



ENTRANCE GALLERY

Women's Art Register: Setting up shop in the GPG

Coordinated by Caroline Phillips

Following a series of women-only exhibitions and meetings at the Ewing (now George Paton) Gallery in 1974 and 1975, Director Kiffy Rubbo and Co-Director Meredith Rogers met with artists Lesley Dumbrell and Erica McGilchrist, to discuss setting up an archive of women's art. Amidst the energy and activism of that International Women's Year, the group put a call-out to contemporary women artists to each submit two slides of their work. They quickly received 160 slides - shown at a screening in September that year - and in short order the Women's Art Register was born.

Their aim was to address a stunning lack of women artists represented in educational materials and across the canon of art history. It also quickly became an active (and activist) community that provides opportunities and a supportive peer network for otherwise marginalised artists. The initial collection was housed and administered at the George Paton Gallery until 1979, when it was relocated to the Carringbush (now Richmond) Library - a valuable relationship brokered by Anna Sande - where it still lives today. The Women's Art Register is now the longest running, artist-run archive of women's art practice in the world and is designated a *Collection of National Significance*.

Since its inception the Women's Art Register has compiled educational kits for use in schools and libraries throughout Australia. Over the decades, this grassroots, living community of contemporary artists has undertaken research, published a bi-annual magazine (The Women's Art Register Bulletin), and produced a number of major exhibitions and projects to educate and inform broad audiences, support its community of members, and advocate for women's art and artists. We now reinhabit this site to collaborate with George Paton Gallery once more for this historic *Feminisms* exhibition. We have temporarily set up shop, continuing our work of archiving works from the past and the present, sharing the narratives and images of thousands of women artists, and amplifying their voices.

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