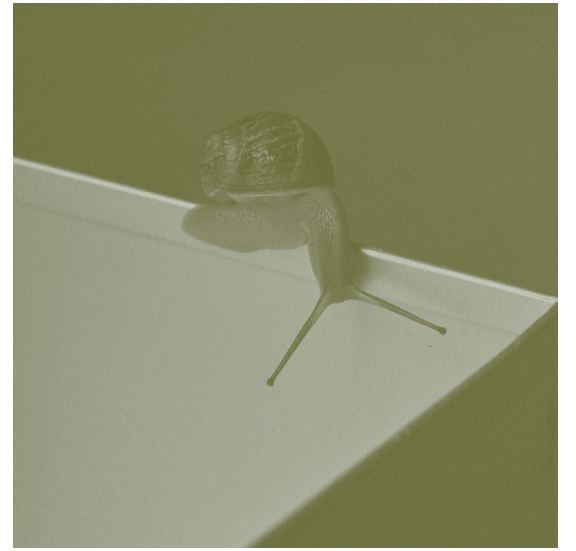


# ANARCHIVE KNOWLEDGE FOLLOWS FORM



## I. ARBORGLYPHS

The act of carving a word onto a tree is a moment of friction between a person and a plant. The human bristles with speed, perhaps driven by anger, loneliness or love. Their burst of energy is captured by the sustained growth of the stalk on which they write — and which might, in turn, outlive them. This entwinement becomes a scar driven by a humans' will and plants' continuance.

Bridget tells me that the letters found on trees are called arborglyphs and have an unexpected history that includes lonesome Basque shepherders in the American west. They are ephemeral, living artefacts. The arborglyphs she collected for *Cut the world to fit* (2025–26) spell out something between a poem and a ransom note. Printed onto fabric to be unfolded by the hands of exhibition visitors, the cloth is a kind of human bark to wrap and protect our soft bodies.

Unfolding the fabric, it reads 'refusal is no strategy when your name is written in sand'. Bridget's words respond to a hand-scribed note found in the margins of *Can't help dreaming* (1981) by poet Jenny Boulton — which asks 'who wants equal rights in a society as corrupt as this one? Who'll miss me?'

Boulton's book is on loan from the Flinders library, joining other artefacts from Flinders University Museum of Art's (FUMA) Post-object and Documentation (POD) collection in glass topped plinths and shelves. Made at the intersection of poetry, theatre, and performance art, *Can't help dreaming* illustrates the slipperiness of post-object and experimental works. It is hard to know whether the rarified care of the gallery, or the wide (if precarious) distribution of the library, suits it best. For now, it sits in a glass case. At the end of the exhibition it will be dutifully popped through the library return chute.

Work in progress:  
Bridget Currie, *Each surface touched*,  
2026. Mulberry and rag papers eaten  
by snails, glue, board, pearlescent ink  
Photo: Sam Roberts

## II. PRUNING



Bridget's own artist book, *Trees among people* (2013), joins works selected from the POD collection including the few works by Australian or Aotearoa New Zealand women, international inclusions, as well as collected volumes in which female artists feature strongly. Together—in one instance with artist Shenshen Zheng—we read the texts, turn pages and record our musings, offering visitors a conversational entry to the works that the glass vitrines deny.

Bridget's works are often open-ended acts of long attention. Her project of photographing truncated trees manifests here as a map-folded digital print *Fine, thanks* (2025–26). One tree being stands the edge of ANZAC Highway in Adelaide, pruned flat across the top to accommodate power lines, its limbs grow sideways and down like long fingernails trailing from lifted elbows. It makes me think of pruned histories, surviving as it does among the structures that curtail it. The archive lid closes, neatly trimming stories into shapes that suit those for whom they are told.

The POD archive is a pruning machine. All archives are. When I first surveyed it, I found just five individual works by Australian or Aotearoa New Zealand born women. In parallel, the Adelaide chapter of the Women's Art Movement exhibited more than 300 female artists in 1977 and continued to show many more until 1986; it was a time when women's contribution to artmaking grew wildly.

Bridget Currie, *Cut the world to fit*, 2025–26  
Digital print on cotton poplin, cotton sateen, thread  
Photo: Sam Roberts

### III. THE BIRDS

The bird masks for *Dot pieces* (2025–26) are so joyful that they burst out of their boxes like a laugh released from the throat. Made in conversation with Dorothy (Dot) Thompson, Bridget has re-made Dot's bird costumes but shaped them over a cap and glasses so that they can be donned like silly disguises. The gesture brings bird and human faces close. Bridget tells me that the first version she made wasn't messy or colourful enough — it is in the great painterly heft of them that the joy resides. I put one on and the world laughs back at me.

Dot's use of her birds in performances and protests resonate through time with those brave American inflatables protesting Donald Trump. In her photographs a canary marches for woman's liberation with a placard that says that birds aren't chicks. It's a great clapback. In another photo, budgie gives a lecture at the Experimental Art Foundation proving these costumes a magnificent defence against multiple forms of institutional and political authority.



### IV. SNAILS

Bridget Currie, *Dot pieces*, 2025–26. Papier-mache, air dry clay, linen, acrylic paint, glue, cap, glasses frames, foam  
After costumes by Dorothy (Dot) Thompson  
Photo: Sam Roberts

To make *Each surface touched* (2026) Bridget offers mulberry papers to tiny mouths. It turns out to be a dry winter in 2025 and the snails are few and fussy. She gives me some pages to serve up and I find a few contenders who chomp disinterestedly before making their way back to the green safety of the lawn. Other pages are left under houses, some others in compost bins. All tiny mouths are welcome. The pages accumulate traces of slimy bellies munching out their absence (holes) and presence (swarm).

### V. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF HOLDING WATER STILL

our conversation, Bonita gave FUMA a copy of her 1980 artist book, named for the river and carrying out relational mapping through stories of living on its banks. My research set off an avalanche of gifts to FUMA. The generosity of the women of experimental art comes with reciprocal obligation. Theirs is activist giving, archive flooding.

Bonita Ely was the first artist I interviewed for my PhD into women's contributions to experimental art.<sup>1</sup> She told me about the works she made in Adelaide, part of her sustained engagement with the river Murray/Murrundi. She visited it at many points during 1977, poking square arrangements of sticks into the shallow water in a beautifully absurd act of liquid delineation. Following

An archive can be imaged as a machine endlessly churning repetitions of its own limitations, like a small language model that makes the world in the only shape it knows. In contrast, the shape Bridget has created in *Unfolding table* (2025–26) is porous and mobile—a furniture designed to nudge bodies and archives together—offering a tactile encounter with others through time. The knowledge that follows this form is born of more-than-human intimacy, of looking and feeling closely. It is a machinery for connecting with others and for unfolding delight.

### VI. UNFOLDING — KNOWLEDGE FOLLOWS FORM

1 Interview participants included: Catherine Cherry van Wilgenburg, Bonita Ely, Christine Goodwin, Jane Kent, Polly Sumner, Sandra Greentree Nicolaidis, Stephanie Britton, Fiona Clark, Philip Dadson, Maree Horner, Christina Barton, Dorothy (Dot) Thompson, Micky Allan, Virginia Coventry, Jude Adams, Anne Marsh, Sue Richter, Ken Bolton, Fernanda (Fern) Martins, Helen the Printer (Rogers), Michele Luke, Michelle Stanley, Julie Ewington, Margret Dodd, Jill Orr, Ian De Gruchy, David Kerr, Karylin Brown, Jacky Redgate, Bronwyn Platten.

### SASHA GRBICH CURATOR

*Anarchive: knowledge follows form* is held at Flinders University Museum of Art, from 27 April – 19 June 2026, and supported by Create SA through the South Australian Government. The exhibition constitutes *The Experimental Art Anarchive*, a research project led by Sasha Grbich, and presented across Flinders University Museum of Art, Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (ACE), and Artlink.