

A Feminist Reading of Judy Chicago's Installation the Dinner Party (1979)

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Abstract

Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" (1979) is a landmark feminist installation that reimagines the traditional dinner table as a symbolic site of women's historical contributions and struggles. This research paper provides a feminist reading of the installation, exploring how it challenges the patriarchal structures that have historically excluded women from cultural and historical narratives. The artwork features a large triangular table with 39 place settings, each dedicated to an influential woman from history, ranging from mythical figures to real-life trailblazers. Each setting includes a hand-embroidered runner, silverware, and a ceramic plate, often adorned with butterfly and flower motifs symbolizing the vulva, thereby reclaiming the female form from objectification and celebrating it as a source of creativity and power. "The Dinner Party" not only elevates traditional female crafts such as embroidery and china painting, often dismissed as mere "domestic arts," to the status of fine art but also critiques the gender biases that permeate the art world. This paper examines how the installation engages with feminist theory, particularly through its emphasis on collective female experience and its critique of historical erasure. By including a diverse range of women from different cultural and temporal backgrounds, Chicago's work highlights the interconnectedness of women's struggles across history. Furthermore, the paper discusses the critical reception of "The Dinner Party," analyzing both the acclaim and the backlash it received within the art community and beyond. This feminist reading underscores the work's enduring relevance as a powerful statement on gender equality and its call for a more inclusive recognition of women's roles in shaping society.

Keywords: Feminism, Gender Equality, Judy Chicago's, The Dinner Party.

Introduction

Judy Chicago is a feminist, educator, artist, writer and intellectual with a fifty-year career. Her participation in hundreds of periodicals worldwide is evidence of her influence inside and beyond the art community. Her artwork has been displayed frequently in the United States, New Zealand, Canada, Asia, Australia, and Europe. Many publications have also been released in international editions, exposing her art and ideas to a global audience. Judy Chicago recounted her experiences and difficulties in the art world and fine arts academia until the mid-1970s. However, it is not just her struggle but also the work of women of that age who aspired to be artists. It was Chicago's record of the feminist art movement as it was occurring rather than through the perspective of the present day. I believe attitudes have improved somewhat since then, but much work still needs to be done. With the help of this work, it has also been told how important women are in our society and that both women and men have equal cooperation in

building this society (**Huezo**). Women should also have equal rights in education, knowledge, voting, etc. Only then can a good and beautiful society be formed. The struggle of female artists to establish careers in a sector or society dominated by men. She seems to be brutally honest regarding herself and her marriage. There have been few changes in the last 50 years, but the struggle continues. Demonstrates that our culture tends to place a higher value on our accomplishments than on our potential. Chicago's dedication to the potential of art as a vehicle for intellectual transformation, social change, and women's right to partake in the highest degree of art production spans over five decades. As a result, she has become a worldwide icon, known and revered as an artist, writer, teacher, feminist, and humanitarian, whose work and life served as models for an expanded role for the artist, an expanded definition of art and women's right to free expression.

In addition to a prodigious art career, Chicago is the author of numerous books, including "Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist," published in 1975 (and subsequently published in England, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, and China) and most recently available as an ebook; "The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage," published in 1975 (*The Dinner Party*).

History of feminism

There is little evidence of early organized protests by women to demand their rights. In the 3rd century BC, Roman women filled Capitoline Hill. When the consul Marcus Porcius Cato opposed efforts to repeal laws limiting women's access to expensive goods, he blocked every entrance to the Forum. In the late 14th and earlier 15th centuries, Christine de Pisan, France's first feminist philosopher, made great efforts for women's education. She was replaced by a 15th-century Venetian woman, Laura Cerreta, who published the *Epistole Familiare*, a volume of letters related to one. Many women's complaints range from denial of education and marital harassment to the flimsiness of women's dress. Until the late 16th century, when the Venetian writer Moderata Fonte posthumously published a widely read feminist treatise, the defense of women was a complicated issue. Women of the time as superficial and inherently immoral. At the same time, emerging feminists produced many courageous and accomplished women. He declared that women would be intellectually equal if they received the same education as men.

After publishing a series of satirical works ridiculing women, Jane Anger responded by calling for their protection for women, writing as the first feminist pamphleteer in England. Until Mary Astell, an English writer issued a more reasoned response in *A Critical Preface to Women*. The two-volume work suggested that women should not be inclined towards marriage or religious vocation. Arrangements were made for their living, studying and teaching. It's unusual to find information about women artists in books on art history. However, this has been shifting since the middle of the twentieth century. In this article, we will delve into feminist art history and learn about ten artists who certain the way for one of the most significant art movements in history, one that would shake things up in the art world and change how people look at and experience contemporary art. Georgia O'Keeffe, Frida Kahlo, Louise Bourgeois, Teresa Burga, Barbara Kruger, Carrie Mae Weems, Kiki Smith, Guerrilla Girls, Sarah Lucas, Alexandra Gallagher.

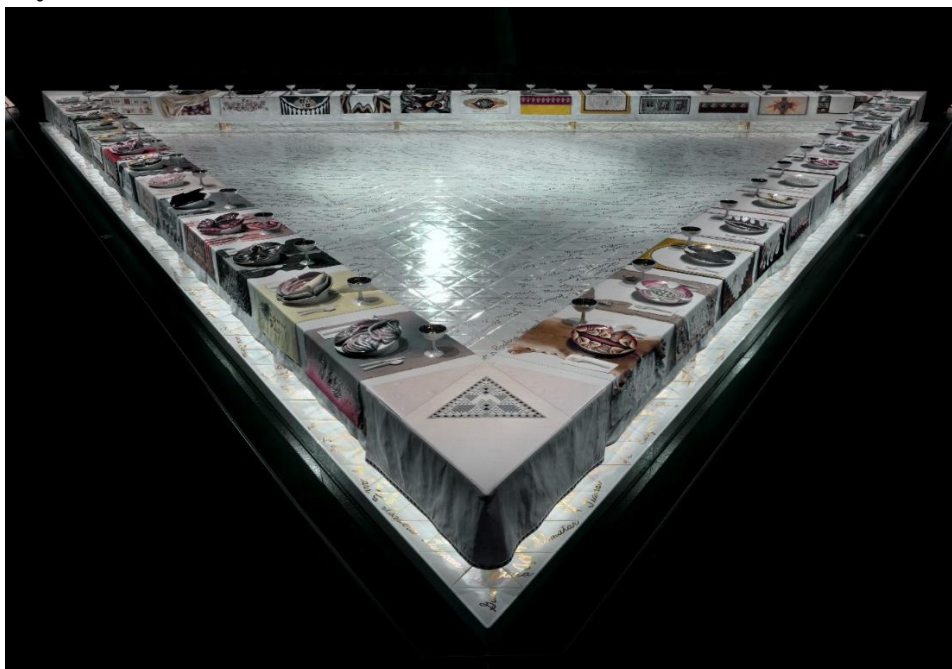
Feminism is the belief in economic, social and political equality between the sexes. While it originated mostly in the West, feminism has continued to appear globally. Many organizations promoting women's rights and interests have spoken on their behalf. Throughout Western history, women were relegated to the domestic realm, while men dominated public life. In medieval Europe, women were denied property ownership, education, and civic participation rights. In France, women were still required to cover their heads in public until the late 19th century, and in areas of Germany, a husband could still sell his wife. In

the early 20th century, in Europe and most US, women were not allowed to vote or run for office. Women were prohibited from doing business without male representation. Married women could not exercise authority over their children without the consent of their husbands. Furthermore, women's access to education was limited and excluded from most occupations. In some areas, women are still subject to similar limitations.

Judy Chicago

Judy Chicago, whose real name is Judith Sylvia Cohen, changed her name to Judy Gerowitz after marriage. She changed her surname today to reflect her birthplace in Chicago. Chicago was born on July 20, 1939, in Chicago, Illinois, United States. Chicago received his education at the University of California, Los Angeles (B.A., 1962; and M.A., 1964). Chicago's early work was Minimalist, but she shifted to feminist themes in the late 1960s (**National Museum of Women on the Arts, 2019**). Chicago recognized the need for a feminist pedagogy for female art students and, in 1970, launched the first Feminist Art Program at California State University, Fresno (**Art in the United States**). Chicago is arguably most known for her classic *The Dinner Party* (1974-1979), which honors women's history by designing place settings for 39 significant women. Traditional women's crafts, like embroidery, needlepoint, and ceramics are included in the large, collaborative work. With *The Birth Project* and *The Holocaust Project*, Chicago's work has continued to examine issues from women's experiences. She is a well-known lecturer and author who has taught at Duke, Indiana, and the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. She has received numerous honors, including grants from the NEA and the Getty Foundation and four honorary doctorates. She is married to the photographer Donald Woodman, with whom she collaborates on artistic and pedagogical endeavors.

The Dinner Party



Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1974–79, ceramic, porcelain, and textile, 1463 x 1463 cm
(ipernity: LaurieAnnie's photos.)

The Dinner Party is an installation work of feminism. Judy is regarded as the first epic feminist work of art. It serves as a symbolic history of women in civilization. The triangular table features 39 ornate place settings, each representing a different renowned and historically significant woman. A hand-painted china plate, ceramic flatware, and a gold-embroidered napkin make up each place setting. Except for Sojourner Truth and Ethel Smythe, each plate features a colorful, ornately stylized representation of the female genitalia. Places are put atop runners decorated with needlework of varying styles and methods. The table stands on The Heritage Floor, which comprises more than 2,000 white glitter-glazed triangular tiles, each inscribed in gold script with the name of one of the 998 women and one man who left their mark on history. (The correct spelling of this name is KRESILAS. Casillas, a Greek sculptor active in the fifth century BC, was a man and was mistakenly included in The Dinner Party) (**Cresilla**).



Judy Chicago, The Dinner Party, 1974–79, ceramic, porcelain, and textile, 1463 x 1463 cm
(ipernity: LaurieAnnie's photos)

The Dinner Party is imposing at 46 ½ feet per side, but its most striking quality is its almost ethereal presence. Set in a darkened room with black walls and ceiling, the triangular table, draped in gleaming white linen with vibrant place settings, rests on a slightly larger triangular platform of polished white porcelain tiles, appearing to radiate light. The visual impact is stunning: a sharp-edged, open-centered equilateral triangle, adorned with colorful rectangular needlework runners placed at regular intervals. The rhythm of these divisions is further accentuated by the vertical counterpoint of goblets, their interiors glistening with gold to match the undulating gold names inscribed on the floor. Since the tablecloth stops above the platform and the aluminum legs remain in shadow, the triangle seems to hover, giving the piece a sense of weightless luminosity. Each side of the triangle honors a distinct era of women's history. The first side, from ancient times through the Classical era, begins with the Primordial Goddesses and concludes with Hypatia of Alexandria, representing the arc of antiquity. The second side, beginning with Marcella, traces the development of Christianity and ends with Anna van Schurman, a seventeenth-century scholar. The third side, the Age of Revolution, opens with Anne Hutchinson and concludes with the twentieth-century memorials to Virginia Woolf and Georgia O'Keeffe. This journey through *The Dinner Party* offers an homage to the legacies of women across history, brought together in a luminous tribute.



Judy Chicago's Dinner Party at the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art, (<https://elisabethcondon.blogspot.com/2019/11/judy-chicagos-dinner-party-at-elizabeth.html>)

They are the 39 women who have been given seats at the table

Part One: Ancient Times to the Roman Empire

It goes from the "Primary Goddess" to "Fertile Goddess" to "Ishtar" to "Kali."

Goddess the Snake, Number Five

From 6 to 9, we have: Sophia, Amazon, Hatshepsut, and Judith

Ten. Sappho

Boudica and Aspasia, 11 and 12.

A.D. 13 Hypatia

Part Two: The Early Church and the Reformation

Theodora of Byzantium, Hrosvitha, Trotula of Salerno, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Hildegard of Bingen, Petronilla of Meath, Christine of Pisa, Isabella d'Este, Elizabeth R., Artemisia Gentileschi, and Elizabeth R.

Anne van Schurman, Number 26

Part Third: The Feminist Revolution after the American One

To name a few: 27, Anne Hutchinson; 28, Sacajawea; 29, Caroline Herschel

The list continues with: 30, Mary Wollstonecraft, 31, Sojourner Truth, 32, Susan B. Anthony, 33, and Elizabeth Blackwell.

Emily Dickinson, Number 34

35 Ethel Smyth, 36 Margaret Sanger, 37 Natalie Barney, 38 Virginia Woolf, 39 Georgia O'Keeffe.

The names of 999 more Women of Achievement are represented in the floor tiles (**Wikipedia contributors, 2022**).



Judy Chicago's Dinner Party at the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art, (<https://www.nastywomenwriters.com/feminist-artist-judy-chicagos-the-dinner-party-celebrating-women-across-time/>)

Part One: Ancient Times to the Roman Empire

- 1. Primordial Goddess** - The primordial gods are the initial set of deities in Greek mythology. Usually not actively worshipped since they were not given human traits but instead were personifications of places or abstract notions, these deities represented the primal energies and material underpinnings of the world.
- 2. Fertile Goddess** - A fertility deity is a god or goddess who presides over sexuality, motherhood, agriculture, and/or reproduction. These gods may be concrete personifications of particular experiences or more general symbols. Fertility rituals may be performed as part of their religion.
- 3. Ishtar-** Inanna, a Mesopotamian goddess of love, war, and fertility. She represents beauty, sex, heavenly law, and political authority. She was called "Inanna" in Sumer and "Ishtar" in Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian. The "Queen of Heaven" was the patron deity of the Temple of Enna in Uruk, her early cult centre. The lion and eight-pointed star were her symbols and Venus was her planet.
- 4. Kali** (Mahakali, Bhadrakali, Kalika) is a Hindu goddess of ultimate power, time, destruction, and change in Shaktism. She is a ferocious version of Mahadevi, the supreme power in this mythology. She is the first of the ten Hindu Tantra Mahavidyas. Shiva first appeared Kali. She is the embodiment of Shakti, the primordial cosmic energy and mother of all living things. Goddesses destroy evil to defend the innocent. Bhakti groups and Tantric sects have venerated Kali as the Mother Goddess, Mother of the Universe, and the primal force, Adi Shakti. He is also Brahman to Shakta Hindus and Tantrics. He is also the divine guardian and moksha-giver.
- 5. Snake Goddess** - Two serpent goddess statues were found in Knossos, Crete, in 1903. Arthur Evans' decade-long Minoan excavations substantially increased understanding and awareness. Evans was then accused for exaggerating and speculating about the "restoration" of certain artefacts, the most famous individuals, and the Minoans' archaeology. Heraklion Archaeological Museum displays the figures ("AMH"). The fragmentary Knossos statues date from circa 1600 BCE, near the end of Minoan Neo-Palace. Evans termed the bigger pair of his sculptures the "snake goddess" and the smaller the

"snake priestess." Since then, there has been controversy over whether Evans was right, if both statues depict priests, or whether they depict the same deity or different deities.

6. **Sophia**- Sophia is a central figure in Hellenistic philosophy, Platonism, Gnosticism, and Christian theology. Plato's term *philosophia* (meaning "love of wisdom") transformed the understanding of *sophia* from mere "cleverness" or "skill" to *phronesis*, a term denoting "wisdom" in a profound sense. This feminine personification of divine wisdom is sometimes associated with Jesus Christ as the Word of God (as in the dedication of the Hagia Sophia Cathedral in Constantinople) or with the Holy Spirit in Orthodox and Catholic theology. In Koine Greek translations of the Bible, *Sophia* corresponds to *Chokmah*, the Hebrew term for wisdom.
7. **Amazon** - The Amazons are a prominent group in numerous Greek myths and tales, including the Iliad, the Argonautica, and the Labors of Hercules. They were a band of female warriors and hunters who were more skilled than any men they faced in the areas of physical prowess, weaponry, and equestrian prowess. They kept men out of their society entirely, raising exclusively girls while sending sons back to their dads after they had finished breeding.
7. **Hatshepsut**- Hatshepsut was the fifth Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian pharaoh. Hatshepsut, Thutmose II's principal wife, governed as regent. Hatshepsut ruled as the daughter and only child of Thutmose I and his primary wife, Ahmose when Thutmose III took the throne at two years old. Hatshepsut became pharaoh in 1478 or 1479 BCE and ruled until he died in 1458 BCE. Hatshepsut's reign was marked by wealth, large-scale construction projects, and the Karnak temple complex, Spee Artemidos, Mortuary Temple, and Red Chapel (Chapelle Rouge). Hatshepsut and her allies exploited conventional religious beliefs to play pharaoh and king in male positions. Her successors left her out of official Egyptian historiography due to family rivalry, political campaigning, or her gender.
8. **Judith**- Protestants place the Book of Judith in the Apocrypha, whilst Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians include it in the Septuagint and Bible. Judith, a Jewish widow, kills an Assyrian commander and saves Israel with her beauty and charm. Several Protestant academics now think the work is a parable, theological novel, or the first historical novel because the Greek manuscripts have many historical anachronisms. Judah's feminine version, Judith, means "praised" or "Jew" (**Adult bible & book studies**).
9. **Sappho**-Sappho was a Lesbos poet from Aresos or Mytilene. Sappho's music-accompanied lyric poetry is famous. "The Tenth Muse" and "The Poetess" were traditional names for Sappho, a brilliant lyric poet. The "Ode to Aphrodite" is Sappho's only complete poem. Ancient commentators said Sappho wrote lyric, elegiac, and iambic poetry. Sappho's three epigrams are Hellenistic imitations. Sappho's life is obscure. Her parents' identities are unknown, although they were affluent Lesbosans. Three brothers, according to ancient accounts. She was deported to Sicily circa 600 BC and may have worked until 570 BC. Because to her love for Phaon, she jumped off the Leucadian cliffs.
10. **Aspasia** - Classical Athens thrifty Aspasia. She traveled to Athens from Miletus and produced a son, Pericles the Younger, with politician Pericles. She worked as a prostitute and was tried for essential (impurity), although modern researchers doubt these assertions, which stem from ancient plays. Aspasia is one of the most recorded women in Greco-Roman history and the most significant lady in fifth-century Athens, yet little is known about her. In Old Comedy, Aspasia was a courtesan and madam, and in ancient philosophy, a teacher and rhetorician. Visual and literary artists still study her. She has been represented as a sexual and sexually liberated lady and a feminist role model battling for women's rights in ancient Athens since the 20th century.

11. **Boudica**- Boudica, queen of the British Iceni tribe, staged a failed uprising against the Roman Empire in 60 or 61 AD. British national heroine and emblem of justice and freedom. Boudica's husband Prasutagus, who had two children, governed as a nominally independent ally of Rome. He willed his kingdom to his daughters and the Roman Emperor. His realm and property were confiscated after his death. Tacitus said Boudica was flogged and her daughters raped. Cassius Dio stated that influential Britons' imperial donations were stolen and that Seneca forced loans on reluctant Britons.
12. **Hypatia**- Alexandria-based Neoplatonist philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician Hypatia. Alexandria philosopher and astronomer. She was the first well-documented Alexandrine female mathematician, preceding by Pandrosian. Hypatia was a skilled teacher and counsellor. He published an interpolated commentary on Diophantus' thirteen-volume Arithmetica and a lost commentary on Apollonius of Perga's work on conic sections. Hypatia may have edited Ptolemy's Almagest using her father's title, Theon's Commentary on Book III.



Judy Chicago's Dinner Party at the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art, (<https://artandwomenfa2018.blogspot.com/2018/09/judy-chicago.html>)

Part Two: The Early Church and the Reformation

13. **Marcella** - The Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church both recognise Marcella as a holy friar and martyr from the Byzantine era. Butler says that after her husband died in the seventh month of their marriage, she decided to live like an Eastern ascetic after rejecting the advances of Gallus Caesar's uncle Cerellis, who was consul. She never spoke to any guy one-on-one; instead, she fasted from meat and spent her days reading religious texts, praying, and visiting churches associated with the apostles and martyrs.
14. **Saint Bridget**- Saint Brigid of Kildare, often known as Saint Brigid of Ireland, was a patron saint of Ireland and a contemporary of Patrick and Columba. During his time as abess, he reportedly created several convents, including Kildare, which became one of Ireland's most well-known religious centres. The early biographies he wrote are largely anecdotes and miracle tales, some of which have their origins in well-documented paganism. The saint's name is also the name of a Celtic deity. The

celebration of Brigid's life and legacy is held annually on February 1, which was formerly known as the pre-Christian holiday Imbolc and marked the beginning of spring.

- 15. Theodora of Byzantium-** At her marriage to Justinian, Theodora became the imperial wife of the Byzantine Empire. She rose from modest beginnings to become one of Justinian's most trusted advisers and, in 527, imperial consort. On both November 14th and June 28th, her life was honoured. Theodora, like her husband, was canonised as a saint in both the Eastern and Oriental branches of the Orthodox Christian faith.
- 16. Hrosvitha -** It is generally agreed that Hrosvitha, a historian of the Germanosphere, was the first woman to write theatre in the Latin West and the first German woman poet following the fall of the Roman Empire. During the reign of the Ottonian dynasty, she produced secular theories, plays, and Christian poetry. She was the only person at the time to write on women's history from a female perspective. It has been said of her that she was "the most outstanding lady of her day" and that she was a pivotal player in the advancement of women.
- 17. Trotula of Salerno** Twelve-century Italian physician and author Trota practiced in the port city of Salerno. Her treatment account was included in the Trotula, a collection of Latin manuscripts on women's medicine that had been ignored until the late 20th century.
- 18. Eleanor of Aquitaine-** During her lifetime, Eleanor of Aquitaine served as the Duchess of Aquitaine from 1137 until she died in 1204, Queen of France from 1137 to 1152 as the wife of King Louis VII, and Queen of England from 1154 until her death in 1189 as the wife of King Henry II. One of the most affluent and influential women in Western Europe during the Tall Middle Ages inherited the House of Poitiers, which ruled the southwest region of France. Wace, Benoît de Saint-Maur, and Bernert de Ventadorn were among the poets he supported. She played a pivotal role as a prominent leader in the doomed Second Crusade.
- 19. Hildegard of Bingen-**Hildegard of Bingen was a German Benedictine abbot and polymath who lived in the High Middle Ages and is known variously as Saint Hildegard, the Sibyl of the Rhine, and Sibyl of the Bingen. He is recognized as one of the modern era's most prominent composers of sacred monophony. In Germany, he is revered as the man who kicked off the field of scientific natural history.
- 20. Petronilla de Meath-** In present-day Kilkenny County, Ireland, Petronilla de Meath worked as a maid for the Hiberno-Norman noblewoman Dame Alice Kitteler. In this case, both Kitteler and Petronilla were accused of being witches. To Petronilla's detriment, she had no choice but to accept it. Kyteler ran away, and on 3 November 1324, Petronilla was flogged and burned at the stake in Kilkenny. Hers was the first burning to death for heresy in either Ireland or Great Britain.
- 21. Christine de Pisan-** After the death of her husband, Christine de Pizan became the court poet and writer for King Charles VI of France. With her novels, poems, and biographies, Christine de Pizan became the court poet and writer for King Charles VI of France. Her novels, poems, biographies, reviews, and analyses of literature, history, philosophy, politics, and religion were some of the first works by a woman to be called a feminist. The City of Ladies Treasure and the City of Ladies Book are two of her best-known works. Her books for princes, knights, and those who worked for them were still in print well into the 16th century.
- 22. Isabella d'Este -** During the Italian Renaissance, Isabella d'Este became Mantua's political and cultural leader. She was also an early supporter of the arts and a trendsetter in women's clothing. Poets Ariosto and Matteo Bandello dubbed her "liberal and generous Isabella," while diplomat Niccol da Correggio referred to her as "the first lady of the world."

- 23. Elizabeth R-** For the years 1558 to 1603, Elizabeth ruled as monarch of England and Ireland. Elizabeth Tudor is called the "Virgin Queen" because she was the last of the Five Houses of Monarchs. During Mary's reign, Elizabeth spent nearly a year in prison for her support of Protestant rebels.
- 24. Artemisia Gentileschi-** Artemisia Lomi, also known as Artemisia Gentileschi, is regarded as one of the finest artists of the Italian Baroque era, despite having trained in Caravaggio's manner. She did her work when women faced significant barriers to pursuing careers in the arts. Gentileschi was the pioneering female artist to join Florence's prestigious Accademia di Arte del Disegno. Gentileschi depicted biblical women and the drama that often accompanied them, including martyrs, suicides, and heroes.
- 25. Anna van Schurman -** The Dutch painter, engraver, poet, and scholar Anna Maria van Schoorman was also an outspoken advocate for girls' access to a quality education. He was accomplished in art, music, and literature, and he spoke fourteen languages (including Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Aramaic, and Ethiopic). First woman to enrol in an unofficial programme at a Dutch university.



Judy Chicago's Dinner Party at the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art, (https://judychicago.com/chicago_gazette/chicago-gazette-7/)

Part Third: The Feminist Revolution after the American One

- 26. Anne Hutchinson-** Between 1636 and 1638, the Puritan Anne Hutchinson caused a stir in the young Massachusetts Bay Colony. She played a significant role in the Antinomian Debate in addition to her roles as a religious reformer and spiritual counselor.
- 27. Sacajawea-** The Lemhi Shoshone lady known as Sacagawea was instrumental in the success of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in their exploration of the Louisiana Territory. She contributed to the trip by documenting the natural history and facilitating cultural exchange with the local Native American communities. The journey from North Dakota to the Ocean covered thousands of miles.
- 28. Caroline Herschel-** In astronomy, Caroline Lucretia Herschel is best known for discovering several comets. She worked alongside her brother, the astronomer William Herschel, for much of her life. They paid her a salary as a scientist before any other English woman did. The Royal Astronomical

Society honored him by bestowing upon him its highest honor, the Gold Medal (1828). The Royal Irish Academy made him an honorary member (1838).

29. **Mary Wollstonecraft-** Philosopher and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft. Wollstonecraft is now widely recognized as a pivotal figure in the history of feminist philosophy. She penned novels, treatises, a travelogue, a history of the French Revolution, a guide to proper behavior, and a book for children, among other works. She has been recognized for her work *A Retribution of the Rights of Woman* (1792), claiming that women are not naturally deficient to men. However, only appear so because of a lack of education, Wollstonecraft is considered a feminist pioneer.
30. **Sojourner Truth-** An advocate for women's rights, Sojourner Truth. She took her infant daughter and ran away to freedom in 1826. In 1851, she delivered the keynote address at the Ohio Woman's Rights Convention in Akron. According to Nell Irwin Painter's biography, she fought for similar rights for women and African Americans until the end of her life.
31. **Susan B. Anthony-** Susan B. Anthony was a well-known American feminist, suffragist, and social reformer. She was a 17-year-old petition collector for the anti-slavery movement and came from a Quaker family committed to social equality. She joined the American Anti-Slavery Society as their New York State agent in 1856.
32. **Elizabeth Blackwell-**Besides being the first British physician to serve as a medical registrar for the United Kingdom's General Medical Council, Elizabeth Blackwell also holds the record for being the first woman to earn a medical degree in the United States. Blackwell was a trailblazer in the movement to increase women's access to medical education. The Elizabeth Blackwell Medal is given annually in her honor of a woman who has made outstanding contributions to the advancement of women in the medical profession.
33. **Emily Dickinson-** Emily Dickinson is one of the most recognized figures in American poetry. She spent seven years at Amherst Academy and then transferred to Mount Holyoke Female Seminary for a semester before returning to Amherst. Throughout his life, Dickinson largely remained alone. Dickinson never married and maintained most of her friendships solely through letters.
34. **Ethel Smyth-** English composer and equal rights activist Dame Ethel Mary Smith Smith was discriminated against because of her gender, even if her music was not mainstream. Songs, piano pieces, chamber music, orchestral pieces, choral works, and operas were all among his compositions. She took part in the "March of the Ladies" (1911) and the Southwestern Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) (1910), both of which advocated for women's suffrage.
35. **Margaret Sanger-** Margaret Higgins Sanger was a nurse, activist for birth control, educator on sexuality, and author from the United States. In the United States, Sanger is credited with establishing the first birth control clinic. Margaret Sanger was a visiting nurse who served low-income East Side residents while her husband made a living as an architect and house painter. She was active in the Women's Committee of the New York Socialist Party, Workers' Labor Actions, the American Birth Control League, the Planned Parenthood era, and other social art movements addressing issues like sexuality, free speech, abortion, eugenics, and more.
36. **Natalie Barney-** Natalie Clifford Barney, an American author, held a literary salon at her home in Paris. Both French and foreign authors were there. The themes of lesbianism and feminism ran throughout her poetry, plays, and epigrams, which she shared at her salons and which influenced other writers.

- 37. Virginia Woolf-** Adeline Many critics and readers consider Virginia Woolf among the 20th century's most influential modernist authors and storytellers. English literature and the Victorian era were staples of her early education at home. She studied classics and history at King's College London's Women's Department between 1897 and 1901, where she also collaborated with pioneers in feminism and higher education for women.
- 38. Georgia O'Keeffe-** Flowers, New York City skyscrapers, and New Mexico landscapes are just some of the subjects that Georgia O'Keeffe painted. The term "Mother of American Modernism" has been applied to O'Keeffe. Between 1911 and 1918, she was a teacher in Virginia, Texas, and South Carolina, and for two years after that, she worked as a commercial painter. Early stages of watercolor at the University of Virginia and charcoal drawing in 1915 marked a dramatic change in how he felt about art. He taught for a few years at the Teachers College of Columbia University and continued his studies.



Close-up of Heritage Floor in The Dinner Party

[\(https://www.nastywomenwriters.com/feminist-artist-judy-chicagos-the-dinner-party-celebrating-women-across-time/\)](https://www.nastywomenwriters.com/feminist-artist-judy-chicagos-the-dinner-party-celebrating-women-across-time/)

Explanation

She took thirteen Chinese-painted plates of historical figures and turned them into a monument to women. She soon realized there were many women she wanted to feature, so the piece grew from its modest beginnings into a sprawling installation featuring twenty-nine place settings. Piece components included educational materials representing years of research by a Chicago volunteer staff led by art historian Diane Glynn. The 1,038 names and the stories behind them can be found in a book titled *The Dinner Party* (published by Anchor Books in 1979 and designed by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville). The great proposal required to create this installation is documented in Johanna Demetrakas's film *Right Out of History: The Making of the Dinner Party*. (“**Judy Chicago, the Dinner Party (Article) | Khan Academy,**”). The Dinner Party is a highly charged piece whose communal creation is fundamental to its meaning and effect. It radiates a magnitude of vitality that exceeds the capacity of any single person. Judy Chicago's relationship with her workers is comparable to that of a medieval architect in certain respects. Nevertheless, the cathedral was central to medieval society for civic and ecclesiastical reasons;

consequently, the society supported the architect and the project, which could continue after his death. In contrast, Chicago has had to initiate all support for her work. Today, we emphasize the individualism of our artists; they are "free" to work independently and finance their works. The Dinner Party may alter the relationship between art and society because it is owned collectively by the non-profit organization Through the Flower. Simultaneously, the Texas Art and Culture Organization, a women's group, initiated efforts to bring the piece to Houston. In the future, our culture may have an art form as significant to us as the cathedral was to medieval society, thanks to the precedent set by The Dinner Party collaboration. The Dinner Party is an experiment; it is the first time a language of such epic depth has been used. An idea's symbolic and visual levels match in every circumstance, and these two levels bring us into creative contact with a different historical figure. The fact that the work frequently accomplishes this while highlighting the beauty and suffering of women's rights demonstrates not only Chicago's success but also the creative potential of female form language. The explanations of the images are bound into The Dinner Party books, whose titles are designed to function visually. Chicago's virtual collapse into her visual language is indicated by the separation between images and contiguous written cues to their meanings. The Dinner Party book, this most challenging aspect of the piece's symbolism, its relationship to the Last Supper, appears superficially addressed by Chicago. She began to consider thirteen place settings, the number of seats at the Last Supper, but she also recalled that thirteen was the number of witches in a coven. The triangular shape of the table resulted from the fact that she tripled the number of place settings from 13 to 39 to achieve the size she desired. In the meantime, the wine glasses, silverware, and napkins alluded to the piece's concrete meaning, a reference to actual dinner parties that women throughout history had prepared and served. She stated, "Women have never had a 'Last Supper,' but they have had dinner parties." These tangible allusions are at odds with the abstract symbolism of the Last Supper. Beyond the number symbolism, there appears to be no visible reference to the Last Supper in the piece, although the goblets are loosely based on the shape of the Communion chalice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, created with the help of volunteers, sought to end the "persistent cycle of omission" that had long excluded women from historical narratives. This landmark work of feminist art was exhibited at Boston's Cyclorama in 1980 and highlighted the ways feminist ideas began entering mainstream consciousness, even during a time dominated by blockbuster culture. Chicago's *The Dinner Party* offered a unique opportunity for second-wave feminists to revisit their roots, educating younger generations—especially women artists—about the long struggle for rights and recognition.

The work underscores the essential contributions of women to society, advocating for equal rights in education, knowledge, voting, and other areas. This equality is essential for building a fair and thriving society. Each place setting within *The Dinner Party* includes a personalized table runner with the honoree's name, symbolic motifs representing her achievements, and a distinctive plate often featuring a vulva-like sculpture shaped like a butterfly or flower. The project, a collective effort of female and male artisans, celebrated traditionally feminine crafts, like china painting, weaving, and embroidery—often relegated to "domestic arts"—bringing them into the culturally valued realm of fine art.

Despite its recognition as a pivotal work in feminist art, *The Dinner Party* also faced significant backlash. In a 1981 interview, Chicago shared how harsh criticism left her feeling "like a wounded animal," sparking her only period of suicidal ideation. She withdrew to a rural community, where friends and colleagues

provided administrative support as she documented her journey in her 1980 book, *Embroidering Our Heritage*. This work not only preserved the project's legacy but also solidified The Dinner Party as a testament to the impact and resilience of feminist art.

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