

International Womens Day 2022

opus

Changing Climates



#BreakTheBias

Editors Editors Letter Editors



A Women who inspires Steph, Bri Lee.

Hey all you cool cats and kittens,
This month we're celebrating and recognising the annual and global International Women's Day for 2022. Here at Opus, we recognise the broad, flexible, and ever-changing definition of womxn, and we aspire to wholly and fully recognise our contributors and readers that may find a sense of belonging within these pages.

Not only does this zine give us a chance to celebrate our female-identifying and gender-diverse community, but it also serves to recognise the change that we have forged so far, and that change that is still to come. While sometimes things may seem bleak, I hope these pages can help you find some comfort during this week of celebration, achievement, and recognition.

From a history of womxn's activism and individual artist spotlights to creative writing excerpts and a look at our legal system, this zine represents a snapshot of what we, as students, have to say about womxnhood.

If you have something to say, make sure you keep up with us on our socials this month. We are the voice of students, and we want yours in the mix.

Let's go girls (da da dada da da),
*Junior Editor and Interim Media Officer
Stephanie Jenkins*

Editors Letter Editors Letter Editors Letter

UNSA would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians upon which this magazine was written, the Pambalong Clan of the Awabakal Nation. We would also like to extend this acknowledgement to the Birpai, Darkinjung and Gadigal peoples, as the traditional custodians of the lands upon which the University of Newcastle resides and UNSA operates. UNSA would like to pay respects to all Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge them as the true knowledge holders.

We acknowledge the historical inequalities faced by Aboriginal people and the continuing struggle for justice and equality. Black Lives Matter.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land



Artwork "Women's Business"
Belle Leonard

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Readers are advised that this issue of Opus contains content that may be sensitive to some viewers. This includes, but may not be limited to, discussions of sexual health, sexual and physical violence, partner and family violence, body image, mental health, and death. If you need any support, you can reach out to Lifeline's Crisis Support line on 13 11 14, or scan the QR code to visit UNSA's student support resources page for more services that can help you:



Artist Q&A

As a student media publication, it is our goal at Opus to represent all students at the University fully and wholeheartedly. This year, we've decided to team up with some of our local artists to better acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which Opus, UNSA, and the University of Newcastle resides: The Awabakal, Darkinjung, Biripai, Worimi, Wonnarua, and Eora Nations.

This issue, we again teamed up with Belle Leonard for the artwork featured in our Acknowledgement of Country, titled Women's Business.

Say hello to all our new readers!

My name is Belle Leonard, I'm 21 years old, my pronouns are she/her, and I am a graduand Visual Communication Design student. As well as currently being a freelance graphic designer, I am a proud Guugu Yimidhirr woman, making Aboriginal art that holds meaning and tells stories.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

International Women's Day, for me, is time to celebrate, commemorate, and reflect upon the history of great achievements and sacrifices made by women across history. It's a day for me to remind the women around me of how much they inspire and uplift me day-to-day. I believe that on International Women's Day it's important to accept and welcome the full scope of womanhood including trans, Indigenous, disabled women, etc., and celebrate the power of these different and diverse perspectives.

Can you tell us a little bit about your creative process?

For this work, I used Procreate on iPad which is a relatively new medium for me! But the freedom this program provides is a gamechanger. This artwork is called "Women's Business" and reflects the idea of powerful

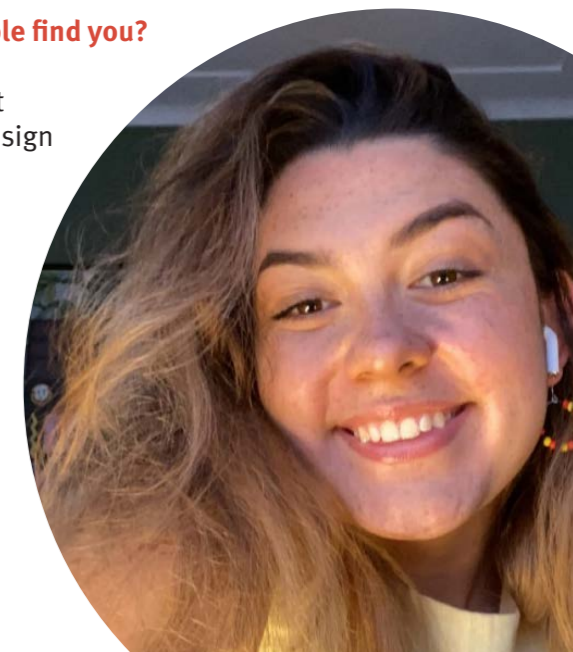
women, and how collaboration, sharing stories, and uplifting each other is so important for growth.

Do you have any advice for women finding space in the world this International Women's Day?

Keep doing what feels right for you. Feel free to share or not share your unique stories and battles. I find that, recently, there are a lot of personal stories and hardships being shared in the media, and the people who are ready to share such stories are doing great work helping other people accept their 'flaws' and feel less alone. I also want to remind people, though, who aren't comfortable sharing their experiences, that it's more than okay to keep those things private. I believe it's important to remember and respect that this International Women's Day.

Where can people find you?

I share my latest artworks and design projects on my Instagram, [@dontbesally](https://www.instagram.com/dontbesally). Come and say hello! I always reply, hehe!



Contributors

Contributors

Name a woman who inspires you



Tiana Williams
Brittany Higgins
Graphic Designer



Tyler Bridges
Tracee Ellis Ross



Adriana Haro
My mum, Rosa Haro



Emily Coles
Grace Tame



Tegan Stettaford
Taylor Swift



Frey Cooper
My best friend, Zoey



Georgie Cooper
Jacinda Ardern



Phoebe Barsi
My Mum, Sue

Reflections on Leadership, Advocacy, and University Life in a Changing Climate

Words: Georgie Cooper

International Women's Day is an important time to reflect on issues and challenges, and to celebrate the successes, of women-identifying and non-binary people in our own communities and around the world. In 2022, there is still work to be done to achieve gender equality. Even in a country as progressive and privileged as Australia, women are still marching at Parliament House to demand safe working conditions, free from the threat of sexual harassment and assault which continues to pervade our culture.

But there is also much to celebrate, especially the incredible achievements of women everywhere: from leaders, to athletes, to unsung heroes that care and look out for us every day. I'm fortunate in my SRC position to get to interact with many strong women leaders within UNSA, the university, and of course fellow students, which is ever inspiring and motivating for me.

My experiences in leadership positions have continually helped me grow as a person, and I would highly encourage everyone, especially women, to get involved in things that they

are passionate about. As a current example, being elected to the UNSA SRC has given me innumerable opportunities to improve my skills and confidence in a leadership role. A big focus for me is what we as student leaders can do to improve the university experience of our fellow students, including through clubs & societies, events, student media and other supports. I endeavour to make sure that the voices and needs of UON students are being heard, and necessary changes made. You can be part of this too, by getting in contact with your friendly neighbourhood student reps, or even writing for Opus!

Getting involved in extra-curricular opportunities at university is also a great way to meet new people, make lifelong friends, and explore your passions. During my studies, I've found professional development opportunities through the Law Students Association (UNLSA), the Empower Network and the iLead program; amazing friendships and memories with the Cheerleading Club; and a like-minded community in the Environment Club (NUSEC). If you're looking to connect with other students or try something

new, have a browse through UNSA's Clubs Directory and go along to some events – you never know where it might lead you!

I'm also incredibly excited for UNSA's new Women's Collective (WoCo) to grow and blossom into a safe and empowering network for women-identifying and non-binary students this year and beyond. If you haven't signed up yet, check out the Collectives section of the UNSA website for more information.

This year's IWD theme of *Changing Climates: Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow* combines topics that I am very passionate about and keen to advocate for in any leadership position (and my everyday life). I strongly believe that everyone should do their bit to stand up for the things that they care about to help make the world a better place. This could be in your workplace, through contacting Members of Parliament, among friends and family, and even at your university. For the latter, let your student reps know if there are important changes you would like to see to make our campuses safer, more inclusive, and sustainable.

Achieving gender equality for women, transgender, and non-binary people is a crucial and pressing goal, as is addressing climate change and its effects. These two issues are deep-rooted, have huge effects on all parts of society, and are inherently linked in many ways. Our environmental advocacy must uplift the voices of women, minorities, and especially Indigenous peoples. These are the people who are not only most affected, but also have the knowledges that must be part of the solutions.

Bringing the issues of gender equality and environmental justice together in this year's IWD theme highlights the need for intersectional, inclusive advocacy and change. I hope we will see even more women-identifying and non-binary people leading the way forward into the future.

Happy International Women's Day, everyone!



The Thoroughfare Between Women and Activism

Words: Tegan Stettaford

Activism
'aktiviz(e)m
NOUN
The policy or action of using
vigorous campaigning to bring

Activism has become an important part of our society today: a chance to create movements, make changes, and be heard regarding a variety of topics that have worldly consequences and implications. The role of women in activism is today considered essential in providing perspective for global plights. However, this was not always the case. Aligning with well-known historical prejudices and discriminatory acts—from the exclusion from the right to vote to house-wife expectations—women were refused a voice and forced to stray from the light of activism.

One figure ingrained in the history books of feminism set a change in motion: Rosa Parks. As many around the world now know, Parks became known as one of the first female American Civil Rights activists after a famous incident on December 1st, 1955. Parks was simply taking a bus when she was asked, among other African-American passengers, to relinquish her seat for Caucasian travellers. Parks was the only one to refuse the request. Despite legal ramifications for Parks, the spark was ignited. A boycott of the bus company ensued, resulting in a favourable court order, and Parks becoming known as 'the mother of the Civil Rights Movement'. This was the beginning of an age in which women have a pivotal and respected role in activist movements. Today, this role is not only maintained, but strengthened, as women continue to promote awareness and push for change in a variety of areas. Of great global interest currently, and the stage for vast activist

movements, are concerns pertaining to the environment. Among the many environmental activists are stars like Winona LaDuke, India Logan-Riley, and Greta Thunberg.

When you hear of 'activism' amongst the likes of these names, you are likely to picture peaceful protests, social media posts, mass signage, and snappy mottos. This visualisation of activism is common; taking a stand in the physical sense is often what labels one as an activist. However, the reality is, this form of activism is not appealing or accessible to everyone. Despite passions one may have, this 'traditional' picture of activism is likely to cause some to simmer down, instead of standing up.

I certainly find myself fitting into this bracket. However, I still have many passions that I feel strongly about and wish to push for change within. It became apparent to me very quickly, the introvert that I am, I needed another avenue through which to 'raise' my voice (so to speak). I stumbled upon a love for research and, as someone who already adored writing, I chose this as my methodology.

My first step into using 'research' as a method for activism began in year 12. I was tasked to write a lengthy report for my *Society and Culture* class about something I was interested in and passionate for. So, over the course of the year, I searched, watched, surveyed, and collated a tonne of information. By submission date, I had pulled together a 48-page report titled *Human VS Animal Rights: 'Right'ing a Wrong*. My passion for fair animal treatment and human recognition of wrongs planted the seed for what was to come.

Then, in 2020, I completed my honours thesis in psychology. Again, I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to undertake research in a field I am passionate about with A/P Lynne McCormack. I spent the year interviewing, analysing, and writing, writing, writing... the result was a 72-page thesis titled *Girls Who Get Raped Ask For It: The Positive and Negative Adult Perspective of Daughters Raised by Mothers Sexually Abused as Children*. In 2021, I was so pleased to be able to present this

research at the Australasian Conference on Traumatic Stress with a publication (hopefully) in tow soon.

Now it is 2022 and, yep, you guessed it—I am still researching! I am heading into my 2nd year of my PhD candidature in health psychology. I am once again so thankful to be able to research in such an important field and one I feel very strongly about. I hope that, in time, this research has a positive contribution to the lives of those with a mental health condition in being able to improve their physical health and reduce the inequity experienced by this population.

As a female in academia, I have found that my passions can be voiced through the research I conduct and disseminate: this is my form of activism. It is important to consider your passions and will for change. If you too are not one for getting up in front of crowds, that's ok! Get to thinking. There are endless ways you can be an activist without it even seeming so. I am looking forward to continuing my research journey as an outlet for activism, and hope that one day this can turn into a career.

Alas, I must diverge, as my love for research does not shelter me from the knowledge that this is not the path for everyone. However, don't let this tale thwart your activist dreams. As with most things, there is more than one way to achieve this goal.
Exhibit A) Consider running for a position in an area you are passionate about. For example, I am also very excited to be on the SRC for 2022, as the Postgraduate Senate Convenor (and as a clear nerd for all things study, this is a fantastic avenue to promote change)
Exhibit B) Join, or even start, a club or society about your passion.
Exhibit C) It can even be as simple as using social media platforms to promote awareness or raise funds.

These are just a few examples of the fantastic ways you can be an activist in a 'non-traditional' sense.



Feminism:

Still as Important Today as in 1903

Words: Anonymous

In 1903, the suffragette movement officially started—the crusade to grant (white) women the right to vote. But the granting of this right to vote still marked a long, long road ahead. Through the years since this fight began, women have been pushing for equality in many other areas and the events in Australia over the last few years have shown why we need to continue fighting.

The horrific events that occurred in our capital when we heard from Brittany Higgins in 2021 shows how far our country still has to go with respecting women—especially by powerful men. This event was followed up recently with the actions of Grace Tame, 2021 Australian of the Year, when meeting with PM Scott Morrison at the 2022 Australian of the Year awards. Tame refused to smile while greeting the PM and being photographed by the media. Her actions prompted a mass reaction (specifically from men across Australia and the globe) with claims that her purposeful frown was “rude and childish.” Let’s take a moment and reflect on when our PM has been “rude and childish”: When forcing people devastated by bushfires to shake his hand; when turning his back to people in parliament; when refusing to face women protesting sexual assault and other violence towards women.

This is why we still need feminism.

In Australia, 1 woman a week is murdered by a current or former partner, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 1 in 5 women have experience sexual violence since age 15. These shouldn’t be numbers that I know—they shouldn’t be numbers at all. But this is the reality, in our fairly privileged country, for all of us. We walk to our cars with keys in our hands ready to fight back at someone who might attack us; we make our friends message us when they are home safe; when we drop our girlfriends home, we don’t drive away until we see them close the front door behind them; we make sure no one is following us when we’re walking our dogs.

This is why we still need feminism.

In the US, Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy related issue than white women because of the structural racism present in the country. Although this is just one of so many issues affecting women, it is a glaring one. If the risk of death in pregnancy in the modern age is lowering, why are so many women still being allowed to suffer?

This is why we still need feminism.

My daughters one day will come into this world, and I can only protect them for so long. I am a statistic—I don’t need them to become one too. This is why I still need feminism.

The Importance of Community

Words: Tyler Jane Bridges

By now, you would have heard of the UNSA collectives—specifically, the Women’s Collective (WoCo).* If you haven’t seen anything about this yet, WoCo is a student-led, safe, and empowering space for women and non-binary or female-identifying students at the University of Newcastle to come together and discuss issues and help make positive change.

Why are groups like this so important?

The Women’s Collective, women-only gyms, support groups, and more, are where women can feel less alone. We are in a world where women’s pain is not taken seriously, where most men get confused about how a pad works, and where we don’t always feel safe or heard. These groups and spaces are places where women can talk to other people who get it, make them feel like nothing is wrong (or that something is wrong), and hear another voice of reason. These groups are also where change starts to occur in our society—a place where we can discuss things, realise there is an issue, and figure out how we can begin to change that issue.

Should you join a community?

YES! Joining a collective or group of people who are struggling with the same forces as you, or maybe have some words of wisdom from their own experiences, is a great way to spend your time. You can network to help your progress in an industry, get help from mothers, carers, or aunties, meet people who can act as a support system for health concerns, or even just life. You can even find

some awesome study buddies—especially in WoCo!

So, you’re convinced to join a group but don’t know where to start?

That’s OK! Maybe start here at UNSA with the Women’s Collective! Here, you can start to form wider connections outside of the classroom and meet women who will direct you towards other groups who can help you. Here, you will also meet students from your degree, who share the same sporting interest, other parents and caregivers, people with the same star sign—you name it! Joining WoCo could be the start of your journey to create and forge important female friendships and connections. It is also a great place to learn about fun events, social gatherings, and more—all in an environment you feel safe and included in.

Not convinced?

WoCo, and groups like it, are not just for you—but also women everywhere. You might solve the next big (or little) issue for woman across the globe, at UON, or even just for the woman sitting next to you. The more women that have a voice at UON and around the world, the better, because every voice matters and ALL the collectives at UON are there to have those voices heard.

**WoCo is a trans-inclusive space, also dedicated to anti-colonial and intersectional feminism.*

Bechdel Bingo

An iconic piece of feminist analysis, the Bechdel test was created by cartoonist, Alison Bechdel, to measure the representation of women in fiction. Most often applied to films, the Bechdel test requires a work to meet three seemingly simple criteria:

1. It has to have at least two named women in it;
2. Who talk to each other;
3. About something besides a man.

Despite the bar for the representation of women in media being located seemingly on the ground, we've compiled a tick list of iconic films that pass the Bechdel test.

THE 'ROMCOM' ERA

- 10 Things I Hate About You
- Bend It Like Beckham
- Clueless
- The Devil Wears Prada
- Juno
- Mean Girls
- The Princess Diaries
- Suddenly 30

WHIMSICAL AND HEARTFELT

- About Time
- Coraline
- The French Dispatch
- Ghostbusters (2016)
- Jojo Rabbit
- Laby bird
- Moxie
- Whip It

FOR THE TOUGH ONES

- Alien
- The Craft
- Jennifer's Body
- Jumanji (1995)
- Kill Bill Vol. 1
- Kill Bill Vol. 2
- Oceans 8

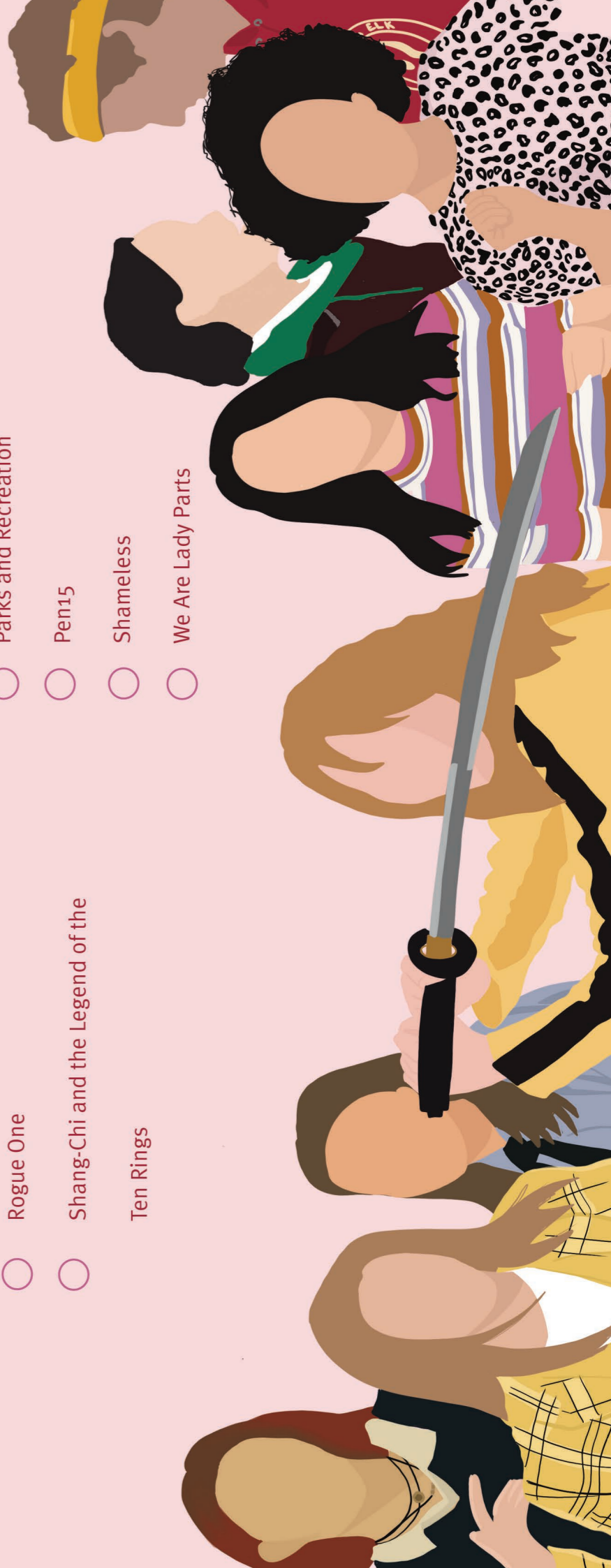
SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

- The Cabin in the Woods
- The Hunger Games
- Mad Max: Fury Road
- Pan's Labyrinth
- Rogue One
- Shang-Chi and the Legend of the

TV SHOWS

- Broad City
- Bump
- The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance
- GLOW
- Parks and Recreation
- Pen15
- Shameless
- We Are Lady Parts

Ten Rings



Favourite Favourite Artists of Artists of 2021 2021

Words: Emily Coles

If lockdown has taught me anything, it's that people can do amazing and incredible things from the comfort of their own homes—one most commonly for the past year has been writing albums. Some of my favourite musicians have released their best music yet, whilst others are starting out for the very first time. Here are some of my favourites:

Listen to the
playlist, here:



Leith Ross

Favourite Songs: Grown Up, Tommy, and Prayer

If Phoebe Bridgers and the best storyteller had a musical baby, it would be Leith Ross. Their vocals are beautifully haunting and, accompanied by their acoustic guitar and songs littered with soft harmonies, these songs will definitely get you in your feels. Ross puts a lot of emphasis on the words they speak, and add to that the broken heart melodies, you'll just want to close your eyes and appreciate the magnificence that is Leith Ross.



SOMOH

Favourite Song: I've Been Saying This

If tears had a musical form, it would be this song. SOMOH has such a pure, innocent, and sweet voice that is soothing to your ears and heart. With mostly acoustic guitar, the drumkit comes in softly to give the song a laidback and beachy vibe—just perfect for a sunny afternoon with a cup of tea, letting the sunlight hit your skin. This is her first release, and I just cannot wait for her to release a whole lot more—I'll have them on repeat for every waking moment of my life!

Lizzy McAlpine

Favourite Songs: The whole 'Give Me A Minute' album

This girl knows how to write. She seems to encapsulate every single feeling you've ever felt or are about to feel. Her newest album, 'When the World Stopped Moving', isn't as sad as her first album, but is definitely still moody. Her acoustic writing style makes you want to cry happy tears, from her silky tone to her heart-pulling lyrics. One of my favourite things about McAlpine is her lyric ability: she is able to tell your whole life story without giving the main points away. Relatable but empathetic. Just gorgeous.



Is She Walking in Slow Mo?

The songs that make you want to get up and move. Embrace your inner Kendall Jenner because we're ready to walk that runway with these ones.

Listen to the
playlist, here:



Olivia Rodrigo

Favourite Song: Jealousy Jealousy

An ANTHEM! Tell me you don't do your sassy walk to this one. It is such a fun, slightly grungy tune that makes you scrunch your nose and bob your head. You can't help but yell all the words.



Little Simz

Favourite Songs: Woman, and Venom

There's just something so tasty about a female, British rapper. It's gold straight to your ears. She's an icon amongst icons with her rhythmic words—the best one to accompany your slow, sassy strut. Real woman power with this one.



Amber Mark

Favourite Songs: 1894, and FOMO

If you don't know this lady, do your ears the pleasure of introducing yourself. Her vocals are so so smooth and silky that you can't help but scrunch your nose in an 'ooooo daaaaaamn' kinda way. Most of her songs sit in a dance tune category which, in my opinion, has got to be one of the best genres out there. You'll be tapping your foot so much you'll get a calf cramp.

Listen to the
playlist, here:



Sunrays on Sundays

Imagine: You've just come back from a long day at the beach and you're having a few beers with mates in the backyard. The sun is starting to set so the sky is lit with ambers and pinks—these are the tunes that will take you there.

Cleo Sol

Favourite Songs: The entirety of the 'Mother' album

Cleo Sol single handedly caused, dwelled, and cured any turmoil I had through this new album titled 'Mother'. It is quite honestly one of my favourite pieces of music to be released altogether. There's nothing but silk to describe the way she sounds, her voice is just so sweet and heartbreaking, whilst giving you an ounce of hope. She has one of the most beautiful voices I've ever heard and, when you add that with her song writing skills and band elements, it's just perfect. This album sounds like you're having a conversation with a friend: familiar, safe, understanding, eye opening, and wanting to hear it every day.





Georgia Greene

Favourite Songs: Something Good, and Lonely For You

Another gorgeously sweet voice you can't help but smile at. 'Something Good' has got to be one of my top songs from the whole year. Taking the lyrics by themselves, the message behind the song is so motivating and cute—I'm OBSESSED! But when you take those important words and add them to a beautiful voice, cute rhythmic instruments, and acoustic guitar: you're in for a treat! It sounds like I should be running through fields of flowers in a long skirt with my closest friends. The greatest smiling song.



Jai'Len Josey

Favourite Song: All Mine

If Beyonce released music that sounded as if she lived on the ocean, this would be it. Putting a spring in your step, this song encapsulates the bright sunny days radiating onto your skin. Easy to listen to and easy to put on repeat, constantly, it just puts a smile right across your face. From bringing in the tambourine, harmonies, rock guitar—to a full-on horn section—'All Mine' has everything you could have ever wished and needed for.

And a Special Mention



Yebba

Favourite Songs: The 'Live at Electric lady' EP

This one recently came out (late January, 2022), and it'll change your life. If you're a fan of Yebba, or not yet, this is a must to listen to. A more stripped-back version of some of her most popular songs in a way you've never heard them before. They just sound so intentional and purposeful—every note, every instrument, there to add a necessary element that digs right into your very soul. This one has made my year.

I've found a lot of healing in music this past year, and I hope some of these songs help to heal, mend, motivate, or sooth your soul as they did mine.

**Favourite
Artists of
2021**

Fantasy Fiction: A Good Old Boys Club?

Words: **Phoebe Barsi**

Fantasy has been a reader-favourite genre for decades now. Whilst the main elements of the genre—such as magic systems, magical creatures, and medieval-type worlds—remain the same, fantasy novels and what they represent are constantly evolving. Now more than ever are we seeing more diversity within the genre, which is attracting more and more readers. However, when it comes to high fantasy—which is a more traditional form of fantasy novels, usually featuring medieval themes and magic—there has not been as much evolvment as the wider genre.

Conventionally, popular high fantasy novels are predominantly written by men. They also mostly feature male protagonists, with female characters often appearing as secondary ones. This is evident in the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, Robert Jordan, Patrick Rothfuss, George R. R. Martin, and Brandon Sanderson. Despite the lack of female protagonists, the works of these authors are beloved staples of high fantasy fiction for a reason. And even though many were written decades ago, they are the bar against which many new fantasy novels are compared, and often fail to reach. To this day, there are only two prominent women high fantasy authors whose works are held in the same regard as their male counterparts:

Ursula K. Le Guin and Robin Hobb. That's not to say there are not others. N. K. Jemisin is another author whose novels have been praised and cemented as must-reads of the genre. However, Le Guin and Hobb are two whose names are continuously mentioned in lists alongside the popular male-authored high fantasy novels.

Keeping this in mind, there are plenty of fantasy novels written by women. However, they are mostly categorised as urban or paranormal fantasy. And, if they are regarded as having high fantasy elements, they are often categorised as Young Adult (YA) books. The YA tag alone usually dismisses these works from being regarded in the same light as other high fantasy books. And this should not be the case. Kristin Cashore's Graceling series is a prime example of this. Cashore's trilogy features a female protagonist and has an excellent plot, worldbuilding, magic system and fantastic writing. Yes, they might not be explicit in content as some high fantasy novels written for adults are, but I argue they are just as comparable. This can also be said to describe many other fantasy series, whether they are categorised as YA high fantasy or adult high fantasy.

It saddens me that despite the evolving nature of the genre there is still this attitude surrounding high fantasy that it is holding it back. Book sales in the last year alone prove that readers want more of these women-authored high fantasy books—YA tag or not. It is beyond time for these authors and their works to be held to the same regard as male-authored books in the genre. A great book is only great because of the writing—the way the characters interact with others and the fictional worlds around them, complex plots that are well executed—and not gender!

Like Candles Winking Out

Words: Stephanie Kathleen

She's running. The slippery sound of her boots slapping against the rotting leaves and mud puddles of the forest floor can barely be heard over her gasping. Heaving for breath, her breast burns with the force of it. Underneath the rasping and the running, the whirling of Valeria's mind is ceaseless. *They're behind you! They're coming! Run, little one! Run!* All the voices of her clan driving her onward and wayward, far from the fighting and the reaping...



...One hand against the rough trunk and one hand reaching high into the branches above her head, she swings herself into a low bough. Footsteps crash through the underbrush around her, sprinting and stumbling deeper into the woods. The screaming in her mind is softer now, as if from a great distance. The orange glow of sunset seeps steadily between the trees and there, tucked into a fork in the tough wood, she waits for night to fully envelop her...



...The feeling is like fingernails on a slate. Minds and voices plucked from Valeria's senses as they die—ripped from the Dwarven hivemind and leaving her claustrophobic in the quiet that muffles her head. As the purple of night sinks deeper into black, she lowers herself gently from the tree. Silently, her feet sink into the moist ground, and she realises she's wet with rain. Slick with it, as it beads between the hairs of her arms and drips from her thick braids. Her foot raises to take another silent step—

And a twig snaps behind her.

"There you are," a silky voice whispers too close to her ear, laced with hatred, and

her heart throws itself so hard against her chest that it rips her, head over heels, from the dream.



She awoke with the world's softest sheet coiled tightly around her torso, uncomfortable. In a bed, so soft it felt fit to devour her, surrounded by more blankets than one person could ever need, that wasn't her own. The unfamiliarity that had its fingers wrapped tightly around her chest slowly loosened its grip as her eyes scanned the walls, the intricately carved dresser and wardrobe, the gold-leaf detailing on the ceiling. The curtains swam around the window frame in a soft breeze, a warm wind that tickled the hairs on her legs and feet as they stuck out the bottom of the silky sheet.

The soft knock at the door that woke her rapped again against the fine wood.

Yes, she said, but it came out as a gasp, her mouth too lousy with sleep to form the word.

"Yes," she said again, swallowing hard and picking the sleep from her eyes with a fingernail that had never been so clean.

A gauntleted hand pushed the door open, gently. The guard to whom the hand belonged sidled carefully into the room, the clanking of her steel plate and heavy footsteps like the morning bells of the city; yet to ring proper but starting Valeria into full alertness, nevertheless. Valeria sat up, wringing the twisted sheet in her hands, and pooling it around herself in soft folds.

"May the clouds part for you," the guard said. Her composure was stern and hard, but the corners of her mouth twitched up into the suggestion of a smile. The formal greeting floated in the air between them as Valeria dug for the second half of the

unfamiliar phrase.

"And let the sun pour her liquid life into your empty cup," she finally said, with barely a stutter.

The guard's chin dipped in a tiny nod, and Valeria felt her shoulders relax just a touch.

"You have been summoned. I am to escort you right away," the guard said.

"Summoned by who?"

The guard didn't answer her, at least not with words, and Valeria couldn't read the expression on her face.

"I will give you a moment of modesty," the guard said, flicking her eyes at where Valeria sat in the nest of silk sheets and wool throws. Valeria ran her hand over her bare chest, tickling the fine peachfuzz of hair there.

"Thank you," she replied.

Dressed in a short tunic and leather britches, topped with a warm doublet and leather gloves, Valeria followed the tall guard through the maze of hallways. As her bare feet padded along the winding corridor of the fortress, deeper parts of the dream come back to her.

Like candles winking out in a sharp gust of wind, the deaths that marred the hivemind left a darkness in her mind that almost blinded her. The sound of the guards clinking armour, the drip of snow as it melted off the archways and dripped down the walls; all sounded too loud in her ears. The walls seemed to press in around her as she walked, all her senses heightened, but new and dumb, from the missing guidance inside her head. Valeria's own feet as they slapped against the floor, burning with the icy cold of the stone walkways, near surprised her with every step as if the physicality of her own body was a new sensation.

The winding hallway ended in a stone archway with a heavy wooden door fit neatly between the stones. Thrice the guard

knocked on the door, the ornate brass knocker worn down to silver from the years of use that must have precluded their visit.

Valeria heard a scuffling inside and an impatient voice shot through the door with a,

"Yes—yes, come in, already."

The guard pushed open the door onto the messiest room Valeria had ever seen. Papers littered every bare surface, including the floor. Bubbling vials and burners spilled over onto scratched wooden benches, staining the countertops and dripping onto the floor. Amongst it all, a knobbly old man hunched over another immense roll of parchment, scribbling away with a leaking ink pen. His eyes flicked to hers from under a bushy brow.

"Yes..." he said, putting down his pen. "It's you."

The wizard stood from his stool and pulled his spectacles from his face. Next to the wizard, Valeria felt as tiny as a human child. He seemed to rise up and up and up and never stop, even with his knobbly knees and stooped shoulders. In a moment, he was beside her, his stride deceptively strong beneath his thin frame.

"We need you, dwarf," he said. His eyes bore into hers with an intensity that she didn't expect. She didn't drop his gaze and instead returned it with one of her own.

"I will be no slave to you people," she spat. Behind her words were the echoes of all the silent pockets in her mind that seemed to scream so loudly within her.

The man did not flinch. Instead, he grasped her upper arm. In desperation, he came to his knees. Valeria didn't know what the man would say, but she knew this moment was unravelling before her in a way she could have never expected. The threads of her life seemed to meet at this point and, from it, spiral out into a million—a billion—possibilities. The cavernous emptiness in her mind seemed to shrink for just one moment.

"No, Valeria... We need you to fight."

Women in Leadership:

Change Isn't Coming, It's Here

Words: Adriana Haro

Last year, I was given an opportunity to take the global stage as a Global Voices Scholar and, subsequently, I am now a young delegate heading to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March of 2022, representing the University of Newcastle and Australia. The CSW is held at the United Nations headquarters in New York every year, but will be held online this year due to the pandemic. The CSW is the coming together of different nation states to discuss current issues affecting women, future plans, efforts, and movements. It ultimately results in a plan to best carry out women's rights in their perspective countries.

The international delegation I am a part of is there to experience what high level discussion and negotiation looks like on a global stage. I have been meeting with people currently in positions that shape Australian policies—like ministers of Parliament, thinktanks, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and DISER (the Department of Industry, Science, Energy, and Resources)—to discuss issues relating to gender equality and climate change. Just like the International Women's Day theme for 2022, climate change and gender equality is the theme for this year's CSW! These experiences are also informing my own policy paper with recommendations that I produce as a Global Voices Scholar on a topic I am passionate about: addressing and ending sexual assault and harassment at our university.

Sexual assault and harassment are happening here on campus; whether the Consent Matters

module tells you that or not. I'm currently working on a proposal to change the policies in place that have failed students again and again. To specifically inform and create meaningful recommendations in my policy proposal to the needs of the University of Newcastle, I've met with fellow UON students, colleagues, and staff, and will soon meet with local politicians. What I can tell you about these meetings is that they all share a theme: For every person that I've spoken to about my scholarship and policy proposal, I have left with stories about them, their close friends, or their colleagues who have experienced assault and/or harassment either at our university or during their time as a student at the University of Newcastle. And, unfortunately, I share that in common with them.

It is more than heartbreaking learning about students who have gone through the formal complaints process at the University, only to end up in a nightmare situation: where the survivor is hurt more in the process, and nothing further is achieved. The stories are stacking up. There

are too many skeletons in this closet, and something must change.

In writing this, I actually feel scared and nervous about what may come after this piece is

“**Sexual assault and harassment are happening here on campus; whether the Consent Matters module tells you that or not**

published. Whether potential is there that I be blacklisted from future job opportunities (it's still a thing!); what the discussion will be like when I walk into a room of University execs. At one point, I thought I shouldn't even pursue this issue, or this policy topic, after a crushing meeting with people at our University, but I know that discouragement is exactly what the system is built to perpetuate. But do you know what's actually scary? Experiencing it. Experiencing sexual harassment and assault. Living it. And then, having nothing done about it.

So, what can we do?

I remember back to week seven in the semester when we were just starting our discussion on globalisation in my tutorial. As a tutor in the social sciences, I am sometimes faced with questions like, “what can we do?” when students learn about how systematically ingrained and complex things like patriarchy, racism, or environmental injustice are. Last year, one of my students was slumped over her desk. As I came over, she said, “I just don't get it. What can I do? I'm just one person.” In all honesty, I feel the same way some days—maybe even most days. I think about the quote: *If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room.* Sometimes I think about the trailblazers before me who fought to have women, like myself, in the classroom at all. It helps, sometimes, to remember.

I want to do more than tell my students and colleagues that I care—about them, about the injustices they're facing; that the globe is facing. I want to show them. I do not have control over the barriers or issues that they face outside the classroom or outside the University, but what I can do is something about their experience (and mine, and yours) at our University. This is me giving a shit. This is me doing my best for the future leaders of our University, of Newcastle, and Australia.

This is what you get when women are trained and mentored to be leaders in a system that was flawed to begin with. This is me implementing the leadership skills

“**Change isn't coming, it's here, and I need YOUR help.**”

and strategies I've been taught because of iLEAD. This is us against the patriarchy, this is us fighting for our voices to be more than just a tick box at meetings or 'engagement' strategies. This is us fighting for the bare minimum. This is us fighting for gender equality. Right here, right now. Change isn't coming, it's here, and I need your help.

I am asking for your solidarity and support as I, and more students and staff, demand for a better university culture. I grew up hearing how my generation would change and inspire the world. This is now a broken record of things like, “the next generation will lead us to change,” “the next generation is a catalyst for social change,” “the next generation will...” I am here to say: I am not part of that generation. I, along with many other women and people who cannot afford to wait for 'the next generation', say that we are that generation.

This is so that their load is lessened.

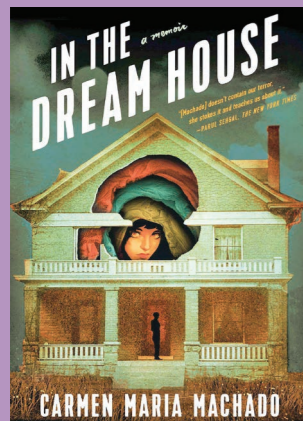
This is so that my story, Our stories, Don't become theirs.

Writers Who See Me

Words: Stephanie Jenkins

Alongside a discussion about recognising women’s work is equal, but often remised, conversation about the value that women’s work carries for other women. The same can be said about other gender identities, sexualities, skin colours, levels of ability, and ways of being in the world that are so little represented in mainstream fiction. Or, even more damaging, those identities which are so overtly misrepresented. However, every so often a book will come along that sweeps me into its current and cuddles me like a baby within its arms. Hamlet asked, ‘to be or not to be,’ but perhaps a better question is, to be seen or not to be seen. These are some authors that described an experience of womanhood that spoke so loudly and so clearly to my reading mind that they’ve stuck with me—both in my heart and mind, and as permanent fixtures on my sagging bookshelves.

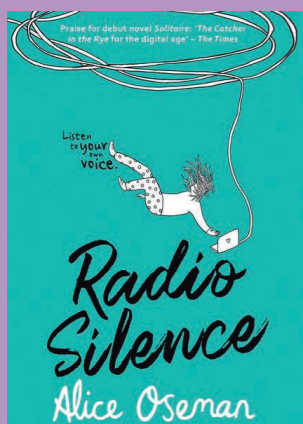
In the Dream House by Carmen Maria Machado



“Places are never just places in a piece of writing,” writes Machado. “If they are, the author has failed. Setting is not inert. It is activated by point of view.” In the Dream House invites the reader into the metaphorical but very, viscerally emotive, dream house that is the mental space, physical space, and time-sensitive space that Machado occupied while in an abusive relationship. Written in an incredibly flexible, explorative, experimental, and lyrical prose, this book reads like a horror novel; made all the more unsettling by its root in reality.

In the Dream House feels like a collection of short stories all interwoven with a sense of unease, albeit one that touches on a very real and unsettlingly familiar experience for women. This book is a collage of moments, some surreal and playful tone and others hypnotic in the uncomfortable closeness to reality that they document, that explore what it means to exist in a body, a relationship, and a situation that is so little represented in our world.

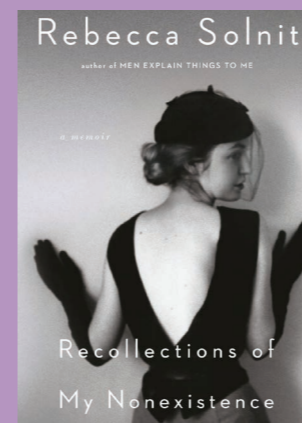
Radio Silence by Alice Oseman



Radio Silence is one of those books that I keep coming back to. Reading this one had such a profound effect on me, and one that I struggle to describe when lending it to friends. Just twenty-seven, Oseman has authored 6 books, and written and illustrated four graphic novels, establishing themselves as a devastatingly authentic young-adult voice. Radio Silence follows Frances, a young woman dedicated to her studies, as she makes new friends, breaks the mould, and is forced to reconsider her Grand Plan for life. Typically ‘coming-of-age’ in essence, Radio Silence nevertheless surprised me with its authentic adolescent voice, its exploration of expectations, and its wholehearted exploitation of the whole range of human emotion.

Oseman’s books are known just as much for their capture of a young voice as they are for their diverse representation of the young experience. While I found comfort in the way Frances and Aled navigate the vast unknown of ‘The Future,’ I know that this book has the power to speak to a lot of different people in a lot of different ways.

Recollections of My Nonexistence: A Memoir by Rebecca Solnit



Solnit is a prolific writer with over 25 books in her repertoire. While I am yet to complete my Solnit collection, she is very quickly taking over my shelves like a fast-growing vine—albeit one that flowers beautifully, curling itself around my consciousness and putting down roots in my mind. While she is sure to point out that while “many of [her books] are not about feminism, all of them are secretly feminist and some of them are overtly feminist.” Recollections of My Nonexistence is a memoir (in the purest and most foundational definition of memory) as much as it is a collection of essays: deeply introspective, reminiscent, and intoxicating.

As Solnit writes about the quarter-century she spent in a small apartment in an all-black neighbourhood of San Francisco, she also writes about her experience as a young woman and a young creative forging a space for herself in the world. For me, Solnit’s writing demonstrates how inexplicably misogyny can be intertwined with womanhood, personal experience, and self-worth. Recollections of My Nonexistence is like being stuck in a car on the side of the road with a close friend: It might be horrible outside, and stuffy and loud in within the tin box of the car, but at least you’re not experiencing it alone.

Bunny by Mona Awad



This book crept quietly into my life and hid, like a ghoul, waiting to grab my ankle when I least expected it. When friends ask me if I liked Bunny, I have to pause. Consider. Did I like it? This book is weird. Described as a satire, it’s not something I would normally gravitate towards. But its promise of dark academia vibes, hallucinogenic weirdness akin to a magical realism horror-scape, and an unwavering parallel between misogynistic representations of female friendship and the innate pull of a cult-like mentality—it drew me in.

Bunny explores the role of the clique in a tertiary setting against the backdrop of sexism, fairy-tale horror, and female sexuality. Samantha, a self-described outsider, finds herself suddenly and inexplicably drawn to the girls who call themselves Bunnies at her elite university. Awad seamlessly challenges the stereotype of popularity while also foregrounding the anguish that comes with a desire to fit in. Equally creepy, thrilling, unsettling, and discomfiting, this novel nevertheless kept me riffling the pages and wanting to know just how deep the rabbit hole goes. For fans of Donna Tartt’s The Secret History or Iain Reid’s I’m Thinking of Ending Things, Bunny touches on an aspect of femininity that sends a chill down your spine.

Jeopardamy

Words: Frey Cooper

“It’s really been an honour to know that I’m one of the most successful people at a game I’ve loved since I was a kid and to know that I’m a part of its history now. I just don’t know how to process it.”

Amy Schneider is known for many things. Among them is having a cat named Meep, being an engineering manager, and, oh yeah, being the most successful female Jeopardy! champion in all of history. Mainly the cat though... (It’s name is Meep because it was the only noise it made in the shelter, FYI).

In eighth grade, Amy was voted “Most Likely to Appear on Jeopardy!” by her classmates and I guess she took that personally. Especially since, from November last year to January this year, she held a 40 game winning streak (the second longest streak EVER, BTW), where she won over \$1.3 million and made epic history for trans women, and womenkind overall. Like I said earlier, she is the most successful female Jeopardy! champion, the first trans person to qualify for the Jeopardy! Tournament of Champions, and the first woman to win over \$1 million on Jeopardy!.

Early this year, she was awarded a GLAAD Special Recognition honour for her performance on Jeopardy!, which was well earned because imagine being good enough you can win that game 40 times in a row... I cannot.

It is important to always note what had to happen beforehand for Amy Schneider to make it onto Jeopardy! in the first place, which included the hard work of countless trans activists and feminists throughout all of history who fought to give us the rights we have today. A special shoutout goes to Kate Freeman, though, who was the first openly transgender contestant to play and win a game on the show just a year before Amy would get her turn.

Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end, as Amy Schneider eventually forgot the only country that ends with an ‘h’—go on, try to think of it! She also literally did this right after I put my proposal in to write about her... I’m trying not to be too personally offended by that.

Schneider was not that torn up about it, truth be told. She took the loss, had a little cry, congratulated the winner, and went to see her amazing girlfriend and Meep. It was awesome to read articles about her saying she was simply exhausted from it all, and was a little relieved when she got to go home.

An important part of Amy being trans and on the show is her thought process about how she should sound. Many trans people experience voice dysphoria. For some who take testosterone, their voice may change. For others, it can require risky surgery or years of vocal therapy to train their voice to be in the range they would like. Amy, like many trans women, has a feminine voice that she pitches when she feels like it, and was planning on using this voice during Jeopardy!. However, after considering it, was worried that needing to monitor her own voice would impact her gameplay so eventually chose to speak in her usual register. Through watching Amy play Jeopardy! and nail it, all while using her unaltered voice, trans people were able to see a trans person who doesn’t feel the need to conform constantly. I find this so inspiring.

Also, as a side note, if any LGBTQIA+ peeps are thinking about first date ideas, Amy spent her first time meeting her now-girlfriend, Genevieve, with Genevieve giving Amy a tarot reading!

If you are now so interested in Amy Schneider you simply must know what she is up to now (I know, my argumentative writing skills are just that good), you can find her on Twitter and Instagram at @jeopardamy.

Horoscopes

Woman Can Do It All

Words: Tyler Jane Bridges

Are you in need of some career advice? Take a look at what we think would fit you best based on your sign. Here are some career suggestions, and which percentage of these workers are women, to get you thinking:



Aries
(Ram):
March 21-April 19
Firefighter – 3.5%



Taurus
(Bull):
April 20-May 20
Farmer – 24.4%



Gemini
(Twins):
May 21-June 21
Architect: 25.5%



Cancer
(Crab):
June 22-July 22
Software Developer: 19.1%



Leo
(Lion):
July 23-August 22
Television, Video, and Motion Picture Camera Operator: 21.4%



Virgo
(Virgin):
August 23-September 22
Aircraft Pilot and Flight Engineer: 5.2%



Libra
(Balance):
September 23-October 23
Aerospace Engineer: 8%



Scorpio
(Scorpion):
October 24-November 21
Sports Player: 9.15%



Sagittarius
(Archer):
November 22-December 21
Construction Worker: 9.9%



Capricorn
(Goat):
December 22-January 19
Carpenter: 0.99%



Aquarius
(Water Bearer): January 20-February 18
Painter and Decorator: 4.92%



Pisces
(Fish):
February 19-March 20
Financial Analyst: 39.9%

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION PUBLICAITON
INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY ZINE FEBRUARY 2022

