

## FROM THE CURATOR

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I first saw this poster, *Wimmin's Dance* by Jan Fieldsend, in the back rooms of Jura Books in 2011.

I was poring through Jura's poster archive looking for works made by women-only screen-printing collectives. I wondered who were the makers behind the names Ashtray, Debenaire, Harridan, Hells End Posters and Jaguar Print? Might they have been women? The text suggested I was close:

*How did we ever live before the Movement? | From here to maternity. | There are no childless people. | Women are you afraid to go out at night? Join us for a night time March. | Today's male chauvinist pig is tomorrow's bacon.*

Among these calls to action were advertisements for dances—women-only cabarets, discos and concerts. I was intrigued by this phenomenon of women-only events. I thought about charting it. How did it start, spread and wane? The posters told me, in the 1980s, women could potentially attend conferences, buy ceramics, enter art awards, share needlework skills, go to exhibition openings, watch cabaret and comedy, dance and disco in the exclusive company of women. How fabulous.

Four years later, I came across Fieldsend's poster again in The University of Sydney Archives. Five women link arms, skipping shamelessly and joyously.



Girls at the Tin Sheds: Duplicated speaks to the nature of posters and the poster archive. Mimicking the duplication of screen-prints, this exhibition functions as a double or a duplicate of the sister exhibition Girls at the Tin Sheds: Sydney Feminist Posters 1975–90, currently on show at the University Art Gallery. Furthermore, this exhibition draws from The University of Sydney Archives' *duplicate* poster collection, that is, their collection of additional posters beyond the official collection of two prints per poster run.

Preparing for this exhibition, selecting works from the archive in a room below ground, in the depths of Fisher Library, I'm reminded of the curious nature of researching posters. Hundreds of posters pile on large tables or lie in archival boxes. It is a constant negotiation between the singular and the multiple, the attention-seeking colours and defiant text of the individual poster versus the heft and weight of the unwieldy pile. The revelation of seeing a print for the first time versus the familiarity of a print seen once, twice, feasibly fifty times before.

For me, familiar favourites include Marie McMahon's early posters from the 1970s, with her delicate illustration style, Angela Gee's brightly happy dog advertising a dance at the Tin Sheds and Toni Robertson's garish Royal Nuclear Show series. Conversely, Jean Clarkson's lurid, yellow-eyed, Warhead, the fabulous pink and green of Pam Debenham's Dick Hebdige poster and Avril Quail's bold Indigenous flag, inset with an Indigenous man and the haunting words 'Trespassers Keep Out', are all new discoveries.

A number of artists have generously loaned and donated additional works to the exhibition in order to address the limitations of the archive. These include early works by Jan Mackay, Sheona White's striking band poster for Electric Fanz, and the detailed, collaged and collaborative Women's Domestic Needlework series.

Although the events advertised—festivals, film screenings, art prizes—are long past, the posters function as time capsules of vitality, conviction and earnestness. To consume them is motivating and uplifting. They beckon us to dance, panic, kiss and sabotage . . . again.

\* Pam Debenham sometimes printed under the name Debenaire and Jan Fieldsend used the moniker Jaguar Prints. Harridan Screenprinters was run by Anne Sheridan and Larri.

For more on female poster makers and printmaking at the Tin Sheds, see *Girls at the Tin Sheds: Sydney Feminist Posters 1975–90*, University Art Gallery, The University of Sydney, Sydney, 2014.

My very warm thanks to the University Art Gallery, Ann Stephen, Katherine Yuill and Katrina Liberiou; Verge Gallery, Siân McIntyre; colleagues Emmi Nevalainen and Emma Crott; artists Jan Fieldsend, Jan Mackay, Marie McMahon and Sheona White for loaning works to the exhibition; and all of the artists who kindly shared their knowledge and well wishes.



## LIST OF WORKS

### External walls, left to right:

Pam Debenham  
*Under a Hot Tin Roof*  
1995

Jan Fieldsend  
*Music Theatre*  
1987

Leonie Lane  
*'We are the guinea pigs' Three  
Mile Island and the catastrophe of  
nuclear power... 'Dust to dust'*  
*Filmamakers Cinema*  
1981

Sheona White  
*Electric Fanz*  
1980  
Collection of Sheona White

Michael Callaghan and Marie  
McMahon  
*Tin Sheds benefit – Disaster  
Dance*  
1977

Sheona White  
*South Sydney Festival – Redfern  
Ranch*  
c. 1980

Collection of Sheona White

Pam Debenham  
*Rozelle C.Y.S.S.*  
1981

Judith Lodwick  
*Blessed Art Thou Among Women*  
1991

Jan Fieldsend and Marie  
McMahon  
*Sydney Anarcho Feminists*  
c. 1979  
Collection of Marie McMahon

## Partition walls:

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Sheona White <i>Connexion '81</i> 1981 Collection of Sheona White	Leonie Lane <i>South Sydney Visual History Project</i> 1983	Pam Debenham <i>Power Foundation – Griselda Pollock – Modernity and the Space of Femininity</i> 1986
Jan Fieldsend <i>Wimmin's Dance</i> 1981	Jan Fieldsend <i>I do not celebrate 200 years of war</i> 1987	Pam Debehnam <i>Migrant Visual Culture</i> 1986
Angela Gee <i>Dance: Tin Sheds. Stray Dags. Electric Fans</i> 1980	Lenore Filson <i>The University of Sydney. This is the site for Art Workshop – Tin Sheds Calendar 1985</i> 1984	Merd International <i>Bring Philip with The Champions and Typical Girls Disco</i> 1984
Marie McMahon <i>Sydney University Art Workshop 1969–1979 – Tin Anniversary</i> 1979	Jan Fieldsend <i>Noel Chettle Prize 1986</i> 1986	Leonie Lane <i>Art Worker's Union Benefit Dance!!</i> 1980
Avril Quail <i>Trespassers keep out!</i> 1982	Jean Clarkson <i>Warhead</i> 1984	Unknown <i>Marathon Ball</i> 1990

## Internal walls, clockwise from entry:

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Sheona White <i>Untitled</i> c. 1980	Pam Debehnam <i>Migrant Visual Culture</i> 1986	Jan Fieldsend <i>Every Mother is a working Mother</i> 1981
Pam Debenham <i>1986 Tin Sheds Calendar</i> 1985	Pam Debenham <i>History</i> 1987	Jean Clarkson <i>Q.E.D. new single "This one"</i> 1984
Louise Dauth <i>1981 Calendar</i> 1981	Therese Kenyon <i>We need a child caring society</i> 1988	Pam Debenham <i>Frame-Up – Who Bombed the Hilton?</i> 1984
Pam Debenham <i>The University of Sydney – Exhibition – Pictures from the Collections</i> 1988	Jan Fieldsend <i>One People, One Soul</i> 1988	Pam Debenham <i>Kiss Me Deadly – Feminism and Cinema Now</i> 1991
Pam Debenham <i>Festival of the Winds – Bondi Pavilion 1982</i> 1982	Jan Fieldsend <i>We are different and alike</i> 1988	Pam Debenham <i>Hiroshima. Never Again</i> 1983
Pam Debenham <i>Pop in Focus</i> 1985	Leonie Lane <i>Festival del sol: Latin American Dance &amp; Music of the Sun</i> 1981	Leonie Lane <i>From the people who brought you "Saigon": Sinai</i> 1982
Pam Debenham <i>Asia-Pacific Film Festival</i> 1986	Unknown <i>Festival of the Winds</i> 1983	Pam Debenham <i>Hiroshima</i> 1985

Pam Debenham <i>Hiroshima</i> 1985	Leonie Lane <i>Sydney University Settlement – Annual General Meeting</i> 1981	Ruby Davies <i>Noel Chettle Art Prize 1987</i> 1987
Toni Robertson <i>Royal Nuclear Show 1–6</i> 1981	Jan Mackay <i>Whodunnit</i> 1977 Collection of Jan Mackay	Marie McMahon <i>Needlework demonstrations... Needlework is herstory</i> 1976 Collection of Jan Fieldsend
Pam Debenham <i>1987 Power Foundation Lecture: Dick Hebdige... 'Digging for 'britain': post modernism, popular culture and national I.D.</i> 1987	Jean Clarkson <i>Newtown Neighbourhood Centre</i> 1984	Marie McMahon <i>Exploited in the workplace   A woman's work is never done</i> 1977
Jan Fieldsend <i>Summer Fantasy Ball</i> 1990	Jean Clarkson <i>After school what then? You tell us about education</i> 1984	Jan Mackay <i>Art and Craft Exhibition - Sydney University Settlement Auxiliary</i> 1977 Collection of Jan Mackay
Judith Lodwick and Eliza Campbell <i>Foucault a Go Go</i> 1987	Jan Mackay <i>You don't have to be dead to hold a retrospective</i> 1982 Collection of Jan Mackay	