



# The *F* Word

## CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST ART IN AUSTRALIA

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### INVITATION

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#### OPENING

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Friday 18 July 6.00pm

#### EXHIBITION

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19 July to 7 September 2014

#### ARTIST TALK

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Friday 18 July 5.00pm

**THE F WORD is Feminism! It is also a thought-provoking and provocative exhibition of feminist art practice today.**

The underlying principle of the exhibition is the question of how has feminism evolved since the 1970s, and how is it relevant to artists working today?

Artists: Catherine Bell, Penny Byrne, Filomena Coppola, Kate Just, Jill Orr, Clare Rae, Elvis Richardson



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**OPEN**  
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Gallery Patron John Leslie OBE

**CAROLINE PHILLIPS**  
Guest Curator

**The ties between political and cultural practices are strong. Within the feminist movement of the seventies female artists used**

**their work to challenge prevailing norms and voice new ways of looking at the world. *The F Word, Sale*, is the first in a two part project exploring the current resurgence in contemporary feminist art that once again seeks to make voices heard. For the seven artists in this exhibition those voices come from the past and the present, joining together to re-imagine a feminist future.**

*The F Word* specifically engages across generations and with regional dialogues to explore the ways that contemporary artists refurbish our social and political histories and engage with current issues. This group of impassioned and engaged artists uncover little-known stories and engage with others in the world to strengthen communities and activate for change.

In the series *Magdalen revisited* Clare Rae walks in the now deserted spaces of the Magdalen Asylum for women in Abbotsford, Melbourne. This place of hardship and sadness is now bereft of useful purpose. The ghosts of the past merge with the artist's body in a light-filled and poetic encounter that provides a spirited glimpse into alternate occupations of these spaces. Similarly, Jill Orr's photographic work from the *The promised land* series engages the senses and the heart with its evocative stories. Grand narratives of loss and hope are eloquently hushed into quiet yet powerful reflections of real and imagined (and more local) landscapes and journeys.

The communities who are with us now are brought to the fore in the works of Catherine Bell and Filomena Coppola. Bell spent time with the residents of Caritas Christi Day Hospice in Kew to work together with them on manifesting their stories of life and loss and honouring their community. The handmade *Flower Tower* and *Heavy Petal Series* acknowledge the historic feminine practice of paper flower making, yet

engage with a deeper social purpose. Coppola's use of video and pastel drawing shows the unique way that the artist connects to her family's Italian community in Mildura. By engaging with the language and stories from her personal history in *Mother Tongue* a new layer of interpretation is explored aesthetically in the accompanying drawings.

Kate Just's knitted banners connect historic collective actions and craft practices to contemporary realities. The work of many hands combined, *SAFE* is writ large, materially and conceptually addressing issues of visibility and safety in the streets for women. The materiality of Elvis Richardson's paper collages speak volumes of the contemporary status of female artists in the bastions of the art market, in this case *Art and Australia* magazine. Penny Byrne shows solidarity with internationally renowned activists in her work *Free Pussy Riot!* again speaking directly to the history and continued importance of the need to speak out and be counted, a hallmark of feminism itself.

*The F Word* speaks to the history and current recuperation of feminist voices in contemporary art. What women artists had to say then, and now, is vital in the creation of a compassionate and ethical society. As the famed visual artist Lyndal Jones said recently "it's not enough to leave it there...!" Let's pick up the story once again... ■



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**IMAGES**

1. Penny Byrne  
*Free Pussy Riot!*, 2013  
Wooden Matryoshka dolls, PVA, and acrylic  
16 x 38 x 7cm  
Courtesy the artist and Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne

2. Kate Just  
*SAFE Walk*, 2014  
Digital Type C print  
122 x 172cm  
Courtesy the artist and Diane Singer, Melbourne

3. Catherine Bell  
*Flower Tower*, 2012-13  
Yearlong community art project with cancer patients at Caritas Christi Day Hospice, Kew  
Handmade paper flowers, florist wire, tape, paint, and polystyrene column  
430 x 60 x 60cm  
Courtesy the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

4. Clare Rae  
*Untitled* from the series *Magdalen Revisited*, 2014  
Lightbox  
40 x 57cm  
Courtesy the artist

5. Elvis Richardson  
*All women artists recorded in various issues of Art & Australia 1990-1993*, 2014  
Collage, acrylic and PVA on box board  
113 x 75cm  
Courtesy the artist, Hugo Mitchell Gallery, Adelaide, and Gallerie PomPom, Sydney

6. Jill Orr  
*The Promised Land, Moving*, 2012  
Pigment inkjet print on Museo silver rag  
113 x 157cm  
Photographer: Christina Simons for Jill Orr  
Courtesy the artist and Jenny Port Gallery, Melbourne

**ENDNOTE**

1. Lyndal Jones, speaking at Federation Hall, Melbourne. The Lip Anthology Forum, presented by VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, May 14, 2014.

**The F Word**

19 July to 7 September 2014

www.thefwordaus.wordpress.com

**Gippsland Art Gallery**

Director: Anton Vardy

Curator: Simon Gregg

**Image front**

Filomena Coppola

*Mother Tongue—Romulus and Remus* 2014

Pastel on paper

80 x 120cm

Courtesy the artist

**Project Supporters**



**Filomena Coppola**

***Mother Tongue Credits***



The Regional Arts Fund is an Australian Government initiative supporting the arts in regional and remote Australia, administered in Victoria by Regional Arts Victoria