

FOR LOVE OR MONEY

A history of women and work in Australia

A film by Megan McMurchy, Margot Nash, Margot Oliver, Jeni Thornley

In 2017 this feminist classic was digitally restored from original film materials



Information Kit

© Flashback Films 16mm 107 minutes 1983 Australia

For Love Or Money was produced with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission and the many groups and individuals whose donations made this film possible. The project could not have been made without the assistance of the National Film and Sound Archive.

Distributed by [Ronin Films](http://RoninFilms.com.au)

orders@roninfilms.com.au or 02 6248 0851

Synopsis

Five years in the making, with contributions from hundreds of women and over 200 Australian films, *For Love Or Money* investigates and celebrates women's work from colonial settlement to the present, a story told by Aboriginal and migrant women, convict women and today's women.

The film chronicles the cycles of women's gains and losses as they are moved in and out of the workforce according to the demands of the time. It reveals how women's unpaid and voluntary work keeps an entire system running smoothly, in peacetime and in war. As wives and mothers, women do the work of loving – the work that is never paid or recognised as real work. The film shows how women's work in the home determines the kind of work they do in the paid workforce, the low-paid, low-status jobs.

For Love Or Money also shows how women have fought and organized for equality and wage justice for over a century. This classic documentary remains relevant today as women continue the unfinished campaigns for equal pay, maternity leave and childcare, and still carry the major responsibility for caring and nurturing.



A Film in Four Parts

Part One: Hard Labour Pre-colonisation to the eve of WW1	1780s – 1914	28 minutes
Part Two: Daughters of Toil WW1 to the eve of WW2	1914 – 1939	27 minutes
Part Three: Working for the Duration WW2 to the eve of women's liberation	1939 – 1969	26 minutes
Part Four: Work of Value The long struggle for equality and wage justice	1969 – 1983	27 minutes



'The heroes are those we don't mention. We find heroes only in monuments in public parks, but I think the real heroes are us.'

The Making of the Film

During the 1970s feminist historians set about radically revising Australian history and challenging many established ideas about women's work. In the lead-up to the first Women and Labour Conference in 1978 it was proposed that the Sydney Women's Film Group create a visual presentation to accompany the Conference's academic papers. A small group of filmmakers began researching available visual resources, with an initial grant from the Australian Film Commission. What started out as 'Women's Work: the Image in Australian Film' became an ambitious project that would encompass the untold history of Australian women's struggle for equality in the paid workforce as well as honouring their unpaid 'work of loving' in the home.

The original research began in the now National Film and Sound Archive, the Australian War Memorial, Cinesound Movietone Productions and various photographic collections. Many months were spent viewing and selecting archival film clips, photographs, etchings, newspaper headlines, and material from women's magazines. This exhaustive search led to the discovery that the day-to-day struggles for survival by most women was not to be found in the feature films, nor even in the documentary films in the archives. Instead these films were more likely to offer fantasy worlds and dreams, masking a more ideological and propagandistic intent. They were films that constantly reinforced the sexual division of labour, even when the contradictions in that structure, as in World War 2, were most apparent.

The filmmakers spread their net wider, undertaking research in areas primarily unrecorded and in many cases uncatalogued: home movies, personal collections, diaries, paintings, letters, poems, and popular songs. Alongside the visual research, the filmmakers undertook a wide survey of existing historical texts and the evolving feminist reinterpretations of Australian history, to construct twin timelines representing 'paid work' and 'domestic labour'. As well as providing the basic structure for the film,

these timelines informed the development of the film's narration, creating a public voice and an interior, poetic voice.

Margot Oliver sought out and interviewed over thirty-five women who had personal experience of the untold stories of women's work and women's political activism. While most of the women interviewed do not appear in the finished film, their accounts directly informed both the historical and political narrative of the film, and the tie-in pictorial book co-authored by Megan McMurchy, Margot Oliver and Jeni Thornley and published by Penguin Books.

'I think one of the reasons we made the film was that the written sources were not reaching or articulating the stories we wanted to tell to a large number of people. We wanted *For Love Or Money* to reach beyond those parameters.' Jeni Thornley

'We took what images we wanted and turned them to our purposes and gave them new meanings. And I think one of the strengths of the film is the slightly irreverent attitude we adopted to our sources.' Megan McMurchy

'Virtually every woman I spoke to - no matter how active they had been in the paid workforce or in unpaid organising - was very willing to speak to me, but not convinced that what she had to say was important or relevant. And that seemed to hit the nail on the head as far as women's history was concerned.' Margot Oliver

Although the film is in some ways a linear narrative from 1788 to the present, the filmmakers were constantly looking for other ways to present the material. For Margot Nash, who edited the film, inspiration came through working with composer Elizabeth Drake on the musical score. 'Not only did the film have to make sense politically, it had to make sense cinematically and emotionally, so it was wonderful to see how the different elements we were struggling to blend together could be shaped thematically through the music.' Margot Nash

The work of copying the large amounts of archival film proved time-consuming and expensive. Developing adequate systems to deal with such a vast amount of footage and acquiring practice in responding to complex problems in the laboratory represented one of the most difficult yet rewarding stages of the film's production.

A project that began as the images of women's work in Australian film grew into a feature length documentary narrative of working women's lives in Australia since colonial settlement. Although modest funding for the film was forthcoming, it was not enough to provide the filmmakers with a living wage – for their part it was truly a labour of love.

In late 1983, the women and work film, *For Love Or Money*, emerged as a comprehensive compilation of images of women's working lives, paid and unpaid, a synthesis of women's social and political histories.







L-R Margot Nash, Megan McMurchy, Jeni Thornley, Margot Oliver

'For Love Or Money stands today as a major work of historical research, a masterclass of montage editing and a classic essay film ...a highlight of incredibly dense, intelligent non-fiction storytelling.'

Lauren Carroll Harris, 'From archive into the future', Realtime, 2017

'... a potent brew, powerfully illuminating, lively and eclectic... the greatest pity is that it ends.'
Anna Maria Dell'Oso, Sydney Morning Herald, 1983

'A gutsy, down-to-earth, no frills feature film about the daily work, love, laughter, poverty, tears, humour, wit, ambitions, struggles and aspirations of Australian women since 1788.' Betty Reilly, Tribune, 1983

'...blends a variety of alternatively fascinating and horrifying materials into a complex and moving statement.' Meghan Morris, Australian Financial Review, 1983

'...superbly edited... entertaining, provocative and professional. You can't ask much more than that.' Neil Jillett, The Age, 1983

Resources

For Love Or Money is a valuable resource for schools, libraries, universities, TAFE colleges and anyone interested in the study of Australian history, labour history, oral history and women's history. It is also an excellent introduction to the history of Australian film.

[*For Love Or Money: A History of Women and Work in Australia*](#) is available from Ronin Films via Vimeo-on-Demand, DVD sales and digital screenings.

Also available from Ronin Films is the large format, fully illustrated companion book McMurchy, M., Oliver, M., Thornley, J. [*For Love Or Money: A Pictorial History of Women and Work in Australia*](#), Penguin Books, Australia, 1983

- [Watch the Trailer](#)
- [For Love Or Money: A Study Guide, Australian Teachers of Media, 1983](#)
- [Curator's notes For Love Or Money \(1983\) on ASO - Australian Screen Online](#)
- [1982 Pre-production promotional Video For Love Or Money made to raise funding for the film.](#)
- [Oliver, M. Interviews with women, For Love Or Money, \[audio\], State Library NSW](#)
- [Oliver, M. Interviews with women, For Love Or Money, \[film\], NFSA](#)
- [For Love Or Money - Facebook Home](#)
- [For Love Or Money - Margot Nash website](#)
- [Introducing For Love Or Money at Avoca Cinema - Jeni Thornley blog](#)
- [Feminism & Film - A Roundtable Discussion with Curator Susan Charlton, Sydney Film Festival, 2017](#)
- [In Conversation with Margot Nash, Jeni Thornley, Megan McMurchy & Martha Ansara moderated by Catherine Dwyer, ACMI, 2020](#)
- Bunbury, S. 'Everything is Not Roses - The Press and Women's Independent Film; Commercially released documentary: *For Love Or Money*' in *Don't Shoot Darling!: women's independent filmmaking in Australia*, (eds.) Blonski, A., Creed, B., Freiberg, F., Greenhouse Publications, Australia, 1987, pp. 242-249
- [Collins, F. 'For Love Or Money: Conflicting Temporalities' \[extract\], *Screening the Past*, Issue 3, 1998](#)
- Dermody, S., Curthoys, A. 'For Love Or Money: a Work of Loving' in *Don't Shoot Darling!: women's independent filmmaking in Australia*, (eds.) Blonski, A., Creed, B., Freiberg, F., Greenhouse Publications, Australia, 1987, pp. 343-349

The Filmmakers

Megan McMurchy is an independent producer of documentaries, factual television and feature films. Most recently she produced a two-part documentary *Horror Movie: A Low Budget Nightmare* (2017), and co-produced the feature documentary *Tyke Elephant Outlaw* (2015). Other award-winning documentaries include *For Love Or Money* (1983), *Mystique of the Pearl* (1997), *Sadness* (1999) and *Mr Patterns* (2004). Megan produced the feature films *Footy Legends* (2006), *Talk* (1993) and *Breathing Under Water* (1991). She served as an executive producer and board member of Film Australia and was the founding manager of Screen Australia's Enterprise Program.

Margot Nash is a filmmaker and an academic. Her credits include the feature dramas *Vacant Possession* (1994) and *Call Me Mum* (2005), the experimental short *Shadow Panic* (1989) and the feature documentary *The Silences* (2015). She was a co-filmmaker on *We Aim To Please* (1976), *Bread and Dripping* (1982) and *For Love Or Money* (1983). Margot has worked as a consultant and mentor for Australian Indigenous filmmakers as well as working in the Pacific running documentary workshops for Pacific Island women. In 2019 she collaborated with Maori dancer Victoria Hunt to make the short film *TAKE*. She is a Visiting Fellow in Communications at UTS.

Margot Oliver began filmmaking in the Sydney Women's Film Workshop in 1974. She was active in the distribution, programming and exhibition of independent films at the Sydney Filmmakers Co-operative where she also lobbied for training opportunities for women. Her film credits include *Charlene Does Med at Uni* (1977), the interview documentary *Edna Ryan – a Political Life* (1993), and the collaborative documentary *For Love Or Money* (1983). Her writing of the book of the same name (Penguin 1983) enabled the publication of valuable research material and analysis, unable to be included in the film. Margot remains passionate about viewing history and politics through a radical feminist lens and continues to photograph and write.

Jeni Thornley is a documentary filmmaker, writer and film valuer. Her poetic documentaries *Maidens* (1978), the collaborative feature and book *For Love Or Money* (1983), *To the Other Shore* (1998) and *Island Home Country* (2008) are landmark Australian independent and feminist films. Jeni was active in distribution and exhibition at Sydney Filmmakers Co-op, wrote for *Film News* and was Manager of the Women's Film Fund (AFC). Jeni is currently making '*memory film*', an immersive poetic essay film based on her historical Super 8 archive. She writes about film regularly, contributing to both scholarly publications and film culture magazines and is a Visiting Scholar, Communications, UTS.

Awards

1984

- Best Feature Documentary, Incontro Internazionale del Cinema delle Donne
- Nominated for Best Screenplay and Best Documentary, Australian Film Institute Awards

1985

- United Nations Media Peace Prize: Gold Citation, Television

Film Festivals

1984

- 34th Berlin Film Festival: International Forum of Young Cinema
- VI Incontro Internazionale del Cinema delle Donne: Il Cinema delle Isole, Florence
- 27th San Francisco International Film Festival
- Women Make Movies Film Festival, San Francisco
- 13th Wellington Film Festival, New Zealand
- Cambridge Film Festival, United Kingdom
- 16th Auckland International Film Festival, New Zealand
- 13° Festival Internacional de Cinema Figuiera da Foz, Portugal
- Festival International du Nouveau Cinema, Montreal
- 3° Uppsala Film Festival, Sweden
- Through Her Eyes Women's Film Festival, Toronto

1985

- 7e Festival International de Films de Femmes, Creteil, France
- St.Kilda Film Festival, Melbourne
- Tokyo International Women's Film Festival
- Women's International Filmforum, Nairobi, Kenya
- 24e Festikon Educatief Film-Videofestival, Amsterdam
- Semaine Internationale Cinema Valladolid, Spain
- Women in Film Festival, Los Angeles

1986

- U.S. Film Festival, Salt Lake City
- 2nd Scottsdale Film Festival, Scottsdale, Arizona
- Australian Film Month, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa

1987

- Women in the Director's Chair Festival, Chicago

1988

- 20° Festival International du Film Documentaire Nyon
- Back of Beyond: Discovering Australian Film and Television, UCLA, Los Angeles
- 1° Festival Internacional de Filmes Realizados por Mulheres, Lisbon

1991

- 13ème Cinéma du Réel Festival International de Films Ethnographiques et Sociologiques, Paris
- Australian Film Event, Pompidou Centre, Paris

1992

- 2nd International Women's Festival, Bangkok

1999

- 21e Festival International de Films de Femmes, Creteil, France in retrospective 'Section Les Antipodes: Le Cinéma des Femmes Australiennes'

Film Festivals continued

2015

- 2nd International Women's Film Festival Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Women's Gaze Future Feminist Archive Film Retrospective, Sydney College of the Arts & Art Gallery of New South Wales

2017

- Feminism & Film: Sydney Women Filmmakers, 1970s & '80s, Sydney Film Festival
- Screening of Restored Version, Arc Cinema, NFSA, Canberra

2020

- Cinema 3 season, Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), Melbourne

2021

- 23rd Seoul International Women's Film Festival, South Korea, 'Australian Women's Filmmaking'

Theatrical Screenings

Australian Theatrical Release (1983-84):

- Academy Twin, Sydney
- Longford Cinema, Melbourne
- Carlton Movie House, Melbourne
- Classic, Adelaide
- Vista Cinema, Wollongong
- Film and TV Institute, Fremantle
- Boulevard Blue, Canberra
- 1st Avenue Cinema, Coffs Harbour
- Kings Cinema, Lambton
- Centre Cinema, Brisbane
- Electric Shadows, Canberra
- Mermaid Twin, Townsville

Australian Country Tour (April-May 1984):

- Katoomba, Springwood, Wentworth Falls, Narromine, Orange, Wagga, Broken Hill, Dubbo, Armidale, Murwillumbah, Lismore, Grafton, Newcastle

London Theatrical Release (June-July 1984):

- Phoenix Cinema
- Everyman Cinema
- Rio Cinema

British Regional Tour (July-November 1984):

- Sheffield, Bristol, Leeds, Southampton, Nottingham

New Zealand Theatrical Release (March 1985):

- Auckland and Christchurch

Television

1985

- ABC-TV National Australian Broadcast

1985-1997

- Broadcast in Denmark, Greece, Ireland and Spain

Credits

A film by Megan McMurchy, Margot Nash, Margot Oliver, Jeni Thornley

Written and Produced by Megan McMurchy, Margot Oliver, Jeni Thornley

Edited by Margot Nash

Music by Elizabeth Drake

Narrated by Noni Hazelhurst

Directed by Megan McMurchy and Jeni Thornley

Research by Megan McMurchy, Margot Oliver, Jeni Thornley

Archival Film Co-ordination

Pictorial Materials Co-ordination

Oral History Interviews

Cinematography & Stills Filming

Sound Recording

Sound Editor

Voice-over Casting

Script Editor

Historical Consultants

Megan McMurchy, Margot Nash

Jeni Thornley

Margot Oliver

Erika Addis

Pat Fiske

Annabelle Sheehan

Faith Martin

Moya Wood

Edna Ryan, Lyndall Ryan, Annie Bickford,

Ann Curthoys, Carmel Shute

Oral History Filmed Interviews:

Sue Bellamy, Alice Briggs, Eileen Capocchi, Kaylene Chamberlain, Gwen Chaumont, Ann Curthoys, Zelda D'Aprano, June De Lorenzo, Meg Foster, Jobs for Women Wollongong, Betty Johnson, Ina Jones, Carmen Lavazzari, Stella Nord, Chris Phillips, Margaret Power, Melbourne Tram Drivers, Thelma Prior, Janne Reid, Betty Reilly, Edna Ryan, Anne Summers, Louise West

Voice-over Actors:

Jane Clifton, Robyn Nevin, Dianne Craig, Emu Nugent, Nick Enright, Justine Saunders, Vivienne Garrett, Kay Self, Richard Meikle, Carole Skinner, Margot Nash, Maureen Watson

Musicians:

Elizabeth Drake, Virginia Weekes, Marnie Sheehan, Kathy Bluff, Palz, Patricia McMeekin, Chrissie Shaw, Ewen Huggett, Dianne Spence, Chris Abrahams, Tina Harris, Dave Clayton, Celeste Howden, Greg Mayson, Kathy Loosley, Jeremy Cook

Music Recording Engineer

Electronic Tapes

Laboratory Liaison

Editing Assistant

Sound Mixing

Negative Cutting

Grading

National Film and Sound Archive Liaison

Martin Benge

Vineta Lagzdina

Megan Williams

Vic Smith

United Sound: Peter Fenton, Phil Heywood

Chris Rowell Productions

Clara Schubert

Kate McLoughlin, Dr Henning Schou,

Karen Foley

For Love Or Money was produced with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission's Creative Development Branch, Project Development Branch and Women's Film Fund; the NSW Women's Advisory Council; the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services, and many trade unions, community groups and individuals who gave donations or invested.

Year Completed	1983
Running time	107 minutes
Genres	Feature Essay Documentary, Compilation Documentary, Women's History, Labour History
Gauge and Stock	16mm Eastmancolour negative
Aspect Ratio	1.37:1
Laboratory	Colorfilm Pty Ltd

For Love Or Money was digitally restored by the National Film and Sound Archive and in 2017 screened at the Sydney Film Festival as part of a 'Feminism & Film' retrospective.



Information Kit Pictures

- P.1 Newcastle Barmaids, *Tribune*, 1962
- P.2 Mother and Children, Victorian Railways, 1951
Aboriginal Domestic Servants, Mundabullangana Station, Battye Library, WA
1898
- P.3 Australian Nurses, Lemnos, Greece, Australian War Memorial, ACT 1916
- P.6 Aboriginal Day of Mourning, *Man* magazine, Sydney 1938
- P.7 Migrant Women Workers, Ruth Maddison, Melbourne 1974
'A Quiet Day with Mother', *Everylady's Journal*, Mitchell Library, SLNSW, 1912
Melanesian Women, Farnborough Estate Sugar Mill, John Oxley Library,
QLD 1890
- P.8 *For Love Or Money* Filmmakers, Sandy Edwards, Sydney 1983
- P.15 Miss J.M. Donovan, Typist, Stott's Business College, Melbourne 1907
Women Tram Workers Win the Right to Drive Trams, *The Age*, Melbourne 1975
Munition Worker, Australian War Memorial, ACT c.1943
- P.16 *For Love Or Money* original screen-printed poster, Jan Mackay 1983



'She'd seen women fight, she'd seen them unite. She'd seen them show courage and resourcefulness. Give them a clear issue and they cut right through to the bone of it, and stood solid as rock.'



FOR LOVE OR MONEY

A HISTORY OF WOMEN AND WORK IN AUSTRALIA



16mm 109 mins
 Australian Distribution
 Sydney Filmmakers Co-op
 PO Box 217
 Kings Cross Australia 2011
 Phone: (02) 330 721
 World Sales
 Flashback Films
 C/o Australian Film Commission
 1st Floor, Victory House
 99-101 Regent Street
 LONDON W1 UK
 Tel: 01 871 1
 Suite 615
 9229 Sunset Blvd
 Los Angeles
 CA 90069 USA
 Telex: 691355

A FILM BY

MEGAN McMURCHY
MARGOT NASH
MARGOT OLIVER
JENI THORNLEY

MUSIC

ELIZABETH DRAKE

NARRATION

NONI HAZLEHURST



A FLASHBACK FILMS PRODUCTION MADE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION.

THE WOMEN'S FILM FUND AND THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE