Feminist Futures:
Exploring activism and the future of gender equality.

Feminist Archive South: A Level Art & Design Resources

Art & Activism

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Authors:
Bryony Gillard and Elissa O’Connell

Credit: See Red Women’s Workshop Members. Four Corners books.
Hatpins to Hashtags
These A Level Art and Design workshops and resources were created by the Feminist Archive South at the University of Bristol and funded by the Government Equalities Office. The Hatpins to Hashtags project enabled young people to celebrate and participate in the Centenary of Women’s Suffrage by engaging with women’s activism and the democratic process. In 2018 we engaged over 300 young people to use the Feminist Archive to think critically about gender equality over the last century and draw courage from historical campaigns to make their own voices heard.

The workshops were delivered in schools, colleges and youth groups across the South West and students’ artwork was displayed alongside our touring exhibition of posters Politics and Protest. Students had the opportunity to think critically about how contemporary issues of gender, identity and protest affect their generation and make their voices heard through a creative, archival exploration of the Women’s Liberation Movement.

Art and Activism
These resources draw inspiration from a wide range of feminist artists to consider how mediums such as screen-printing, collage and DIY zines allowed artists and activists to break down barriers to communicating their messages. We share how to explore the creative possibilities of collage and design with archival materials as we did in our workshops, questioning what it means to reshape the images of political protest movements to envision feminist futures.
WHO ARE WE?

The Feminist Archive South (FAS) is based at the University of Bristol and documents international feminist movements through over 160 metres of diverse archive materials including oral histories, pamphlets, posters and periodicals that tell the story of how activists struggled for gender equality. We hold one of the most significant collections of women’s activist histories in the UK. Our workshops are developed by a qualified teacher specialised in teaching ages 16-19.

Bryony Gillard is an artist, educator and curator based in Bristol. Situated between writing, performance, video and exhibition making, Bryony’s practice often focusing on investigating marginalized Herstories reflecting upon events, approaches and ideas that refuse to be pinned down or categorized. Bryony has worked as an educator and workshop facilitator with a number of schools and colleges in the Bristol area and beyond.

The Hatpins to Hashtags project was a 3-strand project taking place across the South West, funded by the Government Equalities Office and supported by Special Collections at the University of Bristol. The three project strands were:
- Educate: Feminist Futures educational workshops
- Participate: Digital Democracy skills workshops
- Celebrate: Politics and Protest touring exhibition

Why ‘Hatpins to Hashtags’?

In the early 20th century the hatpin, a decorative pin for holding a hat to the head, was considered an international threat following its use by Suffragettes to defend themselves from assault. In the early 21st century social media hashtags such as #MeToo, #EverydaySexism and #SayHerName have provided tools for women to speak out against gender-based violence.

The Hatpins to Hashtags project is about young people reclaiming the tools for democracy and making their voices heard.

GET IN TOUCH

Our workshops and resources aimed towards students aged 16+ include:

- A Level History: the Personal is Political
- A Level Sociology: Gender roles, Stereotypes and Socialisation
- A Level Art: Art and Activism
- A Level English Lit/Lang: Rewriting Herstory
- LGBTQ Feminist Movements suitable for LGBTQ youth groups and PSHEE

Our workshops are usually 2-3 hours long but can be tailored to lesson time.

To find out more or to book one of our workshops email: Ellie at education.feministarchive@gmail.com
**Objectives**

- To think critically about how contemporary issues of gender, identity and protest affect you and your generation
- To learn about women’s artist collectives and the role of screen-printing in the Women’s Liberation Movement, focusing on the See Red Women’s Workshop
- To explore the creative possibilities of collage and design with archival materials
- To question what it means to reshape/repurpose the images and messages of historical political and protest movements

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| 15 mins | **Arrivals** | • Introductions - name stickers and optional pronouns. Explain project and workshop aims  
• Accountability policy and group agreement for behaviour |
| 15 mins | **Exhibition** | Looking at the exhibition together. Questioning:  
• What are your first impressions?  
• What issues are being addressed in the posters?  
• Have you ever been to an exhibition like this before?  
• Why are feminist exhibitions like this important?  
• Can you identify similarities between the posters in terms of aesthetic/colours/medium/themes/images?  
• Discussion and thoughts |
| 10 mins | **Herstory of the See Red Women’s Workshop** |  
**screen printing collective in the WLM**  
How mediums such as screen-printing and zines allowed artists and activists to break down barriers to sharing their work and spreading their political messages |
| 10 mins | **Feminists artists using collage and screenprinting presentation** |  
**Collage making**  
• Setting up the activity  
• Encouraging students to think critically about how contemporary issues of gender, identity and protest affect them and/or their generation  
• What does it mean to reshape/repurpose/reposition the images and messages of historical political and protest movements?  
• How could you build on the artwork you have been doing on the course and combine this with your collage? |

To adapt for classroom use you could look at some of the archives in the bibliography or feminist poster projects online, e.g. https://www.dezeen.com/2018/11/07/protest-posters-vivienne-westwood-design-nan-goldin-graphics/

Materials: A3 card, scissors, glue, pens, papers, archive materials, feminist screenprinted posters- see PPT and bibliography for ideas.
### Feminist Archive South: A Level Art & Design Resources

**Art and Activism: Workshop Plan (continued)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td><strong>Exercise 1: Cut up text slogan</strong></td>
<td>Newspapers, scissors, big pieces of paper, glue or sellotape.</td>
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<td>In pairs or groups of 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Look through a copy of today's newspaper and look at the headlines.</td>
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<td>• Start to cut out words or sentences that you think are interesting.</td>
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<td>• Using these words, create a statement (or series of statements) about equality – a positive change you would like to see happen in the world.</td>
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<td>We will stick all these statements on one big sheet of paper to create a cloud of statements of equality.</td>
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<td><strong>Reflection 5 mins:</strong> Which statements are powerful? Why do they work?</td>
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<td>5 mins</td>
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<td>45 mins</td>
<td><strong>Exercise 2: Collage</strong></td>
<td>Newspapers, magazines, colour paper, glue, glitter, pens, paints, thick paper to use as background.</td>
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<td>Taking one of these statements as a starting point (it doesn’t have to be yours, it could be someone else’s), create a collage using feminist posters, magazines and newspapers that reflects this statement, incorporating the text into your image.</td>
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<td>Think about: what it means to reshape/repurpose the images and messages of historical political and protest movements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 mins-1 hour</td>
<td><strong>Exercise 3</strong></td>
<td>Tracing paper, pens, scissors, mags and newspapers, glue, stencil card, Stanley knife, spray paint.</td>
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<td><strong>Option 1:</strong> Use the paint pens to highlight the strongest shapes in your collage, draw over the top or enhance the bold graphics of your collage with strong colour blocking. The aim is to create a bold graphic similar to See Red’s posters.</td>
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<td><strong>Option 2:</strong> If you have the space to use spray paints:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use tracing paper to trace over the top of your collage, isolating the boldest and most powerful shapes or strong text. Trace your graphic onto some stencil card and cut out using a Stanley knife. Use the stencil to spray paint over the top, creating a powerful graffiti-like poster design.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td><strong>Feminist Futures Plenary</strong></td>
<td>Postcards</td>
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<td>If you were to make one demand for gender equality, what would it be? Think of a hashtag to share your demand - either write on your postcard or your poster.</td>
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<td>Share demands and discussion.</td>
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<td>Sharing work (on the exhibition displays)</td>
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<td><strong>Questioning:</strong></td>
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<td>• What was the most interesting thing about working with these archive materials for you?</td>
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<td>• What is the role of artistic expression for political and protest movements?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How might you use art to explore or express how issues of gender inequality affect you?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What does it mean to reshape/repurpose the images and messages of historical political and protest movements?</td>
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Hatpins to Hashtags Case Study: Feminist Futures ‘Art and Activism’ workshop
Sir John Colfox Sixth Form at the Literary and Scientific Institute, Bridport

This case study will explore the impact of one of the Hatpins to Hashtags project’s Feminist Futures workshops which took place within the Politics and Protest exhibition at the Bridport Literary and Scientific Institute. The Art and Activism workshop was co-developed and facilitated by artist and curator Bryony Gillard and teacher Ellie O’Connell to explore what we can learn from artist collectives from the Women’s Liberation Movement to envision democratic and feminist futures.

Impact: Mobilising Youth Activism

10 16-18 year old students attended the Art and Activism workshop through FAS’ partnership with Sir John Colfox school in Bridport. Similar to the other workshops in the series, we began by establishing different understandings of ‘activism’ within the group. Whilst some were confident in describing it as ‘Making your voice heard and on behalf of those who feel they don’t have a voice’, for others, group discussion helped formulate what ‘activism’ meant to them personally, thereby emphasising the validity of a wide range of forms of activism. As the discussion evolved, students took an active role in exploring the relevance of activism against gender inequality to people of all genders and the need for solidarity and allyship towards the causes of oppressed groups in society.

Through a series of progressing creative exercises, students worked in groups to identify the contemporary issues of inequality that affect them and the positive change they want to make for the future. Drawing on a rich handling collection of screenprinted campaign posters from FAS, students were invited to create a poster expressing their idea by reshaping the archive materials through collage. Three activist causes and posters emerged: inclusivity for LGBT+ and disability rights, intersectional feminism and anti-plastics environmental activism (see photos below). Whilst the workshop was designed to encourage students to think critically about gender inequality and feminist activism, one group was highly motivated by environmental activism and we supported them to consider how environmental and feminist activism were interlinked, resulting in conversations about how climate change disproportionately affects women and the feminisation of poverty.

One student who openly shared her disability was particularly impassioned about inclusivity for LGBT+ and disabled minorities; inspired by the archive posters on intersectional lesbian discos and Reclaim the Night she envisioned ‘the bold and beautiful disco for everyone to hide no more!’ where you can ‘be yourself in free-minded ways’. When sharing her group’s work, she commented that the collage method had enabled her to realise the symbolism of remaking the images of one activist movement into another and to trace interconnectedness between the Women’s Liberation Movement, the LGBT+ and the disability rights movements. According to her, the workshop empowered her to create ‘artwork that presented meaningful and powerful messages’ and she plans to continue this work through her theatre group.

Cascading Activism

The workshop culminated in students reflecting on their demands for gender equality now and their ideas for starting hashtag campaigns. These included frustrations over the gender pay gap (#FillTheGap), anti-racism and intersectionality (#BlackWomensLiberation) and consent/victim-blaming (#myclothesarenotmyconsent). Within these conversations, participants exhibited an increased confidence and expressed a strong desire to get involved in different activist causes, in particular LGBT+, feminist and environmental activism. Whilst one student was already leading a recycling campaign by herself at school, through the workshop she learnt lessons from feminist activist collectives such as See Red and the power of digital feminist hashtags. At the end of the workshop students mounted their posters in the Politics and Protest exhibition, showcasing their work to the local community at the exhibition launch that evening, later continuing onto the Plymouth exhibition. As result, hundreds of local people were connected to the demands of youth activism and local feminist group Bridfem suggested organising an inter-generational feminist exchange with Sir John Colfox school.
Changing attitudes and enriching learning

Through the resources co-created by artist and curator Bryony Gillard and teacher Ellie O’Connell, FAS has supported Sir John Colfox school to increase the representation of women artists and activists in the A Level curriculum and benefit educationally from accessing women’s activist herstories from Suffrage to the Women’s Liberation Movement. Head of Art Louise Burgess said, ‘We would love to get involved again in the future […] please contact us if you have any more exciting opportunities’ and Head of Sixth Form Adam Teasdale said ‘The students loved the workshops. Very impressed with the outcomes, too. Many thanks for providing the opportunity.’

The workshop created a vital space in which young people ‘enjoyed the fact that we could express our ideas of what we believe in and what I want to get across’ through ‘creating artwork that presented meaningful and powerful messages… I just wish it was longer’. Another remarked it was ‘different to anything I’ve ever done’ and realised ‘how strong messages can be powerful forms of art’. Most importantly, students learnt the power of making their voices heard in a variety of democratic ways including voting, campaigning, protesting, community activism, digital activism and, not least, artistic expression.

Clockwise from left: Feminist Futures posters in the Politics and Protest exhibition, working collectively and LGBT+ disability rights poster
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Art and Activism: Photo Record

Photos of Feminist Futures workshops and student artwork in the Feminist Archive South’s touring exhibition Politics and Protest.
Art and Activism: Photo Record (continued)
Feminist Archive South: A Level Art & Design Resources
Art and Activism: Bibliography

Recommended resources:


Online archives:

Sisterhood and after: The Sisterhood and After website created an original and extensive oral history archive of the lives of feminist change-makers of the 1970s and ‘80s. The archive provides the resources for new studies of this important social movement and its legacy. They have an extensive selection of teaching resources. https://www.bl.uk/sisterhood

Spare Rib: Explore digitised images from this ground-breaking feminist 20th-century magazine https://www.bl.uk/spare-rib

Feminist Archive South online catalogue, Special Collections, University of Bristol
The Feminist Archive South is housed and managed by Special Collections, Arts and Social Sciences Library, University of Bristol. Anyone can make an appointment in advance and order up material to the reading room. Search the catalogue here: http://oac.lib.bris.ac.uk/DServe/dserve.exe
Get in touch with Special Collections: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/library/special-collections/contact/

Grassroots Feminism: Transnational Archives, resources and communities
https://www.grassrootsfeminism.net/cms/sortable_node_list_digital_grass/134

Dreadnought South West: Exploring 100 Years of women’s activism in the South West

Historical Association: Suffrage Resources
https://www.history.org.uk/ha-news/resource/9409/womens-suffrage-history-and-citizenship-resource

The National Archives: Suffragettes on file:
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/suffragettes-on-file/
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Art and Activism: Bibliography (continued)

Feminist Activist resources:

ICA See Red Women’s Workshop Educator’s Pack
https://seeredwomensworkshop.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/ica-educator_s-resource-pack-see-red.pdf

Grrrl Zine Fair: Grrrl Zine Fair is run by artist Lu Williams and celebrates contemporary DIY feminism though zines, live events, practical workshops, and a pop-up library. https://www.grrrlzinefair.com


Feminist Frequency Media Resources: https://feministfrequency.com/resources/

The Everyday Sexism Project: http://everydaysexism.com

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Authors:
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