

Marija Gimbutas film screening and conversation

On Thursday 1 October, ACT members of the Women's Climate Congress joined with A Chorus of Women at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. We watched *Signs out of Time* – a documentary film about the life and work of the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas (1921–1994) (see <http://belili.org/marija/aboutSIGNS.html>).

In this centennial year of her birth UNESCO is honouring Marija Gimbutas as one of the eminent personalities who have “helped shape the civilization we share by contributing to the mutual enrichment of cultures for universal understanding and peace.”

The film was introduced by Dr Glenda Cloughley from A Chorus of Women. Glenda has drawn inspiration for the many songs and larger performance works she has written for A Chorus of Women from wisdom in the most ancient layers of European mythology, her training in Jungian analysis and PhD research in cultural psychology. Glenda dedicated the evening to her Canberra friend and mentor Dorothy Cameron (1917–2002), a prehistorian and artist who worked closely with Marija Gimbutas.

The film transported us to Europe around 4500-30,000 years ago. There, people worshipped Mother Earth and lived in peaceable harmony with the cycles of birth, death and regeneration. From archaeological sites across Europe, Gimbutas studied thousands of female images and figurines to understand the symbols and patterns they portrayed.

Made by the friends of Gimbutas, the film is a fascinating story of women passing knowledge down generations. It is also a grounding story of how we can gain confidence from the indigenous European cultural heritage, which points to the rebalancing needed today for us to transition from the present power-over ('warrior king') systems to more regenerative community structures based on harmony with each other and with nature.



After the film, local artist Dr Sally Blake, a member of the Women's Climate Congress, showed us her life-sized pencil drawing of the 30,000-year-old 'Venus of Dolni Vestonice' figurine she calls *The Ancient One*. She also brought some of the 100s of coloured drawings of goddess figurines that she has made since the start of the COVID outbreak. Sally has also been much inspired by the work of Marija Gimbutas.

Sally Blake and Glenda Cloughley in conversation



Glenda brought us into the present by reading *The Singing Hill*, a poem by Dorothy Cameron. The poem tells what Dorothy heard in the original place now known as Capital Hill. It also tells of Dorothy and other women who gathered regularly in Parliament House with the first Greens Senator, Jo Vallentine. The women often encircled the 'Reflection Pool' near the entrance to the Chambers, meditating and humming together. When she retired from the Senate in 1992, Jo Vallentine read *The Singing Hill* into Hansard.

Participants viewing Sally Blake's beautiful goddess images

Viewing Capital Hill as a location of "endless disputes", Dorothy's poem observes that:

*... once it was the Singing Hill
The hill which sang the Earth Song
At the meeting of the ley-lines
And the crossing of the song-lines
In the centre of the Hills of the Circling.*

She then proceeds to reveal the profound vision that guided her life and work:

*With the passing of the seasons
Music from the Singing Hill
Will transcend the voices
Of the dark suits
Shouting their abuse ...

The shouting will be stilled.
The healing of the planet will begin

And the daughters of a different Dreaming
Will recover the mystery,
Rediscover the harmony,
Of the Centre of the Circling
Around the Singing Hill.*

To close the evening, we played video footage of A Chorus of Women and friends singing 'The Hymn to Gaia' and 'The Promise' from the finale of *The Gifts of the Furies*, Glenda's big story song about climate change. In 2010, a cast of 80 citizens performed this in Old Parliament House, with Bob Hawke playing a cameo role. To see that footage, as well as the former Prime Minister's impromptu remarks after the performance, go to A Chorus of Women's News item ['Vale Bob Hawke'](#).