



**Introduction by Jo Holder, ffA convenor
AGNSW, 15 June, 2015**

FFA Intro - AGNSW 15 June 2015

For over 4 decades Feminists in the Art World have been trying to right the balance.

In LIP magazine, Barbara Hall wrote that: In 1970, 99% of Australia Council funds were allocated to male artists although women made up 50% of applicants.

Enormous collective endeavours have changed this, but the pendulum is stubborn and keeps swinging back — to about 33% in exhibitions and about 1 in 5 women to men in public collections.

Public opinion on equity has changed — Beyonce is a feminist and we will soon have Marriage Equality.

CAF is a grassroots initiative to commemorate 40th Anniversary of IWY.

We realised that the pre-digital simply did not exist. Much material was already lost. Dark times in government meant that old feminist women's collectives — with archives and posters — were being closed or corporatized.

On our "endangered list" are:

The Women's Art Movement,

1982 Women and Arts Festival

Premier Wran opened The Women and Arts Festival at AGNSW, yet there is little in the archives. The Women and Arts Mural on the Domain Carpark symbolises a history of institutional neglect.

Were it not for Carol Ruff's artist's website, Virginia Spate's photos of Norah Bindal painting her section of the mural, this major undertaking is now all but obliterated by neglect by the city council — who own the Domain Car Park.

Eric Riddler will talk about digitally archiving the 1995 National Women's Art Exhibition — the first part of the CAF / DAAO digital archive.

Drawn as a graph — those 200 plus collection surveys and solo shows, shows how much else is missing!

In 1995 — for the 20th anniversary — we found that women in public art exhibitions were 33.3% and women were seen as "too present if they are present at all".

Mostly that figure came from survey shows not from solo exhibitions — which of course generate advertising, marketing, reviews — all the key elements of an artists's reputation.

Joan Kerr's legacy lived on in the heart of the DAAO.

One difficulty in archiving was that Feminism had always been a political and theoretical movement — a strong strand of instrumental feminism was engaged with housing / childcare and land rights along side equal rights and equal representation.

CAF is both a focused stocktake and a playful scoping of selected archives by selected artists — in Sydney, W/gong, Dubbo, Bathurst, Lismore, Moree and we hope Trades Hall.

We opened with a major conference here in the Art Gallery.

FFA is a hypothetical question that addresses the question — what happens next — you think about acquisitions, collections. Exhibitions.

Talking about archives — what kind of archive — digital / real; local or state based/ stand alone feminist archives eg Sackler Collection in Brooklyn Museum.

We will collect this material — hopefully in a major publication — to be launched in May 2016.