes.



L-R Liz Eastmond, Mary DeBrett, Pauline McGgregor, Sue Fitchett at LIz's home on Waiheke,February 2019. Photographer Fenner, Liz's son.

Liz sent me a list of these (see list of surviving tapes below) and added—

> Technically lacking! Historically important!
>
> So many others still to track down...

Sadly, Liz died in 2025 and there was no sign of the tapes she deposited in the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki online catalogue.

Early on, I had asked the Ministry for Women whether they still had the tapes that the group had deposited. They didn't. When quite recently I met the librarian who had disestablished that library, she told me that there were no video tapes among the collection.

SURVIVING AUCKLAND WOMEN'S COMMUNITY VIDEOS

A list from over the last eight years or so. It probably isn't complete.

NGĀ TAONGA SOUND & VISION

In Ngā Taonga's numbering order. It's possible that one or two are not AWCV and that there is more information about some of them at Ngā Taonga. For instance, when I viewed F59883 at Ngā Taonga around 2017 it had information attached that is not currently in the catalogue; I've added it here.

F50547 *Breaking Silence* 1985: Subtitled, 'A Discussion Starter', *Breaking Silence* dramatises a 'moody' schoolgirl and mother talking in the kitchen. As a last resort, to stop the mother leaving her alone with her father that evening, the daughter reveals a dreadful truth. The end credits are followed by on-screen 'Discussion Questions' - How would the mother be feeling? What are your options? What advice would you give her if she was your friend? Why?...." These are replaced by the following text: "Remember if a young woman or girl says she has been sexually abused BELIEVE HER. "1 in 4 women are abused before they reach the age of 18. "Auckland Counselling

Services...." The contemporary 'Rape Crisis' and 'Help' phone numbers are given.

F55515 [*Interviews With Gay Women*]

F55544 *When The Party's Over - A Discussion Starter*

F55545 [*Interview With Kate*] 1980: Interviews with an elderly woman about her experiences during World War II, the break down of her post-war marriage and the violence she was subjected to. She eventually shot her husband and ended up in prison but through court proceedings was acquitted of attempted murder. Her realisation of her own sexuality and her life as a lesbian.

F55548 [*You Wanna Talk Feminism?*] 1975.

F55553 *Freudian Slips Live* 1981: Freudian Slips were an all female rock band from Auckland who released two EPs, *On the Line* and *Are You Laughing*. They were active between 1981 and 1985 and made music with lyrics and themes examining gender politics and feminism. The band was profiled in a film titled *Slipping Away* made by members of the Auckland Women's Community Video society. Members of the band include Paula Connolly, Mary During, Donna Fletcher, Nikki Lancaster, Elizabeth Leyland, Cathy Sheehan and Jenny Renalls. This recording features the band performing live on stage at an unknown venue.

. . .

F55556 [*H L R - Wi St, Cr St*]: A young woman polishes her inner front bicycle wheel and then moves up the bicycle frame in a domestic back garden setting. Two other women are talking and one weeds between the [cabbages] in the vegetable garden with a hoe. A bowl and spoon are used as mortar and pestle to prepare [fish food] which is tipped into the raised garden pond. Washed clothes are pegged to a circular outdoor washing line to dry. Two woman with a dog talk on chairs outside; one puts a sheer sock on the foot on the other, quipping 'These are new silk stockings from Paree'.

F55561 [*Mamata 5, Kate Stills*]: Five women doing [weeding/ cleaning] work in backyard. Woman sitting on bed with acoustic guitar. Three women exercising in a room (waving arms, sit ups, stretching.) Three women potting indoor plants on newspaper on floor in room.

F55562 [*Vibra Slaps*]: Members of the band Ahorangi from Taipa North Hokianga perform at a Women's Collective hui. Sharon Hawke addresses the hui. Māori Women's Centre in Hamilton perform acapella and a poetry reading from Hinewirangi Kohu. Performance from another group (unidentified).

F55565 [*Women's Soccer*]: Two teams of women playing soccer on a football field in a residential area. One team wears purple top and black shorts, the other wears red and green tops with red shorts.

F59824 Footage of the concert performance at the 1979 [Women's Convention] in Hamilton. Performances by various entertainers in a small hall including Mary Jane Carpenter.

. . .

F59832 *From Our End Of the Speculum*: Two pupils interviewing seated (male) teacher in classroom, e.g. "Are the pupils good?". "Oh no, they're rotten." Sleeping man in bed.

F59840 1976: Band performs in the rotunda in Albert Park in Auckland city. Banner on side reads 'Auckland Women's Centre'. Children with balloons amongst the spectators. Shots of the band singing 'You Don't Know What it's Like' including a very enthusiastic drummer. Interview with Centre spokesperson. Woman sings Joni Mitchell song. Interview with man who discusses his support for the woman's liberation movement. Man gives a rather confused version on the movement. Woman discusses her experience in China. Street Theatre. Group hold hands in circle and and dance to 'I am Woman' by Helen Reddy. Interview with woman and kids about the success of the afternoon. [23.21]

F59841 *Shere Hite Talks To Broadsheet* 1978: Begins with [test shot] of woman with a microphone followed by a line of people (mainly, but not exclusively, men) walking across a carpark to [venue]. Shere Hite, US author of "The Hite Report On Female Sexuality" (1974) and other titles, talks to interviewer [Miriam Saphira] from monthly NZ feminist magazine *Broadsheet*. They sit facing each other in an office. 'To me', begins the interviewer, 'the most astonishing fact to come out of your mammoth study of women's sexuality is the fact that only one third of women regularly have orgasms during intercourse ... What does Ms. Hite think the significance of this finding is?' 'Well', Shere begins a long and considered answer, 'I think it challenges all the ideas of what we think 'sex' is ... ' The interviewer prompts Hite to expound on her thesis that there hasn't hasn't been a sexual revolution: 'I think the birth control pill didn't cause the sexual revolution. I think the birth control pill was a technological result — a reaction — to the same historical changes that are

causing the changes in women's roles ...' Differing attitudes to mothers and childless women are also discussed. And also the necessity of the freedom for physical love with a partner of the same gender: 'We should own our own bodies if nothing else ... To be told you can only express love for someone [of] the opposite sex is a very narrow viewpoint — which derives from ... reproductive ideology'. 'Do you think', the interviewer follows, 'as a result of information like this coming out, plus the impetus of the women's movement, there are going to more woman considering lesbianism as an option?' The answer is a succinct 'Well of course'. The camera remains on after the interview and until Hite leaves the room.

F59845 *Childbirth - A Discussion On Homebirth* Auckland 1977. Title on viewing copy is a still of the label of Film Archive's Preservation copy, 2003.09392. Crying baby lying down. Several women - in home settings - talk about their experiences in giving birth at home.

F59870 *Single Mothers Speak Up*

F59883 United Women's Convention Hamilton NZ 1979: lists those involved as Lee Lee Heah, Mary Ellen Barker, Carole Stewart, Jennifer Wright, Briar Millar most of whom are known to have been involved in AWCV.

F59890 [*Auckland Womens Community Video Collective Misc Tapes*] may be the 'Leftovers at Ngā Taonga, unseen, undigitised ' below.

F264385 *Even Dogs Are Given Bones* 1981 (currently available online to

stream at Ngā Taonga https://www.ngataonga.org.nz/search-use-collection/search/F264385/).

LEFTOVERS, UNIDENTIFIED, UNSEEN & UNDIGITISED AT NGĀ TAONGA

Original notes for Ngā Taonga Archive Box currently numbered 2003.7259 include 'All tapes are unidentified, no titles or headings: some tapes have mould'. Jane Paul at Ngā Taonga checked further and kindly provided more details...

- 8 x 1/2" Reels unlabelled
- 1 X1/2" Broken cassette unlabelled
- 2 x 30 minute Umatic unlabelled
- 1 x 10minute Umatic " TITLES, Margaret Palmer?"
- 1/2 " 18cm Reel — Video Access Centres
- v79 1x 1/2" Reel Titled "Carole Stewart? Women's Community Video — The Receiving of Simone
- v87 "2/7 2nd Forum "Nick"
- v93 "old low density 1/2" bad quality tape" "practice tape"
- v95 "310 ATI TEP March 21/7/80 1/2 " reel
- V74 "tues Jan 29" Marian, Anna Disc 1 1/2" [Women's Gallery 1980]

'So that's all the info, I'm afraid', wrote Jane. 'And because we can't play 1/2" it is the only info we can provide.'[22]

22. Copy of communication: original and its date now lost.

ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY

- OHV-2692 Keri Hulme, Heather McPherson, Jacqui Baxter: probably an AWCV tape and copy from the Women's Gallery *Opening Show*
- OHV-2689/2694 Probably an AWCV tape and copy from the Women's Gallery *Opening Show*
- OHV-2690/2695 Probably an AWCV tape and copy from the Women's Gallery *Opening Show*

Some of this material is available on the Spiral Collectives YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@spiralcollectives6077.

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, FROM LIZ EASTMOND

Liz Eastmond's list ca 2018

From Our End of the Speculum 1976, 35 mins;
Shere Hite Talks with Broadsheet 1978, 30 mins;
Hite at the Lewis Theatre 1978, 33 mins;
United Women's Convention, Hamilton 1979, 3..? mins;
Women's Centre Anniversary Day Celebration, Albert Park 1976? 25 mins;
The Game of Life 1977? 20 mins;
Masturbation tape no details.

In late December 2025, the gallery sent the list below. What a delight that there's a typescript of *The Game of Life*! But no *Masturbation* tape?

. . .

Auckland Art Gallery 2025: various AWCV 6 tapes donated by Liz Eastmond 2018 (173:00)

From our End of the Speculum 1976 USA 35:00; *Shere Hite talks to* Broadsheet 1978 30:00; *Hite at the Lewis Theatre* 1978 33:00; *United Women's Convention Hamilton* 1979 38:00; *Women's Centre Anniversary Day Celebration Albert Park* 1976 (?) 25:00; *The Game of Life* 1977 (N.B. Typescript of play available. Housed with this DVD) 20:00 - DONATED by AWCV member, Elizabeth Eastmond 2018

JESSICA SKIPPON COLLECTION, VIA HER DAUGHTERS 2025

'Her Story A': Backstreet Theatre, probably made around 1976, when Backstreet Theatre toured New Zealand presenting the abortion struggle in dramatic form. 4:20 min, colour. https://youtu.be/whHC-Qet00So (unlisted)

'Her Story B': Tarnished Goods nd 6:57 min, colour. https://youtu.be/L1uSH4LK9lU (unlisted)

'Her Story C': The Game of Life nd 17:37 min, colour. https://youtu.be/i2kR0NoyzrA (unlisted)

NOT YET FOUND (PROBABLY INCOMPLETE LIST) – CAN YOU HELP?

Mary Debrett's comment is typical —

> I may have had a few copies of some of the items we made, but having moved countries and moved homes several times since then I don't think I have them any more unfortunately.

. . .

Do you know of tapes out there, or under your bed, or in your shed? If so, I and the AWCV remnant would love to hear from you. Here are some we KNOW are missing. But I bet there are more.

- *Slipping Away*
- Auckland Women's Refuge project/Halfway House (info from Liz Eastmond)
- Sue Fitchett's ECT project, supported by money from women psychologists (multiple references)
- *The Committee*, about the story of Adam and Eve coming into being (Jessica Skippon)
- Menopause (Liz Eastmond)
- Women's experience of the Health Service (Liz Eastmond)
- Women's Convention Christchurch (Liz Eastmond)
- Ivan Illich (x 2,3?, (Liz Eastmond)
- Trade Union meeting Eden Park... (Liz Eastmond)

CODA DECEMBER 2025

I put some screenshots from Jessica Skippon's three short films onto the Spiral Facebook page, hoping that readers would be able to identify the actors and got a full response those in the Backstreet Theatre film.

Here's one of those actors, Miranda Coates.

> This is interesting. I was only in the Backstreet Theatre Group in'76 and didn't know about the

AWCV until now! And unfortunately I don't know the names of any of the women in the last 2 clips.

I presume you know the names of all of us in the first clip?

I was part of the collective that started the Auckland Women's center in Ponsonby Rd and also started the Rape Crisis center. I remember doing a couple of skits on the street before Backstreet Theatre started.

I wrote a poem on rape that was published in *Broadsheet*'s 'Rape and Violence' issue 1975 that was later included in *Damned Whores and Gods Police* by Anne Summers.

I was living in a house with Sharon Alston, Maggie Eyre, Sand Hall and Vicky (forgotten her surname) when we were working on BSTG.

My sisters were too many to name but had been partners with Rosemary Ronald 74/75; she was working on *Broadsheet* at the time. I remember everyone coming to stuff envelopes. We bussed down to parliament and stood on the steps of parliament to protest the abortion laws under Muldoon and used to heckle the politicians.

And from all of that BSTG was born. It was very organic and we workshopped the songs and script together. We used *Broadsheet* addresses to find women who could billet us when we took the show on tour around the country. I only did the north island. Sharon was the bus driver of course!

One of the things I remember was that a lot of women we stayed with around the country were straight at the time and after we all stayed with them a lot came out and left their marriages.

And as you know the abortion laws were changed.

Sorry I couldn't help with the other names.

Thanks for the opportunity to share some wonderful memories! Keep going.

I just read Ngahuia's book a couple of weeks ago. She was my mentor when I was coming out at 17 back in '71. Such [an] amazing woman and amazing time of change in Aotearoa. Sisterhood is powerful. Miranda

Just remembering that when we set up the Rape Crisis Centre several of us were invited to a panel by Marcia Russel on her TV show Speakeasy in 1975 and 3 or 4 of us were interviewed on David Williams's show Saturday Night in Wellington in the same year in Wellington. Might be good to check as archival footage.

As memories emerge that might be interesting or useful I will pass them on if that's helpful.

SISTER GALVAN (2004)

Heather McPherson & Marian Evans

INTRODUCTION



Galvan and his inula plant, from a cutting in Rodney Kennedy's garden.

Sister Galvan is a feature about Galvan Macnamara, who died not long after we launched the film, at *Mahi Ata Mahi Ahua: Women's Work in Film* (2003). It's more than two decades old, but I still feel sad when I watch excerpts, can't watch the whole film. I miss Galvan.

> New Zealand's Sister Wendy[1] does not have a TV show: Galvan Macnamara lives a hermit's life on the banks of the Waiohine River in the Wairarapa. A legendary arts professional, familiar to many as James Mack — he took his father's name when he turned 60 — he spends his days with his much-loved dog Ozka-Ra and his chooks, reading and thinking and looking and praying and delighting in magic moments.
>
> Talking with a lesbian feminist and her son as they explore how difference (of gender, generation, sexuality) affect the questions asked, the stories told and the way these stories are listened to, Galvan presents his experience of gay life, prostate cancer, tattooing, and artists Richard Grune and Colin McCahon. He also talks abut Rodney Kennedy, the man he wishes had been his father.

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendy_Beckett

INTERVIEW



Galvan biking to his office at the Woodside Railway Station, Wairarapa.

H McP You've chosen this medium — film-making — subsequent to being an artist and publisher. Can you talk about why?

ME I'd often thought about making films. But I'd never felt enough of an artist to make super 8 films on my own like, say, Joanna Paul. Especially as I tend to think in long, costly, sequences. Digital film-making changed everything. The wonderful thing about digital technology is that it offers infinite possibilities for portraying someone's life and ideas.

We're no longer limited to either a film or something written, something on the Internet, an audio oral history or a video one, an emphasis on still or moving images. We can mix it all up and use multiple authorship to get what we want, using autobiographical or biographical sources. I find that exciting because it makes it possible

to make a film about someone now, and include all the past stuff on an extended DVD.

Sister Galvan doesn't do justice to Galvan's complex life and work before his last ten years, after he decided he wanted 'power out of his life' and left a problematic work environment and an unsatisfying domestic arrangement. And there's only a tiny bit of his interactions with the next generation.

But his DVD will include, alongside Sister Galvan, Galvan's own writing. He had a vivid and idiosyncratic way of writing about art and social issues and wrote from the 70s about New Zealand art, as well as keeping a diary. And it will include audiotapes, especially those we made about his gay life in the 60s and 70s and his memories of the legendary Rodney Kennedy.

I like thinking of people in bed with their laptops, watching Sister Galvan and having the opportunity to flick to something Galvan wrote, or to an Internet reference, or more detail. For instance there'll be more about Richard Grune, the gay artist who made absolutely stunning images of the concentration camp he was in. Galvan discovered him on the Internet and talks about him very movingly in the film.

We can also add pictures of Galvan working with various artists and craftspeople, Kaleidoscope tapes that include him. And the full story of the loss of his dog Puka. As we filmed we got caught up in that story in real time and it deserved its own movie. Finally, I'd like to include tributes from others.



Penn and Galvan outside City Gallery Wellington, after viewing the McCahon show.

What is Penn doing in the film?[2]

Galvan loved young people and they loved him, so I chose to involve young men in the film. Gary Morris, who's made 24 films himself, did some of the camera work and all the editing. Paul De Lean, who then went off to study at Swinburne, did the rest of the camera work. I knew that their conversations with Galvan were very different than mine and wanted to include a young man as interviewer. Because Penn's my son, and he'd been enjoying film and journalism at school, he was the obvious choice.

2. Penn is my youngest son, Penn Mahuika Evans.

I've had feedback that the representation of Penn as the visible member of the younger generation in the film is problematic. Penn and Galvan were very close. But that doesn't come across visually in the way that we expect a close relationship will. When I look at the footage I see an eighteen year old who could be described as unengaged or not listening, as I remember students also seemed to be when I was teaching, sometimes. But because I know Penn well I can also see him thinking hard and completely engaged. And I see Galvan communicating vigorously for the camera rather than with Penn. One person thought Penn was possibly a young lover of Galvan's and by implication a bit deferential to an older man; Galvan in fact always liked older men. Some people found Penn's presence intrusive.

There's no doubt that the transparency and sense of relationship I wanted is there in the sound track. The woman who transcribed the sound track before she saw the film — and who found the visual expression of the relationship problematic when she later saw it — had a better sense of the relationship between Galvan and Penn than those whose first encounter with the material included the visual images. So I may have failed in not directing Galvan and Penn differently because their relationship didn't come across visually. But is this also because we have conventions about how interviewers should look and respond? Is it about our visual expectations? Should I have 'trained' Penn to look like a TV interviewer? I don't know yet.

This year I've been reading Bresson on the use of 'models' as actors, not wanting people to 'act'. I'm wondering how — in a documentary — people would accept the visual relationship between Penn and

Galvan as being an authentic representation of their (warm) relationship with a particular, useful, significance, just as the verbal relationship has on the soundtrack. But this would require them to modify the way they behaved for filming purposes. I do know that Penn asked questions that as an older woman I might not ask, for instance about Galvan's testicles, and that the other young men filming appreciated those questions. As have young men viewing the film.

How do you see your role in choosing your subjects of filming: as a social historian, a personal biographer, an empathizer with endangered marginals — all of the above?

Being a mother and a daughter was especially significant in the process, I realised recently. As you know, I'm doing the scriptwriting course at the International Institute of Modern Letters this year. We did an exercise the other day, intended to help us find our own uniqueness as writers. I found that my focus is on motherhood and remembering. If I were to stand on a roof-top and shout a single message to a crowd, hoping to make them cheer (as required in the exercise) it would be "Remember your mothers". To an intimate partner the message would be "Remember your mother". Or if I had to whisper a one word message, it would be "Remember".

Given that in some ways I'm not the greatest mother in the world I was surprised. But then I remembered the Women's Gallery show I selected with Anna Keir in 1980, Mothers, about being a mother and being a daughter; we sent it to public galleries around the country with an associated programme. I thought of my LLM thesis about the New Zealand jurisprudence of shared and equal parenting rights and responsibilities and its consequences for mothers — and how

these laws obscure the gendered hierarchy of care for children and reinforce gender inequities (still very proud of getting a Distinction for it, too!). I remembered writing for Spiral about my own mother who mothered me badly, but whom I came to love when I cared for her as she was dying. I remembered our — yours, mine, other women artists' — difficult search for cultural grandmothers and how I've felt dependent on my peers to be cultural mothers. I realised that the feature film I'm writing in class is essentially for Simone, an eight year old who appears briefly at the beginning and end of the film, that my TV series proposal I thought was a thriller is also about motherhood.

My first film project, with Irihapeti Ramsden, was called *Something for the grandchildren to hold*. She and I talked often about mothering and the next generation, and her cultural safety theory is of course ultimately about making sure that everyone is safely nurtured.

And, as Galvan says in the film, he missed being a parent, and he wanted to be reincarnated as a mother. Certainly he 'mothered' many artists in the best possible way. He also loved children and young people and they loved him, right until the end. Shortly before he died he gave art classes to a young friend and some of his mates, over five weeks. I hear the classes were wonderful.

For me, the next generation is the reason for making films, another aspect of my own practice as a mother. If — like us when starting out — the next generation doesn't have the opportunity to know its cultural foremothers, locally and globally, it won't benefit from their accumulated experience and wisdom.

. . .

Galvan's early work on Parihaka is just one fine example of his concern to learn and teach about difficult aspects of the history of this country. But he was also deeply concerned about making and analysing art and about details, like giving art objects space to radiate their own excellence when on display, or providing exhibition labels that were easily accessible to everyone. He never ever stopped questioning and thinking.

And I found that the three young men who worked with me and who had never heard of Galvan just blossomed from spending time with him. He gave them so much. They were transformed by the experience. Other young men who see Sister Galvan also respond strongly and positively. Galvan himself told me that when he was sitting at the Wellington Railway Station in the freezing cold the young man on the coffee stall ran over to say "You're Galvan, I saw your film. It was wonderful and it changed my life." That young man had responded to the gay parts of the film particularly, but the enthusiasm has come as often from straight young men as from gays. And from young women.

What is your position on the selective decisions/interventions/insertions of the maker? i.e. do you or/and Galvan decide on the content? Whose decisions — if either — would override? It may seem that only Galvan's comfort boundaries operate — do yours?

Hmmmm, as you would say.

None of it was scripted, nothing in the film at all, we just started filming. I asked questions about what interested me and Penn asked questions about what interested him. I'd also done audiotape inter-

views with him and some reading, to make sure I had the right basic info to start from and a sense of the shape of Galvan's life. But once we'd finished the video interviews I tried to shape the material in a way that ensured that the basics introducing Galvan were in the first part and after that each of the more important aspects of his present life — identified by him — received equal attention.

I've learned from a number of these video projects that it's important to start with as few preconceptions or expectations as possible and that each project has to be carefully negotiated. There are oral historians and documentary makers who have standard contracts and release forms for their 'subjects' who relinquish their copyright in the material generated and who often begin from the understanding that there will be no ongoing relationship after an interview is finished.

My view is that although this may be appropriate for others, it can't work for me. For a start, the default position is that anyone I interview owns the copyright in their contribution to our interview, outright or in equal shares, depending on what we jointly decide. What they choose to contribute is their intellectual property, not mine, though I may 'use' it to make another piece of intellectual property.

Galvan talking about McCahon does so from years of careful looking and rigorous thinking that I had nothing to do with. Why should I alone benefit from the use of that if others pay to watch and listen to him? It's possible to make money from documentaries and if they are about individuals I think those individuals should receive a negotiated, proportionate, benefit.

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Galvan didn't want to have anything to do with shaping the movie or DVD, so we agreed that he'd see the film for the first time at its first public showing. Partly because of this I think but also, typically for him, and because he wasn't going to be around for long, he wanted Spiral and the young men involved to benefit financially, rather than him. Unfortunately, because TVNZ wanted $4000 for the use of their 87 seconds' footage, we've only recently, thanks to GABA, been able to buy the rights to it. Until we distribute the film there won't be any money to complete the DVD and certainly no financial benefit for Spiral to pass on. And as the DVD's not a biography 'for the page' and the film is designed to be read with the other material rather than for TV or theatrical release, the project's ineligible for many funding resources.

My choices when editing were based on using the strongest material available to illustrate particular aspects of Galvan and I didn't think about the comfort zones of others. If I had, I'd have got in a terrible tangle. Boundaries were not something we discussed. Galvan and I abandoned our boundaries in a way that sometimes happens in sex where you just trust what's happening without too much thought. We had an intense curiosity in the process, in each other's questions and responses. There was never any question he didn't want to answer and he was embarrassed just once, when I asked him "What about your mouth?"

We talked a lot about sex and about prostate cancer and had many conversations that we didn't record. It felt important to get the essence of the significance of sex in Galvan's life. And there's no doubt it was huge: I am still amazed when I imagine him having meetings in the institutions where he worked and then whipping out at lunchtime for sex in the local public toilets, instead of having a

sandwich. I hadn't realised that that went on and of course still goes on.

There's so little documentary material about prostate cancer and about dying and death and there was enough material to do a whole film about either, but the prostate interviews were hard to edit and although we added some of Galvan's CAT scans to cover some of the cuts, it's not as easy to watch as I'd like, and that may exacerbate a viewer's discomfort.

As far as ongoing relationships are concerned, the time that the people share with me is precious and if we've both valued that, it can only enhance our lives if we later choose to spend time together without the recording machines, building on the relationship we've developed. The relationship is an equal relationship, because we take time to negotiate the power balance at the outset, with a proviso that the initial agreement can be renegotiated. Penn as a young heterosexual did, now I think about it, have a less 'equal' relationship and this may explain some of the visual problems.

It would be a different relationship and a different work if I had harvested Galvan's story and taken it home to do what I liked with, without the initial negotiation and the assumption of shared ownership. Galvan asked me to include what he wanted — the shower scene — and told me I was to feel free to ask any question I wanted and to film anything else I wanted. He seemed to lack vanity. I don't think I would give a filmmaker the same level of trust or be so courageous, because I've always found it hard to look at photos of myself and to articulate aspects of my life in a way that satisfies me.

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The relationship we created meant, for example, that long after the film was done I went out to the Wairarapa for a day after Galvan developed dysphasia and lay with him under his duvet while he rested, each of us with a book to read. He was very tired. All afternoon we watched the leaves dropping outside, with little conversations about things like why the coloured leaves dropped more slowly than the green ones and why the trees had different rhythms. Making himself understood was a struggle by then. But his mind was still working in the same way as usual, apart from no longer having the capacity to find words easily and to form sentences. He was a bit disappointed that the Douglas Wright book I'd told him about had had to go back to the library. He'd hoped I would bring it with me and read it to him. But in spite of that, it was a lovely time.

Our ongoing relationship meant that Penn and I participated in Galvan's dying, too. And that was special. Being there when the beautiful woman in the cancer ward shaved his hair off and being aware of how much cultural safety has affected the care given in hospitals, in the way that kind of thing is done. Holding his woolly hat and glasses while he had the stunning custom made net mask put over his head to hold it still for radiation and then seeing the radiation on the TV screen. Hearing his 'second mother' sing and talk to him the night before he died, sharing his care with his friends, keeping his mouth clean and lubricated, holding his hand. Seeing one friend kiss him lingeringly and lovingly on the lips and noticing Galvan's response: the sleeping queen woke briefly, experiencing pleasure. If it hadn't been at such short notice and if I hadn't also wanted to be involved in his physical care I would have filmed the entire process. And he would have been happy with that. One of the best things about working with him was that he wanted all aspects of his life to be included and trusted me to do the best I could. He would also have been delighted to know that while he

slept we watched Taika Waititi filming among the rubble of an old hospital building, out the window.

And from his dying and the hospital I've been given so much to think about. You and I both now live alone, our health somewhat compromised. I know from my thesis research that single mothers have a shortened life span, because of their single motherhood and not just as the result of the ongoing poverty that accompanies that status. Our marginalisation as lesbians has probably also affected our health. How will we be cared for? The nurses were so good at the hospital and even made sure Galvan was cared for by male nurses, realising he would like that. But they were overworked and the environment they work in made me feel ill. I don't want to end up in a similar place, without resources, eating the horrible food, or at home feeling alone and unwanted as Galvan certainly did over the years he was sick.

After he first saw the film he told me that before we started working on it he had decided to suicide. I don't want that for you or anyone I care about either, but we are all so busy and you and I (as an example) living in different cities and without great energy or resources won't be able to provide much care for each other.



Galvan with Aunty Marge, 'his second mother' — Matarena Marjorie Rau-Kupa 1913-2010. Photographer unknown.

Galvan felt utterly embraced, possibly for the first time in his life, over his last months, by the group of people in Greytown who cared for him: his friend Ian with whom he stayed often and his friends Juliet and the other Marian, as well as others. But although Ian stayed in Wellington to care for Galvan until the end, it wasn't possible for the others to do so. And I was surprised — that apart from one former lover from out of town who happened to be in Wellington and another who came when he wasn't at work, one friend from the art world, his wonderful second mother and a couple of visitors Galvan decided he didn't want — there was no outpouring of love and support.

Earlier, one group had sent him a digital camera, and that thrilled him [no iPhones then!]. But towards the end, there was this silence

and inaction, followed after his death by considerable numbers of people wanting to participate in a send-off, who rang about the funeral and emailed to get copies of *Sister Galvan*. So many people knew he was ill and did nothing to help. No enquiries about what Galvan or his carers needed. I know he was 'difficult' as well as loved. But why did those people not even try?

And I read in an obituary for Irihapeti that towards the end of her life she felt isolated, emotionally and intellectually, and realised that I stopped ringing or going to see her at times when I felt I might be intruding. I think we need to talk more about living and dying and how to offer support, even if it is just to drop off or post an interesting book or image, rather than making assumptions. I know I'd like support while I'm living rather than people acknowledging me when I'm dead. And I've spent a bit of time thinking 'Who would I like lingering kisses from as I die, or to give me strength to live?' Strangely, I thought of Barb Macdonald, who when she was alive would have liked to kiss me lingeringly and because at that time I wasn't into lingering kisses on a casual basis I missed out. That kiss was certainly life enhancing for Galvan. It's an issue to be considered, along with all the other touching and caressing: he loved me caressing his feet, even when his oedema was very severe.

The wonderful shower scene and Galvan's commentary which runs from the 'aging body' to the 'old auntie' stereotype and details of what mother said on cleanliness...is there also a minor sub-text of "How to keep healthy"?

No, no sub-text there, simply Galvan being as and saying what he wanted. The second time he saw the film he told me that the shower scene ran for twelve minutes and he had expected it would be twelve seconds, but he liked it. One young Swiss woman found it hard that

Galvan used a single face cloth for all parts of his body. I defended him, since he washed and rinsed the face cloth between parts, but from her point of view that was an extremely unhealthy practice. His mother I think has a strong presence in the film (there's that mother theme again) which neither of us really thought about at the time but one of the first 'test' viewers remarked upon and really liked.

I was fascinated by the unexamined — as in the 8 year old being inducted into homosexual sex and the throw-away "I didn't like it much at first but then I grew to love it". To me this suggests this homosexual was 'made' not 'born' — does this resonate with you — does it matter? A defecting film watcher who said that "any sex, not just homosexual sex" was too much for him also talked about 'triumphalism' — a need to be seen as 'winning' or "I am who I am regardless of others' boundaries". I'd interpret this more as a kind of compensation as in — if this is what I am then I will be it flamboyantly. You as maker seem content to leave in the contradictions — Galvan's quest for 'inner' spirituality with the need to embody or identify with symbols/markings, his pragmatic reaction to the dog's skeleton compared with previous distress — without wanting to tie things up. Is this a commitment to being post-modern or how the work unfolded or....?

O dear, this is where I reveal my naivety. As I've said, I just began and went on, without a theoretical basis. Now I've learned about films as 'journeys' I can see that the film is based around various kinds of journeys: Galvan's life and the work within it until the present, his bicycle rides to and from his office, the sexual journey, abruptly terminated by his castration, his spiritual journey, the tattoo trip and the travelling towards death as his final magic moment. Also in there are my journey and the journeys of the young men working on the film.

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Several people have asked why I didn't pursue the issue of Galvan's sexual experience as an eight year old. They were mostly shocked. I guess if he had been a woman I may have asked at the time. But my sense was that the question was redundant. When I asked him about the sex as abuse — after people asked me — his response was much as I expected: that in the larger scheme of things his introduction to sex with another person may have been 'abusive' but that it didn't matter at all. What is perceived as abusive towards an eight year old may have introduced Galvan to sexual practices that anyway suited him rather than 'turning him into a homosexual'.

Furthermore, I see sexual and physical abuse as subsets of psychological abuse, which may itself cause physical ill health. I'm sure Galvan was abused psychologically, all his life. It's important to remember this and see the abuse of him as a child within this context. Being 'out', as Galvan was in the days before homosexual law reform, and intensely sexual as well intensely intellectual, creative and political, I imagine he was scary for a lot of people. As are most visionaries. And there's no doubt some people saw him as an unpredictable whirlwind of energy they needed to control, if only because implementation of his many excellent ideas blew out their budgets. Consequently I suspect some people responded abusively to him, overtly or subtly. Over the years, this kind of abuse could have been more damaging than the earlier sexual abuse. Maybe Galvan was recognising this when he said he wanted power out of his life and when he stated that if he had still been working at Te Papa he would have died long ago.



Galvan and Ozka-Ra, the successor to Puka, outside the caravan where they lived on the banks of the Waiohine awa.

Galvan was a mass of contradictions and happy to own them and to live with them. His tenderness for Puka, his weeping over the corpse was as real as his concern to enhance Puka's skull by having it covered in silver for use as a sacred object. One viewer was appalled that he could take the head and do nothing with the body, but my sense was that although he found seeing the whole body upsetting, it was immaterial to him whether it was buried or deteriorated as it was, concealed under a tree where people rarely passed. He also knew that Puka's spirit was long gone from the body and as he was so fond of saying about various things "It [the removal of the skull] didn't matter". He was pragmatic about his own body as well, straight to the crematorium without ceremony. I can't quite believe that I won't see those stunning Rangi Kipa tattoos any more.

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Flamboyance. He could act the queen anytime he felt like it and it was wonderful when the Queen's Birthday gun salute over Oriental Bay started just as I learned he was being cremated in the Wairarapa. What is flamboyance? Passion? Honesty? Transparency? The thing about his queenliness, which is how 'flamboyance' is often understood, was that it persisted even when he was in his swandri building a chook house. I loved his refusal to tamp himself down for others' comfort, although it was sometimes hard. It was awful when he shouted "GO AWAY!" to me at the hospital at a moment when I couldn't help him because he was desperate for medication.

But I know that he wanted to behave lovingly to those around him, was distraught if he felt he had hurt or caused offence and always made amends. In my own experience he changed his behaviour when I explained that something offended me; he did not offend again. He knew that it wasn't acceptable to treat people badly and sometimes, like the rest of us, did not realise he had offended. Some of his behaviour may have been learned, resulted from others' abuse of him; perhaps he never acknowledged the connection. But in the end I found it possible to accommodate Galvan's responses, positive and negative, however powerfully expressed, because they were just part of his honesty, part of his flamboyance. Honesty may only be painful when it hits us in the ego I guess, or challenges our world view in a way that makes us feel uncomfortable. And our last interchange before he died was utterly loving.

Would you approach making this film the same way another time?

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I'd do it more consciously in the technical as well as the emotional sense. I know now more about what digital film-making is capable of and where my own strengths lie. I'd perhaps try to direct Galvan and Penn and the camera more and I'd also persist more with the spiritual stuff. I think you can tell that although they were very important to Galvan I found it hard to relate to his spiritual practices. And the limitations of time, skill and money meant that the spiritual images were weak. I wish I'd been around when he made great petrol circles and set them alight.

But yes, as an exercise in creating something that conveyed who and what Galvan was I'd approach it the same way: research, negotiation, careful looking and listening, trust and, of course, love. The outcome was no more important than making sure that the process warmed and enriched each of us. It looks a bit corny written down, but that's how it was.

2020

I found this interview when I was transferring data onto a hard drive for deposit at the Alexander Turnbull Library. I'd forgotten about it.

Poet Heather McPherson's own last days were hard, too. In late 2016, when Cushla Parekowhai kindly drove me from Auckland to Wellington, her car packed with Heather's archives, also destined for the Turnbull Library, we visited Heather at a rest home in Hamilton. When Cush went to sit in the garden Heather asked me if I'd help her die, because her quality of life was so poor. And later, I wrote about that in the catalogue for the exhibition *This Joyous Chaotic Place: He Waiata Tangi-ā-Tahu* (2018–2019, Mokopōpaki and

Spiral), about Heather and her peers.[3]

I never made the DVD, because for years after Galvan died I couldn't look at anything that reminded me of him. And, someone with access to a studio we used wiped the hard drive with all the footage on. Maliciously, I believe, because they also set the hard drive to be unusable until some far distant future time. The original mini-DVD and audiotapes are in the Alexander Turnbull Library. The film itself is at Ngā Taonga.[4]

SOME FEEDBACK

'Marian Evans' [film] was sheer joy.' — *Linda Clark, Sunday Star Times*

'It's an amazing wonderful open and at times funny film — just delightful.' — Jenny Gibbs

'I LOVED it. It is very rich and thought provoking. Well, Sister Galvan is thought provoking, the film is thoughtful–every frame. It has a lovely look to it. I really like documentaries that are personal like this and I think you have exploited the possibilities of NOT having to put it on the free to air network. It is something which will get to be more and more valuable as time goes on.' — Gaylene Preston

3. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/this-joyous-chaotic-place
4. Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision F264391 2003.

PORTRAIT OF AN ART LOVER



ARTS

Portrait of an art lover

Despite living with cancer and in self-imposed isolation, New Zealand's own Sister Wendy refuses to lose his passion for art and life, writes Marian Evans.

NEW ZEALAND'S Sister Wendy does not have a TV show. Instead, Galvan Macnamara lives a hermit's life on the banks of the Waiohine River in the Wairarapa – in a caravan, a garage and a building that contains an oratory as well as a shower. A legendary arts professional, familiar to many as James Mack (he took his father's name when he turned 60) he spends his days with his much-loved dog Ozka-Ra and his chooks, reading and thinking and looking and praying and delighting in magic moments. He also lives with prostate cancer.

I first met Galvan in 1979 when he was a project officer at the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. He became a powerful advocate for groups I was involved with, helping us find funding to publish children's picture books (including Patricia Grace's classic *The Kuia and the Spider* in dual Maori and English editions, almost unheard of at the time) and then to set up The Women's Gallery in Wellington. I loved him for his analytical mind that understood exactly why our projects were worth funding, his appreciation of the need to experiment and his intellectual stimulus, emotional support and laughter. Many others felt – and feel – the same. Although Galvan acknowledges that "in human relations terms I have often been a prick", artists and students all round the country have benefited from his presence in their lives.

Galvan would have liked to be a painter but became an art teacher (with a view of art history that encompasses thousands rather than hundreds of years of art-making) a curator, gallery director, lecturer and art writer (most recently for the *Sunday Star-Times*). He's probably best known for his stint as director of the Dowse in Lower Hutt. However the projects he's most proud of are the *Parihaka* exhibition he selected for the Waikato Art Museum in 1974, when he asked Colin McCahon and Ralph Hotere to make paintings that are now acknowledged national masterpieces; *Treasures of the Underworld* at the World Expo in Seville in 1992, seen by half a million people; and his redoing in 1990 of the Maori Hall – for the first time since it opened – at the old National Museum in Wellington, which he also made accessible for people with disabilities.

None of this necessarily qualifies Galvan as our very own Sister Wendy. I didn't fully recognise his star qualities myself until I read in the paper that he had been castrated (part of the cancer treatment), then found him and made a film about him.

Filming Galvan was an extraordinary experience. He was open and articulate about every aspect of his life, enthralling me and the three young men working with me. We were fascinated by his stories of gay life from the 1950s on, the disappearance of Puka, his beloved dog for 11 years, his tattoos, his prostate cancer and ageing body, his spiritual quest and his decision to retreat to the country.

Galvan is exceptional in the way he conveys the essence of art works, especially Colin McCahon's works, including (in the film) his *Crucifixion – for Rodney Kennedy*. His fluency on McCahon is not surprising: during the late '60s he stayed at the legendary Rodney Kennedy's Dunedin house with 33 McCahons on the walls and later had McCahon's *Northland Panels* in his own flat. But when I watched old television programmes Galvan contributed to, he showed the same profound knowledge of and enthusiasm for other artists' works.

We were fascinated by his stories of gay life from the 1950s on, his tattoos, his ageing body and his decision to retreat to the country.

It seems a pity that despite having in common with Sister Wendy the artistic knowledge, the caravan, the spiritualism and the energy, no one has offered Sister Galvan his own show. It could still happen: he has new enthusiasms to share, including his discovery of Richard Grune, the gay artist who produced an extraordinary series of lithographs about his experience of the concentration camps of the holocaust.

Our feature-length documentary offers a taste of Galvan's charm and his capacity to elucidate and amuse. It's like him to risk entrusting his stories to a partially sighted, ageing lesbian feminist single mother, two young men straight from Wellington High School's excellent media courses and a third, the film's editor, who has made 24 action movies. Funding for the film was eclectic too, from individuals who love Galvan, the Cathy Pelly Maunga-rongo Trust, the Dowse, the Jennifer B Gibbs Trust and Pub Charity Inc (via the Greytown Hotel), as well as gender and women's studies at Victoria University. Later the film will be on DVD with the wealth of material we were unable to include.

■ ***Formerly Known as James Mack*** **is screening in Mahi Ata Mahi Ahua Women's Work in Film, a New Zealand women's film festival at the City Gallery Wellington, September 18-21. www.vuw.ac.nz/womens-film-festival**

Published in Sunday Star Times *2004.*

CLIPS

Galvan on What Makes A Gay Man[5]

Galvan on Colin McCahon[6]

Galvan on Holocaust artist Richard Grune[7]

5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drA8ik3RvOM&feature=related
6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnyWRyzpSow
7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJbMteWeYro

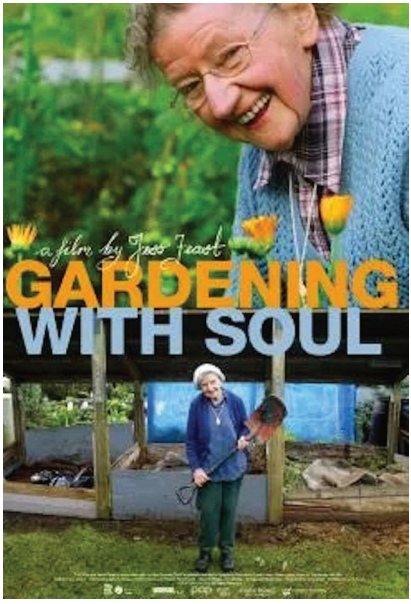
ANNIE COLLINS (2013)

Annie Collins & Marian Evans



Annie's a legend. I know her from an unfinished project we worked on years ago, *Something For My Grandchildren To Hold*, a documentary about Irihapeti Ramsden (1946–2003), best known as the primary architect of cultural safety as a concept and in practice, and a member of the Spiral Collective that published *the bone people*. I

don't see Annie often, but I love knowing that she's there in the world, working harder and better than almost anyone I know.



Gardening With Soul, edited by Annie, has just gone into New Zealand cinemas. Jess Feast's doco about Sister Loyola Galvin is a beautiful story about a nun in her nineties, a member of the remarkable Sisters of Compassion Order, founded by Mother Suzanne Aubert (1835–1926), who work 'in a spirit of compassion, openness and integrity to meet the needs of the aged, the sick, the oppressed and the powerless in our communities'. *Gardening With Soul* follows last year's *How Far is Heaven*, also about the order, directed by Christopher Prior and Miriam Smith. To celebrate *Gardening With Soul*, I decided to interview Annie.

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Annie's worked on every kind of project imaginable: many features (including New Zealand classics from *Sleeping Dogs* and *Goodbye Pork Pie*, to *Scarfies* and *Out of the Blue* — Best Editing Awards for both as well as for 2012's *Two Little Boys* — to *Lord of the Rings* and this year's *Shopping*); countless docos (a special love); short films (including Sima Urale's *O Tamaiti*, winner of the Golden Lion at Venice), commercials, corporate training videos (including a series on the law which won an ITVA Silver Monitor), trailers and promos. And in the predominantly small-budget New Zealand industry, where roles are often flexible, she's had to handle music, FX and dialogue, ADR, post-production supervision, lab liaison as well as the picture edit.

And she keeps on keeping on, very often with projects by women. Her most recent projects are two shorts, *Nine of Hearts*, written by Kelly Joseph and Briar Grace-Smith and directed by Briar, *The Lawnmower Men of Kapu*, written and directed by Libby Hakaraia, and the Andrea Bosshard and Shane Loader-written and -directed feature *The Great Maiden's Blush*.



The women directors Annie's worked with include Merata Mita, Sima Urale, Andrea Bosshard (and her co-director Shane Loader), Shirley Grace, Clare O'Leary, Melanie Read (Rodriga), Monique Oomen (The Nineties, which won ITVA Best Documentary and USA Golden Apple), Kate JasonSmith (Xmas for Lou which won Best TV Drama), Pat Robins. She won the Media Peace Award for Double Take, which she directed.

Annie was interested in only one subject for this interview, the ethics and integrity of editing documentary. But I couldn't resist asking about lots of other things. Annie kindly transcribed the long discussion (thanks a million, Annie!) and when we finished editing (negotiating priorities we didn't share; for sense and discretion and some repetition I couldn't justify), I was thrilled to realise that she

provides an excellent example of the creative-life-making arts practitioner, the subject of 'Beyond "Career"'[1].

Before this interview we caught up on the road, as we drove to Auckland together, Annie's car packed with editing gear for her latest gig. Talking almost all the way. I haven't seen Annie since. But re-publishing Cushla Parekowhai's 'Kōrero Ki Taku Tuakana: Conversation With My Big Sister', with Merata Mita in 1988, reminded me that Annie had spoken about working with Merata, in this interview — Marian Evans (interviewer).

ME *Editing is so straightforward that directors can do it themselves. Why do they use an editor?*

AC There are a few directors around who can do that — who have such a clear vision and such a specific vision of what they're making that they should be cutting their own films. However, every director I've worked with has really enjoyed the collaboration of another head and another head coming from a different angle, able to see in the footage things that they have missed, have gotten so used to that they are just overriding them, conceptual things they didn't see in the footage. When you're talking about documentary which is the main thing I'm interested in, there are often threads of ideas and concepts which an editor can see, but when the director has already sorted out the questions they want to ask, or feel that they know about the subject, they just ask a specific range of questions and miss all this sideline stuff. They even miss things that are in the frame because they're not expecting to see them so they DON'T see them.

. . .

1. https://medium.com/womens-film-activism/beyond-career-144db111fdd0

And I think what's really important here, what I found out and what I learned from Māori director Merata Mita, is that the subtext you can see is grounded in your knowledge of your own culture. You can pick up things on screen or the little side comments that people make. The way that their eyes flicker at certain places and you know that there is a connection bouncing across to something else. And I'm always curious about those, I'm always curious about what people don't say. For instance the thing about *Gardening With Soul* is that I took on that project because it is a film about the qualities of Pākehā culture [the culture of white people who've been in New Zealand for some time]. I've made a study of my own culture and I love it; and there were some things that I was picking up on which Jess, the director, who hasn't studied it like I have, had missed.

Like what?

Oh, you're putting me on the spot! I don't think I can go into that and it's because they're very personal things about Sister Loyola and to put them out there in public wouldn't be the right thing. It's interesting because you can see the dichotomies that exist in people's characters and they affect how you cut because to show the character well, to do justice to them, you actually do have to deal with those dichotomies. But you have to deal with them with integrity. You can't just pull them out and shake them around in front of the audience and go 'ooooh, look at this!' They've actually got to be bedded into a place that they come from and looking at where they're going to.

Are you saying that you would not show the difficult side of somebody?

. . .

No, on the contrary, the difficult side of somebody is exactly what you do need to show but you cannot show it out of context — you need to know enough about what shapes that person so that you can indicate where that 'difficult' side comes from. And what interests me the most now, and this is for me personally, as well as the people within footage, is that people's weaknesses are also their strengths. Your greatest weakness is your greatest strength, and your greatest strength is also your greatest weakness. And it's how people manage those qualities within themselves, and it's why Sister Loyola in *Gardening With Soul* is so affecting when you watch her, because she lets you see her struggle. And boy, has she struggled! Here is a feisty independent woman who was taught as a girl, at five years old, by her father, about politics in this country in the 1930s, a really difficult time politically. And she learnt about that among all of her father's friends, as part of the political conversations. And she goes into the Catholic Church.



Sister Loyola

And I'm going: 'How on earth did she stay there? How on earth could you when you have that upbringing?' And that is a puzzle which is throughout that film. And you can't just wipe her off and say she was stupid to do that, she should have been somewhere else. When you think about the times she was in, and you think about the qualities of that woman and how much she loved children, still loves them, the order that she chose to go into was the place where she could do the most good. And she swallowed the Catholic side of it — she dealt with it when she had to — in order to keep doing the good work. That's a pretty difficult road.

I don't remember the bit about her father and politics...

Well, you don't remember it because it's not in there. And this is part of the challenge of being a filmmaker. You have a specific time frame to work within. We could put in all the extra bits about the characters we're making films about, but after about ninety-five minutes you're actually ready to go and have a cup of tea, have a break. And at that point you do not hear anything more so whether you put it in there or not, your audience doesn't hear it anyway. So there's a series of choices that you make and you've just got to do the best that you can.

It's one of the shockers about dealing with such a long life as Sister Loyola's — knowing that you cannot take everything. What's lovely about the DVD is that we get a second bite at the material and for this one it's really really important.

The extra material about Sister Loyola and her father, her training in politics etcetera will go into the DVD. There is also a section about

the founder of the order, Mother Suzanne Aubert, who set up the only order in this country that someone like Sister Loyola could possibly have entered, and stayed in and done such good work. Those two stories would give you five hours of footage. We had to make that decision and we made it a third of the way into the edit.



The camera, Sister Loyola holding Jess Feast's daughter Mia; & Jess.

What are the characteristics of your editing?

When a director comes in and sits at this bench they have to be prepared to be challenged. If they're not prepared to be challenged then they don't stay with me for very long. And the first challenge is a very simple one: 'Why are you making this film? For what reason are you making this film?' In this country I use another word, I ask

them what their kaupapa is, and in using that word I don't just ask them for their reason. I am asking in what spirit are they approaching this film. The kaupapa is a direct reflection of the director, of the director's spirit in approaching something. And they have to be able to answer that in one sentence, because anything more than that — paragraphs of reasons — is bullshit. They have to know very very clearly why they're poking a camera at that person and exposing them to the world.

You mean a logline?

Nope. Not that. Absolutely not that. Nope. I want to know a deep heartfelt reason why they consider that they have the right to make this film. To ask of another person that they expose themselves. And they have to have a damn good reason otherwise I don't want to be part of it. I was clearing out some files just last night, and I came across some material I'd written and presented at a conference in Auckland in '96. I'd written about kaupapa and I talked about one director whom I'd asked what his kaupapa was and he came back the next day with a piece of paper with five words written on it. Past. Present. Future. Struggle and Hope. That's a kaupapa.

The next challenge is: 'Who are you talking to?' They have to answer that question, and it's not 'The whole world!' because that's just bullshit too. They need to be pretty clear about it. When *Gardening With Soul* came in, I knew who I wanted to talk to, but I didn't know who Jess wanted to be talking to.

Who did you want to talk to?

. . .

Young New Zealanders. Because Loyola is a role model and we don't have too many of them. Not up on film. We've these great hulking brutes who play rugby who can hardly string two sentences together but people who actually talk about the qualities of how they work? Of what's important to them or how they were brought up? What's important in life and what takes you through? No — I don't think so. No, there's no one like Loyola in our footage these days and I wanted her to be there for young New Zealanders. She will always be there now.

What are those qualities?

Humility, determination, real grit. A deep love for growing things. A caring, yet none of this namby pamby I'll give you everything you want. It's a caring that says the way that you can learn is by doing it yourself and you can. I'll stand back here and I'll guide you but YOU can do it. A self- questioning and finding out answers for yourself, not looking for things to be delivered on a plate. Not expecting other people to fix things for you, just going out there and making it happen.

And you can only do that on film?

A film does it better than anything else because when somebody walks and talks on a film, every time that film is shown, that person is alive. It doesn't matter whether they died 10 years ago, that person is alive. So much of how people do things is shown, not talked about so yes, film is the best way.

. . .

The other thing about those first two challenges, the kaupapa and who are you talking to, is that if I have good answers to those two questions, I can cut a film. I don't need a director to tell me a lot more than that.

Do you try to meet the subject?

I avoid it at every opportunity. So no, I don't try to meet the subject, and it's much much better if I don't because what you learn about the subject and what you FEEL in their presence starts to be invested in the footage. Everybody else who sees the film probably isn't going to meet the subject so all they get is what's in the footage. And it's really important that when I cut, all I get is what's in the footage too, my eyes and my head are clear of other information. Otherwise I'll start putting material up which I THINK is showing things, which the footage isn't showing at all because I'm investing it with what I know about the subject. People generally get to see the film only once so that first impression that you get from footage is the only one you're going to get — so if it isn't really in the footage in the first place, the audience isn't going to see it, you're going to miss your mark. And that's really the first important thing that I bring to the edit bench.

One of the things that I do — it's one of the ways I try to maintain the integrity of dealing with people in documentary — is I use a process whereby I don't allow the director in (!) until I've had a good look at the footage. Until I've done a first cut of the footage. I've had a conversation with the director about all the ideas they think should be in the film which they set out to capture and then I add the ideas which I've seen to that list and then I go through and cut those ideas. It's also my responsibility to give the director my initial

response to the footage, whatever it might be. I might hate one particular section, I might say I'm not using this piece, I don't believe it. I don't believe anything about this, I think it's bullshit. Which is a fairly tough thing to say but that's said privately at the edit bench and the director takes it on, goes 'hmmmm, but I felt such and such with this', and then I am challenged. 'Why do I think that about it? Do I continue to think that every time I see that particular section?'

I'll be cutting two things: a series of concepts — those ideas, and I'll be cutting what I call reality sequences like Sister Loyola digging in the garden, having breakfast, her 90th birthday party, those are discrete sequences in their own right. That first pass over all the footage will take me between two to five weeks depending on how much footage I've got and there was a lot of footage for this, lot of ideas...

I've got all that cut, and then I invite the director back in and we sit down and view all the cuts from top to bottom. The challenges then are the filmic challenges and how to make a sequence work. By that stage they are the technical and craft challenges but the lovely thing is that when the raison d'etre of why you're sitting at that bench cutting this particular footage is clear, the craft and the technical challenges, they often just dance into place.

And it becomes very clear when we're viewing on a bigger screen whether we've got enough material to make a concept work, which of the reality sequences really carry you with them and are important to see. For example, the very last sequence in *Gardening With Soul* started out as twenty-five minutes of Sister Loyola and her helper digging over one of her gardens in Autumn. They start at the

beginning of it and they dig each trench, put compost in it, turn it over and dig the next trench, and the next one and the next one and they get right to the end and then they clean the tools, walk down to the shed, wash their hands, tidy up all the bags that they've used, tidy up the tools and put them away. Her helper changes his clothes and says goodbye, and she takes one last look around and walks out and closes the door behind her. Now the entire sequence is beautiful, it's gorgeous, because it just embodies all of the lifecycle that this woman is about. The care for the soil, the way she places the new compost in with all its wriggly worms is like the care that she would give children. Everything is there in that cycle. And then they prepare the shed and the tools for the next day, and she leaves. When we had played down the twenty-five minute first cut, it came ¾ of the way through a week and a half's worth of work, and when it ended I turned to Jess with tears running down my face and said 'That's the end of the film'. And she agreed.

Everything is there and we had to distil that down, in the finish, to around about forty-five seconds. Because we had it longer, and people thought the film was starting again and they couldn't stand it. If we had left it longer — say two minutes — it would have put a coda on the end of the film which would have undermined everything that had gone before, the emotion we had built before it. And those are the things that guide the pace of the film.



Jess Feast & Sister Loyola.

We knew we had a crucial area in *Gardening with Soul* which was the situation around the abuse of children within the Catholic Church. You do anything concerning the Catholic Church now, you must address the abuse. You cannot ignore it. And whether your subject ignores it or not, you as a filmmaker cannot ignore it. It is a subtext — and everybody in your audience knows that it's there and if you don't address it then you've undercut your entire film. You haven't done justice to your subject. That was a huge challenge to Jess and I to make that work. Sister Loyola approached the abuse of children

herself, she didn't need to be prompted or asked about that, and she tackled it five times. It was very difficult for her, she had such strong feelings about it and such a struggle with her commitment to compassion in this situation. No one time did we have a complete reflection of how she felt but the closest she came to expressing it, we had footage with severe camera problems. It took a long time to work through a solution that truthfully reflected Sister and gave the film what it needed. We went back to that sequence and the sequences surrounding it over and over before we were satisfied we'd done our best.

When we looked through what I had done with the concepts trying to make them work, there were some we discarded saying we just don't have the material to make that concept work. It wasn't there, she doesn't touch on it well, it wasn't important to Loyola for whatever reason, so out it's gone. There is a peeling away of ideas from the footage as the process goes on. And there is conceptual material like Mother Aubert's story that we want to go in the extras.

Sometimes the problem of not being able to make a concept work means that you can't work on the project together and usually that manifests itself in the first couple of weeks, usually because the kaupapa's wrong, right up the front. I have walked away from documentary jobs.

What role does a script have through the documentary editing process?

If you walk into any of that with a script in hand, knowing your subject so well, and say, 'right we'll start at the beginning, and I want a sequence of this and this and this and this up front, and

then we'll go into this .... Blah blah blah.... And we will be finishing with that,' the extraordinary serendipity of what happened in Gardening With Soul, with that end sequence and with a lot of other sequences, especially the opening sequence and the handling of child abuse within the Catholic Church — once you've got a paper script in here, before you've had that chew over of footage, before you've had a chance to respond emotionally to the footage, you have no chance of serendipity. It just doesn't happen and you can never be sure that you've done your best by the footage.

But narrative/doco hybrids, like Gaylene Preston's Home By Christmas*, Leanne Pooley's* Beyond The Edge*, start with scripts?*

Well that's really interesting because you can't get funding in this country unless you start with a script. For a documentary. Oh yes. In this country, now, there has been a period for most of this century where there has been no independent documentary funding. A documentary fund has just been established for feature documentary — for six of them — and you have to provide a very very good outline to get the funding. A director always has some sort of an outline but some things occur which need to be documented and you cannot possibly know where they're going to go, what you're going to come up with. You walk into it being interested in the subject, with a series of questions about it. Jess didn't know what she was going to come up with, with Sister Loyola.

Jess is not a religious person. She was really curious about why this little old lady stayed sixty years in the Catholic Church, but she also had some questions about God. So she had a journey of her own. She could not know where that was going to lead because she didn't

know a) whether there is a God and b) what that could possibly end up looking like.

So there were some things she knew, some things she could script, but the only script that she used was that within the four seasons she knew that she would deal with death in Autumn. She knew that in Springtime she would deal with new beginnings. She knew that in Winter she would deal with the preparation for life — both children and soil. And Summertime would be the abundance of return and the richness of where her children went to, what happened to them and what happened in her life. So she knew some questions she wanted to ask Sister Loyola and in which season to ask them. But she had no idea where those questions would go.



Gardening With Soul *Q & A L-R Vicki Pope, producer, Jess Feast, director; & Annie*

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Why are you an editor and not a director?

Crikey — why am I an editor? I know why I'm an editor and not a director, that's easy, but why am I an editor to begin with? Like so many things in life, I kind of lucked into editing. I didn't set out to be involved in film. In fact I was a wife, a housewife. Had a couple of jobs. But I guess I always had a lot of... hesitating over the word 'ambition', because I don't think that's really it. Right from early days I was driven to make as much of myself as I could, I was driven to extend myself, to find out what I could do. And that drove me out of the marriage and into Design School and from Design School into film. And into the area of film which was probably what was most at hand at the time because it was Pat Cox who suggested it to me. He'd just set up an independent editing service and he had guided me on one edit. So I started out in editing.

And there is something, there's something about the images that just drives me all the time. About putting them together, about that moment of connection between one shot and another, about what happens that comes out of it. It isn't just this shot and then that shot, it's what happens at that moment of intersection. It can be magical. And I would say that ever since 1975 when I first cut anything, it's like an addict, you're always searching for that same high. And all the time I'm searching in the footage no matter whether it's drama or documentary, but it happens more often in documentary, I'm searching for those moments of magic that happen. And there's nothing like it. I've tried to go away from editing but I can't. It's so magical. Every film is magical, every one of my films has something in it. Yeah.

. . .

I've stayed in editing because I actually have the hands on for those moments of magic, for those moments of transformation. I'm not asking somebody else's hands to do it I'm not having to translate about it. It's immediate. There's nothing between me and the image, there is no other person, I'm in there, there is no other person in between. And that I will not give up.

I sometimes wonder how directors can ever work with other people if they have some sort of vision of their own. Because they have to accommodate a DOP's vision, a sound mixer's vision... And yeah, sometimes my moments of magic are carved away and whittled down, all sorts of stuff, but I'm still in the chair with my fingers on the keys controlling how much gets whittled away and still trying to retain the magic of it.



Annie editing Hook, Line & Sinker*, with Shane Loader. Torchlight Films photograph.*

And I haven't wanted to be a director. Mainly because I haven't had anything to say! Except for *Double Take*. It's a documentary about institutional racism in New Zealand in the 1980s and the reason I went into it was because I knew there was no other director in this country who had the training in anti-racism that I had had up to the point. No other Pākehā director and it had to be a Pākehā director and so I just went, 'Yep, I do know what needs to be said, I know how it needs to be said and constructed and what it needs to be

used for'. I was at that stage working in anti-racism workshops and so I simply stopped other work and went straight into that.

That particular doco was used only in anti-racism workshops. That's what it was built for. It worked hard for three years, that film. And interestingly enough I'll be going to Auckland on Thursday, taking a digital copy with me to be uploaded onto an anti-racism website where it will continue to work [available only to trainers]. It's cool. I'm delighted. Twenty-five years is one generation and we've come around full circle and we have to do it all again. The doco is out of date but some of the conceptual material in it is still relevant.

But there is a more basic thing about why I am an editor and not a director and this goes back to my family. And in my family my father ran a business and my mother worked alongside him in that business and she matched him hour for hour, had seven children and she basically stood at his shoulder and supported him. And that is my role model through everything. So although I sometimes operate as a leader and out in front and sort of leading a charge and I'm the person who stands up in a conference and challenges or whatever it might be, in fact, where I work best is standing behind a director's shoulder and supporting them. And that's why for me a kaupapa is really important because I am supporting somebody else's vision. So it's got to be a good vision.

I'm much more comfortable where I am and I'm also perfectly aware that the real power in a film sits at that editing bench. I am quite quite cognisant of that.

Can anyone look at your work and say, 'that's an Annie Collins edit'?

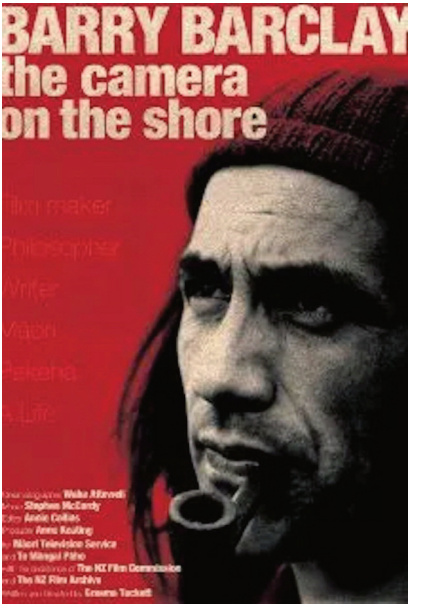
. . .

You can look at any one of the films that I have worked on and once you are familiar with one or two of the documentaries that I have cut you will see it in every one of them. They all have that sort of flavour to them and it's something that has concerned me, because I don't want every film that comes off this bench to look like every other film that comes off it, but I actually cannot work any other way.

I think the commonality in my work is the process that I have been describing to you, my insistence on kaupapa and I won't work on anything unless it's there.

Mmmm. That tends to cut out of my oeuvre certain sorts of doco or reality TV. I don't get those because I don't allow them in the door. So you'll find that there's a commonality running through the docos that I handle but the difference between, for instance, the doco on Barry Barclay, *The Camera on the Shore*, and *Gardening with Soul*, I mean they are very different pieces of work.

What's common in them is there's some sort of, I dunno what it is, there's some sort of humanity, I dunno, you might be able to answer this, I dunno. There's some sort of heart sitting there. I know what I'm looking for when I'm handling the footage. Yeah, I can't explain it.



What other editors do you look to?

In documentary I find that a really hard question to answer. There are documentaries that I will not go and see because I know who the editor is and I know their weaknesses and I don't want to be sitting through a film that has not been as rigorously dealt with as I require films to be.

You mentioned earlier that you'd just watched Courtney Hunt's Frozen River *edited by Kate Williams and John Crowley's* Boy A*, edited by Lucia Zucchetti and you were impressed by the editing.*

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The quality that drew me in is that it isn't about the editor, there's a warmth towards the subject, there's a handling of the drama characters which brought out the humanity and warmth of them. So that there were things within those characters that connected with you and drew you in and the poignancy of the situations — the edits were handled in quite poignant ways, the edits weren't flashy or striking. It was quiet and very human and quite moving. And I see that from women editors more. I see it from women more than men.

So it doesn't matter whether the director is male or female, or the writer, you see that quality in the way it's cut?

In drama you have to have a director who is directing the performance that way to begin with. I don't think there's a clear cut division between a director's work and the editor's work. You can look at my doco work and say, that's an Annie Collins edit. But I look at my documentary work with a fairly cold eye now and I go 'Yep, that one, that one, that one. And then I look at the directors who directed me on them and I go, 'Yes, they were very very good directors'. And if I didn't have such good directors those cuts would not be as good as they are.

So maybe it's a little bit like a marriage, two people create a third element?

Yes, yes, there is something else that comes into play. You put two shots together and from that moment of intersection bursting out of it you can obtain magic. With a director and editor in the cutting room here, the relationship is very close, very intimate, and out of it there can be this real atmosphere created but also a welling up of

ideas and conceptual stuff that bounces out of this intimate relationship. Jess and I found that. She's not the only director I've found that with. Rob Sarkies and I have that. With Jess and I, much to her surprise she found she enjoyed the editing process immensely because this room was filled with laughter a lot of the time. Besides good coffee and lots of cake and tears at times, but basically it was a room filled with warmth between the two of us and we wanted to get in here and working. And yeah, something else is created out of the middle of that.

I have noticed a gender difference. The men are much much more focused in their approach to the edit and also tend not to allow themselves to wander into a more compassionate way of expressing themselves.

But for the directors that walk into this room there are more similarities than differences and the similarities are: not one of them brings an ego in with them. Or if they do it's pretty quickly hung up outside the door the next visit. Because it doesn't survive in this room. Nothing survives in this room except the footage. And I learnt that from Rob Sarkies who never ever brings his ego in, into anything to do with film. He's very particular, he has a most specific artistic way of operating and he is full on all the time from when he walks in at 8am to when he leaves at 6pm but there's no ego here.

The women directors, no egos come in, no and that's actually the most important thing, because as soon as an ego walks in the kaupapa walks out because they are diametrically opposed.

. . .

Have you ever wished that you could have more women subjects like Sister Loyola?

Yes, yes, because it throws into sharp relief that so many of my documentary subjects are male. I don't really mind whether they're male or female subjects. I would like to see more films like *Gardening with Soul* being made but I don't care whether they're about male or female so long as they are good role models. So long as they are dealing with those really deep inbuilt qualities and ethics of our culture. That kind of film is missing here I think. And this is what I would like to see more of.

If somebody had spent some time and for instance, filmed my mother, she would have embodied most of the things that Loyola has — just an ordinary woman from a small town. Nobody knows her name, nobody would think to spend so much time and effort and resources making a film about such a little-known person. But there are people like her in every town, women like her in every town. And they are the ones who place our ethics and qualities in us, they are the ones who bring us up, they are the ones who give us our culture.

So I would like, I would really like there to be more films about the most ordinary people you can think of. Loyola already had a profile, she's in an unusual situation and she could do unusual work because she is in that situation. But by crikey my mum raised seven children, worked alongside her husband for fifteen-hour days, buried two of her children and lived a life where, if I think about strength, she is the first person I think about. If I think about warmth and lovingness she is the first person I think about. If I think about the ability to put food on the table she is the person I think about. And there

will be hundreds of people like this throughout the country and those ORDINARY people carrying in them those so-called ordinary qualities — that's what we need.

And you're not talking about reality TV?

I am not. I am talking about loving portraits of people with both their weaknesses and their strengths and how they cope with them.

Maybe it's a good time to talk about Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi and what effect it's had on you and your work?

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi — which is one of the founding documents of this nation — has played an enormous part in my life and still does. It began to play that part when I was engaged on *Patu!*, a film directed by Merata Mita, which was about the Springbok rugby tour of New Zealand in 1981. And it wasn't until I was on that film that I realized there were two different realities in this country — one for indigenous New Zealanders and one for Pākehā New Zealanders. And I also realized at that stage that my skills were adequate only for my own culture. And that if I wanted to really be able to do my job, first of all I needed to know who I am a damn sight better than I did.



Merata Mita and Annie laying track 1983. Photographer Jocelyn Carlin.

Because I'd never had to question myself and I sat beside a woman who questioned me.



Merata Mita and Annie doing the mix 1983. Photographer Jocelyn Carlin.

. . .

Was that the beginning of the challenge about kaupapa?

Yes, that was the beginning of the challenge about kaupapa because that was the first time I came into contact with the word, that was when I began to understand the layers that are involved in the word and I learnt them in a working situation. I didn't read about them, I learnt them on the job. In order to complete that particular film — *Patu!* — I had to draw on, I had to think about and draw on the things which my parents had instilled in me in terms of the qualities they held dear. And it was so tough working on that film with that particular director that unless I did something about myself, about strengthening myself, I would not have been able to complete it.

The main thing that got me through that was remembering my mother saying to us kids — 'you don't come second, you come first' — and — I watched her stand up under the greatest strain a mother can face and support her husband and not be beaten. Now both of those things are also the ways of operating that people who colonise another country use. I will not be second and I will not be beaten. They can also be used for good. And I remembered those and I held my head up. You remember your parents saying to you 'hold your head up, walk up straight'? And I held my head up and went back in for all the weeks and months following. And that was the beginning of starting to understand who I am, what my strengths are, where they have come from and why I have them.

I look at Te Tiriti o Waitangi and I know that I have immense strengths to bring to the relationship that document embodies. They are the strengths that undermined that document. They are

also the strengths that can uphold it. It depends on the spirit with which you approach it. It depends on your own kaupapa of how you approach anything because everything we do is a relationship. A relationship between you and me, a relationship between me and the director, a relationship between me and the subject. Relationships between me and my neighbours.



Annie & her assistant track layer 1983. Photographer Jocelyn Carlin.

And after I'd finished working on that film I moved deliberately and solidly, while still continuing to edit, into anti-racism work based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

. . .

And my understanding of subjects both Māori and Pākehā deepened and deepened. I have done a lot of work with Māori directors which has really increased my understanding but I absolutely know that I cannot cut indigenous material without an indigenous head beside me.



Fred Renata DOP, who often worked with Merata Mita and Annie, at the Indigenous Filmmakers Symposium in Honour of Merata Mita 2010.

Nothing that I have learnt, no matter how committed I am to the Te Tiriti o Waitangi — nothing qualifies me to cut another culture's material without that other culture being present.

What about the Barry Barclay documentary, The Camera on The Shore?

Yeah. Indigenous subject, Pākehā director, Māori producer, Pākehā editor, so two Pākehās in the cutting room. When that director first

came to me I sent him away because he couldn't articulate a kaupapa. This was to be a film about one of the most respected indigenous filmmakers in the world — someone who was writing the textbooks on handling indigenous images. And then Barry died. And the director came back to me. He'd had a go at putting a cut up and he knew he wasn't anywhere near where he needed to be. And I asked him again what his kaupapa was. And this time he could answer and we did the best we could. Because Barry had given the directorial role to that director. He knew what the problems would be but he thought he was going to be around. I required that it go back to the family before it was locked and that other Māori checked it. And I probably knew him as well as anybody. But there are holes. There were areas of it we stayed away from because we did not have the knowledge or the expertise to go there. My tears are for the loss of Barry.

He was one of your mentors?

Yes, there were a bunch of them. Merata would be far and away the strongest influence in my editing. Barry, Tama Poata, Martyn Sanderson, Jonathan Dennis.

What changes do you see happening?

The significant changes are basically in what comes into your home, the television area.

And the internet?

. . .

I'm just thinking about that. Yeah. And the internet, and with any luck, television will be subjugated into the internet so that what comes into a family is what they choose to come in rather than having second rate fare served up on the big box — something that somebody else chooses.

The biggest changes that are happening are the attitudes towards the actual craft of filmmaking, especially documentary out in the field. Because it is digital, because it is cheap to shoot, the discipline of focus, of walking into a situation and being focused enough that you understand what you need to point a camera at, of being focused enough to hear what you need to point your camera at — that has been massively eroded. In the beginning you had only so much filmstock, you had to be careful how much you used and you CHOSE when you rolled.

The plus of digital is that you can shoot everything. Why is it then that filmmakers appear to think that because you can shoot everything. It doesn't really matter how it's shot, you no longer need to be mentally focused, you no longer need to listen because someone is still rolling — they'll get it somehow. Well, no actually, they don't. And that's got to impact upon the subject while they're being filmed too. The problem is that the people who have grown up only with digital do not know the difference. They cannot recognize what they're doing. They cannot recognize the quality difference between focusing on someone when you're shooting them and just shooting.

You've worked in a lot of docos. Why have you chosen to go into narrative film? Because there you don't have a kaupapa.

. . .

Oh yes you do. Oh yes you do! Up front. I don't see a great deal of difference between documentary and drama as far as the business of kaupapa is concerned. I don't want to work on shit. You've got to have a reason to be making that film, you've got to have something to say — and that's your kaupapa. You look at Rob Sarkies' work — *Scarfies*, *Out of the Blue* and *Two Little Boys*. Ho! What was *Two Little Boys* about? It's just a fart in a bottle really. But it wasn't really — it was about manipulation, about relationships, about how one person controls another and how you go round in circles in life. *Out of the Blue* — obvious. *Scarfies* — blimming interesting stuff in there — just a film about a bunch of students and they get themselves into an odd situation with a basement full of marijuana. Except it's a lot more than that. It's about how you get pulled into making decisions that you would never ever normally make, never ever dream of making. Decisions of life and death. It's a kaupapa. Interesting stuff.

And what about *Lord of the Rings*?

That's got to be my own kaupapa. *Lord of the Rings*, I searched for a job on it because I knew it would be the biggest production in the world and that the editorial systems necessary to handle that would be immense and I would never get access to such systems unless I worked on those films. To begin with I got three months work, increased to a year and then again, in the finish four-and-a-half years. Does *Rings* have a kaupapa? Yes, it's about good and evil eh? It's about as simple as you could get! Though why they didn't just give the ring to the eagle and tell it to drop it down the mountain I'll never know! Now, I didn't go off to the director and ask him to tell me about his kaupapa — I didn't do that this time.... I was not one of the editors — I was merely an assembly editor and part of an entire editorial department that was fourteen strong. That's a very different type of filmmaking.

. . .

So what did Lord of The Rings *give you?*

Rings gave me doing things in a New Zealand way, finding solutions to an immense problem, an immense set of circumstances that nobody else had precedents for. We set the precedents here. And because it was here in New Zealand and especially because it was here in Wellington with the sort of feel around filmmaking that Wellington has, we had the opportunity to be quite intimately involved in every aspect of it.

I think that the experience expanded me because it really disciplined me into working with a really big team instead of just the one-to-one that's in a cutting room. Obviously, the huge systems in place to handle footage and to output it to various departments, they were immense undertakings. But of course I've not worked on anything nearly as big since then and nor do I want to. It gave me disciplines. It honed my disciplines a great deal. I'm really appreciative of that.

It gave me a complete understanding of the place of the editing bench within the entire range of people involved in a large feature film and we're talking about VFX, Sound, Miniatures, motion capture, laboratory, the workshop — armourers, costume.....everything. We were involved with them all. And also, as each film was completing, the digital games people, the marketing people, all of those were funneled through editorial at some stage and had to be serviced.

. . .

That whole interlinking of everybody was really important for me. It's very important because more and more I'm working with newer and newer, younger and younger directors, people who work in an industry where every six months or so new technology is on the market. I think that what it does for the younger directors is that they're focusing on getting their film shot and they don't have the experience yet of this whole network of post production that's going to be serviced from this edit bench. You used to just shoot film and if you were going to be finishing on digital it didn't matter — it just went through the telecine chain, the lab knew what to supply you with and away you went. Now it's a very different thing. The workflow changes with each camera. From Rings I learnt where everything was going to go afterwards and that each one of them required specific formats.

Were you ever working overseas? Would you ever work overseas now?

In many ways I was overseas for four years on *Rings* — I was in a country called Middle Earth which doesn't have a great deal to do with New Zealand. I've popped over to Aussie to give feedback on a film but quite frankly I'm not much interested in other countries' films. It takes six months from go to whoa for a feature. Do I want to spend six months or more somewhere else working on something which is not relevant to New Zealand, is not relevant to Treaty relationships, which doesn't mean a helluva lot to people I'm committed to, who are other New Zealanders? And the answer is, it'd have to be a bloody good director and a really good story to haul me away from here.

And what are you working on now?

. . .

The projects I'm working on now, I have a feature doco coming in in the next few weeks, I've just delivered a short film and I have another short film to give feedback on and that will take me right through to February next year when I have a feature to go with Rob Sarkies and I have another feature lined up after that as well. I'm always working.

I would assess that I get paid for half of the work that I do, but that's the nature of the film industry in New Zealand, especially of the material that comes to me. A lot of it is underfunded, or not funded, but they're films that need to be made and I like them. I work for megabucks on a feature film if it's funded, and that enables me to do the other stuff that I really like as well.

And that's an easy decision?

Absolutely. I prefer working for nothing because you're not beholden to anybody with what the film does. You're just making the film that the director wants.

So sometimes the funders require changes?

Oh yes yes yes. Let us not go into the funders and how they like changing films!

Is there anything that you would still really really like to do?

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I would really like to work with a director that has a head that can really bounce off the wall! I would love to work with a director and writer who are not bound by the restrictions of chronology. I just would LOVE to move outside the narrative.

Tell me more!

Well, almost every feature film in this country has a beginning a middle and an end and it goes in one straight line. And it's basically as boring as batshit unless it's a really interesting story and not a lot of them are. I'm just blimmin intrigued about shifting time. Because you can do it in film and why aren't people doing it more? And the feelings, the magic that you can create by shifting time. And I'm not just talking let us have a flashback here or there, I'm talking real shifting of time. Example is *Babel*. Writer is Guillermo Arriaga — Mexican. I loved its shifting of time, the way that he played with it and you don't know it until the very last shot.



Annie-the-winner!

After this 2013 interview, *Gardening With Soul* won Best Documentary at that year's New Zealand Film Awards. Annie had two nominations as Best Editor, Documentary and won, with James Brown, for *He Toki Huna: NZ in Afghanistan*. She was also nominated as Best Editor for the feature *Shopping*, which won Best Feature Film. In 2014, Annie won Best Editor at New Zealand's Oscar-qualifying Show Me Shorts festival for *Eleven*, the beautiful multi-award-

winning short written by Kate Prior and directed by Abigail Greenwood. At the New Zealand Film Awards 2014 she was nominated for Best Documentary Editor for *Voices of the Land: Nga Reo o te Whenua* and edited *Consent: The Louise Nicholas Story*, winner of Best Television Feature. She also won Women in Film & Television's Great Southern Film & Television Award for Outstanding Contribution to the New Zealand Screen Industry.

WATCH SOME ANNIE-EDITED FILMS ONLINE

Gardening With Soul https://ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz/film/gardening-with-soul/ *Gardening With Soul* on Facebook https://www.facebook.-com/GardeningWithSoul

The Great Maiden's Blush https://ondemand.nzfilm.co.nz/film/the-great-maidens-blush/

Patu! https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/patu-1983

The Camera on the Shore https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/the-camera-on-the-shore-2009

MORE CLIPS

Screentalk Legends — Annie Collins with Rosie Howells. https://www.n-zonscreen.com/interviews/legends-annie-collins-2024

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Q&A *Gardening With Soul* https://funeralsand-snakes.net/2013/09/11/cinematica-extra-gardening-soul/

NZOnScreen interview with Clare O'Leary: Annie talks about working on *Patu!*, *Scarfies*, *Mouth Wide Open*, *Lord of The Rings* and *Out of The Blue*, . https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=789dI1yG6BY

WOMEN WHO DO IT (EXTRACT, 2017)

Marian Evans

In 2017, I wrote at length about gender inequity in the allocation of Aotearoa New Zealand (AotearoaNZ)'s taxpayer funds to screen-based fictions. In this excerpt from a longer essay, I wanted to celebrate the women who were making webseries.[1]

1. The full and fully referenced article is available here https://medium.com/womens-film-activism/nz-update-11-1-the-women-who-do-it-9965444ed894; and in https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral/womens-film-festivals-and-womeninfilm-databases, in a new section about women's filmmaking in Aotearoa.



Most of the Waru *women during a standing ovation at TorontoL-R Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu, Awanui Simich-Pene, Chelsea Cohen, Renae Maihi, Katie Wolfe, Casey Kaa, Paula Jones, Briar Grace-Smith*

BACKGROUND

Ever since the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC)'s gender policy was established, I've heard slogans like 'Do It', used in

attempts to persuade women writers and directors to participate in various NZFC initiatives, and more recently I've heard institutional endorsement of 'rattling women's cages' so that they/we will participate more enthusiastically in NZFC-funded programmes. Nothing wrong with 'Do It' in general, it can be encouraging to hear. But, with respect, it often isn't helpful to encourage women to engage with a system where, to quote Amanda Cole's excellent *What's Wrong With This Picture?; Directors and Gender Inequality in the Canadian Screen-Based Production Industry*, prepared for the Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen—

> [...] bias is filtered through the decision-making capacities of a complex terrain of industry gatekeepers [...]

There is no formal commitment to investing equally in projects with women and men attached as writers and directors, where the established gender equity policy is patchy and the culture is aligned to men's ways of working. As Amanda states (her emphases)—

> Key to understanding the issue of gender inequality is an analysis not just of discrimination against women, but of *systemic advantage for men*. Gender inequality in the film and television production industry is a systemic problem that *affects* women. Nonetheless, as [her] body of research clearly shows, the issue is not one created by women. Consequently, solutions to an issue of considerable economic and social significance require an industry-wide effort.

[...]There are (of course) some Women Who Do It who write and direct entirely within taxpayer-funded agencies. Others who make features, often with female protagonists, have little or no involvement with those agencies. Andrea Bosshard for instance. Rose Goldthorp. Bea Joblin. But Women Who Do It are most likely to create fictional short-form series and these are mostly webseries for online distribution. (Documentary webseries are not considered here.) Collectively, over the last couple of years, the combined screentime of women's webseries has probably matched the combined screentime of all the features that the NZFC has funded. Easily. NZOA, unlike the NZFC, has a digital fund and has supported some of these for production — typically $100,000 per series. But NZOA says it 'cannot easily extract fictional webseries as a digital data category [and] even if we could, the data sets each year would be very small', so it's reasonable to infer that in the overall scheme of its funding allocations NZOA's investment in webseries is small.

The achievement of Women Who Do It in webseries could be understood as secondary to 'serious' film and television drama. But I believe that these series are central to the development of women's storytelling within AotearoaNZ and for the world. I'm inspired by the ideas they explore, the worlds they create and the stories they tell; and impressed that from this small country their creators develop global audiences, both online and at festivals, where they regularly win awards. In general, the webseries experiment with female protagonism and with intersectional representation. They are almost always entertaining, often very funny and usually have high production values (just once I've been unable to catch a key punchline). The Women Who Do It's commitment to these short-form series, and their achievement, is especially remarkable because as women they are typically time poor and have limited financial resources.

. . .

Some women make webseries *and* develop short and feature films with the NZFC. Others make webseries as a step towards participating in the international trend of highly successful long-form series by and about women and because, as one of the Women Who Do It told me—

> [...] it is satisfying — the characters and story arcs can be more creative with time to play with them, and TV stations [and other commercial platforms] do your marketing for you. And you are employed over a longer period of time.

And the Women Who Do It develop and often produce their own webseries as multi-hyphenates; their individual roles shift to and from producer, writer, director, actor, publicist, though there are also some outstanding webseries producers-only like Robin Murphy (*Pot Luck*) and Kerry Warkia (who executive produces for Flat3 Productions, though she started as an actor and — as Brown Sugar Apple Grunt with her husband Kiel McNaughton — was a writer as well as producer on the webseries *Nia's Extraordinary Life*; and producer of *Waru*, just screened at the Toronto International Film Festival).

The women who write and direct short-form series don't come from nowhere: the women of AotearoaNZ have always shone in short-form artistic expression, starting — it seems to me from my limited perspective as a Pākehā, a tauiwi — with indigenous short-forms, honed over centuries and forever evolving. For example, Māori women excel at the various forms of waiata and I believe that the

karanga — the opening, formal call and response that Māori women give when groups meet, usually on a marae though also in many other places (I've never forgotten Irihapeti Ramsden's and Miriama Evans's at London's Guildhall, when we accepted Keri Hulme's Booker Prize on her behalf) — is among its many qualities also an art form. Like a fine poem or painting a karanga evokes a visceral response: it opens my heart, connects me to people who are with us and not with us, with time and with place and with purpose; and reminds me to pay attention, to think and act as well as I can.

Settlers brought the ephemeral short-form arts of letter-, journal-, and diary-writing (loving the just-published *He Reo Wāhine: Māori Women's Voices in Colonial New Zealand* by Lachy Patterson and Angela Wanhalla). The short story writing brilliance of Katherine Mansfield, Janet Frame, Patricia Grace and many others followed. We have extraordinary practitioners of short-form storytelling in children's picture books: Katarina Mataira, Margaret Mahy, Joy Cowley, Patricia Grace again, Robyn Kahukiwa and others. We have poets: five of our eleven poets laureate have been women. Women have always done well in taxpayer-funded short filmmaking and our participation in the last decade or so has been quite high; the NZFC's own research — a little while ago — records that when women directors make taxpayer-funded short films our work is more likely than men's to be screened at A-list international film festivals. Women wrote and directed four of the six finalists in New Zealand's Best Shorts competition at the New Zealand International Film Festival this year and three last year; this year two finalists, one of them the overall winner, made their films as students, highlighting — for me anyway — how digital natives' participation in screen storytelling is democratising filmmaking at every level.

. . .

And serial short films aren't new here. For instance, Joanna Margaret Paul's short films from the 70s are a serial exploration of ideas that she also examined in series of paintings and poems; they regularly screen internationally. Today, women's engagement with short film series appears to be growing. Over the last few weeks I've heard of a sequel to one successful short film from a few years back; and at the end of the latest 48Hours competition, Becca Barnes — lead writer at *Power Rangers* — reported that Squidwig, her long-standing and mixed-gender group, where she co-writes and directs, had made two entries that relate to their entry from last year: '*Squidwig* and *Squidwig 2: Electric Boogaloo* got both our films in on time — and they're BOTH sequels to last year's film. It's a trilogy!'

WARU

Waru is a new feature film that debuted at the New Zealand International Film Festival, just screened at Toronto, will open imagineNATIVE and will be released in AotearoaNZ cinemas soon. It's structured as an inter-related series of eight single-shot and self-contained short films with Māori women at the centre, made by nine Māori women writers and directors, two of them responsible for each 'episode', each one shot in a single day. *Waru* explores interventions associated with the violent death of a child and, through this, the nexus between the effects of colonisation on a single community and the community's diverse and complex female protagonists. It's breathtaking.

The screening I went to opened with karanga and I experienced the film itself as karanga too, eight powerful and uninterrupted calls and responses that left me fully open and committed to a national conversation about violence towards children; and wondering if *Waru* is a response to Merata Mita's call in her last film, *Saving Grace*, also about child abuse.

. . .



Still from Waru.

Nearly 30 years after the most recent Māori woman-written- and -directed feature, Merata Mita's *Mauri*, *Waru* marks a turning point, the very best kind of turning point because it shows, instead of a solitary, exceptional Māori-woman-writer-and-director for today, a representative cohort of the many contemporary Māori women qualified to write and direct episodic television and long cinematic fictions. As one of *Waru*'s writer-directors, Katie Wolfe, said in a Radio New Zealand interview the other day–

> Before *Waru* was made, when it was pitched as an idea, someone quipped 'there wouldn't be eight Māori women in this country that could helm a feature film,

> which was just crazy because the women who helmed this feature film were incredibly experienced.[2]

I think that *Waru*, funded by the NZFC — among others — also authoritatively signals that it's time for the NZFC to take short-form series seriously, to make strenuous efforts to find ways of supporting them as well as single short films; and to work with NZOA to incentivise the women who write and direct them to make features and to crossover to making television series.

[...] Now to the webseries. It's impossible to keep up with them all but here are some. The first three involve writers and directors whose other work is part of the NZFC's feature pipeline.

SOME WEBSERIES EXAMPLES

2. http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/insight/audio/20185650/insight-women-s-work-and-the-gender-wage-gap



Flat 3 at work: J J Fong, Ally Xue, Perlina Lau & Roseanne Liang.

Flat3 Productions' three series are *Flat3* and *Friday Night Bites* and *Fong Shui Advice & Insight*, made with some funding from New Zealand on Air (NZOA). The whole team — Roseanne Liang, Ally Xue, JJ Fong and Perlina Lau — storyboards together, with Roseanne as primary writer-director, although sometimes guest writers or directors contribute.

Roseanne also co-wrote and directed the NZFC-funded rom-com *My Wedding & Other Secrets*, won this year's Best Short Film Audience Award for her NZFC-funded *Do No Harm* which tells the backstory of one of the characters in her feature in development, *Black Lotus*; and recently qualified for consideration for an Academy Award. The group describes the Flat3 productions as—

> ...packed full of pop culture, cussing and awks-as situations. All smothered in a rich New Zealand accent and garnished with a light grating of intersectional f-word. You know you want it.

(Yes, we do!)

Jessica Hansell, Coco Solid, 'musician, writer, artist and philosoflygirl', writes and appears in the amazing *Only in Aotearoa*. She wrote and co-directed the *Aroha Bridge* we-series, an 'animated snapshot of the multicultural melting pot that is Aotearoa' that evolved from her comic strip turned animated short, *Hook Ups*; and was funded by NZOA.

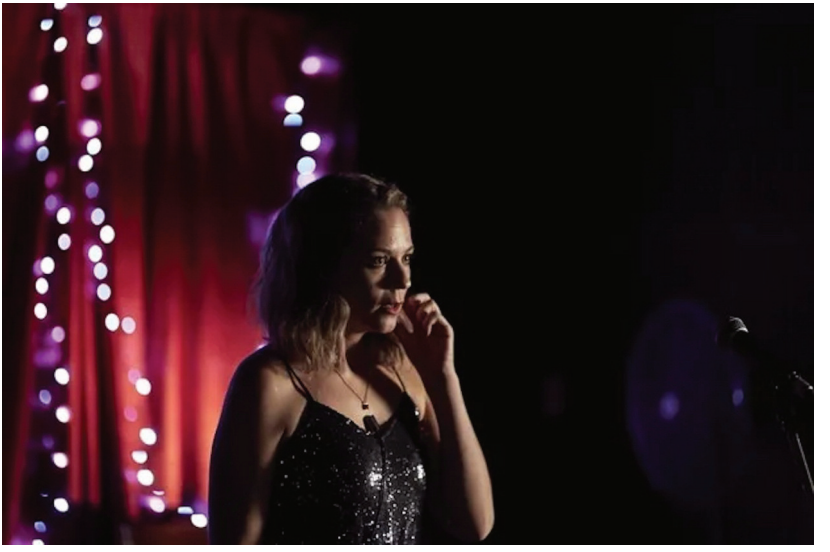


Jessica et al in Only in Aotearoa.

Women & Hollywood described Aroha Bridge like this—

> Let's say you combined the family dynamics of *Transparent*, the way *Key & Peele* dissects the myriad expressions of race, and the world-building of *Orange is the New Black*. The result still wouldn't be as interesting and multi-faceted as *Aroha Bridge* ... *Aroha Bridge* is that rare series that has a defined point-of-view, a balance of specific and universal humor, and the advantage of just being entertaining.[3]

Jessica also has an NZFC-funded feature in development.



Shoshana McCallum in Stand Up Girl.

3. 2025: link broken.

Actor and writer Shoshana McCallum and actor-writer-director Aidee Walker have created *Stand Up Girl*, about a sex worker and comedian, written and played by Shoshana, directed by Aidee and inspired by Lucy Roche, a stand-up comic and sex worker Shoshana saw perform.

According to one report, Lucy's set sparked—

> "...a really interesting discussion' among Shoshana's friends after the show– 'As feminists, we were on board, but as people ... where do you stand? It was confronting, and weird, and when I found out she was a sex worker, I was surprised ... it came from that really.[4]

Shoshana wrote the series with Lucy's 'blessing' and after some further research. I watched all the *Stand Up Girl* episodes in one go and found it a more nuanced inquiry into the world of sex work than *China Girl: Top of the Lake*.

Aidee Walker has written and directed four short films and she too is engaged with the NZFC system. Her *Friday Tigers* won Best Short Film at the New Zealand International Film Festival in 2013. In 2015, she was the Directors & Editors Guild of NZ (DEGNZ)'s TV drama director attachment to SPP's *Westside 2* television series and last year she was one of ten women selected for the DEGNZ's inaugural Women Filmmakers Incubator.

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4. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=11879459

There's The Candle Wasters, too, who made their first series while in high school—

> ...four young women (and a token dude) from New Zealand, who create fierce, funny, feminist webseries. We started in 2014 with *Nothing Much To Do*, inspired by Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, and have gone on to create *Lovely Little Losers* and *Bright Summer Night*.



The Candle Wasters *L-R Sally Bollinger, Minnie Grace, Claris Jacobs, and Elsie Bollinger.*

Their series have had over 5 million views on YouTube, NZOA has funded them several times and they now also have funding through YouTube's Skip Ahead initiative. Their *Happy Playland* is just out, set

in a children's playground where one of the characters, an aspiring actress works before it is closed down. Like all great stories, she also falls in love. In a recent feature, the collective said of *Happy Playland*—

> We wanted women, we wanted a lesbian love story. All our other series had background lesbians...We had all these elements, like a character with anxiety, which we wanted to include.[5]

NZOA has also funded their *Tragicomic*, on its way.

And there's the brilliant lesbian series *Pot Luck*, written and directed by Ness Simons, with its worldwide audience of more than 2 million, such a pleasure to watch. Its much-anticipated second, NZOA-funded, season is in post-production.

5. 2025: link gone.



The three stars of Pot Luck *L-R Tess Jamieson-Karaha, Nikki Si'ulepa, Anji Kreft.*

Baby Mama's Club, a comedy drama written and directed by Hanelle Harris, was 'born out of a desire to see authentic representation of Māori and Polynesian women on screen ... just being themselves ... sassy and fun, sexy and fierce' and was funded by NZOA at the end of 2016.



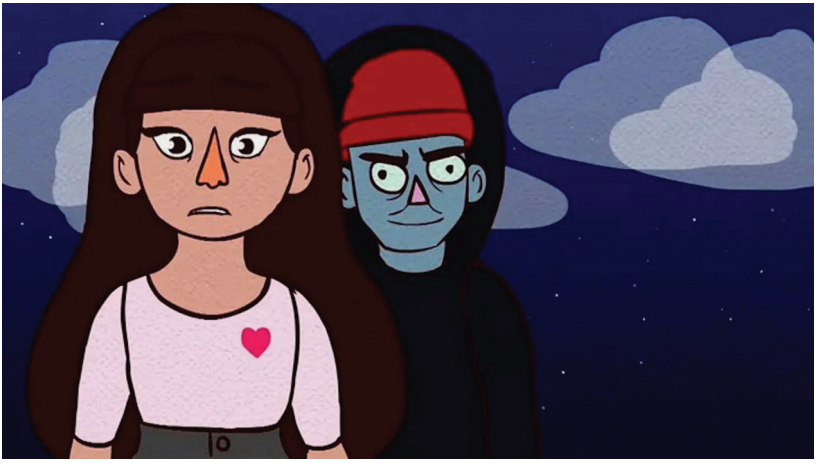
L-R Hanelle Harris, Luciane Buchanan, Suivai Autagavaia, Moana Johnson.

It began with a fictional Facebook post where a woman appealed for help in finding 'Johnny' the father of her unborn child; the post received a huge response. Hanelle says, in a video about the experiment, that she and her collaborators—

> ... wanted to explore the very real themes that we're looking at in our project which includes what it is to be a woman, to be brown, to be young, to be a mother in New Zealand today. We really wanted to challenge and expose some of the judgement and the misconceptions we feel exist around these issues.[6]

6. https://www.facebook.com/sophiafolau/videos/1663232071443 11/

And there's Maha Albadrawi and Lucy Zee's superb *So This Happened*, real stories of harassment, as told by those who have experienced them, fictionalised through being told through animation and available on demand at TVNZ.



from So This Happened.

Bea Joblin is a fine example of a witty, thoughtful, digital native, beginning with *The Hutt Valley Dream Project*, moving on to *CNT Live*, 'the show that talks about what matters to women, where the only thing missing is yoU!'. I love it.



Bea Joblin in Louise Hutt's Online Heroines.

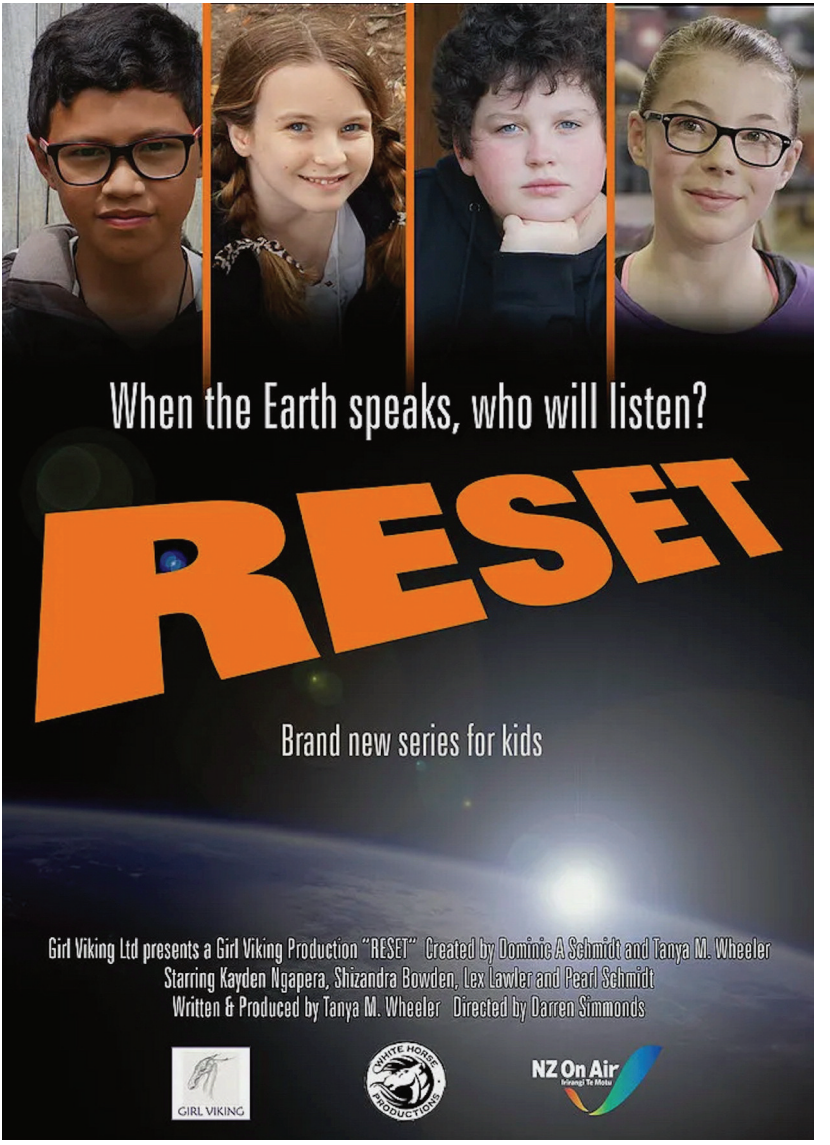
Bea also has a feature in post-production, *Births, Deaths & Marriages*, already with lots of behind-the-scenes episodes.

Most recently there's the charming *Oddly Even*, the pilot written and directed by Ashleigh Reid and Isla Macleod, that won TVNZ's New Blood competition.



Still from Oddly Even.

Prolific screenwriter Tanya Wheeler wrote and produced RESET, (directed by Darren Simmonds), the award-winning children's scifi webseries, about 'kids trying to do the right things against the odds'.



. . .

It won both MipTV's Digital Short Form Content for Children 2017 competition and the Best Webseries at the Los Angeles Webseries Festival Global.

Tanya's now made a teaser/trailer for a new television series, called *Realm*, aimed primarily at the teen girls/women demographic, which is 'getting great feedback from test readers...has Australian and New Zealand investors and sponsors putting money in to take it to Netflix and the Australian networks and TV studios'. Because of its target audience, Tanya would love to have women directors for *Realm*.

Look beyond all these for more, like *Auckward Love*, just about to start its third season, 'a funny, sexy and almost romantic webseries' created by actor Holly Shervey, and co-written and produced with actor/writer Jess Sayer and actor/director Emmett Skilton.

WHY & HOW THEY DO IT

Filmmaker Louise Hutt's remarkable *Online Heroines* is an absorbing in-depth webseries about women who make webseries in AotearoaNZ, part of her ground-breaking Masters thesis.



Louise Hutt.

She found that the *Online Heroines'* definition of success 'is not about making money or being famous'. And the Women Who Do It seem to do the work because they can — thanks again, digital revolution — and because they're compelled to keep going. Sometimes they tell me that they wish they felt compelled to do something else that does provide a living. They do it for love. But let's not call them 'amateurs'. They're not.

It's just as well that the Women Who Do It don't do it for the money because even when NZOA funds webseries it's a financial struggle. In a world where women anyway work an extra unpaid hour a day compared with men (that's the equivalent of 36.5 ten-hour days a year!) and on average earn 9% less than men, it matters that even writers and directors of taxpayer-funded features sometimes work without payment. (When finishing her recent NZFC-

funded feature The Inland Road, Jackie van Beek reported that she'd reached the stage where she was effectively 'paying for the privilege of making the film'[7].)

The financial struggle continues right through the process, from development, which often includes a crowdfunding element, to production and post-production, to distribution and audience engagement.

Tanya Wheeler's work on her award-winning RESET's development and pilot was typical, completely unfunded—

> After a ton of [unpaid] hard work over many months the RESET Children's Sci Fi Web Series has been accepted by Māori Television On Demand and received funding from NZOA.[8]

And even with NZOA assistance, the second season of *Pot Luck* needed more money for production and post-production, as the makers explained in their Boosted crowdfunding pitch—

> Thanks to funding from the good people at NZ on Air, Wellington City Council Arts & Culture Fund, and Hell Pizza, we've managed to raise the majority of our budget already. This will cover modest fees for our

7. http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/film/83857086/Jackie-Van-Beek-producing-two-feature-films
8. https://www.boosted.org.nz/projects/reset-childrens-sci-fi-web-series

> cast and crew, equipment hire and art department, but we still need help for production office costs, location expenses, transporting all that gear around and of course we have to feed people! Plus there's the editing and all the magic that happens in post production, and finally distribution.[9]

Repeated funding success seems to make little difference. In their *Online Heroines* episode (around 9' in), The Candle Wasters are particularly open about their financial struggles.[10] They pay their costs, including the costs of employing others. But even with NZOA funding, each of them receives a limited fee, not a wage, and it's not enough to live on, so they all work part time or flexible jobs to make ends meet. In a recent interview, one of the collective says 'We needed to figure out how to pay people properly, otherwise it isn't sustainable'[11]. But they still need to work towards making it more sustainable for them as the creators. Others are in the same position. Another webseries maker told me—

> [The webseries] has occupied my life for over two years now and I have not had any income from it despite the NZOA funding.

So what compels the Women Who Do It do it? I think it has a lot to do with Building Our Own House(s) and the social elements that are inherent in doing that.

9. https://www.boosted.org.nz/projects/pot-luck-season-two
10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Gkr3dBGFoo
11. 2025: link broken.

BUILDING OUR OWN HOUSE(S)



Installation, National Museum of African American History & Culture (Smithsonian).

Some of the Women Who Do It may have followed the trajectory of Ava DuVernay's success as a screen storyteller for varied platforms (*Selma*; 13th; *Queen Sugar*; *A Wrinkle in Time*). They may be familiar with her mantra as an African-American filmmaker, articulated most recently in TIME—

> It's not about knocking on closed doors. It's about building our own house and having our own door.

Ava's consistently urged people to 'Create work ... Look at what you have and work with that'. And for her, building her own house has led to many opportunities through other doors, with Netflix as distributors for *13th*, with Harpo Productions and Warner Horizon TV for *Queen Sugar*, with Disney for *A Wrinkle in Time*; Building Our Own House doesn't preclude walking through other doors when they open and someone beckons you with a welcome from within.

Here in AotearoaNZ there's also movement between a now-established settlement of Own Houses. For instance, Nikki Si'ulepa who stars in *Pot Luck* is — like Roseanne Liang — one of the five women writer-directors in the ten-part short-form series *K' Road Stories*, produced by Hazel Gibson and Morgan Leigh Stewart, who are participants in *Online Heroine*s. Hanelle Harris of *Baby Mama's Club* co-wrote *GirlFight* with its director Roseanne Liang, an episode in Flat3's Friday *Night Bites*, where Malia Albadrawi of *So This Happened* is listed as a producer.[12]

12. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEnsPH2JtWI



Filming Girlfight.

GENDER EQUITY LEADERSHIP 2015

Here in AotearoaNZ staunch Māori women provide gender equity leadership of Ava DuVernay quality, but in the tradition of Merata Mita, who died in 2010 and 'is always with us'. Merata once said—

> Swimming against the tide becomes an exhilarating experience. It makes you strong. I am completely without fear now.

On a panel at the 2015's Big Screen Symposium, one of the *Waru* writer-directors, Chelsea Cohen (Winstanley), with, and supported by, Briar Grace-Smith and Libby Hakaraia, was our first woman filmmaker to publicly challenge the NZFC to support gender equality in the industry and commit to equal funding of women and men



NZFC development exec & writer/director/producer Karin Williams & writer-directors Briar Grace-Smith, Libby Hakaraia of Māoriland Film Festival, Chelsea Cohen & baby, Big Screen Symposium 2015.

She said, according to Twitter—

> The NZFC should make a commitment to funding as many female filmmakers as male...We should all be challenging the NZFC to support gender equality in

> the film industry...Women experience things men can't... like giving birth *points to new baby*[13]

O wow. Not surprised. But totally thrilled, I read and re-read.

This was a red-letter moment, a huge breakthrough. Except for Jane Campion, this is the first time in Aotearoa that any highly achieving woman producer and director made an unequivocal and widely reported public statement that challenges the NZFC to support gender equality and thus encourages and emboldens others ('all' = women and men) to do the same.

I'm full of admiration for Chelsea's action, supported by the others who spoke alongside her. I hope that many others will move to stand beside her. Soon. Regardless, her statement marks a turning point.

[...]

13. Script to Screen, Twitter, 10 October 2015.

'ONLINE HEROINES' (2017)

Louise Hutt



Louise Hutt, director of Online Heroines*, 2017.*

In New Zealand, we like to think of our film industry as pioneering. We've got Weta Workshop, Peter Jackson, Taika Waititi, Andrew Adamson — who made *Shrek* and *Narnia* — and Jemaine Clement from Flight of the Conchords. But it also has a dark underside that

we don't like to talk about. When people play devil's advocate and ask if gender discrimination is even a problem in our industry, I ask if they can name a woman director from New Zealand. On a good day, they've heard of Jane Campion. However, I'm still yet to find anyone who can name a second.

If you're a woman who wants to make films, why is it so hard? Diane Twiss, the first women sound recordist in New Zealand, spent eight years in her apprenticeship, when her male colleagues only had to train for six months because it was policy at the National Film Unit that women were not allowed out with film crews until after 1973. By 2013, when I received my Bachelor's, discrimination had moved from outright policy to more subtle tactics, with only 9% of the New Zealand Film Commission grants for feature film development going to women. This problem isn't unique to New Zealand, and women filmmakers around the world know this struggle.

I became increasingly aware that the likelihood I would break into the traditional circuit of cinemas, festivals, or television was pretty slim. Even at Women in Film and Television events, when stated that I wanted to direct, I was looked at like a unicorn — a mythical creature that shouldn't exist. So I started a search for even rarer unicorns — women who were beating the odds and actually getting their work out there. For my thesis, I set out to interview New Zealand women directors, writers, and producers about their experiences, specifically those outside of cinema, festivals, and television.[1] YouTube does not discriminate when you create an account. PledgeMe and GoFundMe provide money that the New Zealand

1. Hutt, L. (2018). Online Heroines: Exploring the Experiences of Aotearoa New Zealand Women Filmmakers (Thesis, Master of Media and Creative Technologies (MMCT)). The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10289/12273

Film Commission does not. With over one billion hours of video being watched on YouTube every day, online platforms don't just offer women equal opportunities to make and publish their work, but also an engaged audience who is more than willing to put their money where their mouth is.

I turned these interviews into a web series, condensing the information into ten-minute snapshots of these women's experiences with gender discrimination, online platforms, and success, and released them for free on YouTube. My participants were varied. The Candle Wasters made their first web series while still in high school. Their original series has over a million views on YouTube, and they are now onto their fourth and fifth web series. Another participant, Tegan Morris, uses her YouTube channel and public speaking background to show the reality of navigating life with disabilities. With thirteen participants and nine videos, I covered women who had been to film school, women who didn't own a television, women who were single mothers, women who had moved to London for better YouTube opportunities, and so many more.

Several participants had turned to making their own web series after dealing with sexism and harassment on set. Some also talked about the struggle to find mentors and models to base their own careers off; with the invisibility of women filmmakers brought up time and time again. Each participant talked about the importance of telling authentic stories — sharing their experiences and making and changing the way people think about what stories by, and about, women can be like. When my grandma asks me how I plan on becoming a successful filmmaker, I don't tell her about Peter Jackson anymore. Instead, I tell her about these women — women who are telling stories that have never been given the audience or respect. These stories are now being told by authentic storytellers, whether

they're vlogs about motherhood, web series representing diverse teenagers, or feminist parodies of breakfast television shows. These women are completely redefining the industry.

To my knowledge, my research is the first of its kind in the world. It's not just an academic text, but a web series produced about women, made by a woman, and uses the same platforms that the participants discuss. Rather than including more quantitative research showing the percentages of women locked out, the web series puts faces, emotions, and anecdotes with experiences that happen every day. It provides information for policy makers and guilds to address systemic issues in more depth, rather than just saying 'women aren't being funded', it explains specifically how their experiences relate to being locked out of the industry, from sexist comments on set, to not studying anything by women in film school. Moreover, the importance of being available on YouTube; it's accessible, not locked up behind a paywall.

The web series gives advice and inspiration for young women interested in film, who were just like me, questioning whether they could even succeed in this industry at all. So many of my participants talked about how they go out of their way to support young women entering the industry, and how filmmakers reach out to them.

Online Heroines is a platform where women who would otherwise be overlooked have the chance to be seen as the trailblazers and leaders that they are.[2] When I launched my web series, I invited some of the students I tutor in undergraduate video production to come to

2. https://www.youtube.com/@onlineheroines3202

the event. I was so pleased when afterwards, several of the male students commented on how much they'd learnt from watching the interviews, not just about gender inequality, but also about creating interesting, compelling work for platforms that didn't even exist 15 years ago.

Whether you're a government policy maker, fresh out of film school, or a seasoned feminist filmmaker, I hope my research has something for you, and that it can add to the conversations happening worldwide about our industry. It's inspired me to find that there is a community of women ready to support each other, share our stories, and make the industry a safer place. I feel like a lifelong career in filmmaking is something which is now achievable for me and for other women. I'm hoping to do a second round of interviews for *Online Heroines* once my thesis is handed in, wanting to highlight more women doing amazing work, and keep up with the ever changing nature of online platforms.

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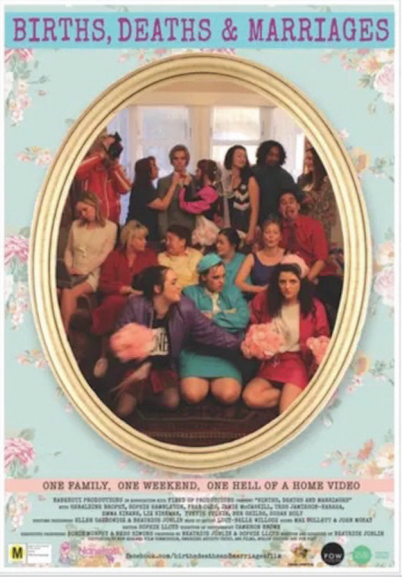
BEA JOBLIN'S 'BIRTHS, DEATHS & MARRIAGES' (2020)

Bea Joblin interviewed by Marian Evans



Births, Deaths and Marriages was a highlight of last year's New Zealand International Film Festival for me, one of only two local features selected by the festival. It is a heart-warming, funny tale

about an Irish family in the Hutt Valley, shot when Bea Joblin its writer/director/producer was 20.



Bea and her kōtiro, Pīata.

Bea describes *Births, Deaths & Marriages* as being—

> ...shot in 2014 for about $4000, in a state house in Upper Hutt...a fictional home video set in a family home where the camera is held by one of the characters as they record a weekend in their family's life. The film is a celebration of working class women and the dirty, overcrowded chaos of life.

Births, Deaths & Marriages is about to be released into cinemas in New Zealand. It's also screening at festivals in Australia. It was funded by the New Zealand Film Commission at post-production.

BEGINNINGS

ME Why and when and how did you start to make films?

Bea Joblin I started making films when I was 10, my parents bought my grandma's old camcorder off her when she was upgrading and gave it to me for my birthday. As an aside my grandma filming my whānau on her camera throughout my childhood was the inspiration for this film. I first entered the 48 hour film festival at 12 years old, and did that for three years then stopped altogether. I made my first actual webseries at 19, and haven't stopped since then, although I have moved very slowly over the last few years finishing this project.

All in all since age 19 I've made three webseries [including *The Hutt Valley Dream Project* and *CNT Live*, 'the show that talks about what matters to women, where the only thing missing is yoU!'[1]] a short, a short doco and a feature, although I have co-directed, executive produced or co-written a few more. I haven't owned a camera since my grandma's one fell into disrepair, I have always borrowed other people's. I'm not a videographer, I'm a writer and director, so access to a camera was always a secondary aspect to my desire to make film, it always started with a script for me!

1. https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDePwEoKNKGQZN6Hg7tUzvJ_cGOhID-Shf&si=JLUP-viAC3xQtVZG (*The Hutt Valley Dream Project*); https://youtu.be/SwXb7kwjiHw?si=jkStMr7IbPQ4vLk8 (*CNT Live*).

When did you realise that mainstream filmmaking didn't show you stories about females and 'others'? Was there a moment of revelation?

It was a slow process throughout my teen years that began as a feeling I couldn't describe...but somehow the media I watched never made me feel uplifted or empowered in my identity as a female. I had to imagine myself into the mind of the male protagonist to emotionally connect to the story, because all the females were one-dimensional and functional to his story, and there was no truth or relatability or resonance in their own experiences that I could relate to, or journey with. And now I've been taught how much worse that feeling would have been for POC or LGBTIQ young people, and still is. I couldn't articulate why this lack of representation was problematic because those terms weren't being used in that way yet! The feeling was always there but it didn't become conscious as an issue until I had the feminist education to know I was allowed to feel it, and to want something more. My fire about authentic female representation grew from there. I try to stay aware of the fact that for LGBTIQ and POC people this lack of representation was even worse, and continues to be worse than it is for cis white women.

Whose work influenced you at the beginning?

Ruth Jones (and James Corden)'s *Gavin and Stacey*, and *Green Wing* (Victoria Wood), combining domesticity or at least professional banality with absurdity, that is, hyper-realism with the hyper-bizzareness of our emotional and relational realities.

When and why did you decide to work low production values into your narratives?

There was no other option. I felt, particularly as a female, I had to make things without formal support before I would be even considered by funding bodies. I had never seen a young woman with no track record yet get any support to establish her career. And you need some funding to make something with normal production values...Low production values as an intentional aesthetic choice gives you the ability to make work without waiting forever for cash!

In her new book, The Wrong Kind of Women: Inside Our Revolution to Dismantle the Gods of Hollywood, *Naomi McDougall-Jones points out that all of the women who've been nominated as Best Director at the Oscars come from filmmaking families. In New Zealand we have film/theatre 'dynasties' too. To name a few: the Mitas and the Murphys; the Grace whānau; Libby and Oriwa Hakaraia; three generations of Campions and Harcourts; Gaylene Preston and Chelsea Preston-Crayford; Elizabeth McRae, her daughter Katherine McRae and her grand-daughters Etta, Elsie and Sally Bollinger (etc). What has your family history meant for your own development?*

Just my self-made Mum, Geraldine Brophy, who left school at 15 and never went to drama school. She made a brave choice to follow her vocation and paved the way for me. She began the dynasty! She has helped me a huge amount, I have privilege in this industry that comes from who she is. Her practical support (being in my stuff) and emotional support (telling me I can do it, as well as modelling the doing of it), has helped me immeasurably.



Bea and her Mum, Geraldine Brophy.

Is feminism part of your family, too?

Yes, mum definitely lives her life in radical opposition to power imbalances or oppression that she perceives. She modelled amazing feminist values, particularly body love, self belief, assertiveness, creative expression, balancing career and family. I am more of a

garden variety intersectional feminist, or trying to be from within my white feminist bias....I'm trying to learn and listen!

BIRTHS DEATHS AND MARRIAGES

What gave you the idea for Births, Deaths & Marriages?

My mum's parents were working class Irish immigrants who moved to NZ in the 1970's, so the cultural context is identical, but the relationships and characters in the film are very different, and come from my own head!

I understand from your Radio NZ interview the other day that originally the Births, Deaths & Marriages *script was 200 and something pages.*[2] *With so much material, why did you decide to make it as a feature rather than a web series?*

I didn't properly understand the difference between webseries and feature film processes when I started this, I just think I wanted to be as ambitious as possible and felt I had made two webseries already so in my wee 20 year old brain a feature was the obvious progression...hilarious! It's been the most beautiful learning experience of sticking with something massive and seeing it through to the very end, and picking up so many new skills along the way.

2. https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/standing-room-only/audio/2018733339/births-deaths-and-marriages-with-bea-joblin-and-sophie-lloyd

Sophie Lloyd was your co-producer and editor. It's quite unusual for an editor to be a producer as well. How did you meet and decide to work on Births, Deaths & Marriages?



Sophie Lloyd.



Bea Joblin.

We went to high school together but weren't in the same circles... but at age 19 we reconnected over my first webseries (which she edited).

. . .

For *Births, Deaths & Marriages*, as I was a lone producer, I had no team with me, Sophie was the only other person in the process once the shoot finished, so she just became the co-producer. Because she put so much damn time and heart into the film, she became its other parent! We work well together, and know each other's tricks, so I hope we work together again, once we take a breath from this process.

According to your interview with Louise Hutt, for her Online Heroines *project, you wanted to be independent of funding bodies, I think.*[3] *But then, Robin Murphy and Ness Simons became involved as executive producers.*[4] *How did that happen and how did that change things?*



L-R Ness Simons and Robin Murphy.

3. https://youtu.be/mO4pMIcEZ4Y?si=EFoh805WDfKFARjp
4. http://robinmurphyproductions.com/; https://www.noted.co.nz/money/money-small-business/kiwi-web-series-pot-lucks-themes-find-universal-attraction

I didn't want to be independent so much as knew my chances of support were very low, due to my lack of experience, my gender and the nature and content of my work not being the patriarchal norm. Once Ness and Robin came on we all fully committed to the cinema release pathway, which we knew required some support from a funding body, but NZFC gave us our funding a matter of weeks before we were due to screen at the NZIFF. It was John McKay from POW Post and Robin and Ness that actually took the financial risk on us, it was their commitment to start the process to get us ready for the NZIFF, and somehow raise the money later to pay for that, that was the actual investment. So even at the very end we didn't have any actual funding bodies 'involved', as by the time NZFC gave us our post finishing grant the film was basically completely finished!

Robin and Ness have advocated for us hugely. As women their position in the industry has been hard won, and they've used it as soon as they could to start supporting others. I also know that they both regularly donate to Pledgeme and Boosted campaigns for work with female, queer or POC content, because they want to see people's stories being told. I know there are a lot of rooms we just wouldn't have got in to without Robin advocating for us. Their involvement changed the possibilities for the film.

It took five years to finish Births, Deaths & Marriages. *Why did it take so long? I know you had a baby, which is probably one reason?*

Mainly the money needed for the sound design, and all the time I spent trying to get newbie sound people to do it for free...lots of foolhardy dead ends pursued by me! Then the amazing Gareth Ruck and I needed a long time in between him working and being an

awesome dad, and me working and being pregnant/ having a new baby, to do a temp sound design on the whole thing, which took about a year. We needed that so that when we showed it to prospective producers, enough of the concept was coming through via sound design as well as picture that they could see what I was aiming for! Then once we showed it to Robin and Ness we had to re-edit the picture as they felt it could be a lot stronger, and I'm so happy we did as the film became a lot better! Then getting the money to do the sound for real. But yes having a baby slowed it down, and I did intentionally take a break to gift myself and Pīata that sacred time without distraction.

In the first year or so after shooting my major mental health battles slowed it also, but a lot of it was down to the challenges of no budget filmmaking which require a lot of perseverance, waiting for the right people and timing, finding creative ways to do things, working around people's 9–5 jobs, etc.

I was blown away by your beautiful mihi at the NZFF. Te reo is an important part of your life, and Births, Deaths & Marriages *is partly about the intersections between Māori tikanga and Irish ways of doing things?*

I do have a strong commitment to being an ally to Te Reo and to Kaupapa Tiriti ways to working, but I try to remain open to what that means and looks like as things evolve. I fear as a Pākehā working in these spaces that I will get confused about my role or fail to stay in my lane, which could mean me doing more harm than good!

. . .

I am trying to stay an active listener in the ever evolving indigenism movement, as well as in the bicultural and multicultural communities I have the privilege of being in, because I want to make sure I'm hearing the new thinking on how Pākeha can genuinely support decolonization, both at a political intellectual level, i.e. paying attention to indigenism as a movement, and also at a personal and community level, i.e. what are the real people that I know and work with saying is needed and most useful.

It's not straightforward or static, walking the line of supporting diverse stories without speaking for people is complex, I believe, and requires deep listening to others and to yourself and your behaviour.

MORE ABOUT PRACTICE

Do you have a favourite role?

I love writing, it's a simple, pure joy. Directing is much more complex and can be frenetic, but has an excitement too....its much more demanding for me. Producing is deeply scary, almost spiritual in the zen-like way you have to stay calmly committed across much greater expanses of time through extreme uncertainty. Its satisfying in a slow burn, more grounded way. Acting is the least loved child....I barely ever do it!

Your work makes me laugh. It's so clever and funny. And full of heart. I think it demonstrates profound confidence as well as a lot of hard work and practice. What influenced your capacity to be so funny and confident?



L-R Fran Olds (Hugh), Ben Childs (Dean)

A funny question...I don't feel confident anymore in the way the 20 year old who made this film was confident...she had ignorance and naivety on her side, which I think are essential ingredients for achieving the impossible!

As for the humour in the film, I think we as people are so absurdly beautiful and I think most of how we have been taught to organize our relationships to each other is so counterproductive and ineffective...I analyze relationships between people a lot and see the tragicomedy of how we try and fail to love well...its just observing and reflecting that is makes the laughter happen.

Something I find so healing about writing, it's a place where I'm the benevolent omniscient eye that can see how hard these ridiculous people are trying to relate, and all the challenges and obstacles or barriers to connections that each of them is working with. It feels good to take an objective compassionate eye to it all, and see

lovingly where everyone is coming from. In real life you can't do that so easily as you end up caught up in your own perspective!

I think the alternative style of the film is confident, both in the cinematography, the content, and the structure of the story. It's a bold rejection of the status quo, but that comes naturally to me as my mum taught me to go against whatever the 'rules' were, whatever the institutions said was the 'right' way to create art. It's all about resistance for us Irish catholic feminist witches!



Births, Deaths and Marriages *premiere New Zealand International Film Festival 2019*

I'll never forget seeing about 40 people walk on stage at the end of your NZFF screening and realising the extent of their commitment to a very young feature filmmaker, as unpaid workers. What do you think attracted them to the project? How did you learn to run a set the way you do?

. . .

Love connected us and attracted them! They all know I respect them and will hold them in a space of aroha and care, because I make that clear from the start. Whether it's my own mother, or someone like Ariadne Balthazar who came on the week before shooting to replace another actor, you engage with them in a manner which makes clear that you want them as people and as artists to have the most positive experience possible. Perhaps a lot of cast and crew are used to feeling that a director or producer wants them to carry out their vision, at any cost to them, whereas I wanted them to weave themselves into a collaborative vision with me, so I think in that sense there is more for them to gain.



L-R Ariadne Balthazar (Tam), Fran Olds (Hugh).

And perhaps less to lose...because particularly as a woman when I walk on to most film sets I think, 'I wonder how much misogyny I'll be fielding today? How many microaggressions?' And same for men, particularly the more junior ones, having to put up with harsh treatment from older people who are trying to 'harden them up', which is unnecessary, and wrong. I think I made it clear that I didn't give myself authority to decide that anyone else should be mistreated for

any reason. I was going to do everything in my power to manage things as respectfully as possible.

TODAY

What's it like to have Births, Deaths & Marriages *being widely distributed here, accepted for more festivals and to be taken very seriously as a filmmaker?*

I am intentionally quite emotionally disconnected from it, so that I don't take on the negative feedback, or feel hugely invested in people's response. When creatives say they enjoy the process, not the accolades, it's true. People can hate it, and love it, and not notice it, whatever, if you open yourself up to taking any of that on you'll be emotionally and mentally affected by something that's actually impersonal and kind of incidental and also fleeting and fickle.

I weirdly don't feel yet that I am being taken seriously as a filmmaker because I still see myself and my film as what I / it started as; a baby little renegade making a funny little film. Maybe once the release is done, and I've stopped working on the film for the first time in 6 years, I'll reflect and realize I am a real filmmaker!

Autonomy is important to you. But I think some of your views about funding etc have changed as a result of the Births, Deaths & Marriages *experience. What will you do differently next time? Will there be a 'next time' soon?*

Autonomy doesn't mean isolation, I know that I need people and that I couldn't have done this without so many people, Sophie, Robin, Ness, Gareth, John, all the cast and crew, and friends like

Anita Ross and Tess Jamieson-Karaha who just emotionally supported me not to give up!

But giving your fledging idea over to a funding institution who prioritise lots of things that aren't artistic integrity or authentically diverse representation, that is still an uncomfortable idea. This film would never ever have been made if I had waited for a funding body to think it, or I, was a smart risk. So I didn't have total autonomy here, I shared power with who I chose to share with, but not a funder. And next time, though I won't do it again without money, I really hope that doesn't equate to handing major creative control to whoever funds it.

....But for sure, next time will be different, I'm too old now to make things for no money!!!

As for next time...I'm making a music video with local musician and fellow mum Keely Turuwhenua, I want a small scale project next! Next feature film will be slow coming, as this one was, but that's what I like! It gives me time to honour my role as mum and to work in an organic way. It's you Marian who said to me first, women's lives and therefore film careers are often cyclical, not linear, and that is more than ok.

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'RADIOGRAM' AT PARLIAMENT: ROUZIE HASSANOVA & ANNIE COLLINS (2020)

Rouzie Hassanova, Annie Collins & Spiral

Rouzie Hassanova's award-winning *Radiogram* was #DirectedByWomen #Aotearoa's first screening for 2020, at Parliament on 16 March, the day after the first anniversary of the massacre at two Christchurch mosques.

It was hosted by Jan Logie MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Justice, a visionary and very effective politician. In particular, Jan's an outstanding advocate for those affected by violence and discrimination, including women in the screen industries, through her support of the Screen Women's Action Group,[1] as well as #DirectedByWomen #Aotearoa's programme. The screening was followed by a Q&A with Jan, Rouzie and legendary editor Annie Collins. It was just before New Zealand's first Covid-19 lockdown.

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1. "SWAG (Screen Women's Action Group) is committed to changing the culture that enables bullying, harassment, discrimination and other abuses of power over women in the screen industry. We will collect ideas and advocate for changes that will promote respect." https://www.facebook.com/screenwomensactiongroup

We got together for a drink and a snack at Backbenchers, along with our lovely photographer Adrienne Martyn,[2] and then crossed to Parliament's Beehive theatrette. (Since then New Zealanders have become very familiar with this venue, where almost-daily Covid-19 press conferences are streamed, with the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, other Ministers and the Legendary Dr Ashley Bloomfield.)

Lorna Kanavatoa welcomed us all in the voice of the mana whenua, Taranaki Te Ātiawa, and introduced Jan as 'one of our local Porirua people who we're so proud of having amongst us and who speaks on our behalf'.



Jan speaks from the heart. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

2. https://www.adriennemartyn.com/

When Jan spoke, she reminded us that before March 15 2019 'members of the Muslim community had been raising alarms for us for months and that they hadn't been heard, about rising levels of hatred and violence that they were seeing'.

And she continued: '*Radiogram* is a film about a father who decides to walk almost 100 kilometres to the nearest town to buy a new radio for his rock and roll obsessed son. And the film celebrates the strength of the human spirit, family, friendship and the power of music, and is based on a true story from 1971, set in a predominantly Muslim community in Bulgaria under the communist regime, where religious expression and Western music are forbidden. And so there are many themes in this story that feel relevant today, about the human spirit and how we create communities and enable people to live free lives, for everyone within our communities'.

Jan also referred to why *Radiogram* hasn't been seen more widely: 'In 2016 there was research done that looked at all of the films across the world that have been distributed in any form. And only 16 percent of those were by women. Which is pretty shocking. But then, actually, those that made it to theatre release was only two percent. So gatherings like this are subversive. This is at some level, almost an underground railway for women's film. And I think it is on all of us to to push for more opportunities for, and more pressure, for the diversity of stories to be told and to be told in the same range of places'.[3]

3. Showtools (https://www.showtools.com/) provided an infographic that showed the New Zealand government's 2015–2019 investment in large budget screen production: just 0.97% of almost $374m allocated to projects directed by women.

Rouzie then introduced *Radiogram*.



Rouzie introduces *Radiogram*. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

THE Q & A

After the screening, Jan introduced Rouzie and legendary editor Annie Collins, there to question Rouzie.[4] Rouzie's young daughter Emily joined them at first and Cushla Parekowhai joined them at the end of their conversation, enriching the discussion with another dimension. Jan and Lorna then closed the evening.

Soundtech kindly made a beautiful (unedited) recording of the event, which includes everything except the film and Lorna's closing remarks.[5]

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4. https://medium.com/spiral-collectives/annie-collins-editor-extraordinaire-e631bf1c26c8
5. https://archive.org/details/rouzie-hassanova

This is a lightly edited transcript of Jan's post-screening introduction, Rouzie and Annie's discussion and some of the audience questions at the end.

Jan Logie It's an extraordinarily beautiful and moving film. [Applause.] And I'd like to welcome up Rouzie and Annie Collins... I think we can all, after sitting through that, understand why it's won awards around the world and acknowledge what an incredible achievement that is, particularly as a first feature film and how lucky we are to have Rouzie living in New Zealand. [More applause.]

... I'm really looking forward to the conversation between Rouzie and Annie Collins, who I suspect is known to most people in the room. But in case there's somebody who isn't as familiar with the film industry, Annie is one of New Zealand's leading film editors who has edited I understand over 50 films, around 50 films. Maybe you haven't done the adding up, but when when I was scanning through, it was a very, very long list, and of some very important films for us as a country, including the *Poi E* video which for me is personally very important. And [Merata Mita's] *Patu!*. So I'm really looking forward to the dialogue between the two of them. And hopefully [Emily's] face will cheer up when you get to sit next to your mum, because that was quite amazing, wasn't it? Aren't you proud of your mum? Yeah. So I welcome you up onto the stage. All of you.



Annie Collins, Rouzie Hassanova, Emily. Photographer Lorna Kanavatoa.

Annie Collins Thanks very much, Jan. [Emily joins the panel.] We thought we were going to have a third person on this panel anyway, so I think it's just right. Kia ora tatou katoa. My feeling is that the introduction or the choice of this film on this day, after the Christchurch massacre commemorations is actually, for me, a perfect film. It's... It is just the right film.

Rouzie Hassanova Thank you. I mean, for me, it's very difficult to judge that because you know, it's it's what happened last year, it's it's it's it's horrible. It's something that, you know you never want to see and you don't want to experience and it's you know, there's nothing I can say. Thank you. And I didn't know if a film is fitting to mark the

anniversary because film is an expression, it's an art, especially my version of the story is an expression of what I feel my granddad and my dad were going through at the time. I wasn't alive at the time, so it was very...

You know, I had to consult myself with a lot of relatives and a lot of you know, friends and family and people in the village and, and from all different perspectives, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, because I didn't want to offend anyone. I wanted to make a film that celebrated Muslim culture and introduced it in a very relatable kind of way. It was very important to me that I wanted to let people in and understand us rather than feel a distance from us. So when Jan, thank you for the invite and Marian mentioned that they wanted the film to be shown here to mark the anniversary my first reaction was no way a film can take anything away from what happened. But then I was encouraged that it is fitting because it allows people to understand. It allows people to relate and and and include and feel like they know the culture a little bit better after that.

Annie Collins Mm hmm. Bulgaria has a huge history to it, and do people here who haven't been there know where Bulgaria is? (Laughs.) I had to Google to find it.

Rouzie Hassanova A lot of people do. Yeah, but we are north of Turkey. That's the best way to describe it. And north of Turkey and Greece. And south of Romania, yeah. So we're just all Balkans really. We're all the same. I feel like... I've been to Turkey many times. I've been to Greece. I've been around most of the Balkans. And I feel like we're one big family just living in different kinds of countries. The food is the same. The people seem to have the same customs

and similar kind of understanding of life and everything. So I feel like we're one big family. We just end up being in different countries.

Annie Collins Mm hmm. Because you've got about five countries surrounding you, haven't you? And the Black Sea.

Rouzie Hassanova On west I mean, on east, sorry.

Annie Collins Yeah. And... (Laughs.)

Rouzie Hassanova It's all very confusing.

Annie Collins And what that means it seems to me is that there is constant incursions into and shifting of borders and boundaries all through the centuries. And so the country is just continually...

Rouzie Hassanova It's very hard because it's on that route into Europe. So if you're coming from the Middle East or immigrating from that region or even from Africa, you can still come through Turkey and Greece and Bulgaria. Sometimes it's a good choice, but they usually choose to go from Macedonia and Serbia. And somehow that's why I think the Balkans are [in a] very important position geographically because there's so many people who have gone through. And that's why Bulgarians are so different in terms of how we look, because it's been taken over, empires after empires after empires. I mean, we were under the Ottoman Empire for five hundred years. So we're very influenced by the Muslim community

and the culture. But the Muslim community is a minority there. So it's interesting and the same with Greece. But we've also been in the Roman Empire. I mean, so many empires have taken us over. So we are big mix of lots of nationalities and lots of colours and lots of heights and colours of hair and all sorts.

Annie Collins One of the things that really interests me within *Radiogram* is that there are quiet little essences of the things that people do when they colonise, when they take over another country. And one of them is spirit. You got to break the spirit of people. So you take the religion or you change the religion.

Rouzie Hassanova Yes. Yes. Yes. That's the first that has to go yet. Yes.

Annie Collins And the thing about names. It's so, so crucial. My dad who came out from Scotland had this little saying which I didn't understand for decades, which was 'It's a wise child knows its own father'. Interesting. And your name is gone. Who are you?



Annie & Rouzie. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

Rouzie Hassanova Well, they knew that with Muslim religion the name is the one of the biggest and, you know, kind of things that if they take away, that really breaks them or breaks the unity within the community. Because in Muslim religion, this is what I know from my grandparents and my parents, if you change your name, then Allah on the other side when you die doesn't know who you are. So you can't be judged. You can't be tried, as you say. So Allah would not know if you should go to heaven or hell, which means you're stuck forever in the in-between.

And that's the worst nightmare for Muslim people. They'd rather be in hell if they'd been, you know, bad people than in the middle, stuck forever, not knowing where they're going. So the names, it had such a big importance, like bigger than losing your life. A lot of people

lost their lives over the change of their names. The film could have been even more dramatic and so on, but I didn't want to put such an emphasis on it because I wanted to make a film for a family audience and I wanted people to understand, not to be isolated or see it as some sort of propaganda or anything like that. So I was very, very careful how I portrayed that.

Annie Collins I understand that you did run into some trouble at some stage while you were filming, because some of the people around whom you were filming thought you were making propaganda.

Rouzie Hassanova Yes. Yeah. Of course, everyone's open to having their own opinions. And for some people, probably it's seen as a controversial film because it does reveal Muslim people as human. But this is why I wanted to make it. And we were doing a night shoot. And it was in one of the big scenes in the party secretary's kind of office. And it was 2 o'clock in the morning, I think. The mayor of the village next door decided to come over and threaten us and tell us to stop shooting because they were against what we were doing: this film should never have been made. And because people were fearful of misrepresentation or, because what happened was during communism there were few stages of changing the names of the Muslim community.

So we started off from the 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s. And because there were quite a few people and they were doing it strategically one by one, by hiring their own people to do it. So they were smart about it.

. . .

But a lot of the Muslim community, because now, 60, 70 years later, a lot of the Muslim people have now converted back to Christian religion. So they've felt that I was trying to make a film now against them or shaming them, which wasn't the case at all. So it was very difficult to try and explain that I wasn't doing that. It was it's actually a very family story. I'm keeping it close to my family because that's what happened to them. And I wanted to show something that I'm very proud of, of my culture and my family.



Annie & Rouzie. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

Annie Collins I think that's one of the things which I feel about the film, is that it's very authentic and you don't get that authenticity unless you are a person of that culture, because the authenticity doesn't come from the big stories and the big speeches, it

comes from the tiny details of family life. And only somebody who knows and comes from that culture actually understand which details are the important things that give you the clues.

Rouzie Hassanova I mean, that's right. But I have to admit it took a lot of cast and crew encouragement because I feared that there will be a lot of backlash. I mean, I've experienced discrimination, racism myself. And so I was very scared. Even at financing stage we had a lot of people against the movie. They misread the script. There was a lot of things said in public that shouldn't have been said. But we just tried to rise above it. But my producer [was] Gergana Dankova.

You know, it's very difficult when you're trying to make an authentic film and you're a first time filmmaker and you're a woman and everyone is looking at you and everyone is questioning you and saying, are you going to do something that will misrepresent my country or my people? And are you going to offend me? And then, you know, it took a lot of encouragement. I needed encouragement from the cast. And thank God they were with us on the journey because they were very dedicated. And being professional actors they they were the ones who inspired me to speak the dialect in the film.

Annie Collins So you had written in what language?

Rouzie Hassanova In a clear, a little literary, kind of Bulgarian, which is not the language they speak in the mountains. In the mountains they speak a bit of a mix of Turkish and Bulgarian. It's kind of strange. Yeah.

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Annie Collins So when did that change occur?



Annie & Rouzie. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

Rouzie Hassanova Two days before the shoot. (Laughter.) So this is what I'm saying: I didn't have the guts to write it like that because it wouldn't have gone through the financing process. I knew that and I didn't have the guts to direct it like that. But it took the actors to say, "Hold on. Let's do this right." And I was like, "Yes, why am I not doing this right? Why am I even thinking about getting them to speak clean Bulgarian when they don't in the mountains?"

Annie Collins So it's like these two these two languages, there's

two versions of the script. There's a script that the funders can read and give you money for.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah.

Annie Collins And there's a script that actually you shoot.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah.

Annie Collins And in many ways they shouldn't be the same script.

Rouzie Hassanova Well, in our situation, yes. And also it took us almost five years for the project to get the money from Bulgaria because of that problem. We had a lot of... We faced a lot of difficulty in getting the money. And the only reason why we got 100,000 euros from the Bulgarian National Film Centre is because there was money left in the budget in 2015. And we were the next project on the list that just about made it. And so they called my producer and they said, right, we can't give you 700 that you wanted, but we can give you 100. Can you make it? And so then she called me and I said, "I think we can". And so then we I called some friends in Turkey and I offered them the Turkish rights and I said, I need another 25 so we can actually shoot the movie, because that's what we needed to actually go into production. And then that's why it took us two years to finish editing because we had nothing left. So we had to do it as and when and favours. And... You know.

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Annie Collins Yeah, I know. (Laughter.) So you actually had a co-production with Poland?

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah. That was just equipment.

Annie Collins So, just equipment for the shoot.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah. So we had four Polish guys arrive in a massive truck with all the camera, lighting, sound. It was all given to us. Well we had it for free, but of course that was part of the co-production agreement is that they will come in. But it was great because obviously we do not have money for any of the equipment...

Annie Collins That's pretty interesting that you you get a co-production with Poland.

Rouzie Hassanova It is very interesting because now they're kind of going a little bit the other way. They're becoming quite right and quite isolating to other cultures and religions. But, you know, we had we had the greatest luck of meeting these two producers that really liked the script and and the team behind really wanted to kind of be part of the experience and make something together, so...

Annie Collins I wanted to ask you a little bit more about the cast and directing them, etc., because for for me, the performances that are up on screen are faultless.

. . .

Rouzie Hassanova I see a lot of mistakes, but anyway...

Annie Collins That's not just really great actors. You can direct great actors really badly and come up with a heap of what you don't want. It's also director.

Rouzie Hassanova Well. Thank you. I was very conscious that I wanted the actors to feel like they were one of the people in the village. So three days or four days before the shoot, I had them stay with some locals. And I had them separate, in different rooms. And I had them basically do exactly what the locals were doing, going to pick the tobacco, milking cows, scything the hay, you know, loading the trucks. You know, every single thing that is in the movie, they did it. And at first they were a little bit uncertain because in Bulgaria, they've never really done such an exercise before. But for me, it was very important that it looks authentic on screen. And they loved it. And maybe this is the reason why they then encouraged me to change the language because they spent that time. And they started seeing how easy it was, an important part of the life, how people spoke. So...

Annie Collins That's a process that you put them through.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah.

Annie Collins Which was quite unusual I take it, for going onto a film set.

. . .

Rouzie Hassanova It was, especially because we didn't have any money. So it was unusual. They didn't expect it. They felt out of comfort, their comfort zone, because these are guys...everyone in the movie is incredibly famous in Bulgaria. So they, they're like stars. So they didn't really expect any of that kind of living in someone's house with basics like not even proper toilets, you know. And just kind of with the animals. But they loved it at the same time. They loved it because it was different.

Annie Collins Is your background from one of those sorts of villages?

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah, I'm basically one of those little girls that was in the tobacco fields. It's the same village that I grew up. And that's the house, we shot in the same house of my granddad. Everything in the movie is pretty much one to one with what I remember from back then.

Annie Collins More authenticity isn't it?

Rouzie Hassanova Well, I was very proud. I remember being on the tobacco fields when I was four or five years old and it was so hot and I was so tired because we had to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to go there really early. And, you know, when you're a kid, you want to play. But I had to do all this work and I was praying for rain so I can just kind of sit and not do anything. But, you know, at the same time, I remember all the songs. I remember how people got together. And they were always some sort of...

. . .

Everything was connected with music in a funny way. We sang songs when we were happy and we sang songs when we were very sad. And so for me, it's something that I grew up with and I really wanted to show to the whole of Bulgaria to see, because when I ...when the summer was over, I was back at school and that was in the middle of Bulgaria. And my classmates didn't know what I was up to. And and and I felt different, but I couldn't really explain. So, yeah, I just basically wanted to tell everyone how proud I am of who I am. Yeah.

Annie Collins So if you come from a wee village, that village we saw, how on earth did you start making films? It's not the easiest sort of thing to do.

Rouzie Hassanova Well, no. Well, so long story. But don't know how to say it short. I applied when I was 18. I applied for a lot of universities. A lot of Bulgarian universities. International universities. Because I spoke English, I went to a special kind of course, to speak, to learn English and special school, to get really fluent. And I wanted, I really wanted to study, you know, a world class kind of education, to have that. But when an opportunity came that one university in London offered me a position, a place, I jumped at it because... my name is Muslim. So at the time, I felt that I didn't have the same opportunities as my classmates if I stayed.

The option of leaving and trying somewhere else like the U.K. was amazing. And I felt instantly welcomed. And nobody cared. Nobody nobody cared about my name or the fact that I had a Muslim background. Everyone was like, just come and do this. And I now felt very included. I instantly found friends. And not that I didn't have friends in Bulgaria. I did. But for my future, I felt that was the best

opportunity because my family, you know, they were repressed. And so they pushed me out of the door, basically. And then film.

Film took a lot of time. I would say eight to nine years, but it's something that I wanted to try. And I don't know, I guess I'm a little bit crazy that I always make films even though I never have money, but it just started off with a short, going to university, which got a distinction. And then I got encouraged to keep going. And then I made another short. And then another one. And then another one. And then the feature took about nine years. So a long time.

Annie Collins Is it nine years for one film? I mean, it's not unheard of here in this country either. But, so. (Laughter.). But it's it's it's a huge patch of your life to put in to put into one thing but that you put into this film, that's...

Rouzie Hassanova I mean, I, you know, when you start making something, you never think it's going to take that long. You always think, Oh, we'll make it. And it's going to be straight out and it's going to have a life, and so on. But I was really passionate about telling this movie, and there was a lot of people, of course, encouraging me to make it into a thriller, into an action. And and all sorts.

Annie Collins You need a car chase.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah, I know. Next one. But it wasn't the kind of film I wanted to make, actually. I was trying to stay very close to a Turkish director who is one of my biggest influences. And his name

is Semih Kaplanoğlu. And so I was going for that kind of very poetic, but also like very authentic. And I wanted to basically show something that was real and not fake.

Annie Collins One of the things that just grabs me about *Radiogram* is a couple of things. It's how you had figured out the essence of what information you want to seem to give. But the most important thing that you've figured is what emotion you want to give with the information. And that's, that's that's a quality not many filmmakers have.



Annie & Rouzie. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

Rouzie Hassanova Well, there were a few occasions that I can recall where, because of that, because I was a little bit obsessive about it. There were some some scenes that we reshot three times

and there were some scenes that we did 17 takes. On one camera set up. So that's obsessiveness, because I was so... I really did not want melodrama. And I didn't want over the top performance. And sometimes the actors took ages to get into the rhythm. And of course, there's a lot of other distractions, sometimes planes are flying above or someone's phone rings and it's Oh! And then I've got to reset and reset and... But that's my passion. If I'm doing something, I want to do it right. And so I'll keep trying until I get the best take. And and hopefully then someone like you can fix it if if I haven't got it. (Laughter.)

But I must say, if it wasn't for my editor, the film would have been completely different. So editors take a lot of credit for it. And I've worked. So I started working with a Polish editor at the beginning and it was very clear he just didn't get the emotion that I was after. He cut the movie like a tele-feature. And I literally cried and I said, this is not the film I shot. And so then I, then we had to stop, because we had no money. And then suddenly I had to find a new editor. And I found this amazing lady, Natasha Westlake, in London, who we didn't pay a lot. We did it over the weekends. I was heavily pregnant. But she got it. She got the music and the emotion and and we didn't spend a lot of time, in fact, because I left her to do it.

Annie Collins Oo, that's interesting.

Rouzie Hassanova But from then on, I knew. I knew. I knew that we'd got a movie. I knew that I did it OK. Like it wasn't all lost.

Annie Collins And the interesting thing, eh, that that combination of people who do get it and then the film itself talks back to you and

tells you it's in the right hands and you don't have to run around worrying about it so long as you just take your time and sit and look and listen at what's going on.

Rouzie Hassanova And then being open to editors talking to you, because one third of the script is actually not even in the movie. So it was heavily edited. It was heavily edited in post.

Annie Collins I was going to ask you about it because the other thing that really grabs me about it is the sparseness of it. It's almost shorthand in some ways, and it takes a lot of guts to cut a film like that. To leave off the bits and pieces where people walk indoors and outdoors and, you know, get themselves from one place to another and how did they get there and why are they doing that and all this sort of stuff? And people want to have it all explained, but actually, they don't need it. Yes they're in a truck. Somebody gave them a lift and they're in a truck. They get there.

Rouzie Hassanova Well, that's how that helps when you have an editor like Natasha, who was just exactly saying those things to me. She was like, you don't need to explain it. Don't worry about it. They will get it. Trust your film. Trust your vision. And and that constant kind of reminder was amazing because you do doubt yourself. You've written that script millions of times over and over and over. I could... I could recite every single word on it. And you see every single cut. And and so you you do see only the mistakes. You don't see the good stuff. And so, yeah, it helps other people being there, encouraging you and helping you through the way.

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Annie Collins Have you ever cut a film with that sort of sharpness before? With that brevity?

Rouzie Hassanova No, no. That was my first time, yeah.

Annie Collins Well, that must have been very exciting for you.

Rouzie Hassanova Yes, it was it was very challenging, but it was good. It was a good challenge, you know. It was very healthy. I learnt a lot.

Annie Collins Yes. It's always the nice thing about working on a film isn't it. It's not just what you give to it. It's what you get back.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah.

Annie Collins Yeah. One thing that I have been thinking about because I've actually watched it twice in the last two days now and it's a thing about when you're from that place and you are you are pulling up these these details that give you the authenticity and really tell your story with that sort of brevity. Somewhere along the line, you actually have to know yourself. And you have to turn and look inside yourself.

Rouzie Hassanova I don't know what you mean, but...

. . .

Annie Collins In order to know those things, you have to have really examined yourself.

Rouzie Hassanova Oh, yeah. And especially my family. I had to examine my family and that was not easy at all. And some hate me for it. But, you know, it's, it's interesting because even the family, it's not... You know, in Muslim culture, we are quite humble or anyway, the Pomak people in the village in that kind of community, they're very humble people.

So when it came to like premieres and events and speaking and stuff like that, they didn't really want to be part of it. And and because they didn't want the kind of how do you say, to draw attention. But, yeah, it was challenging to talk to them and to ask the hard questions so I could be truthful, especially because the bad guy Serahev, is a Pomak. He is like the Muslim guy that turned Christian, that then betrayed his own people. And that is something that you know, it happened. It was historically correct. But it's not something people were easy to talk about. And weren't happy to admit that they have people like that within them.

Annie Collins It's a terrible exposure.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah. Yeah.

Annie Collins Hard stuff. Hmmm. The sound work on it. It is a beautiful soundtrack on it, and I'm not just talking about the use of music. Music in itself is a simple element in many ways. It's the knit-

ting of the richness of the sound behind the music. It may be what I'm thinking of are actually composed elements.

Rouzie Hassanova They are. Yeah.

Annie Collins But the knitting of it altogether, it is a beautiful soundtrack. Who was doing the sound design? Was that Polish?

Rouzie Hassanova Well, again, we had a very similar experience with the sound when we had a Polish company start. And then I had to make a very difficult decision. And, you know, again, I just felt like I couldn't find the right people to work with at the beginning. And that makes it really hard for producers, for me and for everyone involved and for the co-production, of course, that became slightly tricky towards the end because of it.

But they just, again, didn't get the movie. The team in Poland, they added so much sound, so many effects that actually it was laughable. It felt like a farm movie and not a drama. And I just couldn't believe it. And then and then I had to take that away from them and again, find a very amazing group of young, well, not young, young like me, I guess, but sound design guys that did it for very little money and they did the whole sound mix as well. So they were incredible. They did it in literally one month, but that's working weekends because we didn't have the money. So it was incredible. They recorded everything in their little tiny studio. They knew exactly what I wanted. And again, I hardly even went there because by then my daughter was born. So if I went, she had to come with me and all that.

. . .

Annie Collins I would have felt very, very torn if I was in that situation. Twice you'd had critical stages of the film totally misinterpreted. And then when you do get somebody who looks like they get it and can do it, you're actually away. You leave it in their hands. I don't know if I'd have the courage to do that.

Rouzie Hassanova Well, I mean, they give you a first cut. You have to allow an editor and you have to allow a sound team to have a go at it first. Otherwise, there's no point if you're gonna be there dictating, telling everyone what to do. So. You just know instantly when they give you the first version of their version of the film that they've seen, you just know. It's like that that that easy.

Annie Collins So your process there was to just like put the footage in Natasha's hands, perhaps the assembly that you've been given, and you said 'Take it. See what you can do with it'.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah. And give her two weeks and and then see the cut.

Annie Collins Come back and have a look.

Rouzie Hassanova Yeah. And then it's like you either get it or you don't. And you then start polishing, polishing, polishing it.

Annie Collins Yeah. Yeah. It's quite a quite a... when creativity works it's quite a loose business. How are we doing for time? Any questions from anybody?

. . .

audience question How was it received in Bulgaria?

Rouzie Hassanova So in Bulgaria, we had a small release because the cinemas didn't want to book it on a wide release. We had it on 10 screens. It was released. I mean, critically by the reviewers and stuff like that it was received very well because they they understood what I was trying to say. But we released in the hottest weekend, so it was bad timing. But it's done OK, I mean, for what it is for that kind of level of film. And, you know, it's not for everybody. It's not for the mass audience of Bulgaria. It did OK. And then it got released in Turkey. And I think it had a limited release in Poland as well.

audience question (inaudible, about scriptwriting)

Rouzie Hassanova Well, it's interesting with this example, because now I'm trying to write something else and I'm definitely doing something. You know I have a very different kind of structure of writing. With this particular story because it was a short and then the Scripteast Development Lab heard about it because we were nominated for this award. And then they just heard about the pitch. They heard the pitch and they just came and met me.

And we had a very quick coffee and they said 'This needs to be a feature'. And I just, I was a bit like, it can't be. I don't even know how to where to begin. And they said, 'Look, we give you, we'll extend the deadline for another two weeks if you can give us a feature film script. It doesn't have to be perfect. It's a development

lab. Anyway, we'll help you develop it. Just give us a script, 90 pages.' (Laughter.) So, yeah.

So I took two weeks off my work and I sat down and... I didn't even write a treatment. I just wrote the biggest probably pile of crap. But they just saw the potential of it and then accepted it. And it took about, well, it took eight years of development. A lot of drafts, 14 drafts. I mean, it took a lot of development labs. It took script editors. It took... We had financing for development from Media, [now called Creative Europe]. We went to EAVE, we went we went to so many events just to try and get as much feedback as possible. And I was very green in this writing process. But it was an incredible school.

Annie Collins And then you dropped a third of it.

Rouzie Hassanova And then I dropped a third of it. (Laughter.)

Audience — inaudible question about New Zealand filmmaking

Rouzie Hassanova Here is very different. (Laughter.) Number one. Europe is very crowded. It's very competitive. You are up against thousands of film makers, super, super talented. And so, well, it's just so much harder to get finance. Incredibly hard. Here I haven't really started doing much. We're just doing a little short now with Fran Carney over there, which we are prepping for a May shoot. And it's a kind of cute little story set here in New Zealand about immigrants

again. But so far, it's been a completely different experience. It's because everyone is so welcoming and and people are so happy to be helping and giving you advice and... or being involved in the project. It just feels, it literally feels like a breeze, to me anyway. You don't have to beg and ask... I mean it just feels so much easier. But I'll tell you, in a few months, if that changes. (Laughter.)



Cushla Parekowhai joins in. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.



Lorna Kanavatoa closes the event. Photographer Adrienne Martyn.

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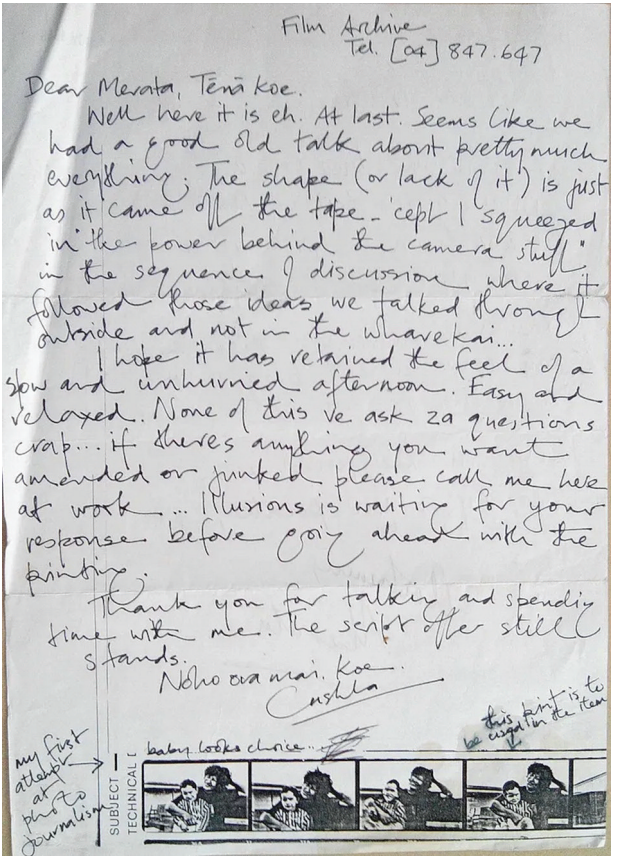
KŌRERO KI TAKU TUAKANA: CONVERSATION WITH MY BIG SISTER (1988-2016)

Cushla Parekowhai & Merata Mita



Film Archive
Tel. [04] 847.647

Dear Merata, Tēnā koe.

Well here it is eh. At last. Seems like we had a good old talk about pretty much everything. The shape (or lack of it) is just as it came off the tape - 'cept I squeezed in the power behind the camera stuff" in the sequence of discussion where it followed those ideas we talked through outside and not in the wharekai...

I hope it has retained the feel of a slow and unhurried afternoon. Easy and relaxed. None of this ve ask za questions crap... if theres anything you want amended or junked please call me here at work... Illusions is waiting for your response before going ahead with the printing.

Thank you for talking and spending time with me. The script offer still stands.

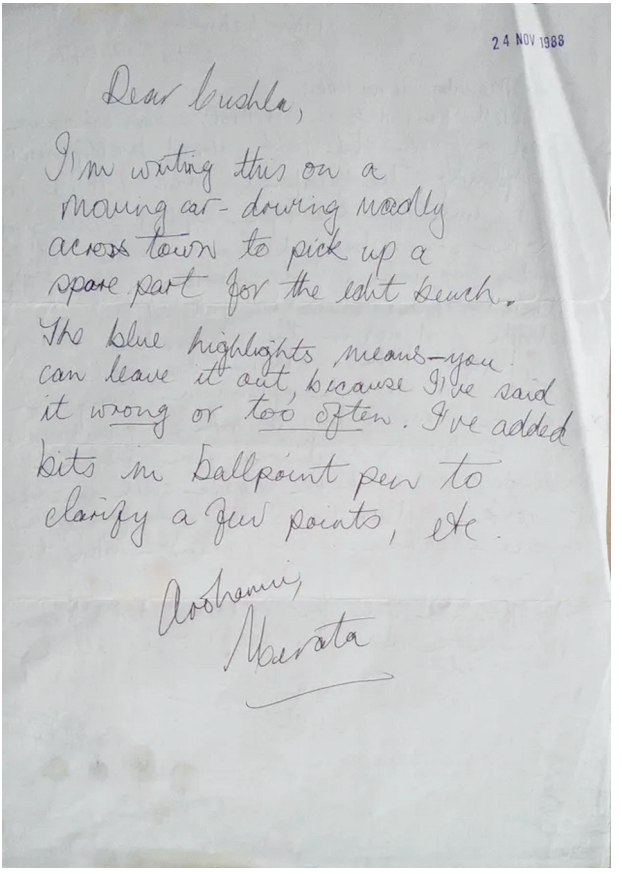
Noho ora mai. Koe.
Cushla

my first attempt at photo journalism

baby looks choice...

this print is to be used in the item

SUBJECT
TECHNICAL


24 NOV 1988

Dear Sushla,

I'm writing this on a moving car - driving madly across town to pick up a spare part for the edit bench.

The blue highlights means - you can leave it out, because I've said it wrong or too often. I've added bits in ballpoint pen to clarify a few points, etc.

Aroha nui,
Merata

So you heard eh? Went to this hui at Taiwhakaea Marae round Whakatāne way where there was all this talk about Māori making Māori films. Hooked up with the director Merata Mita. It was full on. Kōrero going, hammer and tongs. Merata decided she needed a break so the two of us went outside and sat in the sun, not doing nothing. Well maybe thinking a bit, taking care of the baby and listening to the sound of the sea. Was nice, relaxing even, but eventually I switched on the cassette recorder, opened up the notebook and asked, 'So what do you reckon about the honky film industry then?'

. . .

Merata plucked at a wayward strand of late spring grass.

You know I find it tragic that Māori aren't left to make our own stories, ourselves. We just don't get a chance to address our own problems, our own personalities and our own ways of looking at life.

She rolled the long, lanky stalk between the palms of her hands.

Somehow Pākehā film makers feel free simply to take Māori characters and take Māori stories—

Merata bit into the stem and spat out the end.

Because Pākehā film makers take Māori character and stories out of a Māori context what they present is an interpretive or derivative view of our people rather than an authentic one. There is so much about the Pākehā Māori need to know but firstly Pākehā have to explain what this might be for themselves.

She paused briefly.

I mean I don't understand them. I don't understand the Pākehā mentality that has brought so much destruction to our land. This is not to say Māori are entirely blameless, but any damage we were responsible for was not on the scale or at the speed of that done by Pākehā.

. . .

Merata looked thoughtful.

There is so much in the Pākehā psyche I want to know about. I want to know what motivates their destructiveness. I want to know what motivates the neurosis they have about living here. I want to know about their relentless need to cut everything down to size, to destroy the kauri forest, to shape the land not for people but for sheep and cows to live in. I want to know about a mentality which manicures its grass and builds fences. I want to know about what motivates Pākehā because I don't understand them. I think if Pākehā made films about themselves and addressed their own issues then Māori would be much better off.

She studied me intensely expecting a response so I said, 'Guess the buzz word right now justifying Pākehā inaction turns on their anxiety about appropriation. As long as there is only talk about what is a Māori image and who controls this, Pākehā think they don't need to do anything at all'.

Merata was pleased and then she said—

That's right. Pākehā in New Zealand have always had an excuse to stand still and take two steps back. But if you talk to them and ask why, you are never given a reason or shown a motivation that recognises any need for progress. Pākehā will always find an excuse not to change. So-called appropriation anxiety is simply a means to justify the status quo. Misappropriation is what I call it, of Māori image and influence.

Merata chewed on her paspallum cigarette.

. . .

I think Pākehā film makers would do well if they cleaned up their own backyards particularly with regard to what they present to the public firstly as a story and secondly as a story with a statement or a message. Damn cheek. Insult actually. I don't accept it. I refuse.

She inhaled luxuriously.

I don't want to put my energy into making stories about Pākehā because I don't know them well enough. I never saw any of them on the marae except those that were invited. I never saw any of them at the hui we held. I never saw any of them at tangi we attended — so how the hell do Pākehā film makers who presume to tell Māori stories know what it is they're telling stories about?

Merata threw back her head and blew a lazy stream of imaginary smoke into the air.

Pākehā film makers are just not up to it. They should just leave Māori concerns alone. That's what I say. I really think Pākehā are avoiding having to deal with themselves, their own crises, lack of action and flawed social analysis.

Merata discarded the weedy switch and then casually flicked off some stubborn fallen seed.

That's enough about them, let's talk about us.

. . .

Not quite sure what to say next I wondered vaguely about the increasing number of alienated Pākehā relocating to Australia and asked her if she saw this movement as some desperate occupation of a cultural non-space.

Definitely. Often I have to deal with arguments justifying the existence of Pākehā based merely on the fact of their being here. They say, 'I'm a fourth-generation New Zealander. I belong'. But Pākehā say this with such incredible defensiveness. It's amazing. I feel if they actually believed this claim they wouldn't be so angry or closed.

We were quiet for a time and watched while Merata's little boy Hepi hauled himself up on the bench and sat next to his mother. I wanted to know what she thought was needed so that Māori were more able to make images for ourselves. Merata began to talk about her experience working on Mauri *where on location, right in the middle of the shoot, major effort was put in to giving Māori young people skills by teaching them the technical aspects of filmmaking.*

We got excellent results running a training programme parallel to the making of *Mauri*. I make no apologies for what we did. There were a number of inexperienced young Māori people working on our crew. Many Pākehā say, surely you sacrificed quality by embracing your belief about the need to provide opportunity. As a filmmaker my response is that although I might sacrifice quality in relation to technical expertise or perhaps range of performance because on *Mauri* we used mostly untrained actors, all these objections are stupid and end up being refuted by the achievement of the film itself. For me what a director could lose in supposed finesse by

choosing to employ untried Māori people you certainly gain in intensity and commitment for the work being done. From a professional crew you get professionalism. From a Māori crew you get passion. It's their one chance in a million, and it's a chance not offered to them by many Pākehā directors. Young Māori know they are always up against it. They know that when given an opportunity they have to prove capable of doing the job. I'd say the success of the trainees who worked on *Mauri* made our decision to go with a Māori crew totally worthwhile.

As the baby wrigggled free from the hard wooden seat and made ready to escape, I asked about the way Māori people view films. Did she think moving pictures could be seen as a form of whakapapa or geneaolgy able to connect generations? Was Māori interest in film making a reflection of the cultural power of cinema? Merata observed the little boy attempt some tentative steps.

First remember where Māori have come from. Our people have a strongly oral tradition of story telling with emphasis on the spoken word. This tradition has evolved over generations and brings to life the deeds of the ancestors and their spiritual insights in fairy-tale, myth and legend. Our language is rich, complex and able to speak in pictures. It is a means of communication not only between people but also of our inner most values and beliefs. As a film maker what this means for me is that when Māori make films what we do is essentially different from what Pākehā film makers do.

At this point Merata insisted I take notes.

. . .

Unfortunately criteria for criticism of Māori film has not yet been understood or developed. This is mostly because it's Pākehā people who are assessing Māori film. They approach the work of Māori film makers from a kind of polarised scale that can't even address the language used in a film.

I was distracted by the baby being unbearably cute. Merata waited until she was sure she had my full attention.

If we look at *Mauri* as an example, particularly the treatment of plot and narrative. I remember people kept walking around the set, commenting on lack of narrative thrust and absence of plot, comparing what we were doing to films by Hitchcock and other able-bodied Pākehā men. And I thought what a load of shit, that's only *one* way to approach filmmaking. In my experience if you tell a story where your starting point begins with an oral tradition the narrative is presented to you in a series of layers. As a director I pull back layer after layer until more and more of the story is revealed. That's how narrative in oral tradition works. Each layer adds new dimension and depth to the story. This process is not possible if you have to function in a purely technical or literal construction. I quite consciously and unconsciously destroy plot as taught to me through Pākehā literature. In *Mauri* I deliberately went for a story told in layers because that's how I think. I feel comfortable with this approach because it's my natural way of expressing what it is I want to say. When making a film I wasn't going to allow myself to be constrained by artificial Pākehā convention.

Merata checked I was on task. Satisfied, she gave me a chance to turn the page.

. . .

When *Mauri* was screened at this year's New Zealand Film Festival few Pākehā actually understood my use of layer rather than thrust to create narrative.

Merata lifted her pelvis off the bench, made a provocative movement with her hips and grunted suggestively. I didn't know where to look. She giggled with delight.

These are exactly the kind of differences Pākehā critics don't take into account when analysing the film. So, when they are forced to confront their own confusion they try saying it is the film that is confused not them. When confronted with their own lack of knowledge, Pākehā critics say the film isn't offering any knowledge. When confronted with their own lack of direction they try to say it is the film that has no direction. But of all people who have seen *Mauri* I haven't heard any Māori say they couldn't find the direction of the film. Admittedly some of them had to sit down and think about it for a bit, but in the end Māori knew what was going on.

Suddenly Hepi returned from the exercise of freedom, crumpled but happy.

When Pākehā people talk about *Mauri* they ask really dumb questions like 'Why did Willie die?' Obviously Willie died because he was shot, and why was he shot? The reason to me is irrelevant. What is important is that every Māori family in New Zealand has been effected by sudden and violent death, whether it's in a shooting or an accident, a road fatality or whatever, we've all been touched by grief. It is a Māori experience. All of us have lost some young person about Willie's age. That's why violent death is in the film. Every Māori knows what this feels like and can relate to the pain. But

Pākehā critics want reasons that are more reassuring than the ones I'm giving you here. Pākehā want reasons that tell them they are not racist or violent toward us. They want reasons that tell them they know a lot about Māori and that they have Māori friends, who will look out for them, pander to their guilt and maybe get them off the hook. Pākehā want reassurance. They want a simplistic, patronising, condescending easy little story able to lull them back into a safe and predictable, timeless, happy kind of dreamscape. Ask them to step out of that environment into some harsh reality and Pākehā are instantly uncomfortable.

Merata set the baby on his way again. Hepi was off.

I must say that when Bill Gosden [Director of the New Zealand Film Festival] sent me the reviews of *Mauri* from Wellington I rolled around the floor in hysterical laughter because the comments said so much about the critics themselves and so little about the film. In particular there was one reviewer, can't remember his name exactly but I know I saw a film that he'd made. It dealt with a pre-adolescent white boy's fantasy — he imagined that a man friend of his family's was Stalin.

Think that's Costa Botes and his film Stalin's Sickle*, I said helpfully. Ah yes, Merata nodded. She continued.*

OK so what we've got here is a New Zealand film that tells a story of a little white pre-adolescent boy who has fantasy about an ogre with a big, hairy, moustache that lives a million miles away. It's never one of our ogres, it's always Russian, or Chinese or some other reviled race in the world from some other reviled country. And yet the

director of this film about a distant Russian ogre sets himself up to be a critic of *Mauri*. I ask you. I wouldn't even attempt to try and deal critically with the issues in his film because these tell me only about a white fear of the ogre centred overseas, in another country or somewhere else. It is never a statement about the ogre which is in fact the Pākehā male New Zealander right here. Responses like these not only reveal quite a lot about the Pākehā psyche but they also demonstrate how little Māori know about this mentality. I wouldn't even deign to step into their kind of screwed up territory. This is why I found New Zealand critical reviews of *Mauri* pretty hilarious really but sadly ignorant.

Merata frowned with dismay.

For instance *Mauri* won a prize at Rimini Film Festival which is mostly attended by directors, and was also very well received at Vancouver. After the screening in Canada the question-and-answer session went on for over an hour. People there were sincerely interested in the issues *Mauri* presented. Audiences were not defensive or threatened. I really enjoyed talking to people who wanted to know what I thought and were willing to be challenged by my answers. It was refreshing to engage with an audience who could discuss rationally with me my ideas about deconstruction of plot, because overseas more and more films like *Mauri* are being made where the range of film language is much more extensive so that as a director you are not confined to such narrow thrusting.

Merata made even more obscene gestures simulating sex and cracked up laughing. Hitchcock would not have thought this funny.

. . .

Overseas I talk about my use of layered narrative and am understood. When this happened I was really taken aback and thought, Good God, is it only me who knows about this at home? Here in New Zealand I feel like some kind of fringe minority, cut off and isolated from the rest of the world. However in international contexts there is this discussion but at a completely different level.

She shrugged.

Many of those Pākehā reviewers who offered their critical opinions on *Mauri* know nothing about the film. They zero in on Geoff [Murphy]'s character, Mr Semmens, and take aim at it but actually Pākehā can't handle the function of this character at all. Yet when I was overseas a member of the audience once stood up and said, they really liked the portrayal of the racist in the film. I said heaps of people actually hate him and this guy replied he was glad I made him a total nut-job because this kind of representation takes the sting out of how hurtful racism is. I told him some Māori think turning Mr Semmens into a lunatic was a cop-out, but this tauiwi said as a white person in Canada he wanted to thank me for making the film because from his perspective he was enormously relieved that the racist was shown to be mad. I was asked, how many of my views of the racist were in the character of Semmens. I said all of them. Racism is irrational and illogical just like him. I then wondered, if a film like *Mauri* is acceptable to a Canadian audience, what was wrong with Pākehā audiences at home and everyone laughed.

Merata reflected. She watched a lone gull fly in with the turning tide and said–

. . .

Later, indigenous Canadian filmmakers told me their experience was exactly the same as mine. Where my film was acceptable in Canada, none of their films were. Seems to me wherever the indigenous population is the conscience of the nation it's very difficult for settler people to be comfortable with or accept our views.

The solitary grey and white bird made a low effortless sweep of the horizon.

What I wanted to do in *Mauri* was to destroy the massive sentimental view of Māori, that says we're the sort of people who have this lovely mystical thing called Māoritanga and that we go on marae and commune with the ancestors and who occasionally have meetings and engage in political action with the odd unlikable character but not one that is so racist and insane as Semmens. I wanted to destroy all this rose coloured cosiness because Māori eat, drink, live, fuck, fight, do all the normal things that other people in vibrant, contemporary living cultures do. I wanted to break out of a particular characterisation Māori people find themselves stuck in particularly in relation to our representation on film. Look at all the early films that feature Māori. Here indigenous people are all cute, caper about in piupiu, batting their eyelids, being mischievous and coy. I thought, no, bugger this. Māori are not like that. We are real. We are alive. We have passion and we deal with the everyday drama of life and death. In *Mauri* that's what I set out to show. I know a few Māori had difficulty with the film because often you become so colonised you automatically accept the image that the Pākehā projects of you. For instance unconsciously you accept that the assumption that the lead character in a film has to be white all the time. Actually this was an observation made about *Mauri* because Jeez — how strange it was for an audience to see a film where the leading man and leading woman were Māori. And I said no it wasn't strange at all because this film was made by a Māori director, like

me. We're so conditioned to seeing that other kind of hero like the ones in commercials where the characters are all white and they're the only ones who use *Lux*. As a film maker you've got a hard road. You're not only creating disturbance among Pākehā but you are also provoking a response from Māori, particularly those who are just as colonised as the colonisers.

Then just as quickly as it appeared, the sharp-eyed bird on border patrol was gone. Merata hardened her tone.

In fact I think the process of decolonisation had better take place soon and it had better take place fast. We need to reject the view of Māori Pākehā has always presented to us so we can accept as being 'correct', the authentic image of ourselves — as we see ourselves.

I was wondering what Merata thought about land issues and alienation of the whenua. All separation at 24 frames a second. I thought perhaps when Māori film makers tell stories in landscapes these images actually talk about people. She smiled.

Mmm, that's very true. When I want to shoot the land I have to contend with really superficial assumptions where my view is understood as just another pretty panorama or arty location shot. If you work with professional film crews that's what they see — selling the scenery — that's their level. If you talk to valuers or real estate agents they see property to be bought and sold. This is not how Māori see land. We are tangata whenua — people of the land. Land is a living part of us. It is where we work and play, build homes and dig gardens. In *Mauri* I never ever separated the land from the people. I tried to keep the signs in nature, that figured largely in my

childhood — such as the moon and the phases it went through, the rising and the setting of the sun identifying all the stages in the movement across the sky, as well as the inescapable effect that light has on the land and the people. At a very young age I learned about interlinking in nature and developed a connected, holistic view of the world. So again I end up having to ask myself why should I break with traditional Māori teaching when I make a film. My ideas about the importance of land in *Mauri* appears in a Māori context and not a Pākehā one.

I thought Merata's film was like consciousness playing on the imagination. Maybe that was why film can help Māori to get free of the process of colonisation because it is an art form able to teach people about mauri, or wairua or whenua. I asked her if she ever saw cinema as belonging to te ao mārama or the world of light where the wisdom in moving pictures often allow us to see more clearly in the dark.

The world of light is an analogy that never dies. It's perpetual. No matter what the generation it holds true, whether you're talking about films or whether you're talking about a search for insight and knowledge. Our old people, weren't dumb. When Māori make films we need to draw on the strengths we have consciously and subconsciously inside us. Take hold of these internalised Māori disciplines. Lean on them. Refuse to replace them. Leave Pākehā film theory to Pākehā. Māori have nothing, absolutely nothing, to be ashamed of, if we want to present new perspectives to the world of film.

I wondered what she thought about early ethnographic films of Māori. Although the people in archival images might never have seen a camera before they seem to know there was something more to the moment than just being filmed. I asked if Māori still had that awareness. Merata agreed.

. . .

Athough some people get hōhā when you put them in front of a camera and some are obviously frightened of it, many are not. Māori watch television every day but what we see is a distortion and an abuse of power perpetuated by the camera and the white power behind it. I'd say there is in fact a high awareness of this kind of distortion not only at a human level but also at the supernatural level and the effect that this abuse has on us as well. I mean there is something very supernatural in a technology that can steal your image. Let's face it. There's nothing natural about what the camera can do at all. And anyone who thinks it's natural to be able to see yourself projected on a wall is stupid because this is so not the real you. There are Māori people who are very aware of such a danger. Film and television flunkies say, 'Be natural, be yourself'. And you can't be because someone is spying on you, someone is removed from you, not looking **at** you but looking through something at an image of you. Being filmed represents a very real fear, the knowledge that something is not quite right, and for Māori instinct is our guide.

Merata flexed and shook out some stiffness in her legs.

Often you will see our people playing up to the camera and in the early films they poke their tongues out and do mad dances. They perform antics to hide their true self. They think that by acting in this way they successfully conceal their image from the camera, but we all know the camera breaks through such subterfuge and steals the image anyway. That's why it's so important to take a film back to where you shot it. As a director you've done a despicable thing, you've gone in to a place, and intruded on the past and the privacy of people and helped yourself to their mauri or aura. You've reached

in and taken something sacred. So you must go back and return this to where it came from and that is among the people you stole the image from in the first place. This is a really important principle. I haven't yet met a Māori filmmaker who doesn't believe this to be necessary.

Merata shot me a conspiratorial look.

When people are put in front of the camera of course they are intimidated and are afraid.

Then she leaned forward and whispered—

Because you know, the camera can make even a virgin look fucked.

Merata slapped her thigh and laughed out loud.

No sorry. I think this discomfort with the camera that many Māori people feel is because film has the power to bring people back from the dead. It has the power to project an image of the past into the future. It has the power to make the present eternal. So we're not just talking about the effect of a gadget here, we're talking about significant consequences. Māori people know this. We're not stupid.

As if on cue I said something stupid. Fortunately Merata did not respond so I moved quickly on to talk about images on film where the past is the present is the future.

. . .

You know I really love this quote from Walter Benjamin. He says the present is really a flash between the past and the future. I thought to myself that's a very Māori way to look at time.

Attempting to keep up with her train of thought, I wondered if Walter Benjamin could have been Māori. Merata laughed and said 'No, he was a bloody German'.

Mind you Benjamin was quite a unique man in his brain. He talks about the power of speech making and how as words are ejected up into the sky the impact they have on the people assembled is as if suddenly there is a bolt of lightning or a flash of insight. And I thought of those who do whaikōrero and make speeches on the marae. I thought how best to explain what happens in these highly charged situations. Pākehā who don't know anything about what is going on sit back and are very detached from the proceedings, whereas if you are inside what is happening and are part of it, you experience what a theorist like Walter Benjamin describes. His idea becomes very meaningful. That's the tragedy with images of Māori on film, so many people are only too willing to dabble in glib representation, they have never had the shock of insight, or experienced the charge of illumination and can't understand that the present is merely a flash between the past and the future.

Merata continued.

Although concepts of time intrigue me I was not really concerned with them in *Mauri* because Māori time is timeless. Now when

Pākehā tried to approach the film they were all saying, OK, so this is day one but we're going to day two and Oh my God! there's no effective bridge.

She clapped her hands to the sides of her face in horror.

You know I am reminded of this saying eh: for Pākehā people time is the master, whereas Māori masters time. I think everyone should see it that way. I don't want time to be my master. Actually there are other film makers like the French director Alain Resnais, who do this successfully. So Māori film makers are in good company. We don't have to be ashamed or change our concepts. Crikey. We're streets ahead. We're talking about enlightenment here.

Merata became serious.

I think one other important thing about Māori filmmaking is that when you make a film from an indigenous perspective, as an indigenous person living in a colonised country, you can't help but have allegory in your films. What fascinates me about films that I've seen of third world people and films that Māori people have made right here — and most of them are really unaware of this — is how, in a single a story, many other stories are being told. Sometimes you can't count them. There is always an allegorical dimension in films minorities make. I think it's because the kind of social, political and cultural factors which determine the way we have to live our lives makes it impossible for us to ignore what is happening to us as minorities in colonised white societies. Every time we tell a story, we can't help but tell or translate this experience into the stories we're telling on film. Our films are so full of allegory. They are quite

different from stories told in parallel narrative where you might have three thrusts at the same time.

Merata rolled her eyes. God forbid the ejaculation, she said.

The thing with all this thrusting is that often you don't have a climax. In our films allegories are turning circles all the time. I think this is interesting because even in short films made by Māori I know there are always other little stories going on. It's got to the point now where I'm now more interested in these stories than the big story being told in bold letters on the screen.

I asked to her to explain.

What I mean is Māori have a narrative tradition and should be building on it. We should be proud of our way of story telling. Don't destroy it or substitute it with some other superficial and senseless kind of bloody film language. Imagine what Russian films would be like if they copied the Americans. Imagine what French films would be like if they copied the Americans. These people are proud of their own stories, their own languages, customs and culture, and because of this they make films.

The afternoon was coming to an end so I wondered where Merata was going to from here. She shielded her eyes from the sun.

Well after I finish with this documentary I'm going to have a little reassessment of the situation and make some decisions because it's

being made abundantly clear to me that it's going to be quite difficult in the future to get money to make films, whether they're documentaries or whether they're features. Chances are that every argument will be used against me, like 'You're making films that are not commercial. You're making films accessible only to Māori people. You're making films that are too obtuse for even a specialist audience'. But if you look at what has been defined as a commercial New Zealand film — take *Queen City Rocker*, for example . . . . I still get denied the money. It's exactly what you talked about right at the beginning of this interview — an excuse for inaction.

Sensing we were nearly done I asked if she had any jobs for an unknown Māori director and would-be script writer? Merata yawned as the baby lurched back into the conversation all smiles, with sand in his hair.

Write me a script. I'm tired of writing scripts. I'll look at any story that's put in front of me.

I started to gather up my notes and thinking this could be my one big break wondered if a director like Kurosawa could do it with Ran *what could Māori do with* Lear*? Considering her reply, Merata brushed Hepi down and lifted him up on to her lap—*

Now there's a film maker who took someone else's story and made it totally Japanese.

And I said, the point is, Lear should be wearing moko. Merata liked this idea and said—

. . .

Yeah that's nice.

Then getting carried away I said, in the Lear story, the characters, the power struggle within the whanau, rangatiratanga and who has it, the tension between tuakana, teina older and younger siblings are all essential dynamics in Māori drama where although the historical Lear springs from some ancient kind of Pākehātanga located somewhere over a Shakespearean rainbow his struggle still feels very familiar. Merata listened to me. It could be when telling a story of a Māori Lear we in fact give Pākehā the chance to learn more about their own tipuna but on our terms and with reference to our way of seeing. Besides, I said, really going for gold and trying my luck, there hasn't been a New Zealand director who can 'do' crowds. And she said—

You know if you submit a script like that the Film Commission will say it's going to cost thousands, but this is mostly because someone in Hollywood tells them it will. There is no effort to weigh up the proposition, that maybe you could get all these Māori schools out in the middle of a football paddock and shoot battle scenes where it costs nothing.

I unpacked and struggled with an unfamilar camera borrowed from the student office. Merata suggested I take off the lens cap. 'Imagine it, heaps and heaps of people', I said, peering into the viewfinder. As inexperience and a failing battery were about to overwhelm me I fumbled hopefully with the aperture and, almost in focus, photographed Merata and Hepi sitting together. Merata said—

Kurosawa is a really interesting filmmaker, how in *Throne of Blood***,** he took *Macbeth* and turned it into a very Japanese story was absolutely

brilliant, but Japanese cinema has had time to develop eh, so that they can be that innovative and bold and steal off Shakespeare and culturally adapt the story to suit themselves. Māori filmmakers are only on the first rung of the ladder but white filmmakers who use our stories continue to frustrate us.

Merata stood and swung the baby on to her hip.

Māori film-makers will be pushing shit up hill for a long time yet but we'll get there. We've already got films like *Ngāti* and *Mauri* and now Barry [Barclay]'s on his next one. It will happen. Just you wait.

I thanked her and began to stash away the camera and recording gear. Merata looked down at me and asked Kua mutu. Finish eh? I said, yep. And that was the end of that.

NOTES

This 2016 edit was published in Spiral Collectives, *Medium*. First published in *Illusions*, 1988:9: December. VUW, Wellington.

Watch *Mauri* https://www.flicks.co.nz/movie/mauri/

An online Māori dictionary http://maoridictionary.co.nz/

'Merata Mita' at *New Zealand Onscreen* http://www.nzonscreen.-com/person/merata-mita

. . .

Duet for Merata Mita 1942–2010 http://wellywoodwoman.blogspot.co.nz/2010/06/duet-for-merata-mita-1942-2010.html

Merata Mita and the Merata Mita Fellowship for Indigenous Artists at the Sundance Institute https://www.sundance.org/blogs/who-was-merata-mita/

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE?



Some beloved participants at a Spiral hui with Keri Hulme's whānau, Moeraki 2025.

SPIRAL COLLECTIVES

Poet Heather McPherson founded Spiral Collectives in 1975. Spiral is a small artist-led registered charity (CC62215).[1]

Perhaps best-known for publishing Keri Hulme's Booker Prize-winning *the bone people*, we cherish and educate about the storytelling practices and legacies of women and nonbinary people. We awhi and tautoko and embrace and support them, with publications, exhibitions, events, moving image, websites and archives. And patience. We all work as volunteers.

Almost all of our out-of-print publications are available to read and download at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, without cost.[2]

We welcome and deeply appreciate donations to our running costs, in our 38-9026-0058551-00 SPIRAL COLLECTIVES TRUST account; and to *the bone people* graphic novel project 38-9026-0058551-04 SPIRAL COLLECTIVES TRUST. If you donate and then send your name and email to kiaoraspiral@gmail.com, we will send you a receipt you can use to claim a charitable donation tax benefit.

1. https://www.spiralcollectives.org/
2. https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/about/library/spiral