

## Archive No. 25

### Sybylla Press

Sybylla Co-operative Press was established in June 1976 by eight women who were interested in providing an affordable, feminist printing outlet for the WLM and to give women the hands-on opportunity to learn printing and related skills. The Press was initially set up at 106 Little Lonsdale Street, a couple of doors up from the WL Centre at 100 Little Lonsdale Street. And named after Sybylla the feisty main character in *My Brilliant Career* by Miles Franklin.

Sybylla printed a range of material over the years including the Herstory of the WL Halfway House, Vashti's Voice, the Lesbian Newsletter, several self-published Dykebooks by Emily George and a range of posters, stickers and post cards, amongst other things. Sybylla moved to larger premises at 177 St Georges Road and finally to a shopfront at 193 Smith Street, Fitzroy.

In 1982 Sybylla broadened its operations to include a small publishing program producing titles which explored feminist and left perspectives. The publications included fiction and non-fiction by women with a special interest in new writers and in work that was innovative in style.

Sybylla's list included: *Frictions*, an anthology of fiction by women, edited by Anna Gibbs and Alison Tilson (1982); *A Gap in the Records* by Jan McKemmish (1985); *Quilt* and *A Handwritten Classic*, both by Finola Moorhead (1985); *Taking the Revolution Home: Work among women in the Communist Party of Australia 1920 - 1945* by Joyce Stevens (1987); and *Between the Lines* by Bernice Morris (1988).

After the printing press closed down in 1988 Sybylla Feminist Press continued to publish books including *Working Hot* by Mary Fallon (1989), winner of the 1989 Innovative Writing Prize in the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards; *Second Degree Tampering: writing by women*, edited by Sybylla Feminist Press (1992); *She's Fantastical* edited by Lucy Sussex and Judith Raphael Buckrich (1995) short listed for the 1995 World Fantasy Awards; and *Motherlode* edited by Stephanie Holt and Maryanne Lynch (1996).

After a number of successful years in the printing and publishing business and due to rising costs Sybylla closed down the printing press and the Smith Street premises in December 1988. And moved the non-profit, publishing side of the co-op into a room on the 3rd floor of Ross House, 247 – 251 Flinders Lane where a volunteer collective continued to oversee the publication of a

book every other year till they ran out of energy for fundraising and facilitating readings and events to keep Sybylla going.

Sybylla Press handed over the distribution of their books to Spinifex Press in 2001 and finally and officially folded the publishing side of their business in 2002.

All of Sybylla's archival holdings are held at the State Library of Victoria, Swanston Street. All of Sybylla's material that the VW&LFA held for a number of years has been moved, at Sybylla's request, to the State Library. This bio is to acknowledge the connection Sybylla used to have with these Archives.