

Title

The Activist Essay: Art, Feminism and Wikipedia in the Classroom

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Abstract

Since the 1970s, women's under-representation in the arts has provoked scoreboards and chagrin. More recently, Wikipedia revealed that less than 13% of its editors are women. In 2019, Dr Louise R Mayhew and students enrolled in 2431QCA *Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body* combined the lessons of the classroom with the online activism of digital feminism, writing new and expanded Wikipedia articles on Australian women artists. The Wikipedia-based project contributes to a suite of international courses that engage in Wikipedia-based learning to cultivate critical thinking and digital literacy skills, develop specialist expertise, and contribute to the social good. This article sets out the key components and outcomes of the activist essay, providing a roadmap for fellow teachers. All resources are shared with full hope and expectation that they be replicated in classes elsewhere.

Biography

Dr Louise R Mayhew is an Australian feminist art historian. For her PhD, she constructed the first history of women-only art collectives in Australia, c. 1970–2010. Her expertise expands to include Australian, feminist and relational art histories. More broadly, she is interested in the ethics, activism, selfies and social media of contemporary visual culture. For the past four years, she has coordinated Brisbane's Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon.

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Keywords: Transformative Pedagogy, Digital Feminism, Online Activism, Affirmative Action, Feminist Art History

Introduction

Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body is a chronological (counter-) survey of art from the 1960s to the present.¹ In 2019, I ran the course as a six-week intensive seminar, taught twice weekly, and radically redesigned to move beyond learning feminism to doing feminism. Where educators typically discourage students' use of Wikipedia, the redesigned course operates within a broader pedagogical shift toward Wikipedia-based learning, which seeks to develop students' subject expertise, skills in critical thinking and digital learning, and character as socially-conscious global citizens. For *Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body*, the activist essay focused students' efforts on increasing and improving Wikipedia's coverage of Australian women artists, facilitating their critical understanding that the failures of the (always intertwined) institutions of power—Wikipedia and the White Cube alike—can be addressed from below and within.

The following text sets out the process of designing the activist essay and documents its outcomes. Buoyed by the overwhelming success of the project, this text proffers a detailed roadmap and resources to fellow teachers curious about Wikipedia-based learning. This sharing of resources recognises the significant workload entailed in redesigning courses. It pays forward the generous mentorship I received, and co-learning I undertook, from Professor Pru Mitchell, Charles Sturt University and President, Wikimedia Australia; and with Associate Professor Jane Haggis, Flinders University.

Women+Art+Wikipedia

Women's historical under-representation in art history is well-known (see for example: Nochlin 1971). More recently, *artnet news'* headline: 'Female Artists Represent Just 2

¹ *Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body* was originally developed by Professor Susan Best at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW.

Percent of the Market...', revealed the staggering extent and contemporary persistence of artworld inequality (Halperin & Burns 2019).² In Australia, The CoUNTesses continue the accounting and holding-to-account started five decades earlier by the Women's Art Movement (CoUNTesses 2016, 2017 and 2019, see also Mayhew 2014). In pink and blue pie-graphs, their recently released second report illustrates men's ongoing access to the larger slice of the pie (see CoUNTesses 2019).

Statistics recording women's inequality in the arts are familiar. Educators who compare the headcount of any classroom to the wall-count of any gallery are aware of the gendering, and the whiteness, of artistic success. Wikipedia presents a set of less familiar statistics. Wikipedia is currently the 10th (recently the 5th) most viewed website in the world; it is the largest online encyclopedia and it provides much of the data we access daily via other means (including Google, Siri and Alexa) (Wikipedia Editors 2020g). In other words, we already frequently, directly and indirectly use Wikipedia. Yet a 2010 report revealed that less than 13% of contributors to the site, and less than 10% by other counts, are women (Glott, Schmidt & Ghosh 2010). In turn, the artworld's gender inequality is exacerbated on Wikipedia, manifesting as fewer women's biographies (approximately 18% of biographies written in English) (Wikipedia Editors, 2020e) constrained by notability, topical and linguistic bias (Wagner et al 2016)

In 2013, New Yorkers initiated Art+Feminism on Wikipedia to pursue the twinned goals of training more women editors and generating new and improved content on women, feminism and art. In their words: 'The fact is when we don't tell our stories or participate in the ways our history is preserved, it gets erased' (Art+Feminism 2019). Art+Feminism now runs as an international annual campaign throughout America's 'Women's History Month' in March. In Australia, affiliated and allied events have included the Museum of Contemporary Art's 2014 contribution to Art+Feminism, Nancy Mauro-Flaude's 2014 Myth_O_Pedia_Edit_A_Thon and my own Art+Feminism(+Architecture) events in Brisbane from 2017 onwards. Most recently, the National Gallery of Australia coordinated an Australia-wide Art+Feminism for International Women's Day (March 8) in tandem with their larger #Knowmyname initiative to increase the representation and recognition of Australian women artists (Wikipedia Editors, 2020h).

² Adrian Piper replied with a scathing open letter, calling attention to *artnet news'* own role in perpetuating gender inequality via their skewed coverage of male and female artists (Piper 2019).

There are fruitful comparisons to be made here between contemporary and historical feminisms. Art+Feminism echoes the activism of the feminist art movement, which through protests and petitions (such as preceded the 1979 Biennale of Sydney) sought 50% representation for women artists. Similarly, Art+Feminism and second-wave feminism share grassroots activism, collective labour, and international commitments to networked knowledge-sharing. In the present, the landscape is digital and the tools used are technological, swapping pens for laptops and consciousness-raising circles for digital registrations and emailed instructions. Most curiously, perhaps, to the sit-in protestor of another era, is the reconfigured relationship between institutions and activism in the present. Activists are now invited in. Activism is a public program.



Figure 1: Participants at the #Knowmynamen Art+Feminism 2020, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia. Photograph: Jacinta Sutton.

Although edit-a-thons may appear technologically-daunting and research-intensive, organizing and participating in Wikipedia editing sessions is relatively easy. Setting up a Wikipedia account is straightforward, registering to have edits tracked is quick, and editing Wikipedia itself is akin to using Microsoft Word. Edit-a-thons take the form of a room full of writer-activists, huddled over laptops and poring through books. They have the feeling of a study session, as hushed voices share hurdles and solutions, and finish with a tangible sense of achievement as new words are tallied and made public. Said otherwise, the digital activism of edit-a-thons already have the shape and feel of assessments.



Figure 2: Participants at the end of Art+Feminism 2018, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane, Australia. Photograph: Louise R Mayhew.

Wikipedia+the Classroom

The use of Wikipedia in the classroom dates back to at least 2003, when educators first began registering their use of Wikipedia on the site. In pedagogical literature, educators discuss the use of Wikipedia-based assessment to develop skills in research, writing and digital literacy, experience in group authorship and peer review, and to champion through publication underwritten histories (see for example: Bhatt & Mackenzie 2019; and Di Lauro & Johinke 2017). More explicitly, Michael Caulfield extols the virtue of improving Wikipedia, describing Wikipedia-based assessments as the digital equivalent of local clean-up days. He writes: ‘Some things feel good; some things do good’ (Caulfield 2017). In 2013, the Wikimedia Foundation established Wikipedia Edu as a ‘bridge’ between Wikipedia and academia (Wiki Education 2020). The not-for-profit organisation supports teachers and students via detailed resources, online training, specially developed software for tracking students’ progress, dedicated Wikipedia experts and forums for circulating information. Wikipedia Edu recognizes the mutual

benefits to teachers and the encyclopedia: as students gain knowledge and skills they simultaneously improve the site via well-researched, -cited and up-to-date edits.

I discovered others' use of Wikipedia-based assessments via a Twitter thread by Dr Stephennie Mulder. Her opening Tweet read:

This semester in my Arts of Islam survey, I decided to scrap the research paper and have students collaborate to re-write [@Wikipedia](#) articles. It ended up better than I could have imagined & transformed how I think about teaching
#StudentsOfIslamicArt #IslamicArt #MedievalTwitter (Mulder 2018).

Mulder's own use of Wikipedia in the classroom was motivated in part by Wikipedia's gender bias. The assessment combined elements of art history and social justice, and drew on resources established by Art+Feminism and Wikipedia Edu. In the context of redesigning *Art, Gender, Feminism & the Body*, an adaptation of Mulder's project promised a method for addressing a series of coalescent pedagogical concerns: How to avoid the common problems (plagiarism, ennui and cramming) of existing assessments (essays, tutorial presentations and slide tests)?

How to engage fine art and photography students in their theory class, during the second-half of trimester, when the competition of time and energy with studio-based assessments (especially third-year major studio assessments) is highest?

And critically: how to orient all of the aspects of the course toward genuine learning outcomes?

At its heart, the activist essay develops research and writing skills common to a traditional essay, but the awareness of a public audience reading, critiquing, perhaps even deleting their work, in conjunction with the assessment's framing as a form of feminist activism, a social good, was likely to motivate students to work to a higher standard, enabling improved learning outcomes and tangible feminist activism.

Pedagogical Design: Hurdles and Solutions

In keeping with the Higher Education Academy's principle that every element of pedagogical design—lectures, tutorials and assessments—must lead to genuine learning outcomes, redesigning *Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body* for the activist essay

necessarily entailed rewriting the course learning outcomes. The redesigned learning outcomes were:

- 1 Demonstrate and reflect on knowledge of the ways gender, sexuality and the body have informed art from the 1960s to present.
- 2 Assess and apply competing theories/strategies related to art, gender, sexuality and the body.
- 3 Apply independent and collaborative skills of academic note-taking, research, critical reflection and visual analysis.
- 4 Demonstrate research-based and technology-based skills to contribute to the under-representation of women* artists on Wikipedia.

In turn, these updated learning outcomes guided the assessment design. In brief, I designed the activist essay to work in tandem with two further assessments: a guided process journal (due fortnightly) and an annotated Wikipedia article (due mid-trimester).

The process journal provided a flexible space for students to document, synthesize and extend critical seminar discussions, and complete Wikipedia training. The primary motivating factor in setting this assessment was carving out a space for students to reflect on, and develop, their engagement with art history and art theory. The process journal sought to deepen, rather than add to, their learning labour. In other words, I was cognisant that the Wikipedia-based assessment would require substantial time and effort to develop technical skills. The journal provided an antidote—no footnotes, no formatting, only reflections and critical thinking in whatever form best suited students' thoughts. Mindmaps, lists, diagrams, quotes and unstructured writing were all encouraged.

Wikipedia Edu recommends students review an article as part of their training. In this course, an annotated Wikipedia article functioned primarily as a means for students to familiarize themselves with the content, structure and language of artist biographies.

Wikipedia Edu has developed an abundance of student resources and recommends setting them all. While redesigning the course, I worked through all of these resources to determine which were most useful for the activist essay. I wondered how to efficiently build students' skills and familiarity without needlessly cutting into class-time nor creating burdensome marking. I determined to set a highly curated list of resources as homework

(see Appendix 2). Once a fortnight, I checked the homework was completed as a prerequisite for students to hand in their process journal. To accommodate this extra labour, I reviewed the course required reading list, replacing some of the longer texts with shorter and more engaging pieces. In every fourth seminar, I scheduled a final hour of open time, creating a space for students to independently and collaboratively work through tasks that had been missed or that were found to be challenging. Laptop loans ensured all students had access to functioning laptops during these sessions. In our final seminar, students peer-reviewed each other's draft articles. This task simultaneously built their familiarity with the biographical format and ensured students were drafting their article at least two weeks before the final upload.

Students are likely to be hesitant about writing for Wikipedia. More broadly, affirmative action regularly generates resentful, even antagonistic, responses (see Wikipedia Editors, 2020a). To address these concerns, I thought through the underlying beliefs that might motivate them—‘I don’t have the expertise to write on Wikipedia’; ‘I don’t value writing for a “general audience” website’; ‘Acquiring the skills to edit Wikipedia will be too hard’; ‘I don’t know how I’ll be marked on this’; ‘I don’t think women are under-represented in the artworld’ and ‘Affirmative action is not fair’—and created spaces during seminars to discuss them. For example, I opened the course with a myth-busting session on Wikipedia in tandem with an explanation of the assessments and a discussion on the course learning outcomes. In students’ minds, the average Wikipedia editor took the form of a ‘straight, white, male’ and more curiously a ‘retired academic professor writing in his area of expertise’. In reality, the average editor *is* male, but he is young and no more likely to have a tertiary degree than not. Indeed, a substantial percentage of Wikipedia editors have not completed secondary education (Glott, Schmidt & Ghosh 2010). By revealing statistics on the “average” Wikipedia editor, students learned that *their* access to libraries, research methods and mentors, positioned them as ideal editors.

I also redesigned every fourth seminar to bring elements of art history and the assessment into dialogue. These covered ‘Gender+Power’, ‘Collaboration+Knowledge’ and ‘Intersectionality+Contemporary Practice’.³ These discussions provided a space for

³ Students were encouraged to pose questions in class, or to use Google slides as a method for asking anonymous questions. These ranged from practical concerns, such as: ‘How do we know

students to articulate, and work through, their reservations. In a discussion on resisting affirmative action, one student voiced hesitations regarding affirmative action in the armed forces. A critically-engaged tutor/student-led discussion on merit and meritocracies ensued.

Open spaces also allowed students to discuss hyper-contemporary concerns that arose throughout trimester. Our opening seminar took place in the Griffith University Art Museum exhibition, *The Abyss*, which subsequently made national headlines for its inclusion of Juan Davila's *Holy Family* (1985). We revisited the topic of controversy and censorship in our next open seminar, folding in knowledge of the exhibition and the curator's rationale with contemporary headlines and their attendant politics and power dynamics. These discussions were deployed in tandem with the guided process journal, which encouraged students to articulate how their thinking changed throughout the course.

I was aware that I was entering this course with exceptionally high expectations from my students. I was desiring them all to genuinely commit to the assessment and to be engaged in every seminar. I knew that to lead students in openness, flexibility and engagement, that I and my tutor—Nicholas Aloisio-Shearer—would also need to do the same. To make space for longer, deeper, discussions I culled and combined existing lectures. To respect their adherence to an intensive assessment schedule (which included assessment due dates in weeks two, three, four, six and eight), I committed my tutor and myself to marking quickly and frequently, turning around all assessments in less than a week. I worked hard to ensure all assessment descriptions, rubrics and homework tasks were exceptionally well-organised, concise and clear to avoid any unease or lack of clarity regarding the *newness* of the assessments being unnecessarily exacerbated via poor communication.

Finally, I needed to attend to how to write the Wikipedia-assessment itself. Wikipedia Edu emphasises the need for quality over quantity and asks teachers to remove word-limits from Wikipedia-based assessments. In lieu of word-limits (which can result in

if an image can be reproduced on Wikipedia without infringing copyright?' through to larger quandaries including: 'The Long Death of Freud: why do we still use Freudian Psychoanalysis in art history?'

students needlessly ‘padding-out’ their writing) and arguments (that ask students to seek out opinions supporting their own), Wikipedia encourages incremental additions and improvements. It asks for well-cited sentences that demonstrate the notability of their subject, and well-written paragraphs that adhere to Wikipedia’s principles of clarity, neutrality and verifiability. These instructions are essential to ensuring student work is not deleted. To assist students in shifting away from word-targets and toward these principles, they were explicitly discussed (and critiqued) in class.⁴ These new principles required a redesigned marking rubric, attending to the importance of their additions, the quality of their writing, the fullness of their referencing and—uniquely—evidence of their commitment to collaboration (see Appendix 4).

I also needed to attend to *who* students should research. Rather than drawing a line temporally or geographically, which I suspected might yield unusual results and difficulties in research and marking, I opted for a pre-determined list. Given the newness of the assessment, I reasoned that a set list would provide students with a level of clarity, and produce a tangible measure of progress as students increased the percentage of artists on the list with accurate and up-to-date Wikipedia pages. The Cruthers Collection of Women’s Art (CCWA) is Australia’s largest collection of women artists. It holds over 700 works by celebrated modernists, to emerging contemporary artists, under-recognised artists, and both traditional and contemporary Indigenous artists (for more on the collection see *Sheila: A Foundation for Women in Visual Art*). The list covers sufficient range and breadth to provide interesting artists to a diverse group of students, and the majority of its artists sit at useful points along a spectrum of “sufficiently known”: to meet Wikipedia’s requirements for notability and verifiability, yet “sufficiently unknown” to make the writing of new and expanded Wikipedia articles worthwhile. Moreover, the Cruthers’ collection provides another model of feminist affirmative action. By setting the assessment in tandem with the collection I hoped to demonstrate to students how small-scale grassroots activisms and the larger decisions of wealthy collectors and benefactors can work in unison. Moreover, *Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body*, like most art history courses, unintentionally focuses on the art of elsewhere: namely Europe and America. By setting the Cruthers’ list of Australian artists, I hoped to facilitate students’ connection

⁴ In the context of *Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body*, the gendered implications and limitations of notability and verifiability were especially contentious.

with the subjects of their research, linking them via material conditions and geographic location.

Given the parameters of the major assessment, I opened the annotated Wikipedia biography assessment to any articles on women or non-binary artists, enabling students to research artists relevant to their practice, interests and identity. The only caveat was that the article was an appropriate length. Three students navigated this task in especially interesting and successful ways.

The first chose Gluck: 'a lesbian and gender-nonconforming British painter' (Wikipedia editors, 2020f) (Figure 3). To critique Gluck's page, the student first completed her own research on the artist and then compared this to the article. She found significant gaps regarding Gluck's career, such as Gluck's invention and patenting of an innovative picture frame. She also highlighted the disjuncture between the gender pronouns used throughout the article (where Gluck's preferred pronoun 'they' was used) and in the back-end discussion on the 'talk' page (where individual editors referred to Gluck as 'she').



Figure 3: Gluck, *Medallion*, 1937

The next selected Daisy Andrews, an Indigenous Australian painter from the Walmajarri desert tribe (Wikipedia Editors 2020c). She followed every citation in the article, comparing the source material with the Wikipedia text. She found multiple instances of plagiarism and conjecture. In other words, the editors for this page both repeated too closely and strayed too far from their source material. The root of the problem, she determined, lay in the lack of sufficient scholarly source material, pointing to a larger problem in regarding Australia's coverage of contemporary artists. A third student selected Elaine de Kooning (Wikipedia Editors 2020d), critiquing her page by comparing it to the article for her husband, Willem de Kooning (Wikipedia Editors 2020j). Via close feminist analysis, he determined that Elaine's page, like Gluck's, focused unnecessarily on her social life to the detriment of discussing her career.

The Upload

Students published their final articles in an ‘upload party’ during the assessment period, two weeks after our final class (Figures 4–6). This allowed precious working time beyond the tight six-week course timeframe, and allowed for collaboration between students, guidance from teaching staff, and expert advice from Professor Kerry Raymond, Wikimedia Australia, who lent her knowledge to the afternoon. The three-hour assessment zone was procedurally comparable to an exam and its attendance requirements yet realistically resembled a good study session: filled with conversation and food. The first pair of students published their article three-minutes in, to a round of applause, and then continued typing, embedding their new text into Wikipedia’s web.⁵



Figure 4: 2431QCA Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body students during the Upload Party.

⁵ ‘Orphan’ articles without links to or from other articles are more likely to be automatically deleted.



Figure 5: Professor Kerry Raymond lends expert advice to students.

Final Assessment - New or expanded Wikipedia article

+


Do you need to speak with Kerry, Louise or Nick? Add your name/s and a brief outline of the question/issue below, after any names present, and remove once addressed.
Twiddling your thumbs? Think about what further edits you might write, what comments can you leave on the talk page for others to see/keep working on, consider if you can help others...

We are stuck and can't move forward	We have a big question but I can keep working	We have a small question	We are ready for our work to be reviewed	We are ready to submit!!	SUBMITTED!!
					Margot & Safron Abby & Talisa Richard & Rainer Sarah & Will Isabella & Lucas Jadyn & Kirsty ALISHA & ADAM WINNERS Grace, Meg and Summer Kate and Lachie Ben & Georgie Deb and Sam Sophia & Sidonie Meg & Grace Rhianna and Koreelah Therese & Nelson

Figure 6: Screenshot of the Google slide used during the Upload Party.

At the end of the upload session, all 37 students had successfully contributed to Wikipedia, developing 13 new and five improved women artist biographies (see Wiki Education Foundation 2020). Together they typed almost 50,000 words and 700 references, garnering over 700,000 views to date (Wiki Education Foundation 2020). As a result of their efforts, Wikipedia now hosts articles on Alison Alder, Mikala Dwyer, Mary Macqueen (Figure 7) and Vicky Varvaressos, and improved texts on Vivienne Binns, Dorrit Black and Joy Hester (Figure 8) among others.

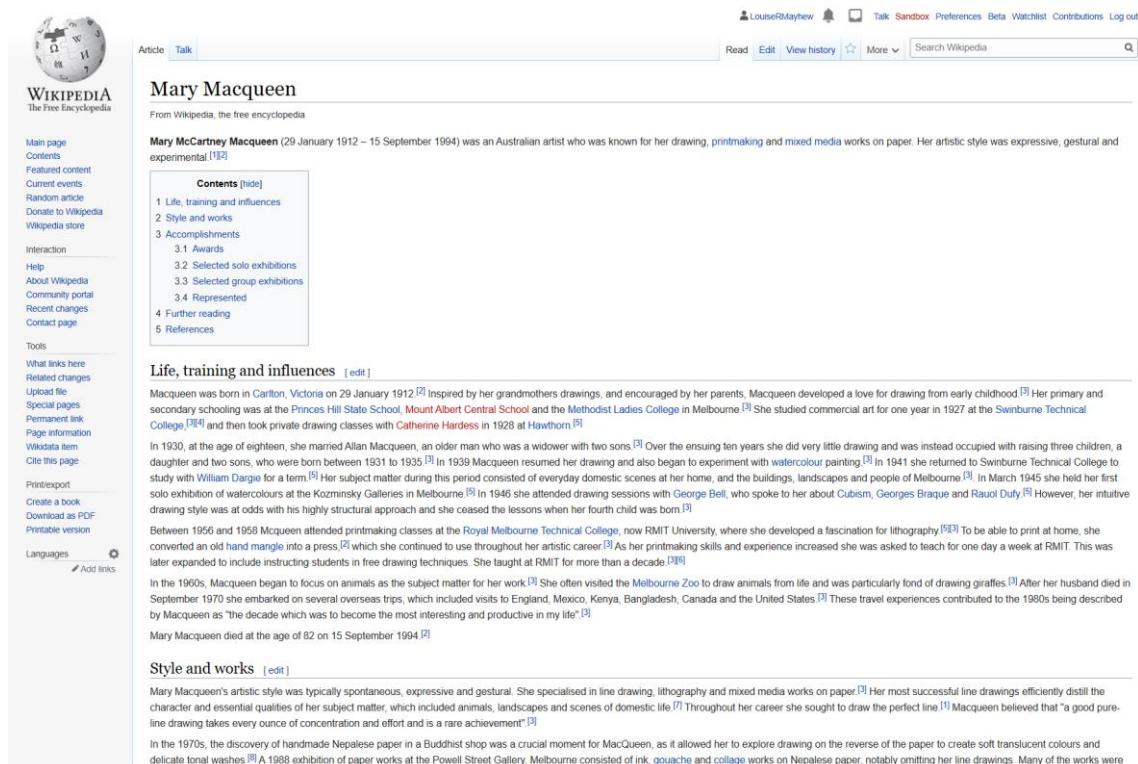

 A screenshot of a Wikipedia article page for "Mary Macqueen". The page title is "Mary Macqueen" and it is the first result in a search bar. The page content includes a brief summary, a table of contents, and several sections of text detailing her life, training, and influences, as well as her style and works. The page is well-structured with headings and sub-headings, and includes numerous citations and links to other sources.

Figure 7: Screenshot of the opening paragraphs of the new Mary Macqueen biography on Wikipedia.

Joy Hester

How did the article viewer work for you? X

Joy St Clair Hester (31 August 1920 – 4 December 1960) was an Australian artist. She was a member of the Angry Penguins movement and the Heide Circle who played an integral role in the development of Australian Modernism.^[1] Hester is best known for her bold and expressive ink drawings.^[1] Her work was charged with a heightened awareness of mortality due to the death of her father during her childhood, the threat of war, and her personal experience with Hodgkin's Disease.^[2] Hester is most well known for the series *Face, Sleep, and Love* (1948–49)^[3] as well as the later works, *The Lovers* (1956–58).^[1]

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Biography

Early life

Hester was born on the 31st of August, 1920 and raised in Elwood to middle-class parents Louise and Robert Hester. Robert died from a heart attack when Hester was twelve.^[4] Hester studied art from an early age and was a student at St Michael's Grammar School from 1933 to 1937.^[5] At 17, Hester enrolled in Commercial Art at Brighton Technical School for one year before leaving to attend the National Gallery School in Melbourne.^[6] Her curriculum was based in traditional media and practice, however Hester took the opportunity to break free from formal restraints.^[2] In 1938 Hester won the Gallery School's Drawing Head from Life prize.^[7] Taking up classes at both the Design school, and Painting and Life school gave her early recognition.^[2] Her work during this time, though bound by tradition, was concerned with shadow and tonal shading, the relationships between dark and light.^[2]

Joy Hester	
	
Hester	
Born	Joy St Clair Hester 31 August 1920 Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Died	4 December 1960 (aged 40) Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Nationality	Australian
Known for	Painting Drawing
Movement	Angry Penguins

Figure 8: Screenshot of the opening paragraphs of the Joy Hester biography on Wikipedia. Edits made by students are highlighted in purple.

Students+The Activist Essay

At the close of the project, students reflected on their experiences. 58% ‘preferred writing for Wikipedia than writing a traditional research essay’ (33% were neutral and only 2 respondents, or 9%, would have preferred writing an essay); and an overwhelming 87.5% of students reported they were more likely to ‘contribute to forms of activism toward gender equality’ (only 3 respondents, or 12.5%, were neutral).

Some recounted frustrations with sourcing information on Australian women artists while others marvelled at the abundance of readily accessible information that, nevertheless, is missing online. Enjoying the semi-archival research mode, one announced their plans to continue after graduation with PhD research. Many articulated the ease of using Wikipedia and their plans to continue editing in both activist and editorial modes.

Turning their attention to the value of the activist essay, they wrote: ‘I found it very valuable using Wikipedia for an assignment, in that my research had a clear, defined,

real-world impact' and 'It felt as though the research I was doing would actually be relevant and could be part of a broader conversation on changing art history.' Others valued: 'actually doing feminism—as opposed to just learning about it', writing: 'It gave the assessment a sense of legacy building, like we were contributing to Australian art history'.

They reported learning 'a great deal about research'. The assignment motivated them to move beyond texts accessible online and into the physical spaces of university libraries and the state library, 'searching through endless sources for pieces of information' and requiring them to develop skills in data organisation, so they could always trace their gathered data to its source. Students even reported fact-checking what they read, cross-checking one text with others to consider their claims 'verified'; as well as editing, re-editing, and re-editing their texts in preparation for Wikipedia's approval process and plagiarism-seeking bots.

They reported the affirmative action component of the course opened their eyes to the reality of women's under-representation and motivated them to work harder on their assessment. A final student recognized her feminism, which she had oriented towards a better future, could also look to the past, re/writing art history with women who deserved to be 'remembered'.

The Activist Essay: Art, Feminism and Wikipedia in the Classroom

The activist essay was overwhelmingly successful. Materially, new and expanded articles on Australian women artists now exist on Wikipedia. Pedagogically, students were genuinely incentivised to improve their research, writing and digital literacy skills. They gained a new, or bolstered, appreciation of women's under-representation in the arts and developed the desire, confidence and strategies to work collaboratively towards gender inequality from within and below. In doing so, the activist essay uniquely addressed the desire for assessments to have real-world impact, simultaneously tackling the artworld's misogyny and benefiting the broader community by translating the specialised language of the artworld into highly accessible articles.

Teaching the activist essay was—without caveat or hesitation—the most rewarding experience I've had in 10 years' teaching. It was overwhelmingly satisfying to observe

students genuinely commit themselves: academically, ethically and emotionally to the task. Their journal reflections revealed raw, articulate and intelligent responses to the significant and critical ideas covered in the course and their final Wikipedia articles were exceptionally well-researched and written.

Acknowledgements

My very warm thanks to Associate Jane Haggis, my co-learner in re-writing a course for Wikipedia-based learning; Professor Pru Mitchell, for your dedicated support and advice on using Wikipedia in the classroom; Professor Kerry Raymond, for your professional expertise and clarity while making the classroom's articles live; and Henry Cook, L&T, Griffith University for our many pedagogical conversations. My deep thanks to Dr Jude Williams (SFHEA), Learning Futures, Griffith University and her team for their outstanding delivery of the 2019 AFHEA program, which facilitated so many of the improvements I made to my teaching. Finally, thank you to Professor Susan Best, who expertly crafted *Art, Gender, Sexuality & the Body* and first trusted me with teaching it.

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The research was conducted in accordance with Griffith University's research ethics procedures.

APPENDICES

1. Assessment Schedule

Assessment	Due Date	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
Process Journal	4 Sept, 18 Sept and 2 Oct	40%	1, 2, 3, 4
Annotated Wikipedia Article	11 Sept	20%	3, 4
Wikipedia Article	16 Oct	40%	3, 4

2. Course Schedule

<p>Week 1.1 Introduction</p> <p>In-class</p> <p>Introduction to Assessment Plan</p> <p>Setting up an Account</p> <p>Enrolling in the Dashboard</p> <p>Key points: quality over quantity, marking criteria, help and support</p> <p>Assessment 1 Process Journal and Homework</p> <p>Reflect on the course, exhibition and/or assessment</p> <p>Create a Wikipedia Account</p> <p>Update your User Page</p> <p>Enrol in the Dashboard</p>
<p>Week 1.2 Postminimalism</p> <p>Assessment 1 Process Journal and Homework</p> <p>Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s</p> <p>Homework: Form pairs and preview CCWA list of artists</p> <p>Further Resources</p> <p>Wikipedia and the Production of Knowledge</p>

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1a/Theories Wikipedia and the production of knowledge.pdf](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1a/Theories_Wikipedia_and_the_production_of_knowledge.pdf)

Week 2.1 Body Art

In-class

Form pairs for Assessment 3

Process Journal and Homework

Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s

Homework: Confirm selected artist on Wikipedia Dashboard

Training: Policies and Sandbox, Talk Pages and Watchlists

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students>

Further Resources

Editing Wikipedia, A guide

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Editing_Wikipedia_brochure_\(Wiki_Education_Foundation\)_%282016%29.pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Editing_Wikipedia_brochure_(Wiki_Education_Foundation)_%282016%29.pdf)

Week 2.2 Gender + Knowledge

In-class

What is Wikipedia? What are its problems?

What is Affirmative Action? Why is it necessary? (What is the state of gender in/equality in the arts?)

Why this assessment?

Open discussion

Complete homework and journal reflections

Due: Assessment 1.1 Process Journal

Process Journal and Homework

Training: Evaluate Wikipedia, use slides 3–6 to guide your analysis

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students/evaluate-wikipedia-exercise>

Further Resources

Training: Evaluating Articles and Sources

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students>

Week 3.1 Performance, Narcissism and Masochism

In-class

Return Assessment 1.1 Process Journal

Process Journal and Homework

Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s

Week 3.2 Female sensibility and collectivism

Due: Assessment 2 Annotated article

Process Journal and Homework

Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s

Week 4.1 Queer Art

In-class

Return and discuss Assessment 2 Annotated Wikipedia Article

Process Journal and Homework

Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s

Training: How to Edit

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students>

Week 4.2 Collaboration + Knowledge

In-class

Collaboration as teamwork and activism

Contributing to Wikipedia: Community etiquette

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:The_community

Research strategies

Open discussion

Complete homework and journal reflections

Due: Assessment 1.2 Process Journal

Process Journal and Homework

Source three scholarly articles for Assessment 3

Week 5.1 Bad Girls/Sick Boys

In-class

Return and discuss Assessment 1.2 Process Journal

Process Journal and Homework

Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s

Training Plagiarism

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students/plagiarism>

Further Resources

Editing articles on Art History

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6d/Editing_Wikipedia_articles_on_art_history.pdf

Drafting as a group

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students/drafting-in-sandbox-group>

Week 5.2 Subjectivity & Relational Aesthetics

Process Journal and Homework

Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s

Source three scholarly articles for Assessment 3

Week 6.1 Global Feminism/Contemporary Masculinity

Process Journal and Homework

Reflect on seminar and/or set reading/s

Week 6.2 Intersectionality + Contemporary Practice***In-class***

Where are we now? What new debates and practices have surfaced? How does your thinking/writing/practice engage with these?

Open discussion

Peer review draft articles

Complete homework and journal reflections

Due: Assessment 1.3 Process Journal and draft Assessment 3

Further Resources

Training: Peer review a draft article

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students/peer-review>

Training: Moving a group draft from the sandbox to live editing

<https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/training/students/moving-to-mainspace-group>

Week 8 Upload Party**3. Assessment Descriptions****Process Journal**

For this assessment, you are asked to engage with the ideas and practices of each seminar in a reflective journal.

General and Guided Reflections

After every seminar, your condensed and considered reflection may take the form/s of:

Summary of key ideas from the seminar and/or set reading;

Selected quotes and associated thoughts;

Connection of ideas from one seminar to another;

Application of key ideas to yours or others' artworks;

Reflection on the implication of ideas;

Diagrams, flowcharts, visualisations, brainstorms and/or mind-maps;
Extended responses to discussion questions; and/or
Reflections on writing for Wikipedia.

Parameters

Approximately 1 x A4 page per seminar response
Approximately 100-300 words per seminar response

Set Tasks

Some seminars will also require the completion of set tasks. Set tasks must be completed as a condition for your process journal being accepted, marked and returned.

Marking Criteria

You will be marked on: Completion, comprehension, engagement and clarity

Annotated Wikipedia Article

For this assessment, you must select and critically analyse one woman's artist biography on Wikipedia. You should print out the article for annotating and refer to your annotations in your review.

Your analysis should attend to the following:

Why is the person deserving of a page?

How is the page written? (with attention to content and tone)

How does the page relate to other sources of information (ie cited texts, linked sites, linked Wikipedia pages)?

How could it be expanded or improved? (see Talk page, provide specific examples)

Parameters

Selecting an artist: Before selecting an article for review, consider its length. A biography between 3 paragraphs and two pages is reasonable.

Example lengths: Dorrit Black, May Gibbs, Rosalie Gascoigne, Hito Steyerl, Amalia Ulman, Margo Lewers, Frances Phoenix, Jenny Watson, Margaret Olley.

Word Length: Less than 500 words plus annotations.

Writing Style: Your review should be concise and neutral. It should not take the form of an essay. Practice your writing-for-Wikipedia style with information-rich paragraphs and

clear topic sentences.

Marking Criteria

You will be marked on: Expression, Comprehension and Comprehensiveness

Resources

[Evaluate Wikipedia](#)

[Lists of Women Artists](#)

[List of 20th Century Women Artists](#)

[List of Australian Women Artists](#)

[Australian Feminist Art Timeline](#)

[Women Artists](#)

[Women Surrealists](#)

Further Resources

[Training: Evaluating Articles and Sources](#)

Wikipedia Article

For this group assignment, you are being asked to create or expand one artist biography on Wikipedia.

Parameters

You must select an artist from the [Cruther's Collection of Women's Art](#). The full list is available [here](#).

You should review the full list of artists, and select an artist who:

Is not on Wikipedia or whose Wikipedia article is less than one page; and

Is relatively easy to research. For example: their work is: collected by major galleries and/or is exhibited in major exhibitions, and they are covered in more than one scholarly publication in some detail; and

Is interesting to you.

There is no word limit for this assessment. Marking will focus on *quality* rather than *quantity*. You should attend to the full rubric to understand how you should approach this assessment and how you will be marked.

Marking Criteria:

You will be marked on the following: Contribution, Expression, Research and Referencing, Collaboration and Community Engagement

Suggested new artist pages

Alison Alder, Zanny Begg, Wendy Black, Barbara Brash, Dorothy Braund, Janet Burchill, Julia Church/Another Planet Posters, Debra Dawes, Pam Debenham/Lucifoil, Mikala Dwyer (selected), Narelle Jubelin, Mary MacQueen, Toni Robertson, Eveline Syme

Suggested articles for improving or expanding

A.M.E Bale, Portia Bennett, Dorrit Black (selected), Judy Cassab, Grace Crowley, Janet Dawson, Julie Dowling, Fiona Foley (selected), Joy Hester (selected), Nora Heysen, Bea Maddock, Erica McGilchrist An(ie) Newmarch, Raquel Ormella (selected), Arlene TextaQueen,

4. Assessment Rubrics

2431QCA Seminar Journal Rubric

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<p>Outstanding reflections demonstrate a deep understanding of significant and complex ideas and practices via:</p> <p>Outstanding Critical Thinking Summarizing significant and complex ideas from seminars and/or readings with attention to questioning the possibilities and limitations of this new knowledge and Outstanding Engagement Applying and/or synthesizing new knowledge from seminars and readings with pre-existing and/or further researched knowledge</p>	<p>Very good reflections demonstrate a strong understanding of significant ideas and practices via:</p> <p>Critical Thinking Summarizing significant ideas from seminars and/or readings with attention to questioning the possibilities and limitations of this new knowledge and/or</p> <p>Engagement Applying and/or synthesizing new knowledge from seminars and/or readings with pre-existing knowledge</p>	<p>Good reflections demonstrate solid understanding of relevant ideas and practices via:</p> <p>Summary Summarizing relevant ideas from seminars and/or readings in your own words/images/tables, etc.</p> <p>Reflection Articulating your own responses to selected ideas and/or practices</p>	<p>Satisfactory reflections demonstrate reasonable understanding of relevant ideas and practices with minor inaccuracies via:</p> <p>Documentation Documenting relevant ideas via quotes, etc</p> <p>Reflection Articulating your own basic responses to selected ideas and/or practices</p>	<p>Unsatisfactory reflections do not demonstrate understanding of relevant ideas and practices.</p>

2431QCA Annotated Wikipedia Rubric

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
For this assignment, you must select and critically analyze one women's artist biography on Wikipedia Consider the length. A biography between 3 paragraphs and two pages is reasonable.				
The selected article is appropriate for the exercise				
				The selected article is inappropriate for the exercise. The assessment will be returned unmarked for resubmission.
Why is the person deserving of a page? How is the page written? (with attention to content and tone) How does the page relate to other sources of information (ie cited texts, linked sites, linked Wikipedia pages)? How could it be expanded or improved? (see Talk page, provide specific examples)				
Analysis critically and adequately attends to all set questions Demonstrates appropriate further research	Analysis critically and/or adequately attends to set questions with some minor oversights Demonstrates some further research	Analysis critically and/or adequately attends to set questions with some oversights	Analysis attends to set questions with some inaccuracies or oversights Analysis does not demonstrate critical distance	Analysis is misguided
Print out the article for annotating and refer to your annotations in your review. Practice your Wikipedia-writing style. Your review should be concise and neutral. It should not take the form of an essay. Instead practice writing information-rich paragraphs with clear topic sentences.				
Annotations are clear and appropriate Writing is clear, concise and neutral.			Annotations are excessive/insufficient Writing lacks clarity in parts	Annotations are unclear/inappropriate Annotations are missing Writing is unclear. Writing does not follow requested structure or tone.

2431QCA Wikipedia Article Rubric

Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Major contribution to important sections		Major contribution to less important sections; or Minor contribution to relevant sections	Minor contribution to less important sections	Minor edits; or Irrelevant contribution
Clear organization Excellent grammar Appropriate language Neutral tone Links to important information	Clear organization Good grammar with minor errors; or Appropriate language with minor errors; or neutral tone with minor errors Links to relevant information	Good organization Good grammar with minor errors; and Appropriate language with minor errors; and or neutral tone with minor errors	Poor or confusing organization Grammar has errors Language is too informal or scholarly Tone is partisan	No organization Writing is unclear Language is inappropriate Tone is promotional
All statements are clearly supported by citations. Citation sources are appropriately good and varied. Citation formatting is correct and complete.	Statements are supported by citations. Citation sources are good. Citation formatting is correct and complete with some minor errors.	Some statements are not supported. Some citation sources are poor. Citation formatting indicates sufficient information for finding.	Some sections are not supported. Citation sources are poor. Citation formatting indicates sufficient information for finding with difficulty.	Few or no sources. Citation sources are unreliable. Citation formatting does not provide sufficient information for finding.
Edits/talkpage/ sandbox/reflection journal/classroom behavior demonstrates exceptional collaboration and working with Wikipedia community	Edits/talkpage/ sandbox/reflection journal/classroom behavior demonstrates strong collaboration and/or working with Wikipedia community	Edits/talkpage/ sandbox/reflection journal/classroom behavior demonstrates good collaboration and/or working with Wikipedia community	Edits/talkpage/ sandbox/reflection journal/classroom behavior demonstrates basic collaboration and/or working with Wikipedia community	Edits/talkpage/ sandbox/reflection journal/classroom behavior demonstrates poor collaboration and/or working with Wikipedia community

This rubric was adapted from the 'Wikipedia Assignment Assessment': 'A guide for evaluating student contributions to Wikipedia'.

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