



**EN / Catalog in large print**

**Exhibition :**

**Portraits of women. Stories for a History.**



**mundaneum**

## Introduction

The aim of Portraits of women. Stories for a History is to pay tribute and highlight the women who left their mark on Belgium in the 19th and 20th centuries. Recognised or anonymous, militant or not, these figures have contributed to changing society and have helped the cause of women thanks to their desire for rights and freedom. With these stories, the Mundaneum, archive centre and museum space, wishes to stimulate the memory of women and encourage a more equal history. This approach to making women visible in the Belgian history of the 20th century is reflected in the non-exhaustive selection of 17 portraits that embody fundamental themes for the emancipation of women.

These portraits, personalised thanks to the work of an illustrator, Florence Sabatier, are accompanied by other women who have also contributed to the advancement of women's rights in each of the themes concerned. In addition to shedding new light on Belgian women, the Mundaneum revisits its own history by presenting those who have contributed to the great bibliographic adventure. Until now, the Mundaneum has borne the names of Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine. However, Léonie La Fontaine, Henri's sister, participated in the drafting of handwritten records of the famous catalogue, the Répertoire bibliographique universel (RBU). This work of valorisation and memory begins with the content of the available collections on women. The creation of a centre dedicated to the collection of documents on women as early as 1910 contributed to the feminist

collection of the current archive centre. When Léonie La Fontaine died in 1949, her personal papers were transferred to the Mundaneum. As a tribute to her “matrimonial” heritage, it is from her point of view and with her voice that the story of these women is told. Finally, there is an important celebration in this exhibition. In 1922, the bar was finally opened to women. Today, in 2022, women have meanwhile acquired other rights such as the right to vote in 1948. Are there new issues to be addressed in order to achieve equality in women’s daily lives? The team of journalists, Les Grenades - RTBF, will challenge visitors with a topical and striking commentary. Portraits of women. Stories for a History. During this visit, some of the figures may be familiar to you, but one thing is certain, you won’t forget it! **Stéphanie Manfroid, Curator of the exhibition.**

## **A word from Léonie La Fontaine**

Welcome to the Mundaneum, an archive and exhibition centre unique in the world and this in the heart of Mons! Within these walls, 6 kilometres of documents are kept, and almost 12 million records. Not bad, eh? It is something to be proud of. The history of this exceptional place begins at the end of the 19th century. I know, I was there! Allow me to introduce myself... My name is Léonie La Fontaine, Ninie for my brother Henri. I was born in Brussels on 2 October 1857 into a bourgeois family. At home, my mother, Marie-Louise Philips (1826-1899), organised dinner debates which my brother and I attended. I grew up surrounded by culture, art, pacifist and feminist ideas. As an adult, I was noticed as an activist in La Ligue, the Belgian women's rights

organisation, alongside Marie Popelin. This movement was founded in 1892. As you can imagine, at the time, it was no easy task to take one's place and speak out as a woman. At that time, society was completely dominated by men and we had no rights, or almost no rights... And it's time for that to stop! I share my commitment to peace and women with my brother. Over the years, we have remained very close. He became a socialist senator and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1913. It is true that he is the one who is noticed, but his notoriety serves my business... I am a determined feminist pacifist: I address these words to King Albert I in December 1916: "A day will come, however, we ardently hope, when women will be called upon to sit alongside men; on that day, we are convinced, wars will have become impossible." And the Mundaneum in all this? I join Paul Otlet and Henri who are starting this crazy and

utopian project of listing publications on all subjects since the invention of printing. Our trio set up the paper ancestor of your search engines.

This is how I wrote the first 400,000 records of the Répertoire Bibliographique Universel (RBU). And since information is part of my struggle, I commission a specialised bibliography on women. The Office central de documentation féminine (Central Office for Women's Documentation) was founded in 1910. After the Great War, during the first communal elections in 1921, Marie Parent and I created the General Party of Belgian Women. This was a surrealism worthy of our flat country: women were registered on the lists and were eligible before they obtained the right to vote! During the inter-war period, I fought against war and fascism, alongside Lucie Dejardin and Isabelle Blume.

Never again, we repeat, and yet in 1939, war breaks out. Everything collapsed. And then, victory, at last! In 1948, women obtained the right to vote in legislative elections. It was the result of a long struggle... At the age of 92, I died in 1949, few weeks before the first elections organised on the basis of mixed universal suffrage. Through this exhibition, Portraits of women. Stories for a History, I take you on a journey to meet my contemporaries who have left their mark on the history of Belgium, but also those who will follow us. Want to know more about our History with women, follow me!

## The press

Let's start our dive into history with the place of women in the press. Women have been working in editorial offices since the end of the 19th century. Unsurprisingly, the reception they received was rather hostile. Nevertheless, they were there, and little by little, they were able to share their ideas. Occupying the media space is a key to the visibility of women and feminists. I myself am very active in propagating feminist ideas through the Bulletin of the Belgian League for Women's Rights, where I am the editor. The writings allow us to create links with sympathisers. The traditional press is interested in women when it wants to feminise its readership with new specialised sections aimed directly at them. Subsequently, new magazines are specifically

targeting this audience. Nevertheless, the press organs are governed solely by men. Later, despite the professionalisation of the business in 1963, journalism, and in particular the written press, remained a male bastion. From the 1990s onwards, although radio and television have been feminising their staff, positions of responsibility, such as production or management, are still predominantly held by men....

## **Les Grenades Issue**

Do you still have to fight to do your job when you are a woman journalist? Are the Belgian media an example in the fight against sexism? According to a study by the Association of Professional Journalists, in French-speaking Belgium, women make up only 35% of the journalistic workforce, and the media are still overwhelmingly run

by men. Also, many more women than men report having experienced discrimination and/or intimidation in the course of their work, mostly because of their gender. Concerning the media's treatment of gender-based violence, the profession still needs to change its practices: it is still too often minimised by journalists.

## **Caroline Boussart-Popp (1808-1891) / Pseudo Charles**

The career of this daring woman is an exception in the world of the press during the 19th century. Native of Binche, she lived in Mons with her husband, Christian Popp, the father of the Belgian land register. From 1837 to 1891, she was director and editor-in-chief of the Journal de Bruges. She was also one of the founders of the Belgian Press Association in 1886. She was a liberal-conservative and was in favour of women's education in schools. However, according to her party, a woman's place is in the home... She confided: "My literary background is light and journalism a redhibitory vice. All I have to my name is a hardworking life and a little courage". Caroline Boussart-Popp is leading the way!

**Want to discover others figures from the Belgian press ?**

**Germaine An Parijs (1893-1983)**

Germaine Van Parys is a talented press photographer. Active in the underground press during the war, she started her own agency in 1952: Van Parys Media Reporters.

**Marie-Thérèse Rossel (1910-1987)**

Marie Rossel, press owner, inherited the daily newspaper Le Soir when she was only 25 years old. After the war, she was appointed head of the editorial board and innovated by introducing the Petite Gazette section.

## The education

I grew up in a progressive family. I can't go to school, but fortunately I am home-schooled. Let me explain the late organisation of secondary education for girls in Belgium... The quarrels between secular and religious education, reinforced by the conventional pattern of women's place in the home, excluded girls from the state-organised educational path. The first secondary schools originated in the secular bourgeois milieu like mine. Women were able to become teachers through private, paid training courses. And that changed everything! From 1888 onwards, thanks to these first diplomas, other, more specialised courses in universities began to be accessible to the most privileged among us.

For the more modest and for the needs of industry, other schools, such as those supported by Raphaèle Bischoffsheim in Brussels, offer a vocational training course. My brother was one of the founding members of the Association pour l'enseignement professionnel des femmes (Association for the vocational education of women). In 1914, the law on compulsory schooling for everyone up to the age of 12 was finally passed. In the 1970s, the school opened up to co-education; girls and boys were brought together in the same school

## **Les Grenades issue**

Does the school institution perpetuate gender stereotypes? The paths and opportunities for social emancipation of girls and boys are still too largely determined. The lack of training in deconstructing stereotypes

in the initial training of teachers has a major impact on the future of both girls and boys. Biases also occur in terms of educational orientations, whether in general or technical education. Namely, in secondary education, great disparities are observed concerning speaking up in class in favour of boys. In terms of role models, school curricula include few women, whether in science, politics or history. Finally, the so-called neuter masculine continues to be debated, slowing down the use of a more inclusive language.

## **Isabelle Gatti De Gamond (1839-1905)**

My dear Isabelle is a key figure in the training and education of women in Belgium. We worked together in the Belgian League for Women's Rights. Before setting up the schools for which she is renowned, she was a governess for Polish aristocrats. Self-taught and strengthened by this experience, she deepened her knowledge and devised a unique educational reform for girls in Belgium. She shared her theories in the magazine she published between 1862 and 1964, *L'éducation de la Femme*. At the age of 25, she created the first secular school for girls in Brussels, rue du Marais, Les Cours d'éducation. Her establishments offered the necessary foundations to become teachers or join a

university. “We will never know, each time we open a door to women, the importance of the revolution that is going to take place”, she says.

**Other women have played major roles in providing access to education...**

### **Marie Frauenberghaps (1879-1939)**

She founded a school for young girls under the patronage of the University of Louvain. In 1931 it became the Marie Haps School, and in 1946-1947 it specialised in training psychology assistants under the leadership of her daughter, Simone.

## **Madeleine Thonnart-Jacquemotte (1907-2000)**

In 1947, she became prefect of the Lycée d'Ixelles, which later bore her name. She was one of the first women to take on the management of a public school.

## **Léonie De Chestret de Haneffe-De Waha (1836-1926)**

In 1868, she founded the Association for the Education of Young Girls in Liege, a liberal education project. The school inherited the name of its illustrious founder: Le Lycée Léonie de Waha.

## The prostitution

The issue of prostitution is fully part of my political struggle. I am close to the abolitionist movement. In the 1880s, the affair known as “des petites Anglaises” (Little Englishwomen) revealed the trafficking of human beings from England to brothels in Belgium. Our movement, concerned with abolishing prostitution and its direct consequences, such as the spread of venereal diseases, then made its voice heard and tried to put an end to this trade. Many feminist associations joined us. This is also the case of the English feminist activist Josephine Butler.

With her stance, she is moving the lines... The city of Brussels can no longer ignore this traffic, as the power to regulate prostitution is now in the hands of the cities. It was only much later, with the law of 21 August

1948, that the Belgian State finally legislated on prostitution. Although the law was abolitionist in nature, it remained ambiguous. Thereafter, the sex work sector, as it would be called, would continue to raise public health issues.

## **Les Grenades issue**

How to protect sex workers? Prostitution is still a major concern against the backdrop of the rights of sex workers, trafficking in human beings and the sexual exploitation of minors. In Belgium, although prostitution is not an illegal activity, it is often carried out in an illegal and clandestine context. The reform of the sexual criminal law aims to better define what is allowed and what remains prohibited. According to the Directorate for Equal Opportunities, in the major cities of Western

Europe, between 50 and 90% of women in prostitution are of foreign nationality. As regards the protection of sex workers, there are two opposing currents: the abolitionist current and the regulatory current.

## **Anna Van Diest dite Isala (1842-1916)**

It was also at the Belgian League for Women's Rights that I met the incredible Isala Van Diest. The daughter of a surgeon who delivered babies, she was the first woman to obtain a doctorate in medicine in Belgium in 1884. Since at the time, in Belgium, this training was not yet accessible to girls, she went to Switzerland to study before going to England and finally returning to the flat country. On her return, in order to have her diploma validated and to practise in Belgium, she enrolled in the only university open to women, the University of Brussels. Her specialities are surgery and obstetrics. After opening her practice, which was not very successful, she devoted herself to the care of women suffering from syphilis. Her patients included many prostitutes. She

became involved in structures such as the Belgian Public Morality Society and became the director of an association called Refuge. The issues of regulation of prostitution and trafficking in women guide her feminist struggle.

## The women's emancipation

How can I talk about women's emancipation without mentioning my friend Marie Popelin, an emblematic figure of the feminist movement at the end of the 19th century. The first woman to graduate from law school, she was nevertheless refused access to the profession. She then embarked on a legal and economic crusade, typical of this first feminist wave to which I also belong. Our detractors were numerous, as illustrated by the opinion of the public prosecutor Van Schoor on Marie Popelin's application: "The demands and constraints of motherhood, the education that a woman must give to her children, the management of her household and the home entrusted to her care place her in conditions that are hardly reconcilable with the duties of the legal

profession and give her neither the leisure, nor the strength, nor the aptitudes necessary for the struggles and fatigue of the bar.” Fortunately, thanks to our demands expressed in particular through the Belgian League for Women’s Rights, society is gradually changing.

In the economic and political sphere, progress was made throughout the 20th century, and there were also setbacks... In particular, there were attempts to exclude married women from the labour market in the 1930s (the bill of Reverend Father Rutten 1934). In the 1970s, the second wave placed emancipation on a different terrain. It was both political and focused on the liberation of women’s bodies. Finally, in the 1990s, the fight against violence against women became a major concern.

## Les Grenades issue

Are the new generations of feminists signalling the end of impunity for abusers? In 2017, the #metoo and #balancetonporc movements brought to light millions of accounts of sexual harassment and assault. Social networks became platforms for bringing to light a voice that had been denied or minimised by society until then. Various movements followed, such as #MeTooIncest, #balancetonbar, #balancetonfolklore. These 2.0 testimonies help to move the lines in the public, political and media sphere. As a direct result, the authorities are now putting in place tools and studies to quantify and make violence visible, as well as regulations to protect women and punish aggressors.

## **Marie Popelin (1846-1913)**

A radical feminist, my alter ego Marie Popelin began her career as a teacher. As soon as women were admitted to universities, she began to study law. At the end of her studies, in 1888, she was refused access to the bar. The newspapers picked up on what became known as the Marie Popelin affair. For her part, she began to think about the legal emancipation of women and in 1892 founded the Belgian League for Women's Rights. This is where I myself began my activism. The development of women's rights in the professional, economic and civil spheres is our workhorse. The international resonance of our struggle is of great interest to the international Council of Women. Thanks to its support, Marie Popelin began to bring women together within a

national structure: the Conseil National des Femmes belges (CNFB), National Council of Belgian Women, created in 1905.

**It is the multiplication of voices of that leads to change ...**

**Marthe De Kerchove De Denterghem-Boël (1877-1956)**

In 1934, she succeeded me at the CNFB. She stubbornly demanded the right to vote in the logic of democracy and mixed universal suffrage.

**Louise Van Duuren-De Craene (1875-1938)**

She opposed the discriminatory measures that kept married women out of the workplace in the 1930s. For her, equal pay was a necessary demand: equal pay for equal work.

## The Art

Born into a wealthy, intellectual and avant-garde family, I am immersed in art. Unfortunately, women of my generation did not have access to artistic education outside the private sphere. So it was at home that the artistic education of upper middle-class girls was stimulated. Surprisingly, although we could not learn through official channels, we could nevertheless show our work; the 19th century exhibition channels were open to us. Some of us are making a name for ourselves there. Little by little, the themes addressed went beyond the decorum imposed on women artists. Moreover, it was the acceptance of nude models, perceived as shocking too much the virtue and public morality imposed on women, that kept us out of the academies and

conservatories until 1910. It has to be said that in the 19th and early 20th centuries, women artists evolved in a very masculine world. In the art world, women's place was still that of muse or model. However, as you will have understood, even if the challenges are numerous, more and more women are claiming the status of artist and defying the social, artistic and moral conventions of their time to finally free their art.

### **Les Grenades issue**

Not so easy, is it? Despite the fact that women are often in the majority in art schools, they are still very much in the minority in the management of cultural venues, in festival appearances, in museum collections or on library shelves. However, equality between women and men cannot be envisaged without a real valorisation of women's

heritage. The younger generations need role models, so that they can be inspired, feel valued and project themselves. In Belgium, there are initiatives that are moving the lines, such as Scivias, which aims to affirm the existence of discrimination against women in the music sector, the Collectif F(s), which fights against the invisibilisation of women in culture, or the Voix de Femmes festival, a project at the intersection of the arts, cultures and feminisms.

## **Anna Boch (1848-1936)**

Like me, Anna Boch comes from the liberal upper middle class. Her family developed the faience industry in La Louvière at the end of the 19th century. Trained in the arts like all girls in our milieu, she preferred to devote herself to drawing during her travels. Her training was facilitated by the links she forged with the Belgian artistic community.

As early as 1884, she exhibited at the triennial Brussels Salon, then at the Cercle artistique et littéraire. She frequented many artistic circles, notably the Group of Twenty, of which she was the only woman. In her home, she welcomed renowned artists such as Eugène Ysaye and Gabriel Fauré. Wealthy, she financed and supported artistic creation. Her role as a patron was very important for the artists she discovered

throughout Europe. She was an accomplished painter, but not only! She also excels in music. She and I share a passion for the piano.

## **Others women through the arts.**

### **La reine Elisabeth (1876-1975)**

Music had a special place in her life. The internationally renowned classical music competition, founded in 1937, was named after her, the Queen Elisabeth Competition.

### **Cécile Leseine dite Douard (1866-1941)**

Cécile Douard is a painter of modest origin who belongs to the Belgian artistic avant-garde. She painted the Borinage and adopted the realist style. Her favourite subjects were the mines and the exploited workforce, where there were a large number of women. Stricken by

blindness at a very young age, she devoted herself to music, sculpture, writing and was actively involved in the Braille League.

### **Marguerite Acarin dite Akarova (1904-1999)**

Choreographer, painter and sculptor, Akarova was a major figure in the Belgian artistic avant-garde of the interwar period. She applied new codes of artistic expression to dance.

## The religious life

I come from a secular background, but it has to be said that in my time religious life and communities throughout Western Europe had a strong influence on the population. Young girls join the Church and take their vows. For many, there was no other way than marriage. In the 19th and 20th centuries, nuns, whether they were active in hospitals or as teachers, occupied the public space to teach, heal and alleviate suffering, all under the veil of faith. These services to society are free and accessible to all. Gradually, society became more focused on the individual than on the Christian tradition and its rituals.

After the Second World War, the prerogatives and influence of religious communities declined. This was due to the secularisation of education

and the professionalisation of care. Qualified nurses now practised under the control of doctors. Through the proselytising of the Christian faith, the nuns lived a life in seclusion.

## **Les Grenades issue**

What place for women in the institutions of the religions of the Book? In Belgium, France and elsewhere, women have decided to “depatriarchalise” beliefs and practices. Like Anne-Joelle Philippart, who points out that “women are not equal to men in the cathosphere” and pleads for an opening up of positions in the sacred domain. Or Malika Hamidi, a specialist in Muslim feminism, a movement that has been gaining momentum since the late 1980s, and which proposes a genuine transformation of religion coupled with a reinterpretation of

texts to put an end to gender inequalities. Or Delphine Horvilleur, a rabbi with the Liberal Jewish Movement of France, who also denounces the exclusion of women from religious knowledge, and therefore from power.

## **Sœur Marie-Rose Carouy Zélie Carouy (1852-1923)**

I am not close to the sisters or to the Church, but let me introduce you to Sister Marie-Rose Carouy for whom I have a particular admiration. Lady prioress, but also an entrepreneur, a pioneer, this member of the hospitable community of Our Lady of the Rose of Lessines, invented Helkiase (mercury bichloride) in 1897, following what she described as a mystical vision. This providential product contains various medicinal virtues against skin ailments. Also, this lady prioress faced multiple challenges during her mandate as manager of the Hôpital Notre-Dame à la Rose: the splitting of the community, part of which ended up in Jolimont, the setting up of a first museum room, the creation and promotion of Helkiase. Her religious life spans more than forty years

within the Canons of Saint Augustine. It is a perfect illustration of the golden period during which the nuns had a strong influence on society, in a community dedicated mainly to care.

**Other sisters will be talked about them...**

### **Sœur Emmanuelle (1908-2008)**

Known as the little sister of the poor, Madeleine Cinquin has had an atypical career among the poor. Through her voluntarist and determined speech, she speaks out in favour of contraception.

### **Sœur Sourire (1933-1985)**

Accompanied by her guitar, the woman known as "Sister Smile" became famous in 1961 with her hit Dominique. She has an atypical

career which is reflected in her personal life without hiding her homosexuality.

## The mother figure

During the 19th century, the wife, the pivot of social control in families, was the good mother and perfect housewife. As for the husband, he was, above all, a worker and a citizen. At that time, under the reign of Leopold II, Belgium was the third largest economy in the world. The 'good housewife' model and a pronatalist policy were imposed. Fortunately for me, I have other commitments. But for a majority of women, their lives are limited to the role of mother and the running of the household. Later, the economic crises of the new century changed the structure of the family. Women entered the labour market. But there was great reluctance... In a context where the fight against alcoholism and the protection of children were new tasks for the state,

women's paid work outside the home was considered to be contrary to the well-being of children and family harmony. Therefore, attempts were made to prevent them from working, despite the need to earn more money to cope with economic crises. Fortunately, the conquest of civil rights for women and wives will offer new perspectives.

### **Les Grenades issue**

Is the image of the perfect, idealised mother really outdated? How can we talk about equality without the introduction of real paternity leave? What about families that do not fit the heteronormative model? Today, patriarchal society still favours the construction of a maternal pattern reinforced by gender bias. Also, if society has evolved since the time of Marie Parent, equality between partners in the mental or domestic

burden is far from being achieved. According to a 2020 report entitled "Reconciliation of work and family life still strongly influenced by gender" by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. The responsibility for single-parent families lies in more than 80% van de gevallen bij de vrouwen.

## **Marie Parent (1853-1934)**

My colleague Marie Parent grew up in the printing industry. She began her career publishing books for children, literature and education. She was interested in those who remained in the shadow of knowledge: housewives and mothers. In 1900 she created *Le Journal des Mères* (The Mothers' Journal), in which she wrote about sex education. But that is not all! My honourable friend pleaded for the education of women without confining them to the role of mothers. A convinced feminist, she advocated, among other things, the search for paternity, a taboo issue that referred to the condition of abandoned single mothers. Within the Society for Coeducation, she advocated co-education in schools from an early age. After the First World War, together with the

Belgian Women's General Party, we defended a programme for the legislative elections. This was based on a few points: the fight against alcoholism, debauchery and prostitution and the desire for peace and the protection of mothers and children.

**Other women campaign and fight for protection, defense or children's education...**

**Juliette Verhaegen-Carton de Wiart (1872-1955)**

After her discovery of juvenile courts abroad, she devoted herself to childhood and its necessary protection. The child protection law passed in 1912 was nicknamed the "Julia Law".

## **Yvonne Nevejan-Feyerick (1900-1987)**

Her career took place at the Oeuvre Nationale de l'Enfance (National Council for Children), which she directed from 1938. In 1942, she organised the clandestine placement of more than 3000 Jewish children.

## **Aimée Racine (1902-1980)**

She developed expertise in the field of child protection from the 1920s and later specialised in juvenile delinquency in the 1950s.

## Entry into force of women's suffrage

1893: New Zealand

1902: Australia

1906: Finland

1913: Norway

1915: Denmark, Iceland

1917: Russia

1918: Canada, United Kingdom\*, Azerbaijan, Poland, Georgia, Estonia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Armenia

1919: United States, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, India\*

1920: Albania, Hungary, Belgium\*, Czechoslovakia

1922: Irish Free State

1923: Romania\*

1926: Lebanon\*

1928: United Kingdom

1930: South Africa\*, Turkey\*, Greece\*

1931: Spain\*, Portugal\*

1932: Thailand, Maldives, Uruguay, Brazil, Romania

1934: Turkey, Cuba

1935: Chile\*

1938: Uzbekistan

1940: Quebec

1944: France, Bulgaria

1945: Yugoslavia, Italy, Japan, Venezuela

1947: Argentina, China

1948: Belgium, Israel

1949: Chile

1950: India

1952: Greece, Lebanon

1953: Mexico, Syria

1954: Colombia

1955: Peru

1956: Tunisia

1958: French Algeria

1962: Monaco, Morocco

1963: Afghanistan, Iran, Kenya

1964: Libya

1970: Andorra

1971: Switzerland

1974: Portugal

1984: Liechtenstein

1999: Qatar

2003: Oman

2005: Kuwait

2006: United Arab Emirates\*

2011: Saudi Arabia

\* restricted

## **Violence against women**

The inviolability of the private sphere, the principle of freedom and the authority of the husband are the bulwarks against state or police intervention in domestic violence. Protecting women is an important concern for feminists of my time. We attack the very source of such violence with our campaigns against alcoholism. We also fight for the protection of women and against child abuse. The Carton de Wiart law in 1912 (Julia law) is the proposed answer. However, companions, wives and women remained helpless for a long time. The first shelters for battered women appeared in the 1970s. They were created by women's associations. At last, a social and political response to the well-known phenomenon of domestic violence. Also, the judicial sector finally

intervened. From now on, the wife is protected against rape (law of 4 July 1989) within the framework of marriage. The end of the permissiveness of the flagrante delicto of adultery as an extenuating circumstance for assault and battery came the following decade (1997). Measures to remove the aggressor from the home (2003), and the temporary ban on residence in the event of domestic violence will follow.

## **Les Grenades issues**

How to combat gender-based violence?

The vast majority of perpetrators of attacks on women and gender minorities are men. In Belgium, the Stop Féminicide blog is run by

grassroots organisations and records cases of femicide based on press articles, as there are still no official statistics. Contrary to the image conveyed, femicides are not crimes of passion, but are linked to the more general context of male violence against women. The Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence was ratified by 34 countries, including Belgium in 2016. In Belgium, the Ministers in charge are implementing actions between the different levels of power. Namely: 35% of Belgian women over the age of 15 have suffered physical or sexual violence.

## The sexuality

In my time, any talk or method of contraception is completely embargoed. It is the ultimate taboo. The Church and the State promote birth rates. Women are there to procreate, full stop. In 1923, a law was passed banning the advertising of contraceptives and their use. However, couples wanted to have fewer children for mainly economic reasons. Sexuality outside marriage does not exist, at least in theory. I, for example, am not married, and I don't let anything about my intimate life show. So yes, adultery does exist, but it is punished in a discriminatory way; the greatest responsibility lies with the wife who is punished by divorce. Births out of wedlock are common, but hushed up. Little by little, love is sexualised for the benefit of men, while women's

pleasure continues to be ignored. In Hendrick Van de Velde's *The Perfect Marriage*, published in 1933, the man is the active partner who awakens the female sexuality. During the sexual liberation, women demanded the right to freely dispose of their bodies. From 1973 onwards, free access to contraception encouraged this development. Although the heterosexual model continued to dominate sexual representation, homosexuality gradually broke free of social codes to assert itself. However, reproduction and sexuality remained inseparable notions until the end of the 20th century.

## **Les Grenades issue**

Is pleasure a feminist issue? Yes! The Beijing Declaration of 1995 – adopted by 189 countries including Belgium – states that “The

fundamental rights of women include the right to be in control of their sexuality". The clitoris, the only human organ intended solely for pleasure, has long been ignored by doctors. To appropriate knowledge is to reclaim our bodies. In heterosexual relationships in particular, sexuality is still often organised to favour the man's pleasure, to the detriment of the woman's. In Belgium, EVRAS (education for relational, affective and sexual life) aims to accompany children and young people in the development of their relational, affective and sexual life and to help them blossom as adults.

## **Emilie Clayes (1855-1943)**

From a working-class background, this single mother developed a passion for books. She became a major figure of feminism and socialism in the city of Ghent. The first woman to be elected to the General Council of the Belgian Workers' Party, she campaigned against capitalist exploitation and the infantilisation of women through her numerous publications. From 1894, she promoted the neo-Malthusian theses of birth control and limitation. A proponent of free love, she was the subject of virulent press campaigns that targeted her private life and denounced her concubinage with a married man. Her career came to a screeching halt; the rift with her party was irreparable. The subject is taboo, burning.

## **Later, other feminists continue the fight...**

### **Monique Knauer-Rifflet (1923-2012)**

As a contributor to the magazine Cahiers Socialistes, Monique Knauer-Rifflet highlights the issue of illegal abortions. In 1962, the first French-speaking family planning centre, La Famille Heureuse, opened in Brussels.

### **Lucienne Herman-Michielsens (1926-1995)**

A politician of the Flemish Liberal Party and very active in the Senate from 1977 to 1991, she successfully introduced the bill on the partial decriminalisation of abortion in 1989 with Roger Lallemand.

## The nurse

Until the beginning of the 20th century, hospital care was provided by religious communities. Subsequently, the professional training of nurses in Belgium is undergoing a profound change. I witnessed this. Little by little, I was no longer cared for by nuns, but by nurses, civilians. The medicalisation of health care and the secularisation of the profession are changing the situation. The first schools appeared at the beginning of the 20th century in Brussels: the Saint-Jean school, the Belgian school for qualified nurses founded by Antoine Depage and the Catholic school Sainte-Camille. After the First World War, the profession diversified, with visiting nurses promoting modern social hygiene and combating infant mortality. Already there was a recurrent

shortage of personnel in this sector due to low wages, flexible working hours and heavy workloads. Religious congregations remained active in the care sector until the Second World War. The need for a diploma was imposed by the doctors' decision and the order of the hospital women was definitively ruled out.

### Les Grenades issues

Is caring a task reserved for women? In times of crisis, who is at the front? In times of pandemic, is it fair to speak of heroes in the masculine? If, at the level of doctors, parity between men and women is more or less achieved, today most of the other care professions (nurses, care assistants, home helpers, etc.) are largely dominated by women. They

are therefore the first to suffer from the precariousness of the health sector (part-time work, night work, low wages, etc.).

Although the health crisis has brought “care” back to the forefront, this field of activity is still not valued to its full extent. Thinkers such as the philosopher Joan Tronto advocate a better valorisation of care by all.

## **Edith Cavell (1865-1915)**

Edith Cavell, a nurse from Great Britain, joined Antoine Depage in 1907 to run his nursing school, which offered professional training outside of religious congregations. Recognised for the quality of its secular and scientific teaching, the establishment experienced a major boom. During the war, Dr Depage and his wife joined the famous Ocean Ambulance in La Panne, leaving Edith in sole charge of the school. She then joined a clandestine escape network for Allied soldiers. Arrested in August 1915, she was executed by a military tribunal a few weeks later. She was shot. Her death shocked the public, including me. Symbolising forever the barbarity of the occupying forces, the echoes of her execution are used to quota new volunteers in Great Britain.

## **Many of them feed the myth of the White Angel...**

### **Constance Teichmann (1824-1896)**

Constance Teichmann achieved her full potential through a solid Christian education. She financed the creation of one of the first children's hospitals in 1846. Cholera struck the port city, and her direct intervention in the organisation of care accentuated her vocation. During the Franco-Prussian war, she intervened with the wounded on the battlefields on behalf of the Red Cross, recently created in 1864. Constance Teichmann's name has left a lasting impression and is associated with the first actions of the Belgian Red Cross in the 19th century.

## **Thérèse Goldschmidt (1873-1963)**

Thérèse Goldschmidt devoted herself entirely to the care sector, supporting the Belgian school for qualified nurses as well as the creation of old people's homes and many other projects such as the setting up of the mutuality.

## **Jeanne Delaunoy (Jane De Launoy) (1881)**

Jeanne Delaunoy distinguished herself during the Great War by providing accelerated training to students at the Sainte Camille nursing school in Brussels, and by her involvement in the Ocean Front Ambulance in October 1914.

## The sport

Sport is not my cup of tea. Physical education is not part of my daily life as a middle-class woman, or only under the guidance of a doctor.

In the second half of the 19th century, sports competitions gradually appeared in society, but only men had access to them. In 1894, the creation of the International Olympic Committee accelerated the institutionalisation of sport and raised the question of the place of women. They participated for the first time in the Olympic Games in Paris in 1900 and were in the minority. Few sports are accessible to them because of the persistence of prejudices about women's anatomy and their presumed performance. After 1945, access to sports is more open. Women joined the sports federations, which were still in the hands of

men. A major turning point occurred in the 1960s: there were more women athletes. The conference on sport and women was held in Stockholm in 1967. In schools, sport was taught, and everyone benefited from it.

### **Les Grenades issues**

Are sports clubs still huge boys' clubs? According to the "State of affairs of Gender balance in sport", 51.8% of boys in 5th and 6th grade declare that they practice a sport more than three times a week, compared to 28.1% of girls. These differences are due in particular to the lack of visibility of female champions and the absence of female role models, including in the media, which gives much more visibility to professional sportsmen and women than to professional sportswomen.

Furthermore, it is important to stress that women are under-represented in the decision-making bodies of sports institutions as well as in coaching and leadership roles. Finally, the crucial issue of access for girls and women to facilities and competitions is now on the political agenda.

## **Hélène Dutrieu (Marguerite Dutrieu) (1877-1961)**

A top sportswoman at the turn of the 19th century, Hélène Dutrieu is the women's cycling speed champion. What a source of pride for us, her contemporaries. To finance her biplane called *La demoiselle*, she made the circus happy with her act, the *Flèche humaine*, which also made her famous abroad. In 1910, she was the only woman among thirty men to obtain an aviation licence. An outstanding competitor, she won women's speed races and also competed against male pilots. She won the prestigious *Copa del Rei* speed race. During the Great War, she joined the Red Cross as an ambulance driver and ran the *Val de Grâce* field hospital. When peace came, she returned to France where her husband, a newspaper director, lived. She turned to the written press.

In 1956, she created the Hélène Dutrieu-Mortier Cup which rewards the aviatrix who, alone on board, covers the longest distance in a straight line without a stopover.

## **Hurray for the champions...**

### **Marie Protin – Lambotte (Emma) (1876-1965)**

Marie Protin is a fencing expert. In 1907, the Ladies Fencing Club, the first women's fencing club, was founded with her support.

### **Yvonne Reynders (1937)**

In the 1960s, Yvonne Reynders was an internationally renowned Belgian cyclist who triumphed in our cycling homeland by winning several gold and silver medals at the world road championships.

## **Ingrid Berghmans (1961)**

Ingrid Berghmans is a pioneer of Belgian women's sport and has an incredible track record. With her 6 world titles and 7 European titles, she is even the most successful judoka in the history of Belgium in the 1980s.

## The justice

Access to the bar was restricted to men until 1922. However, university training was opened to women much earlier, in the 1880s. My friend Marie Popelin, the country's first female law graduate, attempted to be called to the bar in 1888, but without success. Even though 1922 was a victory, we feminists were not satisfied with it! From 1948 onwards, our access to the right to vote and to institutions favoured change. The Belgian feminist group for the defence of women workers, La Porte Ouverte, was instrumental in this. With the abandonment of marital power, women were completely free to work without their husband's consent. The world of work was accessible to all without distinction. The slow opening up of the legal profession was followed by other changes

in the 1960s, in the judiciary and in the highest court in the Kingdom, the Council of State. Nevertheless, women were kept out of the judiciary for far too long, I think that's crazy, don't you? In Belgium, the feminisation of the judiciary will have an impact on family law, among other things.

## **Les Grenades Issue**

Is the justice system equal enough? Many women victims of rape or domestic violence are mistreated by the authorities. The treatment of cases of migrant women victims of violence in particular regularly raises major human rights issues. The #DoublePeine denounces the poor treatment of victims of gender-based and sexual violence. And what about single mothers who have to fight for years in the courts? Faced

with the failings of the institution, groups of women citizens have been created (L'odyssée des mères célibataires, les Mères Veilleuses, le Collectif des Madrés). A more feminist justice system would start by training the police, the administration, lawyers and magistrates to better understand and listen to women victims of violence. This is what the association Fem&L.A.W. recommends, among others.

## **Marcelle Renson (1894-1988)**

On April 8th 1922, Marcelle Renson was sworn in and became the first Belgian woman admitted to the bar. Finally, what a struggle we had to go through for this! She testifies: "At the time, there were three women out of about three hundred students? Of course, everyone was charming with us, but they didn't take us seriously. We were just window-dressing. Even when we were called to the bar, some people said we had to be "protected from the horrors of life". We were nicknamed the gazelles. It was kind, a little contemptuous." She participated in the drafting of the bill on women's access to the legal profession alongside the Minister of Justice, Emile Vandervelde. A committed feminist, within the National Council of Belgian Women, she

worked on the themes of the emancipation of married women, the recognition of household work at its true value, the separation of property between spouses and the equality of parental rights between parents.

**And another woman who will re-draw the lines, and not just a little...**

### **Georgette Ciselet-Wagener (1900-1983)**

Georgette Ciselet's career took place in two stages: first as a liberal politician, then as a woman lawyer. She was the fourth woman to be sworn in as a lawyer in Belgium and distinguished herself by her desire to put an end to the discrimination suffered by married women during the 1930s. Her work as a senator put an end to the incapacity of married women by the law of 30 April 1948. She was the first liberal

parliamentarian and a member of the Belgian Porte Ouverte (Open Door) group. She sat in the Belgian assemblies until 1961 before changing her activities and becoming a magistrate at the Council of State in 1963.

## The science

Access to university education is a condition for women's entry into scientific fields. With my rather literary profile, this does not affect me. However, many of my friends find themselves blocked because of a lack of access to training. Finally, it was in the 1880s that the first universities allowed women access to training. What is the point of learning if you cannot practice? From 1890 onwards, women were authorised to enter the professions of doctor and pharmacist. The feminisation of medical careers began with the new century. With the arrival of these pioneers, hope was born. They are role models for the younger generation. In the auditoriums, they are more and more numerous and are no longer the

exception. In the other scientific disciplines, the gender gap is still there for a long time.

## **Les Grenades Issue**

Does society give girls the chance to project themselves as future scientists? Do companies offer the same opportunities to male and female scientists? There is a lack of female role models in the study of science in compulsory education, which can lead to a lack of interest in scientific subjects and professions among young girls. Although there are many women doctors today, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) professions are still largely dominated by men. Today, in Belgium, only 14% of jobs in the new information and communication technologies (NICT) sector are held by women. Yet the

professions are promising and need diversity to limit bias in the programming of applications.

## **Suzanne Simon (1901-1989)**

After graduating in medicine in 1926, she obtained funding to further her knowledge in cancer centres in France and the United States. Following her internships abroad, she joined the tumour centre and then the radiology and radium therapy department of the Bordet Institute in Brussels. In 1950, she officially obtained the title of professor. In view of the recognition of her qualifications and qualities, she was appointed to the Euratom (European Atomic Union) and to the nuclear power station in Mol. There, she watched helplessly as women were systematically excluded from this high-risk environment. She was opposed to this because, in her opinion, women should be free to take the same risks as men. At that time, the university teaching staff was

still predominantly male. Aware of the efforts needed to promote women's careers in science, she facilitated access to a specialisation in Sweden thanks to a grant that she financed.

**Let me introduce you to other inspiring scientists...**

### **Marie Derscheid-Delcourt (1859-1932)**

Marie Delcourt trained as a teacher and is studying medicine. She is a member of the Belgian Society of Surgery. Her many responsibilities led her to create the Ecole Supérieure de Kinésithérapie.

### **Josepha Ioteyko (1866-1928)**

Coming from Poland, she created a new discipline which focused on the child: pedology (physiological and psychological study) and was joined by Belgian pedagogues of the time, including Ovide Decroly.

## **Marguerite Massart (1900-1972)**

In 1922, she became the country's first female engineer. Her career was spent at l'Office des brevets (the Patent Office) where she met few female colleagues.

## **Lise Thiry (1921)**

She founded the virology department at the Pasteur Institute in Brussels in 1955 and isolated the AIDS virus for the first time.

## The work

I live in an era where women are seen primarily as mothers. Their enforced place is home, where their work is free and has no economic value. Women entering the labour market are paid less than men. In times of crisis, such as the stock market crash of 1929, women are the first to be made redundant in order to keep the men working. As always, crises challenge women's rights... And let us not forget that other discriminations still exist... Legislation in 1888 prohibited night work for women and children. The four-week maternity rest period became compulsory in 1889, without being paid until 1944. But that was not all, the authority of the husband was still necessary to work. According to the legislation, he could oppose his wife's professional activity.

Patriarchal rules are barriers to the feminisation of careers. Women's access to work is one of my major struggles, as it was for many first-wave feminists. In 1948, the change in matrimonial property regimes and the law on marital power ushered in a new era.

## **Les Grenades issue**

Is gender equality at work a reality? According to the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men in 2021, the wage gap in annual salaries is 23.1%. At the same time, in Belgium, only one in four managers is a woman, even though they are more likely to have a higher education (2017 figures). Not to mention gender-based harassment in the workplace. As for entrepreneurship, women are becoming more numerous, but the gap remains wide. And what about free work?

Almost half of female workers with young children (46%) adapt their work organisation, compared to only 22% of men in the same situation. This gap largely explains the difference in part-time work, which remains one of the main obstacles to equality in the labour market.

## **Emilienne Steux-Brunfaut (1908-1986)**

Émilienne Steux grew up in a working-class environment in the town of Dottignies. Her career began in the textile union where she joined the National Committee of Socialist Women. For her, the emancipation of women is linked to that of working women. In 1933, at the age of 25, she was elected as a deputy to the Chamber. Her meteoric rise to prominence caused embarrassment in her political family, le Parti ouvrier belge (the Belgian Workers' Party). She was described as an 'upstart'. Like me, sensitive to the rise of fascism and rexism in Belgium, she joined the World Committee of Women Against War and Fascism (WCWF). We met there. Her involvement brought her closer to the international debates of the time around Republican Spain and the

communist regime of the Soviet Union. She joined the Communist Party for a time and thus affirmed her radicalism. After the war, she continued her pacifist and feminist struggle. Her militant activity continued within the labour commissions of the FGTB. In 1975, she took part in the commission set up by the Ministry of Employment and Labour and chaired by Miet Smet, about which I will speak later.

**My admiration for these activists who promote women's financial independence.**

### **Victoire Cappe (1886-1927)**

She organised a trade union structure for the travailleuses de l'Aiguille (needlewomen) in the Liège region. In 1913, together with Maria Baers, they created the general secretariat of the Unions professionnelles

féminines chrétiennes de Belgique (Christian Women's Professional Unions).

### **Adèle Hauwel (1920-2004)**

Involved in political action from the age of 15, she participated in the Belgian Open Door group, which defended the economic independence of women.

## The resistance

For my part, from 1914 to 1918, I supported the war effort from Switzerland as a prisoner sponsor. In Belgium, many women committed themselves against the invaders, forming 30% of the workforce of the resistance. Some networks, such as that of La Dame Blanche, are close to parity. The range of their activities was wide and went from falsifying papers to transporting documents, weapons and explosives. Unfortunately, the fate of heroines is too often deportation and condemnation. I am a great pacifist and I campaign for peace. And yet the horror is happening again. During the Second World War, women resistance fighters were deported to Ravensbrück, a women's camp where the majority of the women were political prisoners. The heroic

deeds of these intrepid people make it easy for them to go down in history. Their dedication and exemplary courage are admired by all. Although society recognised their bravery, the military career was not officially opened to them until the last quarter of the 20th century.

## **Les Grenades issue**

What is resistance today? As the American feminist Susan Faludi explains in "Backlash", every advance in women's rights is followed by a reactionary offensive. In our time of economic and social crisis, the backlash from conservatives on women's rights is particularly violent. According to the United Nations, the gains of the past 25 years are increasingly under threat, especially in the area of sexual and reproductive rights. In our country, being a woman in the public and

media space continues to be a struggle, even more so as an LGBTQIA+ person, a person of race or a person with disabilities. In a time of war of ideas, contemporary women resisters include those who have to fight for their rights.

## **Marguerite Bervoets (1914-1944)**

Daughter of the director of the Athénée de Mons, Marguerite was a poet from the time of her humanities studies. At 18, she published a collection of poems entitled *Chromatisme*. Four years later, in 1936, she graduated in philosophy and literature at the Université libre de Bruxelles. Full of patriotism, she joined the resistance group known as the Cinq Clochers in the summer of 1941 and created the clandestine newspaper *La Délivrance*. She became a liaison officer for an intelligence group between Lille and Tournai. Arrested in 1942 not far from the Chièvres air base, she was deported to Germany and beheaded with an axe in August 1944. She wrote: "They will tell you that I died uselessly, stupidly as an exalt. That will be the historical truth. There will

be another. I died to prove that one can both madly love life and consent to a necessary death."

## **Other remarkable heroines...**

### **Thérèse Minette De Tillesse – De Radigus de Chennevière (1865-1963)**

During the First World War, Thérèse led the La Dame Blanche network, which consisted of 26 agents, including women from the aristocracy. During the Second World War, at the age of 75, she returned to the Clarence network alongside Walthère Deivé.

### **Louise De Bettignies dite Alice Dubois (1880-1918)**

Louise de Bettignies joined the British intelligence services under the name of Alice Dubois. Her network covered a vast territory from the north of France to the western wing of Belgium. Her arrest in 1915 marked the end of the military network's activities.

## **Régine Orfinger-Karlin (1911-2002)**

Régine Orfinger was brought up in a Jewish family in Antwerp and started working as a lawyer in 1938. She soon went underground with her husband and joined the group Les partisans armés. At the end of the war, she became involved with refugees through international associations.

## The women politicians

Involved in politics, women are changing practices and morals. Marie Popelin took centre stage at the end of the 19th century and demanded rights for women and their civil rights. In 1921, together with Marie Parent, I founded the first women's party, the Belgian Women's General Party. A peculiarity of the Belgian legislative system was that women could stand for election before they had the right to vote in the 1949 legislative elections. Gradually, political life is becoming more feminine. In 1965, for the first time, a woman, Marguerite de Riemaecker - Legot (Parti social-chrétien, PSC, the Christian Social Party) was appointed Minister for Housing and the Family. In 1977, Antoinette Spaak (Front démocratique des francophones, FDF, the Francophone Democratic

Front) became the first Belgian woman party president, a position she held until 1982. More and more women were elected, sometimes with the support of necessary legislative reforms such as the quota policy (Tobback-Smet quota law of 1994). In 2002, Article 10 of the Constitution finally states that “the equality of women and men is guaranteed”. The same year, the law imposed parity on electoral lists.

## **Les Grenades Issue**

Politics in Belgium, equal access for men and women, really? In 2002, the Constitution was amended to include the principle of equality between men and women, to organise their equal access to elective and public mandates, and to impose the mixing of all executive bodies, whatever the level of power. Several laws imposing parity on electoral

lists were adopted. However, despite this legal work, politics in Belgium is still a man's world. The presidency of the parties (except for Ecolo and Groen) is exclusively held by men. Representatives speak more in assemblies and are much more visible in the media than their female counterparts. Not to mention the cyber harassment of female politicians.

## **Miet Smet (1943)**

Miet is one of the successor feminists, the second wave of the 1970s. From the age of 21, when the status of women dominated the political debate, she was an activist in the Flemish Christian group (CVP). In 1975, a shift began. She chaired the Women's Labour Commission, set up by the Ministry of Employment and Labour to study the issue of equal treatment for men and women. In 1992, the Ministry of Equal Opportunities was created and assigned to her. Later, she campaigned for help for victims of rape or violence. In 1995, she supported the creation of Amazone, a place where women's associations were housed in Brussels. It was also under her impetus that the history of feminism gained the necessary momentum with its first publications.

## **Before Miet Smet, others are leading the way... (1892-1975)**

She became responsible for women's action within the Belgian Workers' Party. In the 1936 elections, she was the second congresswoman in the country.

## **Marguerite Legot - De Riemaecker (1913-1977)**

Her career was marked by the first responsible positions in politics in a social Christian party: first woman secretary of the chamber, first woman minister and first woman minister of state

## The legacy

In the context of the creation of the Mundaneum, at the dawn of the 20th century I commissioned a specialised bibliography on women. Thus, I created the Office central de documentation féminine (Central Office for Women's Documentation) in 1910. This collection of the Mundaneum, made up of my research and archives, is the first well-known legacy of feminist archives in Belgium. Fortunately, others are continuing my struggle. However, women's history will remain ignored and unwritten for years to come. The creation of the Interdisciplinary Women's Studies Group in the 1990s put an end to this silence. With the support of the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, a momentum around women's history allowed the publication of reference works and

biographies. To this end, a research project on historical materials is being carried out, including in my papers. A whole process of valorisation of this “heritage” is taking place with exhibitions and writings. Let us not rejoice too quickly, there is still a lot of work to be done to integrate and make visible women in history.

### **Les Grenades issue**

How about we start by stopping talking about legacy? Nowadays, the notion of legacy tends to replace this controversial term. For some years now, the Matrimonial Days have been highlighting the historical heritage of women – architectural, sculptural, urbanistic, social. In addition, these days are also an opportunity to discover the current heritage of women – artistic, political and feminist. It is also an

opportunity to remember that public space is not gender neutral. For example, street names in cities overwhelmingly favour male names (see [EqualStreetNames](#)). While history is perpetuated through books, other media (social networks, podcasts, web platforms, conferences...) are now used to facilitate its transmission. These narratives are enriched by the diversity of genres, origins and beliefs.

## **Eliane Gubin (1942)**

Eliane Gubin is a historian, professor and member of the academic staff of the Université Libre de Bruxelles. During her stay in Canada at the end of the 1980s, she saw feminist demands multiply in the face of the conservative position of the Catholic Church. In Belgium, her work took on a new form. She laid the foundations of the interdisciplinary group for women's studies (GIEF). In the 1990s, the Centre for Archives and Research in Women's History was one of her most remarkable achievements. The collection of archives and testimonies on women now has a permanent place of conservation dedicated to the promotion of women's history. It is undeniable that Eliane Gubin and I, a century apart, share the same need for transmission.

**The historians, those who finally offer another vision of history...**

**Germaine Faider-Feytmans (1903–1983)**

Promoted to the management of the Mariemont Museum on the death of her husband, Germaine took on the responsibilities of mother of a large family and curator of the Museum for almost thirty years. It was under her direction that the museum received royal recognition.

**Denise De Weerd (1930-2015)**

Denise was the first woman to publish a book on the history of women in Belgium in 1980, *En de Vrouwen (And the Women)*. When she retired, she set up a gay and lesbian archive and documentation centre, named the *Suzan Daniel Fund*, in honour of the Belgian lesbian activist.

You followed me in this discovery. What do you say? Women's history is always on the move. Our struggles are more legitimate than ever.

**Léonie, a furious feminist**

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