



TITLE: *Birth Project: The Crowning Needlepoint 3*

ARTIST: Judy Chicago

DATE: 1983

SIZE: 36" x 51"

MEDIUM: needlepoint mounted on fabric covered board.

ACCESSION #: 91.2.2

Additional works in the collection by the artist?

Yes No

“If men had babies, there would be thousands of images of the crowning.”

Judy Chicago, 1981

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Judy Chicago, the pioneer of the Feminist Art Movement was born July 20, 1939 in Chicago. She moved to Los Angeles in 1957 to attend art school at UCLA, from which she graduated with an MA in painting and sculpture in 1964. Her early works from the late 60s include geometric shapes, much influenced by the minimalist forces of the time. This was followed by her 1972 collaboration with Miriam Schapiro and her students of the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts in the production of *Womanhouse*, a woman-only and house-sized installation piece set in Los Angeles. Chicago is known for her other collaborative feminist projects as well, such as *The Dinner Party* (1974-79), *The Birth Project* (1980-85), *The Holocaust Project* (1985-95), and *Resolutions: A Stitch in Time* (1994-2000), in which she uses media ranging from the usual paint and ink to diverse materials like fabric, clay, wood, bronze, and glass.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

The *Birth Project* is a large scale art project with 84 full works (exhibition units) designed and supervised by Judy Chicago and crafted by 150 needleworkers primarily from the United States with a few from other countries. Each piece is accompanied by documentation panels crediting the needleworkers and providing a look into their worlds. All the exhibition unit panels include descriptions of the various techniques used, from needlepoint to embroidery and batik to quilting, among others. One of Chicago's greatest artistic influences may be her least controversial: taking what traditionally have been "women's" media, such as needlepoint, quilting and china painting, and bringing them decisively into the sphere of fine art.

MEDIA DESCRIPTION

The painting on 18 mesh canvas is by Judy Chicago and Lynda Healy; the needlepoint is by Kathryn Haas. The total installation extends 16' 5" and is meant to be exhibited with 14 laminated documentation panels. The materials known as craft materials—materials like needlepoint, tapestry, quilting, embroidery, and crewel work traditionally associated with women's handicrafts—are presented in a milieu which reframes the idea of craft media as art media.



Exhibited with *The Crowning Needlepoint 3*: documentation panels and samples.

REFERENCES

<http://www.throughtheflower.org/>
<http://www.lewallencontemporary.com/judychicago/bio>

RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Feminist Art—the movement began in the 1960s and was pioneered by a number of artists including Judy Chicago. Chicago began the first Feminist Art Program in the United States at Fresno State University in California. Feminist Art incorporated ideas of gender, identity, and form and specifically related them to women's lived experience. The artists also hoped to reveal the origins of society's ideas of femininity and womanhood. The art movement grew in tandem with the Second Wave of the Women's Movement which likewise began in the 1960s.

The Birth Project Works in Summary
ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: 9—12 grades

Session Activity: Students will create PowerPoints to convey information about the range of works from the *Birth Project*. The series contains 84 exhibition units. Each student can select a different work from the series to present.

Activity Procedures:

1. Introduce *The Crowning Needlepoint 3* to the class.
2. Introduce the concept of the *Birth Project* as a whole.
3. Ask students to find other works from the *Birth Project* on which to base their PowerPoints—via the internet, the *Birth Project* book, and other books on Judy Chicago.
4. Students will each select one work about which to create a 5 slide PowerPoint to present to the class. The five slides of each PowerPoint will include
 - A. basic information: title, date, medium, dimensions.
 - B. information about the needleworker
 - C. information about the process for creating the work—what did Chicago do, what did the needleworker do?
 - D. any contextual information that is pertinent
 - E. the meaning of the work.

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS: 9—12

Standard 1: the student makes connections between visual art and the real world.



Do Women Have to be Naked to Get Into U.S. Museums? Guerrilla Girls, Inc. for the project "Public Viewing" organized by Littman Kulturprojeket, Basel/Switzerland. Poster on sandwich board. Various sizes.

**How to Get Into an American Museum—
The Guerrilla Girls Explain**

ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: 9—12 grades

Judy Chicago was joined by many other women artists in the Feminist Art Movement. For example, a group who called themselves the Guerilla Girls became prominent in the Movement in the 1980s. In the *Birth Project*, which debuted as a series in 1985, Chicago focused on an empowering mythological imagery for women. The Guerilla Girls formed as a group in 1985 to focus on visual culture and the politics of the art world. The Guerrilla Girls coalesced after a few women attended an exhibition titled *An International Survey of Painting and Sculpture* held by the Museum of Modern Art in New York and discovered that only 13 of the 169 featured artists were women.

Materials: Collage materials including poster board, paint, and fabric, a computer, Guerrilla Girls posters (for example, *The Birth of Feminism* or *The Montreal Project*), and the website guerrillagirls.com.

Activity Procedures:

1. Have students research the group known as the Guerrilla Girls. Students should answer the following questions. Who were/are these women? Why do they stay anonymous? What were/are they protesting? Did/do their protests have any effect on the art world and how and where art by women is displayed?
2. Instruct students to find examples of work by the Guerrilla Girls and comment upon and analyze these works in the context of these questions. What makes the work by the Guerrilla Girls unique or different from the mainstream works seen up till their arrival on the art scene? Are the materials used in these pieces traditional materials and media, or were/are the Guerrilla Girls using new or non-traditional materials?
3. Students will next identify specific characteristics of the feminist art by the Guerrilla Girls with an eye to producing works of their own. Although the Guerrilla Girls addressed the political questions surrounding discrimination against women and women artists, allow the students to address other feminist questions in their work which might interest them, for example civil rights issues or environmental issues. Since the 60s feminism has broadened to encompass most issues of discrimination and equality, even including such things as animal rights. Students will create their own collages using any combination of drawing and painting with various other materials. Students in graphic design classes can produce computer-generated posters to distribute throughout school in the tradition of the Guerrilla Girls.