"Judy Chicago"

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INTRODUCTION:

Judy Chicago has been a working artist all her life; has pioneered new approaches to art education for women, particularly through the Feminist Studio Workshop and the Los Angeles Women's Building; and has been instrumental in introducing the idea of female imagery into the art community. She is one of the best known and most influential of the American Feminist artists of the 1970's. The following chapters investigate the development of her work from the beginning of her professional life, 1963 to the completion of her major work; The Dinner Party, 1979.

Chapter One, looks at the onset of her professional career, and details the development of her art style through the next decade, 1963-1973. Chapter Two, specifically deals with her involvement in the feminist movement, during this period. It investigates the development of her alternative educational programs, such as the Fresno Womens Art Program at Fresno State College. It continues through to the development of permanent women's centers containing, exhibition spaces, workshops, educational programs etc. for example, The Los Angeles Womans Building.

Her major work of art to date, The Dinner Party, 1974-1979 is the topic of Chapter Three. The Dinner Party, a monumental work of art draws together both the developmental aspects of her own art style, detailed in Chapter One and the

ideology prevalent through her work with young women, her struggle to establish an alternative art community for women, and her personal ideals, explained in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four attempts to look at her art work in another perspective: as a prime example of a developing feminist aesthetic in art. This chapter attempts to investigate Lucy Lippard's theory of a feminist aesthetic based on art that is collaborative, collective and communicable.

There is no doubt that Chicago's work has changed the way many people view art, and has by taking the first steps, given many women the permission to fully express their lives and experiences through their art. Lippard's theory suggests even broader implications for the art world in general.

CHAPTER 1

PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

1963 - 1973

Judy Chicago, formerly Judy Gerowitz was born in Illinois in 1939. Her parents led very active lives; both worked and were very involved in politics. Their home was a centre of political activity in the neighbourhood. The fact that her mother worked and that she and her female friends participated fully in the frequent political discussions which took place in the home meant that as a child Chicago grew up with a positive sense that she could be just what she wanted to be, regardless of the social stereotyping prevalent at the time. This was an attitude that was to serve her well in later years.

Chicago began to draw at an early age, and was greatly encouraged by her mother who in 1947 sent her to art classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. The following year she went to Junior School and through her frequent trips to galleries and museums became fascinated by the work of Monet, Seuret and Toulouse Lautrec.

At eighteen, Chicago went to the University of California at Los Angeles, where she immediately became involved with the artistic and intellectual circles at the school. In 1961, having finished college, Chicago married Jerry,[1] and they moved into a house in Topanga Canyon, one of the lush mountainous canyons in Los Angeles. Here she used the garage as her studio, stone carved in the backyard, and worked as a teaching assistant in University College at Los Angeles. Less than two years after they were married Jerry was killed in a

tragic accident when his car went over a cliff. For Chicago, this was a turning point in her life.

In her grief she turned to her work as her refuge and the one thing she could never lose.

> I had realized that afternoon on the beach, that I must build my life on the basis of my own identity, my own work, my own needs, and the only way I could do that was through my art. [2]

For the next year she worked constantly, trying to make images out of her feelings, and although not always conscious of the meaning of these images, was in the process of struggling to come to terms with her circumstances and to develop into the artist she was destined to become.

When Chicago first started her professional life in 1963, she was making very biomorphic paintings and sculptures. She learned the techniques of spray painting in the paint shop of an automobile manufacturers, because it seemed to be another way to prove her seriousness to the then predominantly male art world. In 'Car Hood' [pl. 1] made at this time, a vaginal form, penetrated by a phallic arrow was mounted on the "masculine" hood of a car.

Over the next few years Chicago retreated from that kind of subject matter because it had met with great ridicule from her male professors. There was no radical departure, just a slow moving away from content oriented work to a more formalist stance. Her imagery became increasingly more neutralized,

working with formal rather than symbolic issues, behind which her content could remain hidden in order that the work could be taken seriously. Then much later there was a slow moving back.

In 1965 she made 'Rainbow Pickett' six differently pastel coloured beams, progressively larger in size, leaning against the wall. In 1966-67 she made a number of sculptures, some very large like 'Ten Part Cylinders', which filled a room in the Los Angeles County Museum's "Sculpture of the Sixties" exhibition and some very small rearrangeable game pieces, for example, '3, 4, 5, Acrylic Shapes', 1966 [pl. 2].

Around this time she stopped using colour.

> "I wanted to force myself to develop the form in the sculpture, and more negatively, because I felt forced to deny parts of myself, as I couldn't seem to fit into the existing structures. It's no accident that it was during this whole period when I was least overt about my womanliness, 1965-that I made my reputation as an artist. It was a period in Los Angeles when no women artists were taken seriously." [3]

When Chicago began to make the 'Dome Set 7' [pl. 3] piece in 1968, she had again begun to use colour. Because of the expense, she couldn't use a lot of colours, so instead she tried to make a colour which would seem to change when light hit it. Each of the domes were made of transparent material and had layers inside that could not be easily seen; possibly a metaphor for her own hidden content. These were sprayed with softly changing colours which overlapped and overlayed inside the forms. The contained

quality of the colour was as if trapped within the swollen dome form. In this piece she decided on using three domes, the irreducible number of units she could use and still get the sense of relationship between them. With the dome piece, acrylic sprayed with acrylic lacquer, Chicago was trying to explore her own subject matter, and still embed it in a form which would make it acceptable to the predominantly male art world, within the 60's idea of formalism. Her forms had become rounded like domes, breasts or bellies. Then they opened up like donuts, and then the donuts developed into forms that stretched, appeared to be grasping and assertive.

Chicago went from three forms to four, and started the '<u>Pasadena Lifesavers</u>' [pl. 4]. The colour systems she had been developing allowed her to establish her method of representing emotional states through colour. For example, assertiveness was represented through harsh colour, receptiveness through softer swirling colour, the state of orgasm through dissolving colour. She combined these colour systems with evolving forms in order to convey the multiple aspects of her own personality, and assert the fullness of the female self as she experienced it.

Using her colour systems forms appear to turn, open, close, vibrate or gesture. As if these were emotional or body sensations translated into form and colour. Chicago calls them life-savers because for her they had confronted

the issue of what it is to be a woman.

At the same time, January 1969, Chicago started doing what she called 'Atmospheres'. These were environmental pieces using flares of coloured smoke, outdoors and in the landscape, all of which were about the releasing of energy. Some of the Atmospheres for example 'A butterfly for Oakland' [pl. 5] were composed like paintings in different colours and times and spaces, like orchestrated clouds of chroma. While in others, the land forms were taken into account and made the vehicle for an ecstatic release of colour. Lights emerge from pockets of rock or earth and create their own contours. The Athmospheres were about control and beauty: two fundamental elements of Chicago's work.

The 'Fresno Fans', 1971, are based on a body gesture and have a strong sense of straining or reaching from the central core of the painting. "How do you fit a soft shape into a hard framework?", she asks in one painting. In 'Flesh Gardens' [pl. 6] simple rigid structures melt in very soft sensations possibly representing masculine/feminine, open/closed, vulnerable/rigid. However, these paintings were still very formalized, the content still indirect.

In 1970, Chicago had an exhibition at California State College at Fullerton. Where she formally changed her name from Judy Gerowitz to Judy Chicago. This was a symbolic statement about her emerging position as a feminist, and also as an attempt to force viewers to see the work in relation to the fact that it had been made by a woman artist:

> "Judy Gerowitz hereby divests herself of all names imposed upon her through male social dominance and freely chooses her own names, Judy Chicago." [3]

Chicago believed that if one allows oneself to meet her painting on an emotional level, one can penetrate the plastic and the formalism to find the soft core she was trying to expose. However, her show was greeted with misunderstanding. The years of neutralizing her subject matter into a formalist mode made it difficult to perceive the content of her work.

At this stage, Chicago considered her alternatives: to continue struggling in the male art community, or go off and live as a recluse, as O'Keeffe had done, and simply wait until her work would be understood. She decided however to commit herself to developing a community based on the goals and ideas of women. So she went to Fresno and set up the Womens Program. A year later she brought it back to Los Angeles, as the Feminist Art Program at Cal. Arts with Miriam Schapiro. These programs were the first step in building an alternate art community. Together they went from education to exhibition space, to consciousness-raising in the community. Then they established a coherent alternative, the Woman's Building, which allowed them to deal with the whole process: education, exhibition, criticism, documentation of feminist values etc.

With the 'Through the flower' series, Chicago started to build on other women's work. In this case the flower in O'Keeffe's work. The grid system was used to convey a kind

of imprisonment as Chicago wanted her work to be seen in relation to other women's work historically as men's work was seen. "What we're really talking about is transformational art".[4]

In the 'Great Ladies' series begun in 1972, Chicago was trying to make her form, language and colour reveal something really specific about a particular woman in history "like the quality of opening and blockage, and stopping, the whole quality of a personality".[5] The Great Ladies were all queens; Christina of Sweden, Marie Antoinette, Catherine the Great and Queen Victoria.

It is one thing to have art that is just illustration, but it seems clear that if art is 'readable' on several levels, it becomes more communicable. It is this idea which probably led Chicago to writing on the canvases of her paintings. Chicago had become dissatisfied with the limits of abstract form language. She wanted to combine the process of working with the thoughts she had while reading about different historical female figures. She wanted to force the viewer to see the images in specific context and content. So she began to write.

In the 'Reincarnation Triptych', 1973 [pl. 7] each five foot canvas is an inside square in relation to an outside square; each is named after a woman whose work Chicago identified with: Madame de Stael, George Sand and Virginia Woolf. The border around each picture has forty words on it about the woman. The change in the nature of the image in

the three paintings reflects two things: the change of consciousness through the last two hundred years of women's history, and also a stage in her own development.

In Madame de Stael, the inside square is very bright; it is in front of a much softer colour, hidden and protected by the bright one. It says "Madame de Stael protected herself with a bright and showy facade". Perhaps it also represents Chicago's own self protection behind the formalism, transparencies and fancy techniques in her earier work. In George Sand, the inside and outside are more at odds, as though the inside wants to come out and the outside is stopping it. A strong orange glow in the center represents her repressed energy. In Virginia Woolf, the central square is just a shadow behind the other,

> That Triptych is a real summation for me. I made these paintings twenty years after my father's death, and ten years after my first husband's death; it's really connected with rebirth. [6]

Looking at Chicago's work there is the realisation that her later work makes much of her earlier work appear sterile. 'George Sand', for instance, is a truly impressive painting by any standards, with a sparkling clarity and an easy, not rigid compactness. The extremely subtle colours are less luscious, more greyed than before. The handwriting here and in the other two paintings is an integrating, formal element, as well as the purveyer of added information. 'George Sand' is in the middle of the Triptych and it crackles where Madame de Stael before it preens, and Virginia

Woolf after it smoulders.

Another very interesting series of work, is that which Chicago had intended as prints, but which remain working drawings because the man running the workshop irrationally decided not to go ahead with the project after two months work. Chicago was distraught and consigned her despair to the drawings: A group of six 'Compressed Women who longed to be butterflies', 1973-4 [pl. 8]. Each one was an entirely different image and colour scheme, based on a circle beginning to open up into wing-like halves. Each already contained writing in the form of a very regular script worked into the images about these women, some historical, some fictional. They also had marginal notes about the technical execution of the projected prints, which would not have appeared on the finished prints. Now they contain as well, the angry annotations of a foiled artist, concerning the events leading to their abortion. These ironically enhance their effect. Where they would be the usual beautifully finished products as prints, the circumstances of their extinction have lent a warmth and passion always present at the core of Chicago's work, but not always fully accessible to the viewer of the completed work.

A second drawing series done around the same time is on the theme of rejection: the artists own experiences when a Chicago dealer who adored her slides and promised a one-woman show, failed to respond to the paintings when they arrived [pl. 9]. So cancelled it. "How does it feel to be rejected? Its like

having your flower split open", is written on the top and bottom margins of the image, in one drawing from the series. Here again, what is beautiful is not merely the visual attractiveness, but her acceptance of, or insistance on, the honesty of a life element without the consequent devaluation of the image itself into sentimentality.

At their best Chicago's paintings are both tactile and ephemeral. 'Reincarnation Triptych' is tightly controlled but also somehow, relaxed, something to do with their expansiveness or continuity with the way the ripples in each painting reach the border. But even then you have to go on, reading words around the edges, turning the way the 'Pasadena Lifesavers' turn retinally, heading back into the center, where it all began. In 'Let it all hang out', [pl. 10] too, the hard divisions are overcome by intensity. It is knife-edged, but it appears to breathe through its gill-like center section.

What a viewer can tend to focus on then, is the vibrations between centering and expansiveness, the same feeling you get from an empty land or ocean horizon over which the light is concentrated on one point.

The ease with which some of the softer works are executed is voluptuous, but that ease is deceptive, all the paintings still employ extremely complex and usually systematic spectral mixings and crossings. Others are repellently rather than welcomingly tactile, an aspect that is more effective in 'Heaven is for white men only': a

brutal and disturbing painting with flesh turned metallic, like hate and hostility.

Like all art, for better or worse, the understanding and acceptance of Chicago's work depends on the particular education, experience and insights of the viewer. It may be that she is as subversive in that private place from which real art has always come; a place which makes it own goals, as she is in her role as feminist spokeswoman. Chicago has put herself in the position of trying to make a truly private art, truly public; a highly vulnerable and generous position. The rewards for this slowly began to appear in 1973. In the form of contact and communication from the general female community. Communication is supposedly the prime point of art in the first place, but one which often appears to be neglected elsewhere.

Chicago's personal need for contact and communication with other women artists, as well as her desire to see her own work within the context of women's experience and perception became of great importance in her life and work in 1970. She commited herself to developing an alternative art community based on the goals and ideas of women, allowing women the freedom to make art work based directly on feminine experience. Her first step was to establish an alternative educational program: The Women's Program at Fresno State College.

CHAPTER II

CHICAGO'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Before Chicago was hired by Fresno State College, she had discussed her ideas for a female art class with the art department chairman. He was very sympathetic towards her plan to offer a class for women only. Having discussed the fact that although a great number of women entered the beginning art classes, few emerged from the schools into professional life, he agreed that something should be done about it. She stressed her interest in helping young women become artists by giving back to them some of her own acquired knowledge. At the time there was probably little comprehension of the implications of her plan; to develop an alternate context for women.

Chicago set up the class with the idea to work intensively with fifteen chosen women for the year. From previous experience Chicago had realized how intimidated many women are in the presence of men, because of the social conditioning and stereotyping still prevalent at that time. As a result she decided that the group would have to have a studio space away from the college. She wanted the women to experience themselves as artists in their own studio space.

Having found a studio space they set about fixing it up, a natural way for them to learn to use tools, develop building skills, and gain confidence in themselves physically. In order to help these women establish stronger personal identities and self confidence, Chicago became involved with them and their lives. She used consciousness-raising sessions, which lead to greater understanding of common experiences,

and the implications of these experiences, as well as developing and fostering a community spirit among the women. So that instead of depending on a leader, teacher or authority figure, the group would be self-supporting, and ultimately could function independently of her. As the class continued the women also became more aware of their situation as women in society.

With Chicago's guidance they went to local libraries and those in Los Angeles, and made lists of all the women artists they found. They realized that there was a huge amount of information about women artists that had never been collated, and resolved to put together the bits and pieces they found and to make an archive at Cal Arts. They took slides of all work found in books, magazines, etc., and put together the first West Coast file on women's art work.

At Fresno Chicago found that the most natural and direct way for the women to get at their subject matter was to act it out. So they worked in theatre and film. One of the most important discoveries of the year was that informal performance provided the women with a way of reaching personal subject matter, aspects of their lives and experiences for art making.

Before the year was over in Fresno, they held a weekend discussion session and invited women from Fresno, Los Angeles and San Francisco to the studio. They put drawings, paintings

and photography on display, many of which were filled with vaginas, uteruses, ovaries and breasts. As in their studio, there was no one to make the women feel uncomfortable about revealing their feminity. They also performed their pieces and showed their films [pl. 11].

One piece involved two women, one dressed as a man, possibly a butcher. 'He' led the woman onto the stage, tying her to a milking machine. Then he walked out leaving her to squirt blood from the machine into a jug until it was full. At the same time a tape-recorder played, telling of the proceedings at a slaughter house. The man returned and he tired her up by her hands, as slides of meat and parts of mutilated cattle were shown, he poured the blood she had 'given' onto her body. The last slide was of cattle strung up by their haunches projected onto the bloody body of the woman. As an image of women's brutalization, it was in line with a common theme used by women that year.

Several films were shown that weekend. 'The Steak film' was about a woman going to the market, getting a steak, cooking it and eating it. An unremarkable subject except that it showed women in a new way. In the steak film, as in another collaborative film, the 'Bathtub film',women were shown eating, bathing and enjoying themselves alone and not in relation to a man.

All the work done by the women dealt with or revealed some aspect of their experiences as women. Theirs was a content-oriented art. Although Chicago had never instructed

them to make any particular kind of work, she had encouraged them to use the content of their lives as the basis of their art, and that had stimulated the production of a lot of work. The women in the audience were excited by what they saw, and the weekend was filled with a sense of identification between them.

Many of these fifteen women had managed, through Chicago's one year program, to change their lives, develop leadership, make art, write about their experiences, speak and perform publicly, learn building and film making skills. They did costuming, make-up and sewing one day, construction work the next, and art history in the evenings, moving easily from one discipline to the other, regardless of their previous experience in that discipline. Several of the women came into the program entirely on the basis of their own determination that they wanted to be part of it. Some of them had no art skills at all. And yet they succeeded because they were in an environment that allowed them to be themselves, and that demanded excellence from them.

> "If a woman recognizes, as I did that the only way women can ever live in real dignity is to make the society a place where both men and women can share its responsibilities and rewards equally, then she must commit herself to women's freedom. I have to live in a narrow stratum of reality because I can not bear the values that are reflected in the movies, T.V., magazines, even in art museums. I tried to close my eyes to the fact that societies contempt for women is really a reflection of a distortion in the entire value system that emphasizes competition, exploitation and the objectification of human beings, both men and women. But once I faced it I had to take responsibility to try to change it. The year in Fresno was the first step."[7]

Chicago and Schapiro decided to bring the program to Cal Arts. Many of the class decided to go with them and eight of the original women were accepted into the school. The Fresno experiment had been a great success and had put out an issue of a Los Angeles feminist magazine "Everywoman", which circulated around the country, creating great interest among women about Chicago's work with the Fresno group. In Fresno there was not much of an art community and the women's program had existed in a kind of vacuum. But in Los Angeles there was a sophisticated art community, so it was questionable how the still male dominated art community would receive Chicago, her new ideas and the Feminist Art Program.

Establishing an environment in which women could be themselves and work out their own ideas was only the first step towards the development of a female art community. At this stage it was imperative that another step be taken so that the work made by women would be seen in a context other than the established male oriented system.

The Feminist Art Program opened at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia. Now Chicago had arranged studio space, private quarters, tools. equipment, money for projects and materials, an art historian and a budget to continue their work, begun in Fresno, in assembling female art history archives. This was the first time that a school of art had addressed itself specifically to the needs of its female students by incorporating an educational program designed

and run by women.

As in Fresno,Chicago, Schapiro and their historian Paula Harper decided to integrate learning technical skills with their art work. A large scale group project was decided on; the designing of a house. Women had been embedded in houses for centuries, cooking, cleaning, decorating, sewing. These same activities were now transformed into the means of making art.

Having found a dilapidated old house in Los Angeles they got permission from the owners to use it for three months, two months to fix it up and develop the individual environment and one to exhibit the results. After the initial repairs the women turned their attention to the development of their individual projects. Some worked alone, some collaborated. Neither Chicago nor Schapiro dictated subject matter, but as had happened in Fresno, once the constraints against working openly with female experience were lifted, ideas poured out.

The rooms quickly took shape. One woman made a crocheted environment. Chicago made a 'Menstruation Bathroom' [pl.12]. Which contained all the items associated with menstruation. Two women made a 'Bridal Staircase' in which the bride was pictured radiant and beautiful at the top of the stairs. Her train covered the carpet and continued up the back of a mannequin who was attached to the bottom wall. It seemed that the bride headed into the obscurity of marriage and domestic life. One woman made a

nursery on a large scale that made adults feel like children again. The association of women with the kitchen and with the giving and preparing of food led to the idea of a 'Nurturant Kitchen' [pl. 13] in which the floors, walls and objects were covered with a flesh coloured skin, and plastic eggs transmuting into breasts cascaded down from the ceiling onto the walls.[10]

Room after room took shape until the house became a total environment; a repository of female experience and feminine dreams. 'Womanhouse' provided a context for work that both in technique and context revealed female experience. There were quilts and curtains, sewn sculptures and bread dough pieces. Several women artists in the community contributed work to the house, which gave their work a new meaning. Wanda Westcoast placed her plastic formed curtains in the kitchen. Here they were more understandable than when first shown in a clean white art gallery, where there was, at that time little understanding of art that grows out of women's perceptions of reality. The up-stairs hallway was hung with quilts by a Los Angeles quilt-maker whose work was not considered art until then. Womanhouse was both an environment that housed the work of women artists working out of their own experiences, and the house of female reality into which one entered to experience woman's lives, feelings and concerns.

In 1971 Chicago was approached by Dextra Frankel, about

holding a woman's exhibition. She agreed and was very enthusiastic about it, enlisting Schapiro to help with the studio visits. In the summer of 1971 they visited fifty studios. They found women working more often in diningrooms, bedrooms and porches than in large commercial white space that was considered a studio. Some worked in the midst of their home environment and developed an art making process that was compatible with their life styles. Others worked in the back rooms of their men's studios. Some worked in almost total isolation, unknown to or ignored by the art community. Generally their subject matter connected to their home lives and experiences as women.

Another group of women artists were those whose work was more neutralized, as Chicago's had been. They were more connected to the art world and often had stores or lofts as studios. Their relationship to the art community at that time was quite peripheral, and many complained of blatant discrimination.

The range of work chosen for the show reflected the two alternatives that seemed to describe women's situations. There was work that was highly formal, without much overt female imagery. Other work was explicit, dealing with kitchens, costumes, curtains. There was a consistant kind of softness and an antiheroic attitude in much of the work. The show revealed the unrealized qualities of women's work, qualities that manifested themselves more openly as a result of the women's movement.

'Invisible/Visible', the title of the show, was a manifestation of the growing desire felt by women artists throughout the States at that time to see each other's work, to search for self-reflection in the work of women, to show together, and consequently to grow as women and as artists. A desire stimulated by the work and dedication of people like Judy Chicago.

Chicago had made her commitment to establishing an alternative art community and had established an educational program. She had also connected with many women artists who met frequently and discussed the possibilities for an alternative exhibition space to bring their work into the community.

They held a conference of women artists in 1972. Over 200 women attended, and out of this came the plan for Womanspace, an exhibition space for women and a community art gallery which opened in January 1973. By the time it opened, Chicago and those involved in the conference: artists, historians, critics and collectors, had held many meetings with women in the art community, explaining the origins of the plan, Dextra's show, Invisible/Visible, the studio visits, the Women Artists group, the Feminist Art Program at Cal Arts and the conference of women artists in 1972.

In 1973, Faith Wilding, the Feminist Art Program's first graduate student put a painting into the annual graduate show. This work reflected all the values of the program Chicago had

supported. It was direct, the subject matter was clear; it related to her own experience, but it was clumsily painted. Chicago felt that this was an inevitable step in Feminist Art education, because as students became successively more connected with themselves as women they usually go through a stage of making very overt art. This is often awkward because it is an attempt to articulate feelings for which there was no developed formal language. As the women develop as artists, they build skills that are relevant to their content. Their work would improve and become more sophisticated. But that sophistication is built on a solid personal foundation and is not a result of imitating prevailing art styles, something Chicago felt was common at Cal Arts as well as at other art schools.

The male faculty in the art school objected to their graduate students' paintings. Chicago was distraught, she had set up the Feminist Art Program, as an alternative educational structure so that women would not have to be subjected to the same misunderstanding, prejudice and blindness, she herself had endured in college. Yet all of the values of the art schools Chicago had attended were still present at Cal Arts, despite their support of a feminist program.

Chicago resigned from Cal Arts early in 1973. It had become clear to her, through her experience at Cal Arts and also her study of history, that the only alternative to working in isolation was to develop a way by which women could control not only their own art making process but also what happened to that art when it left the studio.

She decided to establish a feminist program outside of any art school. Chicago joined forces with Arlene Raven, an art historian who had felt drawn to the West Coast, and its female art community because she felt that those involved were building a solid alternative for women in art. Together with Sheila De Brettenville, who had established the first women's design program at Cal Arts, they decided to establish the Feminist Studio Workshop. It would be the first entirely independent alternative structure for women in the art-related professions.

In the Autumn of 1973, the Feminist Studio Workshop opened in Los Angeles with thirty women artists from around the country. They came to the Workshop for a variety of reasons, but they all shared the desire to work in a Feminist context.

A woman named Edie Gross went to Chicago with a proposal. She suggested that Womanspace, which needed more space and the Feminist Studio Workshop, rent an old art school. They decided however that it would be even better to bring together a number of feminist art organisations, that already existed in the city, thereby establishing a rich environment that housed multiple points of view, within a feminist context. On November 28, 1973 they opened the Women's Building. Edie Gross became the buildings manager and guided it into existance. When it opened, it housed, in addition to the Workshop and Womanspace, a co-operative gallery, 'Grandview' which represented forty women artists. Gallery 707, Womanspace

expanded and had a group gallery, a one-woman gallery, and an open wall gallery. Sisterhood Bookstore, several women's performing groups, the Associated Women's Press, several political groups - Now, and the Women's Liberation Union, assuring that the exhibition of women's work could take place in an environment that was connected to a wider female community. As Chicago puts it "by November 1973, we at least had a home for the female culture that was exploding all around us."[8]

When the building opened, Chicago's exhibition 'The Great Ladies' also opened in the women's co-operative gallery. On one wall of the exhibition she had written

> "The Great Ladies - begun in the fall of 1972, completed in the summer of 1973; these women represent themselves, aspects of myself, and various ways in which women have accomodated themselves to the constraints of their circumstances. Some years ago, I began to read women's literature, study women's art and examine the lives of women who lived before me. I wanted to find role models to discover how my predecessors had dealt with their oppression as women. I was also searching for clues in their work - clues that could aid me in my art. I wanted to speak out of my femaleness, to make art out of the very thing that made me "the other" in male society. I developed an increasing identification with other women, both those who lived before me and those who, like me, felt the need for a female support community. Together, we built an alternative art institution - the Woman's Building. My paintings can only be fully understood in this new context we have made. I want to thank all those who helped me install my show. This was the first time I've received such remarkable support and I feel honoured to be a part of the reappearance of the Woman's Building, eighty years after it was first established in my home town."[9]

Having played a prominent part in the setting up of alternative educational programs, gallery facilities and a strong feminist support structure, Chicago began again to dedicate herself to her own work. Chicago wanted to develop a stronger link between her own art work and the feminist art community she had helped establish. She was still struggling with her visual imagery, in an attempt to make the strong content, always present at the core of her work, more communicable to the spectator. The break through came in 1974. She started work on a series of painted porcelain portraits of a hundred women of achievement. Her ideas about this piece developed further and spawned the major work of her career: 'The Dinner Party'. With the Dinner Party, she took her strive for an alternative art community a step further, creating a volunteer community of four hundred women, artists, needleworkers, china-painters, and art historians, with a single goal: the creation of a single work of art.

CHAPTER III

'THE DINNER PARTY'

1974 - 1979

In the spring of 1979 after five years work and the efforts of four hundred people 'The Dinner Party' [pl. 14] opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. It is an elegant and innovative sculpture that has attracted record crowds in San Francisco. "A truly political art, that gives up none of the aspirations toward beauty traditionally expected from high art."[10] "The cooperatively executed installation piece is an awesome incorporation of sculpture, ceramics, china painting, needlework, and the history of women through western civilization. One of the most ambitious works of art made in the post-war period, it succeeds as few others have in integrating a strong aesthetic with political content."[11]

It could be said that the concept for the work began in 1972 when Chicago, having become fascinated by painted porcelain, while on a trip to Europe, decided to use china painting for a new work, a series of painted plates relating to the '<u>Great Ladies</u>' series of paintings. These abstract portraits of women of the past were part of her search for a historical context for her own art.

As plates are associated with eating, Chicago wanted to convey her belief that the women represented on the painted plates had been swallowed and obscured by history, instead of being recognized and honoured. This idea was originally conceived in terms of a hundred wall hanging plates.

Chicago then met Miriam Halpern, who was to teach her, and help Chicago develop an overall knowledge of china painting

techniques. Chicago found the household objects the china-painting women painted a perfect metaphor for the majority of women's domesticated circumstances. She found it difficult to watch women she considered to be enormously gifted expend their talents on tea cups, and wanted to honour those who had preserved the technique of china painting by making it visible through her own work.

By 1974, her studies were complete and her ideas about the piece had changed. Instead of a hundred abstract portraits on plates, each paying tribute to a different historical female figure, she began to think of the piece as a reinterpretation of the Last Supper from a woman's point of view. Chicago felt that their representation in the form of plates set on a table would express the way women had been confined, and the piece would reflect both women's achievements and their oppression. The Last Supper existed in the context of the Bible, a history of a people. So too the Dinner Party would also be a people's history, the history of women in Western Civilization. Chicago was also exploiting the sacrificial element of the Last Supper, as a metaphor for what she considered women's personal sacrifices over the years of oppression.

As Chicago had explained in her book "Through the Flower: My struggle as a woman artist", 1975, she had been personally strengthened by the discovery of her heritage as a woman. This information she believed to be outside the mainstream of historical thought, and as a result unknown

to many people. As long as women's achievements were excluded from our understanding of the past women would continue to feel as if they had never done anything worthwhile. This absence of a tradition as women, could, Chicago felt, cripple women psychologically. Her goal in the Dinner Party, is consistant with her personal efforts as an artist in the previous decade.

> "I decided to create a work of art that could symbolize these achievements and also represent the circumstances women had to overcome to realize their aspirations." [12]

Chicago had been trying to establish a respect for women's art that expressed the female experience, and to find a way to make that art accessible to a large audience.

> "I firmly believe that if art speaks clearly about something relevant to people's lives, it can change the way they perceive reality." [13]

As Chicago believes that much of the world was unaware of women's history, and their contributions to culture, it is appropriate that the techniques through which she chose to relate women's history, were those conducted primarily by women, china painting and needlework. She had originally planned thirteen plate settings, with the name of each woman embroidered on the table cloth, along with a phrase that would indicate what she had achieved. As thirteen women could not adequately represent the various stages of Western civilization, Chicago decided on thirty nine. Thirty nine plate settings set on an open triangular table. An equilateral triangle that would symbolize her goal, an equalized society.

She wanted to place those thirty nine chosen women against the background of their societies, in which they either had equal rights, or were predominant to begin with, or enjoyed expanded opportunities, agitated for their rights or built support structures for themselves.

This table was placed on a triangular porcelain floor, inscribed with the names of nine hundred and ninety nine other women of achievement. As a result the plates now represented not only individual women of achievement, but also the tradition from which each emerged. The Heritage Floor was inscribed with the names of hundreds of women, all in gold lettering with a lustre overglaze. This overglaze had the effect of making the names seem to appear and disappear as you walk around the table, obscuring the names as history seems to have obscured much of women's achievements through the ages.

When planning the piece Chicago chose fourteen inch plates so that everything would appear slightly over-sized, in order to emphasize that this was not a normal dinner party table. Most of the plates incorporated a butterfly/ vaginal image which Chicago had been using for some time. This butterfly vagina is a complex symbol which is often misunderstood. Her intention is obviously not to reduce all women to mere genitals, rather she sees this butterfly vagina symbol as having metaphysical references to

> "the whole issue of what it is to be feminine....how that word reveals the slant in our values and how those values can be challenged by using the vernacular imagery of the feminine." [14]

She intended to make the butterfly a symbol of liberation and to create the impression through the imagery that the butterfly appeared to become increasingly active in her efforts to escape from the plate; from the Primordial Goddess, past,to Georgia O'Keeffe, present. However, she later decided to strengthen this idea by making the images gradually rise from the plates, dimensionally, negating their function as plates.

The role of the needlework in the Dinner Party was also expanded. Each woman's name was embroidered on the front of the runner which dropped over the viewers side of the table. Instead of a phrase, it was decided to express each woman's achievements through embroidered imagery, using specific needlework techniques common in her lifetime.

The names that appear on the Heritage Floor were chosen with Chicago by an eight women research team, headed by Ann Isolde, using the following criteria:

1. Did the woman make a significant contribution to society?
2. Did she attempt to improve conditions for women?
3. Did her life illuminate an aspect of women's experience or provide a model for the future?

Chicago chose the women who were represented at the table. She picked a woman from each period of history. Sometimes, however, a particular woman was chosen over others because of certain visual possibilities within her history. For example, Isabella D'Este [pl.15] "not only represented the

achievement of female scholars during the Renaissance, the importance of female partonage of the arts, and the political position of Italian women of her century,[15] but also gave Chicago the opportunity of trying to simulate with china paint, one of her favourite ceramic styles, Urbino majolica; a lustre ware produced in a factory patronized by D'Este. Her plate's central image is an arched door at the end of a dream-like, columned cloister [pl. 12].

Boadaceia's [pl.16] plate is a strange, armoured, helmet-form with two spirals set in the gate of what appears similar to a pre-historic dolman. Hrosvitha is represented by an acorn form over abstract folded hands, while Saint Bridget's is consumed in flames. Judith of Bethulia's greens and earth colours unfold in fern like tentacles over the edges of her plate. Sacajawea's [pl.17] plate is one of the few to contain angles instead of curves, and has a great formal dignity in its use of native American symbols, and the ochres, blues and tans of western landscape. Elizabeth Blackwell is a carved pinwheel of rainbow spectrum while Emily Dickinson is a double tier of pink lace ruffles, emanating from the central vaginal shape. Natalia Barney is a seductive, glistening mother of pearl, gold and black starfish. Hatsheput [pl.18] is a simple proud-winged image, stretching from the globular vagina out to its blue majestic wings, possibly a reference to the falcon with which she is associated.

The plates begin as flat surfaces but from Hatsheput move chronologically from very low to increasingly high relief. Mary Wollstonecraft begins this high relief, and her plate is a twisting straining muscular form, reaching out from the central core. Her death in childbirth could have been a gross painted image, but depicted as it is on the runner, it becomes a credible image. The tripartite butterfly vagina form is more or less visible in varied ways on each plate: only one seems to hide the image, composer Ethel Smyth is depicted as a piano. The Sojourner Truth plate depicts a series of three faces. But in fact, the butterfly vagina is still there, composed of the three faces. A weeping face on the left, a fierce mask of hidden strength on the right and a very schematic central image of hidden emotion.

The plates are undoubtedly more stylistically diverse than the runners. This is possibly because they fit more readily into a fine art context and are judged as such, while the runners would be seen more in the craft context. Theodora's [pl. 19] plump gold mosaic vaginal form and halo, and 'Hildegard of Bingen's' [pl. 20] stained glass style are too obviously similar images, in both form and colour to represent both a powerful Byzantine woman of ruling class, Theodora and Hildegarde of Bingen, the ruling abbess of an important monastic center in the twelfth century. Another obvious inconsistency in the plate imagery is that which represents Elizabeth Regina. Her purplish swelling pod shapes are too reminiscent of the earlier Fertility Goddess for a virgin queen.

Some of the images used are a bit over-stated, for example, the Primordial Goddess's runner of animal skins and cowery shells. However, as part of the whole piece, these criticisms seem like pointless nit-picking and become unimportant when you consider, they refer to just a tiny part of the overall image, a simmering, majestic seemingly floating triangle. The least interesting parts of the piece are the clumsy almost crude lustre flatware and gold lined chalices. The gold-edged napkins seem an unnecessarily obtrusive touch of realism.

These plate images are not literal, but rather a blending of historical facts, iconographical sources, symbolic meanings, and imagination. She has used both mythological figures, who have no factual basis, and who are not individual women, but act as representatives for the women of that historical period. For example Primordial Goddess [pl. 21] and Amazon are represented in the same manner as she later uses the lives and achievements of individual women through history without making any distinction as to where myth and history begin or end. Rather she blends historical fact, popular myth and symbolism to produce an amazingly detailed piece of work that proclaims her own passionate beliefs.

The Dinner Party responds to a male dominated society's neutralized version of fine art.

> "It symbolizes female power both as an aesthetic celebration and as a standard bearer in the class struggle based on the division between women and men." [16]

A radical feminist, Chicago believes

> "A species makes myths that correspond to its needs and allows it to act on the needs that are momentarily paramount. I believe that myth at its base has to be challenged before economics or sociology or philosophy will change."[17]

The Dinner Party addresses both myth and reality and attempts to transform reality by the use of art as purveyer of myth. Chicago recognizes the need for positive role models and an awareness of our tradition among women. This need she has also attempted to fulfill.

Yet although the Dinner Party attempts to reiterate and illuminate our heritage as women, it does not really deal with the entire history of women.

> "It is women's historical invisibility, both as participants and as creators, that the Dinner Party tries to rectify: to give credit to the preparer's of meals, makers of the table cloths and recorders of men's activities. The Dinner Party both acknowledges these contributions, and simultaneously challenges the way women have inadvertantly participated in their own oppression by not using their energies and skills to nurture and acknowledge themselves and their own accomplishments."[18]

In Chicago's view and in that of many feminist artists like her, each woman whose name has survived through history implies many others who remain anonymous. The idea of a work of art that can absorb myth and history, as the Dinner Party has done is contrary to the modernist visual tradition. Artists have either found themselves cut off from their audience and their response, or have struggled against the system to make a populist art that is accessible to a

large audience. The Dinner Party has effectively refused to make this choice.

Despite its accomplishments and massive response from the whole community wherever it is shown, journalists have referred to it as "a grotesque embarrassment, the ultimate in 1970's kitsch",[19] or as "coy, brutal, baroque and banal".[20]

> "Her aesthetic ideas have been oversimplified, under perceived and worst of all preconceived. The media hoopla surrounding the San Francisco showing was useful in some ways, but it also engendered a certain amount of hostility. Whereas in the early 1970's the dominant elements of the culture simply could not imagine a female imagery, now they think they recognize it when they see it, and any evolution from the center is as invisible as ever. The art world loves to categorize, applaud or denigrate, and then move on to the next category." [21]

And since women's art is neither a style nor a movement and since feminist art is still more undefined than it is defined, only aggravates this situation.

Although content in art has been an issue in the 70's, where autobiography, nudity and irony have often been prevalent, the capacity of an art work to invite a specific emotional response from its audience was still considered sentimental, crude or crowd pleasing. This and the usual prejudices against crafts, and of course feminism in general, highlights the kind of opposition Chicago and women like her have come up against. The Dinner Party having inspired huge community response directly challenges those prejudices against crafts and female content oriented art.

Chicago had earlier taught women in Fresno and Los Angeles, and encouraged them to work together openly using their own subject matter. But she had gone back to her studio to make what she calls "veiled art".[22] She had helped establish feminized art contexts centered on women instead of men. For example, alternative exhibition spaces for women, had co-founded the Women's Building, and the Feminist Studio Workshop; an alternative educational program. But she left within a year because she was unable to integrate her art-making life with her own need for a support community.

One of the noteworthy aspects of the Dinner Party, however, was the community that it built.

> "The system of the individual artist has not worked for us, and yet women keep doing it and doing it. I think that one real contribution the piece will make, will be to demonstrate another mode of art-making for the woman artist." [23]

Over four hundred people were involved in this one art-work.

> "Benevolent hierarchy, non-hierarchical leadership, whatever it was, it worked!"[24]
>
> "It's the first time I've felt part of a working group." [25]

Chicago and the women she works with, as well as others around the world are determined to make feminist culture not a subculture but part of the mainstream of thought and culture. The goal is not just to join that mainstream but to change its character, hoping to result in a more equalized society.

> "Now the Dinner Party is out in the world with its built in organizational strategy to reach out to feminist communities

wherever it is shown, she is considering other ways to make some new bridges between artists and the communities to introduce new images into the culture and to reach new audiences for art."[26]

CHAPTER IV

A FEMINIST AESTHETIC

Chicago's life's work has been dedicated to establishing and unifying a feminist art community, educational programs, and exhibition spaces. But Chicago is not a lone crusader, rather she is one of many of today's women who strive for similar goals, under a general title of the feminist movement. Is the feminist movement, which these women represent, possibly taking the first steps toward developing what could be termed a coherent feminist aesthetic in art? The term "feminist" is used loosely to define any position that is favourable to women. More restrictively it involves commitment to certain values, for example, equal rights, equal pay for equal work and control over one's body in matters of reproduction. Since relatively few artists take the time to become activists, specific political commitments are nearly impossible to pin down, and may turn out to be irrelevant to the interpretation of works of art.

So a feminist aesthetic, were there to be one, might be drawn from women who are not directly inspired by politics, as well as from those who are. Therefore, the identifying mark of feminist art, is simply its articulation of the artist's consciousness of what it means to be a woman.

Lucy Lippard, a feminist critic, has been the most influential defender of feminist visual art since the publication of her book "From the center: Feminist Essays on Woman's Art", 1976. From her work, it is possible to conceive a feminist aesthetic theory, with potentially broad application across the arts. I feel that Lippard's

theory is relevant here, because of her involvement with feminist artists like Chicago, at a time when work such as 'The Dinner Party' was being produced. She has watched the development of feminist art from its first stirrings in the early seventies and doubtless without her work concerning these feminist artists, much of the information available today about their lives and work would still be unavailable.

According to Lippard, in societies where gender differences are pronounced, issues of gender are bound to appear in the arts. Gender conditioning is very complex and produces different results in artists. It has worked on some women to restrict their artistic expression to certain media, for example embroidery at one extreme, and hard edge painting in reaction to it, at the other. On others it has allowed them to revalue previously devalued aspects of human experience. The belief that art is gendered, appears to underlie most of the exhibits and books devoted to women artists in the seventies.

Lippard was among the first to say that gender differences were apparent in both the subject matter and the form of visual works by women. In 1973 in response to the first major all women's exhibition in America the "Women choose Women" show, Brooklyn Museum, she noted the following recurrent elements in the contemporary work on display:

> "a uniform density or overall texture,
> often sensuously tactile and repetitive
> or detailed to the point of obsession;
> the preponderance of circular forms,

> central focus, inner space (sometimes contradicting the first aspect); a ubiquitous linear "bag" or parabolic form that turns in on itself; layers, or strata, or veils; an indefinable looseness or flexibility of handling; windows; autobiographical content; animals; flowers; a certain kind of fragmentation a new fondness for the pinks and pastels and ephemeral cloud colours that used to be tabu unless a woman wanted to be accused of making "feminine art"."[27]

Lippard attributed these patterns generally to the difference in woman's social and biological experiences in society, saying that if women's art did not differ from men's it could only be because of repression. Gender seemed to be an essential factor in determining the focus of attention, the qualities of colour, texture and shape and the means of creating formal unity.

Later, Lippard modified this position. While still affirming the idea that certain recurrent images in art by women have "biological and sexual sources" she began to see that there is "no technique, form or approach used exclusively by women."[28] She also began to think that the overtly sexual imagery tended to occur in "early, immature or naive, not yet acculturated work".[29] She also appeared to be intrigued by what she calls "a certain antilogical, antilinear approach common to many women's work",[30] particularly as it was expressed in fragments or networks, and was often autobiographical. Instead of dealing with these ideas in further detail, Lippard appears to retreat from them, without abandoning the idea that gender is an essential element in art.

She began to think less about its specific manifestations in form and content, and more about the effect of women on the evolution of art.

> "Feminism's greatest contribution to the future of art has probably been precisely its lack of contribution to modernism. Feminist methods and theories have instead offered a socially concerned alternative to the increasingly mechanical evolution of art about art." [31]

Lippard also refers to her belief that feminist art, despite any political emphasis, challenges the modernist idea of the work of art as an object

> "a closed system accessible only by relatively rare and highly trained acts of empathy: art by women of the seventies is characterized by an atmosphere of outreach virtually abandoned by modernism." [32]

Lippard admits however, that along the way many feminist artists have fallen into certain traps.

> "The adoption of certain cliches in images, (fruit and shell, mirror and mound) materials (fabrics and papers), approaches (non-elitist) and emotions (non-transformative pain, rage and mother love); a certain naivete that comes from the wholesale rejection of all other art; especially abstraction and painting; a dependence and, at the other extreme, an unthinking acceptance of literally anything done by a woman."[33]

Those who have avoided these traps, Lippard suggests, have done so by becoming collaborative, by engaging in consciousness raising dialogue about the social and aesthetic realities of their art and lives, while also developing a new respect for their audience. The impulse toward formal originality appeared to be replaced by a concern with

re-structuring the links between art and life.

Lippard gives examples of interaction between feminist artists and their audiences. Cooperative, collective, collaborative or anonymous art, epitomized by traditional quilt making, is high on her list, as a structure that could change the meaning of art by changing our definition of the artist.

Public consciousness raising events or performances such as Judy Chicago's 'The Dinner Party' demonstrate the idea that art can be socially effective. Ntozake Shange's Choreopoem grew out of the experience of five women who met regularly for two years, in a bar outside Berkeley, to read poems for an audience of about twenty. From here the poems became a full-scale Broadway production. They renacted a ritual of survival for black women, and also acted as a consciousness raising event for the black men and other members of the audience. Shange's work is an example of Lippard's theory of inclusiveness, that she cites as characteristic of feminist art. As a college of poetry, dance, music and theater, it challenges the boundaries of several art forms. This is not to make a statement about the nature of art, but a response to the imperatives of Shange's female heritage and a decision to take on the responsibility for expressing it.

In Lippard's theory all previous definitions of art are superceded by this idea of inclusiveness. The structures of such art are more like webs of communication than art objects. They could encompass any subject, style, form,

situation and audience, and could adapt easily to any new environments. Feminist art is like a collage, both because it "offers a way of knitting the fragments of our lives together and because it potentially leaves nothing out."[35] As such all previous art forms could become part of its structure.

Lippard's definition of feminist art hinges on the idea of dialogue. The work of art must affect the audience both aesthetically and politically and must create the possibility of dialogue. The audience response becomes part of the work. The extent to which the audience is moved to speak back to the work, is for Lippard the measure of its success or quality. In this way she has set the first rule for evaluation within a feminist aesthetic.

It is obvious that Lippard hopes that feminist art will make dramatic changes in the art world, in terms of the feminist challenges to the modernist art world's definition of art and separation of art and life. If feminist art succeeds in making its point that art is a network of relationships with an audience, where its social aspects are as important as its aesthetic aspects, the effect on the art world could be enormous. Feminist art, by it availability to people who are not highly trained in viewing art, will not require much support from the art world. The huge success of 'The Dinner Party' for example. Therefore, regardless of its success in changing the art world, feminist art could

continue to develop independently of the established art community for a very long time.

CONCLUSION:

Chicago's work to date has always had a very strong sense of direction. Obviously she is keenly aware of her personal goals and the realization of these goals is of paramount importance. Her need for communication and identification with other women artists is evident from her earliest work to the present day. In relation to Lippard's feminist theory she is a perfect example. Her work contains both a strong aesthetic and political statement. The viability of this theory and the possibility of a proposed feminist aesthetics' eventual appeal to a very large audience is still at this stage debatable. This situation in no way detracts from the quality and immense response achieved in Chicago's work. We can only remain in awe at the strength of idea and personal magnetism, which allowed Chicago to amass four hundred volunteer workers, with a common goal; the production of her major work to date 'The Dinner Party'.

Chicago's community art work continues. 'The Birth Project' was begun in 1980, in the same participatory manner as 'The Dinner Party'. The images used are her own, but the process of translating or executing them through a range of techniques, draws upon the talents and abilities of the needleworkers, who are spread out all over America. When completed, these works, like the Dinner Party, will belong to the 'Through the Flower Corporation' which will circulate

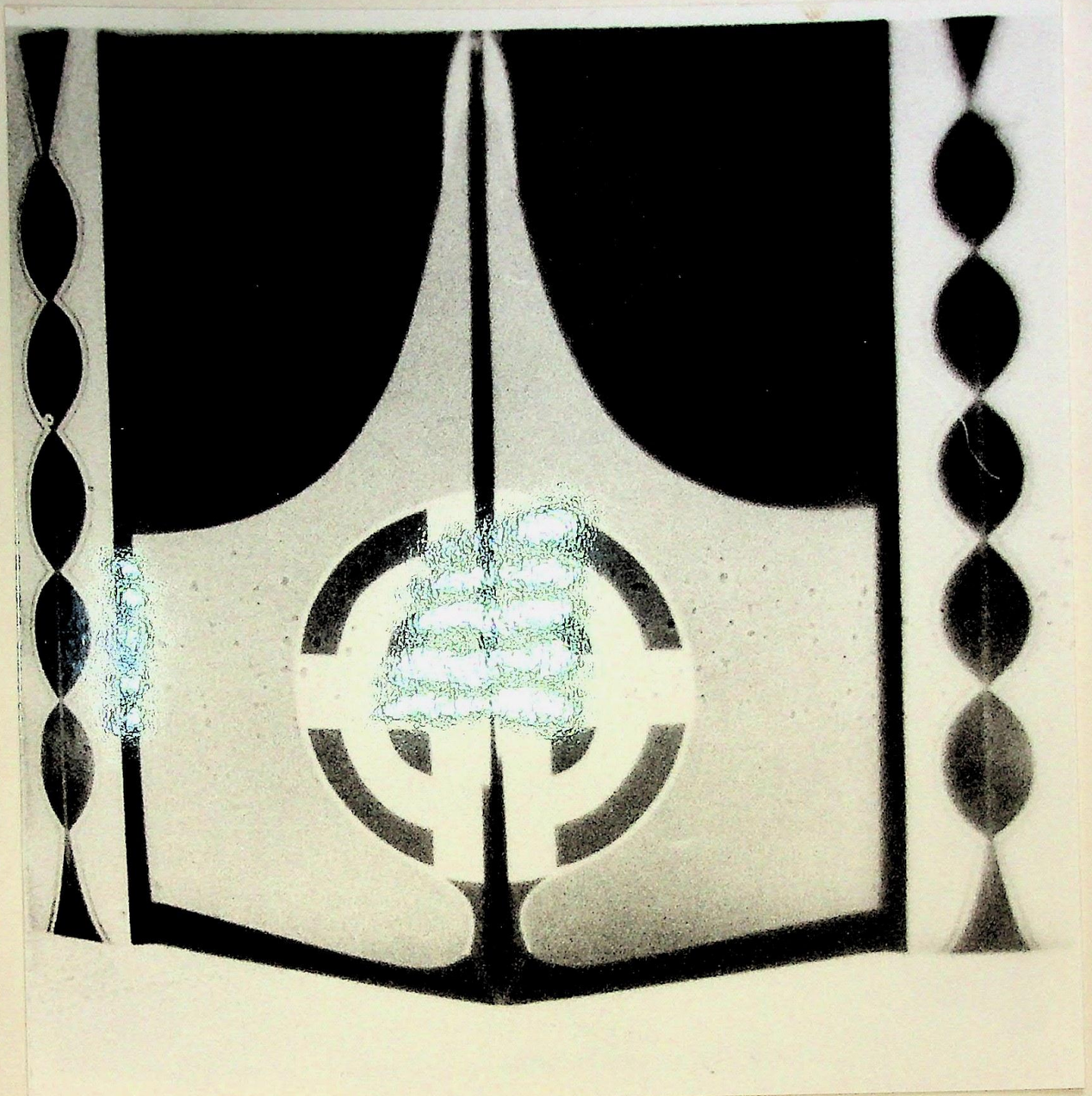
them for exhibition. This is again consistant with Chicago's goal of introducing art into the life of the community in a way that allows people to have images they can relate to.

> "Maybe artists have to be like congresspeople - representatives of the needs, feelings and aspirations of a group of people. At least that's what I want to be - to speak to the longings and yearnings and aspirations of women." [36].

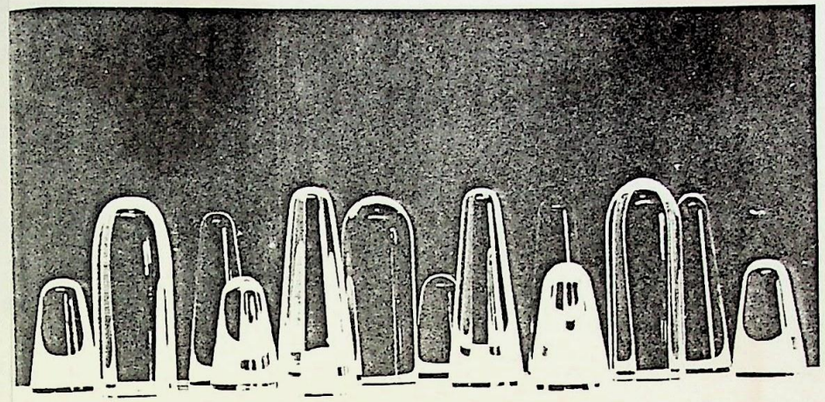
FOOTNOTES

1. There is no reference through Chicago's literary work, to the surname of her first husband, Gerry.
2. Judy Chicago, Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist, New York, 1975, p. 26.
3. Lucy R. Lippard, Judy Chicago talking to Lucy Lippard, USA, 1974, p. 60.
4. Judy Chicago. op. cit., p. 63.
5. Lucy Lippard, op. cit., p. 62.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Judy Chicago, op. cit., p. 92.
9. Ibid., p. 202.
10. Ibid., pp. 203, 204.
11. Lucy R. Lippard, Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, U.S.A., 1980, p. 116.
12. Ibid., p. 115.
13. Ibid.
14. Judy Chicago, The Dinner Party: A Symbol of our Heritage, New York, 1979, p. 12.
15. Lucy R. Lippard, Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, p. 122.
16. Ibid. p. 123.
17. Ibid., p. 115.
18. Ibid.
19. Judy Chicago, The Dinner Party: Embroidering our heritage, New York, 1979, p. unknown.
20. Lucy R. Lippard, Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, p. 116.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.

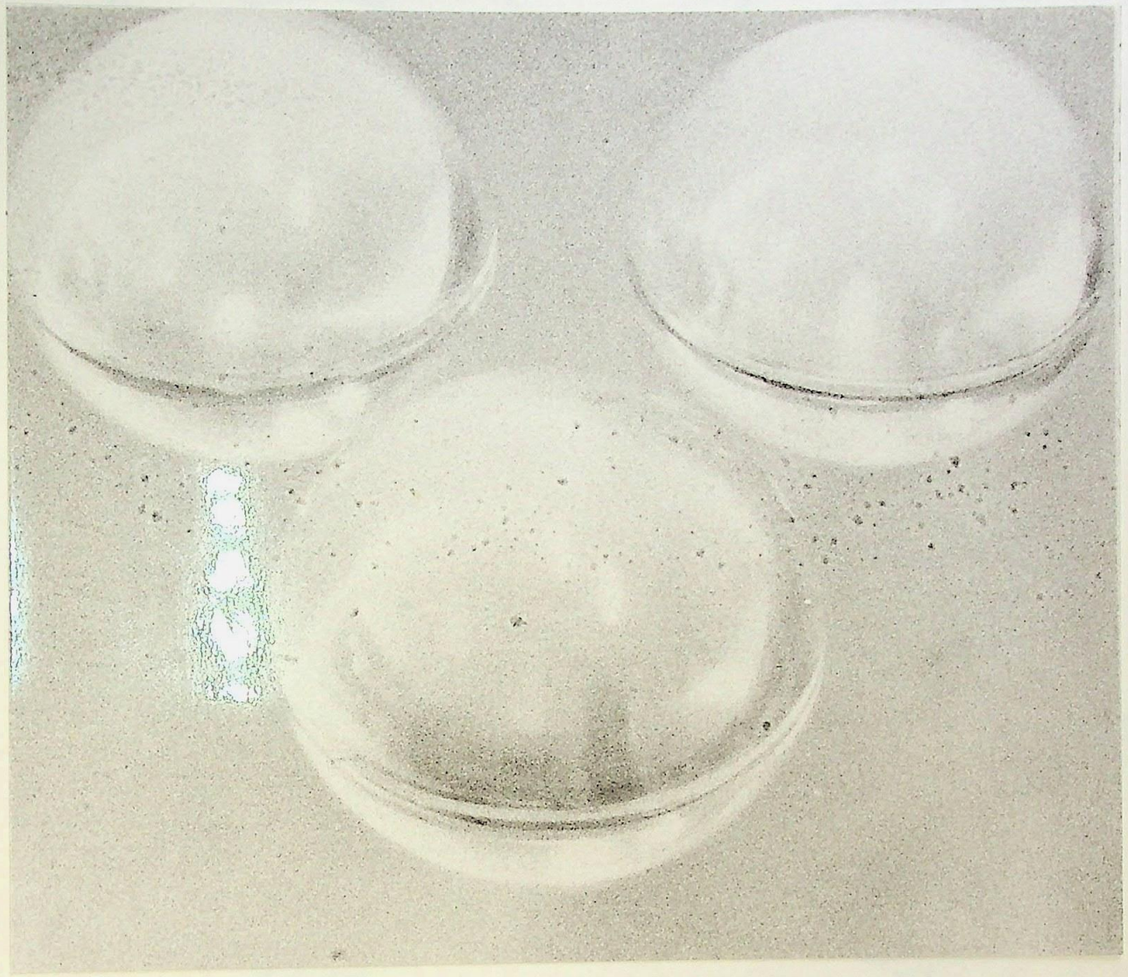
23. Judy Chicago, The Dinner Party - a symbol of our heritage, p. 19.
24. Lucy R. Lippard, Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, p. 124.
25. Ibid., p. 116.
26. Ibid., p. 122.
27. Ibid., p. 125.
28. Lucy R. Lippard, From the Centre: Feminist essays on womens art, U.S.A., 1976, p. 49.
29. Ibid., p. 69.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 81.
32. Lucy R. Lippard, Sweeping Exchanges: The contribution of feminism to the Art of the 1970's, U.S.A., 1980, p. 362.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 363.
35. Ibid., p. 365.
36. Ibid.
37. Lucy R. Lippard, Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, p. 120.



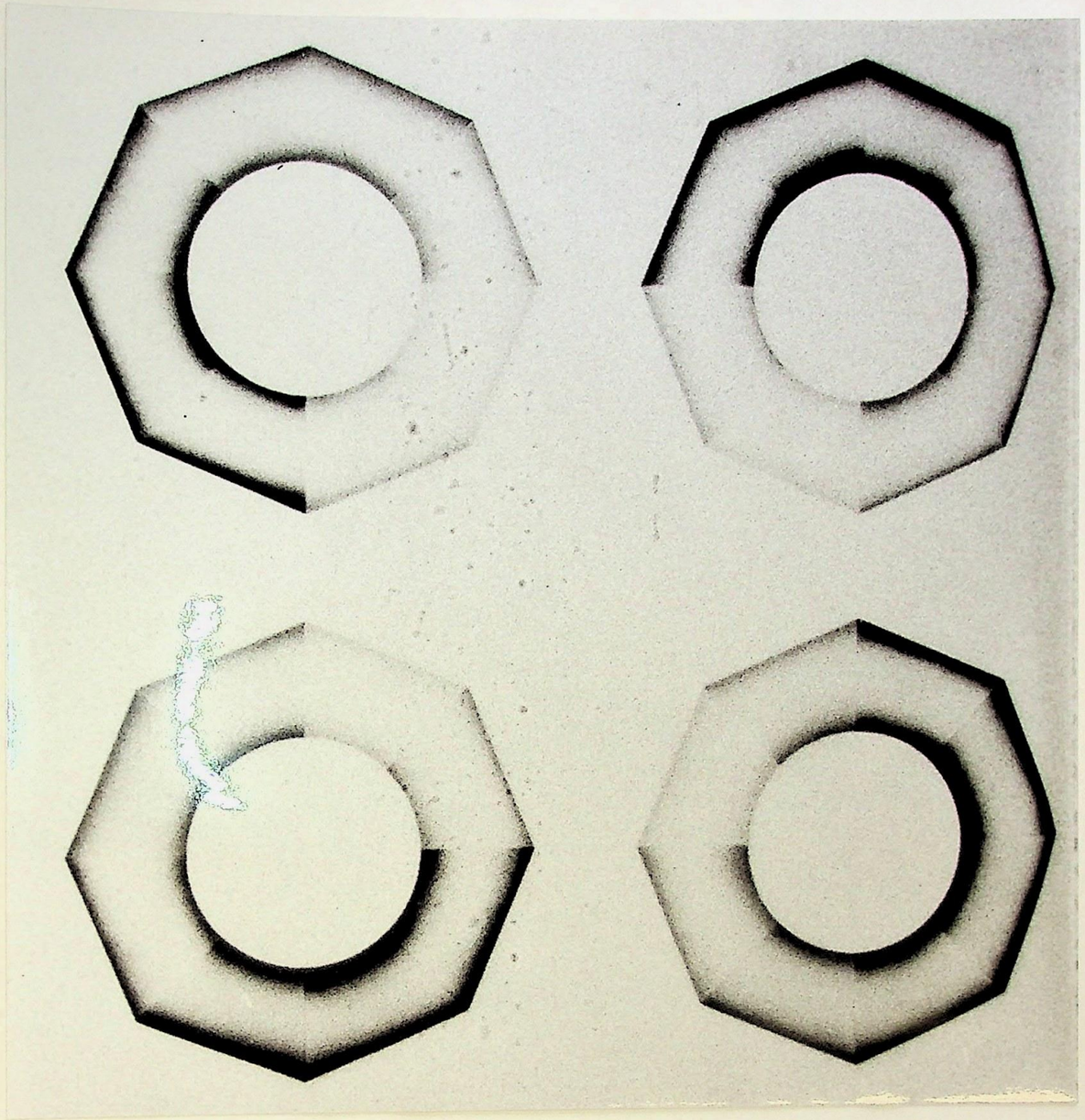
1. "Car Hood", (1964) by Judy Chicago 4' x 6'.



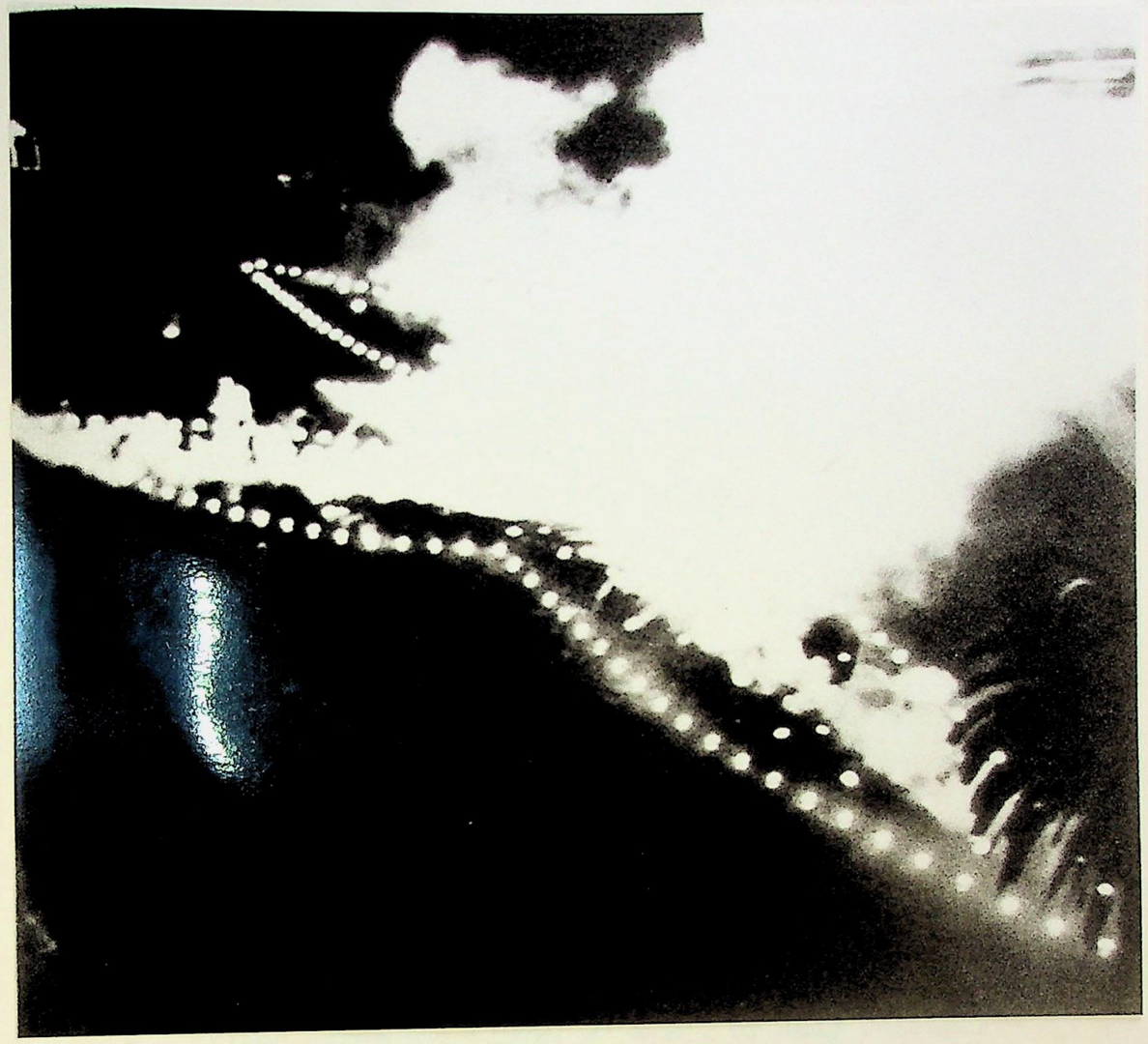
2. 3, 4, 5 Acrylic Shapes (1966) by Judy Chicago 24" x 24".



3. "Dame Set 7" (1968-69) by Judy Chicago 30" x 30".

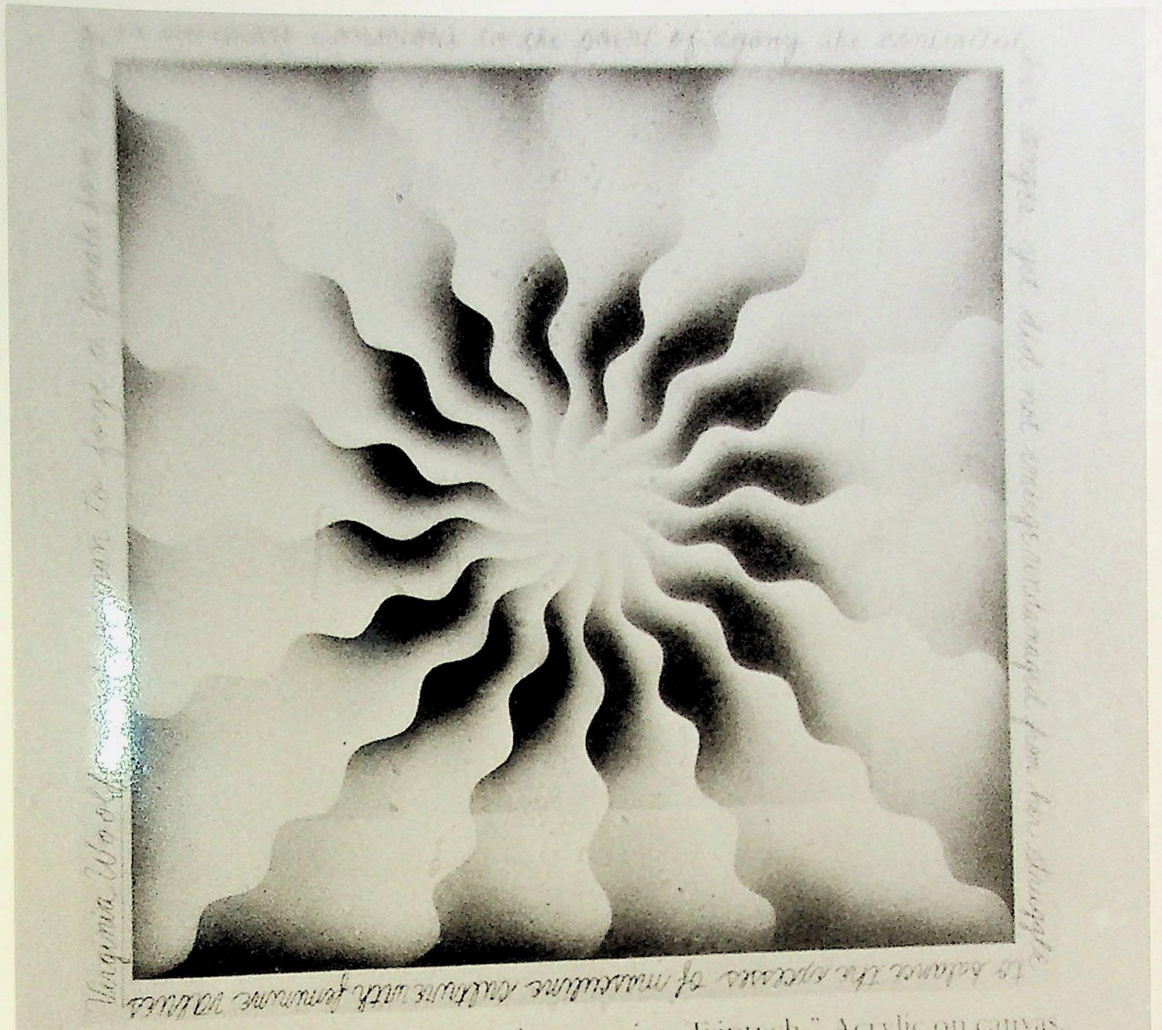


4. "Pasadena Lifesavers 3", (1969-70) by Judy Chicago.

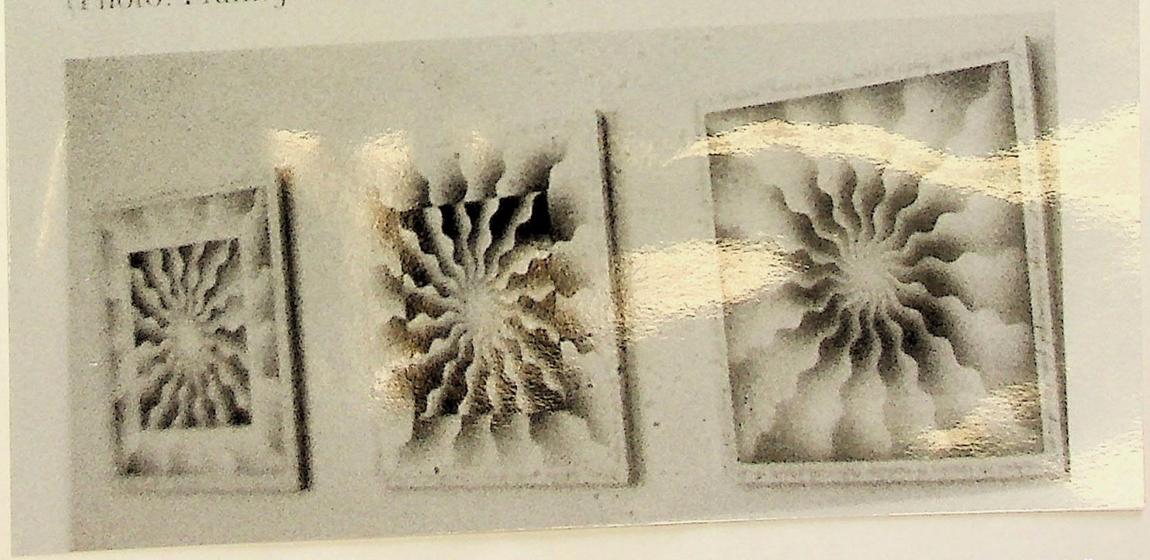


5. "A Butterfly for Oakland", by Judy Chicago (1974). Fireworks. 400' x 200'.

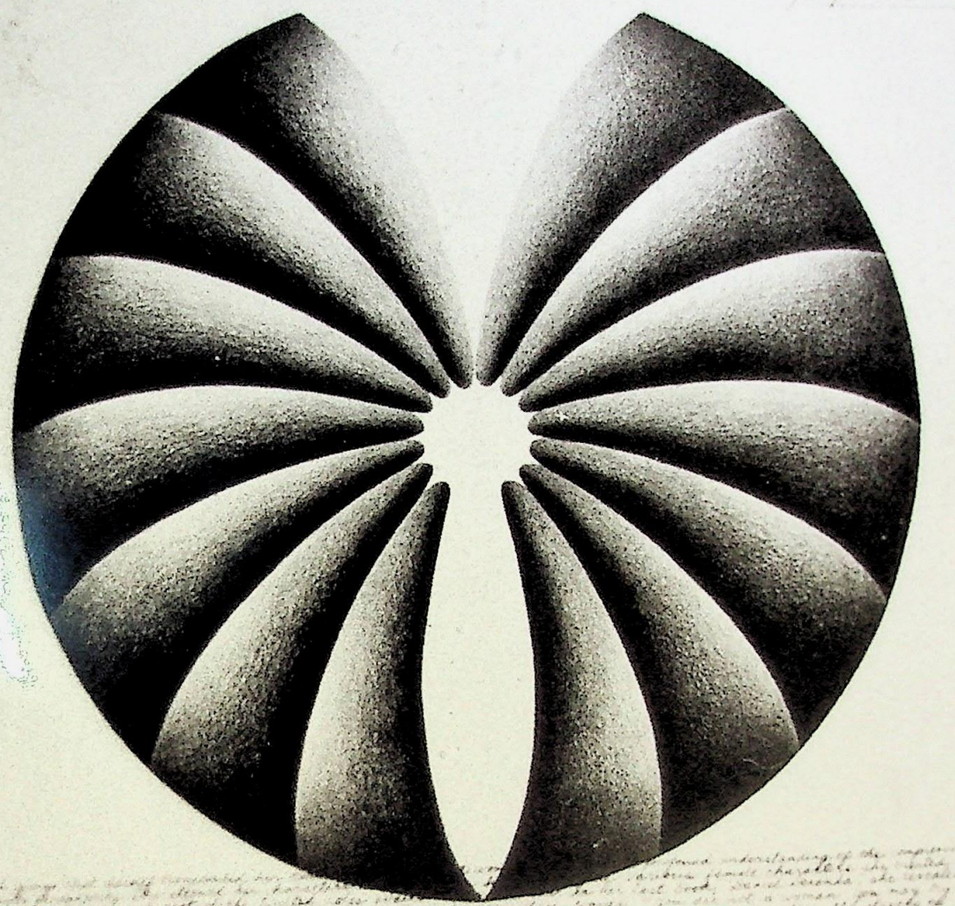
6. "Flesh Gardens", (1972) 2' x 2', by Judy Chicago.



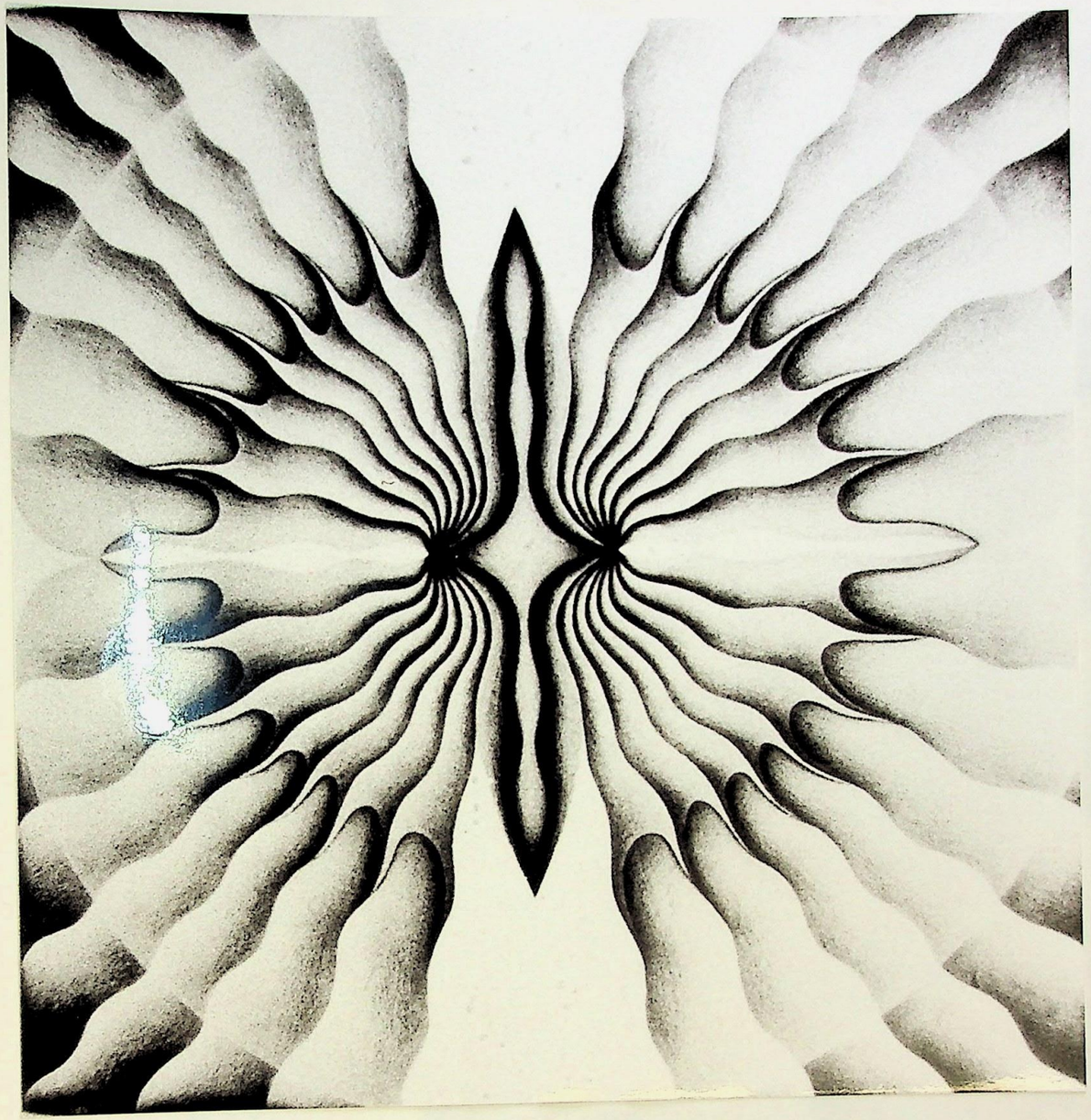
"Virginia Woolf," from the "Reincarnation Triptych." Acrylic on canvas, 5' x 5'. Collection of Dr. Susan Rennie/Kirsten Grimstad, New York. (Photo: Frank J. Thomas)



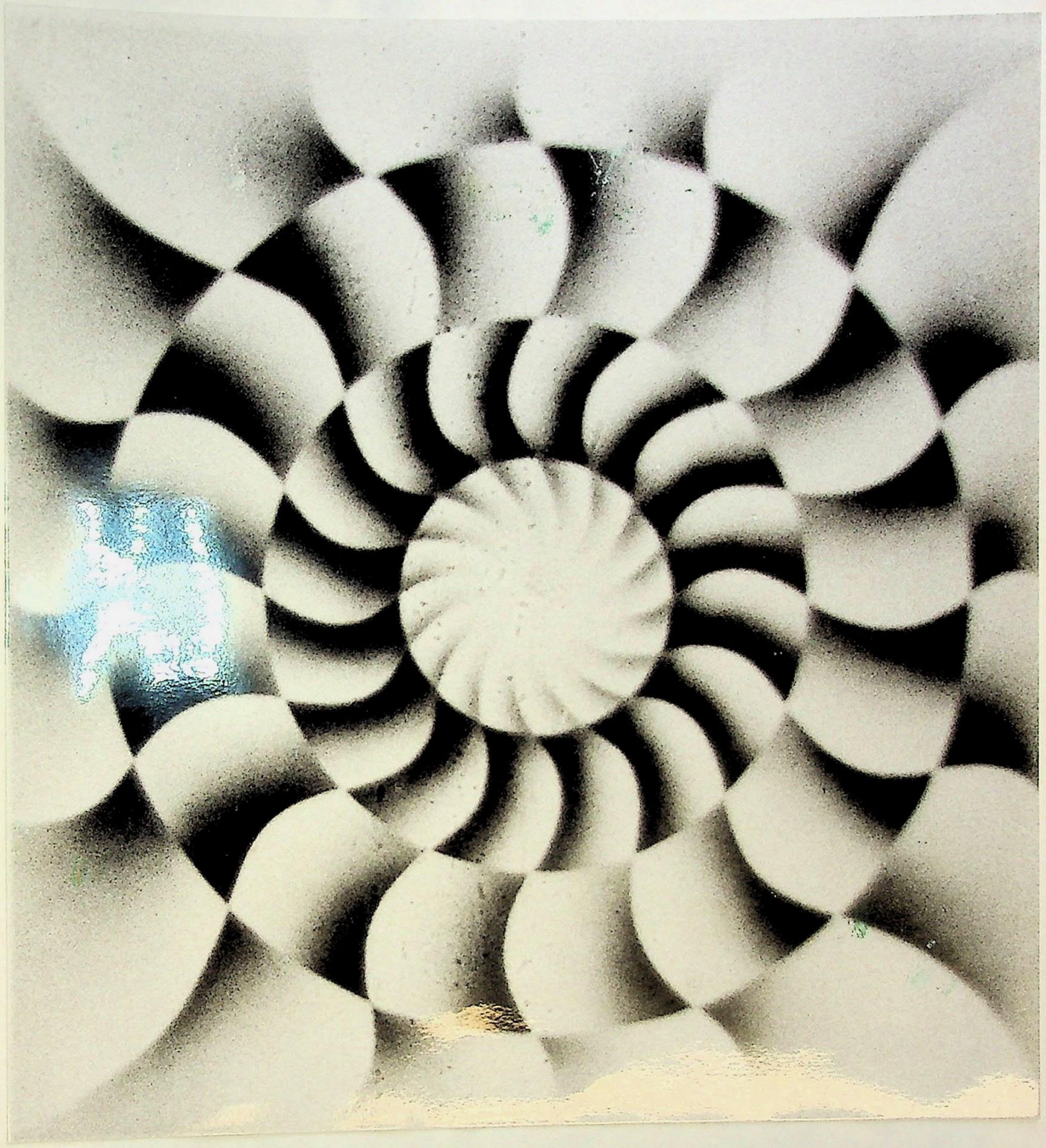
7. "Virginia Woolf" (top) from the "Reincarnation Triptych", 5' x 5'.



8. "Madame Deronda", (1973-1974) from the "Compressed Women Who Yearned to be Butterflies", by Judy Chicago.



9. "Fantasy Rejection Drawing", from the "Rejection Quintet", 1974.
30" x 40", by Judy Chicago.



10. "Let it all Hang Out", (1973) 80" x 80" by Judy Chicago.

11. "Birth Trilogy", by the Feminist Art Program Performance Group, performed at Womanhouse.

"Menstruation Bathroom," Judy Chicago. One day, as I was walking down the steps of the house, it occurred to me that there was no reference to menstruation anywhere in the environment. It was unthinkable that a woman's house should not include any mention of our monthly cycle, so I decided to make "Menstruation Bathroom," which would be very, very sterile, all white. Under a shelf full of all the paraphernalia with which this culture "cleans up" menstruation was a garbage can filled with the unmistakable marks of our animality. One could not walk into the room, however; rather, one peered in through a thin veil of gauze, which made the room a sanctum. (Photo: Lloyd Hamrol)

12. "Menstruation Bathroom", from Womanhouse, by Judy Chicago.

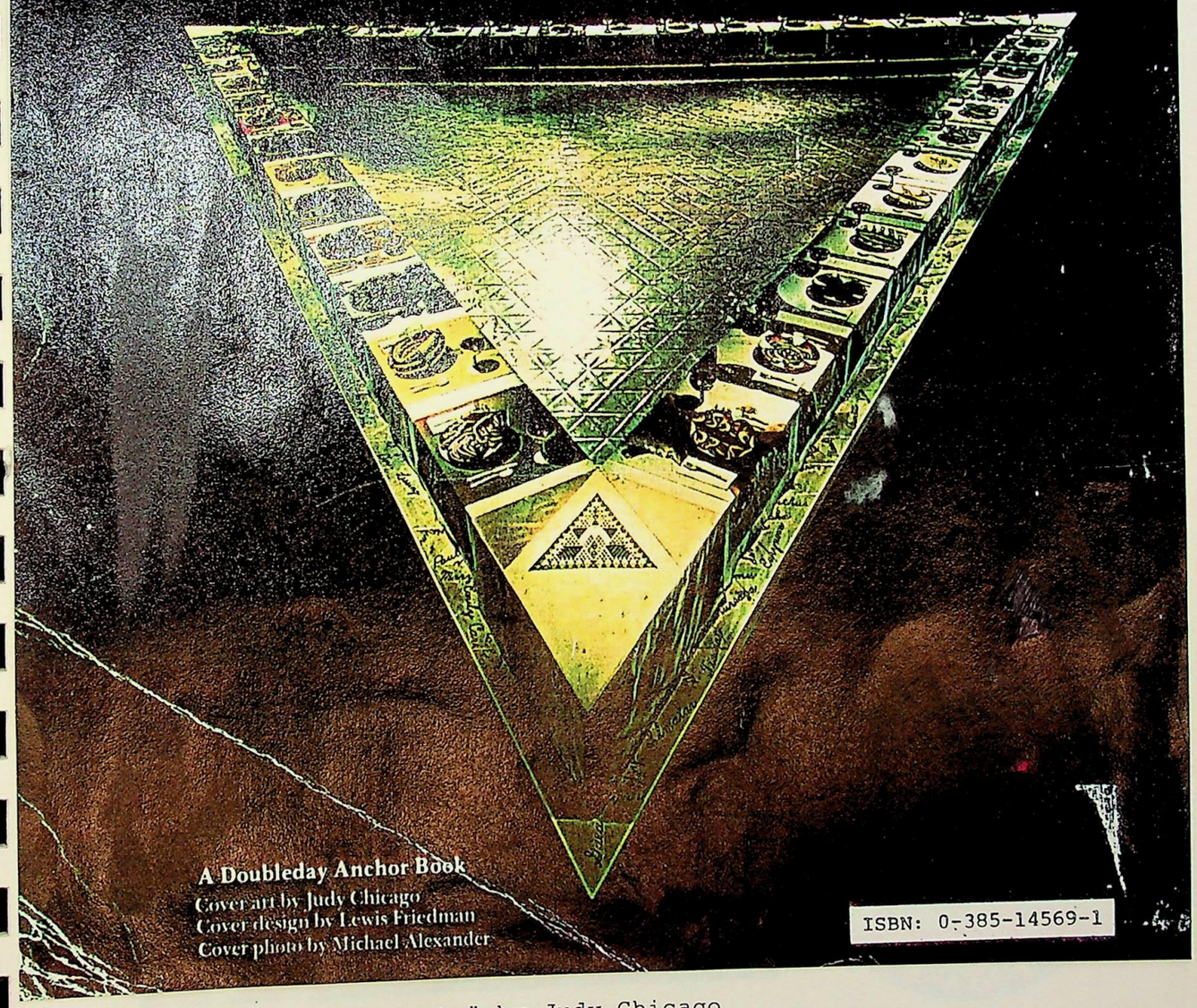
"Nurturant Kitchen," Vickie Hodgetts, Robin Weltsch, and Susan Frazier. This proved to be one of the most popular rooms in the house. A skin of fleshy-pink paint covered the walls, floors, ceilings, and all the objects and appliances. The room took on the feeling of skin and became mother/nurturer/kitchen simultaneously. (Photo: Lloyd Hamrol)

13. "Nurturant Kitchen", from Womanhouse by Vickie Hodgetts, Robin Weltsch, and Susan Frazier.

Judy Chicago

WITH SUSAN HILL

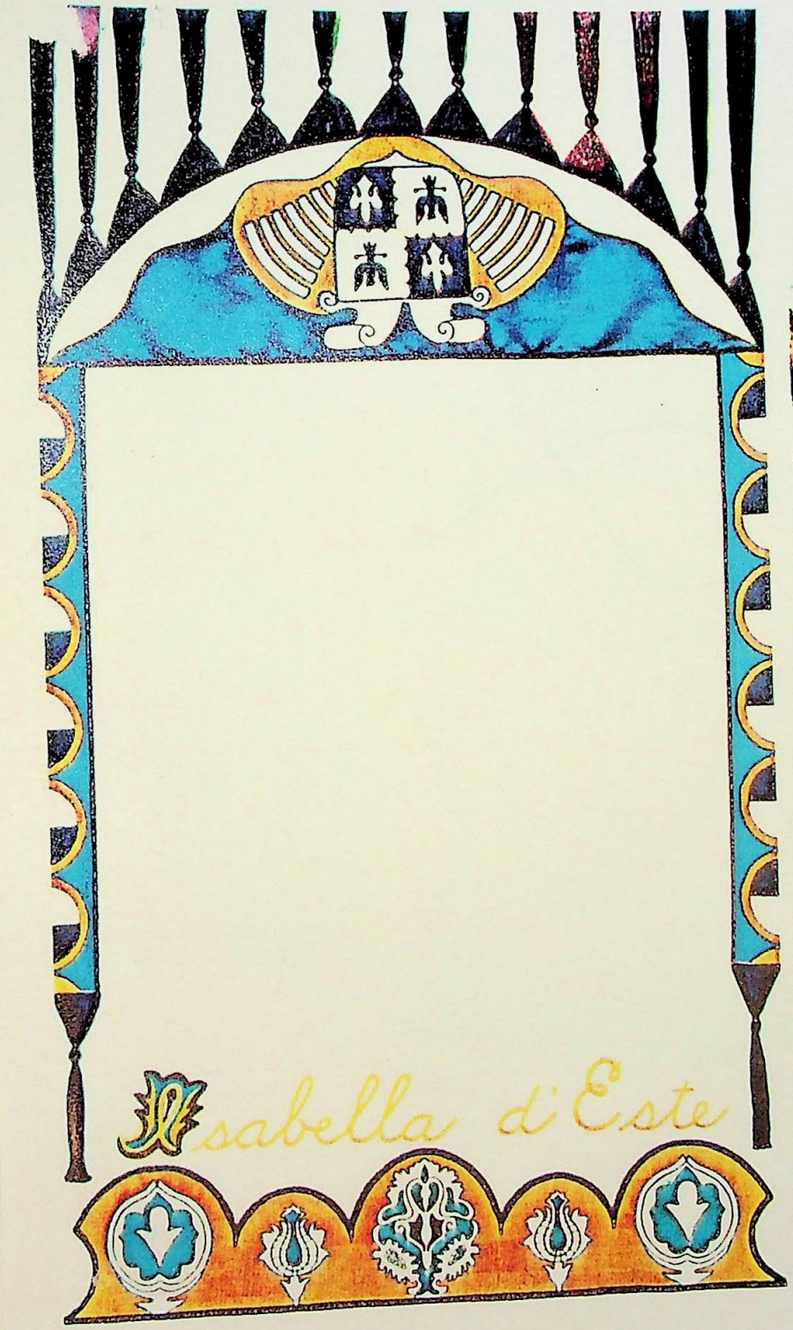
In this brilliant and innovative book, Judy Chicago has created a work of art in which images and words are interwoven. In beautifully hand-drawn pages, she continues the saga of *The Dinner Party*, which symbolizes the history of women's achievements and women's struggles through the 39 china painted plates and the elaborately embroidered runners.



A Doubleday Anchor Book
Cover art by Judy Chicago
Cover design by Lewis Friedman
Cover photo by Michael Alexander

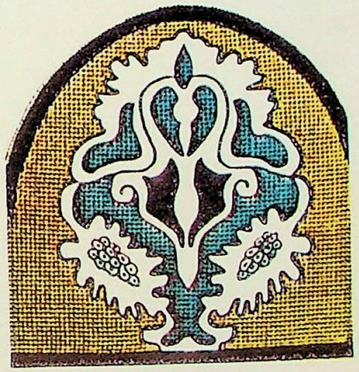
ISBN: 0-385-14569-1

14. "The Dinner Party" by Judy Chicago

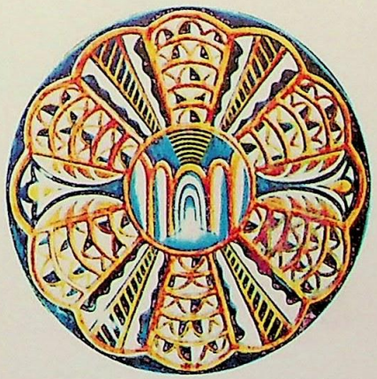


Full runner.

Illuminated capital.



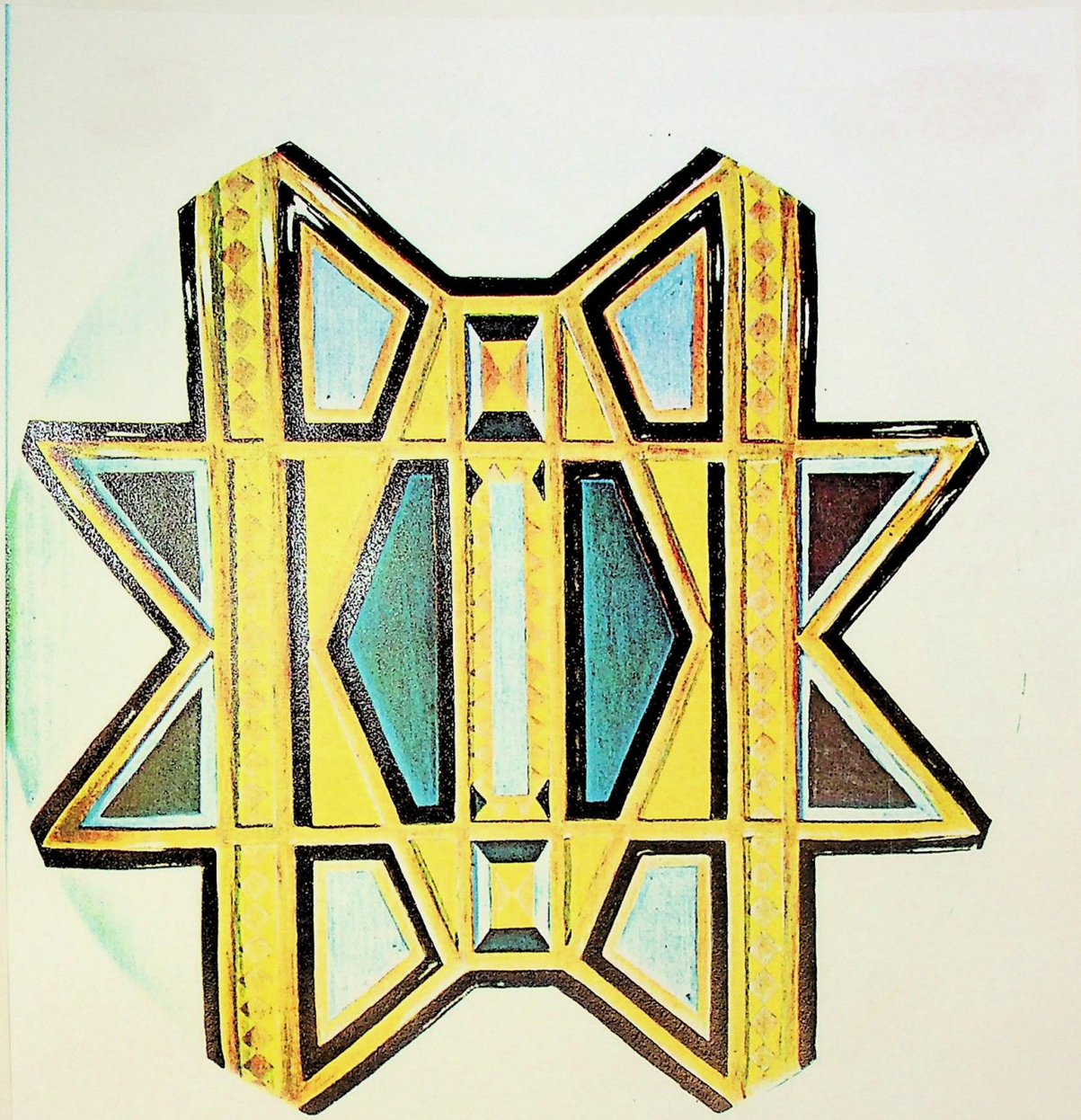
Center image, front band.



15. "Isabella D'Este", (plate and runner design) from "The Dinner Party", by Judy Chicago.

Boadaceia

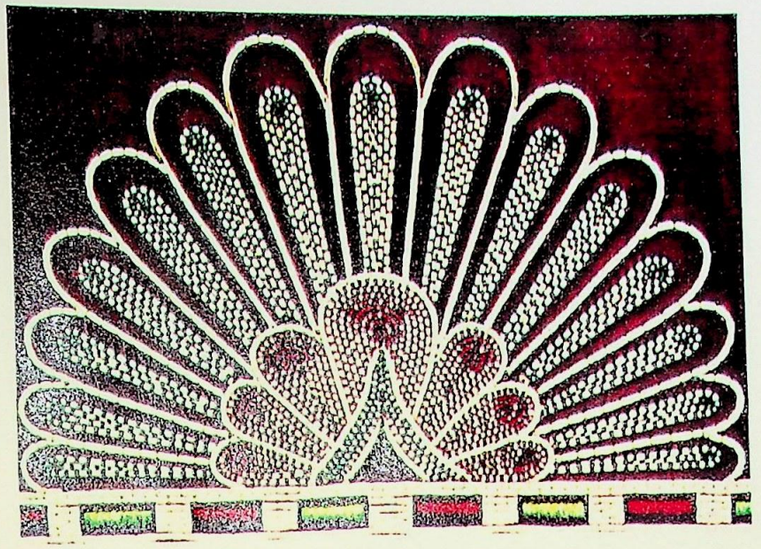
16. "Boadaceia", (plate image) from "The Dinner Party", by Judy Chicago.



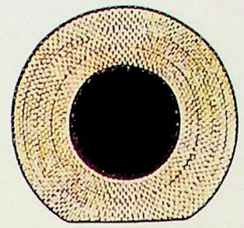
Sacajawea

17. "Sacajawea", (plate image) from "The Dinner Party", by Judy Chicago.

18. "Hatsheput", (plate image) from "The Dinner Party", by Judy Chicago.



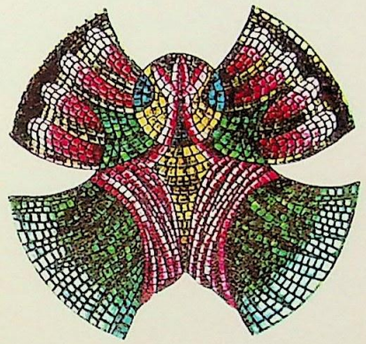
Embroidered shell form.



Theodora

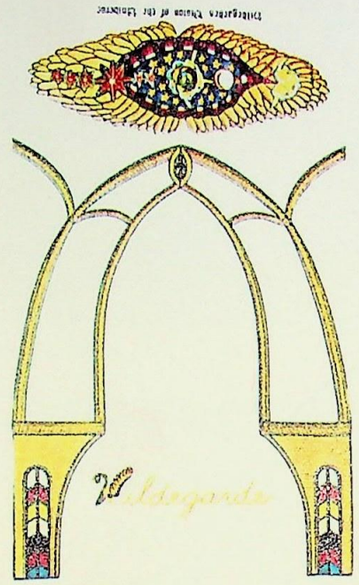
Full runner.

Detail: illuminated capital.

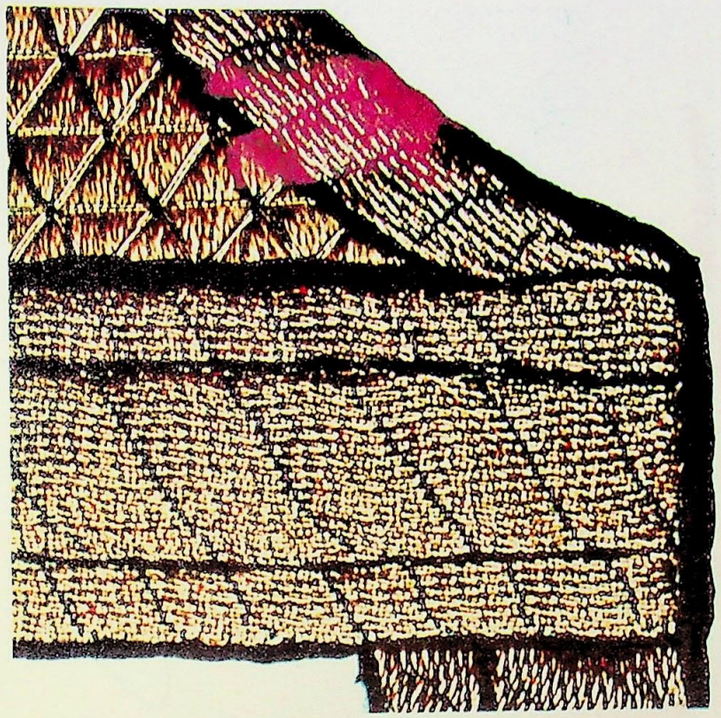


Theodora plate.

19. "Theodora", (plate and runner design) from "The Dinner Party", by Judy Chicago.

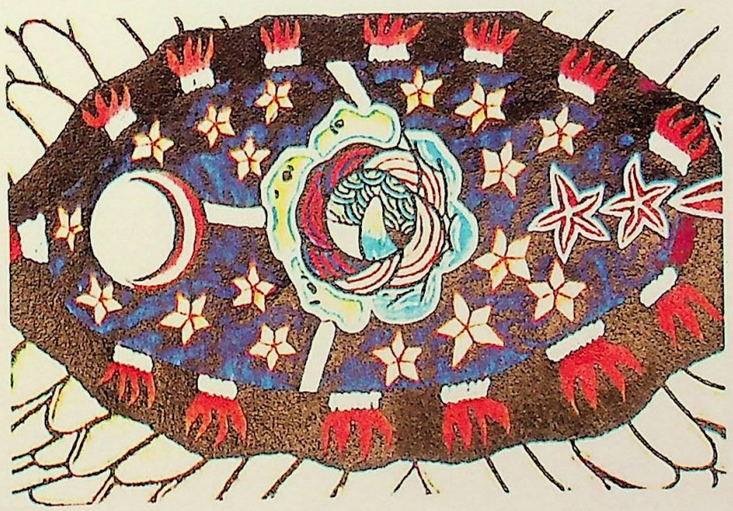


Full runner.



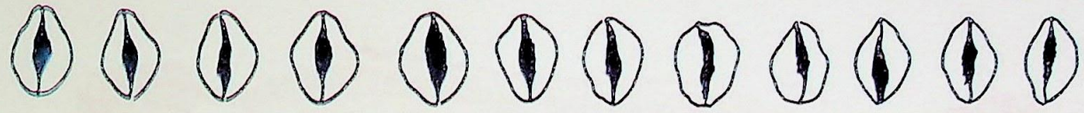
Detail: raised goldwork.

Hildegarde of Bingen plate.



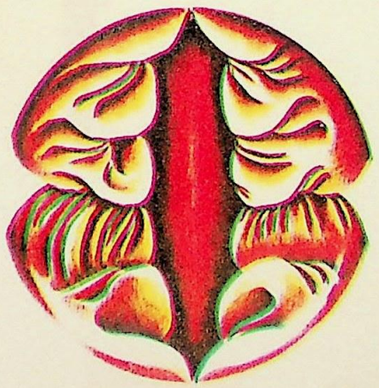
Center of image on runner back.

20. "Hildegarde of Bingen", (plate and runner design) from "The Dinner Party" by Judy Chicago.



Runner detail.

Illuminated capital.



Primordial Goddess plate.

Full runner.

21. "Primordial Goddess", (plate and runner design) from "The Dinner Party", by Judy Chicago.

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