FRAMEWORK

#3 | the arts week issue

ARTIST PROFILE

Annie Kennedy

Q&A SARAH WEINER

POST SECRET

by *Louise Mayhew*

BANGKOK ART & CULTURE CENTRE

by

Rebecca Gallo

REVIEW

A HEAP OF BROKEN IMAGES

BY FRANCES ROBINSON

REVIEW

SPIN THE TABLE

BY MIRIAM GRUNDY

Arc UNSW Student Life @COFA

FRAMEWORK

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

EDITOR
Kate Britton

CONTRIBUTORS
Lydia Bradshaw
Erin Wilson
Louise Mayhew
Rebecca Gallo
Frances Robinson
Miriam Grundy

DESIGN
Chris Vernon & Kate Britton

THANKS
Arc@COFA

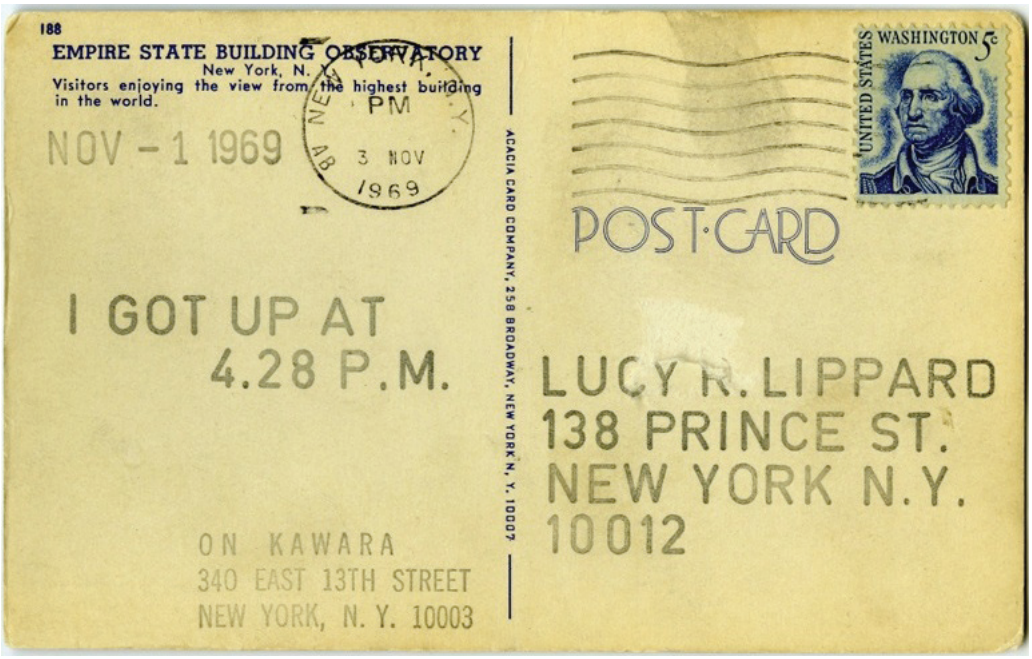
ENQUIRIES
cofa@arc.unsw.edu.au
arc.unsw.edu.au/cofaframework

Front cover image

BANGKOK ART & CULTURAL CENTRE. IMAGE COURTESY OF REBECCA GALLO

back cover image

GABRIELLA HIRST, ALTER ALTAR MNEMOSYNE #3, 2013. INSTALLATION VIEW OF 'A HEAP OF BROKEN IMAGES' (2013). COURTESY THE ARTIST. PHOTOGRAPH TAI SPRUYT



188
EMPIRE STATE BUILDING OBSERVATORY
New York, N.
Visitors enjoying the view from the highest building in the world.

NOV - 1 1969

NEW YORK N.Y. AB PM 3 NOV 1969

ACACIA CARD COMPANY, 258 BROADWAY, NEW YORK N. Y. 10007

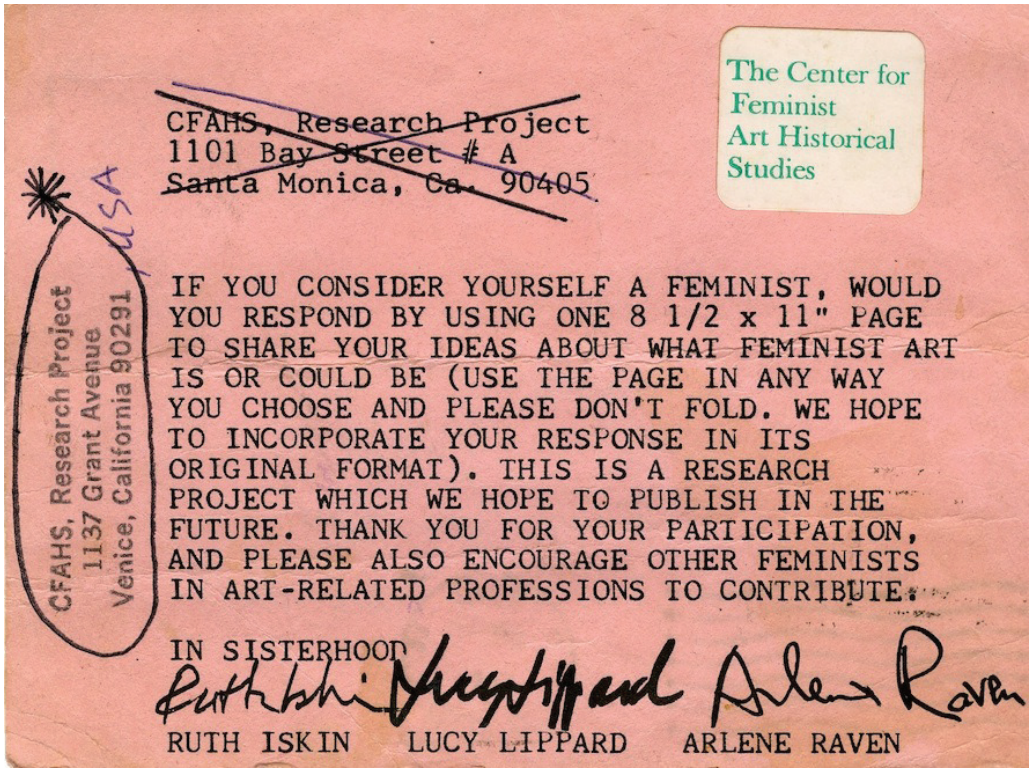
UNITED STATES WASHINGTON 5c

POST·CARD

I GOT UP AT
4.28 P.M.

ON KAWARA
340 EAST 13TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10003

LUCY R. LIPPARD
138 PRINCE ST.
NEW YORK N.Y.
10012



~~CFAHS, Research Project~~
~~1101 Bay Street # A~~
~~Santa Monica, Ca. 90405~~

The Center for Feminist Art Historical Studies

CFAHS, Research Project
1137 Grant Avenue
Venice, California 90291 USA

IF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A FEMINIST, WOULD YOU RESPOND BY USING ONE 8 1/2 x 11" PAGE TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT FEMINIST ART IS OR COULD BE (USE THE PAGE IN ANY WAY YOU CHOOSE AND PLEASE DON'T FOLD. WE HOPE TO INCORPORATE YOUR RESPONSE IN ITS ORIGINAL FORMAT). THIS IS A RESEARCH PROJECT WHICH WE HOPE TO PUBLISH IN THE FUTURE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND PLEASE ALSO ENCOURAGE OTHER FEMINISTS IN ART-RELATED PROFESSIONS TO CONTRIBUTE.

IN SISTERHOOD
Ruth Iskin Lucy Lippard Arlene Raven
RUTH ISKIN LUCY LIPPARD ARLENE RAVEN

POST SECRET

by *Louise Mayhew*

'POSTSECRET IS AN ONGOING COMMUNITY ART PROJECT WHERE PEOPLE MAIL IN THEIR SECRETS ANONYMOUSLY ON ONE SIDE OF A HOMEMADE POSTCARD'.

Online phenomenon, community project, artwork?

The humble postcard appears and reappears throughout art history. Just a glance at my desk provides an introduction to their proliferation. To my right is a postcard reproduction of Magritte's La Page Blanche (1967), a gallery purchase and souvenir of a trip to Brussels. Tacked to my left is an original postcard artwork from the late 1980s, a brilliant-in-pink feminist affirmation, it reads: 'Terrorist in you' (see fig. 4 over page). Finally, in a neat pile on my desk, a stack of invite/advertisement postcards from Kudos Gallery (2013) wait patiently to be used. Quick, easy and cheap to make, postcards were a feature of many postmodern art practices. With PostSecret guiding us, the following article provides a potted history of the postcard's appearance in conceptual, community and collective art practices.

PostSecret began in the mid-2000s with an instruction typed on a blank postcard in black and white text.

The austerity of these very first postcards brings to mind the conceptual art practices of On Kawara. Among his most memorable projects, I Got Up (1968–79) and I Got Up At (1974–75) recorded the artist's location, the date, and the time he awoke, on the reverse side of a local tourist postcard. The hyper-repetitive works were sent to a range of art world colleagues and friends, providing simultaneously an intimate and highly regimented insight into the artist's life. (See fig. 1 opposite).

The instructions invited the finder, for the postcards were left in public places to be found, to 'contribute a secret to a group art project'.

Before the advent of the internet, community artist Vivienne Binns also collected postcards for the group art project, Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories postcard rack (1980). Working in Blacktown as an artist-in-community, Binns asked participants to research and memorialise the stories and herstories of their mothers and grandmothers. In common with PostSecret, Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories encouraged the act of personal reflection and communal sharing. By teaching participants vitreous enamel, a process normally used in craft and jewellery, photographs of maternal family members were turned into postcards that shimmered and glowed.

The instructional format of PostSecret also recalls a very different request-via-postcard. As founders of The Center for Feminist Art Historical Studies (Ruth Iskin and Arlene Raven) and a pivotal figure in America's nascent feminist art scene (Lucy Lippard), the trio were intent on researching, developing and defining "feminist art". Throwing the question out to friends and colleagues, the postcards were sent to women around

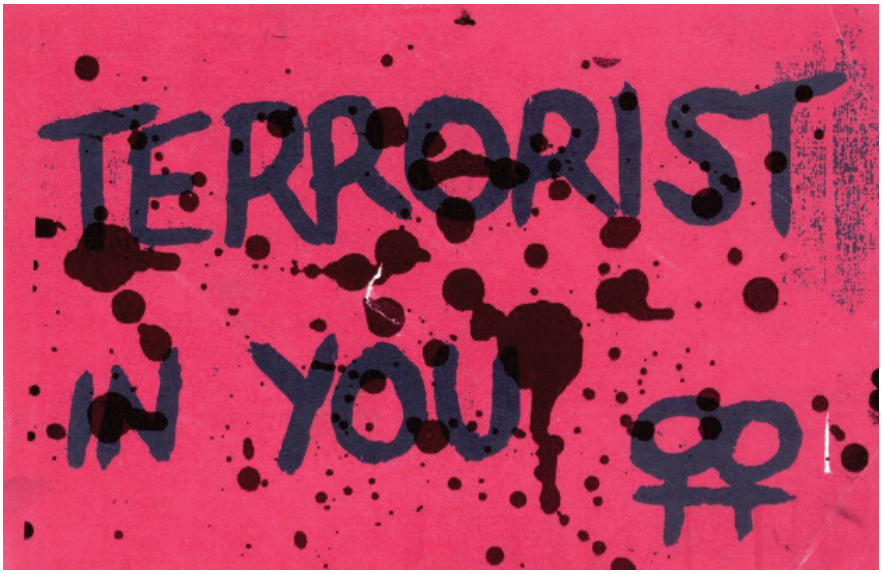
the world, including Australia's founding member of the Women's Art Movement, Barbara Hall. The community, collectivism and conversation inherent in this project were central to feminist art theory and practice ... and the pink of the postcard provides us with a clue concerning their early thoughts on a feminist aesthetic. (See fig. 2 on previous pages).

Through the anonymity of the mail system, contributors were encouraged and enabled to share fears, indulge fantasies and confess sins.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Australia witnessed a surge of screenprinting collectives, who refused to sign works, opting instead for group logos. Posters were illegally plastered through inner city streets and university campuses under the cover of darkness, sold cheaply through alternative bookstores, and exchanged among friends and colleagues for decorating share-house walls. Posters and postcards were cheap, multiple and disposable, a snub to the art market's commodity values of originality and authority. Members were art school students and graduates as well as a swathe of politically- and socially-minded associates, working in the full range of technically skilled to hastily produced images. Posters and postcards advertised rallies, parties and protests, offering didactic and tongue-in-cheek public service announcements on a range of social, sexual, environmental and political issues. Like PostSecrets, by using a simple text + picture format, printers produced an array of emotionally intense and thought-provoking works.

Each Sunday, new secrets are uploaded to the PostSecret website, generating a weekly habit of 'logging-in' shared by hundreds and a virtual online community where secrets are decoded and discussed.

This community exchange aspect of PostSecret brings to mind a final example of postcard art: mail exchange projects. As a means of breaking down the isolation of solo practice; spreading developing ideas, theories and techniques; and as an aid to collaborative authorship, the first widely-known mail exchange program was initiated in Canada by the intertwined collectives New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver (NYCSDSV) and Image Bank. By using the postal system, artists contributed



to an international exchange of cumulatively created artworks that bypassed the gallery system. (Forgive me a little detour: members of the NYCSDSV also donned shark fin swimming caps to partake in synchronised swimming at public pools! Image Bank had a member called Mr Peanut, who dressed up as an oversized peanut and ran for local election. I highly recommend looking them up.) Such alternative art practices remind us that artists have long eluded the gallery system in favour of self-created communities.

Generating five publications, ongoing international tours and a website visitor count of over 600 million, PostSecret is possibly the world's most successful and beloved community art project. Secrets of lies, fears and guilty consciences are gently placed beside requests, revelations and celebrations. Shifting out of the role of artist and beyond the role of curator, PostSecret's founder Frank Warren has become a caretaker.

Secrets from fellow UNSW students will be on display at the PostSecret Exhibition in the Whitehouse during Artsweek (Week 5).

01 On Kawara 'I Got Up, November 1, 1969', 1969; 02 'If you consider yourself a feminist postcard', c. 1973 Posted to Barbara Hall, in possession of Ann Stephen; 03 Glen Lewis 'New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver Reunion', 1975; 04 Jillposters 'Terrorist in you', c. 1985–88.