

ROUNDUP

Artful Volumes

BOOKFORUM CONTRIBUTORS ON THE SEASON'S OUTSTANDING ART BOOKS.

Feminist, Fluxus, and experimental-music scholars, rejoice. This facsimile edition of **WOMENS WORK** ([Primary Information](#), \$24), the first publication to bring together textual scores exclusively by women, is a must. Just like musical scores, these pieces are made up of a series of notes: short—often terse—DIY instructions. Though the publication only ran for two issues, with the first produced in 1975 and the second in 1978, the project featured key works by the likes of Pauline Oliveros, Mieko Shiomi, Simone Forti, Carolee Schneemann, Mary Lucier, and its editrixes Alison Knowles and Annea (then Anna) Lockwood. “These are scores ready for you to do. Please notify us of performances,” Knowles and Lockwood wrote on the first page of the first issue, thus exemplifying one of the main tenets of Fluxus: Anyone can create art.

As with previous *Primary Information* reprints, due care has been paid to a faithful reproduction of the originals: brown ink on off-white paper for the saddle-stitched first issue; a foldout poster printed on heavyweight paper for the second. Both are tucked into a no-frills foldout cardboard cover just slightly larger than a 45 EP. The scores are characterized by their material simplicity, emphasis on repetition, and engagement with the everyday—also qualities of so-called women’s work in the domestic sphere, which are sometimes upended into absurdity here. See, for instance, the prompts to burn down or drown a broken upright piano in Lockwood’s *Piano Transplants*. “Play whatever pleases you for as long as you can,” she noted. But sometimes the command is simply meditative: “Keep the next sound you hear in mind for at least the next half hour,” Oliveros wrote. The invitation beckons.

—LAUREN O’NEILL-BUTLER