

Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work

This output comprises a curated exhibition of work by feminist social documentary photographer Franki Raffles (1955-1994), a related exhibition catalogue and associated events.

Jenny Brownrigg



Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work

Reid Gallery, The Glasgow School of Art, 4 March - 27 April 2017

Image: Alan Dimmick

Project Details

Exhibition curator: Jenny
Brownrigg

Collaborator:

Dr Alistair Scott (Edinburgh
Napier University) and
Franki Raffles Archive

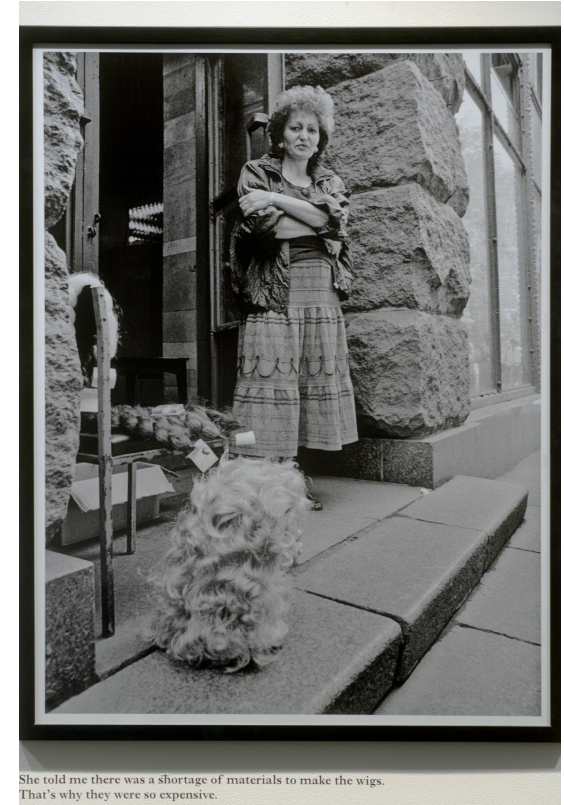
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Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles,
Reid Gallery, 4 Mar- 27 Apr 2017. Image:
Alan Dimmick



Preview, *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work*

Reid Gallery, GSA, 2017

Image: Alan Dimmick

Research Question

What new knowledge can curatorial methodologies and exhibition-making contribute to understanding the overlooked practices of 20th Century women photographers in Scotland, in this case, Franki Raffles?

How can a curatorial 'context sensitive' appraisal of Franki Raffles' photography illuminate her process, methods and aims?

How might exhibition-making enable the contextualisation of Franki Raffles' in relation to her contemporaries and earlier women photographers?

How can a curatorial methodology broaden a response to feminist practice beyond a biographical approach?

Research Output

This output comprises a solo exhibition of Franki Raffles' work, titled *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work*, Reid Gallery, The Glasgow School of Art (4 March – 27 April 2017), which included:

- 63 digital reproductions of Raffles' photographs from University of St Andrews Library Special Collections;
- 3 original posters of the original Zero Tolerance campaign, from Glasgow Women's Library;
- 1 billboard size new paste-up of Zero Tolerance logo;
- 3 display cases including original artefacts on loan from University of St Andrews Special Collections, Glasgow Women's Library and Helen Muspratt Estate
- 2 original photographs by Helen Muspratt from Helen Muspratt Estate; 1 digital reproduction of a Margaret Fay Shaw photograph from National Trust for Scotland Canna House; 1 digital reproduction of a work by The Hackney Flashers Collective; and 3 digital reproductions of Doris Ullmann from Berea College, Berea KY, USA.

<http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/5081/>



Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles, Reid Gallery, The Glasgow School of Art (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick

Research Output

This output also includes :

- An original commissioned performance artwork *Scrubbing For Franki* by Kate Clayton, responding to the central theme of the show
- A symposium, co-organised with Dr Alistair Scott *Assessing the impact and legacy of feminist photographer Franki Raffles*, at CCA Glasgow
- An exhibition catalogue: J Brownrigg & A Scott (eds.), *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work*, Publisher: Glasgow School of Art, 2017. Includes Essay: J Brownrigg, *Observing Women at Work*
<http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/5081/48/%27Observing%20Women%20at%20Work%27%20essay.pdf>
- Conference paper J Brownrigg & A Scott, 'Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles,' *Fast Forward: Women in Photography*,

Lithuanian edition, National Gallery of Arts, Vilnius, Lithuania (2017)

<http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/5681/>

- Workshop paper 'Contemporary Art in Scotland: Franki Raffles Study Day,' University of St Andrews, (2019)

<http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/7061/>

- Article: J Brownrigg & A Scott, 'Photomonitor: J Brownrigg & A Scott in conversation,' *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work*, (2017)

<http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/5436/>



(top) *Scrubbing For Franki*, Kate Clayton performance, GSA (2017) Photo: Ruudu Ulas

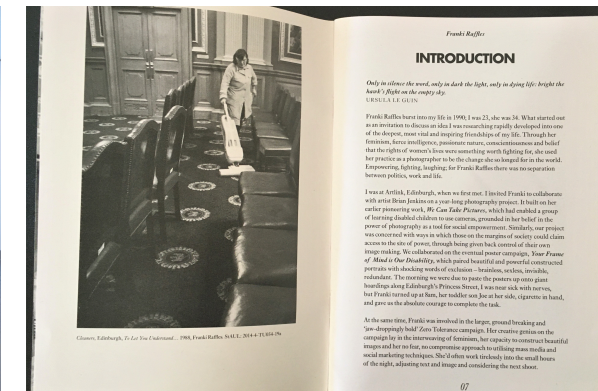
(bottom) *Assessing the impact and legacy of feminist photographer Franki Raffles* symposium, CCA Glasgow (2017)

Research Output

This research used curatorial methods to contribute to the art historical positioning of Franki Raffles' work. In particular, it sought to raise the profile of her work within the context of women documentary photographers in Scotland.

This was the first exhibition of Raffles' work in 25 years. Curatorial methods have drawn out new knowledge on her processes, approach to subject and intentions, whilst further contextualising her practice by showing it alongside historical women photographers and those who would have been her contemporaries. The related co-edited exhibition catalogue is the first publication on Raffles' work.

The range of outputs, including exhibition, exhibition catalogue, performance event, symposium and papers have also contributed to further disseminating the themes of Raffles' photography to professionals and public; the latter connection is also illustrated by media coverage.



Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles: (clockwise) exhibition, exhibition catalogue, symposium, performance event (2017)

Research Output

The exhibition *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work*, Reid Gallery, The Glasgow School of Art (11 March-27 April 2017), presented a selection of black and white photographs and archival material by feminist social documentary photographer, Franki Raffles (1955-1994).

This was the first solo exhibition of Raffles' practice in twenty-three years, following her death at age thirty-nine. Her practice had not been visible in the intervening period until her work was accessioned to physical and digital archives in 2016 through the work of Dr Alistair Scott (Edinburgh Napier University). This exhibition was an opportunity to draw from this digital archive as well as University of St Andrews Library Special Collections.

Raffles' work had been missing from feminist art history discourse. The exhibition sought to make Raffles' particular contribution visible.



Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



Women Workers, Russia 1989

Installation view, *Observing Women at Work:*
Franki Raffles

Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick

Research Output

The exhibition brought together three bodies of Raffles' work:

- *To Let You Understand...* (1988): 14 photographs shown from a larger series that was part of a year-long project initiated by Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee. Raffles documented working women's lives in Edinburgh, as part of this project looking at women's pay and conditions in Scotland
- *Women at Work, Russia* (1989): 34 photographs from a larger series that Raffles took on a road trip to Russia, just before perestroika, capturing Soviet women at work in both rural and urban places.
- and 3 posters, original artefacts and other related material from the first *Zero Tolerance campaign* (1993), entitled *Prevalence*. *Zero Tolerance* was a charity established by Franki Raffles and Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee in the late 1980s, to raise awareness of the issue of men's violence against women and children.



Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



Detail, *Women Workers, Russia* (1989), from
Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles, Reid
Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



Detail, *Women Workers, Russia* (1989) from
Observing Women at Work: Frankie Raffles, Reid
Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



Installation view, *To Let You Understand....*
(1988) and *Zero Tolerance* (1993) from *Observing
Women at Work: Franki Raffles*, Reid Gallery,
GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



Two of three original posters exhibited from *Zero Tolerance* campaign (1993)

Reid Gallery GSA, (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



Installation view of *To Let You Understand...*
(1988)

Observing Women at Work: Frankie Raffles

Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



Detail, *To Let You Understand...* (1988)

Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles

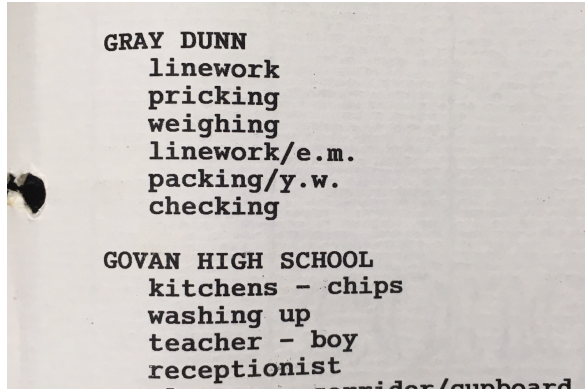
Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



(Top and middle row)

Original prints, contact sheets and Raffles' typed index, from 'To Let You Understand...'
These were shown in a display case.



(Bottom row)

Original documentation prints, cards and mark ups, from *Zero Tolerance*, These were shown in a display case.



Observing Women At Work: Franki Raffles, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017) Images: Alan Dimmick

Research Output

In a second section of the gallery, Raffles' work was shown alongside four other women photographers and collectives, all looking at themes of women at work.

These photographers were: Helen Muspratt (1907-2001), Margaret Fay Shaw (1903-2004), Doris Ulmann (1882-1934) and Hackney Flashers Collective.

In the first pairing, original photographs by Helen Muspratt from 1936 of Russian women workers in a field were shown alongside a Raffles 1989 photograph of Soviet women workers in the field of a state farm.

A small display of materials relating to Muspratt, showing two examples of how she used her photographs for dissemination on her return to the UK were present in a display case.



Second room, *Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles*, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Image: Alan Dimmick



(From left to right), Works 1-2, *Women in the Fields*, Helen Muspratt, (1936), Work 3 *Women Workers, Russia*, Franki Raffles (1989). *Observing Women At Work: Franki Raffles*, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Photo: Alan Dimmick

EXHIBITION of Russian Photographs



Intimate Pictures of Home, Farm and
Factory Life of our Russian Allies

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23rd
11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24th
11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Also *Lantern Lecture* 'A Holiday in
Russia,' 7.30 each night

At RAMSEY & MUSPRATT
23 Cornmarket Street ADMISSION FREE

*Poster for Exhibition of Russian Photographs,
Ramsey & Muspratt Studios
c.1936/37*

On loan from Jessica Sutcliffe



Programme MAYOR OF OXFORD'S HELP FOR RUSSIA WEEK

23 OCTOBER—2 NOVEMBER 1941

*In aid of the Mayor's Fund for Medical Supplies for the Eastern Front
Supported by the Vice-Chancellor of the University and the Rt. Rev. the
Lord Bishop of Oxford*

PRICE 6D.

*Pamphlet for Help for Russia Week, Oxford
1941*

On loan from Jessica Sutcliffe

Original poster and programme leaflet,
illustrating how Helen Muspratt disseminated
photographs from her 1936 trip to Russia.
Shown in display case, Room 2, *Observing
Women at Work: Franki Raffles*, Reid Gallery,
GSA (2017)

Research Output

The 3 other pairings in this gallery section included:

- Two images of women shearing sheep. The first photograph, *Màiri MacRae shearing, North Glendale, South Uist* (c.1934) by Margaret Fay Shaw, was shown alongside a photograph from Raffles' project *Lewis Women* (1982).
- Raffles' photograph of Soviet women knitting on a street corner, alongside American photographer Doris Ulmann's photographs of women's lives and in particular, working on craft, in the Appalachian Mountains in the 1920s and '30s.
- Raffles' photograph of a Soviet woman working in a shoe factory, was shown alongside a work by the Hackney Flashers Collective, who were commissioned by Hackney Trades Council in 1975 to document women's working conditions. This feminist and socialist collective was set up in 1974 and included members Ann Dekker, Sally Greenhill, Elizabeth Heron, Michael Ann Mullen, Maggie Murray, Christine Roche, Jo Spence and Julia Vellacott. This reprinted work was from their *Women and Work* series.



(l) *Màiri MacRae shearing, North Glendale, South Uist* (c.1934), Margaret Fay Shaw, (r) *Lewis Women*, Franki Raffles (1982). Image: Alan Dimmick



(From left to right) Images 1-3, Doris Ulmann, from a series taken c. 1920s-1934, documenting life and craft in the Appalachian Mountains. Image 4 '*Women at Work, Russia*, (1989), Franki Raffles.

Image: Alan Dimmick



(From left to right) Works 1-2, *Women at Work, Russia* (1989), Franki Raffles. Work 3, Hackney Flashers Collective.

Image: Alan Dimmick

Research Output

There were two events as part of the exhibition programme.

I invited performance artist Kate Clayton to respond to the exhibition *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work*. Clayton has an ongoing series of performances under *Art Scrubber*, where she 'scrubs' contemporary artworks, which has included Martin Creed's *Work No. 1059*, the Scotsman Steps in Edinburgh.

In this 30 minute performance, entitled *Scrubbing for Franki*, Clayton paid homage to Raffles' work, cleaning the art work including the framed photographs of Edinburgh cleaners and the *Zero Tolerance* logo. The performance concluded with Kate laying a rose under the Zero Tolerance poster and moving over to the other side of the gallery to lay down her tools and slump in the corner.



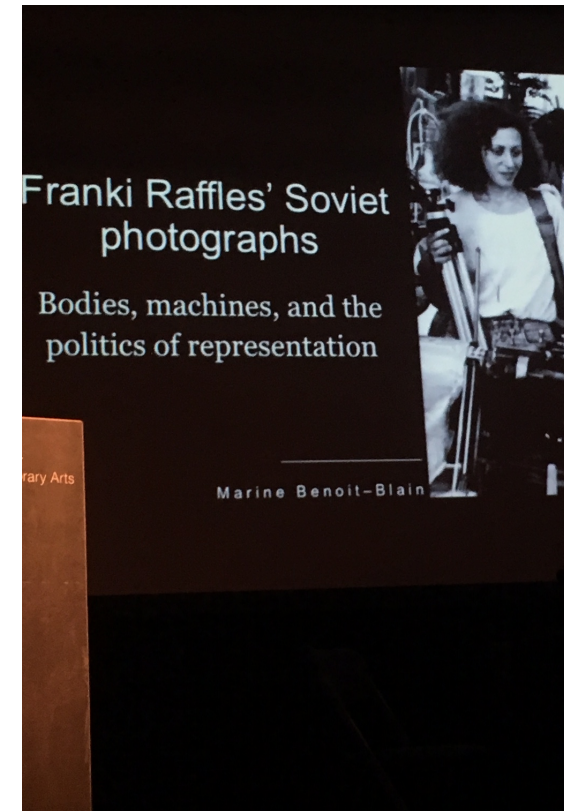
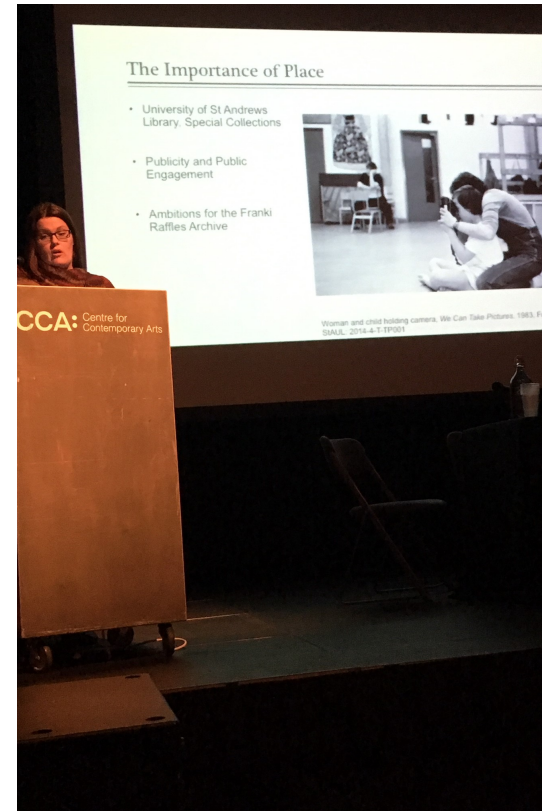
Scrubbing For Franki, Kate Clayton performance, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017) Photo: Ruudu Ulas

Research Output

The second event was the symposium *Assessing the Legacy of Franki Raffles*, CCA, Glasgow, 25.4.17 <http://www.cca-glasgow.com/programme/assessing-the-legacy-and-impact-of-feminist-photographer-franki-raffles>

I co-organised the symposium as a collaboration with Dr Alistair Scott. The aim was to consider the legacy of Raffles' work in Scotland and in other countries, examining how the central themes of her practice are relevant to women and photography today. The key questions were: 1. What are the lessons for contemporary feminist and social documentary photographic practice, archive collections and exhibition curation from this work now over 20 years old?; and 2. What are the challenges for archival collection and curation of feminist creative practice, with a focus on social documentary photography?

The symposium included papers from Dr. Alistair Scott (Edinburgh Napier University), Jenny Brownrigg (GSA), Dr. Rachel Nordstrom (Photographic Collection Manager, University of St. Andrews Special Collections). Other papers assessed Raffles' international project work and the importance of her feminist politics to her practice, including those by Marine Benoit-Blain (Ecole du Louvre), Anastasia Philimonos (University of Edinburgh) and photography collective *TalkSeePhotography* and *Wildfires* and research project *Fast Forward - Women in Photography*.



Assessing the Legacy of Franki Raffles, symposium, CCA, Glasgow (2017)

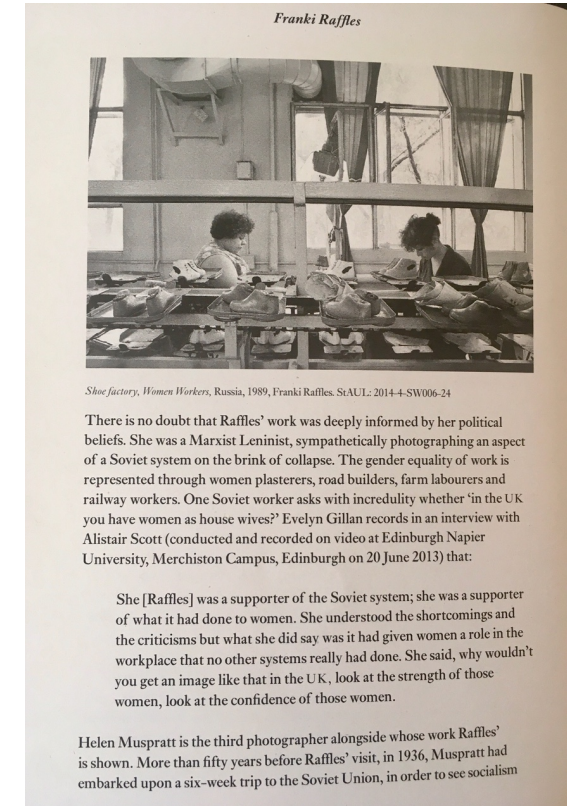
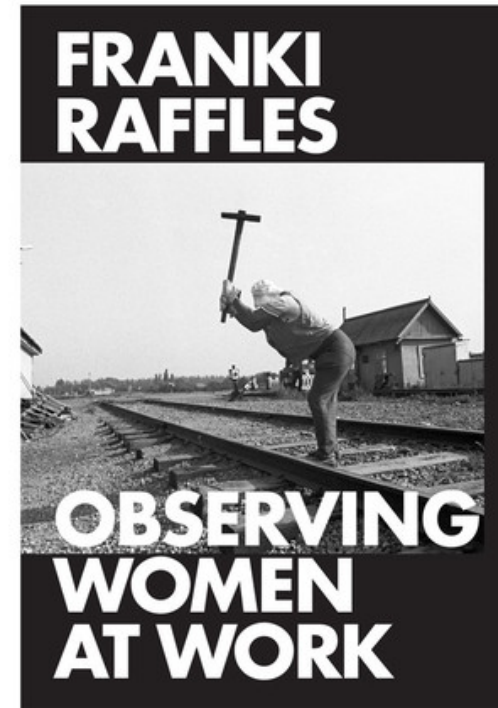
Research Output

An exhibition catalogue was co-edited with Alistair Scott (Edinburgh Napier University).

It contains an introduction by Sarah Munro (Director, Baltic), which relays her account of working with Raffles on the Artlink project 'Your Frame of Mind is Our Disability,' her reflections on seeing Raffles' dark room – a small room off her kitchen - and experiencing the 'Zero Tolerance' campaign rolling out in Edinburgh. Alistair Scott then assesses the aims and contexts of Raffles' practice. Then, in the essay 'Observing Women at Work,' I give an account of my curatorial approach and framing of Raffles' practice through the exhibition that is the key focus of this portfolio.

My essay in the publication can be accessed here:

<http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/5081/48/%27Observing%20Women%20at%20Work%27%20essay.pdf>



(1) Front Cover and page, *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work* (2017), published by Glasgow School of Art, designer Maeve Redmond

Aims and Objectives

AIMS:

- To use curatorial methods to contribute to the art historical positioning and understanding of Raffles work
- To place Raffles' work within a historical and contemporary context
- To assess Raffles' contribution to feminist photography around the themes of women's work
- To grow knowledge on Raffles' work, making visible her practice to other curators, academics and public audiences

- To show the relevance of Raffles' work to the contemporary issues women face today

OBJECTIVES:

- Through curatorial methods in the exhibition, to present Raffles' particular aims and methods that drove her to make the work in order to analyse her contribution to the field of feminist documentary photography practice
- Through collaboration with Dr Alistair Scott, to co-edit an accompanying exhibition catalogue, that establishes Raffles' timeline and draws together a series of essays that contribute to new and advanced understandings of Raffles' work
- Disseminate findings of exhibition as tool through papers including *Fast Forward Lithuania* (2017) and Franki Raffles' Study Day (2019, University of St Andrews) to continue to analyse and disseminate findings from the exhibition on a national and international platform
- Through exhibition, to place Raffles' work within a wider field of practitioners, both historical and contemporary

Context

The research field of this output is feminist art history carried out through practice-based research. The research aims to position Raffles' practice as a key woman photographer in the tradition of UK feminist documentary photography. The main role of the curatorial has been to uncover Raffles' processes and the truly international scope of her study of women's place in society. As this is the first exhibition for twenty-five years, this research takes a revisionist approach to insert Raffles into this field in a more significant way.

Recent exhibitions on other lesser-known regional UK women social documentary photographers have included *Tish Murtha: Works 1976-1991*, Photographers Gallery, (2018), curated by Williams, V, and Murtha, E, with a strong biographical approach; and *Women Photographers from The AmberSide Collection, Stills Gallery*, Edinburgh (2020), which situates AmberSide Collection and the Side Gallery, Newcastle, through their policy of supporting and collecting the work of local and international women photographers. Whilst both a strong biographical (Raffles' diaries of travels to Russia, her early death) or archives (the establishing of Franki Raffles digital archive) focus are present for any study of Raffles, these were not the thematic focuses chosen

in the exhibition *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work* (2017). Rather, this research has more in common with *Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry 1973-1975*, (Tate Britain, curators Emma Chambers and Helen Stout), 2016, a re-staging of a 1975 exhibition at South London Gallery, of a project by artists Margret Harrison, Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly, looking at documenting women workers in a metal box factory in Bermondsey. Both focus through a feminist lens, on the conditions of women's working lives and how this political message is then communicated through the photographers' own practices and processes.

Raffles' work is omitted from key survey studies of 20th century women photographers, including *A History of Women Photographers* (Rosenblum, N, 1994, Abbeville Press) and *Women Photographers: The Other Observers 1900 to present* (Williams, V, Virago, 1986). She is also missing from later books focusing on UK feminist photography and wider feminist art practice, such as *The Visual is Political*, (Klorman, Eraqi, 2019, Rutgers University Press); and *Art and Feminism* (eds. Reckitt, H and Phelan, Phaidon, 2001).

My research attempts to assert her national and

international significance to studies of women photographers and studies of feminist art, particularly in relation to the politics of women's labour. In the immediate field of research on Raffles, I am the only researcher testing out her relevance and assessing her work through a curatorial methodology. Dr Alistair Scott (Edinburgh Napier) has worked from an archival perspective, to amass her entire output of work, accessioned to St Andrews Special Collections and also digital archive (<https://www.frankirafflesarchive.org/>), in order to re-assess her legacy and contribution. Dr Catherine Spencer's (University of St Andrews) ongoing research project *Green Unpleasant Land: Art, Abstraction and Locational Politics*, analyses Raffles' work from an art historical and feminist practices perspective, looking at the intersections of politics and abstraction from the 1970s and 1980s through to the present, as one of a group of artists that includes Rasheed Araeen, Prunella Clough, Rita Donagh and Veronica Ryan. Dr Marine Benoit-Blain's research, (Ecole du Louvre, Paris) has focussed on Raffles' Marxist perspective and how that influenced her photography.

Methods

Curatorial

Comparative

Expressive content

Audiencing



To Let You Understand, 1988, Franki Raffles

Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)

Photo: Alan Dimmick

Methods

CURATORIAL:

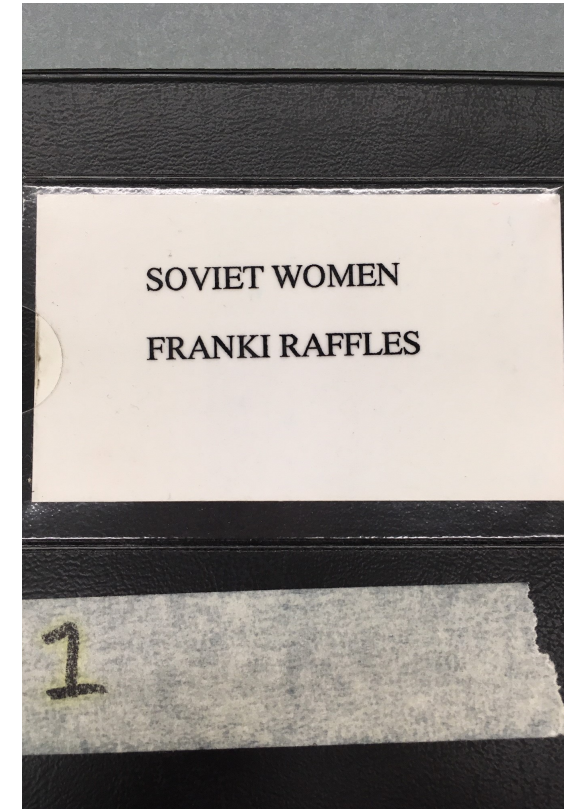
I would define my curatorial methodology as aligned to Maria Lind who described the appraisal of an artist's work, in particular when they are not there (as is the case of Raffles who died when she was thirty-nine), requiring a 'context-sensitive' reading of the work itself in order to establish the logic of the subsequent exhibition (P.63, *The Curatorial, Maria Lind Selected Writing*, Sternberg Press, 2010).

The methods employed for a 'context-sensitive' reading of Raffles' work are as follows:

- assessment of existing archival material.
- Selecting two bodies of work referencing women at work; one in Soviet Union and one in Scotland, in order to draw out her interest in political systems, using the exhibition layout to contrast those systems to imply what the photographer perceived to be the difference in condition for women workers. Furthermore, this choice demonstrates international scope of Raffles' work which is unique to other feminist practitioners looking at this

subject in the 1980s and 1990s.

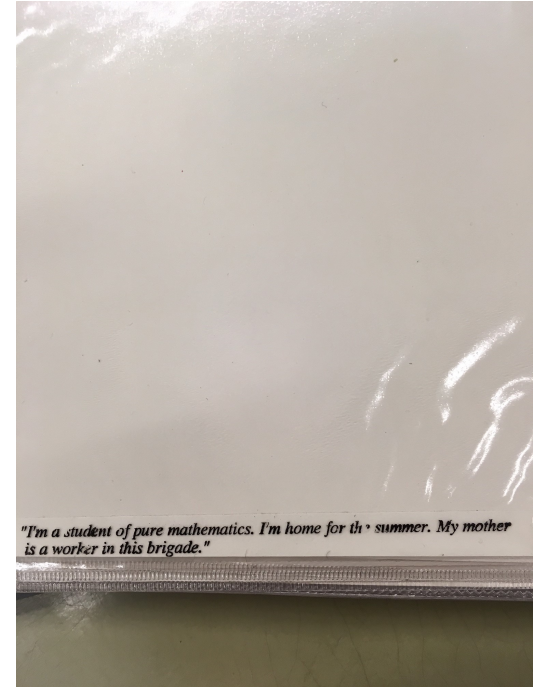
- Select the third body of work, 'Zero Tolerance,' a graphic advertising campaign, to demonstrate that Raffles' saw her work as having to function by communicating a message. This work showed how Raffles used her photography in a campaign format.
- Use the formal aspects of Raffles' processes, such as her inclusion through captioning of dialogue with those she is photographing, to become formal exhibition devices. Where possible, those captions appear as vinyl lettering under framed works in the Reid Gallery exhibition.
- Experiment with the scale of Raffles' work in the exhibition, as there was no guidance in archival material, regarding her preference for scale.
- Using exhibition as a tool to place Raffles' work in a wider context by showing examples of her work alongside four other historical and contemporary women photographers and collectives who also engaged with the theme of women and work.



Front of portfolio *Soviet Women*, held at St Andrews Special Collections



"No I don't want to own the land, it belongs to everyone. We work hard but the money is ok and we have the surplus of the crops to ourselves."



"I'm a student of pure mathematics. I'm home for the summer. My mother is a worker in this brigade."

(1) Detail, *Women Workers, Russia 1989*, Franki Raffles: *Observing Women at Work*, Reid Gallery, GSA, 2017 Photo: Alan Dimmick

(above) detail of lettraset captioning as a method Raffles' employed in her portfolios Photo: Jenny Brownrigg

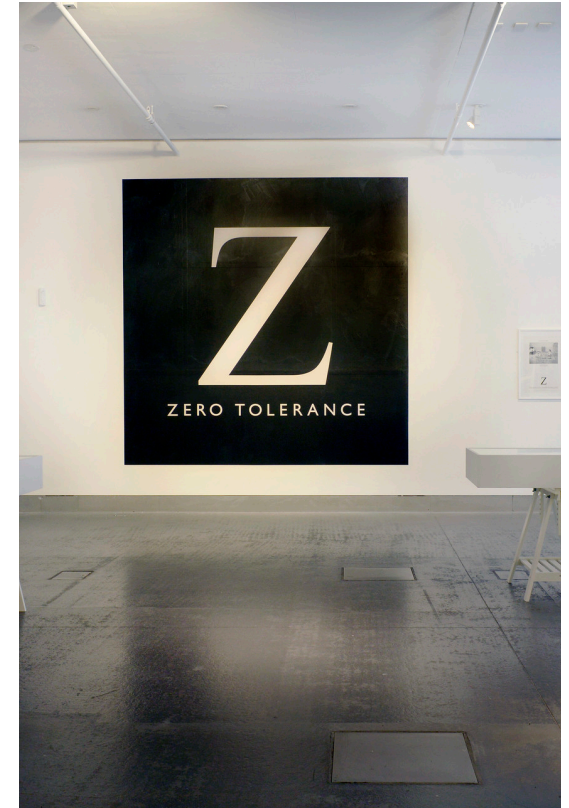
Methods

CURATORIAL cont.:

- In terms of exhibition schema, to represent the Soviet emphasis on the collective, *Soviet Women* was shown across two walls as a non-linear gathering, ranging from rural to urban workplaces, when reading left to right. *To Let You Understand...* was hung uniformly in a modest single line.
- As part of my archival research for the exhibition, I reviewed material of Raffles' own documentation of the *Zero Tolerance* campaign in Edinburgh as it rolled out across billboards and the sides of buses. This prompted the exhibition-making decision to print the *Zero Tolerance* logo to the scale of a billboard and paste it directly onto the gallery wall. The presence of this large billboard undermined the sovereignty of framed photographic work in the gallery space, thus aligning with the photographer's aim for her work to communicate a message beyond being an art object.
- Draw out ethnographic methodology in Raffles' work, through inclusion of her captioning of the subjects.
- I experimented with the scale of Raffles' works, in order to visually test out what information could be gained from a variance in scale. This was because there was no archival evidence of how Raffles' displayed her work in

galleries (*Women in China*, The Corridor Gallery, Fife, 1988, *Picturing Women*, Stills, Edinburgh, 1989, *Women Workers*, Pearce Institute, Glasgow & Rostov-on-Don, Russia, 1990) beyond one comment in a visitors comment book saying the photographs by Raffles' on display were 'too small and difficult to see.'

- The Reid Gallery is architecturally formed of two spaces which allowed for this formal shift. The larger scale also offered the opportunity to see the 'lurking' figures in the margins of photographs, more often than not, men. In the second room, where individual works of Raffles were placed next to other historical and contemporary photographers work, I ensured that all works, including Raffles' images were printed to a small, intimate scale, echoing the size of early prints in the photographic albums of Margaret Fay Shaw.



Zero Tolerance, Reid Gallery, GSA (2017)
Image: Alan Dimmick

Methods

COMPARATIVE:

The second room of the gallery was key in placing Raffles' work in a wider context of women photographers exploring gender, women and labour. This comparative methodology through exhibition-making allowed for a revisionist process of placing Raffles' work in a wider set of histories.

By placing her work next to Muspratt's there was an alignment of political ideologies – here, a representative from an earlier generation of women photographers had been drawn through political ideology to also photograph Soviet women at work.

Comparison also allowed for analysing composition of shot – whilst Raffles favoured a mid-shot, placing women in their environments, Doris Ullman as a comparative example in the gallery, showed a photographer favouring close-ups of hands working. Comparison again between the composition of Raffles' *Sheep Shearing, The Fank, Lewis* (1981) alongside Shaw's *Mairi MacRae shearing, North Glendale, South Uist* (1934), offered opportunity to analyse the woman as central figure to both photographers' ways of working – the composition echoes this, with a woman shearing as the central figure in the frame, around whom others in the group rotate.

The final pairing, brought together Raffles with *The Hackney Flashers*, in order to begin to place her work within the timeframe it was made, in the 1980s, where women's collectives were also interrogating themes around women's labour.

This comparative method allows the focus to be an active analysis of the work itself. It was a key method to move away from the monograph approach of a 'solo exhibition.' It also moves the gallery-goer away from considering biography more important than process, aims and methods of a photographer's work.



Helen Muspratt's *Women in the Fields* (1936), alongside Raffles' *Women Workers, Russia* (1989) Franki Raffles: *Observing Women At Work, GSA*, (2017) Photo: Alan Dimmick

Methods

EXPRESSIVE CONTENT:

I wished to employ a method that would bring out the images' expressive content and in particular, highlight aspects of 'performativity' of the act of work which is very much present in the photographs as the Soviet and Scottish women undertake often repetitive and mundane tasks in the workplace.

The performance event *Scrubbing for Franki* by Kate Clayton took place in the Reid Gallery, where the artist cleaned the artworks in the exhibition. This allowed for an experimental and processional approach to the themes of the exhibition. I have employed the 'processional' approach, where meaning of an exhibition is punctuated by other interventions over time during the exhibition run, as a curatorial method, that introduces alternative readings to the exhibition narrative.

Clayton's performance activated the stasis of the exhibition, by turning the exhibition material itself into works to be dusted and cleaned. By visibly making a performance of hidden labour, for an audience that would not normally be in attendance given that the action of cleaning daily takes place in the Reid Building, allowed a space for consideration of hierarchy – whose labour is valuable and whose remains hidden? GSA cleaners were in the audience for this performance. As an experimental method, the act of cleaning located the work and issues within the work, in the present day as a gendered activity. The performance as a method in its 'live' nature, drew out relevance to the same invisible labour and hierarchy issues prevalent today. Clayton also through her performances comments on the invisibility of age. This subtly linked to the predominant age of the women workers shown in Raffles' photography, who are middle aged or older. In the persona of the cleaner, Clayton investigates hidden labour and issues surrounding age and visibility in the art world.



Scrubbing for Franki, performance by Kate Clayton, 20.4.17, Reid Gallery, GSA

Methods

AUDIENCING:

Audiencing is a process by which 'a visual image has its meanings renegotiated, or even rejected, by particular audiences watching in specific circumstances.' (G Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, London: Sage Publications, 2007, p.23)

The Reid Gallery exhibition schema was aimed to confront the audience in the following ways:

- On entering the gallery, the viewer was immediately confronted by the volume of images of women in workplaces. The exhibition-goer's experience was to be surrounded by a society entirely comprising women, who moreover were undertaking roles more usually associated with men.
- Through this repetition of gender, each photograph included in the exhibition reinforced Raffles' feminist agenda.
- By fore-fronting in the exhibition the issues that Raffles was commenting on - inequality of pay, capitalism and labour, violence against women – the exhibition-goer could make the connection that such issues remain relevant today.
- The inclusion of the graphic campaign and billboard sized Zero Tolerance image in the gallery, aimed to subvert the gallery white cube as principal holder of this exhibition when Raffles made her work predominantly for a public domain. The scale of the Zero Tolerance image references the 'technological site' that the work would have been made for. This aided the audience in understanding that Raffles' work was not made for the gallery but for the public domain.



They told me that they had worked together as a team for fifteen years.
They chose the work they took on.

Plasterers, *Women Workers*, Russia, 1989, Franki Raffles

Contribution to the field

This research uses curatorial methods to contribute further understanding to the positioning of Raffles' within the field of art historical studies of women photographers. It does this by:


- Being the first curated exhibition in 25 years to focus on Raffles' work, thus making it visible to the wider field and the public
- Through the exhibition placing Raffles' work in the wider field of feminist photography, by contextualising her subject choices, processes and methods in comparison to four other historical and contemporary to her peers working in the same area, it places Raffles' work in a new context
- Arguing, through inclusion of *Soviet Women Workers* and *To Let You Understand...*, that Raffles' unique contribution to this particular period is her comparison of national and international women's working conditions, aligned to shared aspects of differing political systems
- Aligning the objectives of her activism and her photographic practice; to communicate a feminist political message, in this case to make visible

violence by men against women, and how this violence cut across class

- Offering a resource to current and future researchers a correct timeline to her life and contextualising essays
- Contributing to the curatorial as a method in feminist art history. Whilst ostensibly a solo exhibition, it included in a small survey of other relevant photographers to contextualise Raffles' work and contribution to the field, moving it beyond being hagiography

University of St Andrews 1413 School of Art History

Contemporary Art in Scotland: Franki Raffles Study Day



Thursday 7th November 2019, 1.00–5.00pm
Seminar Rooms 5 and 2, Arts Building,
University of St Andrews, KY16 9AX

Free, but spaces are limited; please contact Catherine [c124@st-and.ac.uk] to confirm a place.
This event is supported through the Centre for Contemporary Art at the University of St Andrews,
and the Contemporary Art in Scotland Tate British Art Network sub-group - <https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/projects/british-art-network>

Images © Franki Raffles Estate. Image courtesy of the University of St Andrews Library in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University. ©AUL ID 2014-4-100004

BRITISH ART NETWORK PAUL MELLON CENTRE for Studies in British Art Yale ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND TATE

Franki Raffles Study Day, University of St Andrews, (2019), organised by Dr Catherine Spencer

Dissemination

'Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work' ran from 4 March – 27 April 2017 in Reid Gallery, The Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow . **4351** visitors attended the exhibition and events programme.

Dissemination was primarily through the exhibition, an events programme including a symposium and an accompanying publication.

EVENTS DURING EXHIBITION RUN

There were **three** associated events during the exhibition run – **an exhibition tour, a performance and a symposium.**

19.4.17 Joint exhibition tour, run by Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow curator Katie Bruce and GSA Exhibitions GSA Exhibitions Director, Jenny Brownrigg. The tour, was between Polygraphs at GoMA and Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles at GSA, joining these two exhibitions in the city that explore feminist approaches to art practice.

<http://www.gsa.ac.uk/life/gsa-events/events/i/joint-goma-and-gsa-exhibition-tour/> **10 attendees.**

20.4.17 Art Scrubber: 'Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles' performance by artist Kate Clayton in the Reid Gallery. The artist cleaned the frames of the photographs and dusted the gallery, creating a parallel between herself and Raffles' chosen subjects. **25 attendees.**

<http://www.gsa.ac.uk/life/gsa-events/events/a/art-scrubber-observing-women-at-work/?source=archive>



GSA cleaners watch *Scrubbing for Franki*, Kate Clayton performance, Reid Gallery (2017) GSA Photo: Jenny Brownrigg

Dissemination

SYMPOSIUM

25.4.17 'Assessing the impact and legacy of feminist photographer Franki Raffles' symposium at Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow. This symposium was co-organised by Dr Alistair Scott and Jenny Brownrigg. There were **43 attendees**. This symposium was a contribution to the appreciation of the Franki Raffles exhibition *Observing Women at Work* at Reid Gallery, The Glasgow School of Art, 4 March - 27 April 2017.

The central symposium theme was: 'What are the lessons for contemporary feminist and social documentary photographic practice, archive collections and exhibition curation from this work now over 20 years old?' This symposium drew on the Franki Raffles Research project to look in depth at Raffles' work from 1981 until her death in 1994. There were papers outlining the initiatives leading to the exhibition 'Observing Women at Work' and charting how it was planned. Raffles died suddenly and unexpectedly and without the chance for her to select and organise her work for future preservation. For twenty years, her photographic practice has been largely forgotten and unknown. This symposium considered the legacy of her work, in Scotland and in other countries, examining how the central themes of her practice are relevant to women and photography today.

Dr. Alistair Scott (Associate Professor, Film and TV Edinburgh Napier University) introduced the breadth and range of Raffles' photographic practice and examine the wider contexts of her career. Jenny Brownrigg (The Glasgow School of Art Exhibitions Director), curator of the GSA exhibition, described the curatorial process drawing from the three bodies of Raffles' work which are included: *To Let You Understand...* (1988); *Women Workers, Russia* (1989); and the Zero Tolerance 'Prevalence Campaign' (1992).

Dr. Rachel Nordstrom (Photographic Collection Manager, University of St. Andrews Special Collections) outlined her work within a Photography Archive and discussed the work which will be required to properly conserve Raffles' photographs and ensure that her work can be available for exhibition and study.

Other papers assessed Raffles' international project work and the importance of her feminist politics to her practice. The Symposium focused on questions about the challenges for archival collection and curation of feminist creative practice, with a focus on social documentary photography.



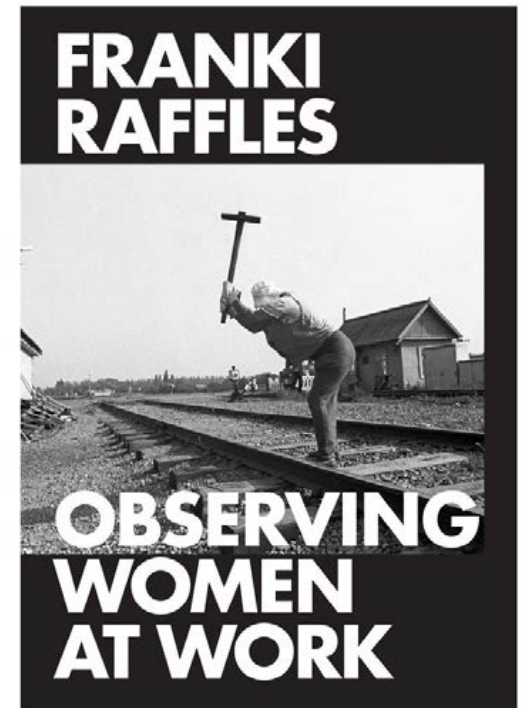
Dr Alistair Scott (Napier University), paper 'Re-discovering Franki Raffles' photographic career', symposium *Assessing the impact and legacy of feminist photographer Franki Raffles*

Dissemination

Publication:

A publication was published by The Glasgow School of Art in a run of 300 with support from Franki Raffles Archive Project Edinburgh Napier University. The book was paperback, 48 pages, in colour and retailed at £7. GSA Exhibitions Director Jenny Brownrigg and Alistair Scott, Professor at Edinburgh Napier University, worked with Glasgow designer Maeve Redmond to produce the book, printed by J. Thompson in Glasgow. The book featured essays from Brownrigg and Scott, with a foreword by Director of BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Arts, Sarah Munro.

The book was co-edited by Jenny Brownrigg and Dr Alistair Scott (Edinburgh Napier). There was no academic peer review process.



Front Cover, *Franki Raffles: Observing Women at Work* (2017, published by The Glasgow School of Art, designed by Maeve Redmond)

Evidence

In summary, regarding secondary sources, there was national media coverage, with exhibition reviews on arts related platforms including *Map Magazine*, *The List*, *Art Review* and *Aesthetica Magazine*; radio coverage with a section in Janice Forsyth Show BBC Radio Scotland (Jenny Brownrigg and Joyce MacMillan in conversation); and articles in general media including *Homes and Interiors*, the *Daily Record*, *Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman*.

MEDIA COVERAGE:

1. Moira Jeffrey and Duncan MacMillan, 2017 *Arts Preview - The Year Ahead in Visual Arts*:

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/art/2017-arts-preview-the-year-ahead-in-visual-art-1-4330696> The Scotsman, 2.1.17

2. *Arts News: Scottish-Egyptian playwright launches anti-Racist kickstarter, Scots in Romantic Novel Awards, new show at GSA*, Phil Miller 10.2.17, The Herald

http://www.heraldsotland.com/arts_ents/15082857.Arts_News_Scottish_Egyptian_playwright_launches_anti_Racist_kickstarter_Scots_in_Romantic_Novel_Awards_new_show_at_GSA/

3. *Scottish photographer Franki Raffles to be honoured in new exhibition*, Daily Record, Jenny Morrison 6.2.17

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scottish-photographer-franki-raffles-honored-9763529>

4. *How the other half live*, Catherine Coyle, *Homes & Interiors*, Issue 112, March & April 2017, p.167-170

rather fittingly, on International Women's Day. This spring, the Glasgow School of Art mounts an exhibition of her images, *Observing Women at Work*, curated by Jenny Brownrigg.

Raffles moved to the Isle of Lewis in 1978. There, she took on a farm, working the land as well as weaving to make some money. It was here that her passion for photography grew from a hobby into something more serious, as she took pictures of local women, her neighbours, at work on the land or shearing sheep.

Raffles moved to Edinburgh in 1983. She was able to link up with organisations, establish projects and instigate the kind of campaigning documentary work that was at the core of everything she later did. "She was full of energy and committed to her political ideas – she was a feminist, a Marxist," remembers Scott. "Who she was and the kind of work she did were all wrapped up together. I think it had to be like that."

Travelling was central to Raffles' work. By the mid-1980s, she was travelling across Russia, Nepal, India,

Tibet and China with her partner and her daughter, photographing women at work everywhere she went. Her aim was to capture ordinary women doing everyday tasks. Her stark, arresting style and inconspicuous presence allowed the inequalities faced by her subjects to show themselves naturally (and, as a result, obviously) without her setting up the scene to create a message.

"When I look back on a typical day's work I realise that very little of my time is spent in taking photographs," she wrote on a trip to Russia in 1989. "Most of my time is spent talking to the women about the issues. Without the understanding that I gain from talking to them, I cannot produce good photographs. I want them to show how women feel and to do this I have to learn myself."

Back in Scotland, she worked on a variety of projects with community groups, public bodies and charities. As with her international work, she sought to portray the reality of women's lives. Her contribution as one of the founders of the Zero Tolerance charity, to raise awareness of men's violence against women and



(Left and top right) A woman and child in a rural setting, photographed for the *Women at Work* project, Russia in July 1989 (Raffles). Bottom right: The woman and child in a rural setting, photographed for the *Women at Work* project, Russia in July 1989 (Raffles). (Previous page) Franki Raffles in a Russian factory in 1989 (top) and (bottom) The Market Women, Moscow, Russia, July 1989



"SHE WAS COMMITTED TO HER POLITICAL IDEAS. WHO SHE WAS AND THE KIND OF WORK SHE DID WERE ALL WRAPPED UP TOGETHER"



children, is among the most significant work she did. Together with Evelyn Gillan and members of Edinburgh Council's women's committee, with whom Raffles had worked with on her *To Let You Understand* project, she photographed women and children in familiar, everyday settings to reinforce the notion that any woman can encounter violence, regardless of age, class, colour or religion. Her black-and-white images were juxtaposed with startling facts about domestic violence, and, after first being shown in Edinburgh, appeared on billboards, on buses and in newspapers across the UK. That was 25 years ago and the campaign still resonates today. "Franki showed the women not as victims but as people," says Scott. "In all her work, she was campaigning for equality and seeking improvements for women on those issues."

The upcoming exhibition presents a selection of ▶

'How the other half live', Catherine Coyle, *Homes & Interiors*, Issue 112, March & April 2017, p.167-170

Evidence

5. *Photography is women's work*, Jan Patience, *Glasgow Herald*, 25.2.17
http://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/15117254.Photography_is_women_39_s_work/

6. *Work by feminist social documentary photographer Franki Raffles showcased in Glasgow*, Art Daily <http://artdaily.com/news/94248/Work-by-feminist-social-documentary-photographer--Franki-Raffles-showcased-in-Glasgow#.WL1d-U2PNaQ>

7. *Timeout Glasgow, Things to do in Glasgow this week*

8. *The List, Long overdue exhibition of pioneering documentary photographer*, Rachael Cloughton, 20.3.17
<https://www.list.co.uk/article/89608-franki-raffles-observing-women-at-work/>

9. Susan Mansfield, *The Scotsman* 5.4.17
<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/art/art-reviews-now-franki-raffles-observing-women-at-work-1-4406862>

The screenshot shows the Daily Record website. The main headline is "Scottish photographer Franki Raffles to be honored in new exhibition". Below the headline, it says "The respected campaigning photographer died at just 39-years-old in December 1994." The article is by Jenny Morrison, dated 06:00, 6 FEB 2017. There are social media share buttons (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Email) and a comments section. A sidebar on the right features a "VIDEO SLOTS" advertisement with a "11 WELCOME SPINS WAGER-FREE" offer. The bottom of the article shows a black and white photo of Franki Raffles holding a camera.

‘Scottish photographer Franki Raffles to be honoured in new exhibition’, Daily Record, Jenny Morrison
6.2.17

Evidence

10. <https://mapmagazine.co.uk/observing-women-work-franki-raffles>
Catherine Spencer, *Map Magazine* (online), 26.3.17 *Observing Women at Work: Franki Raffles*

11. *Observing Women at Work*, Susannah Thompson, *Art Review*, May 2017, p. 115

12. *Aesthetica Magazine*, *Franki Raffles: Social Campaign* 13.4.17
<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/franki-raffles-social-campaign/>

Radio

13. The Janice Forsyth Show, BBC Radio Scotland
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08g7xll> Joyce MacMillan and Jenny Brownrigg discuss *Observing Women at Work*, 14 mins long, 7.3.17. Whilst the programme is no longer available, press 'show more' to read narrative of programme and inclusion of Joyce MacMillan in discussion with Jenny Brownrigg on exhibition.

Aesthetica

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Franki Raffles: Social Campaign



Aesthetica Magazine, 'Franki Raffles: Social Campaign' 13.4.17

Acknowledgements

This exhibition was produced in partnership with The Franki Raffles Estate and Dr Alistair Scott Edinburgh Napier University.

The exhibition was supported by University of St. Andrews Special Collections Photography Division, where the archival material is held; and Zero Tolerance. Other lenders included The Hackney Flashers Collective, The National Trust for Scotland (Canna Island), Glasgow Women's Library, Doris Ulmann Galleries at Berea College, Kentucky USA; and private lender Jessica Sutcliffe, daughter of photographer Helen Muspratt.



With further thanks to:

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