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We're in the Library!: welcoming creative practices, sharing responsibilities of access

Althea Greenan

This article discusses how the Women's Art Library fosters creativity through the experience of the many artistic research practices hosted since the collection was installed in Goldsmiths University of London in the Library as a Special Collection.

Since the collection was moved to Goldsmiths and housed in a climate-controlled storage area labelled "No Entry", I have programmed a number of artistic interventions that confront or explore who this collection represents from behind closed doors. Groups and individuals bring many different research practices to their projects in the Women's Art Library (WAL) from disciplines ranging from sociology to choreography and computing. Projects continue to be realized in a range of forms from posters to performances, as well as exhibitions and publications. The documentation or traces of these projects that are subsequently added to the collection reaffirm the WAL's potential to contribute to the wider intersectional movement enhancing cultural heritage.

Welcome to your library

Determining a way of envisioning the art library as an open creative space, I consider the critical artistic researchers that I have worked with. One of the most important individuals is Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, whose re-imagining of the title of Kate Eichhorn's book conveys so much about the continuum of knowledge-making that art libraries inspire (fig. 1). I introduce her collage here as a citation that sharply reiterates the importance of not just writing or rewriting, but building on and enhancing our archives and collections as critical subjects of them whether we are represented or not. Ego's visual intervention is an artistic citation re-positioning Kate Eichhorn's book[1] from her own position as a professional archivist and scholar as well as artist and activist safeguarding black histories. I cite her work to situate the myriad transformations that happen when we consult or look for ourselves in the archives alongside making them.

1. Eichhorn, Kate. *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013.

The Women's Art Library (WAL) was gifted to Goldsmiths by Deed of Gift in July 2004 since when I have worked to build the collection physically and broaden awareness of what it contains according to the condition set out in clause 6.2, that, 'the College shall use its reasonable endeavours to promote the Archive in the furtherance of women's art, to maintain the Archive as an accessible resource and to enhance the Archive subject to suitable funding being available.' Nevertheless, the institutional setting changed the collection's relationship to its constituents. Developing the collection became synonymous with finding ways to support women's art practice as a critical way of renewing the resource as valued knowledge. Royalties from the electronic publication of the *Women's Art Magazine* provide independent income for the WAL to seed fund artistic research by students as well as independent researchers, producing contributions to the collection and challenging new demands on the protocols of access. Bringing boxes of requested material to an archive reading room usually follows a browsing session deep in the stack, sometimes for days. Filming, performing and recording are also regular methods of working with the collection, along with projections and live streaming

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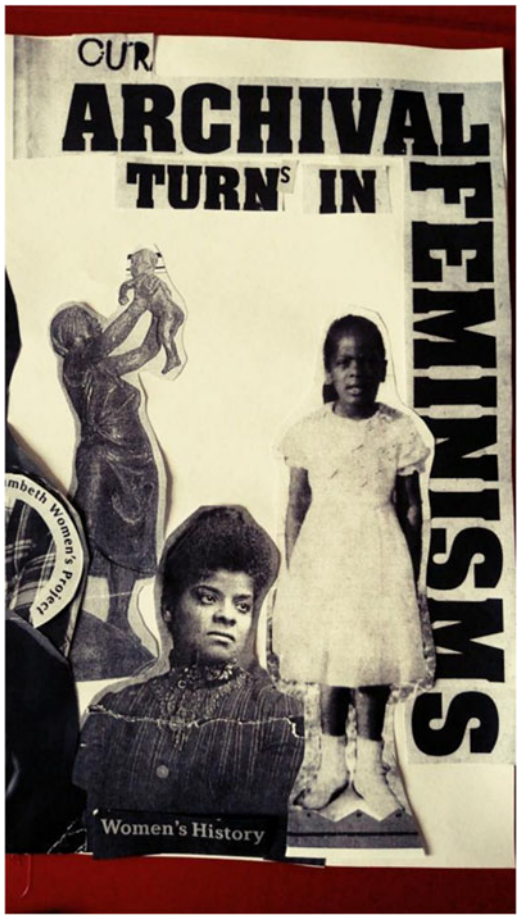


Fig. 1. Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, 2018.

in the dark. Much is collaborative work facilitated by my role as curator supporting the new artists, the archive/collection and the new artworks/ideas/conversations I hope to document, honour and share. My responsibility to the material has been shaped by the founding principles to support and promote women artists. Surviving, adapting, and thriving as an effective intervention is a more complex undertaking, where affect, hospitality, anecdote, gossip not just animate the materials, but my approach to its custodianship.

The art library is a continuum

Engaged in work that adds to the field of knowledge the WAL, like many grassroots archives, sees researchers become repeat visitors and friends, as colleagues become comrades. The WAL's history as a feminist collective project shaped by the political awakening of the women's movement questioning of research with recognizing that artists documented their practices to build a library as a corrective to their lack of representation in existing institutions of educational resources. No other collection in the UK approaches the breadth of the WAL's material representation of women's art practice, especially from the 1980s capturing the turn from pre-digital forms of photographic documentation and self-promotion. The artist files are heavy with press cuttings, invitations, artist statements, photographs, unpublished and published texts and even examples of packaged food are evidence of networking through the delivery of something for the library staff or volunteer to open. This transfer of material through the post anticipates the way we preserve artists' contributions today. As the material becomes more historical, today's library users rather than the WAL as an activist organization, perform as the networking advocates of the collection's artists. One of the most visible examples of this is the Women in Revolt: Art and Activism in the UK 1970-1990 exhibition curated by Linsey Young.[2]

2. Tate Britain, 8 November 2023 – 7 April 2024, National Galleries of Scotland, Modern 2, Edinburgh, 25 May 2024 - 26 January 2025, The Whitworth, University of Manchester, 7 March – 24 August 2025.

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Shaped by an ethics of care

Dr Catherine Grant, author of *Fandom as Methodology* and *A Time of One's Own*[3] and a critical figure in the WAL network of writers and art historians, recently introduced me to an article by Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor, that argues compellingly for the application of feminist ethics to archive work which struck a powerful chord with me as a recognizable approach to archive work practiced by other feminist archives and libraries such as the Glasgow Women's Library.

> In a feminist ethics approach, archivists are seen as caregivers, bound to records creators, subjects, users, and communities through a web of mutual affective responsibility.[4]

The authors had applied what they identified as a feminist ethics of care to scrutinize the dynamics between archive custodianship and community access. While their work focused on archives featuring private papers and potentially disquieting information, the authors had usefully identified key relationships between those who care for archives and collections and those who not only use them, but who are also the subject and the co-builders of these resources. As I considered how to discuss the dynamics for fostering creativity in the Women's Art Library, Cifor and Caswell's pinpointing how these relationships are acknowledged through a feminist ethics of care, was not only useful to describe my work with the WAL as a creative space, but decisive. Their analysis offers a template of practice.

Cifor and Caswell discuss the work of archive custodianship as binding them to a web of mutual affective responsibility and in this I recognize the complex dynamics that underpin the emotional and community as well as practical aspects of my stewardship of the Women's Art Library collection. Instead of a directive coming from the institution, it is the WAL's politicized web of responsibility that leads me to encourage creative practices as a means of maintaining the collection. By going over the three relationships that Cifor and Caswell cite, I see how the collection holds *my* work alongside the *creative* work that the Women's Art Library generates.

Between archivist and record creator

Firstly, there is the relationship between archivist and record creator. In my case I am the equivalent to an archivist and the record creator is the woman artist who submits her documentation or donates her publication. In the setting of the WAL when an artist donates anything, from slides to zines, they are creating a record of their practice in the art library. My stewardship of the WAL collection has been defined by the affective bond I have with the woman artist. I was trained for this work through an art education, and this has informed the way I work on behalf of the artists' material. I prioritize access and want to see these artists' names appearing everywhere and find myself wanting to see materials listed across the library as well as the archive catalogues at Goldsmiths, and although these things are not practical, I want to generate as many profuse and wayward descriptive vocabularies as there are artists.

Recognizing the invitation of our records' subjects

Then there is the relationship between the archivist and the subject of the record which entails a detailed analysis of responsibilities towards those who may be represented in archives. The WAL collection is constituted from archives representing women artists' art practice rather than artists' personal biographical archives. The materials focus on the representation of practice and create a space that invites more practice to generate visibility. The WAL situates the art library as a crucial means of professionalizing marginalized art practices even beyond these women's working lives.

The acquisition or rather donation of the Women's Art Library collection to the Library at Goldsmiths was, I like to think, conceived by the librarians working at Goldsmiths at the time as an affirmative action. It is thanks to the foresight of the head of the Library in 2003, Sacha Shaw, and the subject librarian for Art and Design, Jacqueline Cooke, that the Women's Art Library could become secure

3. Grant, Catherine, and Kate Random Love. *Fandom as Methodology: A Sourcebook for Artists and Writers*. Cambridge: Goldsmiths Press, 2019. Grant, Catherine. *A Time of One's Own: Histories of Feminism in Contemporary Art*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022.

4. Caswell, Michelle, and Marika Cifor. 2016. "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives". *Archivaria* 81 (May), 23-43. https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13557

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Fig. 2. *Queer To Me*, performance live-streamed into the Showroom, 11 November 2016. Photograph: Dr Rebecca Fiebrink.

following the withdrawal of funding for the arts organization that had built it. Known as 'Make, the organization of women's art' the organization was looking for a home for the collection after ceasing production of the magazine and found a new context for its work as an advocate of marginalized practices. Jacqueline Cooke wrote shortly after the arrival of the WAL to Goldsmiths:

> As an art librarian, I am always aware that however many art books, magazines, slides and videos I acquire for the library, more actions, events and thoughts remain undocumented there. I realised that if I do not engage with this problem, not only will I be unable to provide current readers with information on the artists they are interested in, but my collections are likely to divulge only a simplified and reductive version of history to future researchers.[5]

While the Women's Art Library is very far from being comprehensive, it is good at reminding us of how incomplete it is. This awareness of ongoing absence is, of course, another means of inviting creativity as part of the process of contributing what you want to be there.

Kiona Hagen Niehaus devised a live stream reading of unassigned materials in the WAL storage space that was projected into a public gallery during an opening event. Her performance consisted of holding up found objects like pieces of acid proof card and cryptically labelled envelopes without audio, but registered as a monologue as she typed a vivid commentary in the chat box along the side. The archive objects prompt her to write autobiographically about identifying as a queer young woman, and the experience of queer identity that she wants to find in the Women's Art Library collection.

Welcoming radical empathy

The projection into a gallery was part of an evening of performances hosted by the Showroom as part of the Cybernetic Resistance project produced by Kiona with the curator Brenda Guesnet.[6] While Kiona was alone in my usual workspace with the WAL collection, I was standing transfixed in the Showroom. This brings me to the pivotal aspect of the third relationship discussed in Caswell and Cifor's article. It is the affective relationship between the archivist and the user. The authors recognize the importance of what they call 'radical empathy with users' to highlight the deep emotional impact that making discoveries in the archive can

5. Jacqueline Cooke, "Art Ephemera, aka Ephemeral Traces of 'Alternative Space': The Documentation of Art Events in London 1995-2005, in an Art Library'" (Goldsmiths, 2007), http://eprints.gold.ac.uk/3475/.

6. https://brendaguesnet.com/cyberres

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have on users. Radical empathy is a concept that might appear to be at odds with usual patterns of professionalism, especially with archives in academic settings, but Kiona's performance of the archive not only expressed a reimagining in terms of her own autobiography, it produced an affectively nerve-wracking powershift in my usual experience of 'controlling' the archive (fig. 2). As she became the archivist demonstrating the collection, I am confronted by how I am represented by it. Her performance to an audience who don't know what the collection is or stands for felt exposed as I helplessly watched the artist hold up an item to the webcam and then waited to see how she responded to these 'orphan' objects that I knew very well and she was writing into a fresh queer history.

The web of responsibilities of a feminist ethics might be seen to humanize the work of custodianship, and I see its recognition as a start towards alleviating the sense of guilt that can haunt an archivist isolated from the supportive aspects of community and overburdened with the servicing. I couldn't help but feel pangs of responsibility for generating a sense of neglect, when Kiona held up an envelope casually labelled with a postit note-to-self saying 'Very Precious!' on what I know is a drawing by Alexis Hunter. But I think Alexis would have approved. The archive has set both Kiona and Alexis in a temporal loop of past into present that working creatively with art documentation inevitably invites us to join.

Take an archive out and about

Before the WAL was gifted to Goldsmiths the entire collection was in a public space where visitors were encouraged to browse. Today I often invite visitors into the library stacks to experience the scale of the collection which is at once seductive and overwhelming. The hanging files, the box labels and the rolling stack shelves provoke the urge to share images or recreate the collection virtually. This re-imagining of the collection's return to a public realm includes expanding it into digital alternative spaces, that are safe or experimental including more academic projects like web sites and digital apps that work to become alternative digital versions of artist files.

Two BA Curating students, Mia Kordova and Agata Hosnova, devised a phone-based game that interacted with 35mm slides (fig. 3). It was a lively response to the challenge of activating 35mm slides and was set up on a light pad during the event Viva Las Projectionistas, an event celebrating slides which was part of ARLIS's 50 year celebration at the Centre for Contemporary Art at

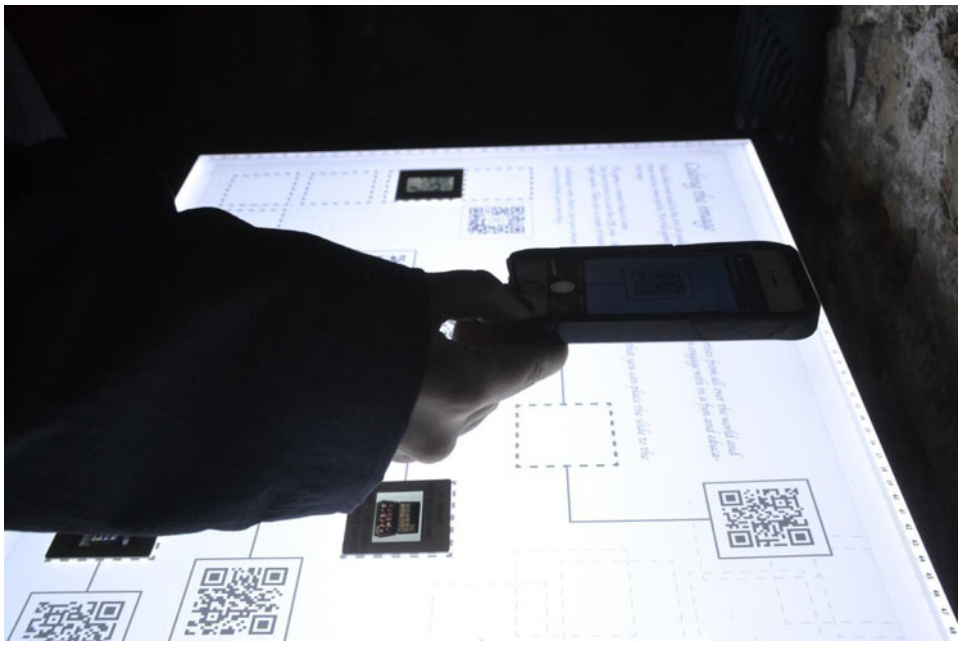


Fig. 3. WAL slides game developed by BA Curating students Mia Kordova and Agata Hosnova for *Viva Las Projectionistas,* Goldsmiths CCA, October 30 2019. Photograph: Althea Greenan.

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Goldsmiths. It was a matching game using QR code links to clues read on your phone with slides from the Women's Art Library Teaching Slide Pack 1994.

An earlier phone-based project titled How to Make an Archive Travel resulted in the WAL digital app[7] realized by Dr Ana-Maria Herman as a research fellow based in the WAL. Her research focused on the use of augmented reality by museums and more broadly on the sociology of culture and communication and her response to the WAL slide collection particularly was to design a digital archive starting with a selection of seven artists' slide files. She worked directly with the artists to update how their practices were represented by designing an iPhone app to enhance and make the artist file travel. A set of old and new images formed a snapshot of their practice combined with an abstract of 10 keywords from the artist, a short statement and an extract of an audio recorded interview conducted by Ana-Maria.[8] This care and attention to the artist's labour of self-representation made Herman's digital app project an exciting prototype to explore the digital possibilities of updating an artist's WAL slide file and making launching it as a free app downloadable from the Apple store until the iPhone upgrades rendered it inoperable.

The WAL app followed an earlier, academically funded pilot digital project[9] that also had artists' slide files as a starting point. But artists, as the subject of these collections, have their own relationships to their files to explore. Claire Collison was featured in the WAL app but had carried out her own project revisiting her slide files as an artist in residence. The slide files not only represented early work, but a life before transformational changes experienced through breast cancer. Here art, work and life are combined with citation – an important feminist practice - acknowledging with affection the powerful precedent of the phototherapy work of her friend Jo Spence and Rosy Martin of the 1980s (fig. 4). The resulting exhibition included an affective display of facsimiles of new work and archival objects, turning out the materials of the art library into a kind of exploded diagram of practice, reflection and tributes to peers that visualizes the web of responsibilities that define the Women's Art Library as a particularly enriched creative space. Claire's unpacking of the art archive revealed it to be a feminist statement of cross-references, admiration and aesthetic pleasure.

Like a materialized networking project, the slides and all the attendant information and artist productions including multiples, zines, ephemera, photos and other recorded encounters with art works emerge from a reciprocated awareness of the issue of visibility in relation to art production. How do we validate art



Fig. 4. Detail of Claire Collison's installation *Watch This Space* in the Kingsway Corridor, Goldsmiths University of London, March 2018. Photograph: Althea Greenan.

7. Marcia Bennet, Claire Collison, Angela Edmonds, Caroline Hands, Freddie Robins, Kim Thornton. Each artist featured in the WAL App by 4 images bridging her practice from a slide in the WAL slide collection. The project was curated, designed and realized by Dr Ana-Maria Herman.

8. https://appadvice.com/app/wal/1189925919

9. https://web.archive.org/web/20130517164620/http://artworklife.org.uk/main/start Rosamund Davies, Greenwich University

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practices, support them, reference them, and acknowledge that art practices emerge from different spaces other than art school?

The archivist with community

The fourth affective responsibility that Caswell and Cifor cite is the relationship between the archivist and the larger community, and I especially welcome their characterization of this as 'responsibilities towards unseen others'.[10] Researchers and artists in this collection are often equally 'unseen others' suggesting a presence sustained by advocating for the WAL outside the space of the collection. Welcoming documentation from unknown artists suggests that important community building needs to continue, supported by the continuing acceptance and prioritising of physical material.

The raw material of the slide library continues to represent a deliriously un-curated swathe of possible ideas of what being an artist means. Veering between amateur and professional the collection as a whole manifests art practice as a work of self-knowledge asserting identity as well as parity.

The book *Human Endeavour: a creative finding aid for the Women of Colour Index* is a definitive creative project realized in the Women's Art Library produced by the artistic research group X Marks the Spot (fig. 5).[11] This book is a groundbreaking example of work based in the WAL, because it encapsulates a feminist ethics of care in the process of exploring, highlighting and enhancing access to a WAL collection: the Women of Colour Index. It reinterprets the notion of the finding aid in terms of the archive, the archivist and their community, bringing to bear the group's experience of a wide range of intergenerational community work.[12] The publication is an artistic response activating the Women of Colour Index, responding with artist pages, documenting Twitter texts and commissioning writing from black scholars and artists and fellow activists. The

10. IBID, Caswell et al.

11. The group members were Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Gina Nembhard, Lauren Craig, Mystique Holloway and Zhi Holloway. The book is available as a PDF from the WAL and the project was supported by the Estate of Gillian Elinor.

12. The group had formed in 2011 to work on the Jo Spence archive project Not Our Class with Studio Voltaire and the Jo Spence project. Ego Ahaiwe-Sowinski has previously been a long time coordinator for the Lambeth Women's Project and has since worked on a number of important archives of black cultural figures.



Fig. 5. Cover of *Human Endeavour: A creative finding aid for the Women of Colour Index*, 2015.

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Fig. 6. Projection of Lauren Craig's Women of Colour Index Slide Show onto former site of Centre for Caribbean Studies in Laurie Grove, October 2015. Photograph: Lesley Ruthven.

transcribed interview with Rita Keegan is at the project's heart, reconnecting the creator of the WOCI with the collection's history to appreciate its contemporary relevance.

In addition to producing the book the group hosted a play written and produced by five young women from the Brit School.[13] The event is documented in the book as an ephemeral performance brought into the sphere of community-building archive making that the WOCI represents. New work is valued as a critical component of the archive. This is its community, the unseen and un-anticipated community for whom the WOCI is deeply relevant decades after its inception.[14]

Lauren Craig's contribution to the project was to digitally restore the slides of black women artists represented in the Women of Colour Index to produce a film simulating a slide show which has been projected in different gallery spaces, showcasing the slides of black women artists in the WAL.[15] I often include an image of her standing with a friend in New Cross in the crisp night air of an October evening looking across the road to the projection of her slide show lighting up the former site of the Centre for Caribbean Studies (fig. 6). This creative and generative response to a multitude of archaic 35mm slides gathered decades ago feels driven by a desire to reach through the collection to grasp and celebrate the living practitioners and acknowledge connections to other vital communities. It is also a powerful image that reminds me that as a worker in an institute of higher education I need to keep in mind that no research space is secure.[16]

Our records, our rhetorical space

I continue to collect slides because they document works found nowhere else, and this redundant technology tells the story of art practice in a unique way.

The WAL began as the Women Artists' Slide Library and I experience the artists' slides as a presence producing a 'rhetorical space' as described by the philosopher Lorraine Code. As I consider what kind of creative projects the Women's Art Library not only inspires but holds, I attribute this to the feminist purpose that drove women artists to establish a slide library that became an art library. Feminist ethics determined why it was needed and how it works today while the concept of radical empathy understands that the responsibility for access includes understanding this collection as a haven for the complex work of self-discovery and sharing knowledge. I see these artist files and project collections like the WOCI as declarations that shape the Women's Art Library into what Code describes as a 'textured location'. It is not neutral. When viewed as an entity, it is clear that the strategic choice to create a slide library collectively in response

13. *Taking Charge: 5 monologues exploring the complexities of social identity,* performed 21 May 2015 https://www.gold.ac.uk/calendar/?id=8761

14. Another critical project is the WOCI Reading Group. https://wocireadinggroup.wordpress.com/

15. Screenings include an outdoor projection at Goldsmiths, as part of the Show and Tell exhibition opening featuring the life and work of Rita Keegan and launching the book *Human Endeavour: A creative finding aid for the Women of Colour Index* October 2015. Subsequent screenings have taken place at The Showroom, 2016, Mining the Gap, Tate Britain, 2017, Viva Las Projectionistas, CCA Goldsmiths, 2019.

16. The Centre was renamed the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies and moved to a less publicly accessible location in the university.

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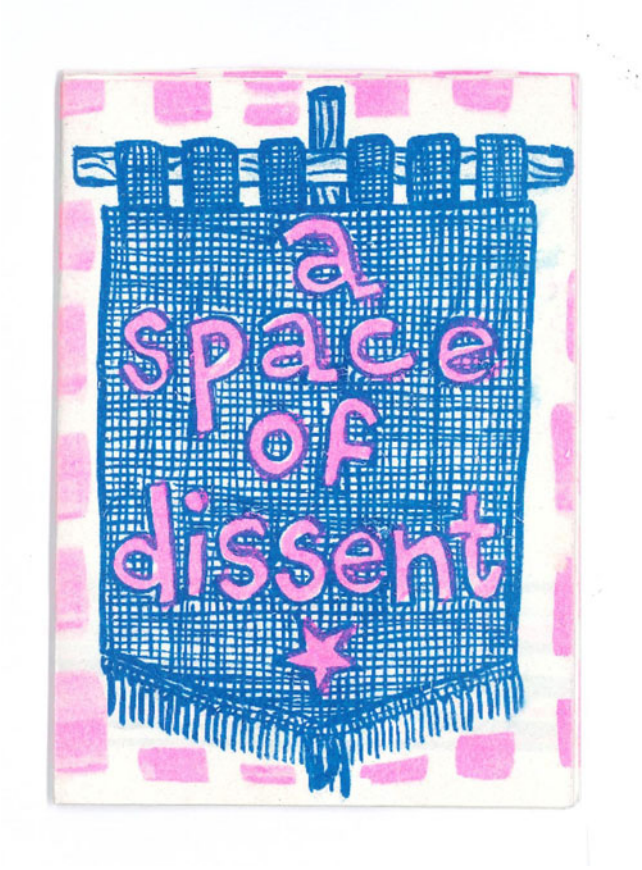


Fig. 7. Cover of riso printed minizine by Rachael House & you, March 2017.

to the indifference of the art world has resulted in a conceptually and materially defined space that works as a textured location. In the sense that Code describes:

> […] textured locations where it matters who is speaking and where and why, and where such mattering bears directly upon the possibility of knowledge claims[17]

17. Code, Lorraine. *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations.* New York; London: Routledge, 1995.

By documenting their art work, women situated practising art alongside life experience, and giving space to this process of identifying the self as an artist inflects our understanding of heritage and knowledge-sharing. While artists have moved away from slide collections towards digital image systems, they continue the tactile hand to hand transfer of material and the sense of gifting. While images of artwork proliferate online and contexts for viewing digital images are fluid and meaning is generated by citation and is screen-based, the Women's Art Library maintains the messiness and immersive qualities of a physical educational feminist and (for me) beautifully textured space. Artists no longer send slides but send their publications in order to become present in that space (fig. 7).

Artists' books networking

Since Marcus Campbell invited us to have a table at the Artists Book Fair in 1996, we went further and set up an exhibition of women artists books curated by Cathy Courtney, which led to purchases and donations that started our collection. Today the collection is the subject of a creative cataloguing project called the Digital Archive of Artists' Publications. Conceived by the artist Ami Clarke, this is a project implementing an ethics of care that is drawing artists into a space of exchange created by the book collection and enabled by digital networking. The WAL is contributing to DAAP fulfilling the mission of promoting women's art practice, enriching the context for understanding these practices through the expanse of artists publications rather than institutional setting. This relationship between the artist, her document, the library catalogue and the context of reader discovery, is a lively web of responsibility that connects the artist with her

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Fig. 8. Costumes for Curators # 3, Amelia Beavis-Jones, 2015. Photograph: Julian Hughes.

audience as well as connecting a book with its reader. I welcome this web site as an additional action of responsive custodianship giving space to artists determining their own terms of visibility.

This art library was a rallying concept for British-based women artists to document themselves and I was drawn into library work by a persuasive mass of evidence of women's creative work and its community. A photograph of Rita Keegan at her desk in the Women's Art Library's location at Fulham Palace marks the beginning of my understanding what and who the work of art libraries is for outside of art colleges. I have written about how Rita's example taught me how archive building and the Women's Art Library produced a community of visitors who were not just clients but peers.[18] Her desk was a threshold of knowledge exchange and affective mutual support that endures as a practice today as an ongoing partnership between the WAL and the Rita Keegan Heritage Project.

Gina Nembhard made the point in Holly Antrum's film *Yes to the work!*[19] that the Women's Art Library frames our encounters with boxes, books, papers and photographs as an invitation to a two-way exchange. These boxes and files donated by Rita and others have been deliberately assembled by artists and intrinsic to the experience of looking is the question of why did she save this? The conversation with an artist that a user experiences through the archive will highlight what she senses to be missing from mainstream art media and how art is validated in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s art world. For me this represents how the artists' archives hold community and those of us who work with this material are in the hands of the artists.

18. https://ritakeeganarchiveproject.com/2020/10/20/rita-in-the-bishops-library/ Also published in Keegan, Rita, Matthew Harle, and Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski. *Mirror Reflecting Darkly: The Rita Keegan Archive*. London: Goldsmith's Press, 2021.

19. *Yes to the Work!, The Women's Art Library* a film by Holly Antrum commissioned by Art360 Foundation, 2022.

We're in the Library!

It is not until the Women's Art Library found a home in an institute of higher education library that maintaining the connection to contemporary practice

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Fig. 9. Nicole Veillard, History Coordinator, with slide files in the Women Artists Slide Library, Battersea Arts Centre, circa 1984.

became a critical part of maintaining the collection's relevance. It needs to be constantly reevaluated. The phrase 'We're in the Library!' for me evokes a safe meeting place for critical work as well as eager discovery. The role of the collection's stewardship also needs to be critically reviewed to prioritise an open responsiveness to changing expectations integral to a practice of an ethics of care. I took part in a work by Amelia Hawk, then known as Amelia Beavis-Harrison, who worked with curators to create costumes that performed aspects of their curatorial work. As I came across her call for participants through the ARLIS UK & Ireland email list, I was emboldened to think of the library as a curated collection and responded. This was before my own job title changed from Library Assistant to Curator Special Collections in 2018, but since my work in the Library centred on the WAL, I was informally described as a curator. I improvised the collection's development within the environment of the library at Goldsmiths, not only buying books but also arranging a rescue of the relatively few but significant slides of work by women when the entire teaching collection of art slides was being dismantled and thrown in a skip. From this story of the slides, Amelia produced a vision of a futuristic guardian of women artists' slides shaping a future art history. The costume embodies this role: the skirt's pink gradient represents the pigment deterioration of ageing slides and the numerical sequence printed in black refers to the chemical formula of sperm. As my head is framed by a symbolic slide mount, the costume performs a resurrection of women's art from the fading patrimony of traditional art history (figs. 8 and 9). I performed this costume – and it performed me - for one afternoon and has not been worn since. It endures in the photographs by Julian Hughes and in the artist's own archive to symbolize the process of reclamation and looking forward.

It feels more critical than ever that the WAL is in the constantly challenged environment of Goldsmiths, where feminist approaches to scholarship are taught as methodologies by academics like sociologists Nirmal Puwar and Rebecca Coleman. The current interest in group work and collective practices developed as

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strategic feminist work is evident in the projects like the Group Work: Contemporary Art and Feminism research group supported by the British Art Network[20]. Research in this field make the WAL into a singularly affective creative learning space. Academics engaged in decolonizing work or exploring theories of vibrant matter and affect can introduce theory through practice exemplified by the artists' documentation in the WAL. The WAL is not only a space for enhancing feminist art scholarship, it is an example of grassroots self-organizing where the traces of art production like posters and flyers are acknowledged as part of the fabric of communication and struggle for social justice. WAL is an opening to re-think other cultural spaces in terms of creative interventions.

While it offers a space to share a particularly tactile experience of artistic materials documenting art practices as a 'special collection' in the Library, the WAL is more than an assemblage of eloquent curiosities. Not only was it founded as a feminist project, a feminist ethics steers it as an intervention in the academic library.

20. https://britishartnetwork.org.uk/research/group-work-contemporary-art-and-feminism/

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