

Jewish Women's Archive



**A photographic lens on being a Jewish girl:
Mothers and daughters explore the
Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution
online exhibit through photos and creative arts**

Materials for Part 2

Excerpted from the Jewish Women's Archive's online
exhibit at

<http://jwa.org/feminism>

Being a Jewish girl through a photographic lens: Mothers and daughters explore the Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution online exhibit through photos and creative arts
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Ophira Edut



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Jewish Women's Archive (jwa.org)

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To me, being Jewish has always been aligned with women's empowerment and multiculturalism. As the daughter of an Israeli landscaper (dad) and an American rabbi (mom), I grew up believing that cultures could coexist, and women could be whatever we wanted.

As a child of the media, I figured, where better to express this than in a magazine? When I was 19 years old, I teamed up with my twin sister Tali and our friend Dyann Logwood, who is African-American. Together, we founded HUES (Hear Us Emerging Sisters), the first national magazine for young women of all cultures and sizes.

At the time (and to this day), most magazines portrayed a narrow image of women. The pages of every glossy were filled with tall, bony, mostly-white models, punctuated by the same-old article on "Get HIM to Notice You!" or "Flatten Your Tummy by Christmas!" On the other hand, the mags that took women seriously went too far the other way, hitting us as humorless and heavy. We wanted a fun magazine that portrayed women as diverse, smart, soulful, AND sexy – not airbrushed and anorexic – while still telling the truth. So, we created one ourselves.

The HUES mission was to create a space where beauty came in many forms and women got to tell their own stories. The magazine started as a college project in 1992, when I was a University of Michigan sophomore. Young women (and a few good men!) from many backgrounds wrote articles and appeared in photos. We rallied up funding from student organizations, then printed 1,000 copies, which we distributed campus-wide.

It was such a hit that we decided to keep publishing, expanding our reach with each issue. By the time I graduated two years later, HUES had evolved into a full-color, glossy magazine with worldwide distribution to major bookstores and newsstands. Gloria Steinem and Rebecca Walker, two amazing feminist leaders, joined our advisory board. Our readership grew to 20,000 young women and men around the world. We received letters from women in prisons and shelters, readers in Israel, college students, high school girls, and mothers who were so thankful to give their daughters a magazine that was both stylish and smart.

HUES was not overtly feminist, in that we neither required nor banned writers from using the "f-word." Since some women of color have historically felt excluded by the label, we let each writer define herself: womynist, womanist, feminist, girl-powered, humanist, unlabeled – whatever allowed her most authentic self-expression. I believe that freedom alone made HUES a contribution to feminism.

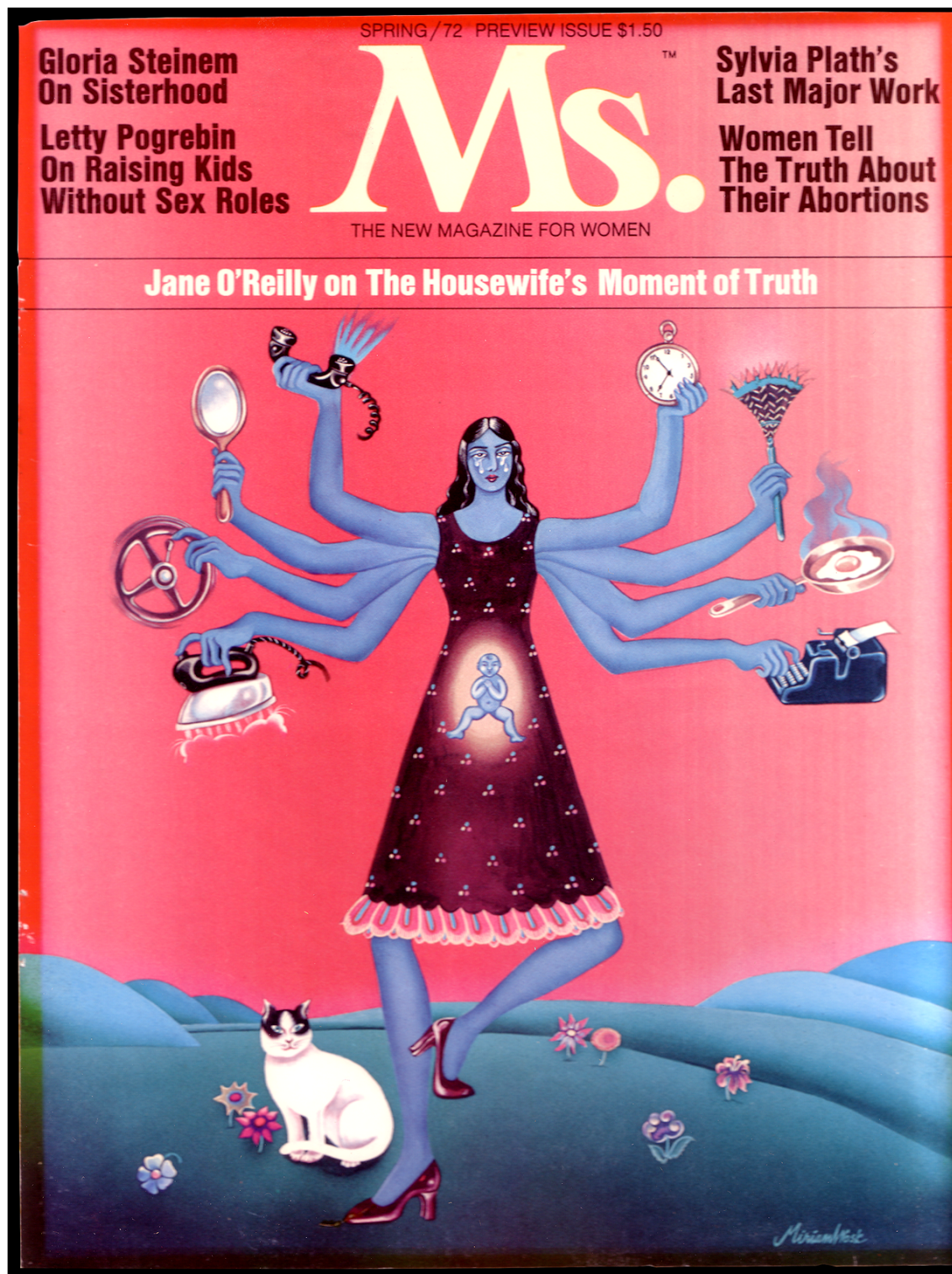
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Eventually, production costs became too high for my post-collegiate wallet, so in 1997, we sold HUES to New Moon Publishing. The Minnesota-based company published New Moon magazine for girls, and kept HUES afloat until 1999.

Although HUES is no longer in print, I'm proud to have brought together such a diverse and inspiring crew to create something previously unseen on the newsstand. We expressed a message with humor, flavor, and strength – that beautiful, intelligent women come in many forms and have much to say. And for a moment in magazine history, we emerged and we were heard.

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Letty Cottin Pogrebin



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The Preview issue of *Ms.*, which hit the newsstands in January 1972, speaks volumes about the concerns of Second Wave feminism and the commitments of the magazine's five founding editors, myself among them.

The multi-armed, blue-skinned cover image – we purposely chose an iconic figure to avoid racial favoritism – embodies the burdens and obligations of the female role. Mother, worker, housekeeper, cook, car-pool driver, keeper of the social life, slave to time, seeker of beauty, object of the male gaze, she is weeping because she cannot do it all. She cries because her labor is unseen, taken for granted, unrewarded. She cries because she is dancing as fast as she can and has no energy left for herself. She is Everywoman, and she is exhausted.

Our goal at *Ms.* was to make such lives visible, to honor women's work, and to expose the legal, economic, and social barriers that stand in the way of women's full humanity. *Ms.* provided a forum where disparate voices – housewives, lesbians, political radicals, cancer survivors, victims of rape, violence, and incest, brave feminist trouble-makers – could be heard on issues that were being ignored by mainstream women's magazines and papered over by "feminine" propriety in the public square. *Ms.* showcased women writers and artists. We publicized grass-roots organizations and local feminist leaders. We reported on street demonstrations, consciousness-raising groups, cutting-edge lawsuits, and legislative initiatives. We advocated for the beleaguered and the silenced. We were rabble-rousers. We helped make a revolution.

The cover lines on the Preview issue are illustrative of where we began: Gloria Steinem's paean to sex pride and sisterhood. The fight to legalize abortion. Sylvia Plath's luminous fiction. Jane O'Reilly's epiphanic essay on housework. My piece on sex role stereotyping and how it squelches children's dreams.

There is no question in my mind that my 20-year involvement in *Ms.* – like my 35-year commitment to the women's movement, both secular and Jewish – is rooted in faith and family. I grew up in a home where advancing social justice was as integral to Judaism as lighting Shabbat candles. My parents, both passionate Zionists, were active volunteers in our synagogue and the wider Jewish community. Having learned from them to stand up for my dignity as a Jew, I suppose it was natural for me to stand up for my dignity as a woman, which, after all, is what feminism is all about.