



# Feminist Library Newsletter

No. 26 Summer 2017

*Keep up with the latest Library news by signing up to our e-bulletin on our website [www.feministlibrary.co.uk](http://www.feministlibrary.co.uk)*

Summer is here and we have a lot of exciting things coming up at the Library, including workshops and events on Self Defence, Yoga, Cycling, and even Vagina Cupcake Making! Our Summer Fayre is always a highlight in our calendar and promises the usual mix of arts, politics, feminism and fun. Our Bookshop stall will also be out and about at a number of events. Make sure you pay us a visit!

We continue to plan for our exciting move to new premises at OKRS next year and are currently hard at work fundraising and revamping our volunteering programme. 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 you will help to cover our day-to-day costs. This support is vital in sustaining the Library and allowing us to plan for the future.

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

## NEWS

### Introducing our new Volunteer Coordinators

We are very pleased to welcome Jael and Niamh, our two new volunteer coordinators, to the Library. If you are interested in volunteering they can both be contacted on [volunteer@feministlibrary.co.uk](mailto:volunteer@feministlibrary.co.uk)



Hi my name is Jael de la Luz. I am originally from Mexico. I am a historian, editor and writer about feminist issues, books and spirituality. I also work at Latin American Women's Aid, where I coordinate the Change Maker project, which is a space for popular feminist self-learning from Chicano feminism, Latin American feminisms, and diaspora. I am part of the Latin American Feminist Collective in London and a collaborator in Feminopraxis. I am a mother and companion of battles. You can find Jael at the Feminist Library on Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.



Hello, my name is Niamh. I am originally from Leeds, and came to London for university. I have now completed a gender history degree, allowing me to become more involved with the fantastic work and activities of the Library. If you are interested in becoming involved in any part of the Library, however big or small, you can contact us and we will point you in the right direction to get you started. Looking forward to meeting everyone, both existing and potential volunteers. You can find Niamh at the Feminist Library on Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m, and other times by request.

### Save KVINFO

The Danish Centre for Gender, Equality and Diversity is under threat of closure.

They have started an international petition to oppose this. Please support our sister library:

[www.petitions24.com/support\\_kvinfo](http://www.petitions24.com/support_kvinfo)



## Visit to Lesbian Herstory Archive NYC

[www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org](http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org)

At the beginning of May I visited New York for the first time. I wanted to walk around Manhattan and get a sense of the city. I enjoyed overhearing people's conversations on park benches, many of them in Spanish, and the surprising sound of birds singing everywhere. I experienced hope with the overwhelming amount of graffiti, stickers, badges, posters, and books opposing Trump in the heart of the city. But I wanted to listen deeper to the stories of lesbian lives in America, and to find common ground, so I left Manhattan for Brooklyn to visit the Lesbian Herstory Archive. I have been a long-time volunteer at the Feminist Library in London and I was told that both archives share similar values. With great timing, the LHA

was open for a few hours on the Sunday I was there, so I invited my friend Megan, who lives not far from New York, to join me in this exploration.

From the outside the Lesbian Herstory Archive has the look of any other house in the neighbourhood. Megan and I felt instantly welcomed from the hall entrance onwards. No security, no library card needed, a zero stress beginning. The archive still looks like a house inside, the rooms full of wonderful lesbian objects. Books, bookmarks, photographs, badges, t-shirts, video tapes, dildos, banners, or anything interesting around the excitement and complexity of living a lesbian life.

We were incredibly lucky to meet Deborah Edel, one of the co-founders of the archive back in 1974, who showed us around the archive, giving us a tour of our lesbian herstory. She explained that the collection's emphasis is on women who have lived an everyday life more than on the lives of famous lesbians. Deborah was there with filmmaker Megan Rossman, who has produced short films about the library. She was filming that day, and Megan and I were invited to participate, being filmed as we explored the archive with Deborah. Megan, not my friend but the filmmaker, pressed the record button as we started the tour in the living room, which is full of anthologies, poetry, theatre, science, feminism, sport, humour, photography, pornography, and spoken word. How exciting to be archived too!

The archive was originally a house where people lived. Many years ago the women of the LHA raised money to buy the house so they could secure its future. LHA is run by volunteers and has no government funding. It is very well organised with a paper catalogue and many online resources. The material is organised in alphabetical order by women's first names, and includes items donated from all over the world.

In the basement, a group of volunteers is working very hard to preserve cassettes and videotapes – an urgent task because of the fragility of these technologies. They wear headphones to listen to what was recorded, and sometimes what is written on the cassette labels is incorrect, as a new recording has erased the first contents. Upstairs, in what were the bedrooms and the children's room, they have more books, but also t-shirts, badges, a guitar, protest jackets, even little origami lesbian nuns. As Deborah said, 'You name it, we have it.'

The archive is not set up to collect artwork. They refer artists to the Gay and Lesbian Museum instead, but they collect photographs of artwork. Badges are tricky because they can't be easily dated. This commentary made me want to discuss the idea of the unknown object in an archive space, but I opted to carry on listening.

Deborah finished the tour with the story of one of her good friends in the library, Marge, whose books are kept in a bookshelf upstairs. She was the one who raised the first \$50 towards buying the building. In the 1980s she was very sick and decided to go to her parents' house. They were very limited in their thinking. At the reading of her will her parents found out that she was a lesbian, as she wanted to donate her papers and books to the LHA. They got very upset and wanted to destroy her books. A lawyer and a van were hired to come to the family house and rescue such important herstory. Her diaries tell us what it was like to come out in the bars of 1950s Ohio, and deal with the question of who am I?

As always, the best things in life come in simple forms, for free and with gentle manners. After the visit I felt pleased, and made the resolution of becoming a world correspondent on Lesbian Herstory archives, not for the BBC but maybe for the Feminist Library's new foreign affairs press department!

Written by Eva Megias. Photo of Deborah Edel by Megan Saltzman.

## REVIEWS

### '56 Artillery Lane' a Raven Row Exhibition

[www.ravenrow.org](http://www.ravenrow.org)



A cluster of rooms in an 18th Century Huguenot weaver's house in Spitalfields has recently been sent back in time to the spring of 1974, as '56 Artillery Lane', a group exhibition at Raven Row which takes inspiration from the feminist collective S.L.A.G. (South London Art Group) who, in 1974, transformed a former domestic space, South London Women's Centre in Lambeth, to create 'A Woman's Place' – which served as both an exhibition and an immersive artwork in itself. Located in a squatted house, South London Women Centre was one of many repurposed community and activist spaces occupying disused buildings at the time. S.L.A.G took advantage of the domestic nature of this setting to offer a critique of family life.

'56 Artillery Lane' similarly takes place within a domestic setting, and the exhibition as a whole seeks to imagine 'home' as 'a space for social, sexual and political agency', and the 'domestic' as a stage on

which kinship and self are formed and transformed through acts of love, cruelty and indifference'. The exhibition does not seek to explicitly restage the S.L.A.G artists' earlier creation. This would have been impossible, partly because A Woman's Place was always meant to be an ephemeral happening, and little documentation of the exhibition remains. '56 Artillery Lane' instead takes its predecessor as a point of inspiration and departure, presenting the works of contemporary artists who offer a multitude of perspectives surrounding the domestic, both within the exhibition and the accompanying programme of events.

The relationships between past and present plays out in myriad ways. One element of the exhibition is a publication produced as part of the research process titled *14 Radnor Terrace: A Woman's Place*. The book reflects rigorous research, carried out in archives including the Feminist Library, through oral histories and in collaboration with the families of some of the original artists. It contains archival documentation including posters and newsletters, and even the comment book from the original show, prefaced with an essay by editor, Amy Tobin, who considers the legacy of 'A Woman's Place'.

Among the works with the most contemporary feel are Lucy Orta's *Refuge Wear*, shown on the ground floor. Pieces of equipment evoking both leisurely outdoor pursuits and survival, such as tents and sleeping bags have been refashioned – rendered as strange hybrids, with a hood protruding through a tent, or a conjoined pair of sleeping bags. The objects are absurd, evoking strange mythical beasts, but also uncomfortably familiar, calling to mind scenes of rough sleepers or refugees. The fact that the latter occupy so much of our visual field in news broadcasts in recent months and years make these sculptural objects particularly affecting, and it comes as a sad surprise that they were actually created in the 1990s, reminding us that for so many, the search for refuge is not a new thing.

On the upper floors, among the newest works in the show are *Poison the Cure* (2017), a film by Jenna Bliss specially commissioned by Raven Row, which plays with the history of pharmaceutical trials in Puerto Rico, thus bringing imperialism to the fore, and *An Evening With the White Queen* (2017), a 360° video work by Martine Syms accompanied by wallpaper and drapes created by the artist for the space.

It is a real pleasure to see such fresh contemporary works alongside those such as *Fenix°*, originally created by Su Richardson, Monica Ross and Kate Walker in 1977 and reinstalled here by Su Richardson. This and other works on show from the 70s and 80s call to mind the Feminist (with a capital F) art I remember seeing in museums throughout childhood and adolescence, and it feels important that they should be brought into dialogue with young feminist and queer artists working today.

The accompanying publication *14 Radnor Terrace: A Woman's Place* is now part of the Feminist Library's collection.

Review by Anna Pigott. Photo of *Fenix°* by Marcus J. Leith.



## EVENTS

### **Women's Self-Defence Workshop. Saturday 22nd July, 3-6pm**

Exciting taster on women's self-defence led by experienced teacher, Carolyn. Tickets £3/£6/£12. Book through Eventbrite: <https://tinyurl.com/flselfdefence>

### **The first ever Feminist Library sponsored vagina cupcake making event. Feminist Library and everywhere. Saturday 15th July, all day**

We will shortly be circulating information about how you can take part in this exciting event, have fun, raise lots of money, and eat cakes. What's not to like? If you would like to help organise this, please contact volunteer [@feministlibrary.co.uk](mailto:@feministlibrary.co.uk)

### **Feminist Library Summer Fayre, at the Feminist Library. 12th August**

Our feminist Fayre returns for another year, set to be packed with zines, stalls, food and workshops. Full details will be announced on our website and social media. If you're interested in booking a stall or running a workshop, please email [bookshop@feministlibrary.co.uk](mailto:bookshop@feministlibrary.co.uk)

### **Feminism and Cycling Event, 3rd September at the Feminist Library**

Day of workshops with Bike Grrl, Elly Blue, from Microcosm Publishing in US, and Love Your Bike. Stalls, presentations, discussion, readings and merchandise. Unmissable event. Tickets £3/£6/£12. Book through Eventbrite: <https://tinyurl.com/flcycling>

### **Feminist Yoga at the Feminist Library, every Thursday, 7pm-8.30pm**

How do we reimagine self-care? How do we validate, honour, and love the anger which our feminist activism requires us to use for change? Each week we will explore the relationship between one of these feminist feelings/emotions and yoga (physical postures, breathing and meditation) with a focus on healing. Open to all levels – you don't need to have prior yoga experience.

1) Drop in session – £10 unemployed, £12.50 part-time employed, £15 employed.

2) Four class pass – £40 unemployed, £50 part-time employed, £60 employed.

3) Eight class pass – £80 unemployed, £100 part-time employed, £120 employed.

Book places now, email [affectiveyoga@gmail.com](mailto:affectiveyoga@gmail.com), or pop along one Thursday evening.

## 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.

### **Gender and Education Association Conference 2017**

21st - 22nd June, 10:30 am - 4:00 pm, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, London NW4 4BT.

### **Feminist Emergency International Conference**

22nd - 24th June, Birkbeck, University of London, Malet Street, Bloomsbury, London, WC1E 7HX.

### **London Radical Bookfair 2017**

24th June, 12 pm-6:00 pm, Great Hall, Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW.

### **Grrrl Zine Fair**

8th July 2017, 11am - 8pm, Southend-on-Sea Village Green Arts and Music Festival.

More details at [Facebook.com/grrrlzinefair](https://Facebook.com/grrrlzinefair).

#### **The Feminist Library Newsletter, Summer 2017 - ISSN 0951-2837.**

Contributors: Emma Thatcher, Jael de la Luz, Niamh Brookes, Anna Pigott, Eva Megias, Gail Chester.

The Feminist Library, 5a Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1 7XW. Phone 020 7261 0879 or email [admin@feministlibrary.co.uk](mailto:admin@feministlibrary.co.uk)  
www.feministlibrary.co.uk Twitter: [@feministlibrary](https://twitter.com/feministlibrary) Facebook: [FeministLibrary](https://Facebook.com/feministlibrary)

Nearest tubes: Lambeth North, Waterloo, Elephant and Castle, Southwark.

Opening Hours: Monday 7-9pm, 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.

Apologies but owing to circumstances beyond our control you still have to climb six stairs before you can access the Feminist Library lift.



# Feminist Library Newsletter

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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>

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## 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](http://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](http://fourthwave.co.uk) or email [fourthwavelfa@gmail.com](mailto: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

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## 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**

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**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](mailto:admin@feministlibrary.co.uk) [www.feministlibrary.co.uk](http://www.feministlibrary.co.uk)

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The Feminist Library Newsletter, Autumn 2017 - ISSN 0951-2837.

Contributors: Emma Thatcher, Gail Chester, Magda Oldziejewska, Lorna Harrington.





# Feminist Library Newsletter

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## No. 25 Spring 2017

Keep up to date with the latest news about the Library by signing up to our e-bulletin - send an email to [bulletin@feministlibrary.co.uk](mailto:bulletin@feministlibrary.co.uk) or click on the button on our website <http://feministlibrary.co.uk>

### Happy Women's History Month

We would like to wish a happy Women's History Month and a happy spring to all our supporters. Thanks to your support the Feminist Library lives to fight another year! We survived a challenging 2016, and are looking forward to an exciting 2017, with new premises and more community events. We are so excited to have survived another year - it was this time last year that we were facing the threat of eviction and closure, and now we're at the beginning of a brand new chapter!

We'd love you to get involved - come along to an event, join our volunteering team or become a Friend. Let us know if you have ideas for things you'd like to see happening at the Library, we'd love to hear from you.

We have a lively fundraising team, if you have time and energy to help, email Caro [caroline@feministlibrary.co.uk](mailto:caroline@feministlibrary.co.uk) to discuss your plans, or call on Fridays between 11-5pm on 020 7261 0879.

### 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.

**Special Offer:** As a special offer this spring, Friends can get 50% off *Vixen* or *Palace of Curiosities* by Rosie Garland. NB Friends can also claim 15% discount on any purchases at stalls and in the bookshop.

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

## NEWS

### Feminist Library at the Women's March



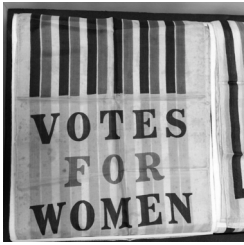
The Feminist Library was very pleased to carry its banner among the thousands of people on the London Women's March on 21st January. As the most visible manifestation for some time highlighting women's struggles, it was very encouraging, but of course it should be seen only as a beginning rather than an end. In an article in the Guardian on 6th February, Angela Davis and other American intersectional feminists ask what the focus might be of a new wave of militant feminist struggle. 'In our view,' they say, 'it is not enough to oppose Trump and his aggressively misogynistic, homophobic,

transphobic and racist policies. We also need to target the ongoing neoliberal attack on social provision and labor rights.' They are calling for an international strike of women on International Women's Day, 8th March, building on recent successful women's strikes, for example in Poland. The call is being taken up in many countries, including Britain, so if any group of women want to meet to discuss this or other possible actions, you are welcome to book a space at the Feminist Library.

### Bishopsgate Institute Tour

#### Many thanks to Bishopsgate Institute for giving a tour of their incredible archive to our Collections team!

Located on Bishopsgate, near Liverpool St station in London's Spitalfields area, Bishopsgate Institute is a hidden gem. Their Victorian Library houses an archive stuffed with treasures – their special collections include a vast range material on subjects including the history of London, trade union and co-operative movements, LGBTQ history, feminism,



protest and campaigning. We were lucky enough to see exciting artefacts including original suffragette sashes, silk scarves and even a tea set!

Call us biased but we think one of the most stunning aspects of the Bishopsgate's archives is the Feminist Library Pamphlet Collection! This ephemeral material was donated to the Bishopsgate by the Feminist Library in 2009 so that it could be preserved and protected, and made available to researchers – or just those who have an interest in the fascinating history of feminist campaigning it provides.

Bishopsgate welcomes anyone interested in their archives to come and use the material – no membership or appointment is necessary and archive staff Stefan and Nicky will be more than happy to welcome visitors, whether conducting research, looking for inspiration for a creative project, or just whiling away a little time doing something unusual. To learn more, and to search the catalogue, including The Feminist Library Pamphlet Collection online, visit [Bishopsgate.org.uk/Library](http://Bishopsgate.org.uk/Library) Article by Anna Pigott

### **Support the campaign for Holloway Women's Centre**

<https://www.facebook.com/plan4holloway>

<https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/project/justice-matters-community-plan-holloway>

The closure of Holloway prison in North London – the largest women's prison in Western Europe – offers a major opportunity for redevelopment that genuinely benefits the local community. The campaign calls on the Ministry of Justice to loan the visitors centre to a partnership of local groups. Suggestions include the space being used for an advice centre, women's space, youth centre or community café. There is also a campaign for a permanent women's building on the site. More information from the Women's Resource Centre. [admin@wrc.org.uk](mailto:admin@wrc.org.uk)

## **EVENTS**

### **B A R D O Audio Walks**

**Feminist Library – Bloomsbury, Various dates.**

Due to popular demand, the B A R D O audio walks will run monthly through 2017.

Running between the Library in Waterloo and the British Museum in Bloomsbury, the walks, lasting between 90-120 minutes, explores fiction writing, the Library's herstory, and selected London landmarks.

B A R D O is devised, written and led by the Library's inaugural Writer in Residence, Caroline Smith, and supported by Arts Council funding. Tickets £5, payable on the door.

Dates: February 26th, starts at Feminist Library, 12pm. March 25th, starts at Feminist Library, 2pm.

Further dates to be confirmed nearer the time. Please see our website [www.feministlibrary.co.uk](http://www.feministlibrary.co.uk)

### **Joint Book Launch**

**7pm, Wednesday 29th March 2017, Feminist Library.**

Gail and Sarah would love you to come to our Book Launch Party, when we will also be celebrating the refurbishment of the Feminist Library Meeting Room. *Murder Mile and Other Riffs & Rants* by Gail Chester is published by Free Radicals Press and *Making Pink Lemonade* by Sarah O'Mahoney is published by Good Being a Girl. Both books are available to buy from the Feminist Library Bookshop at £7.99.

Sarah O'Mahoney works at the Feminist Library and feels like it's her second home. *Making Pink Lemonade* - her first novel for teenagers tackles the still taboo subject of Periods, and how young Kali begins to love and be positive about hers. [goodbeingagirl.tumblr.com](http://goodbeingagirl.tumblr.com) For more info and to buy direct, email [info@goodbeingagirl.com](mailto:info@goodbeingagirl.com)

Gail Chester was an original founder of the Feminist Library in 1975. She helped to save it from closure in 2004, and has been doing pretty much the same ever since.

Her book of short pieces, which includes the award-winning *Murder Mile*, blurs the distinction between poetry, flash fiction, and creative non-fiction. The book reflects the preoccupations of a radical Jewish feminist, not drowning but waving in Hackney today. For more info and to buy direct, email [gailchester@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:gailchester@blueyonder.co.uk)

### **Rebels in the Archives**

**Wed 8th March, 7 - 8:45pm**

**British Library, Knowledge Centre, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB**

See more at: <https://www.bl.uk/events/rebels-in-the-archives>

The Feminist Library will be helping celebrate International Women's Day at the British Library. Come and have a chat, pick up books, merchandise and info. The event hosts a conversation on the power and potential of archiving feminist movements with Jill Liddington, Abi Morgan, Heidi Safia Mirza and Deborah Withers.

## WOW Festival

**10th March, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, Lambeth, London SE1 8XX, 11am - close**

We will have a stall at the WOW Market, come along to browse, gather ideas, participate in activities and discover great creative products. *WOW – Women of the World* festival at Southbank Centre champions gender equality, celebrating the achievements of women and girls everywhere and examining the obstacles that keep them from fulfilling their potential. <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/women-of-the-world>

## REVIEWS



### ***See Red Women's Workshop: Feminist Posters 1974-1990 W (Four Corners Books, 2016)***

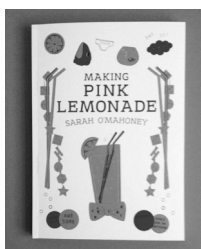
The See Red Women's Workshop book is incredibly useful, not only as an comprehensive archive of the group's graphic output, but also as a document showing women working together in difficult times. I often found the photographs of the women in the workshop together making them as powerful as the posters themselves.

These were women from different backgrounds and experiences, who, through their connection to the workshop, had to deal with being targeted by the National Front; threats and break-ins, as well as the difficulties of organising, funding themselves, and often having to move premises.

Originally called the Women's Image Collective, the group came together in order to counter the systematic sexism in images depicting women (whether presented to them via advertising or other forms of mass media), by destroying these images; teaching the skills needed to visually respond to them, instead disseminating positive, identifiable and varied visions of womanhood and contemporary feminism.

The group, like so many other radical groups, did not last, but reaffirming the demands and clarifications posed by their inventive and intelligent posters seems continually relevant for obvious reasons (not to mention more hidden misogynies) – we can fight back not only with words, but also with images. *Review by Margherita Huntley*

### ***Making Pink Lemonade by Sarah O'Mahoney (Good Being a Girl, 2016)***



A topical read for 2016, the year in which tampon tax hit our headlines and Chinese Olympic swimmer Fu Yuanhui spoke openly about her period, Sarah O'Mahoney tackles this topic for her debut book for older children and teenagers. O'Mahoney believes that 'this most important and life defining rite of passage is largely uncelebrated. Our periods need to be honoured and recognised fully in this world.' And through her book *Making Pink Lemonade* that she challenges us to reconsider our relationship with menstruating.

Written from the perspective of twelve year old Kali, the reader follows her journey into womanhood from starting her first period at the age of ten to learning to love her cycle as the book progresses. Beginning with the lines 'The first time it happened I thought I was dying. It seemed the only reasonable explanation', we immediately sympathise with Kali. In some ways she becomes 'everywoman', someone we can relate to through our shared experience.

If you're wondering what *Making Pink Lemonade* (or MPL for short) means, then fear not, as Kali explains on page 19 that this is her euphemism for having a period. This theme is well illustrated with an attractive front cover in pink and blue, designed by the Feminist Library's own Eva Megias. O'Mahoney herself is a prominent figure at the Feminist Library, and so this project, a collaborative effort between writer and graphic designer, in many ways represents what they're about. Although feminism isn't necessarily the main subject of the book, it does feature, with Kali learning about women's achievements within history as well as how women all over the world deal with their periods. *Review by Lorna Harrington*. Read the full review on our website: [www.feministlibrary.co.uk](http://www.feministlibrary.co.uk)



## LISTINGS

### **Where are the Women in Today's Islamic World?**

**Saturday 25 February 2017 11:00am to 12:30pm, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC1. Hosted by the Gender Institute, Middle East Centre and LSE Literary Festival**

Today there seems to be a backlash of patriarchy as women are being pushed back into private spaces and traditional roles as mothers and wives. Even the fundamental rights we thought we had can be lost easily. Not only in the Middle East, but all over the world, women, especially Muslim women, are increasingly asking the most difficult questions and having the most engaging discussions on identity, religion, faith, freedom and sexuality. Join us for a thought-provoking discussion about some of the most compelling issues of our times.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Events/LiteraryFestival/2017/Saturday-25-February/Events/02-Where-are-the-Women>

### **Older Women Rock!**

**18<sup>th</sup> February - 12<sup>th</sup> March**

**Space Gallery, 7 The Old High St, Folkestone CT20 1RJ**

An innovative project using poetry and vintage clothing to raise awareness and explore issues that face women in their mid-50s to 70s.

The Older Women Rock! pop-up shop and exhibition will be open from 18 February to 12 March at Space Gallery, and events will be taking place in the shop and at other locations in Folkestone including at Quarterhouse.

Events include: *Carry Greenham Home* film; Women Over 50 Film Festival; The Common Thread; Stories from the She-Punks; Panel Discussion Day. For more information contact Leah Thorn on [leahthorn@hotmail.com](mailto:leahthorn@hotmail.com).

### **WOW Women of the World Festival**

**7th – 12th March**

**Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, Lambeth, London SE1 8XX**

Hear influential and challenging speakers, take part in mentoring sessions and workshops, and see some of the best female comedians, musicians, performers and writers around.

<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/women-of-the-world>

### **Million Women Rise**

**Saturday 11th March 2017, 12:30pm**

**Assemble 400 Oxford Street (outside Selfridges), London W1A 1AB. March to Trafalgar Square. WHO: Women and Children**

Million Women Rise (MWR) believes that male violence against women and children is a global pandemic. This year is the 10th anniversary of Million Women Rise, yet women's right to live free from violence and/or the fear of violence has not been achieved. Women continue to be attacked, exploited, and violated in many different ways, in our homes, on our streets, on our public transport, at our places of work. More than ever, we need to gather as a critical mass.

Women be ready... get ready... stay ready. Let the rise begin.

### **WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH in East London, 1<sup>st</sup> – 31st March 2017, many different venues.**

Women's groups, artists, activists, performers, writers, arts, media and community organisations are celebrating WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH in East London, and International Women's Week in Tower Hamlets, with a remarkably diverse range of events and exhibitions.

Women's History Month in East London is co-ordinated by Alternative Arts [www.alternativearts.co.uk](http://www.alternativearts.co.uk)  
[info@alternativearts.co.uk](mailto:info@alternativearts.co.uk)

For a listing of Women's History Month events round the country, please also see women's grid events calendar at <http://www.womensgrid.org.uk/>



**The Feminist Library, 5a Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1 7XW. Opening Hours: Mondays 7-9pm 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. Please email or phone if you would like to make an appointment. Apologies but owing to circumstances beyond our control you still have to climb six stairs before you can access the Feminist Library lift.**

**Phone 020 7261 0879 or email [admin@feministlibrary.co.uk](mailto:admin@feministlibrary.co.uk)**

**Visit [www.feministlibrary.co.uk/hours](http://www.feministlibrary.co.uk/hours) for the most up-to-date information, including changes to opening hours.**

**Follow us on Twitter [@feministlibrary](https://twitter.com/feministlibrary) Facebook FeministLibrary**

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