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Archives of American Art

History of the Woman's Building, circa 1975-1979

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[[image - drawing of a building]]
[[caption]] The Women's Cultural Centre in Toronto [[/caption]]

THE WOMEN'S TRANSIT AUTHORITY

A 1973 Rape Conference held in Madison, Wisconsin raised issues of concern for many women. One of these issues was related to the lack of public transportation facilities at night in the city of Madison. In spring 1973, a group of women responded to this issue by forming the Women's Transit Authority.

The transit service operates from the University of Wisconsin and is funded jointly by the University, the city of Madison and the county. It is a free automobile service offered to women within a four mile radius of the centre city. It operates every evening between the hours of 7 p.m. and 2 a.m. Women may use the service two ways - they may call to be picked up, or they may wait to be picked up at any 3 points in the University campus area.

Women drivers originally used their own cars to service clients but the Transit Authority now owns a fleet of three cars. Sue Greenwald of the Authority states that there is a consistent demand for the cars. She estimates that they service 75-85 women a night. Approximately 70% of the clients are students or are affiliated with the University.

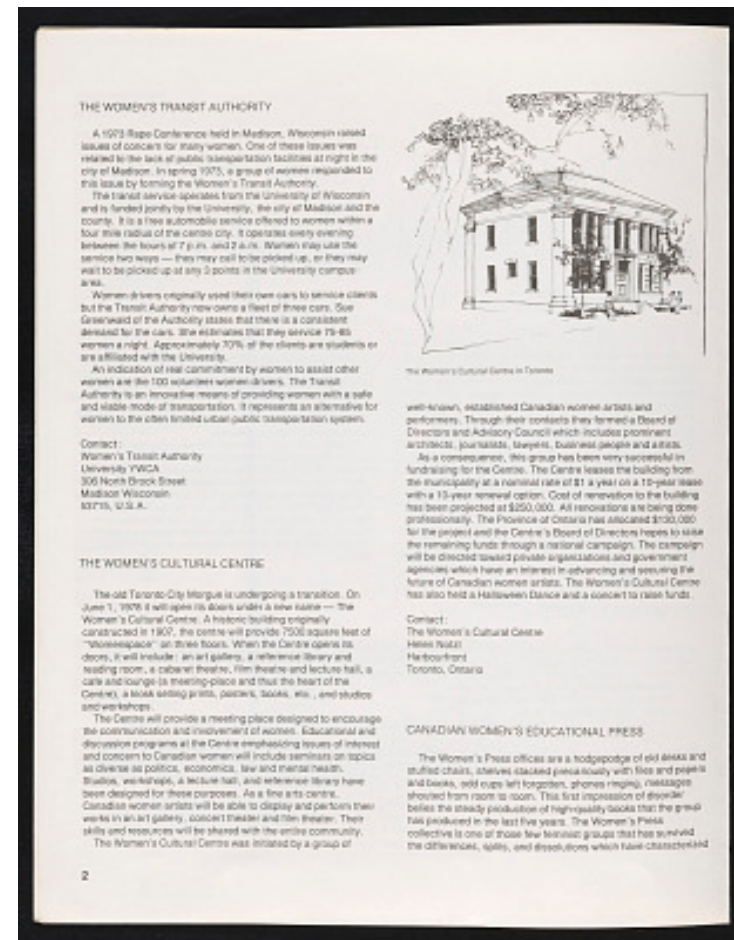
An indication of real commitment by women to assist other women are the 100 volunteer women drivers. The Transit Authority is an innovative means of providing women with a safe and viable mode of transportation. It represents an alternative for women to the often limited urban public transportation system.

Contact:
Women's Transit Authority
University YWCA
306 North Brock Street
Madison Wisconsin
53715, U.S.A.

THE WOMEN'S CULTURAL CENTRE

The old Toronto City Morgue is undergoing a transition. On June 1, 1978 it will open its doors under a new name—The Women's Cultural Centre. A historic building originally constructed in 1907, the centre will provide 7500 square feet of "Womenspace" on three floors. When the Centre opens its doors, it will include: an art gallery, a reference library and reading room, a cabaret theatre, film theatre and lecture hall, a cafe and lounge (a meeting-place and thus the heart of the Centre), a kiosk selling prints, posters, books, etc., and studios and workshops.

The Centre will provide a meeting place designed to encourage the communication and involvement of women. Educational and discussion programs at the Centre emphasizing issues of interest and concerns to Canadian women will include seminars on topics as diverse as politics, economics, law and mental health. Studios, workshops, a lecture hall, and reference library have been designed for these purposes. As a fine arts centre, Canadian women artists will be able to display and perform their works in an art gallery, concert theater and film theater. Their skills



and resources will be shared with the entire community.

The Women's Cultural Centre was initiated by a group of well-known, established Canadian women artists and performers. Through their contacts they formed a Board of Directors and Advisory Council which includes prominent architects, journalists, lawyers, business people and artists.

As a consequence, this group has been very successful in fundraising for the Centre. The Centre leases the building from the municipality at a nominal rate of \$1 a year on a 10-year renewal option. Cost of renovation to the building has been projected at \$250,000. All renovations are being done professionally. The Province of Ontario has allocated \$130,000 for the project and the Centre's Board of Directors hopes to raise the remaining funds through a national campaign. The campaign will be directed toward private organizations and government agencies which have an interest in advancing and securing the future of Canadian women artists. The Women's Cultural Centre has also held a Halloween Dance and a concert to raise funds.

Contact
The Women's Cultural Centre
Helen Notzl
Harbourfront
Toronto, Ontario

CANADIAN WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL PRESS

The Women's Press offices are a hodgepodge of old desks and stuffed chairs, shelves stacked precariously with files and papers and books, odd cups left forgotten, phones ringing, messages shouted from room to room. This first impression of disorder belies the steady production of high-quality books that the group has produced in the last five years. The Women's Press collective is one of those few feminist groups that has survived the differences, splits, and dissolutions which have characterized



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