

---

This item was submitted to [Loughborough's Research Repository](#) by the author.  
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

## Introduction: Home, Land, Homeland and Home/Land

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

<http://liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/products/73646>

PUBLISHER

© Liverpool University Press

VERSION

VoR (Version of Record)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

This work is made available according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Full details of this licence are available at:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Arnold, Marion, and Marsha Meskimmon. 2019. "Introduction: Home, Land, Homeland and Home/land".  
figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/24002>.

## INTRODUCTION

### Home, land, homeland and home/land

Marion Arnold and Marsha Meskimmon

In the first slashed word of its title, *Home/Land: Women, Citizenship, Photographies* declares its content. It is about rupture and division. While 'home' evokes ideas of security and domestic space, and 'land' suggests terrain, 'home/land' acknowledges the fractious realities of geopolitics and the failure of idealism inherent in concepts of 'homeland'. The schism between home and land has particular emotional associations and resonances for women, all but invariably the homemakers, and these are signified eloquently in the images, texts and narratives that populate this volume, which brings together academic essays on fine art and documentary photographs, photo-essays, community-based and pedagogical photographic projects, with personal testimonies, creative writing and participatory action research, all using photography as integral to their insights.

In these diverse formats, *Home/Land* does not adhere strictly to established models of academic writing, but rather takes its lead both from the exceptional range of lens-based practices currently being explored by artists, activists, educators and scholars, and from contemporary feminist arguments that demonstrate clearly how significant changes to theoretical and methodological practices necessitate new modes of writing and more varied forms of articulation.<sup>1</sup> 'Academic' is

1 An especially astute commentator on the interconnections between feminist theory, methodology and writing is Nina Lykke. See, for example, *Feminist Studies*:

## 2 Home/Land

an ungenerous adjective. Often prescriptive, it tends to favour institutionally derived written discourse rather than eloquent visual imagery, and endorses the objective voice of reason. In this profusely illustrated volume we question this valorisation over the embodied and situated modes of knowing that feminisms have placed securely within the territory of intellectual enquiry. Embracing intertextuality, we attempt to bridge the gaps between theory and practice and create dialogues between equals – academics from many disciplines, practitioners and artist-researchers, whose words and images offer thoughtful, provocative and passionately articulated content. As a feminist intervention in the field of visual studies, we have positioned scholarly arguments adjacent to first-person narratives, and images next to texts, to demonstrate that writing by women and about women is richest when authors are free to choose the form best suited to connect research with experience. The texts and images in *Home/Land* are not standardised because women as writers, artists and readers are not homogenised. Personal voices, visions and writing styles characterise our scholarly academic essays and photographic practices alike, and resonate with the authors' convictions that the lives of women matter, and can be communicated when photography facilitates insight through its capacity to record and evoke.

While 'photographies' provide the evidence for discussion, our contributors frame their debates around a single starting point – women. Women's experiences of the love, loss and memories associated with homes and homelessness, the lands (and landscapes) where they dwelt or were relocated, and citizenship conferred or denied to them as women – these themes constitute a range of narratives, reflections, analysis and interpretations shaped by personal and collective socio-cultural experiences. In our publication, photography's affective power as 'light drawing/writing' is demonstrated visually and through theoretical interpretation as it illuminates women's lives in the United States, Canada, Britain and other European nations, the Middle East, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Australia. In essay after essay, words and the visual language of light and darkness demonstrate how the spaces and places constituting 'home' and 'land' have very particular

meanings for women. Many stories have diasporic themes; displacement from land, home and homeland brings experiences of loss, grief and trauma. Removed from the security signified by home (and *heimat*), and from familiar routines, rituals and the presence of family, friends and possessions, women who migrate cherish that most unreliable but beguiling companion – memory.

The multiple stories of *Home/Land* were generated by an international conference held at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom in July 2012. The book's text mirrors both the global landscape inhabited by the conference delegates, and the erosion of disciplinary boundaries inherent in the conference papers. Delegates discussed women's art and documentary photography, community and pedagogical projects, historical and contemporary photographs, and theory made visual through photography. The conference affirmed the equality of writers and visual artists; now the book presents the dialogues which circled round the 'Home/Land: Women, Citizenship, Photographies' conference.

The conference had a progenitor – an international network research project, *The Lens of Empowerment*, established at Loughborough University in 2009. This project germinated from discussions at Loughborough about feminist theory, women's art practice, identity formation and our global commonalities and decisive differences, the latter often constructed within nationalistic patriarchies which undervalue women politically and, in some societies, still restrict women's social participation and deny them full citizenship. Feminist citizenship studies as well as work on global cities networks has a distinguished pedigree at Loughborough and we had drawn on this thinking in our individual work on transnational feminist approaches to the arts before we entered into the collaboration that has become *Home/Land*.<sup>2</sup> As we began the network project, we wondered what could be learnt from a network of global partners thinking through feminist theory, practice and locational identity via that most ubiquitous of contemporary languages – photography.

2 See Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (New York: NYU Press, 1998); Line Nyhagen Predelli, Beatrice Halsaa and Cecilie Thun, "'Citizenship is not a word I use': how women's movement activists understand citizenship", in B. Halsaa, S. Roseneil and S. Sümer (eds), *Remaking Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: Women's Movements, Gender and Diversity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); the Globalization and World Cities Network: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/>

#### 4 Home/Land

Having identified potential *Lens* partners, we organised the first contact meeting in September 2009. We met with Jean Brundrit (Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town, South Africa) and Jacqueline Nolte (University of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia, Canada). Although Tina Sherwell (International Academy of Art Palestine) was unable to attend, her institution joined the partnership, while Pey-Chwen Lin (National Taiwan University of the Arts, Taipei) attended the first meeting but did not subsequently affiliate with the partnership. At our second, larger symposium, we were joined by Svea Josephy from the Michaelis School of Art, Shirley Hardman and Sarah Ciurysek from the University of the Fraser Valley, and Tina Sherwell.

Over several years we explored what women from the Fraser Valley in Western Canada, Cape Town on the southern tip of Africa, Ramallah in Palestine and Loughborough in the United Kingdom might have in common. The Fraser Valley, the third most diversely populated region in Canada, is home to people of European descent and the First Nations Stó:lō people; Cape Town, South Africa's mother city, has descendants of Dutch, British, Khoisan, mixed race and Bantu-speaking peoples; Ramallah has experienced millennia of Middle Eastern population movements and is a major player in contemporary land politics; and the Midlands in the United Kingdom is populated by the successive waves of historical and current immigration which form the British nation.

In our discussions we found that ideas about 'nation' and 'developed' and 'developing' nations were inappropriate when talking about women's experiences of 'citizenship' or forms of community belonging, because many women are underprivileged in social and cultural groups in all nations, even when ethnicity and class are able to moderate repression, opportunity, poverty and so on. 'Nation' was a troublesome term, especially for the UFV Canadians who acknowledge the First Nations peoples in their indigenised curricula, but also for South Africans, for whom 'homeland' has a particular politicised meaning. It was hijacked by the Nationalist party's apartheid ideology as the English translation of the *Bantustan*, a concept devised to justify the 'separation' policy and the forced removal and relocation of black African and mixed race 'coloured' peoples. Homeland also has a difficult resonance for Palestinians who yearn for their independent homeland. Little wonder that the conference that concluded the *Lens* network project was defined by the fractured *Home/Land* word and concept and that instead of exploring 'nation' through women's complex uses

of photographs, the question of 'citizenship', of belonging to m/any homes and lands, emerged as the central focus.

The network facilitated for us a more personal experience of working through some of the core issues at stake in what has come to be called transnational feminist scholarship. Broadly, transnational feminisms are a body of practices across the arts, humanities and social sciences that can be characterised by the exploration of gender and sexual difference as determined by intersectional and intersubjective dimensions of cultural experience. That is, transnational feminist thinking does not presuppose a singular or universal concept of 'woman' (or, indeed, 'man') and seeks, rather, to understand how sexual difference is materialised in and through the complex (and often multiple) patterns of identifications that subjects undergo over time and in specific locations. The social, historical, economic and cultural locations in and through which subjects unfold as 'women' are not immaterial – they mark and make embodied subjects in and through many forms of difference.

Transnational feminist thinking on women, citizenship and photographs envisages the three key terms working together to produce a range of effects that we might understand as sexed subjectivity and locational identity. To explore those means not collapsing the differences into a singular narrative, but rather developing the complex dialogues across a global terrain marked by inequities of power, and inscribed by manifold histories of cultural change. Within the frame of the network, we spoke in dialogue and soon found that we had in common mythologies, histories and realities related to spaces and places, our personalised homes, and land – settled, contested and lost. We asked: how does geography intersect with history? How do land politics affect women? How do women cope with the loss of homes and experiences of diaspora or relocation? How is home remembered? What form of citizenship do women receive from land demarcated as nation? And – how can photography as art or document, fact or metaphor, bring our lives and the lives of other women into focus, generate women's empowerment and communicate with readers/viewers?

Planning the activities and research associated with and generated by *The Lens of Empowerment*, we agreed that research and activities on different continents would culminate in an international conference, a residency at Loughborough and a publication. The structure of the research mirrored our commitment to a dialogic methodology that

could enable many different voices to be heard. We planned and organised a small, single-strand, participatory three-day conference, structured so that all delegates could hear and respond to all the papers and presentations. We allocated sessions to our *Lens* partners to talk about their research and pedagogical work, and we provided exhibition space to the residency participants – Jean Brundrit, Sarah Ciurysek and Nina Mangalanayagam – and to a ‘Lens’ project undertaken by the University of the Fraser Valley, which formed part of the university’s commitment to an indigenisation programme.

Nomadism, dispersal and migration on local, national and international levels infiltrate the contents of *Home/Land* as they did the discussions of the *Lens of Empowerment* symposia. Throughout the project, the practical has always been integral to the theoretical and we have maintained a critical emphasis upon the processes through which embodied subjects are materialised in and through various forms of language – visual, textual, performed and performative. While acknowledging different experiences, the *Lens* partners and the authors of this volume evoked home and land to contextualise their arguments about, and experiences of, female identity, understanding this as an experiential, and experimental, continuum drawn from the past into the present. What emerges from the *Home/Land* essays is evidence that our being-in-the-world has a future, not just a past. A change in punctuation suggests the possibility of trying to mend rupture and division; by replacing a slash (/) with a dash (–), Home/Land becomes Home–Land, an alliance and not a failed, forced union. It is for this reason that the final photo-essay in *Home/Land* is a series of photographs by Florence Ayisi which celebrate women’s spirit, humanity and colourful vitality.

### **Photographies, imag(in)ed communities and citizenship**

The contributions to this volume demonstrate that the ‘imagined community’<sup>3</sup> of the nation-state is also an ‘imaged community’, a collectivity and/or a sense of belonging that is constructed through

3 Using this phrase, we are paraphrasing Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

inclusions and exclusions operating in and through the languages of visual culture. Key among the visual forms through which our identities are negotiated are *photographies*, a word used here in the plural to indicate a myriad of lens-based practices ranging from experimental fine art photography to documentary, domestic, mass media, community-based, participatory and commercial forms of photographic practice. We encounter the products of lens-based media everywhere and many of us have experience of taking photographs ourselves. Photographies are powerful, ubiquitous and, from passport photos to holiday snaps, advertising to documentary, family photo-albums to social media, they are embedded within the visual codes that construct our identities as belonging *with others* and *in place* – in short, our citizenship(s) within imag(in)ed communities.

There are more than two dozen contributions to this volume, each of which focuses upon the gendered construction of space, place (*home* and *land*), belonging and identity (*citizenship*) in and through photographs, and each of which is unique in its structure, format, tone and timbre. The diversity of voices brought together here mirrors the extraordinary range of lens-based practices the volume explores and is part of its contribution to the interdisciplinary terrain it traverses.

Eleven contributions to *Home/Land* are academic essays, mainly written by art historians and photographic theorists, examining the intersections between historical and contemporary forms of photography and concepts of gender, genre and geopolitical identity. These essays are the most conventionally structured contributions to the volume, yet the range of photographies they engage and their distinctive theoretical voices provide a first glimpse of the diversity of practices, both visual and textual, encompassed within this collection. The essays by Helen Ennis, Staci Scheiwiller and Astrid von Rosen, for example, bring photo-archives sharply into view, both as re-appropriated and re-presented by fine art photographers and as an ephemeral resource for thinking through the significance of memory to history, identity and location. The difficulties inherent in categorising photographic practices by means of conventional genres (e.g. portraiture, landscape, social documentary) are encountered in the essays by Michael Godby, Liese van der Watt and Svea Josephy, and the latter also explores the limits of genre in her photographic practice. The essays by Kathryn Brown, Marsha Meskimmon, Lize van Robbroek, Danielle Leenaerts and Clara Zarza argue that particular forms of contemporary 'experimental' fine art

photography are able to articulate post-colonial identities, migratory aesthetics and pluri-local homes – the corollary of women’s experiences of ‘up-rooting and re-grounding’<sup>4</sup> globally.

These essays are accompanied within *Home/Land* by an exceptional group of ‘practice-led’ photographic projects, photo-essays, documentary works and a collection of participatory, community-based photographs, many of which are pioneering new text-image forms of dissemination or have been designed specifically to work within the present publication. Some of these contributions follow long-standing and innovative photographic forms in their production – such as phototherapy, photoethnography, photodocumentary – while others are revisiting or renegotiating the possibilities of practice-led photographic research techniques within established fields (autobiography, engaged pedagogy). These varied explorations of the potential of photographs to articulate the experience of sexed citizenship are crucial to the intellectual and creative contribution of *Home/Land*; the volume as a whole demonstrates that women, citizenship and photographs are intertwined dynamically in and through both *theories and practices*. This is not only an issue of great scholarly import across a wide range of disciplines, it is a matter of emotional and affective significance to many individuals as they seek to make themselves ‘at home in the world’. *Home/Land* brings that dual context into sharp focus.

Photo-essays form an important element of the anthology, but these are no more homogeneous in form or content than the essays on photographic history and theory. The photo-essays from Aliza Levi and Mo White, for example, look to Europe’s colonial legacy in South Africa, Australia and Ireland to very different ends: Levi makes us aware of the archive as a framing device for identity and White places herself at the nexus of the double meaning of the *domestic*: the family home and the nation-state (‘domestic’ vs. ‘foreign’). Berni Searle (in dialogue with Marion Arnold) re-works her own archive as a series of stills that become a photo-essay conversation on home, land and belonging in the ‘new’ South Africa. Loughborough University’s Radar Residency artists, Jean Brundrit, Sarah Ciurysek and Nina Mangalanayagam, tested the limits of the photo-essay in their contribution by using

4 See Sara Ahmed et al. (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2003).

photography as their ground zero – a shared space from which to explore their very different experiences of place during the residency. Their photo-essay thus acts as a collective conversation rather than an end point, in thinking and making place and identity. Florence Ayisi and Karen Frostig, by contrast, contribute *documentary* photo-essays to the volume, each from a very different perspective: Frostig reveals the hidden issues of citizenship (and the right to give voice) that large-scale public art projects can engender, while Ayisi documents the empowering display of collective female presence that is International Women’s Day in Cameroon.

Yet another direction that the contributions to this volume have taken is towards what we might call ‘autophotography’, a form of creative, even lyrical, photo-text narrative in the first person that charts the subjective, but not untheorised, position of the author/photographer as they explore the dynamics of home and land from their own positions as women. These ‘photo-reflections’ (which include the chapters of Suze Adams, Marion Arnold, Denise Ferris and Andrea Shaker) are striking in their immediacy, and the affective qualities of their photo-text strategies produce evocative ‘figures’ for the constitution of place-memory within the process of identification. Collectively, these theoretically informed autographic (writing/photographing) essays reinforce our determination within *Home/Land* to reflect the investment made by scholars, writers, artists and photographers in finding new forms by which to articulate gendered belonging and sexed citizenship.

Photography has a long history within activist and socially engaged research, teaching and practice and a number of contributions to the collection participate in and extend that important legacy. Rosy Martin (with the late Jo Spence) pioneered phototherapy, a feminist-activist form of participatory photographic work designed to enable subjects to use image-making and role play to confront negative patterns of thinking and behaviour. In her contribution to this volume, Martin used photography to work through mourning the loss of her parents. The resultant photo-work locates the personal experience of grief within the historical experience of Britain’s development of suburbs and the formation of the ‘suburban citizen’. Nicky Bird also turned to domestic photography in a remarkable community-based project exploring the significance of lost urban homes (‘lost’ through slum clearance and redevelopment) to the social formation of locational identity.

In her 'photovoice' project, Jean Brundrit used photography and interviews with lesbian South African communities to explore the paradoxes of citizenship in the RSA, a nation whose written constitution heralds inclusivity against continued practices of extreme exclusion faced daily by many individuals. Sociologists Jo Vearey and Elsa Oliveira turned to photo-based participatory action research to enable migrant women sex workers in Johannesburg to give voice to their experiences of displacement and loss. The resultant works are anything but disheartening; photography proved a valuable tool towards empowerment for many of the women involved in the project as they sought to move out of the trap of precarious and dangerous employment. Menika van der Poorten developed a form of photoethnography to document the last remaining 'Eurasian' community of Sri Lanka, again focusing on the distinctive experiences of women within this dwindling community.

Finally, one of the most striking examples of the inspiration provided by the *Lens of Empowerment* network is also documented within this collection, the *Women, Citizenship, and Identity in Stó:lō Territory* project undertaken at the University of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia. Combining radical pedagogy with community engagement designed to empower indigenous women in the west of Canada, colleagues from UFV (Stephanie Gould, Jacqueline Nolte, Shirley Hardman and Sarah Ciurysek) came together to develop a new undergraduate programme focused on photography and indigenous identity. The photographic essay within *Home/Land* charts this project and the life-changing experiences of three of its extraordinary students, Jessica Bennett, Andrea Smith and Jennifer Janik, whose work is reproduced in this volume.

This collection provides a space for heterogeneous dialogue; exploring the diverse practices through which women, citizenship and photographs coalesce at the point of home and land enables different voices to resonate with one another, yet remain distinct. The book does not arrive at a unified conclusion, nor does it identify a singular form of photography, a fixed definition of citizenship (or 'woman') or a universal home or land, yet the contributions, with their innumerable manifestations of making oneself at home, find forms through which to image and imagine belonging in a world marked by movement and migration. This fact, demonstrated time and again by the work collected here, is proof of the significance of the theme, in theory and in practice, within and beyond the academy.

Emphasising the heterogeneous dialogues made possible by the diversity of the contributions, the volume is organised under four thematic headings: *Terrain*, *Dwelling*, *Migrating* and *Locating*. The first two focus attention on land and home, the latter on the processes and practices of citizenship as these are performed through movement and settlement. Throughout the volume, women's specific relationships to place, belonging and community are central to the arguments being made, as are the lens-based practices that constitute the material manifestations of the locational identities explored.

The selection of work within each thematic section has been made to enable a range of different perspectives – geographical, temporal, formal, material – to be taken on the theme. The themes thus act more as signposts designed to lead our readers through an uncharted territory than as an overarching map replete with statements of intent or definition. The volume does not, for example, situate all work on Europe together nor cluster African contributions under a banner, it does not group 'academic essays' or 'photo-essays' in separate sections, nor does it pit the 'historical' or archival material against the 'contemporary'. These organising principles would imply our compliance with conventional geopolitical borderlines, the traditional hierarchies of academic disciplines or a linear, teleological ordering of past and present. Our argument resides elsewhere; the contributions to this volume continually transgress just these forms of conventional categorisation of time and space, subjects and objects, articulating instead sexed subjectivity, practices of identification, senses of collectivity, belonging and emplacement against traditional (and exclusive) boundaries. The four themes used here are neither rigid nor exclusive, their boundaries are permeable, they blur and leak, cross-fertilise, hybridise and pollute happily.

*Terrain* opens and closes with lens-based fine art practices presented as photo-essays (Searle, and Brundrit, Ciurysek and Mangalangayan) which seek to describe the paradoxes and pleasures of embodied encounters *in place*. Moving easily between post-colonial theory, autographic writing and documentary photography, the remaining chapters further elaborate the relationship of land/place to concepts of identity, demonstrating that this relationship is never natural, always constructed and usually contested. Specific locations – from Vienna (Frostig) to Angola (van der Watt), South Africa (Josephy) and central England to Australia (Ennis, Ferris) – are variously conceived as sites of

pleasure and pain, as homes and prisons, the locus of love or brutality. The terrain described so eloquently in these works through texts and images is produced in dialogues between past and present, memory and history, myths and the material traces of the world. Arguably, photography never merely 'represents' these contested spaces, but materialises them, occluding as much as it reveals.

The contributions that comprise *Dwelling* place 'home', literally and metaphorically, at the centre of the affective relations constituting our sense of belonging to place and, with this, our emotional investment in 'citizenship'. How we make and inhabit our homes is simultaneously personal and political; likewise, the domestic refers at once to our most intimate spaces and the borders of our nation-states. The movement between the micro- and macro-levels of 'home' are central to the contributions by Martin, Adams, Shaker and White, while Brown literally explores a visual play of scale in thinking through Heidegger's concept of dwelling from a feminist perspective. Godby and Scheiwiller step back to examine how domestic interiors and local surroundings can become a stage on which unexpected connections between gendered identity and community might play.

The use of the gerund in the section head *Migrating* is strategic; this section brings together a range of essays and photographic projects that explore the processes and practices of transnational/global movement. While women still less frequently control the decision-making elements of migration than men, they play a key role in the everyday activities of migrating, and photographs, from self-portraiture (Leenaerts) to personal snapshots (Arnold) and archival records (von Rosen), participate in the practices that constitute migrating materially and as an affective experience. Sometimes forced, sometimes chosen, migrating is never easy. The borders can be hazardous (Zarza), the histories devastating (Levi) and the effects of migrating, precarious (van der Poorten). Tracing movement, change, losses and gains through photographs in public collections and in private hands, personal accounts and third-person narratives, the contributions to the third section of *Home/Land* remind us that our responsibilities, rights and desires do not always easily align.

*Locating* is the final themed section of the volume and explores the creative activities that women use to make themselves at home in the world. It is intimately tied to questions of citizenship, belonging and hospitality and the contributions demonstrate that 'locating'

is not about domination or 'mastery', but rather an inclusive and welcoming practice, responsive to others and reliant upon their mutual open-ness. Not surprisingly, four of the contributions to this section come from collaborative community and pedagogical projects (Bird, Brundrit, Oliveira/Vearey, University of the Fraser Valley) where conversation, dialogue and (photo-) voice were embedded within the very methods of the research. Two further chapters seek to develop a theoretical voice or language for an intersubjective understanding of citizenship: first, as articulated otherwise through the figuration of the 'denizen' (Meskimmon) and second, as critically interconnected to the use of photographs in the processes of decolonisation (van Robbroek). These essays acknowledge that locating (and 'dis-locating') are difficult processes, frequently marked by loss, displacement and grief, yet they are not despondent in their tone or timbre, but hopeful. The final contribution to *Home/Land*, a documentary photo-essay on International Women's Day in Cameroon (Ayisi), strikes a positive chord that resonates across the whole of the volume. Women make themselves at home in the world with an astonishing and creative array of means and methods. The practices through which they articulate themselves as citizens *and* women, as individuals *and* participants in larger and more extensive networks and communities, are as diverse as they are empowering, as compelling as they are complex, as hopeful as they are dynamic.

*Home/Land*, as we have outlined above, engages with women, citizenship and photographs but another term also binds together the diversity of *Home/Land's* ideas and images: feminism. Its theoretical power and radical, transformative actions reshaped late twentieth-century socio-political gender relationships in the West. Tempting though it might be to claim that we can take feminism for granted in twenty-first-century democracies and postulate a post-feminist era, this is lazy, expedient thinking generated by a failure to acknowledge that progress made by Western societies towards equality is not the same thing as the achievement of full social, political, economic and cultural equality and respect. Feminist activism in the developed and developing world has a remarkable history but its progress is fragile and the notion of a 'post-feminist' era is a mockery both to women who participate in democracy without receiving its full benefits (in the UK, for example, despite the Equal Pay Act of 1970 there is still an alarming disparity between women's and men's pay, signifying the gap

between the law and its delivery of justice) and to women still denied basic rights because of their sex.

The post-feminist premise is largely irrelevant to lands beyond the geographical West and its spheres of influence, where feminist thinking has been unable to penetrate the social fabric meaningfully. The public expression of feminist principles and aspirations is stigmatised as being foreign to *manmade* culture and patriarchal nationalism. In the *Lens of Empowerment* project and *Home/Land* conference, the post-colonial condition of women and the ongoing need of feminist theory emerged for discussion because, despite women's commonalities, important differences between women and their lived experiences of place and culture were identified. This indicates that the plural term 'feminisms' correctly accommodates women as sexed and gendered beings subject to the pressures and vicissitudes of geopolitics and the imposed norms of patriarchal societies. Feminisms facilitate our engagement with our ethnic, religious and national identities; feminisms help us to think through the burdens and responsibilities placed on women when we challenge laws and conventions, fight injustices and develop confidence from contacts with women beyond national boundaries. Feminisms emphasise that our humanity is a *female* humanity which can accommodate other group allegiances but draws strength from a range of different femininities.

Thinking through home and land, womanhood, citizenship and the activities/activism of photographs, feminism – as bedrock – adds layers of meaning and resonance. We offer *Home/Land* as evidence of the complexity of women's consciousness, lives and creative commitment and we end this editorial introduction with our thanks to all who have contributed to *Home/Land*; we have learned and grown through the experience.