



Lesbian Artistic Expressions

Aesthetic Inspirations for Building Communities

Panel Presentation for Rhode Island School of Design | October 2024

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What IS Wanderground Lesbian Archive/Library?

Personal Items
 Letters, postcards, cards, etc. | News clippings | Diaries | Journals | Datebooks | Photos or slides or Home videos | Oral Herstories | Organizational documents/records, etc. | Brochures, flyers, etc.


Archive
 Articles of Lesbian herstorical interest

Memorabilia
 Artwork | Unique items | Clothing (t-shirts, etc.) | Lesbian-made handcrafts | Jewelry | Misc. Artifacts, etc.

Publications (NON-circulating)
 Books | Periodicals | Zines | local community newsletters | Audio & Video Recordings - (CDs, albums, DVDs, etc.)

Museum ↔ **Library**

1950-2000
 New England
 Primarily but not totally



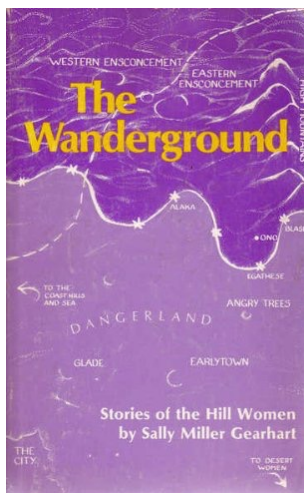
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And more details...

- ❖ Lesbian-Focused
- ❖ Highlight New England region / 1950-2000
 - With a large special collection of national / international Women in Print items and more
- ❖ Community gathering spaces (on & off-site)
 - Zoom Programs / Workshops / events on-site
 - Pop-Ups Events / Library Displays



The name Wanderground....



- ❖ Nod to Sally Miller Gearhart's novel, *The Wanderground: Stories of the Hill Women*.
- ❖ First published in 1978 by Persephone Press, **The Wanderground** stayed in print until 1999.



We have a workspace...
(open by appointment for now)



5 WANDERGROUND
LESBIAN ARCHIVE LIBRARY

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6 WANDERGROUND
LESBIAN ARCHIVE LIBRARY

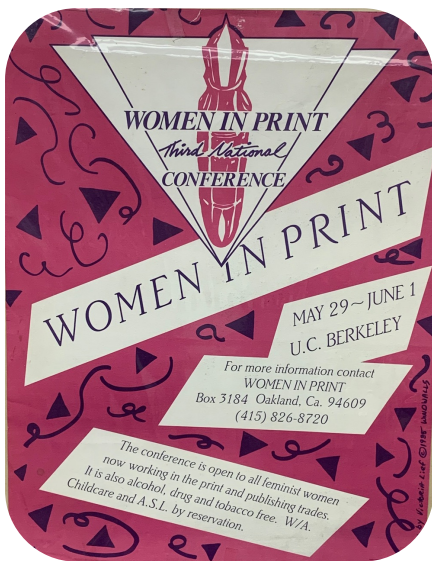
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Origin of the Wanderground Collection... 40+ years in the making....



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Our special collection... Women in Print



1985

- Between 1970-2000
- Movement of Lesbian/feminist/women-owned independent presses and bookstores (along with supportive librarians)
- Provided vibrant resources and centers that shaped, informed, and supported Lesbian/Feminist sociopolitical movements.



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We couldn't get them printed ... So ... We learned how to print

Printed by the Women's Press Collective
5251 Broadway, Oakland, Ca. 94618

It started off as a mimeograph machine in somebody's basement. Some women got the idea of publishing a book of poems and drawings by women because there wasn't anything around like it. They produced the graphics on onion skin, which stuck to the mimeograph drum so they had to lift each sheet off by hand. After many hours and lots of spaghetti and coffee they managed to produce this rather thick book called *Woman to Woman*, staple it together and start taking it around in shopping bags to sell.

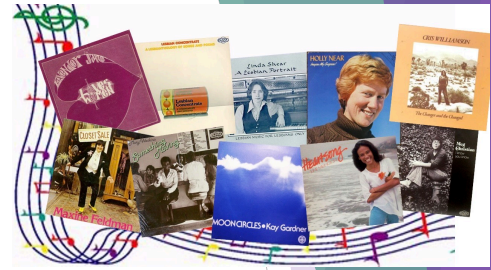
From interview with Martha Shelley, in *Sinister Wisdom* #2, Fall 1976 (p. 120)



An Ecosystem ... Lesbian Creativities & Cultural Centers



Similarly... We made our own "Women's Music" Industry



- ❖ "Women's Music"
 - Mostly Lesbian - Focuses on women's lives, civil rights, life experiences, coming out, love/romance, and often various feminist topics
- ❖ LOTS of different genres
- ❖ Musical artists supported by creation of Women's Music Industry
 - Recording labels (e.g., Olivia, Redwood), distributors (e.g., Goldenrod, Ladyslipper), local concert producers, festivals (e.g., Michigan, NWMF, NEWMR), ... Etc.

Our purpose: To reconnect with our Lesbian heritages to imagine & support Lesbian futures

