

AS LONG AS
PROSTITUTION
EXISTS YOU
CANNOT HAVE
EQUALITY
BETWEEN MEN
AND WOMEN

BENJAMIN NOLOTT

THE UNTAMEABLE SHREWS



DAN



UNTAMEABLE
SHREWS



NO WOMAN
SHOULD EVER
HAVE A
PRICE TAG!

smart & opinion

**WOMEN
ARE NOT
TOYS
FOR MEN**



If prostitution
was empowering
for women

men would be
against it.

Vol.1, No.1, 2017

ing/shitting/charging
mpay not a

CREDITS

my
reality
to validate
your own

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CHOOSE
LOVING
WOMEN



The Shrews would like to thank all the women that generously donated funds through our GoFundMe campaign. You made this zine possible.

The Untameable Shrews zine was produced on Australian Aboriginal land, which was never ceded. The Shrews pay their respects to elders past, present and emerging.



**YOU CAN'T BE
ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING
BUT BE PRO SEX INDUSTRY**
SUPPORT EXIT PROGRAMS & THE SEX BUYER LAW!



PROSTITUTION IS THE
OLDEST OPPRESSION.

LIFE AS A WOMAN

men would be
against it.

CANNOT HAVE
EQUALITY

CONTENT

- 1-4 What's New in Feminism?
- 5-11 Dear Trans Activists
by Renee Gerlich
- 12-14 The Etymology of Slut
by Sabrina Valisce
- 15-18 Myth: Legalising Prostitution
Reduces The Stigma For Women
by Jacqueline Gwynne
- 19-22 Survivors Speak
- 23-24 The Shrews VS The Sex Trade
- 25-27 Seeing Ourselves, Being
Ourselves - Self-Portraits
- 28-34 How Do I Look?
by Paige Gleeson
- 35-36 Women Artists in Profile
- 37-39 The Shrews Go Literary
- 40-41 Shrews Reviews
- 42 The Personal Is Still
Political

PORN CULTURE

Gender's performative

#NoAlloNoAchoice#PornKillsLove

Prostitution Facts
Prostitution is an act of violence which

SHAVE MY LEGS

EXPLOITATION
OF WOMEN we believe you.

GOOD MEN

freedom of women

DEHUMANIZE

DON'T USE
PORNOGRAPHY

WHAT'S new in feminism

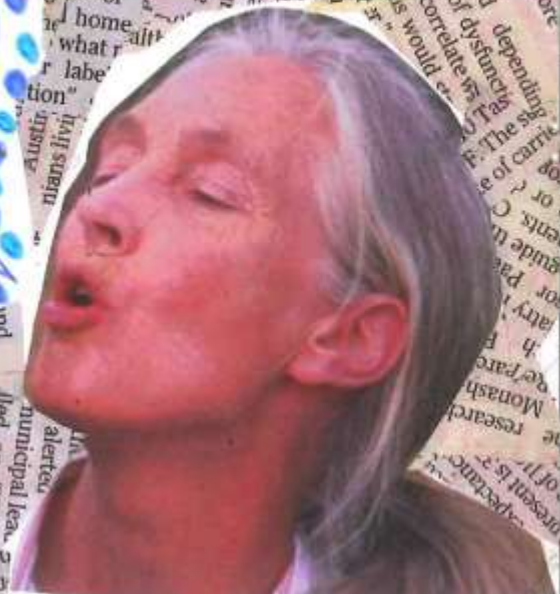


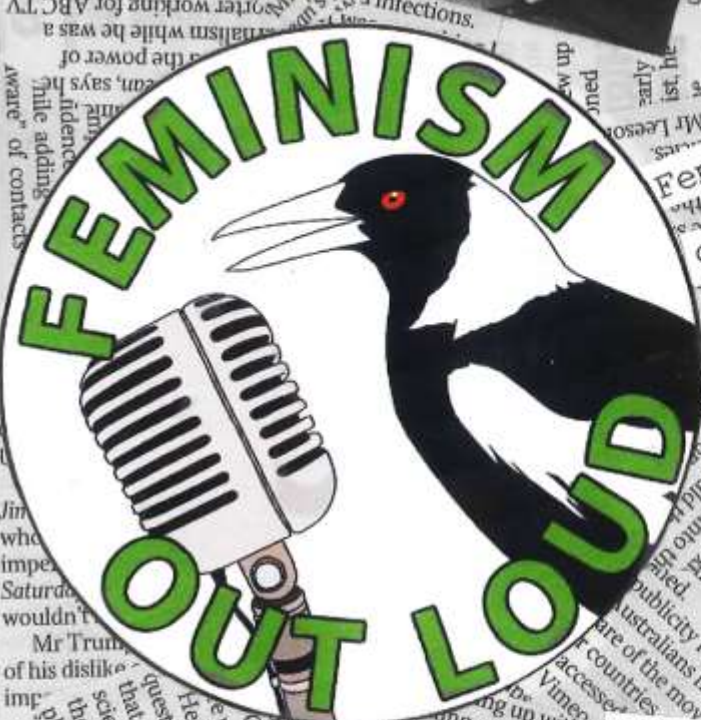
Melbourne based arts blogger Natalie Thomas has taken on the cocks of the National Gallery of Victoria. Outraged at the galleries stubborn refusal to address the gender and racial imbalance of artists represented across both headline exhibitions and general collections, Thomas has begun printing her protest on the surface of the great symbol of domestic drudgery - the tea towel. Proclamation of the NGV's woman problem will now be drying dishes across Australia until "that mausoleum of male privilege" as Thomas calls it, wakes up and smells the pussy. For more of Thomas' anti-cock art essays see <https://nattysolo.com/author/nattysolo/>

For more information about the under representation of female artists in Australian contemporary visual art, check out the data collecting initiative The Countess Report at www.thecountessreport.com.au. Some of their stats will simultaneously blow your mind and not surprise you at all - like the fact that only 34% of reviews in Australian art magazines feature women.



What do we want?
 Equal representation in the arts!
 When do we want it?
 Preferably twenty years ago,
 but here we are.





Feminism Out Loud is a podcast with a mix of discussion, analysis and interviews with an Australian focus. Episodes are produced monthly.

<http://feminismoutloud.pinecast.co/>

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



THE FEST CONTRIVERSY

In late 2016, New Zealand feminist activist Renee Gerlich was banned from the Wellington Zine Fest. Her supposed crime was writing critically about the sex trade and questioning the current trend in labelling gender non-conforming children as transgender and starting them on a lifelong course of medical transition.

Undeterred, Renee sat peacefully on a quilt outside the festival and sold her radical feminist zines. Her defiance cost her her job.

After refusing to submit to the demands of the New Zealand sex trade lobby and transactivists, a petition was formed with the express purpose of preventing Renee from being involved in any and all public life in the future. The subsequent harassment she faced from supposed 'progressive' activists left her with no option but to leave her job.

Renee has penned a response to those who attempt to forcibly silence women who dare to express feminist opinion and engage in politics. After all, Renee is in good company: Julie Bindel, Sheila Jeffreys, Meghan Murphy and dozens of other activists and academics who tirelessly devote themselves to the cause of female liberation, have suffered similar treatment.

If you're craving more of Renee's sharp, radfem critique, check out her blog at: <https://reneejg.net/>

DEAR TRANS ACTIVISTS, STOP NO PLATFORMING FEMINISTS.

by

RENEE GERLICH

One of the key, stated motivations driving liberal transactivists is to end unjust violence and discrimination inflicted on a marginalised group: violence that should never be condoned. Many transactivists I know are community-minded liberals who want to make life easier for a minority group suffering discrimination - and that is fair enough.





I would be on board with this campaign, too, if it was not in actual fact so clearly focussed on attacking women; and if it did not pose such a huge, persistent and aggressive threat to women. Transactivism has to date been so effective in its silencing and bullying of women too, at taking down feminists whatever their public profile, that it also reveals itself as something much bigger and more sinister than a grassroots movement based on solidarity.



It also makes no sense to attack women, and feminists, if your ultimate concern is with gender-based violence. Feminists have been speaking out about rape, child marriage, sex trafficking, domestic abuse, witch hunting, female genital mutilation and gynecide; discrimination in education, politics, the workplace and the legal system;



pathologisation, conversion therapy and abuse through the medical establishment; forced surrogacy, the criminalisation of abortion, miscarriage and self-defence; the promotion of violence through objectification in media, eating disorders, self-harm and dysphoria, and more, for a very long time. To shut down feminists who have analyses about how these forms of oppression co-exist is counter-productive to any effort to end gender-based violence. It is also pure misogyny.



As Jonah Mix points out, women commit perhaps one-tenth of all murders, and less than one tenth of one percent of all mass shootings. When one removes from the pool of killers all women who struck back against abusive strangers and partners alike, only to be punished for their self-defence, the number drops further. To deny the specifically male nature of atrocity is to fool oneself.



So, it seems highly suspect that a movement claiming to want an end to gender-based violence should train its eye so consistently on the very people who have been victim to it, and speaking out against it, for so long. This would also seem to be contrary to the aims many activists claim to have.

The no-platforming of feminists taking place internationally at the moment is vicious, unrelenting and not to mention - embarrassing and vacuous, and we need to stop imitating it in New Zealand. Here, I wish to introduce some of the people who have been victim to this no-platforming craze. Recognising who these people are should make us ask ourselves some questions about who really benefits from their silencing; how grassroots and community-minded transactivism really is, internationally; and what our personal relationship is to it.





Julie Bindel is a staunch lesbian feminist to whom we all owe a debt for her incredible work as a writer, activist and organiser, begun in the 1970s. She has also spent countless hours on helplines since then, as part of her work supporting lesbians to come out in the anti-gay climate of the Thatcher era. She also founded the organisation Justice for Women, which advocates for women in the face of self-defence criminalisation. She is scheduled to talk about her life on February 4 this year, at the Working-Class Movement Library in Salford. She is being shut down by a mob of transactivists hurling abuse and insults she is courageous to withstand.



I met **Mary Lou Singleton** last September. Singleton has been a midwife for over two decades and a reproductive rights advocate for as long, and she also served on the board of directors for the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA). Singleton opened my eyes to a practice that the second wave feminists used, called menstrual extraction. It's a skill that women can cultivate in groups to ensure that sisters will always have access to early term abortions, even when clinics are shut down left, right and centre. Singleton also is the first person I've heard speak powerfully on home birth from a feminist perspective. She is a herbalist who believes in women's health in women's hands - a stauncher, braver sister is not to be found.



Singleton has been abandoned by her midwives' association, since she objected to MANA buckling under pressure placed on them by the trans lobby, and removing all references to "women" from their advocacy and documentation. Transactivists often emphasise the dehumanising potential of language. Yet women are expected to accept being referred to as "menstruators", with "front holes" instead of vaginas. Because Singleton rejects this and can also contextualise this pressure within a history of witch hunting and abuse through a male dominated practice of gynaecology, she has been no-platformed and bullied incessantly.

So far, we have a hard-working herbalist midwife, and a journalist who founded a Justice for Women organisation who has spent her life answering calls on helplines. At what other "violent" feminists should we all be throwing stones?





Thistle Pettersen is another woman I met last year. She is a feminist singer-songwriter, environmentalist and radio broadcaster who used to volunteer for WORT 89.9FM, a radio station in Wisconsin. In late 2015, Pettersen did a live interview with feminist Sheila Jeffreys, and later aired a 58-minute radio documentary about the last MichFest (MichFest was an annual women-only festival that has now been shut down). Transactivists complained at the station and Pettersen was banned from the premises. As is typical, this no-platforming came with its share of abuse: Pettersen received death threats, and she also received an anonymous package in the mail containing human *faeces*.



Pettersen now runs her own online radio station, called Women's Liberation Radio News: unique in its all-female production team and coverage of a range of women's issues, it comes highly recommended.



Last year, I was **personally** banned from the Wellington Zinefest because I am a feminist blogger. The Zinefest has not responded to my, or any other letters asking them for more information, or expressing upset, about the ban. This hit-and-run style manoeuvre is also characteristic: transactivists often do not feel their no-platforming of women requires any explanation or accountability. My job was targeted following the Zinefest ban, while one transactivist who is also "community liaison" for the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC) launched an online bullying pact against me. I was forced to resign from my job in the midst of this.

This transactivist, Ahi Wi-Hongi, then moved on to another target: ni-Vanuatu activist and academic **Pala Molisa**. Molisa's work involves continuing the legacy of his late mother, Grace. Her and Molisa's father Sela were instrumental in Vanuatu's independence struggle throughout the 1970s. Grace's feminism was shaped from very early on, as she grew up in the matrilineal society and culture of Ambae.



000+

Molisa has worked tirelessly to rebuild links between Maori and Pasifika; raise awareness of genocide in West Papua, and support feminist struggle for several years. He also works with a Naenae College rugby league team regularly, helping them to imbue their school life and training with a spirit and awareness of Pacific resistance struggle.



Molisa has barely spoken about gender identity politics, at all. Yet attacks are now being made on his job (see the image adjacent) as well as speaking engagements, on the basis of critiques he has shared on social media.

To attack Molisa is to attack a voice continuing an intergenerational legacy to make huge strides in discussions on indigenous rights and colonisation in New Zealand and the Pacific.

DEMAND ORGASM EQUALITY

Who else is being targeted by this lobby? There is an extensive list here, but another recent example is **Meghan Murphy**. Murphy is a writer who runs Feminist Current, perhaps the only online news source that is fully run and funded by women, for women, and has no sponsorship that can compromise its feminist objectives and critiques. It too, was shut down on Thursday 12 January by transactivists, doing the patriarchy's work for it, with absolutely nothing articulate to say about their objectives.



As George Orwell wrote in the novel 1984: "Orthodoxy means not thinking - not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness."

These transactivists seem to operate on the completely unthinking notion that feminist critiques of identity politics motivate male violence. As if male perpetrators of violence learn to be abusive by listening to herbalist midwives, or feminist community radio, or by reading Meghan Murphy or Julie Bindel or feminist zines, or studying with a Pacific academic whose critiques of colonisation are inspired by his mother, a woman raised on the island of Ambae.



Feminist writing and midwifery are not the kinds of activities that motivate male violence, as if that needs explaining.



This no-platforming is frightening, the reason why should be clear from my description of what these feminists contribute to women's movement. One thing all of these feminists do is create and contribute to feminist media in a world where most media is totally male owned and controlled. In a Trump-era where women and women's rights are increasingly under attack. Anyone who tries to shut them down is not a feminist, by any stretch.

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL



PORN
KILLS ->



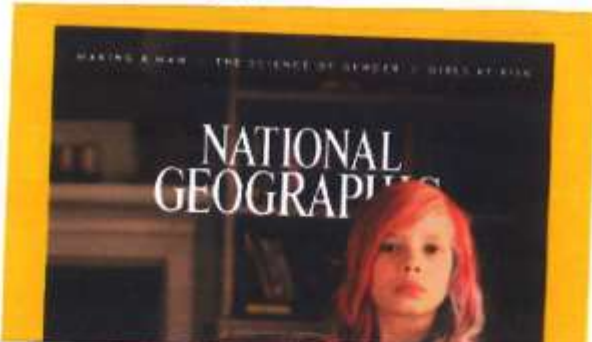
I'd like us in New Zealand to be more concerned about these movements. I'd love groups like Ace Lady Network to show some concern about this kind of thing. The attacks made on Julie Bindel, Mary Lou Singleton, on Thistle Pettersen, Meghan Murphy, Pala Molisa, myself and countless others, are a threat to all women's media, to women's rights and to all women. We need to be concerned, and transactivists here in New Zealand should take a long, hard look at what is going on, who is behind it, and what they're really aligning themselves to.

**PORN IS
HATE SPEECH**

By its rapid growth, government and corporate funding, increasing presence in schools and media; influence on policy on issues from bathroom laws (which Donald Trump supports) to birth certificates, from sports participation to media reporting, reproductive health advocacy and access to women's spaces - it's clear that transactivism is not grassroots. That is one reason it needs to be considered critically, rather than advocated unthinkingly.



Neither of these images contain females. Bear in mind that Rupert Murdoch now owns National Geographic.



CHOOSE
LYING
WOMEN

If you are a genuinely community-driven transactivist, please consider whether the wider movement and its targeting of women truly represents your own aims.



Renee Gerlich

Do you celebrate when people born male can be recognised as women, and celebrate their womanhood in its full glory? Right - do you also celebrate when women are referred to as "menstruators" by the very reproductive health organisations they fought to establish? When Trump and Caitlyn Jenner pat one another on the back? Do you celebrate at the thought of nurses referring to a woman's "front bottom" while she is giving birth? How about when lesbians are called bigots for not wanting penile penetration? It is progress when male violence is reported in the media as having been committed by females - for instance in this case of a recent axe attack in Sydney? Is it not of concern that this distorts the discussion of male violence that women need to have? Is it only right to you, when young girls - the very girls we are trying to teach about "consent" - are demonised for expressing concern about seeing male genitalia in their own changing rooms? Do you cheer watching the hard-won feminist struggle for safe female only spaces put into reverse? And first pump when males who identify as women dominate in women's sports, which are still under-represented, supported and funded in preference of men's? Is it fine that the transactivist movement tends to ignore critiques of the medical establishment practices it advocates, from detransitioners who've been there? Doesn't this movement pride itself on amplifying marginalised voices?

WANKERS
WATCH
PORN

WELL... IF THEY
CAN PUT ONE MAN
ON THE MOON, WHY
NOT ALL OF THEM?

If you celebrate all of these "triumphs", you may want to consider calling yourself a men's rights activist. If you can see why these things might be *problematic* - then please, stand up for free speech when lobbyists who do not care about women - attack and no-platform feminists. This craze is embarrassing to watch unfold in the U.K. and the States - we do not need it in our midst as well.

MY FEAR OF
MEN
IS LEGITIMATE

CHOOSE
LOVING
WOMEN

The background of the top section is a dense, colorful pattern of purple irises with green leaves. A white banner with a black outline is draped across the middle of this pattern.

ETYMOLOGY of SLUT

by

SABRINNA

VALISCÉ



art by Paige

c. 1400, "a dirty, slovenly, or untidy woman", German Schlutt "slovenly woman", Swedish slata "idle woman, slut" and Dutch slodde "slut" slodder "a careless man". Chaucer uses sluttish (late 14c.) in reference to the appearance of an untidy man. Also "a kitchen maid, a drudge" (mid-15c.; hard pieces in a bread loaf from imperfect kneading were called slut's pennies, 18c.).

By 1966 it meant a "woman who enjoys sex in a degree considered shamefully excessive, "which came from "woman of loose character, bold hussy" from the mid-15c., but the primary association through 18c. was untidiness. Johnson has it (second definition) as "A word of slight contempt to a woman" but sexual activity does not seem to figure into his examples. Playful use of the word, without implication of messiness or loose morals, is attested by 1660. Compare playful use of scamp, etc., for boys. Sometimes used 19c. as a euphemism for bitch to describe a female dog.

There is a group of North Sea Germanic words in sl- that mean "sloppy," and also "slovenly woman" and, less often, "slovenly man," and that tend to evolve toward "woman of loose morals." Compare slattern, also English dialectal slummock "a dirty, untidy, or slovenly person" (1861), variant of slammacks "slatternly woman," said to be from slam "ill-shaped, shambling fellow." Slammakin (from 1756 as a type of loose gown; 1785 as "slovenly female," 1727 as a character name in Gay's "Beggar's Opera"), with variants slamkin, slammerkin. Also, possibly related are Middle Dutch slore "sluttish woman," Dutch slomp, German schlampe "a slattern."



FEMINIST'S VIEW OF THE WORD 'SLUT'

Radical feminists hold the view that no woman is a slut or the opposite pejorative, a prude. The use of such words is only to emphasise their nature as tools of the patriarchy used to control women's sexuality.

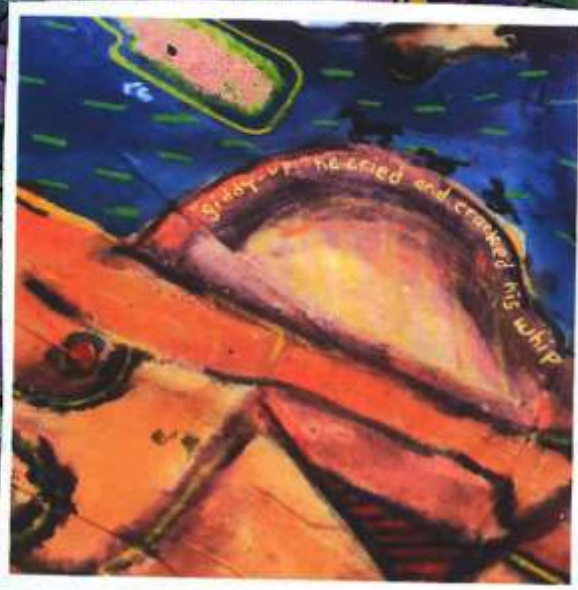
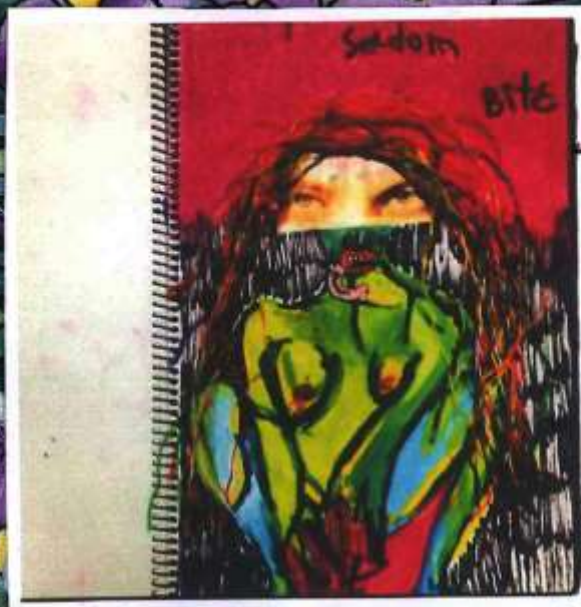
Where Radical Feminism and Liberal Feminism agree that rape culture needs to be addressed and is the most pressing human rights issue across the globe, liberal

feminists believe that to reclaim 'slut' will raise awareness and change culture whereas radical feminists believe the word 'slut' needs to be relegated to the annals of history in the same way as the atrocious and racist 'N' word.

VICTIMS OR SURVIVORS?

In the 1970's there was a bid to change the language we use surrounding the way we describe those who have been raped and sexually abused. The language shifted from victim to survivor. Today this language is again being contested. Women are asking why the word victim takes on different connotations in crimes of a sexual nature than in crimes of a non-sexual nature. Why is a victim of home invasion a description of positionality in a crime whereas a victim of a sexual crime has 'victim' stamped upon them as an identity? Why is a man's sexual violence a woman's identity? Women are also beginning to ask, 'At what point does one shift from a victim to a survivor?' As far too many of us know, healing is an ongoing process with many pauses, many backslides, many progressions and many layers.

Radical feminism holds that 'victim' is a descriptor of positionality within a crime and is in no way reflective of any identity. Any victim of any crime can use the words, 'victim' or 'survivor' and change between these terms to describe the space they feel in any given moment without this becoming who they are as a person.



RELIGION, RACE AND COUNTRY

For far too many women the word 'slut' cannot be reclaimed to empower them in issues of rape, sexual assault, child molestation and all other sexual attacks. This is especially true for some religious groups, women of colour, and women in countries where being raped can mean being given a death sentence. Even many women who do not fall into the aforementioned groups have been documented as suffering low self-esteem, poor grades and lowered work performance when labelled a slut. We say it's time to retire the word 'slut' from the English language because NO WOMAN IS EVER A SLUT.

Legalising
Prostitution
reduces the
stigma for
women

JACQUELINE

G WYNNE



In Victoria, Australia the sex trade had been completely legal since 1984. In 33 years you would think if this was the legal model that is safest we would notice some difference in the working conditions and social standing for women in prostitution. From my experience, things are only getting worse and more dangerous.

I draw on my experience as a receptionist in a high end legal brothel where I worked for 2 years while I studying. The venue was close to Melbourne city and I was in the position from 2008 onwards. I briefly worked at one other in an industrial area on the outskirts of Melbourne.

I worked the night shift 6pm to 6am the following morning, 2 or 3 nights per week. Every single shift there was an incident of harassment, verbal abuse, violence and rough treatment towards the women. In my position I experienced sexual harassment and verbal abuse from punters, even the phone calls were harassing.

There were panic alarms in every room but these were never used the whole time I was there. It was just accepted that sexual harassment and abuse were part of your job. There was hardcore porn playing in every room, including the reception area that you could not escape. In any normal job this would be considered sexual harassment. But prostitution is not a normal job.

Women were expected to do a pre-agreed shift from start to finish. Once they arrived they were not allowed to leave the building for any reason. They were in lock down and this is a condition that is adhered to in Victoria, and from what others have told me,

is the norm in most countries. I didn't understand the logic of this and was told it was to keep drugs out of the venue, which didn't make a lot of sense really. This place had a no drug policy but the majority of the women took prescription drugs, street drugs or alcohol just to make it through the night and to endure the physical and mental pain of it. There was no way that I could police this no drug policy. What was I supposed to do, search bags, strip searches?? It was obvious by their demeanour that the women were using substances. They would bring drugs or alcohol in with them or their regular punters would bring them in. So, this reason for keeping the women in lock down was really not about drugs at all. I believe it is about control and keeping them obedient, to break them down mentally. In every sense the sex trade is a total manipulation, control and oppression of women.

In this work environment you would lose your sense of time. The building is bathed in unnatural, eerie red lighting and all the windows are covered. There is no connection to the outside world. If this was a normal business there would be no need to have the windows covered. They are covered because of the awful abuse and exploitation happening to women on the inside.

Brothels and legalisation are supposed to get women off the streets and protect them, so it is said. But the real reason is profits for the pimps, brothel owners and the government to make money from the exploitation of women. It has been 33 years since the legalisation. You would think that there would be some improvement if this was the legal model to provide the solution and make selling sex a legitimate profession for women. It is just not possible to make it safe. Women are still ostracised, marginalised and most of them live a double life where they keep their life within the sex trade secret, to the extent that they cut themselves off from family and friends outside of the industry. Many of them don't tell their own partners and will say they are working as a night cleaner, packing shelves or invent some elaborate identity as an entrepreneur, complete with fake business cards and a website.

I only worked in 2 venues but you learn a lot about what goes on within the industry as there is a lot of movement among the women and the receptionists. Women move around and work at different brothels, sometimes at 3 different venues including the illegal ones. One reason they move around is to hide from men who stalk and harass them. Within the legal brothels there was corruption and illegal activities going on including drug deals and trafficking. This is all just accepted as a normal part of this world. Many of the women come from dysfunction, mental illness and poverty and this world is normal for them, no one really questions it. Legal businesses in Melbourne are operated and controlled by bikies or crime gangs. During the last 12 months there has been a spate of shootings and fire bombings by bikies in a few of the legal, popular venues around the city. There was a suspected murder in Dreams Gentlemen's Club where a stripper lay dead for 13 hours before it was reported. At these venues, although there are often no security guards, there is 24 hour CCTV surveillance in every room inside and outside of the building, so they know who is coming and going from every direction. I can't fathom how a woman would lay dead and no one noticed.

During the 90's a legal topless bar at Kew's Clifton Hotel was raided by police because women trafficked from Asia were being held captive as sex slaves upstairs. These are all examples of corruption within legal businesses. The legal and legal brothels and strip clubs are all interconnected. Some may think that stripping is just harmless entertainment but strip clubs usually have brothels inside or connected to them. Stripping is becoming more and more extreme, with the influence of internet pornography, and is virtually pornography onstage. For example, women insert objects including vegetables into their orifices as part of their act. The way to make money as a stripper is by private lap dances involving whatever the punter requests, often penetration and sexual contact. Many women shift between stripping and prostitution just to make ends meet. Generally women feel safer in prostitution because in stripping they are dealing with crowds of rowdy, drunk men. They feel they are more in control and it is less degrading doing prostitution.

When the sex trade is made legal a demand is created and in a way it is normalised. The public become accepting and really don't know the difference between a legal or an illegal brothel and won't question it. It is an industry that operates outside of normal hours so the public don't see what is going on.

According to recent statistics, there is a 500% increase in illegal brothels since 1984 and every year that percentage rises. For every legal brothel there are 5 illegal brothels that the authorities know of. Of course these numbers are difficult to estimate as many illegal pop up brothels are coming and going, operating underground. This is not a system that is working. Why is this industry granted immunity from the legal bodies to exist unregulated?

The impact of legalisation has led to punters demanding more for their money. These demands include practices that did not exist 20 years ago due to the influence of internet pornography since 1995. As the receptionist I would introduce the general services provided, including sex, oral and an erotic massage. Everything else was considered an extra service that they would pay more for. Men would ask me what the women did in their service over the phone and during my introduction. It was clear that they wanted what they saw in pornography and I knew what they wanted because I was watching hardcore porn every shift. Porn never has condoms, there will be 3 men ejaculating on a woman's face, verbal abuse, anal sex, choking, hair pulling, slapping and this was just ordinary mainstream porn. They wanted the women to look like the women on screen, very young, they all looked like teenagers, blonde, breast implants with no pubic hair.

I moved from Sydney to Melbourne in 2002 and you saw the dodgy looking "massage parlours" with flashing LED signs, covered windows, very long operating hours where you would never see clients enter or exit the front door. The public know what is going on but are in denial or don't know what to do. Surely the police, councils and the local government know what is going on. Why is nothing being done? Is it because they benefit and profit from the sexual exploitation of women?

For the past 4 years I have been working in a straight job doing sales and marketing. I speak to WorkSafe on the phone and they visit for a thorough inspection every year. (WorkSafe enforce Victoria's occupational health and safety laws) You always know when they are coming but in the brothel I was not aware of any Worksafe inspections. I'm sure I would have known about it if they were visiting. If WorkSafe did a basic look around they would close the place down in less than 5 minutes. The fact that porn is playing in every room is one reason that this job is not a safe work environment. Women are exposed to sexually transmitted infections on a regular basis. These conditions do not exist in any other profession. Receiving a man's ejaculation on your face unprotected, tearing of the vagina and anus is not only painful, degrading but unsafe when it come to the spread of disease.

In one of Melbourne's "award winning" brothels, the punters are treated like kings and nothing is spared in the way of luxury. The women's facilities are at the opposite end of the scale. The men have a spacious lounge area with leather couches and pool tables. The women working up to 12 hour shifts had a small cramped room, lacking in privacy to share among 10 or more women. They did not even have space to sit down comfortably to relax between bookings.

Legalisation does not work and never will. If it were the answer surely the conditions in Melbourne's high end, "award winning" gentlemen's clubs would be something to go by. Since the legalisation of prostitution in 1984 the legal sex industry is out of control, dangerous and unregulated. Why do we still justify men's right to sexually exploit women? We'd never defend the right of white people to have black servants. The whole concept is archaic and the logic solution is to end the demand for men buying women and girls for sex. The one legal model that is working is the Nordic Model which has been operating in Sweden since 1999 and most recently in France. The Nordic Model acts to end the demand for the sex trade. It criminalises sex traffickers, pimps, brothel owners and men buying sex. Women are provided with training, rehabilitation and services for drug treatment, counselling, housing and financial support so they can return to a life of safety and normalcy. Buying sex is not a human right. Men are not entitled to sexually exploit women and nothing will ever justify this.

This article can be found on the UK based Nordic Model Now blog.

Read more of Jacqueline's experience in Prostitution Narratives by Melinda Tankard Reist and Caroline Norma available from Spinifex Press.

SURVIVOR S S P e a k



The United Nations recently conducted a consultation seeking views on the UN's approach to sex work, the sex trade and prostitution. Sister Survivor, an Australian and New Zealand collective of prostitution survivors responded to the UN's questions. Here is what they had to say.



We are Australian and New Zealand survivors of the sex trade and leaders in the movement to end violence and discrimination against women and girls. We have experienced abuse, violence and dehumanization under commercial sexual exploitation, all while our governments have catered to and protected the very people who harmed us; the sex buyers, pimps and traffickers who bought, sold and profited from our exploitation with impunity.



Question 1:

The 2030 Agenda commits to universality, human rights and leaving nobody behind. How do you interpret these principles in relation to sex work/trade or prostitution?



We are the women the U.N., its agencies, governments and society have left behind who are at great risk during and after our experiences in the sex trade. Many of our sisters were not so lucky and died due to the failure of society to take a stand against commercial sexual violence and exploitation.



Our expertise shows that the best way to protect women bought and sold in the sex trade is to provide them with the services they urgently require: basic needs for them and their children's survival (food, housing, clothing, medical services, childcare) and tools to help them rebuild their lives (education and training, psychological or psychiatric treatment and counselling, substance abuse rehabilitation). Also critically important is to advocate for laws and policies that exonerate them from police arrest and criminal punishment and instead hold their sex buyers accountable for the irreparable harm they perpetrate.



Although we have rarely come across a prostituted woman whose life experience did not include any of the vulnerability factors that are linked to prostitution, we concede for purposes of this consultation that a minority might claim that prostitution was a free and clear choice. Our colleagues who work with victims of intimate partner violence might also encounter women who are not capable or ready, for whatever reason, to leave their batterers. In neither case should governments develop laws and policies to their countries. This is both an issue of sexism and of racism. The universal colonization of Indigenous peoples had a doubly negative impact on women and girls, who have suffered sexual violence and discrimination of the worst magnitude. If the goals of the 2030 Agenda are to leave no one behind, UN Women cannot treat the sex trade as just another form of employment. Lives are at stake and must be placed first and foremost.



Question 2:

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls. The SDGs also include several targets pertinent to women's empowerment, such as

- a) reproductive rights
- b) women's ownership of land and assets
- c) building peaceful and inclusive societies
- d) ending the trafficking of women
- e) eliminating violence against women.

How do you suggest that policies on sex work/trade/prostitution can promote such targets and objectives?





To us, the term 'sex work' is highly offensive because what we endured at the hands of sex buyers, pimps, brothel owners, traffickers and other exploiters was neither sex nor work, but an endless stream of violence, degradation and dehumanization imposed on our bodies and minds that plagues our memories for life. We urge you to recognise the universality of human rights and the respective histories of the U.N.'s member states where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international covenants were signed and ratified. These covenants had government's pledge responsibility toward marginalised and discriminated against groups for the purpose of remedying the wrongs created by those with power over those without. Prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation have an overwhelming percentage of women and girls who are Aboriginal, Indigenous, First Nations, or Native



person...." Article 6 of CEDAW states that "State Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women." Article 9.5 in the Palermo Protocol calls on State Parties to take measures to discourage the demand that fosters the exploitation of persons that lead to trafficking, meaning that any national or international policy that calls for the decriminalization of sex buyers are in direct contravention to the Palermo Protocol.

We urge UN Women to analyse prostitution within these legal contexts, and within the scope of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as gender-based sexual abuse and exploitation.

Question 3:

The sex trade is gendered. How best can we protect women in the trade from harm, violence, stigma and discrimination?

The vast majority of prostituted persons everywhere are female with most being prostituted since childhood. Prostitution is by definition an exploitative system of unequal gender relations, which operates to subjugate and oppress women.

Harm, violence, stigma and discrimination are the standard experience of prostituted women and girls. The factors that catapulted us into the sex trade are poverty, homelessness, childhood sexual violence or incest, racial or ethnic disenfranchisement, vulnerability after conflict or natural disasters, and most importantly an absolute and distinct absence of choice. Today women and girls are bought, sold and used with impunity by adult men who are financially, socially and racially privileged in relation to them, just like we were.

The only viable policies in addressing prostitution within a women's rights framework is for governments to target the demand for prostitution by penalizing sex buyers; to target third party profiteers via imprisonment and to provide comprehensive services to prostituted women and girls for the purpose of exiting the sex trade, regaining health and wellbeing and building a fulfilling life including decent work. Prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation are incompatible with the Sustainable Development Goals outlined. It is impossible within the context of prostitution for women to exercise full rights to secure reproductive autonomy, end trafficking, eliminate violence and secure justice and freedom from exploitation. Prostitution embodies violation and discrimination against women within the aspects of economy, politics, culture and gender. Women do not develop full potential or build economic security via prostitution. The sex trade leaves women impoverished, bereft of long term income and with no financial security or assets.

A "sex work" model gives state-sanctioned license to pimps, brothel owners and sex buyers which is antithetical to human rights principles and the integrity of international law including the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (the 1949 Convention), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol).

The 1949 Convention articulates specifically that prostitution and trafficking and such slavery like practices "... are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human that exonerate perpetrators because of the so-called choices of a minority of women. Similarly, UN Women is charged with ensuring that governments uphold CEDAW and other conventions that protect the rights of women and girls. Taking a position that would lead to qualifying prostitution as a form of work would violate UN Women's mission and irreparably contradict the principles of the 2030 Agenda.

The global, multi-dollar sex trade is linked to organised crime that profits unconscionably from the sale of women and girls for sexual acts that counts on sex buyers being protected from accountability.

UN Women's mission is to challenge gendered inequalities that violate the fundamental rights of women and girls through prostitution, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse. UN Women's role is to support a global women's and girl's rights movement dedicated to creating fair economic and social conditions and ensuring legal protections for women and girls in order to ensure that they never have to endure the suffering, violence and the denial of dignity that we survived. If they tragically do, they must have access to justice.

We call on UN Women and the UN system as a whole to uphold international laws and human rights principles that will prevent and protect all women and girls, including those in prostitution and the sex trade at large.

THE SHREWS

VERSUS THE

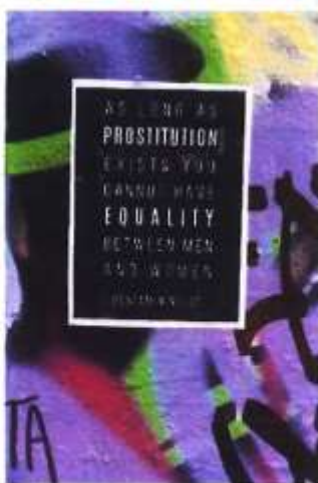
SEX TRADE

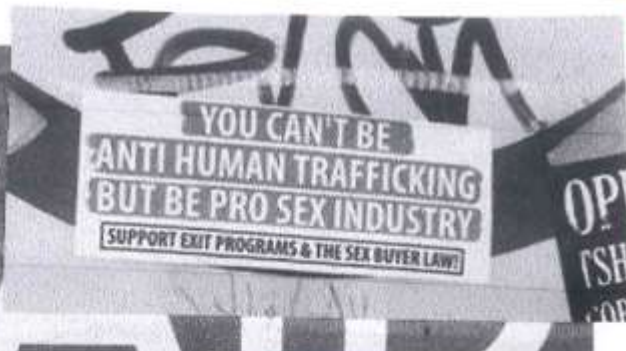
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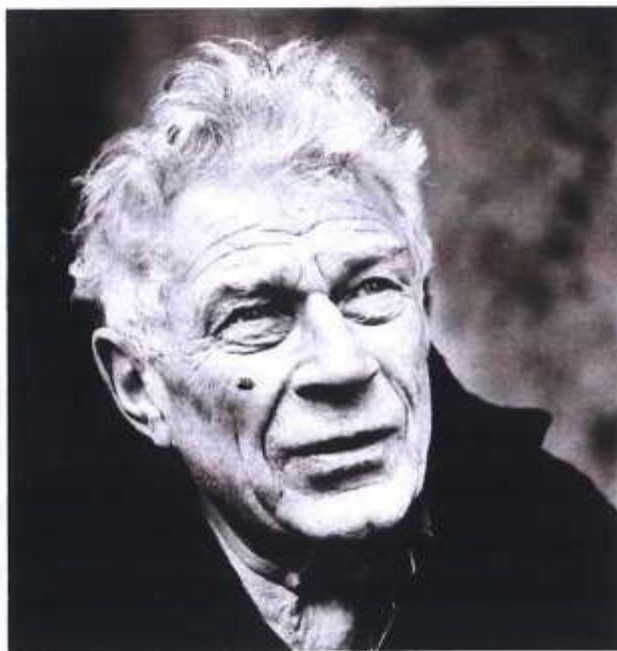
Shrews from around the world have been taking to the streets to criticise the sex trade, with witty, succinct, and often humorous results.





SEEING
BEING

OURSELVES ON THE GAZES



RIP

John Berger

Marxist Art Critic

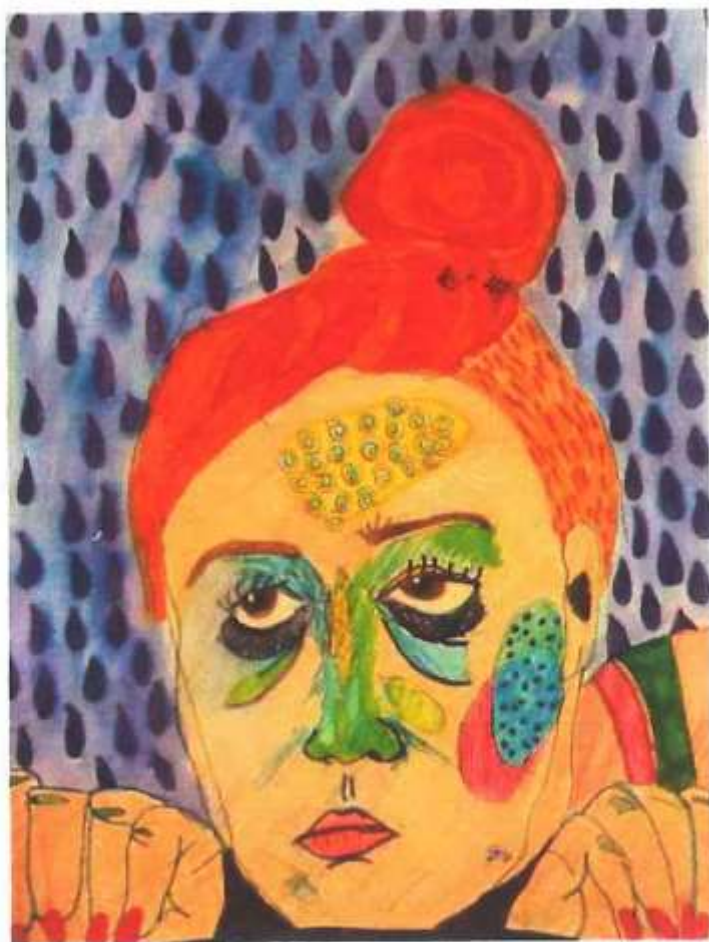
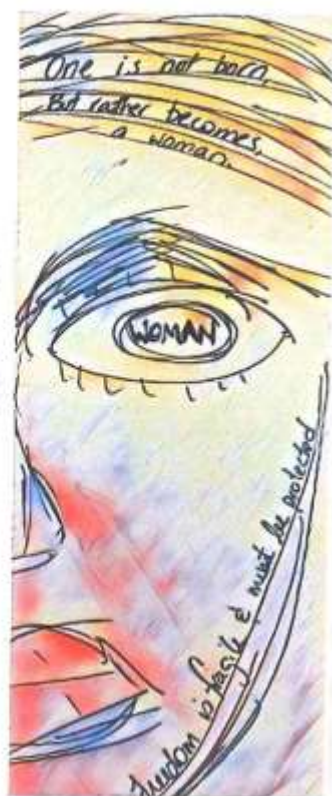
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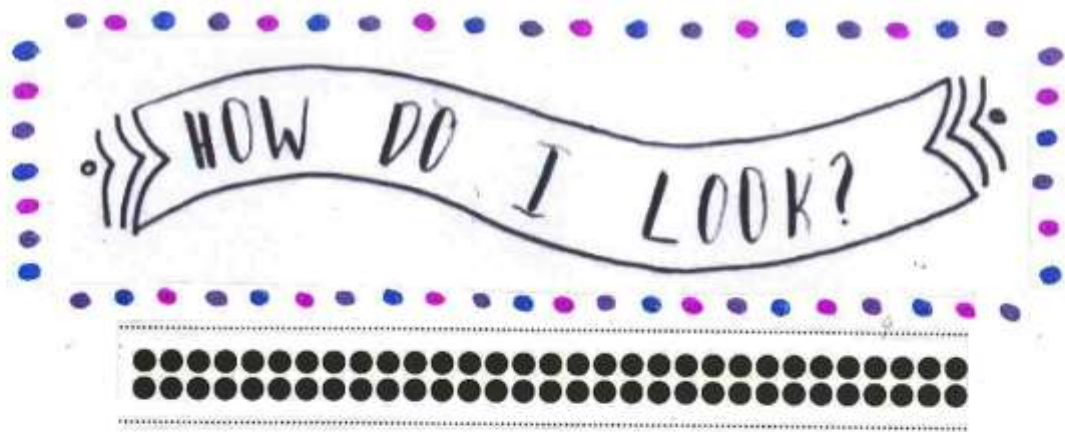
John Berger was one of the Shrews favourite Nigel's. Berger unflinchingly critiqued the history of male dominance in the art world and its continuing contemporary resonance.

His simple articulation of the impact the male gaze has had on the way women view and relate to themselves remains as relevant now as it was 45 years ago when the ground-breaking documentary 'Ways of Seeing' was first screened on the BBC.

To celebrate Berger's life and women's ongoing battle to free ourselves from the chains of the male gaze, the Shrews have created a series of self-portraits. May we always relate to ourselves as subjects, not objects.







By Paige Gleeson

John Berger once commented that: 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves'. But does this theory of relation impact the ways in which women depict themselves in self-portraiture?

The male gaze is alive and well. It's everywhere, glaring. John Berger knew it and feminists everywhere know it still. Whether the way women relate to themselves is influenced by the male gaze is a slightly more controversial statement, but it's a patriarchal phenomenon that can be noted in female self-portraiture spanning across centuries.



While women's depictions of themselves in contemporary eras do not necessarily respond to the male gaze in a way that affirms this gaze as a natural and acceptable 'way of seeing', the gaze informs the choices, both technical and conceptual, that women artists make when they construct images of themselves. Images of women are responded to in gendered terms due to the patriarchal context in which they occur. It's a bind that leaves women restricted in their artistic movements. To paint a nude is to invite the eyes of men who have sexualised the female form to an extent that they are incapable of viewing it in non-sexual terms.

A portrait of a woman cannot be viewed in the same way as that of a man due to cultural frameworks that position 'man' in the dominant, default position of subject. Woman is cast in opposition as 'other', his subject, his muse, his wank bank eye-candy.

It is from within this dominant paradigm that the male gaze has established and naturalised itself as the primary lens through which depictions of women are viewed, and within which female artists must relate to, and create images of, themselves.

Felicity Edholm has argued that the challenge for women in creating self-portraits has been to *"be critical of, and find ways of resisting, the pressures to see and value women in particular ways"* (Edholm, p.157). The dominant representations of women Edholm speaks of are images of women who are responsive to the sexualisation and domination of the male gaze. Which in the industrialised west of the twenty-first century, is almost all images.

Women commonly provide moments of *"erotic contemplation"* (Mulvey 1975, p.10) through their positioning as passive sexual objects. Men are constantly implied and present in images of women in order for women to become complete; women become mirrors of male desire in magazines, pornography, films, wherever and whenever they're depicted. Though while women may be theoretically and socially framed as objects rather than subjects, we're not. The unrelenting nature of the gaze means women suffer from the 'looking glass self', knowing ourselves only in relation to how others see and value us.



Some women fall through this looking glass as they try to mould their appearance to conform to unattainable beauty ideals, forever striving to be young, white, thin, with a perfectly formed vulva resembling that of a pre-pubescent child.

The contemporary women artists presented in this article cannot escape the influence the male gaze has on the way women relate to themselves, but they do not submit to its demands either. Highlighting the insidiousness of the gaze, they *"insert themselves as practitioners within the masculinist myth of the artist as hero/genius"* (Meskimmon 1996, p.xvi), and challenge the position of woman as sexual other, using art as a political weapon.



While the male gaze can most often be noted in contemporary female self-portraiture via artists' attempts to subvert and satirise it, its presence can be felt in some of the first female self-portraits created during the medieval period, before deconstructive techniques became popular. Though the response to the male gaze in medieval women's self-portraiture is vastly different from that of modern women, it is interesting to note that many of the concerns and challenges medieval women faced in relation to mediating dominant paradigms are still grappled with in contemporary self-portraiture.

The social value women are assigned was, and is, primarily related to physical appearance (Edholm, p.156), and this can be noted in the self-portraiture of medieval women by the efforts the artists made to make themselves appear younger and more attractive. Yet also present in these self-portraits is a paradoxical avoidance of appearing 'vain' (Borzello 1998, p.26), a concern still prevalent for women in contemporary Western cultures (Edholm, p.154). This phenomenon partly accounts for the subdued nature of the self-portraits of medieval women, as explored by Borzello in *Seeing Ourselves* (1998).

It is worth noting, however, that medieval women were not entirely submissive in the face of the gaze, despite the subdued nature of many of their self-portraits. There are often instances of subtle challenges posed to the dominance of the male gaze, such as in Lavinia Fontana's self-portrait from 1579. In the background of Fontana's painting are a collection of male anatomical drawing statues, and the image is composed in such a way that there is, *"no risk of the viewer imagining the naked man looking at [Fontana] while she is looking at us. It is, rather, she who is in charge of the gaze"* (King, 1999, p.53).



Self-Portrait in a Studio, 1579,

Lavinia Fontana, oil on copper



In the late twentieth century, Jenny Saville launched a confronting exploration of how women's bodies are viewed and subsequently controlled by the male gaze, drawing on the constrictive nature of ideals of 'attractiveness' that challenged medieval women some six hundred years ago.

The internalisation of the male gaze affected how medieval women were able to relate to and depict themselves, and the same could be said of Saville, who uses elements of the grotesque in her self-portraits as a visual strategy to illustrate this process of internalisation and its affects. Saville's self-portraits *Plan* (1993) and *Branded* (1992) attempt to break the control of the male gaze by refusing to conform to the expected presentation of the female body, and presenting it in a way in which it cannot be visually consumed and sexualised.



Plan, 1993,

Jenny Saville, oil on canvas



Branded, 1992,

Jenny Saville, oil on canvas



Artist, 1991, Judith Shea,

Sculpture

For medieval women artists, displaying an 'appropriate' level of modesty and presenting as attractive were concerns further complicated by the tension surrounding women's involvement in the artistic profession. As Borzello comments, "A woman who practiced as an artist had to operate in a context set up for men and to behave in a manner thought to be unwomanly" (Borzello, p.28).

Women were viewed firstly as women, not as artists; their sex could not be separated from their professional practice. Their self-portraits were, therefore, viewed in very different light than those of men, and social expectations surrounding their painterly conduct were much stricter. When not viewed with outright contempt, they were often considered anomalies (Borzello, p.27).

This patriarchal framework has not lost its relevance in contemporary settings, and is explored by sculptor Judith Shea in her work *Artist* (1991). The sculpture explores what it takes to be a female artist in a male dominated art world and history, and how, as Shea commented in an interview, "...you're always going to retain your identity as a female" (Judith Shea on her self portrait, *Still Standing* shown in *Her Own Style* at the National Academy, 2012).

Contemporary artists Anita Steckel, Lynda Benglis, and Emma Amos, respond to gendered readings of their bodies through satire and deconstructive discourse. Steckel portrays herself directly engaging with a masculinist and patriarchal art world and history by juxtaposing her own female body against "phallic urban sky lines" (Brooklyn Museum, 2014), and portraits of seemingly important men in old photographs.

Steckel is reclaiming a body that has historically been fodder for male artists, under their control and represented according to the male gaze. In these works Steckel is navigating how to use her own body in representations of herself when that body holds connotations to a history of male representation that has categorised the female form as an 'othered', biologically inferior, sexual object. Steckel does not depict herself as an individual, but rather parodies the dominant images of women she has to refer to and the male defined confines she must work within with when representing herself.



Giant Woman on Empire State

1972, Anita Steckel,

mixed media



Solo (Giant Women on New York Series),

1970, Anita Steckel,

mixed media

Presenting her tanned, oiled body, posed in a pornified manner, Benglis' self-portrait would not be out of place in a Playboy magazine; if it weren't for the massive plastic dildo she has attached to her pelvis. Benglis' massive phallic attachment disturbs the male viewers comfortable objectification of her naked form. Viewing pleasure is denied.

Benglis herself called the image a "centrefold" (Smith, 2009). While not directly presenting alternate ways of depicting the female form for women artists, the deconstructive strategies of artists such as Steckel and Benglis, in the late nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies were key in opening up a dialogue which challenged the dominance and naturalisation of the male gaze as the primary mode through which to view images of women. As Edholm argues, "Even when we as individuals reject the subject positions offered in dominant images, or see them as irrelevant, it is still difficult, in the absence of many powerfully visualized alternatives, to escape their influence and impact." (Edholm, pp.156)



EXPLICIT NUDITY

Art Forum Advertisement, 1974,

Lynda Benglis, photograph



Worksuit, 1994, Emma Amos,

oil on canvas

Emma Amos uses her self-portrait to challenge and critique both the male gaze and the related "masculinist myth of the artist as hero/genius" (Meskimmon, p.xvi). The implications of gender in art production are humorously highlighted in *Worksuit* (1994) by Amos' placement of her own head on a white male body (that of Lucian Freud), posed alongside a reclining white female nude. The control the male gaze has over female representation, even extending to women's own representations of themselves (and its role in defining and creating dominant images of women) is aptly illustrated by Amos' hybridisation of herself and a white man.

Amos addresses her own status as a black female artist practicing within a historically white, male dominated field, and references the challenge female artists have in presenting a female self, a body and face, that has "for so long been associated with the expressive repertoire of the male artist." (Partou 2004, p.98). Her intent is to challenge the dominant visual representations of women as objects to be looked at, while highlighting the difficulty, as explored by Seckel and Benglis, of constructing a representation of female self outside of the dominant image of woman.

For Fontana, Shea, Saville, Steckel, Benglis and Amos, their identity formation as female artists could not be separated from an art history and popular culture which has catered almost exclusively to the heterosexual male gaze and its desires through its representation of female bodies.

For women, relating to and representing ourselves within a cultural framework that applies gendered and highly sexualised meanings to our physical forms poses unique challenges. The obstacles that female and feminist artists are faced with have often become the focus of our self-portraits, and we certainly haven't taken the objectification of our sexed bodies and selves lying down.

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Women Artists in Profile



Christine Dynamit:

Christine describes artistic expression as a part of her being, as natural as eating or breathing. Through her art she seeks to soothe, liberate and connect with everything around her as a means for self-expression.

Christine has been making art for as long as she can remember. She lives in country Victoria, Australia, with her three kids and too many pets. Find more of Christine's work at

<https://www.facebook.com/www.artismcreative.com.au/>



Jodie Finnigan

Art featuring Muscovy ducks or Anglo Nubian goats, like the ones Jodie paints, are very rare. But Jodie decided she wanted to bring their unique features into her home. Since she couldn't find any works to buy she began creating her own. Jodie comes from a long line of artists, her mother and grandfather both painting. Jodie sketched a lot when she was younger, but more recently has worked with a range of media, from clay to pastels, paints and inks, and even handmade soap.

Jodie lives in Central Victoria with her partner, children and a herd of goats.



Claire J:

Claire's work on fabric draws on a long tradition of female artistic practice and craft inspired by the private sphere and women's relationships and connections with one another.

Claire has only recently discovered the joys of self-expression through art, and plays with many mediums. She lives in country south east Queensland, Australia, with her two children, five elderly retired chooks and an array of local wildlife.

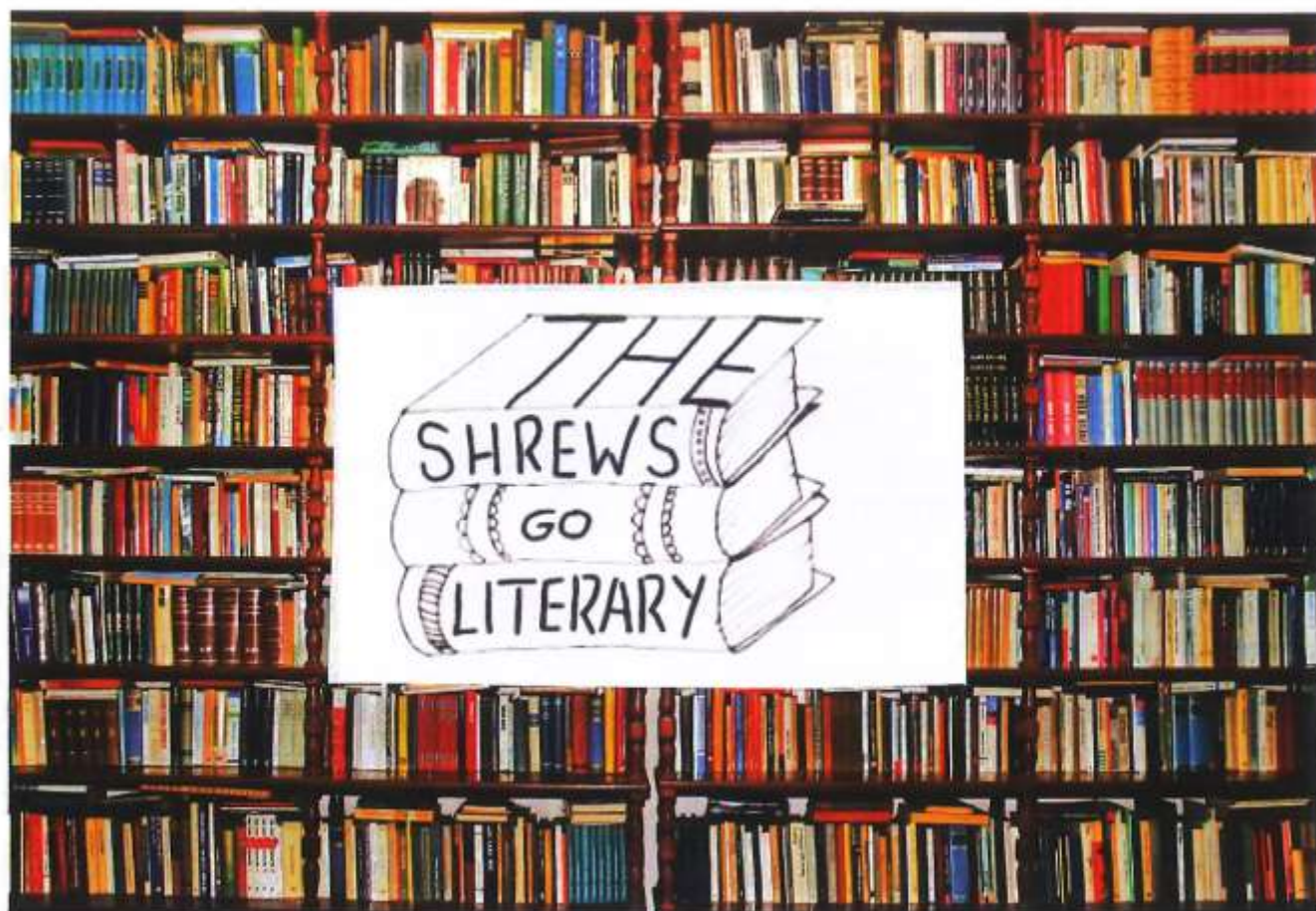


Ailis Fraser

Ailis' ultimate goal for each one dimensional glimpse of an animal is to provide people with an image where they might for a flicker of a second stare and feel the unique character of the creature. Perhaps for a brief moment they question their own grasp of what is real and what is not. Maybe they notice the eye staring back at them and the fine layers of transparency that make each animal complete. Ailis likes to know that a part of her imagination hangs on someone's wall, somewhere.

Ailis lives in southern Tasmania, Australia.





Levitation by Elle Kowal

Miranda levitated above the earth
As the sun rose up to greet her
Was an inch enough to prove her worth
Or were miles needed?
They peered beneath and sucked their teeth
As they measured with string and spoons
But her red skirt hung in the dirt
And the ants climbed up to meet her
She just shrugged
Cuddled and hugged
The babe between her breasts
For it was love that rose her up
And laid them down to rest

Medusa by Elle Kowal

A thousand floating pods
A ship upon the storm
Memories
And memories
Of you to keep me warm
A ship upon the night
A light upon the shore I don't need you
To define me anymore
Frothy foamy frothy sea
Drains into my veins I rise up like medusa
To eat eat eternity I rise I rise
To twice the size
Of your rickety little ship
Slip slop I swallow you down
Sail mast cannons chains I stand alone and whole
Waves beat against my knees
Nothing left but
A rumble inside
To remind me you were right

This Dream

By Maureen K. Doll

I woke up in a dream. I dreamt I was in a most peculiar land, where the weak ruled the strong.

Even the women were not well there, and perhaps particularly the women were not well there, because the weak had begun their domestication of living things by attempting to harness the most potent force of all.

They did not succeed, of course, but they wounded the women badly, and every day reinflicted the wounds. They developed whole publishing houses and empires and court rooms, and piles and piles of books, for this purpose. It seems the weak spent their dreaming times dreaming of new ways to wound women.

Can you see how very weak they were?

I met some women there who had become silent. Women who had ruled kingdoms and rode bareback in lives prior, here fell ill and looked haunted. For those who knew to look you could still see the animal in the back of their eyes, pulsing and intact. But very few knew to look.

There was a problem with senses there. Because they ground limestone to make cement walls, and stuffed mercury in tubes to generate light, and built truly loathsome buildings. They kept the children in these buildings—indeed, by law—so their senses, over long slow afternoons and in fast vague years, began to fade.

Do you see how very peculiar this place was?

There were many interesting species there, like the angels that arrived with velvety green wings holding perfect spheres. They called them luna moths. Also funny little characters with tails that hung from trees and cried "ee eeh" and also very big cats with halos around their faces like

the sun, and the winged ones that could insert tiny hoses through skin to drink blood and then vanish, before you even noticed.

They were all so funny and terrifyingly wise. But the weak built their limestone and mercury homes over these species too, and cut off their hair and tore out their tusks, and sold them for money. I could tell you about money, but it is just too sad. It was for money they divided people by color and said the white, fishy ones were the best. It was a bad, stupid story and a lie and everyone knew it. But the story became law and whole groups of people were tortured on it.

The weak can only rule by violence, and only the weak could rule by violence. This is how they ruled over the strong.

You may be surprised anyone survived in this place. Many did not. But the flashes of beauty-beauty laughs at domestication, of course-were so strong, even darting about the media matrixes of the weak and occasionally toppling grown men, well the beauty was so fierce a person could still fall in love with this place and nearly die of the love alone.

Even the wounded women were so lovely, with the hidden animals in their eyes, sometimes I was struck speechless just at the sight of them.

The other thing you should know about this world is the weak institutionalized weakness as the only acceptable discourse. They built whole universities and medical centres on very weak and odd ideas. A woman could walk into such a place and make a statement about her body, and they would tell her it was not backed up by Peer Reviewed Literature. You may find this hard to believe, but it was quite common. No one knew who the Peers were. They have never been seen.

Can you see the impossible oddness of it all?

I wake up in a dream and in the dream I always have a dull ache at the tip of my spine and the words become thick in my throat as I try to ask, "But why are the weak so wicked and the good things so sad here? I am quite sure it is all unnecessary and in fact ridiculous. And in fact the most wounded woman knows more than all the Peers put together. Just ask her what to do."

They tell me to study market theory and evolutionary psychology. They tell me the old sacred carvings of our holy forms were pornography. They tell me the sacred curving of my holy form is pornography. They tell me I do not understand the male mind. They tell me I am too sensitive and too serious and possibly insane.

The dream is a story I cannot end. But I like all the good things here, which persist despite the rule of the weak, as good things do. I met an astrologer who told me my life will not be easy but it will be true, if I make it so. This is my truth: I live in a dream and I am not who the dreamland says I am.

I met a shaman and she told me I could dream within the dream. So I dream of women being happy again and toppling the weak. I bear this dream in my cells and it grows out of my scalp. The dream within the dream is so beautiful, perhaps I could die for love of it. And perhaps at that moment I finally wake up, someone else will continue this dream inside the dream.



SHREWS REVIEWS

Paid for by Rachel Moran

Paid For is one of the most important books on this subject. Prostitution, up until recently, has been portrayed as a glamorous and desirable profession for women, yet is anything but. This book tells the truth of the exploitative and misogynistic sex trade and Rachel's experience in prostitution from the age of 15. It exposes the ugliness of the industry that sucks in and spits out vulnerable and impoverished young women. Rachel was a homeless teenager from a background of mental illness, poverty, dysfunction and had no other real options in life, like the vast majority of women and girls that enter into the sex trade. This book is a must read if you ever had any doubts about what this life is like for women. A beautifully written and harrowing experience which begins with her life in the dark and seedy underbelly of Ireland's streets, moving up the chain into brothels and escorting, and finally freeing herself from the trade after 7 years. Rachel went on to gain a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in creative writing, and founded SPACE International (Survivors of Prostitution-Abuse Calling for Enlightenment). Rachel now speaks out about the realities of the sex trade globally and fights for the rights of prostituted women everywhere.

MISOGYNY RELOADED by Abigail Bray

I was totally unprepared for the impact of Abigail Bray's *Misogyny Re-loaded*. Standing in line at the Spinifex Press 25th anniversary celebration I picked up a copy of the book and absent mindedly read the first page. I gasped and was unable to place it back on the table.

Bray holds no punches, presenting male supremacy as a form of insidious and fast growing global fascism.

The way misogyny, a literal and burning hatred of women, is represented and expressed culturally through mass media such as pornography, the internet, films and television is, Bray argues, frequently defended as freedom of speech.

Blatant misogyny presented as a libertarian freedom and right to expression serves to reinforce a hierarchical power arrangement that protects the interests of the oppressor over their oppressed.

The result is a cultural environment in which cruelty toward women is not only tolerated, but accepted and encouraged. Women are left to blindly navigate this battle ground in a society which refuses to acknowledge we are even at war. When we fall casualty and display inappropriate or difficult emotional states, we are drugged and psychologically reprogrammed. Typical of the current neo-liberal political vacuum, women as individuals become the problem, not the system of patriarchal global fascism that causes their distress. This practice, Bray highlights with characteristic sharp wit, is an all too common feature of oppressive regimes and works as a highly effective form of social control.

It's a brave book, drawing and quoting from deep and seemingly unconnected places to provide a refreshing radical critique of the far-reaching impacts of neo-liberalism and the patriarchal suffocation of women. *Misogyny Re-loaded* is a must read for feminists old and new; you will never be absent minded again.

The natural way of things

by Charlotte Wood

Wood's terrifying dystopian fantasy is terrifying precisely because it's not entirely fanciful. Reflecting, with disturbing accuracy, the patriarchal cultural influence of rape culture, Wood's story mirrors the personal lives of so many women who have survived rape and sexual assault - and lived to not be able to tell the tale without risking punishment.

A group of women wake and find that they have been kidnapped, relegated to a specially designed concentration camp in the middle of outback Australia. The circumstances that led them there are eerily familiar, as if pulled from real world headlines; the woman gang raped by Australian football players; the female soldier unknowingly filmed while having sex with her colleague; the woman who sues her high-profile employer for workplace sexual harassment.

What all of these women have in common is that they publicly named their abusers and attempted to seek justice. The end result is not justice, but public vilification and chastisement, intended to shame and permanently silence. Their abusers carry on, out of sight, untouched by their actions.

The parallels between Wood's narrative and reality are obvious to anyone with a feminist consciousness.

Much goes explicitly unsaid in *The Natural Way of Things*. Relying on metaphor and beautifully weaved symbolism, Wood's stylistic writing mirrors the social influences she critiques - the rape of women and subsequent appalling treatment of survivors in our society is background noise, appearing normal, natural, as myths abound and multiply. It appears as if it is the natural way of things.

Woods amplified narrative and subtle writing style makes visible what society seeks to bury, and it is her strong female characters who are handed the shovels.

THE **PERSONAL**
IS STILL **POLITICAL**



Thirty years ago, this angry Shrew was told by her husband that he would leave her if she ever got a tattoo. But she bit the bullet, got the tatt and farewelled her Nigel, who was true to his word. Our Shrew has had the last laugh though, because life has been sweet ever since!