



Feminist Library Newsletter

No. 26 Autumn 2017

Keep up to date with the latest news about the Library by signing up to our e-bulletin - click on the button on our website <http://feministlibrary.co.uk>

Autumn approaches, the perfect time to curl up with a book. Our collections are open every Tues-Sat, so pop down and absorb yourself in some feminist literature and history!

If you would like to get more involved in supporting the Library you could join our Volunteering team, make a Donation, or best of all, become a Friend.

BECOME A FRIEND

If you love the Feminist Library and would like to see us continue for another 40 years, please consider becoming a Friend. From as little as £3 a month (or the equivalent each year), you can help preserve Feminist Herstory and our priceless collection of books, periodicals and archives.

- 15% off any merchandise or book at the Library at any time the bookshop is open
- Regular Feminist Library e-bulletins and newsletters delivered to your inbox
- Invites to events, workshops, lectures – from us and our friends
- Special offers throughout the year
- Book Draw: In the run up to Christmas we will be holding a book draw for all new friends. In November one lucky winner will get a signed copy of *What We Lose* by Zinzi Clemmons and in December, *Foxlowe* by Eleanor Wasserberg.

Sign up here: <http://feministlibrary.co.uk/support/friends-scheme/>

NEWS



Latinx Feminist Festival

The Feminist Library's location near to Elephant and Castle places us in the heart of a large Latin American community. To celebrate this we have been running a Latinx Feminist Festival during September and October. Thanks to funding by Oscar Murillo we have had a series feminist talks, workshops and events in Spanish, Portuguese and English for Latinx women and friends.

Saturday 30th September saw the launch party, where participants took part in a tour of the Library, a discussion about feminism and the diaspora and shared poetry, performance and ideas together.

The Festival continues through October, concluding with a history walk around Elephant and Castle. (Full details on the back page)

Help save the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand

The Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand (BMD) is the only public library in France that is exclusively dedicated to the history of women, feminism, and gender; it enjoys an international reputation; and it should not be made to become invisible and then disappear. The BMD, a municipal library of the city of Paris, was founded in 1932, thanks to a gift from the feminist journalist, Marguerite Durand, and must soon leave the building it has occupied in the 13th arrondissement since 1989. The Mairie of Paris could have proposed a new larger space for the BMD, with more space both for the collections and for the development of activities such as exhibitions, lectures, debates, pedagogical workshops, and other events.

Instead, the Mairie has decided that the BMD is to be housed in the Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris (Historical Library of the City of Paris - BHVP) in the 4th arrondissement. This decision has been taken without consultation with staff or social partners at the BMD. All the syndicats (trade-unions) are opposed. This move will mean that the collections of the BMD will have to be stored off-site, their delivery will be delayed, the BMD will no longer have its own reading room, and its personnel will effectively be merged with that of the BHVP. The new collective "Sauvons la BMD!" (Save the BMD!), which has just been launched by the Archives du féminisme, has been constituted to convince the Mairie de Paris to give up the current relocation project and propose a new home for the library that will offer the Bibliothèque Marguerite Durand both a real visibility and worthy conditions of operation. **Sign and ask others to sign the new petition:**
<https://www.change.org/p/mairie-de-paris-sauvons-la-biblioth%C3%A8que-marguerite-durand>

REVIEWS

Hauntings in the Archives at London Feminist Film Festival, August 2017 at the Rio Cinema, Dalston

This year's London Feminist Film Festival had a packed programme, including films from Iranian, Austrian, American, British, Swedish, German, Palestinian, Israeli and Indian women, on topics ranging from feminism and veganism, through to resistance and survival, so it wasn't easy to decide which sessions to attend. In the end, after much deliberation, I 'settled' for the screening of the Austrian film *Hauntings in the Archive*.

The film was surprising, exciting, thought provoking, and above all, an absolute inspiration. It was followed by a hugely interesting presentation about the history of radical and feminist film archiving at the Rio Cinema itself, by researcher Selina Robertson, one of the founders of Club Des Femmes, a queer feminist film collective, and then a panel with Selina, one the *Hauntings*' directors - Julia Wieger, Samia Malik (of the Women of Colour Index reading group), and Goldsmith's Women's Art Library's Althea Greenan.

The film explores a thought-provoking selection of herstories from the archive of the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ), which was set up more than a 100 years ago, and asks more questions than it answers. Those questions are as difficult as they are necessary, some of them so tricky, in fact, that I doubt most of us have the courage to ask them of ourselves. Questions like: what are the ghosts of our pasts that we don't want to talk about, or even admit into our consciousness?

The directors of *Hauntings*, Nina Hoechtl and Julia Wieger, go on a very brave journey of discovery. The herstories that they discover are often unexpected, disturbing even. Some so much so that they have had trouble screening the film in their home country. And yet they persist.

I encourage everyone to see the film and be inspired as I was, leaving the Rio cinema that day. I believe films like that - ones that raise the most difficult, but necessary, questions, are the ones that are most needed. They encourage us to explore our own identities and pasts, and help us deal with the issues that we often sweep aside for too long - which end up being the ones that don't let us sleep well at night.

The film inspired me to take a harder, more critical look at my own herstories (plural, because there is always more than one type of story to be told about our pasts, depending on how far and how deep we are willing to look). It also inspired me to look further into the herstory of the Feminist Library. I don't expect to find ghosts similar to the ones that the women at VBKÖ found. But the film made me realise just how little I still know about the story of the Library, despite how close it is to my heart. And I absolutely cannot wait to explore!

By Magda Oldziejewska

Watch *The Feminist Library* - a film by Anais Charles on our website to glean a little of our history:
www.feministlibrary.co.uk/about/feminist-library-film



Anne with an E

This is the latest 2017 Netflix adaptation of L.M. Montgomery's classic 1908 novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, with seven episodes in the first season. It is the story of Anne Shirley, an 11-year-old orphan girl who is mistakenly sent to live with Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert in the fictional town of Avonlea, on Prince Edward Island in Canada. The Cuthberts wished to adopt a young boy to help on their farm, believing boys to be more suited to outdoor work.

The arrival of Anne changes their life, and perhaps even some of their traditional viewpoints on gender, while Anne has to help indoors and fight for the affection of Matthew and Marilla, so she can stay at Green Gables,

This review looks at the series from a feminist angle, rather than comparing it to the original book. There were many obvious references to gender and feminism throughout the episodes: the sisterhood between Anne and her best friend, Diana; the difference between the role of men and women, as portrayed by Matthew and Marilla; and the beginning of Anne's menstrual cycle. The character of Anne is a role model for young women everywhere. From questioning society and how it treats women, to speaking her mind and standing up for what she believes in, Anne herself is a feminist.

The inclusion of Anne starting her period in episode five is important, as menstruation is still taboo in many cultures. When Anne discovers the menstrual blood on her nightclothes, Marilla explains that she is becoming a woman, while Matthew, Anne's adopted father, is not part of this conversation and is forcefully asked to leave the room. This idea that periods must not be discussed in front of men is further enforced by Diana and the other girls at school, who use words such as 'shameful', 'unmentionable' and 'secret' to describe them. They also mention their fear of getting blood on their clothing and of other people seeing it, which means they miss going to school on those days.

Unfortunately, these issues still affect girls today, with many not having access to sanitary protection. As periods are seen as dirty by most cultures and religions, women traditionally have had a lack of information and control over their bodies and gynaecological health.

This new Anne has much to offer, especially in terms of showing us how little things have changed in terms of equality. It gives us an insight into how far we still have to go, particularly when it comes to traditional gender preferences, the shame that surrounds periods, and negative stereotypes attributed to women.

By Lorna Harrington

The Feminist Library supports improved menstrual dignity for women. Here are some organisations doing great work around this issue:

- **Fourth Wave London Feminist Activists** are collecting menstrual products for a homeless shelter for women. If you have any donations please drop them at the Feminist Library during Fourth Wave's meetings every other Tuesday at 7pm. Visit fourthwave.co.uk or email fourthwavelfa@gmail.com for info.
- **Binti** is a registered charity, with a mission to provide menstrual dignity to all girls, all over the world. It currently runs projects in India, Kenya, Swaziland, U.S.A, and the UK. <http://binti.co.uk>
- **Period Positive**. Through #periodpositive, founder Chella Quint creates, promotes and shares resources and recommendations from her menstruation education research project for all ages and genders, menstruators and non-menstruators. <http://www.periodpositive.com/>

EVENTS

FEMINIST LIBRARY LATINX FESTIVAL CONTINUES

Feminist Crafternoon - 21st October, 2-5pm

A relaxed and friendly afternoon of creativity. Create posters and zines about your favourite Latin American heroines! Tea and biscuits provided.

Peruvian Film Afternoon - Saturday 28th October, 2-5pm

La Teta Asustada/ The Milk of Sorrow (2009)

Fausta is suffering from a rare disease called the Milk of Sorrow, which is transmitted through the breast milk of women who were abused or raped during or soon after pregnancy. Followed by a discussion with refreshments and drinks.

Latinx History Walk – Saturday 4th November. 12-3pm.

Starts and finishes at the Feminist Library

Join us for a guided walk around the history of Elephant and Castle. Learn more about the stories and contribution of its migrant communities. Hot chocolate and cake provided.

A day exploring Feminism and Tech 25th Nov 2017, 11-6:30

Feminist Library, London

Come and join us for a day of exciting discussions and workshops exploring the stereotypes that stop women from looking for STEM careers! Try your skills at building a digital feminist zine in just over an hour!

Programme will include sessions on: What it Means to be a Techy Woman at the Feminist Library; How We Organised before the Internet & What we Can Learn from it; Making Your Own Digital Feminist Zine; screening of Balancing Tech and panel discussion with filmmaker, Lynsey Shaw and others

STALLS

The Feminist Library Bookshop will have a stall at the following events. Come along and say hi and pick up some of our great books and merchandise.

14th -15th October, FILia Conference, London University Institute of Education, Bloomsbury Way, London WC1H 0AL <https://filia.org.uk/>

28th October, London Anarchist Bookfair, 10am to 7pm. Park View School, West Green Road, Tottenham, London, N15 3QR <http://anarchistbookfair.org.uk/>

31st October, History Day 2017, 10:00-16:00, Senate House, University of London, Malet St, WC1
Over thirty stands of libraries, archives and other research organisations (including us!) who are ready to help you with your research. <https://historycollections.blogs.sas.ac.uk/history-day-2017/>

Feminist Futures - The Fawcett Society Conference 2017

18th November, 2017, 9:30am - 5:00pm

Main Entrance (accessed from Westminster Bridge Road), St Thomas' Hospital, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7EH

The Feminist Library, 5a Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1 7XW.

Opening Hours: Tuesday 7-9 pm, Wednesday 2-6pm, Thursday 7-9pm, Friday 11-5pm and Saturday 12-5pm for the Feminist Library Bookshop. We are also open outside these hours by appointment only. Owing to circumstances beyond our control you have to climb six stairs to access the lift.

Phone 020 7261 0879 or email admin@feministlibrary.co.uk www.feministlibrary.co.uk

Twitter @feministlibrary Facebook FeministLibrary

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