

# HOW TO BE A FEMINIST ARCHIVIST-ACTIVIST

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***Feminist archives make space for women's history, provide context, and challenge the status quo. There are many ways to be a feminist archivist-activist so don't limit yourself and put into practice what works for you.***

## HERE ARE A FEW GENERAL TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED!

- Become involved, actively participate, or observe and become familiar with the community you are documenting.
- Decide if you want to start your own collection of feminist activities or if you would like to help or collaborate with an existing archive or collection.
- Decide what exactly you want to collect. You could collect and document a specific feminist art collective, one specific event like the Women's March, or you could focus on a topic like feminism and fiber arts, etc.
- Examples of materials to collect: fliers, postcards, letters, emails, posters, stickers, zines, pamphlets, newsletters, journals, magazines, books, photographs, slides, oral histories, journals, sketchbooks, photo albums, videos, audio recordings, buttons, newspaper clippings, etc.
- Write your own history of the objects and documents you collect.
- Make lists of people, places, exhibitions, books, protests, organizations, schools, etc.
- Make decisions about where you are going to keep the materials. Are you going to donate them to an institutional archive, a grassroots archive, or are you going to start your own archive? Alana Kumbier's book listed below is a great resource on this topic.
- Use platforms like online calendars to help document activities.
- Reach out to other feminist groups and your feminist idols for advice or suggestions.
- Take to social media! Instagram is a great platform for feminism, especially feminist art. Look for feminist hashtags, for example #feministfriday.
- Share your research and your materials at conferences, in blog posts, in zines, at zine fests, in journals, in exhibitions, etc.
- Visit archives! A common trope in feminism is that women of different generations have to re-do all of the work that the previous generation did. Learn what is out there and build on previous collections. If you are creating a women's artist registry come to visit the Women's Art Registry (Special Collections & University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries) to see how and why Lucy Lippard and the Ad Hoc Women Artists Committee started theirs in the late 1960s. Don't know how to look for relevant archives? Ask a librarian!
- Use Your Library Card! Here are some suggested readings to get you started:
  - Bly, Lyz and Kelly Wooten, eds. *Make Your Own History: Documenting Feminist and Queer Activism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Los Angeles, CA: Litwin Books, 2012.
  - Eichhorn, Kate. *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013.
  - Kumbier, Alana. *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive*. Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, LLC, 2014.
  - Lerner, Gerda. *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.