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## **Jill Posters Will Be Prosecuted: Australia's women-only print collectives from the 1970s and 1980s.**

The words of time were: revolution, liberation, demands, rights, organize, overthrow, smash, struggle, collective, solidarity, sexism, racism... (Kenyon 1995, 36).

The legacy of Earthworks Poster Collective (1972–80), a highly influential and impressively productive screenprinting group, is recognised in such collectives as Lucifoil (1980–83), Megalo (1980–present) and Redback Graphix (1980–94). Cross-fertilisation and skills sharing greatly influenced the growth and development of poster collectives during this era. Many individuals passed through the University of Sydney's Tin Sheds Art Workshop, home to Earthworks, and learnt printmaking. As they moved around Australia, visiting Indigenous communities, undertaking artist residencies and working at new universities, they took the skills and ideologies learnt with them.

Earthworks is credited with establishing in poster collectives an identifiably collective ethos, realised through open access facilities, group decision making, equal rates of pay, and a commitment to voicing social, political and local community concerns.<sup>1</sup> Additionally Earthworks functioned precariously within and outside the boundaries of the art world, higher education institutions and funding bodies. This unstable positioning was inherited by successive collectives, that operated between the realms of art and advertising, had an uneasy relationship with the term 'artist', and struggled to meet costs or funding demands.

Although the connection with Earthworks is well established, alternative origins for the emergence of women-only poster collectives can be found in second-wave feminism. The Women's Liberation Movement was similarly concerned with non-hierarchical structures, which they contrasted with patriarchy; a desire to give voice to alternative opinions, histories and lives including those of women, youth, homosexuals, Indigenous Australians and migrants; and a difficult relationship with established institutions: particularly the gallery system. As Frances Phoenix (nee Budden), who was involved in a large number of women's art groups, succinctly explains, feminism was a way of thinking, collectivism a mode of acting.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Recognition of Earthworks collective influence is made by:  
T. Kenyon, 'No god no master' in *Under a Hit Tin Roof: Art, Politics and Passion at the Tin Sheds Art Workshop Sydney* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales Press), p. 42;  
O. Tsara, 'The art of revolution: Political posters in the RedPlanet archive,' *The La Trobe Journal* 75, (Autumn 2005): 94–95; and  
A. Zagala, *Redback Graphix* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2008), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Phoenix, interview with the author, 22 January 2011.

Gender relations strongly influenced the period, and some mixed gender collectives were segregated according to sex. Toni Robertson notes that the women involved in Earthworks in the early 1970s operated in 'a little autonomous women's group', unimpressed with visits the male members received from 'dewy-eyed young girls' (Kenyon 1995, 61). Alison Alder from Megalo describes the collective as 'gender split' in its early days.<sup>3</sup> Frustrations were felt by women who were involved in feminist activities, consciousness-raising and the fight for equality, yet who were also expected to fulfil gender roles in mixed gender collectives.<sup>4</sup>

In light of the difficulties experienced in mixed gender collectives, a growing awareness of the institutional barriers between women and successful careers, and a desire to reclaim and transform the lives, experiences and histories of women, many women-only groups were established at this time. Men were banned from dances, marches and living quarters; women initiated resource, refuge and crisis centres; women's studies courses were taught at university and women-only radio programmes, newsletters, theatre groups, discussion groups and art collectives formed. Groups grew out of friendships and similar ideologies; to share the rent, skills and equipment; and to create alternative avenues for expression and career advancement. Poster collectives serviced the design and advertisement demands of these groups while newly formed women-only presses met print and publishing needs.<sup>5</sup>

Not all collectives founded by women were concerned with separatist principles or women only membership. Lucifoil and Another Planet Posters (1984–91) were collectives with a majority female membership that supported feminist and women's community groups, while also including male members. Similarly not all collectives were harmonious and cooperative, as the ideals of collectivism and feminism espouse; furious arguments and cliques were the flipside result of passionate and determined individuals.<sup>6</sup>

### **A Note on Collectivism and Collective Logos**

Poster collectives rarely worked as unified groups, preferring to operate singly, in collaboration or small teams, often at different times and locations. Toni Robertson suggests that Earthworks was not really a collective, as posters were the work of individuals (Kenyon 1995, 42). Terry Smith, who was also active at the Tin Sheds, counter-argues that a structure that allows for an artist to work without profile or signature is 'genuinely collective' (Kenyon 1995, 12). Rather than indicating that a work was created by an entire group, collective names and logos operated as a means of distancing oneself from the work and the values that are associated with a traditional, signed piece of art: authenticity, originality and value. Logos and group names indicated a sense of belonging, acknowledgement of learnt skills and shared materials, and the desire to prevent the work from becoming a commodity. Among these circles collectivism was the norm. Julia Church, a member of Jillposters, Bloody Good Graffiti and Another Planet Posters, explains to put your names on things was seen as 'bourgeois' and 'big-noting yourself'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Alison Alder, correspondence with the author, 10 December 2010.

<sup>4</sup> This frustration was experienced by women involved in many political and activist groups, including homosexual rights groups and university student publications.

<sup>5</sup> For a history of Sybylla Press and a brief overview of other feminist print and publishing organisations see M. McCormack, 'A history of Sybylla Press,' *Publishing Studies*, no. 4, (Autumn 1997): 18–25.

<sup>6</sup> Julia Church, interview with the author, 5 January 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Resulting from the strong feelings against individual signature, and the tendency to be in multiple political, feminist and artistic groups at the same time, the collective name or logo on works was of less importance or validity than we normally accord a signature. Posters that Carole Wilson did while at art school were simultaneously part of her coursework and signed Jillposters while ten prints by the Women's Domestic Needlework Group (WDNG) are accredited to Earthworks; both collectives were based at the Tin Sheds and shared a number of members. Marie McMahon, from Earthworks, WDNG and Social Fabric, explains with the high number of individuals teaching, living and working at the Sheds, belonging to multiple projects and collectives, it was difficult to determine where one activity stopped and another started.<sup>8</sup> This was relatively unproblematic, clarifies Frances Phoenix, as they 'weren't terribly precious about being famous artists'.<sup>9</sup>

### **Women's Poster Collectives**

The uniformity of themes, causes and organisations for which different women's collectives made posters, across states and almost two decades, is quite simply astonishing. Almost all poster groups printed advertisements for bands, concerts, alternative radio stations, fundraisers, women's groups/publications/centres, International Women's Day and Anzac Day marches. Themes covered in non-commissioned work include environmentalism, peace, youth and anti-nuclear mining, Indigenous and homosexual pride, posters against violence, harassment, rape and incest. There was also universal derision of Fraser. The relatively small differences between *oeuvres* lay in the areas of style, tone, professionalism and proportion of posters dedicated to each cause. Greater variety is found among collective structures, distribution of posters, funding avenues and attitudes towards women-only membership.

Garage Graphix Community Arts Group (1980–96) operated in Mt Druitt, a western Sydney suburb with a high Indigenous population. Although the group is described as a 'majority female' collective, poster accreditations reveal only women's names.<sup>10</sup> The collective followed 'affirmative action principles' for the employment and training of women, including Indigenous women (Hall c.1998, 12). Many collectives promoted Indigenous land rights, yet Garage Graphix was possibly the only collective to include Indigenous Australians in its core membership.

Garage Graphix functioned as an open-access, 'community owned and managed' workshop, where local groups could use facilities, equipment and materials with the assistance of an art worker (Social Concerns 1987, 22). The term 'art worker' was used by printers at Earthworks, and indicates a distancing from the term 'artist' in favour of a word that highlights physical labour and blue-collar status. The group worked on projects such as International Women's Day Koori Women's Group 1988 and International Youth Year Talking Posters 1985. They also ran an artist-in-residence program. Jan Mackay, from Earthworks and Social Fabric, spent 14 weeks in residence producing *Houses and Gardens* (1989). The work was a screenprinted length of fabric, inspired by the front gardens of the local community and printed with

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<sup>8</sup> Marie McMahon, interview with the author, 10 January 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Frances Phoenix, interview with the author, 22 January 2011.

<sup>10</sup> The main printing members included Maxine Conaty, Leeanne Donohoe, Marla Guppy, Alice Hinton-Bateup and Lin Mountstephen. Other individuals associated with the collective extend to Bronwyn Bancroft, Leanne Clerke, Jo Darbyshire, Lee-Anne Hall, Amanda Holt, Betsy McCabe, Jan Mackay, Sue Measom, Tracey Moffat, Karen Vance, Debbie, Coral and Minerva, and two men: Todd Fernando and Garry Jones. This is not an exhaustive list.

their assistance. Garage Graphix was dedicated to 'picturing the west' in a positive and accessible manner.<sup>11</sup>

Funded through national, state and local government grants, Garage Graphix operated more like a local arts organisation than an ad-hoc, volunteer, feminist collective. Administrative, management and artworker positions were designated, membership required sponsorship and the payment of fees, and I suspect prints were not illegally posted. This organisational difference is reflected in the professionalism and tone of posters. Rather than sarcastic, humorous or shocking, their posters are emotive, suggestive and informative with phrases such as 'Every time Aboriginals are forced to move because of poverty, harassment or white housing policy we lose more of our connection to the land and our people. So we travel through halfway places in our own land', *Dispossessed* (1986). Rod Ewins (1988) praises Leeanne Donohoe, one of the collective's main printers, as a 'deft-image maker', delivering her messages in 'sharp focus' while Julia Church (1986, 5) describes some of their images as 'chillingly lyrical and evocative'. Possibly due to better funding and organisation, Garage Graphix ran for a number of years longer than most other collectives.

Adelaide was home to the Anarchist Feminist Poster Collective (AFPC) (1979–85). Flinders University Art Museum and the State Library of Victoria hold work in their collections but have no further information on the group. Silver Moon, a feminist activist, who was a founding member of the first Women's Community Health Centre in South Australia, recalls that the AFPC worked in the health centre's garage rent free, providing posters in return for use of the space. Although Moon's memory of the group has faded, the image of them riding through town on their bicycles and lobbing bricks through porn shop windows is not so easily forgotten.<sup>12</sup>

Jillposters (1983–87) formed in Melbourne and unlike other groups, did not seek government funding, permanent studio space or to establish open access facilities. Instead the group was comprised of women who desired to get their edgy, feminist and political ideas onto the streets, experiment aesthetically and have complete control over the communication process.<sup>13</sup> Their images are generally rough and hastily made, espousing their own demands, truths and values; voicing issues 'ignored by the mainstream media' (Church 1990) and creating their own alternative representations.<sup>14</sup> Works were rarely commissioned, allowing them to work 'unencumbered by affiliation or responsibility'.<sup>15</sup>

The collective often designed posters individually, but generally printed and posted them together. Under the cover of darkness postering the inner-city streets and alleyways of Melbourne was all 'very furtive and fun'.<sup>16</sup> Although they started by postering entire print runs, the conversations they generated, interest from bookshops and the need to cover material costs quickly alerted the group to the possibility of

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<sup>11</sup> Garage Graphix Community Arts Group application to the Visual Arts and Crafts Board, 1989, p. 2. This application was for a Project Grant to support the recruitment of Jan Mackay for a residency, working with individuals from the local community as identified by the Parramatta Regional Public Tenants Association.

<sup>12</sup> Silver Moon, correspondence with the author, 13 January 2011. Since writing this article the author has had the opportunity to be introduced to many of the AFPC members. Information from these conversations will be included in the author's doctoral thesis on the history of female art collectives in Australia. Members of the AFPC included Karen Elliot, Susanne Jones, Kate Millington, Ann Marie (Chloe) Morrissey, Barbary O'Brien, Sally O'Wheel and Megan Schlunke.

<sup>13</sup> Julia Church, interview with the author, 5 January 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

selling posters. About a third of following print runs were posted whilst the rest were distributed for sale. The group also sold badges, postcards and calendars.

Jillposters' name was derived from the common public announcement 'Bill posters will be prosecuted' and 'challenged the assumption that public space was the realm of big advertisers' (Church 1990). One could also add, Jillposters challenged the idea that public space, advertising or political postering was the realm of men. Jillposters made it clear, this was the work of women.

Membership was open to women with a connection to the group and a desire to print and distribute posters.<sup>17</sup> As a result, a number of their members had no artistic training or were self-taught screenprinters and works of a lower standard are evident in their archives. Anti-censorship, allowing individuals to print and post as they pleased, was an integral component of Jillposters. Julia Church explains, 'because it wasn't all women *artists*... people argued and discussed very different concerns. They weren't so worried about their reputation as artists or community workers, they were really there because they wanted to say something.'<sup>18</sup> Over the years Jillposters turned their efforts towards postcards, a more affordable medium; and slowly petered out in the late 1980s.

While Jillposters was still functioning, Julia Church formed Bloody Good Graffix (c.1983–84) with fellow screenprinter Kath Walters. They operated out of a previously established workshop at Melbourne University, teaching screenprinting, allowing open access use of the facilities and printmaking for university and community groups. An in-kind system operated between Bloody Good Graffix and the university, exchanging use of the facilities for operating and maintaining the space.

Bloody Good Graffix combined having a 'bloody good time' with 'useful art', running a printing service and producing posters for bands, community radio, legal organisations and exhibitions.<sup>19</sup> Images were sourced from libraries, books and magazines and when appropriate images couldn't be found Church and Walters employed dress ups and photography.

Church and Walters had met at art school, where Walters taught Church to screenprint. Working together in Bloody Good Graffix, they quickly developed a close, productive and enjoyable relationship. A sense of joy and humour is evident in their first poster, an advertisement for themselves as the new operators of the university workshop. The image includes a photograph of themselves and Lesley Baxter, who previously ran the space, snarling and smiling at the camera, fists clenched, printed in lurid colours. Church and Walters both recall their time and relationship at the workshop fondly and if the name 'Bloody Good Graffix' wasn't cheeky enough, they jokingly referred to themselves as 'the girls against modesty'.<sup>20</sup>

The collective was very short lived as the two gained employment through an arts-in-community scheme for the Hospital Employees Federation, while also successfully applying for funding to start Another Planet Posters (originally intended as a women-only group), which would employ more people and move to a new and permanent location.

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<sup>17</sup> Jillposters members included Lesley Baxter, Ally Black, Linda Brassel, Julia Church, Zana Dare, DeeJ Fabyc, Maggie Fooke, Julie Higginbotham, Catriona Holyoake, Barbara Miles, Kate Reeves, Linda Rhodes, Julie Shiels, Lin Tobias, Julia Tobin, Kath Walters, Carole Wilson, Chaz and Karen.

<sup>18</sup> Julia Church, interview with the author, 5 January 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Kathy Walters, interview with the author, 12 January 2011.

Two poster groups operated out of the Women's Warehouse in Sydney during the 1980s.<sup>21</sup> The house was founded on separatist principles, operating as a women-only place to meet for coffee, learn traditionally male skills such as carpentry, as a dance venue and as an alternative to the gay bar scene. One of the workshops available was screenprinting, taught by Jan Fieldsend who had previously printed with Earthworks. Learning from Fieldsend, Anne Sheridan (Beard) and Marla Guppy contributed to the Women's Warehouse Screenprinting Collective which operated as an open collective (c.1979–81) and later initiated Harridan Screenprinters (c.1981–88).<sup>22</sup>

The Screenprinting Collective mainly produced advertisement-style posters for groups and events associated or aligned with the Warehouse, but also called for the boycott of Nestle and Myers and an end to the sale of the Dalkon Shield, an injected contraceptive with high rates of serious side effects.

Harridan was a longer lasting group and alongside similar work produced a series of posters on inspirational women. Included were Dagmar Berne, Australia's first female medical student; Qui Jin, a revolutionary Chinese feminist and poet; Amelia Earhart, an aviation pioneer; as well as literary, sports and mythical figures. The posters were designed for display in schools and included a portrait of the individual, biographical information and quotes. The gentle and inspiring nature of this series is in stark opposition to the aggressively feminist and difficult issues raised by many other posters. Harridan also had a strong lesbian focus, printing posters on famous lesbians such as tennis player Martina Navratilova and promoting the Lesbian Network, a forum for exchanging news and information. Harridan's work is identifiable via the text 'Harridan Screenprinters' or the use of two logos: a black spider with a green mark on its back, which the collective later realised was being used by Redback Graphix, and the figure of a witch stirring a cauldron. Harridan also employed the use of cool pastels, including purple, blue and silver, which were rare in other poster collectives.

### **Developments**

In addition to these collectives, whose main activity was poster making, were a number of groups that extended printmaking into different areas, formed on a project basis, or that designed posters on the side while having other main areas of activity.

In the mid-1970s Frances Budden and Marie McMahon, members of Sydney's Women's Art Movement, developed an interest in the cultural heritage of women's domestic needlework. They started a collection of d'oyleys sourced from op shops and ran a free community class at the Tin Sheds. The 'Needlework Skills Exchange and Migrant Women's Demonstrations' ran on Saturdays and was open to individuals to teach or learn a skill. McMahon notes although the group was run for women only, there was no need to state or enforce this as no men showed any interest in being involved.<sup>23</sup>

The Women's Domestic Needlework Group (WDNG) was formed in order to research and prepare the growing d'oyley collection for exhibition. Phoenix explains there was

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<sup>21</sup> The Women's Warehouse was also known as the Wimmin's Warehouse.

<sup>22</sup> The Women's Warehouse Screenprinting Collective was also known as Women's Warehouse Screenprinters, with various spellings of women/wimmin/womyn and use of the female 'Venus' symbol ♀. Membership was open and included Jan Fieldsend, Marla Guppy and Anne Sheridan.

Harridan Screenprinters was also known as Harridan, Harridan Screenprinters Women's Warehouse and Harridan Silkscreen Printers. The collective was run and organised by Marla Guppy and Anne Sheridan, whilst posters were sometimes printed by additional women.

<sup>23</sup> Marie McMahon, interview with the author, 10 January 2011.

widespread misunderstanding and judgement from both the arts and feminist communities, who did not understand or perceive as valid the group's interest in 'women's work'.<sup>24</sup> A series of ten posters acted as a form of explanation, as well as wall text for the exhibition, and were available for purchase.

Members of the WDNG, Earthworks and other enthusiastic individuals, completed the posters in an intensive weekend workshop. Images and text gathered during research for the exhibition catalogue were sorted into similar piles and small teams were formed, taking responsibility for finalising and printing each poster.<sup>25</sup> A combination of lettering styles, hand drawn images, designs, photographs, statistics and texts indicate this group effort, whilst the overall similarity in colour scheme and layout produced a cohesive set of posters. Although the prints are some of the most unique, delicate and detailed from the period, the exhibition met with polarised opinions. Julia Church described it as a 'pioneer in community empowerment' helping 'dissolve some well entrenched myths about 'high art' and 'low art'' (Church 1986, 5), conversely a number of male artists from the Watters Gallery stable were embarrassed by their association with the exhibition and left the gallery's representation.<sup>26</sup>

Jan Mackay, Marie McMahon and Kathy Letray started Social Fabric in 1983.<sup>27</sup> The three had enjoyed 'parallel careers, often collaborating on projects', after studying together at the National Art School and working in groups based at the Tin Sheds (J. McMahon 1984, 38). Social Fabric extended the group's interests in relevant, functional art and a feminist concern for the domestic setting, to the areas of applied and decorative arts. They designed and silkscreened lengths of fabric, that were made available to individuals and companies, as material for interior furnishings and clothing. Rather than transferring slogans and images from posters to t-shirts, as had previously been done, Social Fabric designed intricate and repetitive patterns specifically for fabric.

The group normally worked individually on the design process but printing was always done in pairs, the wide fabric requiring two people. Five pieces held by the National Gallery of Australia are dually accredited to the individual designer and the collective. In 1984 the group held an exhibition of work at Bondi Pavilion, indicating that the work by Social Fabric operated both as textile design and visual art. The exhibition included sample prints, domestic tableaux with lounges, lamp stands and curtains, as well as clothing items that sold well.

Although the collective received funding in the form of a Group Studio Development Grant from the Australia Council Crafts Board, funding did not extend to wages. McMahon, Mackay and Letray taught part-time and completed freelance work to maintain an income (J. McMahon 1984, 42). The collective also struggled with developing a marketing plan or identifying the most suitable commercial avenues for their work. When the stocks and premises were lost to fire in 1985 the collective ended. As keepers of the WDNG d'oley archive, this collection was also destroyed.

Alison Alder and Julia Church collaborated on the project *True Bird Grit: A book about Canberra Women in the Arts 1982–1983*, screenprinting all 37, oversized, pages of the book. *True Bird Grit* is filled with interviews, histories, artworks and poems in a broad

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<sup>24</sup> Frances Phoenix, interview with the author, 22 January 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Marie McMahon, interview with the author, 10 January 2011; and Frances Phoenix, interview with the author, 22 January 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Mackay, McMahon and Letray were previously members of 99 Designs, based at King St, Newtown. This collective similarly printed fabric, and included a fourth member. 99 Designs only operated for a few months.

range of creative fields including print, dance, clothing design, arts administration, lecturing and knitting. An understanding of the division between high and low culture is understood and promptly undermined throughout the text, which gives equal space and treatment to art, craft, hobby, amateur and professional interests. The book itself also breaks down boundaries between screenprinting, art and text. This achievement is underscored by an interview with Janet Mackenzie, part-time lecturer and designer of Gum Clothing, who states:

It is also a big relief to not only believe that there should be no hierarchy of activities – with Cambridge philosophy at one end of the scale and knitting at the other – but honestly believe that by recognizing the danger of such a hierarchy and removing it from your own life, you are free to make your own decisions (Church and Alder c.1982, 5).

Works such as *True Bird Grit* demonstrate the possibility for collective and collaborative teams to extend individuals in completing new, challenging and otherwise unfeasible projects.

Other works created by groups formed on a project basis include the Multicultural Women's Poster Project (MWPP) (1988) and women's screenprinting calendars. For the MWPP, Julie Shiels, who was also in Jillposters and Redletter Press, assisted women from Argentina, Assyria, Chile and Australia, in printing posters on issues of motherhood, community childcare and living without a partner, sometimes in two languages. Women's calendars were collated from individual and collective screenprinters in Sydney, including Barbara Aroney, Paulene Lester, Anne Sheridan, Garage Graphix and Harridan Screenprinters. These were done annually throughout the 1980s.

Matilda Graphics (c. 1979–82) operated in Chippendale, Sydney as a business collective for 13 women artists, offering on a commercial basis their skills in graphic design, cartooning, layout, typesetting, illustration, photography and more.<sup>28</sup> For Matilda artists, collectivity offered the means to share jobs according to skills, rent a space together and work in a supportive and encouraging environment. The collective also organised exhibitions, held discussion groups and ran workshops. Although poster making was not their primary focus, and they neither screen nor offset printed, some of the posters designed under the Matilda name are among the most recognisable from the period. These include *Stepping out with the emus on a typical Aussie day* (1981) and *Grow your own grassroots defiance* (1979), which were made available to community groups to print and sell as fundraisers. Sadly the group struggled with debt and despite changing structure and premises did not last very long.

### **Collectives Lost to History**

Despite the proliferation of posters printed and relationships with feminist newsletters, art and community groups; the history of these women-only poster collectives is disappearing. Posters are ephemeral by design and nature. Pasted up only to be defaced, pulled down or posted over; sold at modest prices indicative of 'throw away' status; unsigned and undated. Posters in libraries and galleries are often minimally or unreliably documented – one unnamed library described Earthworks as a woman-only group – or not catalogued at all. As memories fade, individuals from the era pass away, and women change their last names, it is becoming harder to research poster collectives. The following are groups for which little documentation can be found.

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<sup>28</sup> Members of Matilda Graphics included Frances Budden and Erica Jobling.

In Wollongong a group called Witchworks operated at the Wollongong Women's Centre working on posters against domestic violence.

Dag Printing operated in Melbourne with members Wendy Black, Angela Gee and Eveyln Vyhna. They responded to the needs of friends to advertise upcoming events and operated on a quick turn-around basis.<sup>29</sup>

In 1983 Amanda Holt and Liz Newell produced a series of posters with groups of young women from Sydney-based schools, Community Youth Support Schemes (CYSS) and refuges for the Girls in Print Project.<sup>30</sup> Each group was encouraged to make a poster on issues relevant to them: namecalling, racism, unemployment; using photographs of themselves and their own words to create positive, feminist imagery.

Mantis Prints was formed by Lyn Finch and Cherie Bradshaw in 1984, after learning screenprinting from Michael Callaghan at Griffith University and together printing the infamous poster *Prostitution is the rental of the body, Marriage is the sale* (1979–80). Under the name Mantis Prints, Finch and Bradshaw produced *Who says women can't pot black, women can do anything* (c.1984) and *Sexual Harassment* (1984). Finch continued to work as a screenprinter, creating some of the most sophisticated works of the period.

### **Endings**

Women-only poster collectives allowed their members to communicate clearly – with passion, anger and dedication – a broad number of issues to an even bigger audience. Groups provided discussion, encouragement, development of skills and validity for a practice that was undervalued by the education and gallery system. Although collectives dispersed and dwindled – burnt out by volunteering, financial burden and health risks – in their wake new groups were formed while other women followed careers in communication, graphic design, art and academia. The value of this era is summarised by Julia Church, who describes participation in poster collectives as a dynamic, confidence-building and transformative experience, allowing individuals to 'act on the world, instead of being acted upon.'<sup>31</sup>

### **Postnote**

Contact from individuals with further information on the groups mentioned or any overlooked is warmly welcomed. I encourage those who have posters or other records in their possession to consider placing them in Australia's collecting institutions for posterity.

### **Acknowledgments**

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<sup>29</sup> After completing this paper the author had the opportunity to interview Wendy Black from Dag Printing. Information from this interview will be included in the author's doctoral thesis.

<sup>30</sup> Participating groups included 15–16 year old girls from Cleveland Street Co-ed High School, Ethnic Girls School-leavers Project Fairfied, Girls on Tape Project Stanmore, Rozelle CYSS Women's Group. For further information on the Girls in Print Project see 'Girls and their images,' *Scarlet Woman* no. 18, (Autumn 1984): 13–15.

<sup>31</sup> Julia Church, interview with the author, 5 January 2011.

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