From Judy Chicago to the Guerrilla Girls: An Analysis of the Evolution of Feminist Art Movement

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Abstract

This thesis examines and analyzes the evolution in feminist art that contributed to and expanded the idea of change through protests and demonstrations in a patriarchal society. The Women's Rights Movement and Feminist Art Movement used many tactics, methodologies, and ideologies that proved successful for the Civil Rights Movement. The second wave of the Feminist Art Movement began in the late 1960s and 1970s. The Movement produced artists like Betye Saar, Faith Ringgold, Judy Chicago, and Miriam Schapiro. The Feminist Art Movement of the 1970s, labeled the second wave, mirrors the concepts of the Feminist Movement's foundation. The Feminist Movement primarily campaigned for gender equality. However, the second wave feminism also concentrated on educated white woman addressing their concerns about sex discrimination. The historic failure to recognize Black female artist is problematic when discussing the Feminist Art Movement as a whole. Faith Ringgold and Betye Saar are included in this thesis to critique the previously established art historical canon and emphasize the importance of Black female artists to the Feminist Art Movement. Collectively, these women frustrated by the male-dominated art world decided to take a stand and fight for equality and recognition through self-identity and self-awareness. In the 1980s and 1990s, a different form of protest emerged in the third wave of the feminist art revolution. Artists groups like The Guerrilla Girls continued to fight for self-awareness and equality. The key concepts of their art focused on political and social issues like abortion, higher pay, and equal opportunity in the workplace for female artists and artists of color. This thesis examines the trajectory of the Feminist Art Movement from the 1970s-present, focusing particularly on the 1970s to 1990s. The 1970s brought an awareness that women's rights needed to expand and women needed to have a choice in their futures. The 1980s and 1990s brought the Movement to a higher level of

criticism by adding social and intersectional ideas to their agenda. The mid - late 20th century brought hope that female artists could change the conversation in the fight for equality on issues regarding race, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

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Chapter One
Introduction

The song "I am Woman," written in 1971 by Helen Reddy with music by Ray Burton, became the Second Wave Feminist Movement's anthem in the 1970s. Helen Reddy also sang this song at the 1989 March in Washington, DC named the "Mobilize for Women's Lives Rally – Abortion Rights," then again in 2017 at the Women's March in LA. The lyrics spoke of how women felt in America and the need to rise up and shout, "We have had enough!" The first two lines of the song, "I am woman, hear me roar… In numbers too big to ignore," is an example of the impact the Feminist Movement created in the late 1960s and 1970s that carried into the 21st century. Specifically, the Feminist Art Movement created a consciousness-raising movement to demonstrate the importance that women artists and later, artists of color deserved equal time and recognition for their talents and not subjected to marginalization because of their gender or race.

This thesis examines several forms of history including political and social issues regarding the Feminist Art Movement. The research raises questions about the cause and effect that pioneer artists presented through their art including the following questions: How did the Civil Rights Movement inspire the Feminist Art Movement? What prompted feminist artists to take a lead in this movement? What motivated these artists to initiate their action for equality and recognition? Has recognition of female art/artists improved in the last decade? In what ways does positive protest help bring awareness to social and political issues? What needs to take place to increase the low percentage of women artists and artists of color in history books, galleries, and museums? In what ways have the social and political issues changed because of the actions of these female artists?

The Civil Rights Movement provided the prototype for organized demonstrations. Movements that followed used similar tactics, methodologies, and ideologies that proved successful during The Civil Rights Movement. This research examines moments in feminist art history that contributed to and expanded the idea of change through protests, demonstrations, and artworks of the 1970s. The 1980s began yet another phase of change for recognition of the talents of the female artists and artists of color. Another addition to the activism of the 1980s was the need for political and social justice such as abortion rights, workplace discrimination, and rights for the LGBTQIA+ community. This research explores the problems women artists and artists of color faced with an established patriarchal and racist system in the art world. The struggles to maintain self-awareness and the right to tell their own autobiographical stories resulted in the second wave of the Feminist Art Movement. This movement produced artists like Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, and The Guerrilla Girls. Additionally, Black artists like Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold were determined to exercise their voice among the overwhelmingly white population of the Feminist Art Movement. The following chapters examine the contribution of each artist or group and the impact they had on the evolution of female art and the power that changed the status quo in the art world. These women challenged patriarchal norms, made women's points of view the focus of their work, and influenced future female artists, artists of color, and female-identified artists.

Chapter Two: Historiography. This chapter examines the sources used in writing this research, to include books, journals, newspaper articles, and public interviews. Written in chronological order of the history behind the Feminist Art Movement, this literature review provides the background, achievements, and setbacks female artists from the 1960s to the present

have endured. Books written by art historians and art critics like Lucy Lippard and Linda Nochlin demonstrate the need for change in the art world for female artists.

In the 1980s, The Guerrilla Girls wanted to restate the question to read "Why Haven't More Women been *Considered* Great Artists Throughout Western History?"[1] This Historiography chapter shows the progression through time of how the Feminist Art Movement and artists have changed the status quo and helped break the glass ceiling for future artists. The Feminist Art Movement brought attention to the world that women are more than just homemakers, but also freethinkers and pathfinders for future women artists. The movement allowed these artists to think for themselves, create their own identities, and write their own autobiographies through art. Through the efforts of these artists, numerous women joined the feminist movement and campaigned for the importance of self-awareness, cultural, and political change.

Chapter Three reviews the works of Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro. These women represent pioneering feminists and activists that redefined the role of women in the arts. The work of Schapiro and Chicago demonstrates the importance of equality and recognition of women artists, both past and present. Chicago's opportunity came when offered a job at Fresno College. She began in 1970 by bringing new ideas and concepts of a much-needed awareness to women's history. Chicago faced opposition from fellow professors, but continued to push forward to achieve the goals of giving birth to a woman's program for the art department at Fresno. This program became "the first of its kind at this time in any University, which played a

[1] The Guerrilla Girls, *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 7.

significant part in the feminist movement in America."[2] During this time, Miriam Schapiro became interested in the woman's program at Fresno where she met Chicago and become fast friends. Together they formed a partnership and took Chicago's program to the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Another concept of this partnership was *Womanshouse. Womanhouse* was a project that allowed women artists to express how they viewed housework, mothering and the gendered division of labor, aging and menstruation. This chapter also examines the extraordinary impact Chicago and Schapiro had on the growth of the Feminist Art Movement through their works. This chapter examines Chicago's iconic work entitled *The Dinner Party,* and the effect the project had on the public as well as the art critics.

Chapter Three also examines the talents of Miriam Schapiro and her contributions to the Feminist Art Movement. Schapiro began her art career in the late 1950s and was successful in her work. Schapiro experimented in the1960s with computer imaging and became one of the first artists to use this technique; her work *Big OX (1967)* is an example of this technique. This research also highlights Schapiro's teaching of *consciousness-raising*, a teaching technique that makes a person more aware of the issues occurring in the world. Schapiro used the concept to encourage students to work in fresh ways using their own life experiences.[3] This chapter examines Schapiro's campaign to lift women's folk art to a higher level of art than just viewed as women's hobbies or women's work. *Femmage* was a term Schapiro coined to give the technique of collage a feminist connection to the movement. *Femmage* art was Schapiro's protest to end the "age-old prejudice against craft, usually associated with women and domestic life."[4]

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[2] Jill Fields, *Entering the Picture: Judy Chicago, The Fresno Feminist Art Program, and the Collective Visions of Women Artists* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 26.
[3] Miriam Schapiro, "Responses," Art Journal, Vol. 59, No. 2, (Summer, 2000), 4-5. https://www.jstor.org/stable/778096
[4] Carol Salus, "Miriam Schapiro," Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia, Jewish Women's Archive, February 27, 2009. https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/schapiro-miriam (accessed October 15, 2019)

Schapiro brought a completely new level of art in her *Femmage* with the use of fabrics, lace, quilts, needlework, handkerchiefs, and many other materials used in her artwork. Schapiro fought to "end the alleged insignificance of these female symbols and prevent further trivialization of the overlooked traditions they recall."[5] In her challenge to highlight female artists from the past, Schapiro incorporated in her *Femmage* the artist and works of the artist's life, *Conservatory (1988);*a work featuring Frida Kahlo is an example of this type of work. In 1977, Schapiro's enthusiasm of wanting to educate the world as to what the movement was trying to achieve resulted in her creating a feminist journal entitled *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*. The journal was comprised of a collective group of individuals and different types of identities such as "socialists, Marxists, lesbian feminists, and anarchists."[6]

In 1985, a group of female artists decided it was time to challenge museums and galleries for the "underrepresentation or total absence of female artists and artists of color" in their institutions.[7] Chapter Four examines determined female artists that protested under the name of The Guerrilla Girls. The Guerrilla Girls surveyed four museums in New York City looking for a one-person exhibition of women artists, and the results were very disappointing. The Guggenheim, Metropolitan, and the Whitney had zero female artists or artists of color, MoMA had only one female artist. Thirty years later in 2015, the Guerrilla Girls returned to the same museums and the numbers only improved slightly. The Guggenheim, Metropolitan, and the MoMA had only one exhibition featuring a female artist while the Whitney had a record of two.[8]. Even though the Guerrilla Girls brought forward the concept of the early feminist's

[5] Salus, "Miriam Schapiro," Jewish Women: Archive.
[6] Heresies #1, Feminism, Art and Politics, Vol. 1, No. 1, (January 1977). https://heresies filmproject.org/archive/ (accessed April 12, 2021)
[7] Lucia & Harrison, "Guerrillas in our Midst," Cineaste, 47.
[8] The Late Night Show with Stephen Colbert, "Guerrilla Girls Talk The History of Art vs. The History of Power," January 14, 2016, video, 6:24. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxBQB2fUl_g.

movement, the group felt a needed change in the commutations and presentation of protests. The movement needed a new language, a different style to bring attention to the issues occurring in the 1980s. The philosophy for this change was to use humor, and not just slapstick humor, but "sly, sardonic humor."[9] "Elizabeth Vigee Le Brun"[10] quotes "if you can laugh about something that is the most brilliant [ploy] because a laugh makes everybody feel a part of the inside joke."[11] "Frida" points out, "using humor you can fly under the radar and if you can get people who disagree to laugh you have a much better way to convert them."[12] Example of this type of humor is in the iconic poster of a woman reclining nude with a gorilla mask on the image taken from Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) painting entitled *La Grande Odalisque 1814* (Musée du Louvre, Paris).[13]

The Guerrilla Girls were instrumental in spreading the message to the public by going to communities, and universities offering talks, workshops, billboards, posters, and letter writings. Chapter Four exams how The Guerrilla Girls stress developing newer and updated art history books to include more women artists both past and present, and gender classes in the Universities. The group points out museums could play an extensive role in offering workshops and conferences. Displaying artwork of women from the past and present would expand the museum's efforts to enrich and educate the public and the increasing need that women artists wanted recognition as equals. The philosophies of The Guerrilla Girls emphasized that change is important and that the "history of art and culture cannot be written without including all the

[9] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning."
[10] Quotes are used around the past artists name such as "Frida" to indicate the artists each Guerrilla Girl has chosen for their alias.
[11] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning," 104.
[12] Brown University, Salomon Center, "Guerrilla Girls, Artist Talk 4.3.19," April 3, 2019, video, 1:16:43. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VObf2iaJS_Q (accessed April 20, 2020).
[13] Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, oil on canvas, Neoclassicism, Louvre Museum, 88.9cm x 162.56cm (35in x 64in), 1814.

diverse voices of that culture."[14] The Guerrilla Girls considered themselves as "intersectional feminist and explore race, class, gender identity and ethics that effect human rights struggles."[15]

Although the Feminist Movement was the fight for equality, it was not always equal among women in the movements. Women artists of color were not always included in the "sisterhood" of the movement. The 1920s brought great rewards for women earning the right to vote; unfortunately, traditional feminist history has privileged the white female struggle but has often disregarded the lives of Black women. Elaine Weiss, author of *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote,* points out "in the face of racist opposition, white suffragists betrayed the Black women who had also long fought for the right to vote."[16] Although the 1960s and 1970s did bring the start of recognition for Black artists, Black female artists still experienced discrimination not only within their community but also within the white feminists' community. When Black female artists wanted to join the movement, they wanted to discuss issues of not only gender but issues of race. However, the discussion of race was not brought forward because the white feminists believed that "race were diversions from the goals of the women's movement."[17] Chapter Five discusses and highlights two artists of color who fought and campaigned for equal recognition in the art world. Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold persevered in their continuing crusade to bring awareness to the public and the importance of African Americans and Black history through their artwork. This chapter also views Saar and Ringgold's shift in their artwork after the murder of Martin Luther King.

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[14] Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2020) 1-192.
[15] Brown University, Salomon Center, "Guerrilla Girls, Artist Talk 4.3.19."
[16] Melissa Block, "Yes, Women Could vote After the 19th Amendment. But Not All Women or Men," Morning Edition – NPR, August 26, 2020, 5:00 AM ET. https/www.npr.org (accessed February 23, 2021)
[17] Valerie Smith, *Abundant Evidence: Black Women Artists of the 100s and 1970s*, Jill Fields (Eds.), *Entering the Picture: Judy Chicago: The Fresno Feminist Art Program and Collective Visions of Women Arts*, (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011)119-130.

Betye Saar's artistic talent begins at a young age. While living in Watts California, Saar developed a strong interest in Simon Rodia's Watt Towers. Saar remarked at a symposium in 2018, "Watts Towers was the number one impression as a kid; I was a kid that liked the mysterious, the magical, the unknown and the other."[18] In the art world, the Watt Towers is a creation of broken bottles, plates, rocks, and seashells referred to as found objects. Found objects become Saar's focus and choice of medium in her artwork. This chapter also researches the connection of Saar's interest in the occult, magic, and mysticism. This influence is evident throughout many of Saar's works. In the 1950s, Saar decided to go back to school and enrolled at Cal State Long Beach. While at Cal State Long Beach, Saar, found a love for printmaking, which becomes Saar's safe road into the world of fine arts. Etching and printmaking are Saar's trademarks, along with the addition of found objects in her art. That medium set the distinct style and format recognized in her work today. This research highlights how, in 1968, there was a shift in Saar's works that brought out her strong feelings of the injustices Black people endure. This change occured in her work entitled *Black Girl's Window (1969).* Another mixed media work Saar is famous for is *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*. *(1972)* Her description of *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* is "I take the figure that classifies all Black women and make her into one of the leaders of the revolution."[19]

Like Betye Saar, Faith Ringgold's interest in art began when she was a young girl. Ringgold had asthma and spent more time at home than in school. During her time spent at home, she learned to paint, sew and quilt. She was born in Harlem, New York surrounded by painters, writers, and musicians, all of whom became a great influence and inspiration for her

[18] Soul of a Nation Symposium 2018-Crystal Bridges, Moderator: Lauren Haynes, "Conversation with Betye Saar and Alison Saar, May 12, 2018, video, 30:21. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvL9Es3Pp_I (accessed February 28,2020).
[19] Jill Fields, *Entering the Picture Judy Chicago*.

artwork.[20] Chapter Five explores how Ringgold's talent and the love for the arts came from a generation of women whose talents in the arts influenced her in becoming the artist she is today. Ringgold's great-grandma, grandma, and mother Willi Posey were quilters and dressmakers in their own right. They gave Ringgold the confidence to carry on the tradition of creating extraordinary works of art. These generations of women also had an impact on Ringgold to tell her own story of family, address social issues, and educate the world of the injustices Black people have endured. Chapter Five examines the need for Ringgold to tell her story, and reviews Ringgold's transitions from oil paintings to acrylics. In the 1980s, Ringgold began her work in quilt painting. The quilt painting series would become her signature work. Ringgold's quilt paintings, referred to as "story quilts," were a creation from her rejected publication of her memoir entitled *We flew over the Bridge.* In 1991 from her "story quilts" series *The Woman on a Bridge (1988)* Ringgold wrote and illustrated her first children's book entitled *Tar Beach*. *Tar Beach* won over "20 awards including the Caldecott Honor and the Coretta Scott King award"[21]

Chapter Six concludes with research that has examined the results of these artists' labor to improve opportunities for female artists and artists of color in the art world and achieve the goals of equality. This chapter also highlights what each artist has contributed since the beginning of the art movement. The Guerrilla Girls have been passing out humorous posters for thirty-nine years. The Guerrilla Girls expanded their campaigns beyond the art world to include social issues such as abortions, workplace discrimination, and human rights. While both in their nineties, Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold are still working on projects related to a cause. Judy Chicago is eighty-two and still influencing the art world. Sadly, in 2015, Miriam Shapiro passed

[20] Read 180 Videos, Interview with Faith Ringgold, "Who I am: Faith Ringgold."
[21] Tar Beach/Awards and Grants – American Library Association, https://www.ala.org

away at the age of ninety-one, but she leaves a legacy for the next generation of female artists and the importance of telling their own story.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine women artists and artists of color and explore questions as to why these artists were traditionally underrepresented in history books, museums, and galleries. This research explores how the Civil Rights Movement played a pivotal role in the creation of the Feminist Art Movement. The 1970s produced artists, critics, and art historians questioning why there is little to no representation of women in these spaces. The goal of this research is to investigate what motivated these artists to demand equality and recognition. During the 1970s, Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro engaged in a revolution that changed and challenged the status quo. This paper also examines how the 1970s created a foundation for the well-known 1980s artist collective, The Guerrilla Girls, to add important social issues to their previously established agenda. Additionally, this research interrogates how Bettye Saar and Faith Ringgold created the opportunity for Black female artists a chance to express both political and personal change for equality through their art. The Feminist Art Movement was a critical moment in the lives of women artists and artists of color to establish a recognized presence in the art world. Through extensive historiography of the background and achievements in the movement these artists, art historians and art critics document the evolution of change and determination to challenge the patriarchal norms.

Chapter Two
Historiography

In 1960, the Civil Rights Movement contributed to and expanded the idea of change through protests and demonstrations. The fight for women's rights grew out of similar ideas to others seeking equality in a marginalized society. The Women's Rights Movement used similar tactics, methodologies, and ideologies that proved successful for the Civil Rights Movement. The Feminist Art Movement used these tactics instead of protesting with signs and marches; these artists protested through their art. The second wave of the Feminist Art Movement supported women artists that made their voices heard and offered opportunities for future female artists to achieve their dreams. Women artists like Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro along with Betye Saar, Faith Ringgold and the Guerrilla Girls changed the status quo in the art world. These women challenged patriarchal norms, made women's points of view the focus of their work, and influenced future female artists, artists of color, and female-identified artists.

Historically art books such as art history textbooks or coffee table books featured artists who were predominantly men. Women featured in art books was either a model or muse for male artists. Linda Nochlin coined the phrase "Why have there been no Great Women Artists?" The answer is that there were always great women artists, however, historians chose not to include them in history books. The 1960s was a time when female artists began the fight for recognition and the evolution of change in the stereotypical ideas of female artists. The Feminist Art Movement brought attention to the world that women are more than just models or muses, but freethinkers, adventurers, and pathfinders for future women artists. The Feminist Art Movement allowed women a public platform to think for themselves and create their own identity through art. The second wave of female artists began in the 1960s and 1970s with artists like Judy

Chicago and Miriam Schapiro. These female artists, frustrated by the male-dominated art world that rarely allowed women artist entry into galleries or museums, decided to take a stand and fight for equality and recognition. Through the efforts of these women, numerous artists joined the feminist movement and campaigned for the importance of self-awareness, and cultural and political change. Writings about these women reflect the celebratory tone of the time.

The 1980s introduced the third wave to the Feminist Art Movement, which proposed a different form of protest in the feminist art revolution. Artists like The Guerrilla Girls continued to fight for self-awareness and equality. Their art focused on the political and social issues such as abortion, higher pay and equal opportunity in the work place for female artists and artists of color such as Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold. The third wave still incorporated the second wave's views of equality, but with Google and other search engines, these artists could spread the word of recognition through the touch of their fingers. *Intersectionality,* a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, emerged in the 1990s and 2000s to combat white feminism and create a more inclusive idea about feminist artists.[22] Writings from this time reflect the move towards intersectionality. The third and fourth waves observed the need to seek equality through the intersections of gender, class, race and sexuality.

Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History edited by Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker, was published in 1971. Hess and Baker discussed Linda Nochlin's famous statement "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists." In the context of the book, Hess and Baker argued points relating to inequality and discrimination against women artists throughout the ages. The essays written in this book are different opinions

[22] Michele Tracy Berger & Kathleen Guidroz, *The Intersectional Approach* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 4.

and ideas relating to Nochlin's question, from artists such as Elaine De Kooning, Louise Nevelson and Sylvia Stone.

Hess points out that Nochlin's question is an example of how women have endured male prejudices and stereotypes. Hess continues to argue that the art world has viewed women artists' work as unimportant and "undermines scholarly assumptions in art history."[23] Hess also states, that within the context and illustration of this book, Nochlin should have added a clause to make the question read, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists….*Even though women have produced great works of art?"*[24] Hess argues and compares female artists' achievements before and after the Renaissance, using the illustration Nochlin provided in his book, and discusses that the history of art is over 5,000 years old. Hess states, "Who is to say that a woman did not design the pyramids."[25] Hess also questions, even though these women were great artists, were their paintings created with their own originality, or because so many female artists of the past were either students or daughters of great masters, so they painted by copying the masters. Hess states that even though they were proficient in their works, they were not the innovators of the style. As women's liberation and the art movement evolved in the 1970s, so did the foundation and birth of a different breed of women artists.[26] They were creating their own original style showing there is no need to follow the so called greats of the past, but follow their paths to a self-discovery of their own self-identity.

[23] Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker, *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), 45.
[24] Hess and Baker, *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History*, 45.
[25] Ibid, 46.
[26] Ibid, 48.

Elizabeth Baker discusses how the 1970s brought unrest through related events such as political and protest activation.[27] Baker argues that the 1970s brought turmoil in the forms of the Cambodian invasion and the Kent State shootings, along with major targets such as war, racism, repression, sexism, and the recognition of women artists became a "cause célèbre."[28] Organizations such as the Art Workers Coalition brought active members such as women artists, critics, and others to form strikes to make the public aware of the inequity women artists received through galleries and museums.

Baker also maintains that even though young male artists may have a difficult time getting started, the benefit of the doubt is granted to them; female artists were not given the same benefit. She goes on to say that women artists had three main categories they had to overcome to even begin to establish any kind of recognition, "preparing to be an artist, earning a living, and gaining recognition."[29] Baker notes that Nochlin's contribution to this book points out that women in the nineteenth century and earlier had barriers that prevented them from expanding further in their careers. In order to reach the higher levels in the art world, an artist needed professional training; however, women were not offered this opportunity for professional training and were unable to achieve the higher levels. Baker goes on to add that in the twentieth century, opportunities changed, art schools became more than half-full, and artmaking centers offered a broader source of today's art.[30] However, Baker does argue that even though women had more access to art programs, women still had problems achieving a career and recognition in the art world. Baker stated that teaching art in the 1970s, women neither received job offers nor

[27] Ibid, 108.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid, 110.
[30] Ibid.

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had access to grants as male teachers. Barker also goes on to state that "fifty-percent - plus female art students" after graduation, taught at the high school level or below while in the universities, women art teachers were officially excluded from teaching in higher education because these jobs were given preference to men.[31]

Through Baker's research of discrimination of female artists in galleries, museums, and art schools, she was shocked to discover that women dealers, critics and curators showed more prejudice toward women artists than male artists. One well-known female dealer made the statement very openly that "she will never take on a woman artist in her gallery: women 'are not as good.'[32] Baker explains that museums are less likely to include a young woman artist over a young male artist. A woman artist had to be "extraordinarily well-established" such as Louise Nevelson or Georgia O'Keeffe before being accepted into a collection.[33] Baker argues that with any group, unusual circumstances such as being women artists campaigning for recognition takes time, but the younger women artists of the 1970s' were standing strong and the current generation will overcome this plight. This is an interesting statement from Baker because her generation may be approaching the last phase of having to consider the accomplishments of women artists as a special case, were in 2018; major museums still had less than one-third of works represented by female artists.[34] Therefore, to quote Baker, "it takes a long time."[35] Women artists cannot rest; they must continue to protest and fight to maintain their own identities.

[31] Ibid, 110.
[32] Ibid, 112.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid, 118.
[35] Ibid, 117.

From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art published in 1976 by Lucy Lippard. *From the Center* was published five years after her book entitled *Changing* in 1971. Lippard's goal was to compare whether anything had changed in the art world related to women artists. *From the Center* is a series of essays written by artists and critics. The essays in this book are general, monographs and Fiction.

Lippard compared *From the Center* to *Changing* with an aspiration that she found progress in the field of women artists and how far the process of their recognition had come. Lippard frustratingly argued it was a slow journey. Lippard wished she could leap forward into the future and bring back essays that came next in the hope that women artists would have advanced and achieved a strong place in history. According to Lippard's statement, the women's movement had changed her life. The movement gave her the freedom to express how she felt about art from a personal level.[36] She argued it allowed her to be more confessional, vulnerable, autobiographical, and she even made light that she could write something embarrassing if needed. Lippard debated that after rereading *Changing,* she hoped to find contradictions and was disappointed to find fewer than she expected.[37] She noticed also that in *Changing,* she had not really written about women in fact. She confessed that throughout the book, she referred to "the artist, he," "the reader and viewer, he" and worse, because of her career as an art critic, "the critic, he."[38] Lippard discussed that while on a trip with her five-year-old son in a foreign country away from artists where she had planned to write fiction, she discovered her writings did not come from her; she wrote, "mostly about men." When she realized her epiphany Lippard

[36] Lucy R. Lippard, *From The Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc, 1976), 2.
[37] Lippard, *From The Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*, 2.
[38] Ibid, 2.

stated, “I was ashamed of being a woman.” Her revelation was to rethink her writing. From then on, she wrote “for herself “and “to write for women.”[39]

Lippard also observed that female artists were stepping away from a historical style to fundamentally sexual or erotic imagery, and preferred more realist or conceptual experience such as childbirth, motherhood, rape, household imagery and autobiography.[40] Lippard argued that feminist art does not merely consist of imagery or “picturing.” She quotes Judith Stein “perhaps the only things a truly feminist artist would concern herself with are the feminist movement and building a feminist art system inside a feminist society.”[41] However, Lippard debated that if a feminist society is not resolved, feminism will continue to struggle and find itself in a capitalist system that still belongs to male art.[42]

From the Center is Lippard’s desire to “establish a new feminist criticism” and to “engender more questions, more dialogue, more discussion and more investigation in women’s art.”[43] Lippard held optimism that in the future, male and female artists would find a more equitable state of recognition.[44]

Lucy Lippard’s book, *The Pink Glass Swan,* published in 1995, contains selected essays from a book she wrote in 1976 entitled *From the Center* with additional comments from the author updating the changes that had occurred in 1995. Lippard wrote her book *From the Center* during a time of “early feminist passion and rage.”[45] Lippard's idea of rebooting essays *From the Center* demonstrated how the Feminist Art Movement had changed in the last twenty years. The

[39] Ibid, 4.
[40] Ibid, 7.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid, 11.
[44] Ibid, 8.
[45] Lucy R. Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art*, (The New Press, New York, 1995).

author noted that change happened in the art world even though at this time injustices still ruled for the majority. Lippard's goal of publishing essays from her past was to show young up-and-coming artists the struggles their forerunners endured and to encourage a new generation of women artists to continue the fight for equal time and recognition.

The Pink Glass Swan is a retrospective of Lippard's 1970s work with additional comments from the author tracking changes that have transpired since the publication of *From the Center*. In the chapter *Sexual Politics: Art Style*, Lippard discussed how in the years of 1969-1971, feminist artists began protesting and forming groups such as the *Women Artists in Revolution* (WAR). While it is unclear if the initials were intentional (WAR), they do align with what was occurring in the 1970s. Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro formed the first feminist art program on the West Coast known as *The California Institute of the Arts*. In Los Angeles, the *Council of Women Artists* protested the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, producing statistics that reflected the problems occurring throughout the world. Out of 713 artists, only twenty-nine works by women were on display at this museum.[46] In 1971, *West-East Bag* (WEB) created a network to inform and keep artist groups up to date on actions, legal maneuvers, discussion topics, and techniques.[47] Even with these programs, the art world still struggled to accept women artists in the art market.

Lippard argued that women artists in the 1970s faced discrimination on many levels, and lists the obstacles they met as "disregarding women or stripping them of self-confidence, not considering married women or mothers as serious artists, [and] galleries turning an artist away without seeing her slides."[48] Art Dealers and galleries quoted; "Sorry, we already have a

[46] Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan.* 42.
[47] Ibid, 43.
[48] Ibid.

woman," or, "Women are too difficult."[49] Since the publication of *From the Center*, Lippard has observed that the art world has improved on accepting women as serious artists.

The National Museum of Women Artists, established in 1990, was making headway in introducing the known and unknown artists to the world.[50] Numerous artists were exploring new subjects and instead of painting flowers or landscapes, they were creating abstract paintings, sculptures, and photographs. Their self-awareness as a person and as a woman was emerging. In 1971, the recognition of women artists still went unnoticed in H.W. Janson's *History of Art;* his introduction read "the Artist and His Public." Fast forward to 1995 and Janson's book now includes women artists and a change in his introduction to state "Art and the Artist."[51] Changes in the traditional art historical analysis are significant steps forward, and with the support of artists and museums like the NMWA continues to campaign and fight for change in the art world for female artists.

Miriam Schapiro: Shaping the Fragments of Art and Life published in 1999 and written by Thalia Gouma-Peterson. In this book, Peterson discusses Schapiro's life and her evolution as a female artist through her art in the last five decades. Peterson points out a question Schapiro considered a central and important concept to the feminist debate in the early 1970s, "How can a woman artist negotiate her position as an artist and a woman in twentieth-century American culture?"[52] Peterson stated Schapiro answered this question, through a slow and sometimes painful journey; she expressed and demonstrated through her works of art that a woman can negotiate her position in the world. Peterson discusses Schapiro's life growing up in a

[49] Ibid*,* 44-45.
[50] Ibid, 134.
[51] Ibid*,* 135.
[52] Thalia Gouma-Peterson, *Miriam Schapiro: Shaping the Fragments of Art and Life* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1999), 13

patriarchal home, which she states that in the "fifties that was the norm in most families."[53] Petersons also argued that even at a young age, Schapiro was aware of the "separateness of male and female spheres."[54] She shared her father's love for art and through him, she learned to love all art. Schapiro admired her mother, but Schapiro commented that her mother was a "dreamer and constant reader" whose "view of the world was not a 'world' view, but what she lived 'inside,' at home"[55] Schapiro believed that her mother's dreaming and reading was a way of creating a 'world of her own', which justified her own inner life.[56] Peterson referred to a quote by Simone de Beauvoir concerning Schapiro's statement about her mother and herself when dealing with the separateness of male and female spheres; "leaving behind the unredeemed and unredeemable domestic sphere of contingency for the public sphere of economic activity" could women achieve "transcendence."[57]

Peterson described Schapiro's contradiction of life through her art and Schapiro's concern of going to the library as a young girl and not finding any history of women artists. Schapiro's goal in her works of art was to eradicate this problem; she also was concerned that there were no autobiographies on female artists. Peterson researched each decade of Schapiro's life and the changes in her work as she grew and matured in her ideas, strengths, and finding her own identity. Peterson began with the 1950s and continued into the 1990s, also stating that Schapiro did not come into herself until the 1970s. Peterson argued that at this time, Schapiro began to search and discover the "conscious of her otherness."[58] Schapiro found the freedom of

[53] Gouma-Peterson, Miriam Schapiro: Shaping the Fragments of Art and Life, 14.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

bonding with “other women past and present,”[59] which allowed her to “read, see, touch, and feel other women’s stories.”[60] Peterson points out that the seventies were opportune for Shapiro to make the “roles of artist and homemaker ‘seamless’ and resolve the painful and contradictory pulls in opposing directions.”[61]

Peterson goes on to illustrate Schapiro’s friendship and partnership with Judy Chicago. In 1971, Chicago and Schapiro founded the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts, and together they created a program entitled *Womanhouse*.[62] Peterson examines in each chapter of this book the “complex intersection of Miriam Schapiro’s life and art.”[63] She also discussed the effects in Schapiro’s changing ideas and to hopefully make a difference in the lives of past, present and future female artists.

In Cynthia Freeland’s book, *But is it Art,* written in 2001, she argued the questions, “what is Art," "what it means,” and "why we value it."[64] She scrutinized the different art theories such as ritual theory, formalist theory, and postmodern theory. Freeland's approach to writing this book was to "highlight the rich diversity of art."[65] She included cultural crossings, the value of art to gender and minority groups. The author discusses new methods, ideas, and the importance of how minority and women groups were breaking the stereotype of what ‘great’ art represented. Freeland examines the protest against sexism in the art world demonstrated through The Guerrilla Girls, a group of women who in 1985 protested important museums in New York for not exhibiting more female artists.

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid, 15.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid, 14.
[64] Cynthia Freeland, *But is it art?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127.
[65] Freeland, *But is it art?*.

Freeland brought up the concept as to why artists have labels. Does labeling define who a person is? Why does a painting or piece of art viewed for its value and context, have an identity such as female, artist of color or sexual orientation? Linda Nochlin also questions in this book the statement from her influential 1971 essay titled "*Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?*"[66] Nochlin commented that there were no 'great women' of the past to compare to the 'great male artists' of the past such as Michelangelo or Leonardo.[67] She felt women artists did not have their own identity or purpose in their art. To become a 'great' artist, one had to have the training or education in the subject to be considered 'great.' Women of those periods could not sketch nudes or attend schools of training, however, since Nochlin's essay, recognition of women artists has made strides in improving the status quo of females in the art world.

Women Artists at the Millennium, edited by Carol Armstrong and Catherine De Zwegher, published in 2006, contains numerous essays written by art historians, art critics, and artists. In 2001, Carol Armstrong coordinated a conference entitled "Women Artists at the Millennium." The conference presented the ideal setting for past feminists to display their essays of practice. The authors of this book wanted young up-and-coming artists to know the legacies that played a part in the Feminist Art Movement that provided them the opportunity to develop their ideas of how to better their cause. Critical theory points established included gender, class, race, and ethnicity.[68]

Linda Nochlin, a feminist art historian who coined a statement at the beginning of the movement in the 1970s exclaiming, "Why have there been no Great Women Artists," was one of

[66] Ibd, 127.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Carol Armstrong and Catherine De Zegher, *Women Artists at the Millennium* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006), xv.

the presenters and author of the essay with the same title. Nochlin stated that when the movement began, there were no women studies, no feminist theory, no African American studies, and no queer theory. The only courses offered were Art I or Art 105, covering the careers of predominantly male artists of the time. In 2001, Nochlin wrote about the changing dynamics sought in women's studies; however, women are still campaigning to improve on better pay and to hold higher male-dominated positions.

In 2011, Anna C. Chave, a professor of art history, wrote the article, “The Guerrilla Girls Reckoning,” which discusses the origins of how the group called The Guerrilla Girls formed and how their humorous posters and protests helped carry out the continuing works of feminist artists of the ‘60s and ‘70s. The 1970s continued with the art movement, which included art critic Lucy Lippard and sculptor Eva Hesse, forerunners for the Female Art Movement who were pioneers in the importance of equality and recognition of female artists. These visionaries helped establish a foundation for future groups such as The Guerrilla Girls.

Chave discusses that the 1980s brought a new group of protesters with the Guerrilla Girls in the lead, a group of working artists striving to bring equality to the art world for female artists and artists of color. The group formed in 1985 using the disguises of wearing gorilla masks and taking on deceased female artists names such as Frida Kahlo, Alice Neel, and Elizabeth Vigee Le Burn. Their protests and concerns centered on major museums and galleries not giving female artists and artists of color equal exposure. Chave also points out that the 1970s art movement shaped The Guerrilla Girls decision to change tactics to improve on getting their point across to the public. The feminist protesters of the 1970s were viewed as "unduly strident, humorless,

puritanical, antimaternal and man-hating."[69] The Guerrilla Girls used a "sly, sardonic humor."[70] Their goal was to reach a broader audience, in which they saw “humor as invaluable.” Elizabeth Vigee Le Burns quotes, “if you can laugh about something that is the most brilliant, [ploy] because a laugh makes everybody feel a part of the inside joke.”[71]

They accomplished their humorous protests through designing posters. Chave discusses how in the contemporary art market of the 1980s white males were profiting quite well, and the female artists were receiving a fraction of pay and recognition than jobs in other fields held by females in the '80s. The Guerrilla Girls demonstrated this in a poster that stated, "Bus companies are more enlightened than the NYC art galleries,"[72] The Guerrilla Girls proclaimed the bus company employed "49.2 percent of females as opposed to "sixteen percent of artists represented by thirty-thirty major NYC art galleries."[73] SoHo, a contemporary art gallery, was a place the Guerrilla Girls displayed a poster protest on the walls showing the names of the galleries that had fewer than ten percent of women artists, and critics who wrote less than twenty percent of articles that addressed female artists.[74]

Chave mentions in 1985, the Guerrilla Girls discovered that the number of women artists in museums and galleries was next to none. Their research uncovered that The Guggenheim, the Met, the Whitney had none, and the MoMA had only one-woman artist displayed in their museum. Sadly in 2011, thirty years after their discovery, The Guggenheim, Met, and The Whitney, just had one each, and the MoMA had two. The progress has changed only a little, but

[69] Anna C. Chave, “The Guerrilla Girls’ Reckoning,” *Art Journal, Vol. 70, No 2* (2011): 102-111, 104.
[70] Chave, “The Guerrilla Girls’ Reckoning,” 104.
[71] Ibid, 103.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

at least these women and their fight have shown the public that women artists are just as talented as their male counterparts. The Guerrilla Girls' goals are not to break down the system, but merely to have more access, and equal parts to recognition and pay. History has shown that women artists have gone without recognition of their talents and contributions in the world of art. The Guerrilla Girls played a considerable role in the 1980s and 1990s for their continuing fight for equality in the art world as Lucy Lippard points out that the Guerrilla Girls "almost single-handedly kept women's art activism alive over one of the worst decades I hope we'll see."[75]

Women, Art, and Society, written by Whitney Chadwick in 2012, provides a general introduction on the history of women in visual art by discussing great women artists in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the present. However, she goes even further by looking at the "ideologies that have shaped production and representation for women."[76]The author states because of numerous women's works in visual art she had to limit her scope in her research and elected to concentrate on paintings and sculptures. Chadwick argues that after almost two decades, women or feminist art historical writings remained unanswered.[77] Although this thesis does not cover the middle ages and the Renaissance, but concentrates on the 1960s to present, Chadwick's argument is true that to understand 'great women,' historians must research and study women artists of the past helps one understand the present. Chadwick does not spend research time on the biographical facts or archival facts of women artists but focuses mainly on "reframing" the issue that is of concern to many feminist artists such as gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. Since the writing of her last edition, Chadwick has added a new chapter entitled

[75] Ibid, 111.
[76] Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society* (Fifth Edition) (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012), 14.
[77] Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, 14.

"The Enduring Legacy of Feminists." This chapter covers the belief that without the '70s movement, feminist artists may not be where they are today.

Chadwick argues how far technology has come, with the birth of Google and other search engines; technology has given the ability to access knowledge at the touch of your fingers. They have moved away from gender to social and political action and the relationships between objects and materials.[78] Chadwick also points out that not only has technology changed, but the thought process of how the 1960s and 1970s art movement changed the world's understanding of the importance and impact women's art had in the art world contributing to the broader view of the concept of feminist art. Again, Chadwick introduces Linda Nochlin's statement, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" Because of these simple words, the essay Nochlin wrote helped set the foundation for the creation of the *National Women's Political Caucus* and *Ms. Magazine*. Nochlin continues to argue and challenge the ideological concept of "artists" and "greatness"[79] with the exclusion of women from history books and art exhibits. Because these feminist artists of the 1970s, broke the glass ceiling and opened doors in the academic world, which gave way to women's studies, multiculturalism, identity politics, queer theory, and gay and lesbian studies.[80] Thoughts, theories, and concepts of what is art are continually changing the feminist movement, which started in the 1960s and 1970s. The campaign made it possible for future generations of artists to continue the fight for equality and recognition.

Judy Chicago and Louise Bourgeois, Helen Chadwick, Tracy Emin, a book created and edited by Rachel Dickson in 2012, included illustrations, photographs and essays of Judy

[78] Ibid, 496.
[79] Ibid, 499.
[80] Ibid, 501.

Chicago's work from the last four decades, is an exhibit at the Ben Uri, The London Jewish Museum of Art. The 2012 exhibition demonstrating Chicago's works included paintings, printmaking, drawing, photography, film, performance, needlework, and works not seen by the public.[81] Parts of the exhibit were essays written by multiple authors on a more private side of Chicago's life and works. Featured also in the exhibition were three other female artists' works that drew attention for their feminist ideas; Louise Bourgeois, Hellen Chadwick, and Tracey Emin demonstrated the same issues in their forms of art. As a pioneer for female artists, Judy Chicago challenged the concepts and ideas of traditional society.[82]

Judy Chicago was a part of this change in the perception of women artists and art in general. Judy Cohen was born into a family of activists and believed in equality and political changes. Judy Cohen changed her name in 1970 to Judy Chicago as a display of her feminist and activist side to show her independence. Chicago was a pioneering feminist, artist, and activist. Other art critics and artists such as Lucy Lippard and Eva Hesse began to challenge the conventional idea of the male-dominated contemporary art world. Pushing back against socially accepted art forms, women artists and art critics painted and wrote about searching for a more open self-awareness of an artist's own identity.

Chicago's controversial piece entitled *The Dinner Party* represents an example of the works female artists were striving to explore in their self-awareness. The display is a life-size triangular table with place settings celebrating famous women such as Susan B. Anthony, Emily Dickinson, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Virginia Wolf. Chicago wanted to honor these women on their

[81] Rachel Dickson, *Judy Chicago: and Louise Bourgeois, Helen Chadwick, Tracey Emin* (Surrey, England, Lund Humphries, 2012), 18.
[82] Dickson, *Judy Chicago: and Louise Bourgeois*, 18.

own merits and as real artists.[83] In 1980, this piece drew criticism from the academic sector, and from a group called 'anti-essentialists' claiming that female achievement was not connected to female biology. Chicago regained recognition of her piece in 1996 when Amelia Jones edited a book entitled *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*. In 2007, *The Dinner Party* became a permanent exhibit at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center[84] for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum.[85]

Dickson wrote that in the 1970s art movement, paintings produced by male artists were the only works displayed and discussed in museums and art books. Through a slow process, the 20th century brought recognition for female artists with the help and contributions of museums, art galleries, and even newly revised art history books. Previously unknown women artists started to materialize and find their place in the timeline of history. Institutions such as *The National Museum of Women in the Arts* (NMWA), *Women Artists of the West* (WAOW), and The Guerilla Girls have had a significant impact on female artists today. With the help and insight from established museums and organizations, there emerged an increased awareness and appreciation of female artists. The *National Museum of Women* helps move forward the

[83] Ibid, 18.
[84] It should be noted that the Sackler family's name has been associated with Purdue Pharma and the recent opioid crisis. However, Elizabeth A. Sackler has condemned her family for their part in this issue. Elizabeth A. Sackler has shown support for Nan Goldin's protest to hold the Sacklers accountable for the marketing of opioids. https://www.artforum.com/news/nan-goldin-receives-elizabeth-a-sackler-s-support-in-condemning-purdue-pharma-73791. The Sacklers are known for their financial support of the arts, which raises questions about the relationships between donors, museums, and artists. Elizabeth A. Sackler has joined in support of speaking out against the other Sackler family members and their business interest. However, there remains a need for museums to question the social agendas of private donors and the businesses they represent if they are at odds with the social agendas of the communities and artists they support. This thesis does not specifically address these issues, but an examination of these relationships would be beneficial for future research.
[85] Dickson, *Judy Chicago: and Louise Bourgeois*, 18.

conversation on a demographic overlooked in the past and supports contemporary women artists of today.

In an article published in 2019 from the *National Museum of Women Artists* (NMWA), the museum listed a few facts that women artists still deal with daily. In the demographics and compensation section, a female artist on average earns $.74 for every $1.00 a male artist earns. Women artists working as art professionals make $20,000 less per year than their male-counterparts. In 2018, *ArtReview* listed in their Power 100 lists "most influential people in the contemporary art world" women artists were forty percent, which was an improvement from thirty-eight percent in 2017 and thirty-two percent in 2016.[86]

Museums, galleries, and publications in the 21st century still lack the recognition of women artists. In 2013, out of 318 artists represented in the 9th edition of H.W. Janson's art history survey book *Basic History of Western Art,* only twenty-seven women were recognized; a number which was up from zero in the 1980s. In 2015, *Artnews* reported a "huge gender disparity in a solo exhibition." Maura Reilly, a curator, stated that only thirty percent of solo exhibits in major art institutions were of women artists. The *Art Newspaper* reports that in 2007-2013 out of 590 major exhibitions shown in seventy institutions in the U.S. only twenty-seven percent were women artists. The *Art Newspaper* also stated in 2018 out of 820,000 exhibitions in the public and commercial sectors only one-third represented female artists.[87]

In the division of leadership, awards, and publications women still struggle for recognition of their talents and works. A survey by the Association of Art Museum Curators

[86] National Museum of Women in the Arts, "Get the Facts" www.nmwa.org
[87] Ibid.

reports that women hold the majority of professional positions in art museums.[88] However, there remains a vacuum of women in leadership positions in these cultural institutes. Although in the U.S., women who run museums with smaller budgets have risen from thirty-two percent in 2005 leadership positions to 47.6% in the present. There are presently a higher percentage of males in directorship roles than females. Museum with budgets of $15 million and higher are still male-dominated.[89] The British Museum, the Louvre, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art have never had a female director. The good news is thirty percent of women do hold positions as directors; however, women directors still earn less than male directors.[90]

The 1970s saw women artists and feminists make their voices heard for the rights of equality not only in the art world but also in all branches of society. Lucy Lippard discusses in her 1995 book, *The Pink Glass Swan* how equality and acknowledgment of women artists' works have changed. She argues that in the last twenty years there has been an increase in the number of female artists displayed in museums and women recognized for their art and not their gender. The progress of women's recognition is slow, but growth is progressing.[91]

It is unfortunate that contemporary women, like the women artists of centuries past, do not share in the equality of their male counterparts. The fact that patriarchal society discounted these women's contributions is shameful. Nevertheless, with the help of art historians, institutions like *The National Museum of Women in the Arts (*NMWA), *Women Artists of the West* (WAOW), organizations like The Guerrilla Girls, and artists such as Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, Betye Saar, and Faith Ringgold have made significant contributions in the fight for

[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan.*

equality. The legacy of influential female artists who created the groundwork with their talents proved that female artists and their works are more than just a label. The art historical cannon is slow to change, however in establishing women as equals, and not merely subject matter is progressing. Because of the determined and robust pioneering women who blazed a path and created opportunities for future generations of women, modern artists can achieve a place in art history and be proud of their accomplishments and successes. Through the efforts of these artists, art historians and art critics, numerous women like Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, Faith Ringgold, Betye Saar and The Guerrilla Girls joined the Feminist Art Movement and campaigned for the importance of self-awareness, cultural and political change.

Chapter Three
Judy Chicago
Miriam Schapiro

Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, frustrated by the male-dominated art world in the 1970s, decided to take a stand with other female artists in the fight for equality and recognition. Joyce Kozloff, a significant figure in the Pattern and Decoration movement, best describes the feminist artists' ideas, methodologies, and goals to achieve equality, self-awareness, and recognition in the art world. In 2013, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) published an article that quoted Kozloff;

> For us, there weren't women in the galleries and museums, so we formed our own galleries, we curated our own exhibitions, we formed our own publications, we mentored one another, and we even formed schools for feminist art. We examined the content of the history of art, and we began to make different kinds of art forms based on our experiences as women. So it was both social and something even beyond; in our case, it came back into our own studios.[92]

Kozloff's quote illustrates the feelings of most feminist artists in the 1970s, who, along with Chicago and Schapiro, represented pioneering feminists, artists, and activists that helped redefine the role of women in the arts. Chicago and Schapiro became friends in the early 1970s, and together they created a foundation that changed the Feminist Art Movement. Jointly they founded the Feminist Art Program. The program began first at Fresno State in California, where Chicago taught. Schapiro came to observe the classes and brought the program, with Chicago's help, forward to California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Los Angeles. Collectively, Chicago and Schapiro in 1972 created an experimental feminist art installation entitled *Womanhouse. Womanhouse*, a project of installation, sculpture, textile, and performance art, designed in an

[92] Joyce Kozloff – AAUW, www.aauw.org

abandoned Hollywood mansion featured twenty-one women artists who were students in the Feminist Art Program. Their role in the Feminist Art Movement exposed the truths of the invisible history of women artists and set forth to correct this issue. Creating women-centered art education programs helped develop an environment where women felt safe to express their thoughts, ideas and find their self-identity.

Judy Cohen was born in 1939 to Jewish parents in Chicago, Illinois. Cohen's father, an author and Marxist labor organizer, was an enormous influence on her and instilled the belief that her purpose in life was to make a difference and establish a passion for social justice. That passion stayed with Cohen throughout her life. In 1969, Heinz Kusel, who was the department head of the Fresno College, had two vacancies in his art department to fill. Oliver Andrew, a professor at UCLA recommended Judy Gerowitz (Chicago) and Susan Titelman, both students of Andrews. Gerowitz started in the spring term in 1970, bringing new ideas and new concepts of a much-needed awareness to women's history. A critical step Chicago took to challenge the status quo and separate her from the stereotyping of women was legally changing her name. When Chicago came to Fresno, she came with her married last name Gerowitz to separate herself from "all names imposed upon her through male social dominance,"[93] Gerowitz changed her name to Chicago because she felt in doing the name change, it allowed her to identify as an independent woman, so with the move to Fresno, 'Judy Chicago' was born. The men of the Art Department, both traditionalist and vanguard, "could hardly have foreseen that her ambitious drive would transform their classrooms and campus so dramatically."[94] The influence of Andrew and Kusel helps launch the career of Judy Chicago. In Kusel's determination to set a precedent

[93] Gail Levin and abridge by Melissa Morris, *Becoming Judy Chicago: Feminist Class*, ed, Jill Fields (Routledge, New York, 2012) 27.
[94] Ibid, 25.

for change, he gave Chicago free rein in her teachings.[95] Though she faced opposition from fellow professors in the art department, Kusel remained steadfast in his decision that Chicago would achieve extraordinary goals in the birth of a women's program for the Art Department at Fresno. Kusel even supported her creation of a strictly Women's Art Program, which became "the first of its kind at this time in any University, which played a significant part in the feminist movement in America."[96]

When Chicago arrived at Fresno at the end of 1969, she was coming from the LA art scene where a patriarchal society still dominated the art world. For her to fit into the male-dominated world, she had to suppress any signs of her gender in her works. She stated that the program "was unbelievably macho."[97] The opportunities working at Fresno presented to Chicago came with the responsibility to change and recreate a new way of thinking for women's equality. Chicago had to evaluate herself and search where she had come from and where she was going. She first observed that from the beginning of her career as an artist, she employed values and attitudes she learned as a child and young adult. Chicago stated, "I felt that I had built my identity and my art-making as a person - as an artist - on the framework of reality that I had been brought up in – I sensed that what I could do now differed from what could be done twenty years ago."[98]

To make a change in this new framework of reality, Chicago found that reading early writings of the women's movement clarified her feelings that "Great art is great because male

[95] Ibid*,* 26.
[96] Ibid.
[97] National Museum of Women in the Arts, Judy Chicago on "Womanhouse,", April 2017, 35:52, https://youtu.be/Z9muNnozFGY
[98] Levin and abridge by Melissa Morris, *Becoming Judy Chicago,* 27.

authorities have told us so."[99] Chicago's quest was to study and find a way to explore the female experience, which she found essential to studying women's art. Chicago made a strong argument that, "moving away from the male-dominated art scene and being in a female art environment where we could study our history separate from men's and see ourselves in terms of our own needs and desires, not in terms of male stereotypes of women."[100] The moving away from the male stereotyping of women was a start to understanding female art and their essences, but the Movement in the 1970s only focused on white female artists. Even though the Movement itself had great intentions, female artists of color did not always benefit from the Movement. Unfortunately, when the subject of race was brought up, white feminists often stated, "race were diversions from the goals of the women's movement."[101] To study female art, one needs to broaden the spectrum of study and include not only gender, but also race, class and sexual orientation. Audre Lorde states in a paper she wrote entitled "Age, Race, class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference, 1980" "Unacknowledged class differences rob women of each other's' energy and creative insight."[102]

Chicago continued her approach by teaching her students the skills to become more than just a female seen through the male lens, but also encouraged and helped women expand beyond this stereotype. She gave women an outlet and space to express their reality through autobiographies, any type of medium, drawing, painting, and dance showing their own experience.[103]At the end of the decade, Chicago, fed up with male rules, began to wonder why

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[99] Ibid*,* 26.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Valerie Smith, *Abundant Evidence*, *Entering the Picture: Judy Chicago, The Fresno Feminist Art Program, and the Collective Visions of Women Artists* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 120.
[102] Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," April 1980. https://www.colorado.edu/odece/sites/default/files/attached-files/rba09-sb4converted_8.pdf
[103] Levin and abridge by Melissa Morris, *Becoming Judy Chicago,* 27.

she could not create art without disguising her gender. Teaching at Fresno, she felt, allowed her to expand and grow in the field of feminist art.

In an article, written in 2000 entitled “Feminist Art Education: Made in California," Chicago explains the purpose behind the conception of the program. She quotes, “the climate for women at that time…there were no Women’s Studies courses, nor any understanding that women had their own history.”[104] Chicago’s goal was to create an education program strictly for women but because of her bad experience at UCLA, which she refers to as a “reaction to the lousy education she had at UCLA,”[105] she strived for a stronger and more in-depth program that focused on women alone.[106] In her autobiography*, Through the Flower, My Struggle as a Woman Artist*, she states, "as a result of my own struggle, I suspected that the reason women had trouble realizing themselves as artists was related to their conditioning as women."[107] Chicago was in charge of designing this program and she began by putting out a flyer to sign up “young girls.”[108] Little did Chicago know what a huge impact she would have from a simple flyer. She enrolled fifteen young women to begin the new women program establishing a strong following of women who wanted to expand and move from a patriarchal society to freedom of self-identity.

Judy Chicago’s classes were demanding and gut wrenching, and her teaching was not for all students. Chicago’s requirement to enroll in her classes was that a student had to establish that they were committed to the arts but also “aware of themselves as women” and “able to be emotionally honest with themselves and others.”[109] Numerous students found her method of

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[104] Judy Chicago, “Feminist Art Education: Made in California, 2000,” www.judychicago.com.
[105] National Museum of Women in the Arts, “Judy Chicago on “Womanhouse," YouTube, video, 35:52, April 2017, https://youtu.be/Z9muNnozFGY.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Chicago, “Feminist Art Education: Made in California.”
[108] National Museum of Women in the Arts, “Judy Chicago.”
[109] Jane Gerhard, “Judy Chicago and the Practice of 1970s Feminism,” Feminist Studies 37, no 3 (2011): 594.

teaching grueling and tedious; she demanded each student be accountable for their actions. Missing a day due to illness or a mental health day was inexcusable. Chicago expected direct, honest, and confrontational speech from her students. She felt this liberated her students from a tradition that taught them to avoid conflict and withdraw from controversy.[110] Chicago's program was to educate these women in women's history and literature written only by women. To achieve the goal in the first year of the new program, students read only books written by women. Chicago taught students to build their own space or studio space, how to present themselves in the way they dressed, and practiced how to introduce themselves. Instead of a timid voice such as "my name is Sally," she required them to stand up, look someone in the face, shake their hand and present themselves with pride and say, "Hello, my name is Sally Jones."[111] Chicago's teachings were a radical departure from the traditional forms of education at Fresno. She was open to all discussions in class; she considered "nothing inappropriate" such as talking about the female body.[112]

During Chicago's time at Fresno, she strove to introduce the meaning of *empowerment.* Chicago viewed Feminist Art Education different from the feminist movement itself. Her theory and observation of Feminist Art Education was a process of teaching students the understanding of *empowerment,* and helped create the meaning of what was important through their art. Chicago's teaching model was that no one was to dominate the class, including herself. The Facilitator became her role in class; she felt a Facilitator should help in the growth and empowerment of students, instead of teaching at them. Chicago encourages her students to uncover their potential in the fields of intellectually, aesthetically, and personally in order to

[110] Ibid, 595.
[111] National Museum of Women in the Arts, "Judy Chicago."
[112] Gerhard, "Judy Chicago and the Practice of 1970s Feminism," 594.

form a personal empowerment.[113] Chicago made a striking statement that "feminist values are rooted in an alternative to the prevailing views of relations of power, which involves power over others."[114] However, in the Feminist Art Movement, she believes art promotes personal empowerment, and adding education, the empowerment becomes a "potent tool for individual and social change."[115] Personal empowerment allows the artist to express their own experience and add their autobiography to the canvas. Schapiro taught her technique of consciousness-raising to show the importance of understanding oneself, to encourage a person to look deeper and be aware of the social issues around them creates personal empowerment. Education helps enhance personal empowerment to understand race, class and gender issues, with the combination of education and personal empowerment it generates a stronger understanding of issues and increases the ability to make change and social compassion for equality to better humanity.

Chicago's first year at Fresno was productive and exciting; she developed a reputation and a strong recognition of promoting women studies. At the end of her first year at Fresno, her students held an exhibition, which drew crowds from as far as LA. In attendance was artist and teacher from CalArts Miriam Schapiro and her husband Paul, dean of the new art school at CalArts. Schapiro invited Chicago to bring her program to CalArts, and Chicago agreed and with some of her students, made the move to CalArts. This move began another project for Chicago, and since the new art building was not completed when she arrived, Chicago and her students met in living rooms. Paula Harper, a feminist art historian, joined the group. Through her suggestion, the group established a project using an old house in Hollywood on Mariposa Street.

[113] Judy Chicago, "Feminist Art Education," 3.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

Chicago stated the irony of the street name, which means Butterfly in Spanish, is an example of how women's art education was transforming into a beautiful and empowering statement.

Womanhouse was the title given to this mission, an endeavor to produce art and live performance of personal issues of women. It took several months to construct and transform the old house into a work of art. Each room, created by a single woman or a group, addressed a personal issue, which women had to deal with in a patriarchal society. Each room had a designed subject matter such as housework, mothering, and the gendered division of labor, aging, and menstruation. There were eighteen rooms installed in the installation of *Womanhouse*, and out of the eighteen, the *Menstruation Bathroom* and *Nurturing Kitchen* was the most popular.[116] *Womanhouse* opened on January 30, 1972, and was on exhibit until February 28, 1972. Even though it was open for only a month, *Womanhouse* played a part in spreading the idea of feminist art education. On the opening day of *Womanhouse*, one thousand visitors came to visit, and Womanhouse was the first feminist artwork recognized on a national level when *Time* magazine wrote an article about the project.[117] The house was torn down shortly after the new art building opened, and a part of history faded and was forgotten. An article published in 2006 by Temma Balducci entitled "Revisiting Womanhouse" argues that Chicago's *The Dinner Party* was the leading example of what feminist art represented in the 1970s. Balducci believes that in truth, *Womanhouse* was the real example of the struggles women had to face and overcome through their art.

The move to the new art building at CalArts changed the atmosphere and purpose Chicago had established in her program at Fresno. She became unhappy and felt the goal of

[116] Temma Balducci, "Womanhouse," Grove Art Online, 24 February 2010, https://www-oxfordartonline-com.vortex3.uco.edu.
[117] Temma Balducci, "Revisiting Womanhouse," Women's Art Journal 27, no 2 (2006): 17.

creating a place for women to express their issues through art was returning once again to a male-dominated institution.[118] There was also growing tension between her and Schapiro; brought on by disagreements in teaching styles and philosophy. Chicago resigned her position, and she left everything: her students, art history slides she had collected of women artists, *Womanhouse,* and most importantly, the program she created.[119] Despite this dark moment in her career, Chicago did not give up on the Feminist Art Program. Chicago, along with colleagues Sheila De Bretteville and Arlene Raven, rented out the old Chouinard building in LA naming it the Woman's Building. The Woman's Building contained The Feminist Studio Workshop, which encouraged other feminist organizations to join the group.[120] Chicago became disappointed in the program again when asked by another woman "why she was not following current rules"[121] that were set up for the groups in the Women's Building. Chicago realized bureaucracy was not just a male precept, but also female and she deemed the Women's Building too institutionalized[122] Chicago states, "I didn't feel comfortable with institution of any kind, even those run by women."[123] In 1974, Chicago left to devote her energy back into finding her own identity and personal empowerment, which she believed was lost while teaching. It was time to return to her studio work and rededicate her life to her art. This move began her five-year journey on a project that became Chicago's most memorable piece, *The Dinner Party.*

The inspiration for *The Dinner Party* started with a trip in 1971 to an antique shop in Oregon and the discovery of painted porcelain plates. Since Chicago was a classically trained fine artist, she was uncomfortable with decorative art. Decorative art not considered "high" art,

[118] Judy Chicago, "Feminist Art Education," 4.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid, 5.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

but viewed as a woman's hobby; something a domesticated woman spent her spare time creating. Chicago still wanted to learn more about this technique; in 1972, she enrolled in a small class, which changed her perspectives that plate painting and needlework were forms of art and considered “high” art.[124] Chicago's idea in becoming more than just a hobbyist, but a master of painting plates was a desire to use porcelain plates for a related project she was working on entitled *Great Ladies*. Chicago began classes with Miriam Halpern, a master china painter. Miriam taught Chicago with the understanding that Chicago would develop an in-depth knowledge of china painting and not "just paint forget me knots."[125]

Great Ladies was a series of abstract portraits representing women of the past like *Queen Victoria* (1973, Brooklyn Museum), *Christina of Sweden* (1973, Brooklyn Museum), and *Marie Antoinette* (1973, private collection). Chicago was using spray paint and was not pleased with the effect it had on canvas, and she wanted to return to painting with brushes. Chicago's experience in learning this new technique allowed her to observe talented women and she was amazed at how many of these gifted artists had gone unnoticed. Numerous women had gone to art school, but married and had children, so the women had to find ways to express their talent without "a choice between their family life and their work."[126] Some women had painted for forty years without any recognition for their work. Chicago attended exhibitions and was upset to find these women's talents wasted on “inadequately lighting, poor resources to present their work properly, improperly installed and sold their piece for outrageously low prices.”[127] Chicago saw these women as the "perfect metaphor"[128] of how women are perceived through history as just

[124] Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage* (New York: Anchor Books, 1979), 8.
[125] Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 9.
[126] Ibid, 11.
[127] Ibid, 9.
[128] Ibid, 11.

domesticated and trivial. Chicago wanted to honor the women whose talents had gone unrecognized; her thoughts were by making china painting "visible through my work, I hoped to stimulate interest in theirs."[129]

The original idea for Chicago's project included painting one hundred plates of famous women of the past and hanging them on the wall like a painting. After a year and a half of classes, she completed her studies. Through the course of her studies, Chicago changed her concept of painting one hundred plates to creating a series entitled "Twenty- five Women Who Were Eaten Alive."[130] As she launched the undertaking of the project, once again, through research, Chicago decided to go from hanging the plates to the visual aid of a place setting. This idea came when she saw a painting of a traditional dinnerware set created by Ellie Stern, and the idea of setting the table with plates, flatware, glasses, and napkins appealed to Chicago.[131] Chicago compared *The Dinner Party* to *The Last Supper*, but instead of men making history, women became the subject of recognition and their contribution to the history of women. She decided on thirteen women and thirteen place settings, she also made note that a witch's coven has thirteen members. Chicago used the contrast between the two subjects; *The Last Supper* as "good" and the witch coven deemed "evil." Between the two, it served a dual meaning for her plates; the idea was to show "both women's achievements and their oppression," so twenty-five became thirteen plates.[132]

While planning her project, Chicago decided that thirteen plates were not enough plates to symbolize the "various stages of Western Civilization," the number of plates tripled to thirty-

[129] Ibid, 11.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid, 12.

nine plates.[133] Chicago's designs for the plates were to represent historical or mythological figures, such as Saint Bridge, Sacajawea, Sojourner Truth, and Emily Dickinson. Chicago referred to the plates as "guests of honor."[134] Each plate setting was placed on a finely detailed embroidered runner, each runner displayed the story behind each woman's contribution to history, and along with the place setting a gold ceramic chalice, utensils, and a napkin accompanied the plate.

The blueprint for the plate was to resemble the form of a butterfly. Her theory behind the intended shape was to symbolize "liberation and the yearning to be free."[135] The image took on the various stages of metamorphosis that occurred in the life span of a butterfly, from the larva stage to emerging into an adult. Her original plate design was flat, but Chicago felt the plates needed more depth and realized that she could not accomplish this objective on her own. Chicago employed seven artists to assist in the creation of the plate. She felt that each artist brought to the table a different technical experience, which added dimension to the surfaces of the plates. It took Chicago three years to complete the plates, and many stages of trial and error, but in the end, Chicago felt she had created a piece of work that symbolized women's history, or as Chicago states, "the rise and fall of opportunities, and the efforts women have made in the last two hundred years to change their destiny."[136]

Content now with the number of plates, Chicago had to devise a base or table to exhibit the plates; she chose an open triangular table. The influence behind this form was "equilateral in structure,"[137] which she believed represented the feminist's purpose of equality that the

[133] Ibid.
[134] Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, "Judy Chicago, The Dinner Party," www.brookylnmuseum.org
[135] Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 11.
[136] Ibid, 52.
[137] Ibid, 11.

movement was trying to express to the world.[138] Chicago described why she decided that the triangle shape seemed appropriate for her table she pointed out that "the triangle is one of the early signs of women, an ancient symbol for the goddess and the triangle is also a equilateral that represents equality, which is what we are all striving to make."[139] Another aspect of the triangle shape table is Chicago's narrative of the three sides, which represent three divisions of history. The first side is pre-history to Greco-Roman culture, which includes women such as "Primordial Goddess she symbolizes the original feminine being from whom all life emerged, Ishtar, the Great Goddess, the giver and taker of life worshiped for thousands of years she was the female principle as life-giving, protecting, and nourishing."[140] The second side is Christianity to the Reformation, some of the women include with this group was "Saint Bridget Patron Saint of Ireland, founded the first convent in Ireland, Theodora the famed Byzantine empress who was a champion for women. She passed laws nullifying contracts that trap young women into prostitution, passed laws protecting women from mistreatment by their husbands."[141] The third side is American Revolution to the Women's Revolution this side of the table represents women like Sacajawea; Sacajawea was of the Shoshone tribe, and the Minnataree tribe captured her as a child. Sacajawea sold at a young age to a fur trader, and became his wife and slave. She joins the Lewis and Clark expedition, at the age of sixteen along with her six-week-old baby. Sacajawea later takes on the role of interpreter and guide.[142] Sojourner Truth an abolitionist, feminist, and former slave became an activist traveling by foot telling her life story and revealing the evils of slavery."[143] These are just a few of the women Chicago gave honor to in her plate settings, she

[138] Ibid.
[139] Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, "Judy Chicago."
[140] Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 57-58.
[141] Ibid, 70-71.
[142] Ibid, 84-85.
[143] Ibid, 87-88.

designed each plate to show the importance of women's history, strength, perseverance, and courage to continue the cause for equality and women's rights.

The floor, upon which the table rests, entitled the "Heritage Floor," constructed with "2,300 hand-cast porcelain tiles."[144] The 999 names inscribed in gold are of mythical and historical women and placed in groupings around the women included at the table.[145] Chicago had each tile painted in a luster overglaze, which gave the optical effect of the names fading in and fading out as the viewer walks around the table. Chicago quoted why she used this technique was to show the public how women have "appeared then disappeared from history."[146]

The Dinner Party took five years to complete with the assistance of 400 artists. *The Dinner Party* was one of Chicago's most recognizable art piece that represent women's history that had been hidden, dismissed from books, galleries, and museums. Although Chicago's *The Dinner Party* made a statement for the Feminist Art Movement, it did not come without harsh criticism. In 1980, the Brooklyn Museum was hosting Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, and Hilton Kramer, a reporter of *The New York Times*, one of Chicago's harshest critics, wrote an article on his opinion of the piece. Kramer began his argument with "Is the *Dinner Party* Art?" He also commented, "I suppose so. After all, what isn't nowadays?"[147] Kramer went on to state, "It is very bad art, it is failed art, and it is art so mired in the pieties of a political cause."[148] The article continued that Chicago's art piece is "fixated on the external genital organs."[149] Throughout his article, Kramer continuously used the word "gross" in his description of *The Dinner Party*.

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[144] Ibid, 98.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid, 13.
[147] Hilton Kramer, "Art: Judy Chicago's 'Dinner Party' Comes to Brooklyn Museum": [Review], *New York Times*, Oct 17, 1980, pg. C.1.
[148] Kramer, "Art: Judy Chicago's 'Dinner Party.'
[149] Ibid.

Kramer criticized not only the plates but also the table and floor motif. He described the table as triangle shape but goes on to commit to the readers "There is no need, I suppose, to spell out the meaning of that triangle."[150] In the conclusion of his articled Kramer wrote "to this male observer, it looks like an outrageous libel on the female imagination."[151] An article written by Kasia Pilat in 2018, discusses an interview by sociologist and writer Sarah Thornton of Chicago's response to Kramer's article. She states, "Kramer was one of the most vicious, vitriolic critics."[152] Chicago blamed Kramer for the description of her plates as "vaginas on plates," which the stigma lasted for decades.[153]

In an article written in 1981 by Lolette Kuby, a self-proclaimed feminist, she supported *The Dinner Party* wholeheartedly. She stated, "If *The Dinner Party* was to survive, we feminists would have to keep it alive"[154] she also said "I went to Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* prepared to love it."[155] Kuby prepared for the shock value of the motif of the plates but once entering the exhibit, her opinion changed dramatically. Once she viewed the piece, Kuby stated that *Playboy* and *Penthouse* (offensive as they are) have done more to promote the beauty of female parts, than *The Dinner Party* ever could."[156] That was intense criticism, but she then goes on to argue that Chicago's art piece stripped all identity from the women honored on the plates, but focused only on the body part (vagina) that history viewed as a sex object. Kuby also expressed that *Playboy* had "no pretensions, they cater to what they cater to."[157] She also commented, at least

[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Kasia Pilat, "From 'Vicious' to Celebratory: The Times's Reviews of Judy Chicago's 'The Dinner Party,' *The New York Times*, (February 28, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/28/insider/judy-chicago-dinner-part-art-reviews-times.html.
[153] Pilat, "From 'Vicious' to Celebratory."
[154] Lolette Kuby, "The Hoodwinking of the Women's Movement: Judy Chicago's "Dinner Party," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 6. No. 3, (Autumn, 1981), pp. 127-129.
[155] Kuby, "The Hoodwinking of the Women."
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.

Playboy still has a human element where Chicago had taken all aspects of humanity away from the women represented in *The Dinner Party*.[158] Kuby mentioned that some viewers felt *The Dinner Party* had similarity to *The Last Supper*, such as space, darkened, hushed, even the lighting, which appears to be a light from heaven inviting the impression that *The Dinner Party* is a "work of art of great importance."[159] However, Kuby viewed the piece as stilted, mechanical, a regiment of plates and runners. The work Kuby felt also lacked vitality, energy, and Sprit.[160] *The Dinner Party* faced criticisms from art professionals and museums "who dismissed the piece as craft not considered 'High' art, and feminists who viewed the piece as "essentialist and Eurocentric."[161]

The Dinner Party premiered at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1979. It was a great success; however, it did come with criticism about the subject matter of the pieces. Chicago was pleased with the accomplishment of her work and decided to move to Northern California hoping for "opportunities, commissions, and sufficient support."[162] Regrettably, and to Chicago's surprise, the museums "scheduled to exhibit *The Dinner Party* canceled."[163] When the show closed at the SFMoMA, *The Dinner Party* toured until 1982, but because of the stigma of the piece tagged as either pornography or not considered 'High' art, the museum world refused to exhibit the work. In the late 1980s, Chicago crated and stored the artwork where it remained until 1996 when it came out of storage and was on exhibit in Los Angeles.

[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Jane Gerhard, "Judy Chicago and the Practice of 1970s Feminism," Feminist Studies 37, no 3 (2011): 615.
[162] Chicago, "Feminist Art Education: Made in California."
[163] Ibid.

Chicago always hoped for *The Dinner Party* to have a permanent home, and that opportunity came when on April 18, 2002, the Brooklyn Museum acquired *The Dinner Party* as part of its permanent collection. The exhibit opened March 23, 2007, at the new Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art. Forty years later, this piece remains a powerful symbol and a legacy of women's achievements throughout the years. *The Dinner Party* has been an inspiration for many events and fundraisers. The Boston Fenway Community Health Center sponsors an annual fundraiser "The Women's Dinner Party," which supports HIV-positive clients and the LGBTQIA+ community.[164]

Chicago's target for the design of the plates and runners was to convey a story through art and demonstrate that china painting and needlework, although traditionally connected with women was more than just a hobby. She exposed the myth that women's talents were not just for the domesticated life, but that works of art could expand "into mural-size paintings or monumental sculptures."[165] Chicago's dream for *The Dinner Party* was to educate the public that women artists deserved the right for recognition and a place in history. The names on the floor and the thirty-nine plates represented in *The Dinner Party* serve as a symbol of the oppression women have endured throughout history. Chicago quotes, "how many women have struggled into prominence or been able to make their ideas known----sometimes in the face of overwhelming obstacles – only to have their hard-earned achievements marginalized or erased."[166]

[164] Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, "Judy Chicago."
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

In 1988, after a nine-year international tour, *The Dinner Party* was stored at the National Museum of Women in Arts, Washington. D.C.[167] Chicago continued to pursue her goals of spreading the need for women's history to find a place in a patriarchal society. In 1980, Chicago began a new project entitled, "Birth Project." This endeavor was a partnership of 150 needle workers who helped, Chicago create dozens of images blending painting and needlework to produce various stages of the birthing process. The objective of the piece was to "introduce images of birth and information about the reality of women's lives to a wide audience of viewers."[168] The idea came to Chicago when she observed how few images of birth in Western art were on exhibit. Chicago quoted "at that time nobody knew anything about birth,"[169] and the artwork demonstrated how uneducated the public was on the process of birth. Chicago commented about a critique she received from a critic about the piece that "it was one of the stupidest criticism of the "Birth Project"[170] the critic declared, "Birth Project degrades women because it shows them giving birth on their backs."[171] Chicago made the statement "now I'm responsible for OB-GYN's entire history of women giving birth on their backs?"[172] Chicago also commented on how "Birth was shrouded in mystery,"[173] because men were not allowed in the room when the birth was happening."[174] She notes how ideas have changed over the decades and how "responses to it now are so striking; all of the sudden there is so much interest again."[175]

[167] Maura Reilly: Founding Curator, "Tour and Home," Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/tour_and_home.
[168] Harvard Radcliffe Institute, "Judy Chicago: through the Archives: Feb 26, 2014 to Sept 25, 2014," www.radcliffe.harvard.edu.
[169] Elizabeth Flock, "At 80, Judy Chicago isn't done with the mysteries of life and death," (Aug 1. 2019), www.pbs.org.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.

Another known series of Chicago's was the *Holocaust Project: From Darkness in Light (1985-1993).* This project allowed Chicago to explore her Jewish heritage. Along with her second husband Donald Woodman, they created artwork that drew attention to "Jews and other groups targeted by the Nazis."[176] The groups included gays and lesbians, immigrants, political prisoners, Roma people, and criminals. The project also focused on other issues such as genocide, nuclear, environmental, and animal rights.[177] Like most of Chicago's works, the project took eight years to complete. The series premiered in 1993, at the Spertus Museum in Chicago, and continued to tour throughout the states until 2002.[178]

Chicago has come full circle; she continues to create stellar pieces, has overcome harsh criticism and maintains a strong stance in the Feminist Art Movement still today. She continues to campaign for opportunities and programs, which allows women artists to grow and understand the importance of equality, while maintaining their self-identity in a man's world. Chicago quotes "I have learned that you never know what will happen if you live long enough and put art out into the world."[179]

Like Chicago, Miriam Schapiro was an advocate and pioneer for the Feminist Art Movement in the 1970s. The goal of both artists was to educate the world on inequalities women artists faced in a male-dominated business. Chuck Twardy, a critic for the *Orlando Sentinel* wrote, "Miriam Schapiro has helped to broaden the definition of art."[180] He went on to state that

[176] Chicago: through the Archives.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Jewish Virtual Library, "Judy Chicago," www.jewishvirtuallibrary.
[179]. Vanessa Friedman, "If Women Ruled the World, What Would They Wear?" *The New York Times*, (January 21, 2020).
[180]. Chuck Twardy, "To Break Down Barriers, Artist Establishes Ties by Revealing Aspects of Her Life in Her Work, Feminist Artist Miriam Schapiro has Helped to Broaden the Definition of Art," Orlando Sentinel, Orland, Florida, April 3, 1991: E1. https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/newspapers/break-down-barriers-artist-establishes-ties/docview/277826074/se-2?accountid=14516.

Schapiro had acknowledged the increasing accessibility of art, but commented that Schapiro also observed, “We are beavers among turtles.”[181] Schapiro explains, “slow turtles are the well-heeled interests who control the art market and museum funding.”[182] Schapiro argued that the “industrious advocates of pluralism will not go away” and “The goal in art as in life is parity she speculates that parity may take another 25 years.”[183] Miriam Schapiro, a painter, sculptor, printmaker and a pioneer of feminist art in the 1970s challenged the contrast of “high” art and “decorative” art, “a term then used to relegate women and folk artists to enormity.”[184] Schapiro campaigned to demonstrate that quilting, crafts, and embroidery created by women were just as important as the art of predominantly male artists’ works. She strived to recognize works created by anonymous women. Together, Schapiro and Chicago became the founders of the first Feminist Art Program on the West Coast, The California Institute of Arts.

Schapiro was born in 1923 in Toronto, but her family moved to Brooklyn when she was a baby. Her parents, Theodore and Fannie Schapiro, were Jewish Russian who immigrated to America. Theodore Schapiro was an “artist and intellectual.”[185] He went on to become an industrial designer. Schapiro’s mother was a homemaker and a strong supporter of Schapiro’s art career.[186] Schapiro’s art career began at the early age of six when she started taking art classes. At the age of fourteen, her father lied about her age — stating she was eighteen in order to enroll at “Works Progress Administration Classes that worked from nude models.”[187] Schapiro had

[181]. Ibid.
[182]. Ibid.
[183]. Ibid.
[184]. Miriam Schapiro, National Museum of Women’s Art. https://nmwa.org/art/artists/miriam-schapiro/ (accessed October 20, 2019).
[185]. Carol Salus, "Miriam Schapiro," Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia, Jewish Women's Archive, February 27, 2009. https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/schapiro-miriam (accessed October 15, 2019).
[186]. Salus, "Miriam Schapiro.”
[187]. Twardy, “To Break Down Barriers.”

mixed feelings about her mother and guilt about choosing her father's path of becoming an artist instead of choosing her mother's path of domesticity.[188] Even though her mother read about the world, Fannie Cohen still developed "a perverse sense of the world as being a place where only a man could work."[189] Schapiro followed her father's passion of being an artist, but she longed for her freedom away from her father who "sometimes was overbearing in his artistic influence and his interest in the old masters.[190] Her chance for freedom came when she attended the University of Iowa and received her B.A. in 1945. She later went on to achieve her M.A. in 1947 and her M.F.A. in 1949.[191] The guilt of choosing an art career followed her into adulthood when at the age of 32, Schapiro stated, "she found herself trapped between her professional aspirations and motherly duties."[192] Schapiro chose to enter therapy to overcome her self-doubt and to learn more about herself." When asked about this time she declines to discuss this part of her life but does say, "I was, and am, somebody who searches."[193]

Schapiro met her future husband, Paul Brach, at the University of Iowa and they were married in 1946. Schapiro had considered herself a "Cultural Jew" until she met her husband Brach. Her husband was among the American soldiers "who helped to liberate Theresienstadt in World War II. The retelling of his experience of the liberation affected her deeply, and she found that this "furthers her Jewish identity."[194] Her works such as *Lost and Found (1998)* and *My History (1997)* is evidence of her recognizing her Jewish ancestry throughout her art career. In

[188] Donna Seaman, "Miriam Schapiro: Shaping the Fragments of Art and Life," The Booklist 96, no. 6 (Nov 15, 1999): 591, https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/trade-journals/miriam-schapiro-shaping-fragments-art-life/docview/235411912/se-2?accountid=14516. (accessed March 12, 2021).
[189] Thalia Gouma-Peterson, "Miriam Schapiro: An Art of Becoming, American Art, Vol. 11, No. 1, (Spring, 1997), 10-45. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3109259 (accessed August 15, 2019).
[190] Gouma-Peterson, "Miriam Schapiro: An Art of Becoming."
[191] Salus, "Miriam Schapiro."
[192] Twardy, "To Break Down Barriers."
[193] Ibid.
[194] Salus, "Miriam Schapiro."

1957, while living in New York, Schapiro had a successive art career; she was a "second generation Abstract Expressionist in the late 1950s."[195] In the 1960s, Schapiro began to experiment with computer imaging and became one of the first artists to use this technique in her art. The use of the computer allowed Schapiro the opportunity to develop her recognized style of hard edge geometric work, a "breakthrough [for Schapiro] one that took the outward form of hard edged abstraction but opened up a new path towards personal and political empowerment."[196] This technique is visible in her work entitled *Big OX (1967)*.[197] The viewer can see the hard edge of the geometric edges generated from the computer aids, with the description of the letter O in the form of a "hexagon with pink labial interior whose geometry masked its sexual meaning."[198] Schapiro described the painting as "the image was transformative: it represented the female body, shrugging off its patriarchal yoke."[199] Schapiro also quoted, "In painting this image I behaved unconsciously, like all women artists mentored by men. The piece was so powerful to me that when I was finished, I turned it to the wall for six months until I dared approach it again."[200] Creating this painting, Schapiro uses acid orange, purple and pink paint with interlocking letters O and X.

Schapiro's work in creating the piece *OX* was a big move for Schapiro, but it was not until a move with her husband to California in 1967 and meeting Judy Chicago that she began her transformation and found herself in the Feminist Art Movement. Schapiro was interested in a

[195] William Grimes, "Miriam Schapiro, 91, a Feminist Artist Who Harnessed Craft and Pattern, Dies" *New York Times*, Jun 25, 2015, Late Edition (East Coast), https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/newspapers/miriam-schapiro-91-feminist-artist-who-harnessed/docview/1690976135/se-2?accountid=14516.
[196] Ariella Budick, "Miriam Schapiro, A Visionary, National Academy Museum, New York – 'Belated homage to a feminist icon,'" FT.com, London, (February 23, 2016), (accessed August 19, 2019).
[197] Budick, "Miriam Schapiro, A Visionary."
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.

program at Fresno created by Judy Chicago that focused on women's studies. She felt CalArts needed to include this program into the Universities curriculum. In 1971, Schapiro and Chicago co-founded the Feminist Art Program at CalArts. Through the arts program at CalArts Schapiro and Chicago collaborated to create *Womanhouse*, "an installation/performance piece along with young artists in the program opened January 30 to February 28, 1972."[201] *Womanhouse* was a representation of "stereotypes about women that limited them to domestic roles."[202] Temma Balducci states, "it was one of the earliest feminist artworks to question the boundaries between essential and constructed meaning."[203] With the assistance of artist Sherry Brody, Schapiro designed a piece of artwork entitled *Dollhouse,* which became the centerpiece called The *Dollhouse* Room. The *Dollhouse* room was one of many rooms in *Womanhouse*; Schapiro and Brody's work represented a parody of domestic life using an object associated with little girls. The *Dollhouse* has six rooms; each room designed from "bits of lace, handkerchiefs, tea towels, miniature furniture, and personal mementos…. collected from women all over the country."[204]

The materials used in the *Dollhouse* expressed Schapiro's signature use of folk craft traditionally associated with women's work; *Dollhouse* is a reflection of Schapiro's artwork from her series entitled *Shrines.* The rooms are a parody of the stereotypes of women in the 1970s domestic lifestyle. The six compartments contain a parlor, kitchen, a Hollywood star's room, a harem room, a nursey, and an artist's room. Schapiro designs each room so that they paralleled how society viewed women. The Hollywood room represented how a woman was expect to always look her best, the kitchen a room designed for 'women's work' and the artists' room was

[201] Temma Balducci, "Revisiting "Womanhouse": Welcome to the (Deconstructed) "Dollhouse," Woman's Art Journal, Fall-Winter, 2006, Vol. 27. No. 2, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20358086.
[202] Balducci, "Revisiting "Womanhouse."
[203] Ibid.
[204] *Dollhouse (1972),* Smithsonian American Art Museum, https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/dollhouse-35885.

the artists impression that "challenges the idea that the domestic lives of women prevent them from making "serious" art."[205] Schapiro did add a bit of humor to the artist's room by having a male model doll in the place of a female model. She has him standing and not laying in a seductive position while her artwork *Shrines* is on an easel in the corner of the room. The *Dollhouse* is a prominent exhibit at the Smithsonian American Art Museum; a posting of the description on the *Dollhouse* the museum writes, "the tiny rooms in *Dollhouse* evoke cells in which the hopes of women are often imprisoned."[206]

Schapiro's contribution to the movement was her teaching of consciousness-raising. Schapiro explains why this method of teaching is so important to understanding oneself, she states, "consciousness-raising startles and bonds them [students] as a group not knowing anything about feminist art, they are encouraged to work in fresh ways. All of this coming from their own experience with the techniques and practices they are used to."[207] Another key signature of Schapiro's campaign to lift women's folk art to a higher standard in the art world was *Femmage*. *Femmage,* or feminist collage, was a term Schapiro coined to give the technique of collage a more feminist connection to the movement. Schapiro and Melissa Meyer defined *Femmage* as an art form "practiced by women using traditional women's techniques to achieve their art—sewing, piecing, hooking, cutting, appliqueing, cooking and the like—activities also engaged in by men but assigned in history to women."[208] Schapiro and Meyer also point out that the collage technique was used for centuries by women, but not until the "20th century when

[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Miriam Schapiro, "Responses," Art Journal, Vol. 59, No. 2, (Summer, 2000), 4-5, https://www.jstor.org/stable/778096.
[208] Temma Balducci, "Femmage," Grove Art – Oxford Art Online, https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T2085779, (accessed April 29, 2021).

artists such as Pablo Picasso began employing the method in works was collage considered high art and received critical attention."[209]

Schapiro's coming of age in the feminist movement occurred in the 1970s, and although she was older than most women who pioneered the Feminist Art Movement, she was proud for the opportunity at the age of forty-eight, what some might call a late bloomer, "to change my life and reinvent myself."[210] In a conversation with Mary Beth Edelson, an American artist and pioneer of the Feminist Art Movement, Schapiro pointed out for this movement to mean anything "you cannot do that easily, you really need to believe in something in order to do it."[211] Therefore, for an idea or movement to be successful, a person has to have a strong conviction and stay true to the cause so the campaign continues to grow and mature. She went on to comment to Edelson that the 1970s movement prevailed because "what we had that was most important for this campaign to work was I had you and you had me and we helped other women."[212] Schapiro continued to say, "so, for the first time probably in our lives really in the midst of a very, very strong female consciousness, that left a great mark on all of us."[213]

When Schapiro returned to New York, she brought with her the enthusiasm she learned in California from the Feminist Art Movement. In 1974, Schapiro forms the idea of creating a feminist journal, with a collective group of feminist artists. In 1977, Schapiro launched the journal entitled Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics.[214] Heresies devoted to an

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[209] Ibid.
[210] Miriam Schapiro, "Conversation with Miriam Schapiro and Mary Beth Edelson: Idealism in the Feminist Movement and Heresis," March 25, 2011, video, 5:00, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsvOvL58Jl8 (accessed April 27, 2021).
[211] Schapiro, "Conversation with Miriam Schapiro and Mary Beth Edelson."
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, "Miriam Schapiro (1923-2015)," *American Art*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Fall 2015), 132-135, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/684924, (accessed August 15, 2019).

"examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective."[215] Heresies had a collective of all types of identities such as "socialists, Marxists, lesbian feminists or anarchists."[216] When talking to Mary Beth Edelson, Schapiro commented on the support each woman brought to the table, but gave credit to Lucy Lippard. Schapiro stated, "for the women at that time Lucy had a sense of authority she had been published many times and she had a lot of professional experience."[217]

After reinventing herself, Schapiro focused on educating the world and drawing attention to the concepts of what the feminist movement was trying to achieve. Schapiro earned the nickname of "Mimi Appleseed" after Johnny Appleseed, "whose dream was to plant apple trees throughout the world."[218] Schapiro did the same by planting seeds through her teachings. She "opened paths previously closed and unknown to women artists."[219] Schapiro brought recognition to the Feminist Art Movement through her writing, painting, printmaking, and sculptures.[220] Like Johnny Appleseed, Schapiro traveled, and spoke at conferences, universities, art classes and women's groups. Schapiro fought for recognition of anonymous women artists to making domestic art traditions a "high" art. Schapiro was proud of what she had accomplished in her artworks and teachings to support the Feminist Art Movement, Schapiro quotes, "She grew into her own in the 1970s,"[221] also pointing out "When I finally became proud of the women's movement. It was the first time in my life when I saw what it meant to be connected to other people and as time went on, I knew how much I had to give."[222] Sadly, Schapiro passed away in

[215] Heresies #1, *Feminism, Art and Politics,* Vol. 1, No. 1, (January 1977), https://heresies filmproject.org/archive/, (accessed April 12, 2021).
[216] Heresies #1, *Feminism, Art and Politics*.
[217] Schapiro, "Conversation with Miriam Schapiro and Mary Beth Edelson."
[218] Salus, "Miriam Schapiro."
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Meet Miriam Schapiro, Smithsonian American Art Museum, December 4, 2012, video, 4:19, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPCq8r52B4Y.
[222] Ibid.

2015 at the age of ninety-one, leaving behind a legacy of hard work, consciousness-raising, and faith.

Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro were collectively able to challenge the perceptions of women in the art world and provide a platform for future women artists. The Feminist Art Movement in the 1970s argued for a higher standard of equality for female artists. However, the Movement did not always recognize artists of color. A more holistic approach to understanding the struggles of female artists in the 20th century needs to consider the genius of Black female artists and their contributions to the Movement. The following chapter will examine how Faith Ringgold and Betye Saar explored the stereotypical concept of Black women based on the importance of how Black artists influenced the Feminist Art Movement.

Chapter Four
Faith Ringgold and Betye Saar

History has documented the white female struggle with issues like equality and the right to vote, but disregarded the lives of Black women and their struggles with equality and personal freedoms. In the 1920s when suffragists were fighting for women's right to vote, the focus mainly centered on white women's rights and overlooked the Black female experience. Black women fought an uphill battle in three fold; they were black, female, and not included in the sisterhood of the white suffragists.[223] Elaine Weiss, author of *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* points out "In the face of racist opposition, white suffragists betrayed the Black women who had also long fought for the right to vote."[224] Weiss also goes on to state, "the white suffragists used as one of their politically expedient arguments you know, there are more white women who will be voting than Black women. So don't worry. White supremacy is not going to be endangered."[225]

Art Historian Martha Jones quotes that the ratification of the 19th amendment "marks for African American women a start, not a finish."[226] Decades later, the 1960s and 1970s generated an atmosphere of questioning issues of inequality and the right of freedoms that expressed the need for change not only in social and political culture but also in the visual art world. Black artists gained more national recognition with increasing numbers from "communities that had historically been underrepresented in galleries and museums."[227] During the Civil Rights and

[223] Melissa Block, "Yes, Women Could vote After the 19th Amendment. But Not All Women or Men," Morning Edition – NPR, August 26, 2020, 5:00 AM ET. https:..www.npr.org (accessed February 23, 2021).
[224] Block, "Yes, women could Vote After the 19th Amendment."
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Valerie Smith, *Abundant Evidence: Black Women Artists of the 100s and 1970s,* Jill Fields (Eds.), *Entering the Picture: Judy Chicago: The Fresno Feminist Art Program and Collective Visions of Women Arts*, (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011)119-130).

Black Nationalist Movement, Black women held positions of prominence and responsibility such as training activists and maintaining networks of communication. Unfortunately, these works went unnoticed because their male counterparts took the credit of "eradication of racial inequalities and failed to recognize the sexist practices within their own organizion or separate the association between patriarchy and racism."[228]

In the Civil Rights and Black Nationalist Movements, Black women had a strong presence, like Elaine Brown and Kathleen Cleaver.[229] Even within the movement, Black women had to surrender to "male authority and ignore misogyny," they were assigned to "women" issues, downgraded to childbearing and nation building.[230] The public recognition of the movement gave way to "voices of charismatic male leaders."[231] Some feminists stayed with the Black Nationalist Movement with the goal to "radically alter relations of class, race, and gender,"[232] while other feminists joined the women's movement in hopes of finding a "common cause with white feminists."[233] Unfortunately, Black feminists were also experiencing the same discrimination from the white feminists' movement. When the subject of race was discussed, white feminists claimed that "race were diversions from the goals of the women's movement."[234] If Black feminists were to remain in the women's movement, they had to "ignore white feminists' racism and assertions of the class privilege and countenance an agenda that ignored the connections between gender, class, and racial oppression."[235] This did not sit well with Black women involved in the Women's Liberation Movement, so they decided to form their own

[228] Smith, *Abundant Evidence: Black Women Artists*," 119.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid, 120.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.

movement and created the organization entitled "Where We At." Kimberly Springer, a teacher, and author, states that Black feminists "found their activism institutionalized in social services, governmental bodies, higher education institutions, and other organizations they could attempt to influence with antiracist and anti-sexist ideology."[236] Members of the WWA created their art but felt they were not professional artists. In 1984, Kay Brown, a painter and printmaker, sat on a discussion panel explaining the reasons behind this thinking. Brown argued, "They [Black artists] were conditioned to think that they could not achieve the status of a professional artist."[237]

It remained a constant battle for Black female artists attempting to get their works shown in galleries. Galleries hesitated to open exhibitions to female artists stating, "that neither blacks nor women could legitimately claim to be artists."[238] This statement demonstrates what Black female artists endured, and still fight against because they were both black and female. In 1972, the National Conference of Women in Visual Arts exhibited works from both Black feminist and white feminist artists. Brown observed that both groups' art pieces were very different.[239] "The white feminist works focused on sexism, where Black feminist artists focused on the unity of the Black family, the idea of the Black male/female relationship, and other themes relating to social conditions and African traditions."[240] Numerous Black female artists emerged and established a name for themselves. Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold are just two Black artists that achieved fame and success. These Black artists take the viewer on a journey to tell their stories and the struggles of Black women throughout history and in these artists' lifetime.

[236] Ibid, 119.
[237] Ibid, 120.
[238] Ibid, 121.
[239] Ibid, 122.
[240] Ibid.

Faith Ringgold, artist, author, and activist born during the Great Depression in 1930, came from a generation of strong and gifted women. Ringgold's talents, love for art, and storytelling led to her "story quilts," which began with her great-grandma Susan Shannon, a former slave who was a quilter and dressmaker.[241] Ringgold's grandmother, Betsy Bingham, was also a quilter and dressmaker who even owned her own business making dresses. Willi Posey, Ringgold's mother, followed in the steps of tradition of quilting and dressmaking. She made dresses for a living and had business cards that read "Mme. Willi Posey Couture Fashion Designer."[242] Ringgold's mother was one of her greatest supporters, and until her death, assisted Ringgold in her 'story quilts, masks, and dolls. Ringgold's "story quilt" entitled *Matisse's Chapel (1991)* includes these generations of talented women within the quilt.[243]

Faith Ringgold was born and raised in Harlem, New York at the tail end of the Harlem Renaissance. As a young child, she was sick with asthma, which kept her out of school for long periods. During her stay at home, Ringgold's mother taught her how to sew and encouraged her to pursue the dream of becoming an artist. Ringgold's grandmother taught her to quilt and "the importance of the African American tradition in telling stories, conveying messages, and creating community."[244] Ringgold's talents expanded from sewing and quilting to drawing and painting; her parents always kept her supplied in paper, crayons, and paints.[245] Ringgold points out that it was "a time when African American painters, writers, and musician were turning their art into

[241] Melanee Harvey, Juliette Harris (introduction), "Who I am and Why," (2013), Musem.hamtonu.edu, (accessed: March 5, 2021).
[242] Harvey, "Who I am and Why."
[243] Ibid.
[244] Rebecca Seiferle, "Faith Ringgold – Biography and Legacy: American Multi Media Artist, social Activist, Author, and Art Professor," (May 7, 2017).
[245] Makers Film, Faith Ringgold Interviewee, "Faith Ringgold: Artist and Activist, "May 16, 2012. Video, 401. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Com9SetjRA (accessed March 5, 2021).

great art."[246] She had "wonderful role models,"[247] and grew up around artists who gave her the sense of "creative possibilities and family community strengths."[248] Ringgold goes on to say, "There was a tremendous cultural activity going on in Harlem. It was the first time Black people felt comfortable showing their own image."[249] However, along with the positive influences, Ringgold also was aware of "segregation, racism, and economic inequities."[250]

The artists of Harlem inspired Ringgold to follow her dream of becoming an artist she decides to attend college at City College in Manhattan and study art. When Ringgold applied, her application was rejected and she was told that, "University regulation prevented women from declaring a major in the School of Liberal Arts."[251] Ringgold argued that she was "refusing to understand"[252] why she could not enroll. Due to her refusal to give up, Ringgold stated that a "woman in the office spoke in a whisper. She can do it. Let me tell you how. She can enroll in the School of Education and major in art,"[253] and in 1955, she graduated with her B.S. in Education of Art.[254] Ringgold was a resilient woman during her college years, between 1950 and 1955; she married, divorced and had two daughters in the same year, a daughter born January 1952 and a daughter born December 1952.[255] After graduation, Ringgold taught art in the New York public schools from 1955-1973. While teaching, Ringgold earned her Master's degree in Art from City College, graduating in 1959.[256] Ringgold learned to paint in a European style

[246] Read 180 videos, Interview with Faith Ringgold, "Who I am: Faith Ringgold," February 20, 2019, video, 4:01. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RscptkvVaP4 (accessed: March 5, 3031).
[247] Read 189 Videos, Interview with Faith Ringgold.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Seiferle, "Faith Ringgold-Biography and Legacy."
[251] Andrew Russeth, "The Storyteller: at 85, Her Star Still Rising, Faith Ringgold Looks back on Her Life in Art, Activism, and Education," ARTnew, (Spring 2016), 90. www.artnew.com (accessed: March 15, 2021).
[252] Russeth, "The Storyteller."
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255]Graulich and Witzling, "The Freedom to Say What She Pleases."3.
[256] Ibid.

while attending College; she copied Greek busts and emulated masters such as Cézanne and Rembrandt.[257] Upon graduating, she took her mother and daughters to Europe to visit the paintings she had learned to paint. After returning from Europe, Ringgold pointed out that she "had a great education and teachers who taught me everything except anything about African art or African American art, but I traveled and took care of that part myself."[258]

When she returned from her European trip, Ringgold declared, "the world was changing fast. Civil rights protesters were everywhere demanding equal rights for African Americans"[259] and she felt the need to be a part of this change. She set in motion to create a representation of Black people. She began work on the techniques of "finding a way to render black skin tones and thematically by producing portraits of members of her community, of 'real' Black people, whose images had been absent in her formal art education. Instead of looking to Greece, I looked to Africa."[260] In 1962, Ringgold married for a second time to Burdette Ringgold (Birdie). Throughout their marriage, Birdie was a strong supporter of Ringgold's dream to become an artist.

Ringgold was desperately looking for a gallery that would show or represent her work, but in the 1960s, galleries or museums did not accept Black artists and Ringgold being a Black woman and artist had to work even harder for a gallery to recognize her. Ringgold often said, "a lot of people trying to get in my way and keep me from doing what I was doing."[261] The word 'no' was not in her vocabulary, and Ringgold was determined to find a gallery and remained

[257] Read 180 Videos, "Who I am: Faith Ringgold."
[258] Russeth, "The Storyteller."
[259] Read 180 Videos, "Who I am: Faith Ringgold."
[260] Graulich and Witzling, "The Freedom to Say What She Pleases."3.
[261] Susan Stamberg, Interview with Faith Ringgold, "Stories of Race In America captured On Quilt and Canvas," NPR, Weekend Edition, July 28, 2013 https://www.npr.org/2013/07/28/205773230/ (Accessed March 12, 2021).

steadfast in her convictions to show her work. Along with Birdie helping to carry her paintings, she began her campaign to find a gallery that would accept her work. Ringgold points out "We never showed [galleries] books or slides. She did not want the galleries to say, "but I can't see it or I don't know what you do."[262] When Ringgold met with Ruth White from Ruth White Gallery in New York, she presented White with paintings in the style she learned in college, which were landscapes and still life, a series she had entitled "French." White responded, "you can't do that."[263] White went on to say, "you couldn't be black and simply paint landscapes during such a tumultuous time."[264] Ringgold argued back "What she is talking about, I was taught that!"[265] This is when her life changed as a female and artist. In 1963 was her chance to make a difference in not only the arts but to address social issues and educate the world of the injustice Black people have endured.

Ringgold was not offended by what White had said, and was glad that she had the courage to say that to her. It made Ringgold think and realize that White was right, her comment opened her eyes to what was going on in the world. Ringgold stated, "I said to myself you are making European paintings, still life and landscapes, in the middle of all these protests. You need to tell your story. My story as an artist is who I am that's where the art comes from. I am black and I am woman there it is."[266] Ringgold's first series, *The American,* created in 1963 and finished in 1967, was her first series of political paintings. These paintings depict what Ringgold observed and experienced during the 1960s. This series consists of twenty paintings representing events that were happening to her. Ringgold points out "It was what was going on in America

[262] Russeth, "The Storyteller."
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Read 180 Videos, "Who I am: Faith Ringgold."

and I wanted them to look at these paintings and see themselves. ... I wanted to create art that made people stop and *look*. You've got to get 'em and hold 'em: The more they look, the more they see"[267] The paintings in that series became Ringgold's new style of painting which she called "super realism."[268] *The American People* series is about the "condition of black and white in America."[269] During that time, famous Black leaders were writing, preaching and spreading the word of change. Leaders such as Malcolm X quoting, "us loving our black selves,"[270] to Martin Luther King leading marches and James Baldwin's book *The Fire Next Time*.[271] Baldwin's book was the inspiration of the series. Ringgold explains that the series was "her visual interpretation of these turbulent times as inspired by James Baldwin." She also goes on to quote, "I read feverishly, especially everything that James Baldwin had written on relationships between blacks and whites in America. Baldwin understood, I felt, the disparity between black and white people as well as anyone."[272] Ringgold includes Black and white people in her painting series; she felt the need to use visual perception, and show the "look, the face color and forms of those involved."[273] Ringgold also wanted the public to know a woman created these paintings and she wanted her paintings to represent and document the historic events that were occurring at this time. She argues, "Even in 1963 that stood for something."[274] Ringgold did not forget her past style of painting, but incorporated the techniques of the masters and pop art artists in *The Americans* series, several of which even resemble works of Picasso.

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[267] Stamberg, Interview with Faith Ringgold.
[268] Faith Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman," Women's Studies Quarterly, Vol.15, No. ½, Teaching about Women and the Visual Arts (Spring – Summer, 1987). 31-34 https://www.jstor.org/stable/40004837 (accessed: March 15, 2021).
[269] Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman."
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Lisa Farrington, "The Making of an Artist: Faith Ringgold," American Visions 14 (5), 24-29 https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/magazines/faith-ringgold-making-artist (accessed March 18, 2021).
[273] Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman."
[274] Ibid.

Ringgold's first painting of the series is entitled, *Between Friends #1*, which portrays the friendship of two women — one black and the other white. The viewer can see in the eyes of the women the sadness that their friendship still has a racial barrier keeping them from becoming closer. The idea behind the cross dividing the two women speaks of the division even in the churches where "white worshippers attend white churches and Black worshippers attend black churches.[275] Ringgold's paintings were unique in that most artists of that period were not painting what was going on America. Ringgold was the outlier, in that she was drawing "middle-class Blacks and whites together in power situations, however unequal the power actually was."[276] *The Civil Rights Triangle #4* is a painting showing five men — four Black men and one white man. Two of the Black men are dressed in a t-shirt and sweater, possibly representative of the lower class, two Black men in suits represent the middle class, and the white man is at the top in a suit to form the triangle. Some viewers may interpret this painting as the white man is still in charge because he is at the top, which was posited in a *New York Times* article written by Holland Cotter that pointed out "the white man on top, suggesting that to the extent the Civil Rights Movement was white-approved; it was also white-controlled."[277] Ringgold made an interesting statement when she was a guest at the Tate in London discussing this painting. She pointed out "you know the leader of the NAACP back in the day was not black but white." She went on to say not many people know that."[278] Ringgold continued to explain, "there were a lot

[275] Allyson Hitte, "Exploring Faith Ringgold's American People on July fourth," National Museum of Women in the Arts, (July 3, 2013) https://nmwa.org/blog/artist-spotlight/exploring-faith-ringgolds-american-people-on-july-fourth/ (accessed: March 18, 2021).
[276] Holland Cotter, "An Era's Injustices Fuel an Artist's Activist Works," New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast) New York, N.Y., December 10,2010.
[277] Cotter, "An Era's Injustices Fuel an Artist's Activist Works."
[278] Tate Talks, "Faith Ringgold: In Conversation, July 5, 2018, video, 1:35:55, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5tbIjNwyrg (March 18, 2021).

of people who made NAACP important and they were not all Black people, very difficult." She added, "I feel much debt to those who came before me and fought this struggle."[279]

The American flag plays an important part in Ringgold's artworks. Ringgold has used the symbol of the flag throughout her career, even stating, "the flag is so important, because it means so much to us as a nation; however, no one should be brutalized for using it to express evil in America."[280] In 1970, she organized a protest against the arrest of gallerist Stephen Radich for displaying Marc Morrel's artwork of the American flag. Morrel's art artwork was a protest against the Vietnam War. Ringgold argued, "How dare you tell artists what they can do,"[281] Ringgold helped put together a show in support of Mr. Radich. The show took place at the Judson Memorial Church in the West Village and the exhibition consisted of the American flag as the central object. A "plain clothes officer showed up and arrested two of the curators and Ringgold's daughter. Ringgold stepped in and explained, "no, it was she who should be arrested. Her daughter was released and Ringgold went to jail for her part in the protest.[282] Her painting, *The Flag is Bleeding #18,* is one of her first flag paintings and large mural size paintings.

Ringgold began her American People series in 1963 and completed it in 1967. She still did not have any gallery representation. In that era, the community was "the new power structure for blacks,"[283] and any monies made filtered through the community uptown. The Black male artists were having success in showing their work, but like the downtown white superstructure, female artists could not get in unless they knew someone, such as the wife, girlfriend or daughter

[279] Tate Talks, "Faith Ringgold: In Conversation."
[280] Ibid.
[281] Russeth, "The Storyteller: at 85, Her Star Still Rising."
[282] Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman."
[283] Ibid.

of someone.[284] The Spiral would not give her membership because that gallery had only "predominantly male artists and the Studio Museum of Harlem did not accept her because of the museum's Nationalist philosophy.[285] In 1967, Ringgold was present with the opportunity when Robert Newman, director of the Spectrum Gallery in Midtown Manhattan, invited Ringgold to join the roster of artists. She received the invitation on the merits of her American People series. Newman liked her work and fought to get her added to the roster. Newman wanted to set up a solo exhibition in late 1967 displaying her American People series. During that period, artists painted large paintings of abstract subjects. Ringgold was painting political art: what was happening in the black/white struggle. Ringgold stated, "They were all mainstream artists. Mainstream art was the art of the sixties. It was cool, uninvolved and not about anything."[286] Ringgold argued, "Political art was seen as being almost naïve, if not vulgar."[287]

Art made money for gallery owners and artists, and the public wanted abstract and large paintings, as it was the style of the sixties. Ringgold had her own opinion of what art should be; she felt the need to paint what was occurring in her neighborhood. She was not afraid to paint political subjects, as she always said she needed to tell her story and painting was her way of expressing the need to paint from her heart. Ringgold painted small, but knew in order to fit into this gallery she had to paint big. The only problem was she had no studio large enough to create that work. The Spectrum would be empty in the summer, so Newman offered the gallery to Ringgold and she accepted. She knew she could not paint and be a mother and wife, so her mother and daughters went to Paris and Rome for two months to allow Ringgold to finish her

[284] Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman."
[285] Crystal Britton, "Faith Ringgold," *Art Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 5, (September 1987) 23-25.
[286] Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman."
[287] Ibid.

paintings.[288] She even made the statement with a laugh, "I actually left my husband for a while, because I had to be free to do the paintings."[289] The three paintings Ringgold painted were big and very political; she was going to make a bold statement. These paintings would become some of her most recognized works: *The Bleeding Flag* #18, *U.S. Postage Stamp Commemorating the Advent of Black Power* # 19, and *Die* #20.

Ringgold's work *The Bleeding Flag* #18, inspired by Jasper Johns' flag paintings of the 1950s,[290] is six by eight feet. Ringgold used forty-eight stars instead of fifty stars because she wanted a consistency of balance in her painting.[291] In this painting, the viewer can see three figures, a Black man, a white woman, and a white man, placed on an American flag that appears to be transparent. The white man stands on the right, the Black man on the left, and the white woman in the middle. The woman's arms linked to both of the men, possibly in a gesture of solidarity and equality, but the figures stare blankly and show no emotion in their face as they look at the viewer through blood coming from the red stripes. The woman is also smaller than both men are and she is slightly more visible than the Black man, which symbolizes her being "privileged on the basis of race but disenfranchised because of her gender."[292] The Black man stands to the left with his hand over his heart, as he seems to be pledging allegiance, but also trying to slow the bleeding near his heart. The Black man holds a knife in his hand, possibly a sign that he is ready to defend himself at any cost. The white man stands taller than the other two figures and has his hands on his hips. His projected image is closer to the viewer and gives

[288] Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman."
[289] Russeth, "The Storyteller."
[290] Deborah L. Gaston, Director of Education, "American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold's Paintings of the 1960s," National Museum of Women in the Arts, (2013). https://nmwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/educator_guide-faith_ringgold.pdf (accessed: March 2, 2021).
[291] Gaston, Director of Education, "American People, Black Light."
[292] Smith, *Abundant Evidence*, 119-130.

the impression of authority and that he is still in charge. Even though there is no weapon shown on the white man, Ringgold suggests he "packs a gun on each hip ready to draw, western style"[293]

The painting *U.S. Postage Stamp Commemorating the Advent of Black Power #19* is a painting inspired by Stokely Carmichael, a Political Activist. Ringgold saw Carmichael on TV shouting "Black Power" and she responded, "When we heard 'Black Power,' we went nuts. We never thought of black and power together, nobody said that, before him."[294] Ringgold went on the say, "We never thought of white power it was just assumed it was everywhere."[295] She wanted to do something to celebrate this moment so she created a postage stamp. She designed the painting to look like a stamp, even adding 10 cents for the cost of the stamp. In the painting, the viewer can see white people's faces, but will only see ten black faces. She designed it this way to show the world that there was only 10% black population and white faces represented 90% of the population during this period.[296] In an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries, Ringgold also stated to Obrist, about Carmichaels Black Power quote, "what is he talking about? He is making that up. But it caught on and everyone was shouting "Black Power."[297]

In Ringgold's last painting of this series entitled *Die #20,* she wanted to close out the series with a strong and meaningful subject matter. The true depiction of this painting represented what was happening in America. Sebastian Smee writer for the *Washington Post*

[293] Gaston, Director of Education, "American People, Black Light."
[294] Tate Talks, "Faith Ringgold: In conversation."
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Serpentine Galleries, "Faith Ringgold: In Conversation," 2019, video, 3:47. https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/faith-ringgold/ (accessed March 16, 2021).

wrote, “Race riots were breaking out around America in 1967, in Detroit and Newark, most prominently, but hardly confined to those cities.”[298]

Smee goes on to state, “There were street riots in New York and everywhere in America eighty-three people were killed, 1,800 injured and property value at more than 100 million was damaged, looted or destroyed.”[299] The background of the painting is devoid of any kind of landscape or buildings, but has a chessboard feel as if the people are game pieces — one side black, the other white. This painting demonstrates interracial carnage, blood spatters caused by guns or knives. An interesting part of this painting is the two children in the center of this entire chaos, one Black child one white child holding each other and crying as if to say, “what is happening! Is this what our generation has to look forward to?” Ringgold argues, “that children are not born racists they are taught.”[300] She also explained that the painting represented “people trying to maintain their position and people trying to get away.”[301] Ringgold commented, “nothing was ever reported in the newspaper or tv.”[302] That period of the sixties was a hard time. Ringgold went on to comment “that it was unacceptable to paint art in this way, but she felt the need and importance that the world needed to know what was happening in America.”[303] Another fact about this painting is that it resembles Picasso’s painting *Guernica* (1937, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía) a painting he painted in Paris. The painting was an

[298] Sebastian Smee, “American Carnage: Faith Ringgold’s response to 1960s race riots is as powerful as it is unsettling,” *The Washington Post*, (Washington, DC), February 12, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/entertainment/faith-ringgold-american-people-series-20-die/ (accessed March 18, 2021).
[299] Smee, “American Carnage.”
[300] Tate Talks, “Faith Ringgold: In Conversation.”
[301] Smee, “American Carnage.”
[302] Tate Talks, “Faith Ringgold: In conversation.”
[303] Tate Talks, “Faith Ringgold: In conversation.”

antiwar protest of the terrible events in a small town named Guernica, Spain. Nazi Germany and fascist Italy used the small town for bombing practice during the Spanish Civil War.

Ringgold's first solo show opened on December 19, 1967. She wanted the party to be different and "not another all white and very refined black art affair."[304] Ringgold stated, "I invited everybody and over 500 people came," She even included the children and her daughters invited their classmates. Ringgold boasted that the "the old men of Black Art" were there, such as Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis and Richard Mayhew. Ringgold laughed and stated, "They had come to see why Robert wrote in his very provocative press release."

> American People: Categories and labels will always be used to help people evaluate certain realities, and with justice, it can be said that Faith Ringgold, in her dramatic first major exhibition, emerges as the major American Negro artist, an essential American artist. Her three great mural paintings are unique and unforgettable. They have a special beauty that comes from the revelatory truths of the images, and what her paintings embody in implication couldn't be more important.[305]

Ringgold went every Saturday to the gallery just to talk with the people about her work. During one particular Saturday visit, Professor James A. Porter, the chairperson at the Art Department at Howard University, approached Ringgold.[306] Professor Porter was interested in a painting of Ringgold's entitled *Bridesmaids of Martha's Vineyard.* Ringgold commented that the reason behind this painting was "always a bridesmaid never a bride."[307] Ringgold went on to say, "she had Black women friends who were in their thirties and still unmarried, but not by choice."[308] Professor Porter said the painting reminded him of his wife and he wanted to rename the painting *Bride of Martha's Vineyard*, as he was married in Martha's Vineyard many years ago. The sale

[304] Ringgold, "Being My Own Woman."
[305] Ibid.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.

of this painting was Ringgold's first important sale. Ringgold explained, "not only because he paid me several hundred dollars for the painting. But her art would be a part of the collection of a famous black artist, art historian, and educator."[309] After the American People, series was completed, Ringgold moved on to other projects. In 1969, she began a new series entitled *Black Light.* She wanted to produce a more "radical political agenda."[310] The work she produced in that project utilizes a darker palette, as she experimented with "toning the light to the blacks, browns, and grays that cover my skin and hair, and the shades of blues, greens, and reds that create my forms and textures."[311] There are twelve paintings in this series.

The 1970s for Ringgold "was her year that marked the birth date she became a feminist."[312] This epiphany came on a Sunday in 1970, while Ringgold was making dinner and had asked her family "how everything was and was ignored."[313] She also explained, "I immediately experienced my self-needs and my images as mother and woman."[314] Ringgold used her fabric sculpture *Bag Ladies* as an example of what happens to women when they stop cooking dinner. When a woman no longer is needed, she loses her support system and is ignored; she is abandoned to the street like a bag woman. Ringgold argued, "Their families, society, and their world denied them the opportunity to become 'something' and still have a support system. When they could no longer make those dinners and take care of those children/grandchildren, they lost their support system."[315] That day, Ringgold stated, "I stopped

[309] Ibid.
[310] Smith, *Abundant Evidence*, 119-130.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Britton, "Faith Ringgold."
[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid.
[315] Britton, "Faith Ringgold."

cooking dinners."[316] Ringgold went on to state, "My husband understood…he said, "Faith, you do as much as you can, and her husband cooked for many years after that."[317]

During that time of her art career, Ringgold focused on Black women's issues and relationships. She no longer painted traditional paintings using oils; she began to use acrylic paint and designed her work on unstretched canvas. She also incorporated fabric borders in the form of Tibetan *thangkas.*[318] Ringgold, with the help of her mother, created "hooded masks of fabric, beads and raffia inspired by African tribal costumes."[319] Ringgold also created soft sculptures and life-size puppets of real people. Her masks were used in acting performances, like, *The Wake and Resurrection of the Bicentennial Negro (1976)*, which was a play performed during the bicentennial year for America. Ringgold stated that African Americans were saying, "We're not going to celebrate that [US] bicentennial because we weren't free."[320] Ringgold's response was "I'll tell you what; we won't celebrate, but let's have a wake and resurrection."[321]

In 1971, Ringgold dedicated her artwork to the Black Feminist Art Movement. Her work entitled *Woman Freedom Now,* made in the form of a poster, and used in protests, became the new platform to help aid and spread concerns to a wider public. The poster is designed in a triangle shape with red, green, and black colors printed on each side of the triangle are words such as *Woman* in the red, *Freedom* in the green and *Now* in black.[322] Valerie Smith writes in her essay, *Abundant Evidence*, that Ringgold's *Woman Freedom Now* "unites a feminist message

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[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid.
[318] The Guggenheim Museum and Foundation: Collection Online. "Faith Ringgold." https://www.guggenheim.org. (accessed March 12, 2021).
[319] Ibid.
[320] Russeth, "The Storyteller."
[321] Ibid.
[322] Anne Monahan, "Faith Ringgold," Museum of Modern Art, New York, (2019). https://www.moma.org/artists/7066.

with the colors of Black liberation and Kuba design, creating a dialogue between feminist and Black liberation politics.[323] After the arrest of Angela Davis in 1970, Ringgold supported her by creating a poster with the words, *Angela Free Women Free Angela* and *America Free Angela Free America* as a protest to free Davis from prison.[324] In addition to her protest posters, Ringgold supported her daughter, Michele Wallace, in organizing a group called Women Students and Artist for Black Women. Ringgold also cofounded "Where We At," a group of Black female artists who were frustrated at being "Excluded from the largely white downtown art world, as well as from the male-dominated black art world."[325] This organization was a place Black women artists could go and talk with other women who dealt with the same issues of inequality and the pressures of being a mother and artist.

Ringgold and Lucy Lippard were also involved with the Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee which, in 1971 the group organized a protest at the Whitney Museum. The protest centered on the very low numbers of women artists represented in the museum. Ringgold stated that the "last time they were at the museum only two percent of women's art was on display."[326] She argued, "What two percent do we demand." Her daughter Michele Wallace said "fifty percent of women, you want fifty percent of the people in the biennial to be women."[327] Lucy Lippard and Ringgold organized the protest at the Whitney; they placed eggs, both raw and boiled, throughout the museum, letting the public and museum know that women artists are here to stay. Ringgold said, "She boiled hers and painted them all black and painted 50% on each

[323] Smith, *Abundant Evidence*, 119-130.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art: Brooklyn Museum, "Faith Ringgold." https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/about/feminist_art_base/faith-ringgold (accessed: March 12, 2021).
[326] Makers Film, Faith Ringgold Interviewee, "Faith Ringgold: Artist and Activist," May 16, 2012, video, 3:30. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Comf9SetjRA (accessed March 5, 2021).
[327] Makers Film, Faith Ringgold Interviewee.

egg."[328] The group also left sanitary napkins just to announce that women artists are strong, determined, and willing to stand their ground on equality. The Whitney's show in 1970 was to be a "Sculpture Show." The Whitney was well known for abstract art, Ringgold "unconditionally demanded for Betye Saar and Barbara Chase-Riboud to be in the show."[329] Saar and Chase-Riboud "became the first Black women ever to be exhibited at the Whitney Museum of Art."[330] The Whitney's percentage that year was up to twenty-three percent as opposed to ten percent the last year. Ringgold felt this was better, but not great.[331] She stated, "it felt like we were doing something and we were the part of the movement in America to equalize things."[332]

The 1980s brought yet another shift in Ringgold's art. She moved from painting on canvas to a medium she called soft sculpture. Ringgold became famous for her 'story quilts,' a move she took seriously. In a 2010 interview, Ringgold was asked how she started painting on quilts, to which she explained that "In the 1960s, the theme was about black art, why is black art any different than others, but in the 1970s women artists were asking and finding out what makes women's art different from men's art."[333] Women were discussing topics such as subject matter and materials. Ringgold talked about how it is clear that a certain art form has "traditionally been women's art forms and one of them has been quilt making."[334] When making her first quilt with her mother, Ringgold knew she was going to make quilting an art form. Ringgold incorporated the style of famous artists like Picasso and Monet—artists she had studied in college and family tradition of quilt making from her great - great grandmother Susie. Ringgold's great - great

[328] Ibid.
[329] Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art: Brooklyn Museum, "Faith Ringgold."
[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Makers Film, Faith Ringgold Interviewee, "Faith Ringgold: Artist and Activist."
[333] Visionary Project, "Faith Ringgold: Quilting as an Art Form."
[334] Ibid.

grandmother Susie Shannon was born into slavery, and Ringgold points out how traditional quilt making came from slavery "in so many ways a slave experienced, an art form slave women used to embellish and beautify useful objects such as quilts."[335] Until artists like Ringgold, quilts were not valued as art, but bed coverings. Ringgold's 'story quilts' go beyond a bed covering; her quilts are "high" art.

In 1987, Ringgold had an art exhibit at the Steinbaum Gallery in New York. Susan Krane, curator of Twentieth Century Art and High Museum of Art at that time, saw Ringgold's quilts and commented, "she felt that the story quilts are Ringgold's most important work to date."[336] She argued, "Often political art makes bombastic statements that are easily dismissed, but this is not the case with Ringgold's story quilts. Their messages are not easily dismissed and perhaps this is because she has moved from the personal to the universal for representing her concerns."[337] Britton stated, "Ringgold's frequent use of fabric medium and of stories makes her work less intimating than most political work."[338] Britton continued to point out, "Her soft sculptures prepare her audience with images that are familiar or funny before moving into direct confrontation with issues."[339] While Ringgold was designing her quilts, abstract paintings were popular, with artists such as William de Kooning and Jackson Pollock contributing to this popularity. Ringgold felt that abstracts did not resemble real life. She wanted to tell her story and give her work meaning and a face to the story. Ringgold created her 'story quilts' to honor the tradition of her ancestors.[340] In 1980, Ringgold wrote her autobiography entitled *We Fly Over the Bridge*, but no one would publish the book. Ringgold stated that she was told, "That's not

[335] Visionary Project, "Faith Ringgold: Quilting as an Art Form."
[336] Britton, "Faith Ringgold."
[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Harvey, "Who I am and Why."

your story,"[341] so the book was not be published at that time. She argued, "I thought this is the worst form of censorship to be told, what your story is by a complete stranger and to look at you and decide your story is not what your say."[342] When Ringgold started her 'story quilts,' she incorporated her own autobiography into the quilts by writing her story about every subject in her quilts. Rena Hansen stated in an article she wrote, "Lots of artists these days use writing or printing, but much of it is obscure, mystifying. Ringgold is never mystifying."[343] Ringgold always wrote about real people and real events and she continued to repeat, "I need to tell my story." It took fifteen years before Ringgold's autobiography was published in 1995. Little Brown published the book and Duke University Press reprinted it in 2005.[344] Ringgold created exquisite quilts throughout her career. Three of her well-known quilts are *Echoes of Harlem*, *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima,* and *Tar Beach*. In 1991, *Tar Beach* became the first published children's book for Ringgold inspired by this quilt.

Ringgold's first quilt, *Echoes of Harlem,* made with the help of her mother in 1980, was comprised of thirty blocks, and painted on each block are the faces of individuals living in Harlem that Ringgold knew from childhood. Ringgold's mother pieced and sewed the quilt together; this was the only quilt Ringgold worked on with her mother before she passed away the next year.[345] The Studio Museum in Harlem was a museum in the 1960s that denied Ringgold access to show her works, however, after twenty-eight years, she finally found a place in the

[341] Tate Talks, "Faith Ringgold: In Conversation."
[342] Ibid.
[343] Rena Hansen, "Faith Ringgold," Women Artists New, Vol. 12, No. 2, (June 1987): 27. https://search-ebscohost-com.vortex3.uco.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asu&AN=34078058&site=ehost-live
[344] Tate Talks, "Faith Ringgold: In conversation."
[345] Ibid.

museum. In 2008, The Studio Museum in Harlem acquired her piece *Echoes of Harlem*, and it is currently hanging in the museum.[346]

Ringgold's second quilt, *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima,* was the first quilt, which she applied her writings and is her first and only quilt she painted, wrote on, and pieced together. She stated, "Making quilts is not easy, very time consuming."[347] It took her a year to complete the project. After that quilt was finished, Ringgold decided to collaborate with other artists to help work on her quilts. She did the painting and created the dialogue, and then the other artists would piece and sew the quilt, then complete the writing. Ringgold painted *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima* out of a protest of how Black women were portrayed — it was upsetting to her how Aunt Jemima was viewed as fat, big-nosed and black. Ringgold argued, "What's with that, that's nothing, forget that. That is not something you condemn a person for."[348] In an exhibit at Rutgers University, Benjamin Genocchio wrote, "*Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima* while visually beautiful is filled with moments of wry or bitter comedy, for it deals essentially with racist assumptions about African Americans in our society."[349] Ringgold stated, "this woman [Aunt Jemima] I am going to rewrite her life."[350] Ringgold recreated Aunt Jemima's life; she gave her a career and family. Ringgold concentrated on the important things Aunt Jemima accomplished and not the way she looked. Ringgold stated in an interview "More Black artists have done more themes on the American flag and Aunt Jemima than any other theme, so it's just not me."[351]

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[346] Faith Ringgold, *Echoes of Harlem* (1980), The Studio Museum of Harlem, (October 13, 2008) studiomuseum.org.
[347] Tate Talks, "Faith Ringgold: In Conversation."
[348] Visionary Project, "Faith Ringgold: Quilting as an Art Form."
[349] Benjamin Genocchio, "Master of Story Quilts and Much More: A Half-Century of Creative Work by Faith Ringgold," *New York Times*, Late Edition (East Coast), May 24, 2009. https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/newspapers/master-story-quilts-much-more/docview/434079020/se-2?accountid=14516 (accessed February 23, 2021).
[350] Visionary Project, "Faith Ringgold: Quilting as an art form."
[351] Ibid.

In 1988, Ringgold designed a series of five story quilts, entitled *Women on a Bridge*. *Tar Beach #1* included in this series became one of her more famous works and was turned into a children's book, the text written on the quilt Ringgold used in her book. In an interview, she explained, "She had no plans to write children's books in City College as illustration was not considered art, but I was offered a chance to publish *Tar Beach#1* and I loved being attached to children and their art and I love sharing my art with them."[352] Since then, she has published twenty children's books. Ringgold uses a fictional character named 'Cassie Louise Lightfoot' to tell her story through the eyes of an eight-year-old girl. The Washington Bridge is a theme that runs throughout many of her quilts and books. Ringgold said, "she could see the Washington Bridge from their apartment, and its lights were just gorgeous."[353] In the hot summers in Harlem, Ringgold pointed out that her family and friends "would go to the roof of their apartment to cool off because they did not have air conditioner. You could see all the way down the avenue of people on their roofs."[354] Ringgold writes of Cassie's imagination of having the ability to fly and has her flying over the Washington Bridge. Cassie's imagination represented "a phantasmic flight through the urban night sky and symbolized the potential for freedom and self-possession."[355] Ringgold affirms and explains the theme behind this quilt as "My women in the *Women on a Bridge* series, are actually flying; they are just free, totally. They take their liberation by confronting this huge masculine icon the bridge."[356]

Black Feminist artists in the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 21st century have worked to achieve and maintain a strong presence in not just a white dominated world, but a male

[352] Tate Talks, "Faith Ringgold: In Conversation."
[353] Ibid.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Nancy Spector, Faith Ringgold: Woman on a Bridge #1 of 5: *Tar Beach*. https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3719 (accessed March 12, 2021).
[356] Spector, Faith Ringgold: Woman on a Bridge #1 of 5: *Tar Beach*.

dominated world as well. Betye Saar is an example of this strength; she is among many outstanding talented female artists like Faith Ringgold. Betye Saar, like Faith Ringgold, was creating art from an early age. Saar's passion for art developed when she was a young girl living in Watts, California. Saar was born in Los Angeles in 1926, Saar states in an interview with Getty Institute, "She is a native Californian and was born into a very diverse family her heritage is Black, Irish and Native American. She goes on to say, "I think that is why I am an artist that works in a devised sort of way, helter skelter, in whatever I find."[357] When she was six her father passed away and her mother and siblings moved to Watts, California to live with her father's mother before moving again to Pasadena, but she visited her grandmother on a regular basis after the move to Pasadena. Saar's mother "believed Betye had special powers."[358] Her mother felt Saar was clairvoyant and that she could predict things such as her father missing the trolley."[359] Saar also points out that she believed she had lost this ability after her father died, but she comments that, "I didn't lose my instinct to find objects for my art, to be able to pick up a recycled object and visualize it coming out in another way. I think that's really important in my art especially with collage, assemblages and installations."[360]

Saar's interest in art began with her impression of the Watts Towers while living in Watts. Saar remarked at a symposium in 2018, "Watts Towers was the number one impression as a kid; I was a kid that liked the mysterious, the magical, the unknown and the other."[361] Simon Rodia, an eccentric who lived in Watts, was the artist behind the Watts Towers; Rodia created

[357] Betye Saar, Interview by Rani Singh: Kirby, Peter, Getty Research Institute, "Betye Saar oral history Interview," March 25, 2011, video, 1:25. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUOxdZrBIZU (accessed: February 28, 2020).
[358] Betye Saar, Interview by Rani Singh: Kirby, Pete.
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Soul of a Nation Symposium 2018-Crystal Bridges, Moderator: Lauren Haynes, "Conversation with Betye Saar and Alison Saar, May 12, 2018, video, 30:21. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvL9Es3Pp_I (accessed February 28,2020).

his towers with broken bottles, plates, rocks, seashells or any type of found objects.[362] Saar, always fascinated by this structure, explained that "[she] was impressed, to have had the freedom to be able to build something out of nothing."[363] Saar commented that as a child she had a great imagination and would visualize the towers like a castle where fairies and magical beings lived.[364] However, as an adult she stated, "she viewed it differently. She could see and understand why he used his objects such as bottles, corn, and glass."[365] That understanding came from Saar's belief that 'found objects' have a spirit; "that any used material bears the traces of another person, or even whole community – and there is a magic in that."[366] On Sunday drives as a child, she admired the different structures and architect of buildings in her hometown. Saar's imagination and creativity were always working as a child. She would see buildings like ice cream parlors designed in "the shape of ice cream cones or the camera shops in the shape of camera, and Saar's thoughts often wondered as to what kind of people lived there and were they magical people."[367]

Saar's interest in magic, the occult, and mysticism came from her early years as a young child because she loved books on witches, fairies, and magic. In Watts, Saar remembers that gypsies,[368] "would come once a year for a convention – they would come in cars, wagons, and caravans."[369] With the curiosity of an imaginative young person, Saar was intrigued by the

[362] Gary Schwan, "The Artist as Collector," *Palm Beach Post*, April 2, 2006, 1J. http://vortex3.uco.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/newspapers/artist-as-collector/docview/327175384/se-2?accountid=14516. (accessed: April 19, 2020).
[363] Betye Saar, Interview by Rani Singh: Kirby, Peter.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ellen Y. Tani, "Keeping Time in the hands of Betye Saar: Betye Saar: Still Trickin'," *American Quarterly, Collage Park*, Vol. 68, no. 4, (December 2016) 1081-1109, 1113 (accessed April 2, 2019).
[367] Betye Saar, Interview by Rani Singh: Kirby, Peter.
[368] The name "gypsies" is used in these contexts as to how Saar referred to the Romani people in her conversation through the Getty Research Institute, "Betye Saar Oral History Interview."
[369] Betye Saar, Interview by Rani Singh: Kirby, Peter.

mystery of the gypsies. Seeing the palm reading signs interested her, so "that in turn influenced my interest in magic and metaphysic."[370] Saar married at the beginning of the hippie movement and living in the bay area commented, "that these kind of books [magic, metaphysics] were popular in book stores. She collected all the books she could and studied metaphysics."[371] Saar felt the pull toward metaphysics and magic, seen throughout her artwork.

Saar's formal education began at Pasadena College. Her grandmother insisted on Saar and her siblings receiving a college degree. A college education was important, as her grandmother would state, "Blacks in the south were not allowed to read, write or allowed to attend college."[372] Saar continued her education at UCLA and graduated in 1949 with a major in Design and a minor in sociology. Saar stated in an article, "Being from a minority family, I never thought about being an artist.[373] In 2018, Saar also recalled, "that Blacks did not go to art school, very few of them did."[374] Being an artist was never a goal for Saar, she reflected on this thought "that she loved art. Art was all around her; in the family her mother, aunts, and grandmother sewed, quilted and did crafts."[375] Saar also argued, "This was another hurdle that I had to overcome to realize that what I was doing was making art."[376] After college, Saar designed greeting cards and had a small business until she was introduced in the 1950s, to Curtis Tann, a fellow artist; they joined forces and formed Brown and Tann, an enamelware company, working

[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Carolina A. Miranda, "Art; Making Magic; Betye Saar Touches on the Mystical, Personal and Political in her Work," *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 2016, F.1. http://vortex3.uco.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/newspapers/art-making-magic-betye-saar-touches-on-mystical/docview/1785576268/se-2?accountid=14516 (accessed: February 28, 2020).
[374] Soul of a Nation Symposium 2018 – Crystal Bridges, "Conversation with Betye Saar and Alison Saar."
[375] Ibid.
[376] Ibid.

out of Tann's living room.[377] Saar learned the art of making enamel jewelry from Tann.[378] She expressed when she started working with Tann "she begins to feel more comfortable – in the art community."[379] Through Tann, Saar met and married her husband Richard Saar.[380] In the 1950s, Saar now a wife and mother, decided to go back to school and she enrolled at Cal State Long Beach, because as she explained "I thought I'd get my master's and teach."[381] Saar went on to say, "Then one day I walked past the print workshop and I was like, Heyyy!"[382] The next semester, she took a class in printmaking and that's "how she became a printmaker. Printmaking was my safe way into the fine art."[383] Etching became her trademark in this style of art.

Saar was thirty-four when she realized that she was not a designer, but an artist.[384] She used her printing skills by pressing stamps, stencils and found materials onto paper. The theme behind these prints is spirituality, cosmology, and family, as seen in her works *Anticipation* (1965) and *Lo, The Mystique City* (1965). On a trip to Big Bear, Saar found discarded windowpanes and refurbished them into art by incorporating her prints and photos onto the glass panes. Saar had many influences throughout her career, but one important influence was that of Joseph Cornell, an artist known for his boxes or assemblages. Saar made a trip in 1967 to Pasadena Museum of California Art, and it is there that she shifted her art style to assemblages.[385] Assemblages created from found objects, manufactured materials and placed into a three-dimensional construction.[386] Saar's first work using this technique was in her piece

[377] Miranda, "Art; Making Magic; Betye Saar."
[378] Smith, *Abundant Evidence,* 125.
[379] Betye Saar, Interview by Rani Singh: Kirby, Peter, Getty Research Institute.
[380] Miranda, "Art; Making Magic; Betye Saar."
[381] Ibid.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Betye Saar, Interview by Rani Singh: Kirby, Peter.
[384] Smith, *Abundant Evidence,* 125.
[385] Jennifer McCabe, "Review of Betye Saar: Still Tickin," *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*, Vol. 2, no. 1, (Summer, 2016). https://doi.org/10.24926/24716839.1555 (accessed: March 15, 2021).
[386] Tani, "Keeping Time in the hands of Betye Saar: Betye Saar: Still Trickin'."

entitled *Black Girl's Window* (1969). This piece of art is a combination of autobiographical information and her interest in astrology.[387] *Black Girl's Window* is comprised of nine small squares and one large square. The whole piece is made of wood in the form of a windowpane. The girl pressed against the large window represents Saar staring out into the unknown. Saar added to the description as "windows are a way of looking in, a way of looking out. Windows are symbols of transition."[388] She had the phases of the moon and stars along with signs on her hands, which are associated with palm reading, Saar commented on this section of how it "tells of my past, present and future."[389] The nine smaller squares represent different parts of Saar's life. She included her astrological sign [Leo], her planet, which is the Sun, and her element – fire. The other squares represent death, family history and a phrenology chart "suggesting knowledge and thought."[390] Death left a great impact on Saar with the death of her father and great aunt Hattie, and the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.[391] This piece became her shift into "the representation of African Americans' fight for equality and injustice Black people have endured."[392] Saar argues, "After the Black Movement began, I found my work changing because of my strong feelings. I started collecting my derogatory black images. By that I mean Aunt Jemima, pick ninnies and Black Sambos – and by using that black imagery, my work changed and became a revolutionary art."[393]

[387] MoMA Museum, New York, NY, "Betye Saar: The Legends of Black Girl's Window," Fall 2019, 1:57 https://www.moma.org (accessed: April 8, 2021).
[388] MoMA Museum, New York, NY, "Betye Saar."
[389] Ibid.
[390] McCabe, "Review of Betye Saar: Still Tickin."
[391] UCLA Department of Art Lectures: Hammer Museum, "Betye Saar: Fade: The Art of Aging," February 27, 2014, video, 30:28. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHusqpfkjz4 (accessed: March 28, 2021).
[392] Smith, *Abundant Evidence*, 125.
[393] Ibid, 125.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the United States in a state of "social and cultural upheaval."[394] Saar pointed out "the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement caused her to shift from her printmaking to found objects."[395] Another important event that attributed to her shift was the Watts riots in 1965. She was from the LA, area so this affected her and her art. Saar saw "police racism born out of this event. This was the most violent event until the Rodney King riots of 1992."[396] In a review written by Jennifer McCabe, she states, "The decade of the 1960s was also marked by cultural upheaval and saw the birth of radical new movements and ideologies such as Black Power, Black is Beautiful and Black feminism."[397] In 1972, Saar created a piece to honor these movements and express her rage toward the treatment of Black people. The piece is entitled *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima.* (1972) Saar's description of this piece is "I take the figure that classifies all Black women and make her into one of the leaders of the revolution." *Liberation* became Saar's first political work of art it showed how history portrayed Black women, but Saar changed the narrative and created an Aunt Jemima that embraced power and strength.[398]

The Liberation of Aunt Jemima, a well-known piece Saar created in protest of the stereotyping of Black women, but also as a form of revolutionary art to demonstrate a need to recognize the oppression of Black people still happening in the twentieth century. The image of Aunt Jemima originated from minstrel shows, and the "incarnation of the 'mammy' stereotype represented domestic servitude ---rooted in the history of enslaved Black women."[399] Aunt

[394] McCabe, "Review of Betye Saar: Still Tickin."
[395] Ibid.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ibid.
[398] Smith, *Abundant Evidence,* 126.
[399] Jonathan Griffin, "An interview with Betye Saar," Apollo the International Art magazine, (November 16, 2019). https://www.apollo-magazine.com (accessed February 12, 2019).

Jemima was also portrayed on the Quaker Oats pancake mix and syrups since the 19th century. In the 1970s, E.J. Montgomery, who worked at a museum in Oakland, proposed the holding of an exhibition centered on Black heroes inspired by the Civil Rights Movement that was happening at the time. Saar said, "I didn't have a hero but I had a Shero and Aunt Jemima was her Shero and warrior"[400]

Saar created a hero and liberated Aunt Jemima by adding an "automatic weapon and an apron stamped with the iconic fist of Black Power."[401] Trelles notes, "*Liberation* sparked thirty years of Saar's study of the stereotype."[402] Saar also pointed out, "Being active in the feminist movement, I elevate quite a few women in my work."[403] Valerie Smith commented, "*Liberation* represents the ability of Black power to emancipate Black people from the tyranny of a repressive history."[404] Angela Davis, a political activist, praised Saar for her *Liberation of Aunt Jemima* and stated, "[she] was responsible for the launch of the Black women's movement."[405] Saar does consider herself a feminist, but does not focus on the label; she puts her energy toward her artwork in confronting racism and gender issues. Jessica Dallow writes, Saar has "avoided a strong connection with the feminist movement of the 1970s."[406] Dallow goes on to state, "that Saar has helped to shape a feminist consciousness in the arts since the early 1970s."[407] Saar has

[400] Soul of a Nation Symposium 2018 – Crystal Bridges, "Conversation with Betye Saar and Alison Saar."
[401] Emma Trelles, "A Cosmos in her Cabinets found objects fire the imagination in Betye Saar's magical explorations of race and gender," South Florida Sun – Sentinel, (April 4, 2006). https://www-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/newspapers/cosmos-her-cabinets-found-objects-fire/docview/389869532/se-2?accountid=14516. (accessed: February 12, 2019).
[402] Trelles, "A Cosmos in her Cabinets found objects fire the imagination in Betye Saar's."
[403] Ibid.
[404] Smith, *Abundant Evidence,* 126.
[405] Doreen St. Felix, "MoMA's heady Introduction: Betye Saar, "The Conscience of the Art Work," *The New Yorker*, October 24, 2014. https://www.newyorker.com (accessed: February 28, 2019).
[406] Jessica Dallow, "Reclaiming Histories: Betye and Alison Saar, Feminism, and the Representation of Black womanhood," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 30, no. 1 (Spring, 2004), 74-113. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178559 (accessed April 2, 2019).
[407] Dallow, "Reclaiming Histories: Betye and Alison Saar."

brought, "a consciousness circulating around the historical development of the African American female nude."[408]

In 1973, a building named Woman's Building was established and led by Arlene Raven, Judy Chicago, and Sheila Levrant de Brettenville and Saar was even one of the founding members on the board.[409] The Woman's Building designed to focus on feminist artists and their work "contained the center for Feminist Art Historical Studies, the Sisterhood Bookstore, the Associated Women's Press, and the Los Angeles Feminist Theater."[410] Saar did not have a great experience with the white feminists.[411] In 1974, Saar and fellow artist Samella Lewis curated a show entitled "Black Mirror" held in the Womanspace gallery located in the Woman's Building, the show focused on Black women artists. Dallow writes, "white women artists rarely attended the exhibition activities and events."[412] Saar was disappointed in the turnout and nonsupport from the white women feminists. Saar argued, "The white women did not support it. It was as if we [Black women] were invisible. I felt the separatism, even within the context of being in Womanspace."[413]

In 2006 at the age of eighty, Saar was still active. She presented a show at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts entitled Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment at the Rosenfeld Gallery. Her show migrations/Transformations are about the historical viewpoints of Black history. Saar states, the exhibition is the reflection of "what happened in Africa, the transition through the diaspora, to slavery, to freedom." She adds, "this new work is about the

[408] Ibid.
[409] Cotter, "It's About Time! Betey Saar's Long Climb to the Summit."
[410] Dallow, "Reclaiming Histories: Betye and Alison Saar."
[411] Soul of a Nation Symposium 2018 – Crystal Bridges, "Conversation with Betye Saar and Alison Saar."
[412] Dallow, "Reclaiming Histories: Betye and Alison Saar."
[413] Ibid.

integration of it all."[414] In 2017, at the age of ninety-one, Saar held a sole show at Craft and Folk Art Museum, the show entitled was 'Betye Saar: Keepin' Clean.' Saar stated, "I keep thinking of giving up political subjects" she adds, "But you can't, because racism is still here. Worse than ever."[415]

The influence of Faith Ringgold and Betye Saar's artwork and activism impacted ideas on the Feminist Art Movement. Ringgold and Saar are pioneers of Black female art who give voice to the art historical cannon and how Black female artists challenged the standards of the Feminist Art Movement. Their exploration of using stereotypical ideas of African American and Black art changed the status quo for artists of color in the art world. Although the 1970s was a turbulent time for Black female artists, the 1980s would bring a more inclusive revolution. Groups like The Guerrilla Girls created an agenda to improve on the 1970s social movements bringing recognition to both Black and white female artists with the addition of contemporary political and social issues.

[414] Kathryn Shattuck, "The Artist Who Made a Tougher Aunt Jemima hasn't Softened with Age," *The New York Times*, September 12, 2006, E3. https://search-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/central/docview/433407761/3BAA4CB95A874912PQ/3?accountid=14516 (accessed: March 13, 2020).
[415] Cotter, "It's About Time! Betey Saar's Long Climb to the Summit."

Chapter Five
"A Year Supply of Midol"
The Guerrilla Girls
1980s to Present

The 1970s generated a challenge and awareness in the Feminist Art Movement. The goals of activists like Judy Chicago and Mariam Schapiro shaped the foundation that set a precedent for future women artists. The 1970s focused on self-awareness, recognition, and a place in the history books. These waves of artists were striving to alter the stereotypical ideas of female artists in a patriarchal society. As the Feminist Art Movement moved into the 1980s, it continued to bring understanding to the importance of women's history while maintaining the status quo of women artists in galleries and museums. Artists and activists of the 1980s like the Guerrilla Girls brought about a different form of protest in the Feminist Art Movement they went a step further and expressed the need for a revolution. This revolution added political and social issues such as abortion, unfair working conditions, and equal time in museums, and galleries for women artists and artists of color. The Guerrilla Girls, influenced by the 1970s women's art movement, decided the movement needed newer methods to express the differing climate of the 1980s. After a trip to the MoMA, the group experienced a disappointment in the "paltry quotient of women in an art show of contemporary artists."[416] In 1985, The Guerrilla Girls formed their protest group and have continued to advocate for the art movement and women's rights well into the 21st century.

The Guerrilla Girls is an anonymous collective of professional artists formed in New York in 1985. The Guerrilla Girls organization has been together for thirty-six years and continues to advocate for the rights of equality. The concept of this group came about when the

[416] Anna C. Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning," Art Journal, Vol. 70, NO 2 (2011): 102-111, 104, www.uco.edu, (accessed September 19, 2018).

founding members visited the MoMA in 1985, the museum had an exhibit entitled "International Survey of Contemporary Paintings and Sculpture."[417] The exhibit had 169 artists, less than "ten percent of whom were women."[418] This upset the group when they saw the unfairness and inequality shown to women artists and artists of color. The Guerrilla Girls' mission was to protest for the "underrepresentation or total absence of female artists and artist of color."[419] The activists chose to remain anonymous by wearing the disguise of gorilla masks and taking deceased female artists names such as "Frida Kahlo," "Alice Neel," and "Elizabeth Vigue Le Burn." The idea for remaining nameless was that the group felt their identity was not as important as their cause. "Frida Kahlo," one of the founding members, stated in a talk she gave at Brown University that the objective was to "devote their lives to fighting for human rights for everyone, and they try to expose discrimination in the art world and beyond."[420]

Since 1985, there have been over sixty members participate as "Frida" states "some for weeks, some for a couple of meetings and some for decades."[421] The Guerrilla Girls remained diverse in age, sexual orientation, social economic class and ethnic backgrounds, such as Latinx, South Asian, European, African American, Cisgender, and Transgender.[422] The Guerrilla Girls considers themselves as "intersectional feminist and explore race, class, gender identity and ethics that affect human rights struggles."[423] The core of the group's campaign is to express the importance that everyone's history is recognized. "Frida" argues, "you cannot tell the story of a

[417] Cynthia Lucia & Amy Harrison, "Guerrillas in Our Midst," Cineaste, Vol 20, NO 1 (1993): 47-48
[418] Lucia & Harrison, "Guerrillas in our Midst," Cineaste, 47.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Brown University, Salomon Center, "Guerrilla Girls, Artist Talk 4.3.19," April 3, 2019, video, 1:16:43, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VObf2iaJS_Q, (accessed April 20, 2020).
[421] Ibid.
[422] Ibid.
[423] Ibid.

culture without including all the voices of the culture in that story."[424] The Guerilla Girls became masked superheroes like Robin Hood fighting for the rights of women artists and artists of color in the art world. They characterized themselves as the "conscience of the art world" and their activism as "public service messages."[425]

The Guerrilla Girls felt they needed a change in order to get the message to the public. The group believed there had been a decline in how the art world represented women artists since the early movement. The Girls needed a revamping of outdated tactics and added a new twist on their approach to expressing the need for change to reach a broader audience. "Liubov Popova," one of the founding members, argued that to become more effective "we had to have a new image and a new kind of language to appeal to the younger generation of women."[426] Popova goes on to state that "a lot of the things that the Guerrilla Girls implemented had been done by feminist groups earlier but with a different language and a different style."[427] The philosophy for this change was to use humor, and not just slapstick humor, but "sly, sardonic humor."[428] The Guerrilla Girls saw "humor as invaluable." "Elizabeth Vigee Le Burns" quotes "if you can laugh about something that is the most brilliant [ploy] because a laugh makes everybody feel a part of the inside joke."[429] "Frida" points out, "using humor you can fly under the radar and if you can get people who disagree to laugh you have a much better way to convert them."[430]

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[424] Ibid.
[425] Josephine Withers, "The Guerrilla Girls," Feminist Studies, Vol 14. NO 2, (Summer 1988): 284-300.
[426] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning," 104.
[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid.
[429] Ibid.
[430] Brown University, Salomon Center, "Guerrilla Girls, Artist Talk 4.3.19."

They accomplished their humorous protests through designing posters, stickers, billboards, bus ads, and magazine spreads. This style of activism came in the form of plastering walls, kiosks, and construction fences in SoHo and the East Village.[431] The Guerrilla Girls felt this campaign would help bring recognition to female artists and embarrassment to the galleries and museums who chose to overlook women artists and artists of color. In 1989, the art of creative complaining came in the form of a poster entitled "When Racism & Sexism are no longer fashionable, what will your art collection be worth?"[432] That protest poster brought public awareness to the fact that the sale of one painting by Jasper Johns, which sold for $17 million, could have purchased "enough art by women artists, historical and contemporary, to fill an entire museum."[433] In an article Anna Chave wrote entitled "The Guerrilla Girls Reckoning," she discussed that in the 1980s contemporary art market, white males were profiting quite well and the female artists were receiving only a fraction of their male counterparts' pay and recognition.[434] An example of a tactic The Guerrilla Girls used to demonstrate their complaint was a poster entitled, "Bus companies are more enlightened than the NYC art galleries,"[435] The Guerrilla Girls proclaimed the bus company employed "49.2 percent of females as opposed to 16 percent of artist represented by 33 major NYC art galleries."[436] However, in 2010, the Guerrilla Girls stated that this poster was no longer accurate because, though women artist may still lag behind male artists, the value of their artworks have increased considerably.[437] SoHo, a

[431] Kristen Raizada, "An Interview with the Guerrilla Girls, Dyke Action Machine (DAM!), and the Toxic Titties,"NWSA Journal, vol. 19, NO 1, Feminist Activist Art (Spring 2007), 39-58. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4317230.
[432] "Frida Kahlo" and "Kathe Kollwitz," "Transgressive Techniques of the Guerrilla Girls," Getty Research, Journal, NO 2 (2010), 203-208.
[433] Kahlo and Kollwitz, "Transgressive Techniques of the Guerrilla Girls," 203.
[434] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning." 103.
[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Kahlo and Kollwitz, "Transgressive Techniques of the Guerrilla Girls," 203.

contemporary art gallery in New York, was one place the Guerrilla Girls displayed a poster protest on the walls showing the names of the galleries that had fewer than ten percent of women artists, and critics who wrote less than twenty percent of articles that addressed female artists.[438]

The Guerrilla Girls surveyed the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) in 1989, which they named the "wienie count."[439] Their goal was to count how many naked males vs. naked females were on display in the museum. The search began with the Classical section, which was composed of mostly male nudes, the Christian sections, which included no nudes, and the Renaissance and Baroque period areas in which the nudes were of baby Jesus. However, when they reached the nineteenth and twentieth century's section, sex had replaced religion during these centuries and this is where they found the numbers they needed; "less than five percent of the artists in the Modern Art Sections are women, but eighty-five percent of the nudes are female."[440] These findings lead to the creation of a famous poster associated with the Guerrilla Girls entitled "Do Women have to be Naked to get into the Met. Museum?"[441] It shows a reclining naked woman wearing a gorilla mask, the image based on the famous painting by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) entitled *La Grande Odalisque* 1814 (Musée du Louvre, Paris).[442] The Public Art Fund in New York had commissioned the Guerrilla Girls to design this poster for a billboard. However, the committee decided to reject the project on the grounds of the message not being clear enough.[443] The Guerilla Girls recount: "we then rented advertising space on NYC buses and ran it ourselves until the bus company canceled our lease, saying that the

[438] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning," 103.
[439] Kahlo and Kollwitz, Transgressive Techniques of the Guerrilla Girls," 204.
[440] Ibid.
[441] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2020), 1-190, 24.
[442] Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, oil on canvas, Neoclassicism, Louvre Museum, 88.9cm x 162.56cm (35in x 64in), 1814.
[443] Guerrilla Girls/Whitney Chadwick, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* (New York: Perennial, 1995), 1-95.

image … was too suggestive and that the figure appeared to have more than a fan in her hand."[444]

The 1980s brought great success for the Guerrilla Girls in their poster campaign for equal rights and treatment for women artists and artists of color, but as the 1980s ended, the 1990s brought different issues that needed attention. The Guerrilla Girls felt the need to expand their campaign outside the art world. The Guerrilla Girls addressed issues such as "Roe vs Wade, the Clarence Thomas hearings, and the rape trials of William Kennedy and Mike Tyson.[445] When the Republican convention began in 1992, the group created a poster demonstrating how Republicans viewed women's rights. The poster stated, "Republicans do believe in a woman's right to control her own body."[446] Six picture boxes followed this statement with "images of female circumcision, plastic surgery, anorexia and foot bindings."[447] The Guerrilla Girls even poked fun at politicians such as Newt Gingrich "for his hypocritical stance on family values."[448] In the late 1990s, the group continued to use their political propaganda to support feminist grassroots campaigns and support groups like the Woman's Action Coalition (WAC) and Women's Health Action and Mobilization (WHAM). Kristian states in her article "By addressing issues beyond the art world the Guerrilla Girls campaign functioned as consciousness- raising "public service announcements."[449]

In the 2000s, the Guerrilla Girls once again changed gears on their crusade for justice, this time the group targeted Hollywood. Their attack on Hollywood was to expose the low

[444] Guerrilla Girls/Whitney Chadwick, *Confessions of the Guerrilla*, 1-95.
[445] Raizada, "An Interview with the Guerrilla Girls, 40.
[446] Ibid.
[447] Ibid.
[448] Ibid.
[449] Ibid, 41.

numbers of “women and people of color” that held positions such as directors, producers, screenwriters, cinematographers, and studio executives. The Guerrilla Girls created yet another poster representing the unfair treatment of women in Hollywood. In 2001, the group created a case scenario if "Hollywood producers have come to us saying, 'we wanna make a movie about feminism, do you have any ideas?' We always thought that was so ludicrous because don't we just know the kind of movie Hollywood would make? How unlikely this film would become a blockbuster.”[450] The poster they created entitled *The Birth of Feminism* was a ploy on the classic racist film *The Birth of a Nation*. The poster consisted of the female stars wearing bikinis. Pamela Anderson, Halle Berry, and Catherine Zeta Jones starred in the roles of feminist leaders, Gloria Steinem, Florence Kennedy, and congressional representative Bella Abzug.[451] In their hands, the stars held a banner in the form of a beach towel stating “Equality Now,” representing the international Women’s rights organization, along with the statement, “They made women’s rights look good.” Really Good,” a sarcastic remark aimed at the “superficial standards of the film industry.”[452] Oliver Stone, Eminem, and Jerry Bruckheimer are included on the posters as the producers, writers and soundtrack, for being guilty of perpetuating gender stereotyping.[453] The Guerrilla Girls stated, “We made a movie poster for the film we hope never gets made the Hollywood way.”[454]

In 2002, the collective group continued its quest to draw attention toward the inequality shown to women and people of color. The Guerrilla Girls produced yet another poster entitled “The Anatomically Correct Oscar,” the statue of Oscar portrayed as an overweight white man

[450] Rebecca Seiferle, “The Guerrilla Girls Artworks & Famous Art | TheArtStory, (2017), https://www.theartstory.org/artist/guerrilla-girls/artworks/.
[451] Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2020) 1-192.
[452] Seiferle, “The Guerrilla Girls Artworks & Famous Art.”
[453] Ibid.
[454] Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, 80-82.

with his hands crossed in front of him.[455] The poster addressed the number of women and people of color nominated or winners of the Oscar. The result of their research was the discovery that "Best Director had never been awarded to a woman."[456] In 2010 at the Academy Awards, Barbra Streisand spoke the words, "Well, the time has come."[457] She was referring Kathryn Bigelow winning Oscar for director of the movie "The Hurt Locker," becoming the first woman in the eighty-five-year history of the Academy Awards to win an Oscar for Best Director. Jen Chaney, a writer for the *Washington Post*, stated that this moment was a game changer for females, "whoever smacked her head into a glass ceiling of a male-dominated Hollywood."[458] Chaney argued and asked the question "two years later has the Oscars really changed?" In 2012, all the best director contenders were men. Did Kathryn Bigelow's "win open doors for female filmmakers, or are things pretty much status quo in the land of blockbusters and action franchises?"[459]

An annual report from San Diego State University's Center for the Study of Women in television and film argues that status quo is the answer, in a "Celluloid Ceiling studies recorded five percent of the directors who worked on the 215 top grossing movies in 2011 were women."[460] But on the positive side, "women working behind the scenes such as writers, producers, editors and crew members was up eighteen percent in 2011, compared to seventeen percent in 2010."[461] Chaney also argued "that even with glimmers of progress…the simple fact:

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[455] Ibid, 82-83.
[456] Ibid.
[457] Jen Chaney, "Oscars 2012: Did Kathryn Bigelow's win open doors?" *The Washington Post*, February 24, 2012, www.washingtonpost.com (accessed February 27, 2021).
[458] Ibid.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Ibid.

most of Hollywood's key players are white men."[462] Phyllide Lloyd, director of "Iron Lady," pointed out "one of the things we could really do to help is take away that lack of entitlement from our children, as women, and make sure they don't have that fear. [They should feel] That they own the place," she also states, "That will change things."[463] In addition to Chaney's article, The Guerrilla Girls discovered that ninety-four percent of the writing awards have gone to men and only three percent of acting awards have gone to people of color."[464] Months before the 2002 Oscars, the Guerrilla Girls rented a billboard to display their protest and placed the sign right down the street from where the Oscars were held. "Kollwitz" stated, "the people we want to reach will see it. There is so much positive press around the Oscars — the gowns, the stars, that we decided it was time, for another point of view."[465] The Guerrilla Girls have even compared the US government to Hollywood. In 1999, the group created a poster that stated, "The US Senate is more progressive than Hollywood, Female Senators: nine percent, Female Directors four percent, but in 2019 an updated poster was created because "Hollywood is still worse than the US Senate. Female Senators: twenty-five percent and Female directors: four percent."[466]

In 2011, Michele Bachmann, a former member of the US House of Representatives, spoke at a public forum in Iowa. A high school student who was president of their school's Gay-Straight Alliance asked about marriage equality, to which Bachmann replied, "We all have the same Civil Rights." Later Bachmann added, "that when it came to marriage the right we all share is to wed a person of the opposite sex."[467] In 2012, when Michele Bachmann was campaigning

[462] Ibid.
[463] Ibid.
[464] Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*. 82-83.
[465] Seiferle, "The Guerrilla Girls Artists."
[466] Jessica Jacolbe, "The Guerrilla Girls Are Back for Hollywood," JSTOR Daily, April 10, 2019, daily.jstor.org, (accessed February 17, 2021).
[467] Mike Boehm, "Guerrilla Girls exercise artistic license with Michele Bachmann," *Los Angeles Time*, October 19, 2012, Early Edition, www.latimes.com, (accessed February 23, 2021).

for the Republican presidency, Joan Vorderbruggen, who runs a group called Artists in Storefronts, reached out to the Guerrilla Girls for their help in commissioning a billboard to push for a NO vote against a marriage discrimination amendment Bachmann was supporting. Vorderbruggen was excited when she received a response from the Guerrilla Girls. When she heard the voicemail, Vorderbruggen stated, "I fell off my chair." "Frida Kahlo" a member of the group expressed her eagerness to take on the challenge. She quotes, "this was exactly the kind of work they wanted to do."[468] To raise the money for the billboard Vorderbruggen held a silent art auction and earned 2,500 dollars to pay for the billboard and the Guerrilla Girls' artist fee. The 14-foot-high by 40-foot-wide billboard had Bachmann's face with pink lips, which represented the symbol of human rights. Bachmann's statement that "we all have the same civil rights" also printed in pink. Underneath was the push for a NO vote on the marriage amendment; the word NO printed in pink was to represent the "hypocrisy of her position."[469] Rebecca Seiferle, a writer for TheArtStory stated, "pink represented under the Nazi regime, persons identified as homosexuals were forced to wear a pink triangle."[470]

The 21st century found the Guerrilla Girls still campaigning against injustice and discrimination. There are now three groups of the Guerrilla Girls, each group representing certain aspects of discrimination against women artists, artists of color, and the homeless. They also support and advocate social issues such as abortion rights, eating disorders, and wars. Two Guerrilla Girls and members founded the original Guerrilla Girls, Inc. The goal was to spread awareness of injustice through text, visuals, and sarcastic humor in protest posters. They have written books such as *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art* and

[468] Boehm, "Guerrilla Girls exercise artistic license with Michele Bachmann."
[469] Seiferle, "The Guerrilla Girls Artists."
[470] Ibid.

Bitches, and Bimbos Ballbreakers. They travel the world spreading and reinventing the "F" word "Feminist" talking of issues and experiences and bringing the causes into the 21st century. The second group, Guerrilla Girls on Tour, Inc., presents plays, street theatre, residency programs, and stresses the seriousness of women's history, in addition to exploring the "lack of opportunities for women and artists of color in the performing arts."[471]

The third group, Guerrilla Girls Broadband, Inc., aka "The Broads," created by a founding Guerrilla Girl, and comprised of mostly young, next generation feminists and artists of color who continue the crusades of the first two groups, such as fighting sexism, abolishing racism and confronting social injustice. The Broads goes beyond the art world to concentrate on discrimination in the workplace via the internet. Utilizing the internet as their chosen weapon allows The Broads to reach out and expand to a wider audience.[472] The Broadband thinks of themselves as a virtual performance venue, where the first two groups perform in person at events. Peggy Phelan, a professor of performance studies at New York University observes, "While the Guerrilla Girls used theater devices such as costumes and posters to expose the routine sexism and racism of the art world, the new group uses the electronic equivalent of a theatrical mask: the anonymous e-mail."[473] The internet allows their audience to participate and remain anonymous like the Guerrilla Girls wearing masks.[474]

Mathew Mirapaul, a writer for the *New York Times* states, "the Net is often perceived as a digital version of film, television or radio, but it also has strong ties to theater."[475] One of the

[471] Annette Leddy, "Important Art by The Guerrilla Girls," The Getty Research Institute/Guerrilla Girls records, (1979-2003). https://www.getty.edu/research/special_collections/notable/guerrilla_girls.html.
[472] Matthew Mirapaul, "A Stronger, More Theatrical Role for Female Activists," *New York Times*, July 23, 2001, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y., www.uco.edu. (accessed February 23,2021).
[473] Mirapaul, "A Stronger, More Theatrical Role for Female Activists."
[474] Ibid.
[475] Ibid.

sites features the ability to send emails anonymously to "Bad Bosses."[476] "Bad Bosses" provide nine templates of letters that are "hilarious accounts of grievances among office workers," which are sent anonymously through the Guerrilla Girls BoardBand site.[477] Further plans are to add "an electronic bulletin board for discussions and an online gallery for projects made by women."[478] A Broadband member, "Marie Rogers" quotes, "There is the lovely idea that the Internet is this medium where everyone contributes and everyone has an anonymous personality. They'll be looked at as themselves for who they are as compared to what they are."[479] Yoko Ono Lennon awarded the three groups of Guerrilla Girls on March 20, 2010, the Courage Awards for the Arts "In recognition of their outspoken support for women artists, for challenging a male-dominated art establishment, and for their untiring efforts against sexism."[480]

The Guerrilla Girls found great success in the thirty-five years they have protested social issues, made museums accountable for their low numbers of women artists and artists of color, and with their poster and billboard campaigns helping spread the word of human rights disparities to the public. Books and journals have become their next weapons of defense against injustice and inequality. The books, as with most of their projects, were to achieve public awareness about the treatment or mistreatment of women throughout history. These books and journals examine subject matter that has affected females throughout history. The Guerrilla Girls take a closer look at the history of stereotypes and how to correct them by researching and questioning the low numbers of women artists and artists of color represented in museums, and

[476] Ibid.
[477] "Gertrude Stein," "Guerrilla Girls and Guerrilla Girls BroadBand: Inside Story," Art Journal, vol. 70, NO. 2, (Summer 2011), 88-101, 91.
[478] Mirapaul, "A Stronger, More Theatrical Role for Female Activists."
[479] Ibid.
[480] "Gertrude Stein," "Guerrilla Girls and Guerrilla Girls BroadBand: Inside Story." 101.

as well as social issues concerning many groups who have been discriminated against throughout time.

Hot Flashes from the Guerrilla Girls, 1993-1994, a feminist watchdog journal created using a grant from The National Endowment for the Arts. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration wanted to take the grant back, but in Guerrilla Girls style, they "complained and they [Bush Administration] backed down."[481] In 1993, the first journal was published *Hot Flashes*, Vol 1, No. 1, (1993) the headline was a report entitled "Guerrilla Girls Probe *The New York Times*."[482] They reviewed the history of the articles written for the *New York Times* and pointed out the many examples of discrimination that occurred in the paper. One example is TIMELINE: "A brief history of the paper that's too male, too pale, too stale and too Yale."[483] The second journal published *Hot Flashes*, Vol 1, No. 2 & 2, pages 4-8, (1994), was a double issue. This issue "examined multiculturalism in museums,"[484] The Girls reported on the number of women artists and artists of color in museums. The Guerrilla Girls' sarcasm and humor are evident in a head caption that read, "Guerrilla Girls predict that museums in the East will have a white male winter and a white male spring, summer and fall"[485] with the summary of "The west is best, the East is worst. Women of color have a hard time anywhere."[486] The group also offered medicine for the future with suggestions such as "Outlaw the cult of genius. In a culture of more than 250 million, why should museums across the U.S. all show and collect the same few market-validated artists?" The Guerrilla Girls argue to "Make it as acceptable to show sexually

[481] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls The Art Of Behaving Badly*, 54.
[482] Ibid.
[483] Ibid. 57.
[484] Ibid. 54.
[485] Ibid, 56.
[486] Ibid, 54.

explicit gay and lesbian art as it is to show sexually explicit Heterosexual art."[487] The third issue *Hot Flashes*, Vol. 1, No. 4, (1994) reviewed the "practice of hiring or exhibiting one or two individuals from a marginalized group, then pretending the entire system had miraculously become diverse."[488] The main topic of this journal was entitled "The Ten signs You're Being Tokenized." This article listed the signs of tokenism, example number ten "Your busiest months are February (Black History Month), March (Women's History), June (Stonewall Anniversary) and number eight "everyone knows your race, gender and sexual preference even when they don't know your work."[489] These journal articles were short and to the point, with statistics written down in print, makes one face the reality that the fight for equality is far from over.

Written in 1995*, Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* documents the history of the Guerrilla Girls and explains why they chose to be anonymous. When the members first spoke to the press, they wanted their causes to receive full attention; they needed a code to prevent the press from focusing on them and not the issues. "Rosalba Carriera" stated that on "the day of the NPR interview, Georgia O'Keeffe died, giving the group the idea to take on deceased artists and writers names. Taking on past artists names helped strengthen the deceased women's places in history and kept The Guerrilla Girls anonymous.[490] *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* present a short history and examine the works of the Guerrilla Girls fight for injustice of women and artists of color. A self-interview is honest and humorous. The question asked during the interview, "What have you done besides posters?" "Rosalba Carriera" responded that they sent "secret letters to egregious offenders."[491] "Frida Kahlo" demonstrated the humor the Girls are famous

[487] Ibid.
[488] Ibid. 60.
[489] Ibid.
[490] The Guerrilla Girls/Whitney Chadwick, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*, 1-95, 13.
[491] Ibid, 16.

for in her response to the same question. In an article written by Michael Kimmelman in the *New York Times,* he argued that the exhibits at the Whitney Biennial of 1993 were a disaster and that he hated the show."[492] Kimmelman went on to say, "Calling them gift boxes is not meant to imply works well or beautifully made. They are emphatically not well made, for the most part, relying on that tried excuse – that crudeness and tawdriness are deliberate expressions of raw emotion as well as of disdain for elitist values." [493] "Frida Kahlo" pushed back by stating, "The next time art critic Michael Kimmelman plans a show that actually includes a fair number of women and artists of color like his hysterical rant against the Whitney Biennial of 1993, and we're going to send him a year's supply of Midol."[494]

The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art written in 1998 was a chance to explore the question asked by many feminist artists — "Why haven't there been more great women artists throughout Western history?"[495] Instead, the Guerrilla Girls asked the question, "Why haven't more women been considered great artists throughout Western history?"[496] The Guerrilla Girls' intent for writing this book was to explore women in art history and review the many female artists that have gone unnoticed, but also examine how female artists "managed, against all odds, to make art."[497] The group states, "Writing about women artists in Western history is complicated, there are lots of contradictory positions and theories so they have to stay out of the theory wars."[498] The group had to make a hard decision on the artists

[492] Michael Kimmelman, "ART VIEW; At the Whitney, Sound, Fury and Little Else," *New York Times*, April 25, 1993, Late Edition (East Coast).
[493] Kimmelman, "ART VIEW; At the Whitney, Sound, Fury and Little Else."
[494] The Guerrilla Girls/Whitney Chadwick, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*, 19.
[495] The Guerrilla Girls, *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 7.
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid.
[498] Ibid, 9.

included in this book because "There are so many women artists who deserve to be in this book and would be if we had more room."[499] The chapters review female artists from ancient times to the 20th century using again their tongue in cheek humor, adding sometimes their own take as to what an artist may have said. One example is a picture of Alma Thomas, an African American artist and teacher who questioned, "Why is The Museum of Modern Art more interested in African art than in art by African Americans?"[500] Georgia O'Keefe posed the question "Why do we always have to be called "women artists?" "They don't call Rembrandt and Van Gogh "male artists."[501]

In 2003, *Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers,* drew attention to female stereotypes. The emphasis behind this book was to research the origin of names that stereotyped women and how these names affected society. They asked the question, "are female stereotypes based on universal truths? Are they overactive fantasies piled on top of one another?"[502] Another question they researched was "Why does our culture produce so many categories for women?"[503] The Girls challenged their readers, "to come up with half as many stereotypical names for men."[504] The Guerrilla Girls found that an excellent description of what stereotyping is, "a box, usually too small that a girl gets jammed into, or archetype who is placed on a pedestal. Stereotype or archetype, is rarely a girl's own choice. It is a label someone else gives you to make you less or more than you really are."[505]

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[499] Ibid.
[500] Ibid, 7.
[501] Ibid.
[502] The Guerrilla Girls, *Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers: The Guerrilla Girls' Illustrated Guide to Female Stereotypes*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 7-92.
[503] Ibid, 7.
[504] Ibid.
[505] The Guerrilla Girls, *Bitches, Bimbos and Ballbreakers*, 8.

Written in 2004 and updated in 2012*, The Guerrilla Girls Art Museum Activity Book* is a humorous publication created as a parody on books sold in museums stores for kids on how to appreciate art in museums.[506] The group came up with the idea to design an activity book for adults on how to criticize museums.[507] The Guerrilla Girls are fans of museums, but they are also concerned about the lack of equality in museums. As part of their campaign to bring public awareness to how museums are operated, their activity book takes the reader behind the scenes of what goes on in a museum and exposes the dirt that the public does not see.[508] The Guerrilla Girls have always stood behind their biggest complaint that rich white males manage museums. The Guerrilla Girls make it their mission to expose board members of museums who have played a part in the discrimination of not just artists, but the running of museums. Leon Black, founder of Apollo Global Management and elected, as a trustee to the MoMA in 2018, is an example of why the Guerrilla Girls continue their fight against injustice and discrimination. The group has condemned his spending 47 million dollars for a Raphael drawing, and donating the drawing to the Met Museum, but only for a huge tax deduction.[509] The Girls also argued and demonstrated in a poster, about "the two new galleries in the [MoMA] named for close associates of pedophile Jeffrey Epstein: Chairman Leon Black and donor Glenn Dubin should be kicked off its Board immediately." [510] The group continues to state "We declared the galleries an insult to the public, especially to survivors of sexual assault." [511]

[506] Books--- Guerrilla Girls: *The Guerrilla girls' Art Museum Activity Book*, 23, https://www.guerrillagirls.com (accessed: 4-18 2021).
[507] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, 90.
[508] Books---Guerrilla Girls: *The Guerrilla Girls; Art Museum Activity Book, 23.*
[509] Ibid.
[510] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, 176-177.
[511] Ibid, 176.

Since the publication of this book, *The New York Times* published an article in 2021 entitled "A donor's Ties to Epstein are criticized at MoMA and Dartmouth."[512] This article reports on Black's association with Jeffery Epstein, and how from 2012-2017, he paid Epstein 158 million dollars for tax and estate advisory services. Artists Ai Weiwei and Nan Goldin, along with 150 artists, are protesting for the removal of Black from the Met Board of Trustees. Ai Weiwei has stated, "that if Black is not removed, he would remove his works from the museum."[513] Because groups like the Guerrilla Girls making institutions accountable, the group can say they have accomplished their job of bringing awareness to the public and encouraging others to stand up for what is right. The Guerrilla Girls' tactics for bringing issues to light are to be bold, complain, and claiming bathroom space to put up posters, send letters, or plaster posters of protest on walls near museums. The Girl's states, "if museums can reach out to the public, let's reach out to them and change their discriminating ways."[514]

Written in 2016*, The Hysterical Herstory of Hysteria and How It Was Cured: From Ancient Times Until Now* focuses on the various treatments applied to women who were diagnosed with what was then considered by male doctors to be hysteria. To read this book from the eyes of a 21st-century feminist is laughable (hence the title *The Hysterical*) because of the ridiculous methods men believed could cure a woman's hysteria. Plato's theory of this particular female issue was that "the uterus wandered around the female body choking and strangling all normal function as it went."[515] Following Plato's logic, it is remarkable that women have made it to the 21st century. The relief for this female condition, then known as hysteria, was a device

[512] Robin Pogrebin & Matthew Goldstein, "A donor's ties to Epstein are criticized at MoMA and Dartmouth," *New York Times*, February 22, 2021, Late Edition (East Coast), www.uco.edu (accessed February 27, 2021).
[513] Pogrebin & Goldstein, "A donor's ties to Epstein are criticized at MoMA and Dartmouth."
[514] Books Guerrilla Girls: *The Guerrilla Girls, The Guerrilla Girls' Art Museum Activity Book*, 13.
[515] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls The Art Of Behaving Badly*, 138.

invented by a doctor to help aid the problems that were ailing women, the device known as the ever-popular vibrator helped women to solve these problems.[516] Vibrators sold in respectable catalogs like Sears and Roebuck, for socially acceptances the vibrator was advertised as "a personal massage" device.[517] In the 20th century, sexual frustration was recognized as a medical condition and the female orgasm was deemed a cure for all women suffering from a multitude of ailments.[518]

In the 1920s, pornography was becoming popular in the age of film; adult movies used vibrators as a pleasure device. Psychiatrists were "horrified to see, right there on the screen, a medical device used for sexual pleasure," vibrators deemed immoral became outlawed for personal use.[519] In 2008 in Texas, selling vibrators was still a crime and in Alabama, it is illegal to sell a vibrator. The Guerrilla Girls stated that in the 20th century, women's freedom to express their sexuality was no longer a mystery. Due to the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's manifesto in 1949, the Guerrilla Girls believed the book helped jump-start the Women's Liberation Movement.[520] In the 1950s, medical professionals dropped the "word" Hysteria from medical diagnoses stating, "Hysteria was no longer a credible female disease."[521] The Guerrilla Girls asked the question "was feminism the medicine that cured Hysteria? "[522] The answer was a defiantly "yes" because feminism drew attention to women left out of history books, and exposed, how society constrained, misunderstood, and mistreated women. The feminist

[516] Michael Castleman, M.A., "Hysteria" and the Strange History of vibrators" Psychology Today, (March 1, 2013), www.psychologytoday.com, (accessed February 27, 2021).
[517] Castleman, M.A., "Hysteria" and the Strange History of vibrators."
[518] Ibid, 1-22.
[519] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls The Art Of Behaving Badly*, 139.
[520] Ibid.
[521] Ibid.
[522] Ibid.

movement, along with the aid of groups like The Guerrilla Girls, continues to fight for women's rights and equality.

The newest publication for the group is entitled *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly* written in 2020. This book is a journey of thirty-five years of protesting, changing lives, and challenging the status quo. The Guerrilla Girls believe "something important has happened"[523] and they claim, "History of art and culture cannot be written without including diverse voices of all culture."[524] Unfortunately, the one thing that has not changed is in fact that museums, galleries and art collecting still revolves around the money and white men, an issue the girls continue their fight to change. The Guerrilla Girls point out, "Our work is not finished."[525] They encourage the public to complain, complain, and complain. Creative complaining works![526]

The Guerrilla Girls continue to ask questions as to why five percent of works in museums were by women artists, yet eighty-five percent of the nudes were females.[527] The Guerrilla Girls challenged this statement and argued the question "Why these numbers of women artists were low." The Guerrilla Girls discovered that the number of women artists in museums, and galleries were next to none. In 1985, their research uncovered the fact that The Guggenheim, the Met, and the Whitney had none, and the MoMA had only one-woman artists work displayed in their museum. In 2004, when they went back to see if the status quo had changed, they found even fewer female artists, but more naked males. A quote from the Girls "Is that progress?[528] In 2005,

[523] Ibid, 5.
[524] Ibid, 139.
[525] Ibid, 5.
[526] Complain Creatively|The Guerrilla Girls|The Art Assignment|PBS Digital Studios, November 4, 2016, video, 8:54, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5i5cEhd6Vt8, (accessed: February 5, 2021).
[527] Kahlo and Kollwitz, Transgressive Techniques of the Guerrilla Girls, 204.
[528] Ibid.

the Girls updated the poster and stated, “three percent of the artists in the Modern Art sections are women, but eighty-three percent of the nudes are female.”[529] In 2011, the Guerrilla Girls had an interview with Stephen Colbert. Sadly, they reported that, “thirty years after their discovery in 1985, The Guggenheim, Met, and The Whitney, just had one each, and the MoMA had two.”[530] The progress has changed only slightly, but these women continue their fight to show the public that women artists are just as talented as a male artist.

In recent decades, feminist art historians have assisted the Guerrilla Girls in reviving and reexamining “hundreds of women artists from the past.”[531] The collective also points out that when a female author joins a company that publishes art history books, such as Janson’s *History of Art* or Gardner’s *Art through the Ages,* a phenomenon occurs in the increase of women artists both white and artists of color.[532]

The Guerrilla Girls had expanded their campaigns beyond the art world to include issues such as abortions, workplace discrimination and human rights. They have created humorous posters and billboards, written letters, given tours, and published books and journals. The Guerrilla Girls played a considerable role in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 21st-century, the Guerrilla Girls continue their fight for equality in the art world and other realms outside the art world. Lucy Lippard quotes of the Guerrilla Girls that they "almost single-handedly kept women's art activism alive over one of the worst decades I hope we'll see."[533]

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[529] Ibid., 204.
[530] The Late Night Show with Stephen Colbert, “Guerrilla Girls Talk The History of Art vs. The History of Power,” January 14, 2016, video, 6:24, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxBQB2fUl_g.
[531] The Guerrilla Girls, *The Guerrilla Girls’ Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*, 9.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Chave, “The Guerrilla Girls’ Reckoning.”

The Guerrilla Girls' goal was not to break down the system but create more access for women and gain equality in representation and pay. The Guerrilla Girls set the precedence for expanding on the 1970s art movements by contributing their own agendas relating to women artists in general. The progress of the Movement is slow moving, but the advancement and accomplishment these artists have achieved is undeniable. Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, Faith Ringgold, Betye Saar, and The Guerrilla Girls have had enormous influence on the art world and challenged the traditional concerns of the art historical canon. These artists have led the way by demonstrating a strong awareness for continual pushback on traditional ideas. Striving for recognition in their talents and abilities to achieve success and awareness, they have made goals of eliminating labels, creating equality, and securing a place for women artist in history.

Chapter Six
Conclusion

In a survey of statistics regarding female artist's representation throughout the art world, which included artists, curators, directors of museum, and the art market, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC (NMWA) found that women artists fell behind in areas in which their male counterparts still enjoy higher recognition.[534] The article states very bluntly, "Numbers Don't Lie."[535] Statistics may not solve the problems that female artists face with underrepresentation and discrimination in museums, galleries, and auction houses, but the numbers do help the public visualize the need for continuous change for females in the art world. Statistics the NMWA collected through their survey, "in a study of 820,000 exhibitions across the public and commercial sectors in 2018, only one third featured women artists."[536] The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) found that as "women artists age, they earn progressively less than their male artist counterparts. Women artists aged 55–64 earn only 66¢ for each $1 earned by men,"[537] and "women still occupy fewer directorships at museums with budgets over $15 million, holding 30% of art museum director positions and earning 75¢ for every dollar earned by male directors."[538]

In truth, numbers do not lie, and yes women artists are still campaigning and pushing for change in the art world. The need to demand respect and recognition for their talents and not their gender is an ongoing struggle with female artists and artists of color. Artists like Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, Betye Saar, Faith Ringgold, and The Guerrilla Girls have opened

[534] The National Museum of Women in the Arts, "NMWA Get The Facts - National Museum of Women in the Arts," https://nmwa.org/support/advocacy/get-facts/.
[535] The National Museum of Women in the Arts.
[536] Ibid.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Ibid.

doors for many female artists. However, these artists continue their fight well into the 21st Century.

Progress is a slow process for the Feminist Art Movement, but change is happening—even if it is a small step. In February 2019, *The New York Times* article entitled "MoMa to Close, Then Open doors to More Expansive View of Art,"[539] stated that there was a move to "reconfigure the exhibition spaces to focus on highlighting works of female, African American, Hispanic, Asian and other overlooked artists."[540] This statement demonstrates a dramatic difference since 1985 when The Guerrilla Gils surveyed museums and the MoMa had only one-woman artist work on display, and in 2011the MoMa had two female artists on display. Unfortunately, with the opening of the new renovation came a reckoning with the #METOO movement. Indeed, the museum faced social and physical consequences for harboring predators and stoked the anger of groups like The Guerrilla Girls. The two new galleries, "named for close association of pedophile Jeffrey Epstein: MoMa board chairman Leon Black and donor Glen Dubin,"[541] were still associated with the MoMa. The Guerrilla Girls protested and demanded that both men step down from their positions. The Guerrilla Girls, and many others, viewed the "galleries as an insult….to survivors of sexual assault."[542]

Although the Movement has had setbacks, the movement should also celebrate its gains. In 2020, Ben Kesslen, a writer for *NBC News*, reported that after 130 years the image of Aunt Jemima was changing. Quaker Oats announced that the company recognizes that "Aunt Jemma's

[539] Robin Pogrebin, "MoMA to Close, Then Open Doors to More Expansive View of Art," *New York Times*, February 5, 2019.
[540] Pogrebin, "MoMA to Close."
[541] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2020), 176-77.
[542] The Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*.

origins are based on a racial stereotype."[543] Kristen Kroepfl, vice president and chief marketing officer of Quaker Foods, stated in a news release, "that the company has worked to update the brand to be 'appropriate and respectful' but that it realized the changes were insufficient."[544] Quaker said, "that the new packaging will began to appear in the fall and that a new name will be announced later."[545] In an article in the *New York Times* entitled "MoMA chair said to exit over his ties to Epstein" written March 26, 2021, by Robin Pogrebin and Matthew Goldstein, states "in the wake of protests from artists and activists….[Leon Black] agreed not to stand for reelection in June."[546] Even though progress is slow, perseverance in a cause pays off, as the Guerrilla Girls encourage, "Get out there, Get Mad, Complain, Complain, Complain. Creative complaining works!"[547]

In 2015, Camille Morineau, director of La Monnaie de Paris proposed an idea to stage a *Womanhouse* sequel. The show entitled *Women House* was a traveling exhibit shown at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in 2018. Sarah Cascone stated, "It would be hard to imagine better timing for the opening of the show *Women House,* a 21st-century take on artists Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's 1972 installation *Womanhouse.*"[548] The article also points out that the arrival of the new exhibit coincides in the "wake of the #MeToo movement."[549] Orin Zahra, assistant curator at the NMWA commented, "no one realized it was going to coincide

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[543] Ben Kesslen, "Aunt Jemima brand to change name, remove image that Quaker says is 'based on a racial stereotype'," *NBC News*, June 17, 2020, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/aunt-jemima-brand-will-change-name-remove-image-quaker-says-n1231260.
[544] Kesslen, "Aunt Jemima brand to change name."
[545] Ibid.
[546] Pogrebin, Robin, and Matthew Goldstein. "MoMA Chair Said to Exit Over His Ties to Epstein." *New York Times*, March 27, 2021 https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A656434448/OVIC?u=edmo56673&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=f9ba437c (accessed August 22, 2021).
[547] Complain Creatively|The Guerrilla Girls The Art Assignment|PBS Digital Studios, November 4, 2016, video, 8:54, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5i5cEhd6Vt8. (accessed: February 5, 2021),
[548] Sarah Cascone, "Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's Epoch-Making Feminist Installation 'Womanhouse' Gets a Tribute in Washington, DC," *Artnet News,* March 13, 2018, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/women-house-judy-chicago-national-museum-women-arts-1234649.
[549] Cascone, "Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro's Epoch-Making Feminist Installation 'Womanhouse'.

with such an important moment for cultural change in regards to women in the workplace."[550] Zahra goes on to say, "The show will resonate more because of this current spotlight on women's issues."[551] Chicago was also surprised at how the original *Womanhouse* was still recognized for "addressing stereotypes about home and femininity."[552] Chicago told Artnet News, "I don't know that I realized how radical change I was going to make."[553] She also highlights "In the 1970s, the two biggest issues were sex and housework. Since then, more women have entered the workforce and have been battling against the glass ceiling and experiencing our form of male terrorism, which is sexual harassment."[554] Chicago also adds, "In some countries, women still aren't allowed to leave the house."[555] The *Dollhouse* was not shown in the Paris exhibit but was on display at the NMWA exhibition. Schapiro's *Dollhouse* was the only original work from the *Womanhouse* project. The exhibit in DC also displayed a series of butterfly plates that Chicago made before *The Dinner Party*.[556]

Throughout the decades these extraordinary artists Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, Betey Saar, Faith Ringgold, and The Guerrilla Girls have accomplished remarkable goals not only in their art but their leadership and courage to step up and shout "We have had enough" to quote a verse from "I am Woman" by Helen Reddy:

> I am woman, hear me roar
> In numbers too big to ignore
> And I know too much to go back an' pretend
> 'Cause I've heard it all before
> And I've been down there on the floor
> No one's ever gonna keep me down again

[550] Ibid.
[551] Ibid.
[552] Ibid.
[553] Ibid.
[554] Ibid.
[555] Ibid.
[556] Ibid.

"No one's ever gonna keep me down again" echoes these artists' mission to not take no for an answer to stand up and be recognized for their accomplishments.

Judy Chicago turned eighty-one in 2020 and showed no signs of slowing down. In an article written by Noor Brara, she writes of Chicago's collaboration with Maria Grazia Chiuri creative director at Dior.[557] In an interview with Chiuir published in the magazine *Frankfurter Allgemeine Quarterly*, Chiuir spoke of ten women who had influenced her, and out of the ten Chiuir chose Chicago as being the most influential. Chicago always thought of fashion as a threat to women, but upon beginning the quest, she asked herself "can art have any real place here," and "is there a way to really use fashion to Empower Women?"[558] When the two met, Chiuri proposed to use the design loosely based on *The Dinner Party*. Chicago refused as she quotes "My whole focus these days is trying to get my body of work out from under the shadows of *The Dinner Party*."[559]

In the fall, Chicago and Chiuri met again and this time Chicago presented Chiuri with a project, she had "conceived in the 1970s, but never built."[560] The collection revolved around a structure built to resemble a goddess entitled *The Female Divine*. The installation for the runway featured a huge inflatable sculpture, a woven catwalk carpet, and twenty-one banners embroidered in English and French with such questions as "What if Women Ruled the world?"[561] The banners lined the ceiling and hung above the runway. Chicago visited the Dior archives and discovered she had more in common with the fashion world than she had thought.

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[557] Noor Brara, "This Has Been the Greatest Creative Opportunity of My Life: Judy Chicago on How Working with Dior Changed her Mind About the Fashion World," *ARTnet News*, January 22, 2020. https://news.artnet.com/art-world/judy-chicago-dior-couture-paris-1758699.
[558] Brara, "This Has Been the Greatest Creative Opportunity of My Life."
[559] Ibid.
[560] Ibid.
[561] Ibid.

She discovered the Dior history of using embroidery and crafts in their fashion. Chicago offered her thoughts " My god, I have more in common with the kind of environment that respects craft and keeps that art alive then I do with the art world, where nobody knows anything about that kind of works," and continued to state "It was incredible."[562]

In 2019-2020 Chicago exhibited bodies of work at the National Museum of Women's Art, she called *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction*. An article written on the exhibit states, "Judy Chicago continues [her] practice of tackling taboo subjects."[563] *The End* subject matter is "a reflection on mortality and the destruction of entire species."[564] The work is a collection of thirty-five paintings on black glass and porcelain along with two large-scale bronze reliefs. Chicago expressed on the subject matter of *The End*, was a "process of addressing her own mortality and brought her to a place of acceptance."[565] Chicago goes on to say what has "bothered her the most is the destruction of animals and the planet and she quotes "to be faced everyday with what we are doing to other creatures and the planet was to enter the kingdom of hell."[566] Chicago has published sixteen books in her lifetime. When asked why she began to write, Chicago's response was, "because in the 1960s and the 1970s, the critics and curators of the male-dominated art world were not." In 2021, her newest book entitled *The Flowering: The Autobiography of Judy Chicago* was published on her 82nd birthday. It reflects on Chicago's "personal life, her artistic endeavors, struggles and the evolution of her feminism into a feminist art practice."[567] *The End* also speaks of her vulnerabilities, anxieties, and fears. During an

[562] Ibid.
[563] The National Museum of Women's Art, *Judy Chicago—The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction,* September 19, 2019 to January 20, 2020. https://nmwa.org/exhibitions/judy-chicago-the-end.
[564] The National Museum of Women's Art, *Judy Chicago*."
[565] Ibid.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Ibid.

interview in 2017 at an event Fresh Talk at NMWA, Chicago was praised for her fearlessness. She responded, "I am not fearless. The problem with that perception is that it separates me from everyone else."[568] On August 28, 2021, Chicago's first ever career retrospective entitled *Judy Chicago: A Retrospective* will exhibit at the de Young Museum in San Francisco. This exhibit covers Chicago's work that spans from her early works to her current piece *The End*. De Young Museums wrote that the opening of this exhibit falls on the 40th anniversary of her iconic piece *The Dinner Party* first exhibited in San Francisco in 1979 and celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's rights to vote.[569]

Chicago has faced harsh criticism, but maintains a strong stance in the Feminist Art Movement still today. She continues to campaign for opportunities and programs which allow women artists to grow and understand the importance of equality and maintaining their self-identity in a patriarchal society. Chicago quotes "I have learned that you never know what will happen if you live long enough and put art out into the world."[570]

Miriam Schapiro was a pioneer, painter, sculptor, and co-creator of the epic art project *Womanhouse.* She was an advocate for women's folk art to show the world that traditional crafts of women deserved a higher level of recognition. She brought attention to underrepresented female artists and brought women artists from the past into the present. Schapiro was a strong advocate for the Feminist Art Movement. Schapiro strived to educate and teach about the movement through the method of consciousness-raising. Schapiro's objective for this method was to teach students to be aware of their surroundings; she wanted her students to think for

[568] Ibid.
[569] de Young Museum, San Francisco, *Judy Chicago: A Retrospective,* August 28, 2021 to January 9, 2022. https://deyoung.famsf.org/press-room/judy-chicago-retrospective (accessed August 21, 2021).
[570] Vanessa Friedman, "If Women Ruled the World, What Would They Wear?" The New York Times, (January 21, 2020).

themselves to create art using their own experience. In New York City, Schapiro brings forward what she had learned while in California working at Cal Arts and publishes an art journal entitled Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics. This journal gave opportunities and allowed all types of identities to express their ideas and options, identities such as "socialists, Marxists, lesbian feminists or anarchists" were all welcomed.[571] Sadly, Miriam Schapiro passed away in 2015 at the age of ninety-one, but Schapiro left behind an extraordinary life and is an example for future female artists to have courage and determination to fight for what is right and stand firm in their beliefs.

In addition to Chicago and Shapiro, The Guerrilla Girls have been the voice for nearly thirty-six years for female artists and artists of color and they do not intend to quit raising awareness. The Guerrilla Girls goals are to seek equality and self-awareness for female artists and artists of color while exposing the injustice that women artists face in the business of art and recognition in museums and art galleries.[572] In 2021, they released a new book entitled *Guerrilla Girls: The Act of Behaving Badly*. This book documents the Guerrilla Girls career of campaigns, protests, books, and billboards showing statistics, discriminations by museums, art galleries, and art critics for their nonsupport of female artists from the beginning of their first protest in 1985 to the present. In the summer of 2021, The Guerrilla Girls participated in the UK festival Art Night 2021. The title of The Guerrilla Girls commission work is entitled '*Male Graze*.' The Guerrilla Girls' artwork is an "anti-discrimination message, [and] their idea for the project is to explore men in art history devouring women.[573] The Guerrilla Girls are still an anonymous group and

[571] Heresies #1, Feminism, Art and Politics, Vol. 1, No. 1, (January 1977). https://heresies filmproject.org/archive/ (accessed April 12, 2021).
[572] The Getty Research Institute Library, "Guerrilla Girls Archive (Getty Research Institute)," https://www.getty.edu/research/special_collections/notable/guerrilla_girls.html (accessed February 5, 2019).
[573] Harris, "The 'male graze': Guerrilla Girls."

still very committed to their cause of seeking out those entities who refuse to recognize the inequality and discrimination shown to female artists and artists of color in museums, art galleries, and history books. The Guerrilla Girls have a motto; "Do one thing. If it works, do one thing. If it works, do another. If it doesn't, do another anyway. Just keep chipping away."[574]

Faith Ringgold and Betye Saar are creating works well into their nineties; both artists are still socially engaged with today's issues like the murder of George Floyd and the Covid 19 pandemic. They continue their activism and goals and do not let age hold them back. In 2006 at the age of eighty, Saar was still active. She presented a show at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Rosenfeld Gallery entitled *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment*. Her show Migrations/Transformations is about the history of Black history. Saar states, the exhibition is the reflection of "what happened in Africa, the transition through the diaspora, to slavery, to freedom."[575] She adds, "this new work is about the integration of it all."[576] In 2016, Saar had an installation in Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA) entitled *Still Tickin,* the retrospective title taken from a "sculpture eulogizing Saar's late husband and exhibit spans six decades of her work."[577] The installation originated in the Netherlands then traveled to SMoCA. The exhibit features more than 100 works, which include "lithograph, fabric, collage, neon and etching."[578] Saar had stated, "Art and Civil Rights are intertwined in my work because much of

[574] Guerrilla Girls, *Guerrilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2020) 1-192.
[575] Kathryn Shattuck, "The Artist Who Made a Tougher Aunt Jemima hasn't Softened with Age," The New York Times, September 12, 2006, E3. https://search-proquest-com.vortex3.uco.edu/central/docview/433407761/3BAA4CB95A874912PQ/3?accountid=14516 (accessed: March 13, 2020).
[576] Shattuck, "The Artist Who Made a Tougher Aunt Jemima."
[577] Lynn Trimble, "Betye Saar on Finding Inspiration in Civil Rights Struggles and the Problem with Contemporary Art," Phoenix News Times, April 19, 2016. https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/arts/betye-saar-on-finding-inspiration-in-civil-rights-struggles-and-the-problem-with-contemporary-art-8210368.
[578]Trimble, "Betye Saar on Finding Inspiration in Civil Rights Struggles and the Problem with Contemporary Art."

my art is triggered by political actions."[579] In a solo show in 2017 at Craft and Folk Art Museum, Saar's show entitled Betye Saar: Keepin' Clean' features gun-toting mammies.[580] Her *Liberation of Aunt Jemima* is still a big part of her shows. At the age of 93 Saar presented a solo show at MoMA and Los Angeles county Museum of Art, Holland Cotter writer for the *New York Times* asked Saar "if she has any theories as to why big-ticket attention is finally coming her way?"[581] Saar replied, "Because it's about time!" she went on to say, "I've had to wait till I'm practically 100."[582]

On July 30, 2021, Betye Saar turned ninety-five. Saar has been busy attending shows and exhibits and continuing to educate the public on racism and gender issues. Starting October 28 – April 17, 2022, she has an exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (ICAMiami). This installation is entitled *Betye Saar: Serious Moonlight*, and is a "rarely exhibited immersive, site-specific installations from 1980 to 1998."[583] ICA Miami wrote in a post about the installation "Audiences have rarely had the opportunity to encounter the artist's radical installations, many of which have been recently rediscovered and seen for the first time in decades"[584] The exhibit represents the "concepts of ritual and community through cultural symbols and autobiographical references."[585] Featured works include *House of Fortune (1988). Fortune* illustrates Saar's interest in the rituals of tarot cards, voodoo, and the mystic. Saar's *The Ritual Journey* "addresses traditions of death and mourning."[586] This installation celebrates

[579] Ibid.
[580] Ibid.
[581] Ibid.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, "Betye Saar: Serious Moonlight," https://icamiami.org/exhibition/betye-saar/, (accessed August 7, 2021)
[584] Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, "Betye Saar."
[585] Ibid.
[586] Ibid.

Saar's insight into "ritual, spirituality and cosmologies in relation to the African American experience and African diaspora."[587] When asked by Serna Altschul from CBS Sunday Morning "If you were looking back and you had a younger version of yourself what would you say to her?" Saar replied, "I don't think that way. I do it as always, I keep going forward. I don't look back."[588]

At the age of ninety, Faith Ringgold continues to make art that challenges contemporary stereotypes. At the onset of the global Covid 19 Pandemic, Ringgold stayed attentive to the news like most of us, but her creativity was paralyzed. With the lockdown in place, Ringgold told Bob Morris of the *New York Times*, "I'm trying to make sense of things bring some light to the situation."[589] She went on to state, "The children aren't in school and all over the world, the same situation."[590] Ringgold continued "I'm just keeping my eyes wide open so I can find a point of view on all this…I've been waiting for the inspiration that can help me inspire other."[591] Then the death of George Floyd occured, she had to step away from the news and do something to draw awareness to the issues at hand. Ringgold stated, "I can't image what he did to deserve to die."[592] She adds, "His breath was stolen by a system that threatens our Freedom."[593] Ringgold pointed out "her ideas and politics are resurging." She continued, "I've got to see an idea, in my head first and I'm starting to visualize what it is I have to say."[594] Ringgold is also working on ideas for a commission project for a flag, along with other artist's works such as Jeff

[587] Ibid.
[588] Serena Altschul, Assemblage artist Betye Saar: Making the ordinary extraordinary February 23, 2020 https://www.cbsnews.com/news/assemblage-artist-betye-saar-making-the-ordinary-extraordinary.
[589] Bob Morris, "Faith Ringgold Will Keep Fighting Back." *New York Times*, June 11, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/11/arts/design/faith-ringgold-art.html.
[590] Morris, "Faith Ringgold Will Keep Fighting Back."
[591] Ibid.
[592] Ibid.
[593] Ibid.
[594] Morris, "Faith Ringgold Will Keep Fighting Back."

Koons, Marina Abramovic, Sarah Sze, KAWS and Laurie Anderson that will hang at the Rockefeller Center in August.[595] In 2019, Yale Grace Hopper College commissioned Ringgold to replace the windowpanes at Hopper College of Design's common room.[596] In June 2016, an "employee at the college knocked out the panes with a broomstick. The panes depicted "enslaved people working in a cotton field."[597] Ringgold's commission was to replace "six stained glass panels that had commemorated the life of John C. Calhoun the college's former namesake."[598] Anoka Faruqee, chairperson of the committee overseeing the project stated, "Ringgold's preliminary designs for the new windows portray varied scenes of student life."[599] Faruqee adds, "The windows will depict the full range of student life, from academics to extracurricular activities,"[600] she said, adding, "that the display likely will include a tribute to Grace Murray Hopper, a pioneering computer scientist and mathematician."[601] This was a two-part project with Ringgold designing the panes in the common room and artists Barbara Earl Thomas designing the panes in the dining room.[602]

Faith Ringgold and Betye Saar are talented artists, having spent their lives campaigning and fighting for change in equality and freedoms. Both artists have had a tremendous impact on young artists, especially artists from African American communities. A statement in Crystal Britton's article can apply to both Ringgold and Saar regarding their art, their activism, and continued efforts of stressing how important equality and freedoms are to improve humanity.

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[595] Ibid.
[596] Mike Cummings, "Faith Ringgold to design Hopper College common room windows," *YaleNews*, July 9, 2019, https://news.yale.edu/2019/07/09/faith-ringgold-design-hopper-college-common-room-windows.
[597] Mike Cummings, "New Hopper College dining hall windows to confront past, celebrate change," YaleNews, July 20, 2020. https://news.yale.edu/2020/07/28/new-hopper-college-dining-hall-windows-confront-past-celebrate-change.
[598] Cummings, "Faith Ringgold to design Hopper College common room windows."
[599] Ibid.
[600] Ibid.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid.

Britton states, “She has been able to make her decisions and take her stand because she has not allowed herself to be restricted by being a black woman in America. She says that these are the facts of her life that it is powerful to know who you are: the restrictions come in not knowing.”[603]

This research began with an excitement of discovering how artists, critics, and art historians had the courage and ingenuity to express the need for change in the art world for women artists and artists of color. This research was driven by a better understanding for the need of equality and recognition of talents without labels while investigating a more holistic approach to describing what these pioneering women went through to achieve their goals. Although the Feminist Art Movement supported white artists and gave better advantaged to those artists through both social and political gains, this research found it did not support artists of color or those of queer identities. These portions of the findings for this research were disappointing. The observation that this Movement intended to encourage all women to come together and fight for the same cause only to discover women of color had an even harder time of achieving their goals was apparent. Artists of color who identified as Black dealt with both gender and racist discrimination.

However, this research did reveal that as the years progressed, the Movement began to find common ground and women artists saw the need to work together. The Guerrilla Girls and other artists of the 1980s representing the third wave of the Feminist Art Movement expanded on the foundation of the second wave movement by adding social issues to their agenda and brought awareness to the importance of work discrimination, abortion, and higher pay in the workforce.

[603] Crystal Britton, “Faith Ringgold,” Art Papers, Vol. 1, No. 5, (September 1987) 23-25.

Additionally, the research on Betye Saar and Faith Ringgold explored the resilience that Black women had in a time when they faced both sex and racial discrimination. Although they fought different forms of discrimination, this resilience was also observed in Judy Chicago. Chicago is known for starting a woman's art program at Fresno State from the ground up all while fighting with an oppressive patriarchal society. Equally, Miriam Schapiro's determination to bring domestic traditional crafts like needlepoint, quilting, and sewing to a level of "high" art was revolutionary. Numerous universities are adding women's studies, and art history books are recognizing past artists once considered unimportant. Although women artists and artists of color still fight and campaign for equal time in the art world, progress has been slow. There is great admiration in what these women have sacrificed and achieved to bring a consciousness to the world of the importance of self-awareness, cultural, and political change.

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