

Collection title: Janice Baker Photographs

Collection ID: BAKE

Size: 1.17 linear feet

Date: 1982-1998

Abstract:

Janice Baker is a feminist lesbian mixed media artist living and working in California, Oregon and Washington. The collection contains Baker's photography, mostly from the early 1980s, capturing the women's movement at public events and intimate gatherings.

Accession information:

Janice Baker donated the materials to the June L. Mazer Archives in 2014.

Provenance:

The materials were accumulated during Janice Baker's time as a photographer in the early 1980s.

Restrictions:

There are no restrictions on the collection. The collection is open for research.

Copyright:

Property rights to the physical objects belong to the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives. All other rights, including copyright, are retained by the creators and their heirs. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine who holds the copyright and pursue the copyright owner or heir for permission to publish where the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives do not hold the copyright.

Biographical sketch:

Janice Baker (b. 1952) is a feminist lesbian artist born in Pasadena, California working in photography, painting, and mixed media. Janice worked as a nurse and organized with feminist lesbian activists throughout her life.

Janice grew up in a conservative household that practiced the Metaphysical Church of Science of Mind religion and attributes becoming an artist to her "unusual" religious upbringing. She graduated from nursing school at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) in 1977 and divorced her abusive husband the same year. Six months later Janice was raped and she developed severe PTSD. Janice returned to CSULB where she was introduced to women's studies, art classes, and her lesbian identity. In her own words, "women's studies gave me a context to understand I was not alone."

From 1979 until she left California in 1984, Janice was a prolific photographer, documenting the women's movement in Long Beach and Los Angeles. Janice published work in the *Blatant Image* photography magazine and local women's papers. She attended "Ovulars," a week-long photography workshop for women, run by Ruth and Jean Mountaingrove on their lesbian communal land, Rootworks, in southern Oregon.

In 1984 Janice moved to WomanShare, a women's land collective and feminist retreat outside of Grants Pass, Oregon with her friend Aggie Agapito. Photography from her time at WomanShare resides at University of Oregon, Special Collections.

After three years at WomanShare, Baker moved to Eugene, Oregon where she worked as a mental health nurse at Sacred Heart Hospital. She and her partner Ginger Newman participated in lesbian feminist organizing work in Eugene, including advocating against Measure 9, a 1992 Oregon ballot measure to prohibit anti-discrimination laws regarding sexual orientation. Baker attended Lane Community College where she took studio art classes and developed her practice as a mixed media artist. Baker and Newman eventually moved to Tieton, Washington where they settled and continued to create art and organize for LGBTQ rights.¹

Scope and content:

The bulk of the Janice Baker Photography Collection comprises Baker's photography including negatives, transparencies, contact sheets, and prints captured in the 1980s. The subjects of her photographs include portraits of friends and family, lesbian-centric events, nature scenes, and more. Her event photography documents gatherings such as Gay Pride, birthday parties, the Ovular women's photography workshop, and West Coast Women's Music Festival. The collection also contains personal papers including Janice's coursework and correspondence, and material she collected including political ephemera, organizational fliers, newspapers, and publications.

Processing notes:

The majority of material did not appear to be in chronological order or otherwise have an obvious original order. The processing archivist arranged material according to media types: 35mm negatives (black and white and color); black and white medium and large format negatives; prints; slides, contact sheets, and print materials.

Within these media-types, items have been arranged in the original order in which they were donated. Correspondence has been organized chronologically (undated correspondences are at the back of the folder). Photographic elements are stored in their original sleeves unless the original sleeves were damaged or unsafe for long term storage. In these cases, items have been rehoused maintaining the original order and orientation of the elements.

¹ "Oral History Interview with Ginger Newman and Janice Baker: Transcript, Eugene Lesbian Oral History Project," Eugene Lesbian Oral History Project, University of Oregon, October 20, 2018, <https://oregondigital.org/concern/documents/df73c297v?locale=en>.

The processing archivist transcribed information from original housing onto new housing. Some of the 35mm negatives were originally donated in a binder, which was rusting. These have been rehoused in their original order. Some of the photographic prints were originally organized by subject; this original order has been maintained and any related documentation has been kept with the photographs.

This collection was processed by Vera Tykulska in 2023 under a California State Grant.

Arrangement:

Series I: Print Materials

Subseries I: Personal papers

Subseries II: Publications

Subseries III: Organizational materials

Series II: Political ephemera

Series III: Photography

Subseries I: Contact Sheets

Subseries II: Prints

Subseries III: Negatives and Transparencies

Box level contents list:

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Box 1

Series I: Print Materials

Subseries I: Personal papers

Subseries II: Publications

Subseries III: Organizational materials

Series II: Political ephemera

Series III: Photography

Subseries I: Contact Sheets

Scope and content: The Box contains all of the print material in the collection as well as some of the photography elements. Letters and postcards to Janice Baker and Ginger Newman from a variety of people address topics such as birthdays, travels, family, friends, photo classes, and festivals. Janice's biography, written for the Mazer, is included in the Correspondences folder. The Course Materials contain syllabus, notes, a certificate of appreciation and other print materials related to coursework. Periodicals include 2 issues of "Tenants Tabloid" zine (ca. 1982) and an issue of Lavender Wave (1984). Newspapers collected by Janice include articles related to feminism and lesbian organizing. The bulk of the newspapers are California State University, Long Beach newspapers: The Daily Forty-Niner and the student paper Union Daily. Two We'moon Almanacs, fliers and pamphlets for feminist and lesbian community events and organizations, political buttons, a lesbian calendar, and other political ephemera are also included. The Box also contains color and black and white contact sheets of candid and posed photographs including portraits and photographs of events, nature, friends, kids, and more.

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Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence to Janice Baker and Ginger Newman ca. 1984 -1998; Biography
Box 1, Folder 2	Course Materials, 1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 3	Periodicals
Box 1, Folder 4	Newspapers, ca 1982-1999
Box 1, Folder 5	WE'MOON Almanacs, 1984, 1985
Box 1, Folder 6	Fliers and pamphlets
Box 1, Folder 7	Ephemera
Box 1, Folder 8	Buttons
Box 1, Folder 9	Contact Sheets (1 of 2)
Box 1, Folder 10	Contact Sheets (2 of 2)

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Box 2

Series II: Photography

Subseries II: Prints

Scope and content: Black and white and color prints of varying sizes by Janice Baker. Photographs depict still lives, portraits, and feminist and lesbian events and organizations.

Portraits of Laurie Lis, Janice's friend in Long Beach, Betty Willis Brooks, a CSULB adjunct faculty and self-defense teacher, and major activist in the LA area, as well as self-portraits of Janice are included. Photographs that were not originally organized by subject are in Folder 8 including a photograph of Janice as a child. Two oversize matted photographs are included in the box as well.

Box 2, Folder 1	March against domestic violence, ca. 1981-1982
Box 2, Folder 2	Califia Community, 1981-182
Box 2, Folder 3	Women's West Coast Music Festival, ca. 1981
Box 2, Folder 4	California State at Long Beach Women's Studies
Box 2, Folder 5	Laurie Lis
Box 2, Folder 6	Betty Brooks
Box 2, Folder 7	Self-portraits
Box 2, Folder 8	Misc. photographs

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Box 3

Series II: Photography

Subseries III: Negatives and Transparencies

Scope and content: Black and white and color 35mm negatives, originally housed in a single binder. The "Course Material" that was originally organized in the binder has been arranged in a separate folder but a place marker indicates its original order. The photographs capture candid and posed photography of friends, events, and nature including a Gay Pride festival, self-defense classes, West Coast Women's Music Festival, a Holly Near concert, the Ovular photography workshop and more.

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Box 3, Folder 1	Binder Negatives, 1982 (1 of 3)
Box 3, Folder 2	Binder Negatives, 1982 (2 of 3)
Box 3, Folder 3	Binder Negatives, 1982 (3 of 3)

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Box 4

Series II: Photography

Subseries III: Negatives and Transparencies

Scope and content: Black and white and color 35mm, medium, and large format negatives and color slides. The photographs capture candid and posed photography of friends, events, and nature including women's fencing, self-portraits, "Aunt Mary's," Meg Christian, Women's Art Conference, Refugio Beach and Long Beach, and more.

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Box 4, Folder 1	Medium, and large format negatives
Box 4, Folder 2	Slides
Box 4, Folder 3	35mm negatives (1 of 2)
Box 4, Folder 4	35mm negatives (2 of 2)