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Dr Rachael Haynes *Homeground: Artist-Run Institutions and Ethics of Care*  
(2016)

### **ABSTRACT**

Art institutions were identified as contested territory by feminists in the 1970s, who recognized the politics of exclusion in operation. There were two key strategies employed in relation to exhibition making – agitating for the inclusion of women artists in museum exhibitions and initiating alternative spaces for women artists to create communities and present their artworks.

In this paper, and practitioner reflection I discuss how artist-run activity and alternative space-making operate as feminist acts of resistance in a contemporary context. These feminist approaches and methods to exhibition making have emerged through practice, and in the relational context of working with others in dialogic and collaborative ways. This paper discusses the exhibition project 'Homeground' (2016) as a case-study and contextualizes this project in relation to the complex unfolding relationship between feminist exhibition making, artist-run activity and the art institution.

'Homeground' addressed the local context of artist run culture in Brisbane, Australia. The gallery at Boxcopy Contemporary Art Space, operated as a site for process-based and dialogic exchange between six local artist run initiatives, emphasising collaborative and speculative methods of working. Boxcopy was founded by seven art school graduates in 2007 and initially operated from the basement of a Queenslander house in New Farm. This emphasis on the home and the local context were the themes of this project, and many ARIs in Brisbane reflect this approach, utilising domestic environments as exhibition spaces.

This artist run activity readdresses the art institution through creative practice and asks: how can the apparatus of art be transformed and re-imagined? At the same time, artist institutions reflect broader issues of labour – and operate primarily on the unpaid work of artists, who take on many and varied roles into their practice - from publicity, hosting public programs, to painting walls, cleaning and financial administration. Therefore, in a feminist rethinking of the artist run institution, the task is to make visible the contributions of this reproductive labour in this 'alternative' space of production - to emphasise feminist ways of working including working against power hierarchies, exclusions and silencing; and working towards an ethics of care.