

WOMEN at the CENTER

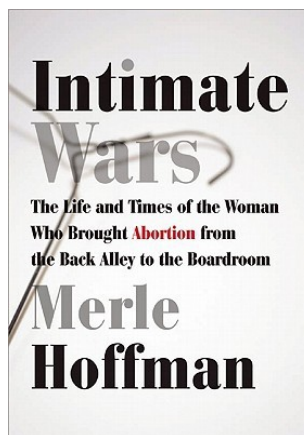
Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture
David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

Issue 20, Fall 2011

Hoffman Gift Endows Center Directorship

Award-winning journalist, activist, and women's healthcare pioneer Merle Hoffman has pledged \$1 million to endow the directorship of the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture.

"The Bingham Center is one of the leading women's history research centers in the U.S., documenting centuries of women's public and private lives, education, literature, art, sexuality, and activism," said Deborah Jakubs, Rita DiGiallonardo University Librarian and vice provost for library affairs. "We are honored by this marvelous gift from a true history-maker, Merle Hoffman. Associating her name with the directorship creates an enduring connection between the Bingham Center's leadership and Hoffman's outstanding



contributions to the health, safety, and empowerment of women everywhere."

After abortion laws were liberalized in New York state in 1970 Hoffman founded Choices Women's Medical Center, one of the first ambulatory surgical centers for women, which has become one of the largest and most comprehensive women's medical facilities in the U.S. She is also the publisher and editor-

in-chief of *On the Issues* Magazine.

In 2000, the Bingham Center acquired Hoffman's papers and the records of Choices Women's Medical Center. Since then, the Center has collected the papers of numerous other providers, clinics, and reproductive rights organizations, documenting the work

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Feminist Art in the Nasher Museum

This fall, artwork from the Sallie Bingham Center by Kate Millett and Irene Peslikis joins pieces by other groundbreaking women artists at the Nasher Museum of Art in an exhibition that runs through December 4. The installation was curated by Sarah Walker Schroth, Nancy Hanks Senior Curator, to complement the visiting exhibition "The Deconstructive Impulse: Women Artists Reconfigure the Signs of Power, 1973-1991" on view through December 31. "The Deconstructive Impulse" highlights women artists' vital feminist contributions to the development of deconstructivism in the 1970s and 1980s.

Millett and Peslikis, early figures in the feminist art movement in the U.S., were two

of the co-founders of one of the oldest and most respected artist-led galleries in New York, the NoHo Gallery. Their own work is a powerful illustration of the intersections of art and feminist political analysis.

In the pen and ink nudes on display, Millett challenges the traditional representation of gender in western art by displacing men from their usual position as artist and arbiter appraising women's bodies. Works by Peslikis include three prints: two untitled woodcuts that appeared in her first one-woman show in 1976, and a screen print, *Women Unite Against Abortion Law*, one of the many youth and women's movement posters she created.

library.duke.edu/rubenstein/ingham

SALLIE BINGHAM CENTER
FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

Fall Instruction

Art of the Book
(Visual Arts)

Feminist Art from the 1970s
(Women's Studies)

Future of the Feminist 1970s
(Women's Studies)

Gender, Sexuality, and the Image
(Women's Studies)

Gender Studies in German Speaking Lands (German)

Sex and the City in 19th Century Madrid (Spanish)

Women & Comics
(Literature)

Outreach & Presentations

Croasdaile Study Club talk on the history of women's clubs like the Halcyon Club

Duke Women's Collective

Profiles in Sexuality Research Lecture

Zine Workshops:

- Gender & Leadership at Duke Women's Center
- Teen Music Festival at the Loudoun Co. Public Library (Leesburg, VA)
- Women & Comics

Hoffman Endows Directorship continued from page 1

of activists, healthcare workers, attorneys, and others involved in reproductive health in the 20th and 21st centuries. Thanks in part to an earlier gift from Merle Hoffman, the Bingham Center has also built a large body of books, periodicals, and historical ephemera from the 18th to 21st centuries documenting the full spectrum of political activity surrounding women's reproductive rights in the United States. Taken together, these materials comprise one of the largest women's reproductive health and rights collections in the country.

"Merle Hoffman has been a strong supporter of the Bingham Center's work for years," said Center director Laura Micham. "This latest gift will enable us to expand our activities and impact, bringing us closer to our goal of building one of the premier

research centers for women's history and culture in the world."

Reflecting on her decision to endow the Bingham Center directorship Hoffman says, "I want to continue to support the visionary efforts by Duke University to honor and document the many courageous women who have fought their own "intimate wars" in the long struggle for reproductive justice. I hope that the Bingham Center will become the bridge between theory and practice that will catalyze future generations to joyfully go further and deeper in the continual battles for women's equality."

Hoffman's autobiography, *Intimate Wars: The Life and Times of the Woman Who Brought Abortion from the Back Alley to the Board Room*, will be published by The Feminist Press in January 2012.

Profiles in Research: Julie R. Enszer

Mary Lily Travel Grant recipient Julie R. Enszer made her second visit to the Bingham Center this spring to conduct research for her dissertation investigating the production of lesbian-feminist print culture in the U.S., 1969-1989, using the papers of Minnie Bruce Pratt, Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, Charis Books, and Catherine Nicholson.

About Pratt's Papers, Enszer writes: "For me, this is one of the most exciting collections that I have worked with. This may be in part because I have been a fan of Pratt's poetry and writing since the late 1980s, but it is also certainly due to the fact that this is an extensive and thorough collection."

She continues, "one aspect of my dissertation focuses on literary appraisals of lesbian writing and a significant portion of the chapter discusses the Lamont Prize in 1989 given to Pratt for *Crime Against Nature*. There are extensive documents on this event in the archive, but my favorite item is the outfit that Pratt wore to the award ceremony at the Guggenheim: It is both festive and feminine while distinctly conveying 'lesbian.'"

Pratt herself emphasized the importance of being identifiably lesbian in this traditional setting by titling her remarks, "On Accepting the Lamont Award for Poetry, As a Lesbian, at the Guggenheim." Even though the award-winning poems address her experience losing her children after coming out as lesbian, Pratt's remarks were received with evident discomfort.

Enszer is a poet, writer, and lesbian activist, and a Ph.D. candidate in women's studies at the University of Maryland. She is also co-editor of *Sinister Wisdom*, a multicultural lesbian literary and art journal co-founded in 1976 by Catherine Nicholson.



Minnie Bruce Pratt at the Lamont Poetry Awards

Snapshots From Our Visit with Dorothy Allison and Minnie Bruce Pratt

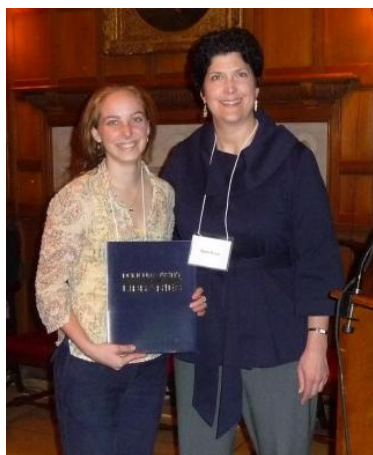


Dorothy Allison (left) and Duke sophomore, Jenny Sherman, after Sherman's performance to a packed house in the Mary Duke Biddle Rare Book Room of selections from Allison's autobiographical work, *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*.



Lesbian feminist authors Minnie Bruce Pratt and Dorothy Allison share a laugh over Pratt's high school yearbook prior to speaking at that night's event: *Out in the South: Writers in Conversation*. Both authors' papers are available for research in the Sallie Bingham Center.

"The ALFA Female" Wins Middlesworth Award



Risa Isard (left) with Naomi Nelson, director of the Rubenstein Library

Congratulations to Risa Isard, winner of the Undergraduate (non-first year) category of this year's Middlesworth award. Her paper "The ALFA Female: Sexuality & Separatism, Coalition Building & Counterculture in the Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance," made excellent use of the Bingham Center's ALFA collections. In addition to her extensive archival and secondary research, Isard conducted oral histories with former members of ALFA.

The Middlesworth Awards were established to encourage and recognize excellence of research, analysis, and writing by Duke University students who use primary sources held by the Rubenstein Library, and carry a cash prize of \$1000.

Recent Acquisitions

Jeanne Audrey Powers Papers

Powers is a United Methodist lesbian, feminist clergywoman who was the first secretary of the UMC's Commission on the Status and Role of Women and served as Assoc. Gen. Secretary of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

Clarissa Sligh Papers

After a career in math/science and business, Sligh moved into the arts, where she uses photography, print-making, artists' books and installation art to explore personal and political themes of race, gender, transformation, and change.

Third Wave Foundation Records

Founded in 1992, Third Wave is a feminist, foundation that works nationally to support young women and transgender youth. Through grant-making and leadership development, they support groups and individuals working towards gender, racial, economic, and social justice.

Significant Additions to the Papers of:

- Jane Clarke-Owen
- Common Woman Chorus
- Eleanor Elliott
- Ipas
- Ladyslipper Music

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Sallie Bingham Center for
Women's History and Culture

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Save the Dates: Spring Events at the Bingham Center



Image from the cover of Meredith Tax's
influential essay, *Woman and Her Mind*,
originally published in 1970 by Bread and Roses

Acting Across Borders: The Future of the Feminist 1970s

Celebrating the Meredith Tax Papers
The 5th Symposium of the Sallie Bingham Center
for Women's History and Culture

April 13-14, 2012
Perkins Library, Duke University

Intimate Wars: a Reading with Merle Hoffman

4:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 7, 2012
Biddle Rare Book Room, Perkins Library

12th and Delaware: part of Rights! Camera! Action!

Human Rights Film Series

7:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 13, 2012
FHI Garage, Bay 4, Smith Warehouse

Mending: a Reading with Sallie Bingham

4:00 p.m. Wednesday, March 14, 2012
Biddle Rare Book Room, Perkins Library

library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham/news