Three Women's Formative Experiences in Art:

Amalia Mesa-Bains, Miriam Schapiro and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

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ABSTRACT

Three Women's Formative Experiences in Art:
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Emily Griffith

This thesis examines the formative experiences of three significant contemporary women artists: Amalia Mesa-Bains, Miriam Schapiro and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Of particular interest is the question of how did their lives impact their vision of art and their place within the art world. By highlighting the similarities and differences in their artists' lives and careers, I show how art has played a formative role in their development as both women and as artists.

This thesis was inspired, in part, by my course work at Concordia University. There, my professors taught me the importance of intertwining theory and practice in art education. When I moved to New York City in September of 1998 I was given the opportunity to see firsthand that fusion, at the Steinbaum Krauss Gallery where I worked. Bernice Steinbaum, the owner of the gallery, is a legendary supporter of women in America's art movement and has been for decades. The nature of my position at the

gallery gave me the opportunity to engage in long conversations with the three artists I focus on in this thesis. I have not selected these artists randomly and, therefore, cannot declare any wide generalizations as a result of this work. However it is my belief that the words of these three women accurately describe the way many women artists see themselves and their role in art education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the three women artists who, without their stories, this thesis would not have been possible. Amalia Mesa-Bains, Miriam Schapiro and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith were exceedingly generous in terms of the time they personally committed to this thesis and in terms of the thought and insight they each gave to me.

While the selection of these three women artists was not random, it is only through the good fortune of having met and worked with Bernice Steinbaum that this thesis finally came to being. She is intelligent, energetic and has been a champion for women artists throughout her career. It was a privilege to work with her.

I would like to thank both Elizabeth Sacca and Kathy Adams for their patience, guidance and hard work in helping me write this thesis.

Finally, without my parents, Karin and Bryant, and my husband John, this thesis would not have been written. I cannot put into words the gratitude I feel for the support and encouragement they gave me while struggling to complete this project. All I can say is: "we did it!"

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Introduction

This study is about three women artists: Amalia Mesa-Bains, Miriam Schapiro and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. I came into contact with each of these women through my work at the Steinbaum Krauss Gallery in New York. Bernice Steinbaum is a legendary supporter of women in America's art movement and has been for decades. The nature of my position at the gallery gave me the opportunity to engage in long conversations with these three women. I became interested in them because each is a strong woman, a renowned artist and teacher and also a mentor. I was specifically drawn to Amalia because of her first hand experience as a teacher and as a role model to her community. I was drawn to Miriam because she is an icon in the feminist art movement and I was drawn to Jaune because of her views on American politics and the environment. I have not selected these artists randomly and, therefore, cannot declare any wide generalizations as a result of this work. However, it is my belief that the words of these three women accurately describe the way many women artists see themselves and their role in art education.

Amalia Mesa-Bains (born 1943) is both an independent artist and a cultural critic. She lives and works in Monterey Bay, California. She received her Ph.D. in psychology from the Wright Institute in Berkeley in 1983. A recipient of the distinguished MacArthur Fellowship, her works are primarily interpretations of traditional Chicano

altars and they resonate both in formal contemporary terms and in their ties to her Chicano community and history. As an author of scholarly articles and a nationally known lecturer on Latino art, she has helped to enhance the understanding of multiculturalism and reflected major cultural and demographic shifts in the United States.

Miriam Schapiro (born 1923) is a painter, a "femmagist," a sculptor and a printmaker. She lives and works in Wainscott, New York. A pioneering force in the feminist art movement of the 1970s, Schapiro dared to challenge the marginalized role of women in the art world by creating a visual vocabulary to express women's experiences.

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (born 1940) is a Native American and a social activist. She lives and works in Corrales, New Mexico. Her multi-media works explore the myths of popular culture from a Native American perspective. Her work often communicates "loss" from environmental pollution to the disenfranchisement of an entire race.

My research led me to the belief that for these three women, art and the teaching of art are closely intertwined with their personal development and their professional lives. In each woman's life, art is a vehicle for personal understanding and growth and the teaching process is the actualization of their reflections of themselves and the process of passing this on to others.

The methodology of this research was to conduct and tape personal interviews with these women. The interviews were carried out in each of their homes (two in person and one by telephone) over a period of several months. In each case, the women were asked to recall and reflect about the most meaningful experiences in becoming an artist. I also asked them to consider what they think today's crucial lessons are for art educators.

Based on these interviews, four major themes emerged. First, it became apparent that all of these women saw themselves as artists beginning at a very early age. I raise this not in an attempt to engage in the argument of nature versus nurture but, rather, to note that for these women a strong identity emerged early in their formative years which has proven to be a central force in their lives. Second, each artist expressed experiencing a deep sense of alienation from the accepted art world as they matured. As a consequence, each established their own artistic network or networks. Once again, I do not want to jump to any premature conclusions, but clearly each of these women have developed a strong concept of self which, for reasons I will explore later, have led them into leadership and role model positions. The third theme is a corollary of the second. It is that as a consequence of these self-established networks, all three women were able to find mentors and allies that greatly influenced their careers. And finally, I found that as artists and as teachers, all three women have made crucial statements that serve as lessons for today's art educators.

Over the next chapters, I investigate and analyze each of these themes in relation to each artist. In the final chapter of this thesis, I will discuss both specific and general conclusions I have drawn and their implications for art education as I see it.

Chapter One

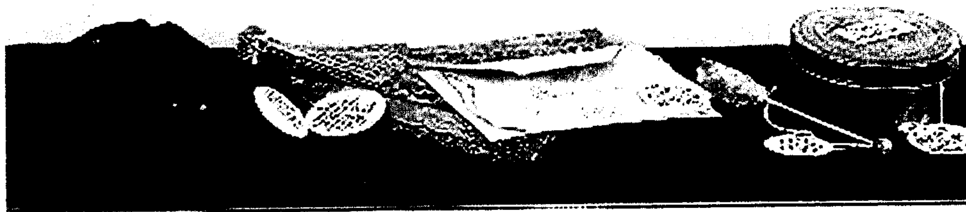
Conversations with the Artists

Part 1: Amalia Mesa-Bains

My first interview was with Amalia Mesa Bains. She comes from a Chicana background with strong family and cultural support. This interview will show how she has become an advocate for her community. Another salient point from the interview is the way in which Amalia has been mentored, and continues to mentor, inside her community as an art educator.

Mesa-Bains

Amalia Mesa-Bains
Homenaje a Dolores del Rio
1995
Installation
Dimensions variable



Amalia Mesa-Bains
Circle of Ancestors
1995
Installation
Dimensions variable

Amalia Mesa-Bains
Emblems of the Decade Borders
1995
Iris print and vitrine with objects
Installation
Dimensions variable

Question 1: What were the most meaningful experiences in your becoming an artist and what roles did your family, friends and/or husband play in your becoming an artist?

I think it's important for me to situate it within my family, but my family, as a Mexican family. I think that's an important consideration. I'm probably about the third generation, and maybe even more, of artists in my family that one would call folk artists.

My uncles, my great uncles all on my father's side, have been people who made things. As a child, I grew up around people who solved problems with their hands by making things. I think, from the beginning, that that was a notion I had. The notion that you could fix anything if you knew how to make things. When I was a child the people around me painted cars, trained animals to do tricks, made inventions. My father's family has a long line of inventors, some whose inventions are patented, and others are just folk inventors. They would make up these crazy little machines that would spin and tip and pour water, kind of like the Rube Goldberg machines. So I think that I was really lucky because I had a lot of support. My family had already seen artists and they could recognize artistic temperaments and the signs of an artist. The minute they saw them in me they expected them. So because they expected them, they reinforced them.

I think that when you talk about Mexican culture, one of the aspects that's

significant is the high regard for artistic ability. I've been to conferences in Latin America where the President of Mexico opened the conference with reading his poetry. Art is integrated as a sense of a refined person. It's not a job, or profession, or role to be artistic.

You go to markets and the poorest people arrange plastic bags by colours or sort fruit into designs. It is a way of thinking. I grew up in all of that so I would say that in my childhood it was my parents.

My family were very working class. My dad used to go around and collect the ends of butcher papers from the meat markets. I got an easel when I was about seven or eight. My first studio was on our back porch. We used to have one of those washing machines with the little turn things on our porch. So my first studio was me and the dog and the washing machine and my easel.

I feel like there was never any question that I would be an artist. As you're going through your research meeting different people, one phenomenon that's really interesting is the question of when do people designate, or self-designate, as artists?

I think that childhood aptitudes show up at age five or six. Some people don't come to recognize them, or are not interested in them, until they're in their teens. Rarely

do people start as adults.

I call myself a lifer. I was an artist from when I was really, really young. I used to trace in the air. My mother thought what a loony child! I realize now that it was contour drawing but I didn't know what it was then. We used to ride this bus from Sunnyvale the little town, to San Jose. My mother was so embarrassed by this continual tracing in the air that finally she began to carry a little pad and a pencil her purse. The minute I started doing it, she'd give me the pad and paper. I really think that those things became a way of making art, constantly with a paper and a pencil, constantly drawing.

By the time Richard met me I was already in art school. As a musician he completely accepted that art would be a central part of my life because music was to his. There was really no question. The thing that I think Richard has given me, and done for me, is that he's provided the kind of organizational support. When we were young, it was passing my paintings up and driving them to different exhibitions and locations. Then later it was helping me figure out how to pay for what I do. And to some degree because of the last few years, he's been doing digital and other kinds of photography. It was also actually making the work with me, and in some years, doing sound pieces for installations and performances that I did.

I lucked out. And actually I say this to everyone, if you're a woman artist, you

better find somebody who is like your wife. A husband who sees your work as absolutely essential and who will devote himself to you producing that. If you have to be taking care of somebody else so they can do their work, you're not going to do your own work. Every woman artist that I know that -- I don't want to use the word successful because it's a very narrow definition -- but is able to produce regularly, has someone who supports them and really thinks that what they do is important. If women don't have that, and on top of that, also have children or others to care for, they have a huge gap in their work career. It's inevitable. And that's ok, for some people. That's an important choice. But for me, not having children wasn't really a choice at the beginning. I thought some day we would. Then at some point, physically it was clear that wasn't going to be possible. Then we thought about adopting but by then I already had moved through almost finishing my Ph.D. I'd been an artist for years and I realized this is what I'm supposed to do. I'm not supposed to a mom. If I was supposed to be a mom, I would have become one. If I have to go to these lengths, adoption, or before that fertility drugs, if I have to go to that level then it isn't in the path.

It's very hard to explain but I think there is only so much volition that you actually have and the allusion of North American culture is the concept that one really has the power to make oneself, in a sense, a controlling around you. My career has been a succession of accidents, generosities, and obstacles that has made me resilient. I have been helped by incredible human beings who for whatever reason, people completely

outside my culture, often older white men, who would make a decision that would change a huge part of my life. And you can't really predict that. I think the one thing you can do is make your work. If you keep making your work on the terms you believe in, the world make's its adaptations, and if it doesn't, you're still happy because you're making your work. Anyway, this is not what you asked me. I love to get philosophical about these things. I really think that when you get older and people ask you this thing about the career, there was no career, there was no plan, there was absolutely no plan. I didn't even know what an artist was except that I had this idea. I thought I'd be famous at thirty and be in New York and do all these things and I did not. I didn't even get famous at forty. It isn't even fame anymore. After awhile it was, give me a space to do my work and help me get some resources so I can keep doing it and then I won't bother you too much.

Question 2: Tell me about some key experiences in the art world that effected the onset of your career.

It's funny, that's what I was speaking of. Well, there's the art world, and then there is the world of art that I grew up in - which is the Chicano world of art. When I began in the Chicano movement at the end of the 60s, we did the first Chicano shows from San Francisco went to Delano for the farm workers. I worked with the Galleria de la Raza, which was my home base for twenty-five years. We set out to create our own

institutions.

Our philosophy was that art serves the community and we were not artists, we were cultural workers. And our notion was that the art system, as it existed, was an elite system that was an extension of the racist domination of a society that really disregarded us. So we sought to build a community-based system that was like an antidote to the commercial, and, even the museum world. So the philosophy at the beginning was an anti-elite community-based system whose purpose was to educate and serve the community. And that's what you did and so your work was within that realm. You made art, like other artists, but it had a different purpose.

I think that when we talk about arts education, I'm realizing the question you ask yourself more than any other is 'why will I make this art'? For whom do I make it? So the notion of service was embedded in the mentality we had. I stayed outside of that art world because, in fact, I was in contention with it. And in fact, my role even beyond being an artist, was that of an advocate -- someone who wrote, who organized and curated. My role was to point out the discrepancies and the practices of elitism that still existed within that art world. It was a strange juncture. It was the point at which, almost inadvertently, I entered the art world because I was not really in the art world at the beginning.

At the beginning the strongest influence was the community-based philosophy and other Chicano and Chicana artists became a subset within that. You know, you call them co-madres. It's funny because co-madres means co-mother and it's usually a relationship two women have in regard to a child. The woman who has the child asks the other woman to be her co-mother and the idea is that somehow you're going to provide extra guidance. If that person should die or be unable to take care of that child, you will. And we all became co-madres without children. Our 'child' was our work and that was what we helped each other with.

Over the years I would say that Carmen Lomas Garza, Judy Baca, Ester Hernandez, were the core people that I shared, and do still share, that type of relationship. The period from 1969 to roughly 1980-81 was a period within a community base of making art. The 'art world' was something out there that we were pissed off at or didn't even care about. Then little by little, I started what I would describe as crossing over.

Other people would ask me to put work in shows. At first they were group shows. A key figure then was Inverna Lockpez. In 1995 she came from New York, out of the Latino gallery system there, to do a show called *Chicano Expression* that she had travelled all over the Southwest. We were in that show and that was the first time any of us -- I think with exception of one or two -- had ever showed in New York. From that

point, she gave me a solo show in 1987 at INTAR. It was reviewed in Art in America as one of the best alternative shows of that year. That sort of opened a door.

There was a man named Bob Bishop who was the founder of the Museum of American Folk Art at Lincoln Centre. He took an incredible interest in me and introduced me to people. Phillip Yenawin who used to be the Art Education director at MOMA was another person who took an interest in my work and opened doors for me. I don't know why but those people made it possible for me to have opportunities.

So I think that's it - two systems: one is the internal system of your community and of other women who give you support and help you build your strength and the second is people from the outside, larger world who actually make and facilitate bridges for you into exhibiting. Those are really the two categories.

Then there are very seminal people like Lowery Sims from the MET in New York and Matsa Modena Vega who is without a doubt one of the single most important people in the formulation of a pan-Latino. That was a phenomena that happened because of going to New York. People like Luis Cardillo and Juan Boza and others; you know the Chicano world was so tight. You don't need anything else. You could go to any city in the Southwest and in half an hour of phoning two community centers, you would meet everybody you needed to know.

We operated on the west coast because the east coast is really the centre of culture in New York. So when I started going to New York it was really that exchange with other Latinos that opened up this huge world. I started curating shows with Latinos and Chicanos for the first time. I may be one of the first people to have done that. I really don't know. I know that we never mixed together, that I remember.

And so that was a big change in my life. The Latino artists made me, or helped me, to look at my own concerns of culture and displacement differently because they were not within their own home countries but they had a relationship to it. I think about all those people now. There was a period of time in New York starting in about the mid 1980s to the early 1990s that's really hard to describe. It was that sort of multicultural time where there were a growing number of Latino galleries. There was like a Latino high life in the arts that was unbelievable. It came to an end when the stock market fell. Galleries started folding up because we were sort of on the perimeter of risk in the economy of the art world. That's something that I try to teach the students about.

I think there's an illusion in arts preparation or in the thinking of artists as sheer genius, and with the right amount of talent and opportunity they will be successful. And the truth is that it's not within your control. It's an art market and there are key players. Sometimes the same person that advises to Christie's, heads an art history department, is on the board of a major museum and writes criticism and theory and when they pick

somebody for whatever the reasons, they pick them. They circulate them through everything and when that's up, they drop them. They pick someone else. So the notion that you somehow could actually plot out a career and make the right decisions is, to me, completely faulty. It's absolutely arbitrary and the one thing you know is that you won't last long in terms of the big shows. You're not going to be there for very long because everyone needs to be replaced because the market consumes. It's an amazing thing that people don't get.

The reason I went with Bernice has nothing to do with selling because I don't even really believe in it. I just don't want to put any stake in it because I've seen it. I've seen great people just go up in flames. Look at what happened in London when Saatchi decided he just wanted a bunch of new pieces of art. He got up one morning and decided to sell his whole collection. Damien Hirst and all these young Brits, and he just dumped them on the market. Their careers took a tailspin because everybody thought, "why is Saatchi selling that? They must not be any good." So then they started unloading it and the prices went down, and down, and down. It's so arbitrary. Who knows, maybe he had a bad weekend, maybe he had to pay some debt. It had nothing to do with art. It never does. It's the investment of art and the economy of it.

So I've been able to stay out of that. Bernice is a good person for me because she certainly has to sell to make money, but she has as a great an interest in who you are as a

person, what you represent and the way ideas effect the larger society. That's a good kind of gallery. You know I didn't go to a gallery until I was fifty. I'd never ever been in a gallery before, a commercial gallery ever. Never sold anything before. In the Galleria [de la Raza], nobody sells anything. It's a community centre basically. So the art world is a place that I have a very contentious and uneasy relationship to. I know it very well because I've been in almost every major museum. I know the directors by first names and I've worked with all of these people so I know how cheesy it is. Strange place. I don't put a lot of stock in it some days. But you know you grow up in this system, you read their magazines and it gets you. You don't want it to get you but it gets you. You want them to recognize you. Even when you think they're sick, overwrought, money mongers. It doesn't matter. You wish you could get a review. It's very hard to get over that. But you have to keep a little distance from it or it can make you sick. You know, you can do extremely good work and never get reviewed. You're not in the right gallery, people don't know your name, whatever. And, you can do really bad work and sell. The relationship between a certain amount of recognition and the element of the market is not a direct relationship to your abilities or to the work. That's the confusion over it.

Question 3: What artists have influenced your work and tell me about your thoughts on being considered an influence on other artists today.

I know I am for Latinos and Chicanos, I know that. The artists that have

influenced me the most really are the ones I've described -- my peers. And I have really crazy favourites that make no sense if you look at my art. Like Donald Judd.

I've got no great art stars that I've ever really followed. There are some Latin American ones like Casalla Armiral -- people like that. But in general, it's really my peers -- the Chicano and Latino artists that I've worked with and some other ones that I think are very important. Right now, Pepon Osorio is probably my biggest influence. I'm so crazy for his work and he's such a great person. I can't say I follow the art world and know the art world very well, especially international art, but I like popular culture. That's vernacular stuff like what's happening to the front yards in Los Angeles. That stuff is really interesting to me but not the art world art world. I find very little in that. I mean, I love Kiki Smith's work. But they are people I know and like, so that over the years, I look at their work more because I know them. I don't come from a feminist disposition so none of those women have any influence on me whatsoever. They didn't exist in the world I was in. They virtually didn't exist. I didn't learn about them until way later. The Chicano movement, and the Chicana movement within that, is very sort of self-contained. If anything, our relationships of influence, in terms of what influenced us, had to do with religious painting, had to do with yard art, had to do with native sand stuff, had to do with crafts, weaving, carving. Those were the things that were a part of the world that was of value to us.

Influencing others is interesting as you get older. It begins to happen and you don't even know quite when it happens. About the year I got my McArthur, which was the year after I got sick and was still recovering, I started a project at the Galeria called Regeneration. It had to do with this issue. The issue that I saw over the years through people coming to interview me, and through little letters I'd get from different artists, or through kids coming up to me after lectures. I've lectured at all the big Ivy League schools and all the big ones in California. So I would go to Princeton or something and out of the dark, it was after the slides would come all these little Chicanas crying because they were so homesick. I found a kind of loose network of these young scholars. I started realizing they don't have any connection to each other but they all come to us because we represent this history. So I got some of the co-madres together and the Galleria was supportive of it. We started going out to different schools and recruiting. Originally we set up a group that would be able to curate for a year at the Galeria and be able to develop their own show. It's mutated over the years. This is six years later and it's a huge collective now. Now they do everything from art education to demonstrations and public performances. They're all up against the gentrification here in the Mission. They have formed performance groups for Day of the Dead. It's very interesting. They have a Salon they run. I think it's once a month. People present their work and they do crits. They have a lot of poets and spoken word people. It's a group that came out of this notion that we were, in fact, important. So it's somewhat inter-generational. They'll invite different people to come and give talks but they run it all now themselves.

It's what took me to CSUMB. It's what took me to wanting to finally teach at university level which I never did because I was a resident scholar and artist, but that wasn't my orientation. I taught at public schools for twenty years. That's a little known part of my life -- that the whole time I was an artist I had a 9-5 job. I retired after twenty years. I arranged my life so that I could make art at night and on the weekends. I spent about ten years in the classrooms, no maybe about fifteen, and then another number of years when I was working on the Ph.D. in the childcare system of the school district here in San Francisco. Then eventually I became head of the teacher preparation program. So I ran the staff development for the quarter of their schools under D-sec, and through those years I always made art. Art was an extension of learning, so in some respects, I always influenced young people because I was a teacher; from when I taught kindergarten all the way up to teaching university.

I get great ideas from young people. If you stay in touch with that kind of youth culture and ideas, then you don't get stale. At this point in my life, it's pretty consistent that the young people for whom I'm important, are young women artists, sometimes young scholars and Chicano and Latino students. I think that what's interesting about working with younger people is that, you think that they want to know professional things about how to build a career, but they really just want to know how you survived. They just want to know "how did you do it?" It's live stories that people search out so that they will somehow know what is of importance to constructing their own lives.

Question 4: What experiences of events contributed to the development of your work?

Obstacles you know. Judy Baca's really good at this. She has a whole theory about the development of any work of art. She always starts with what's called the 'irritant': what pisses you off. You go, "that's not right", and then you go, "well this is what should be done". And then you test this idea and that idea, and you go ask a bunch of people. Then you involve the other people who are getting screwed by this thing until finally, finally out of it, comes something that turns into an intervention which is a work of art.

I'm a person that puts a lot of stock in a spiritual and ceremonial life. I read a great deal so my work is somewhere between what pisses me off and what mystifies me. It's kind of what makes me do those things. So in between when I'm trying to …, I'm also engaged in elaborate mythologies and beauty….

Things are not supposed to be beautiful in the art world -- it's like the kiss of death. Beauty and sincerity are like the quickest ways to never be in the art world because both of them are seen as capitulations to more simplistic thinking and less sophisticated approaches. So the whole idea is to be as esoteric and unpleasant and unattractive as possible in your work. That's what you do. You must be doing something meaningful and if your work is beautiful, then you must not know any better.

If it's sincere, well that's just impossible. No one should do that. I think a lot of time Chicano work has stood outside the realm of the art world because the painting style, the colours and the themes and material are very mythological, very beautiful and that just doesn't make sense in the art world. To paint beautifully is really almost to admit that you haven't thought out painting. Everybody spends their life trying to get rid of the mark, even people who have got it, who are able to. The gesture of the mark from day one was theirs and they spend their lives trying to get rid of it because some how ... capitulation ... there's no other word for it.

Question 5: What is your personal philosophy regarding your art?

I think I do feel that in some way it is transformative, that it can cause people to change the way they see the world. I like the writing of Griselda Pollock. She says that the most common perception of art is that it reflects the world. It illuminates it and that comes out of early aesthetic theory. She really challenges that, and she says that art does not simply reflect the world but, in fact, constructs it. That's what I mean, that I believe that art constructs ideas. It contributes to development of identity. It reproduces them and disseminates them, so that images and imagemaking however you do it, 2-D, 3-D it doesn't matter, really does intervene in the world.

Where I am now at CSUMB, starting this new program, we talk about art as

inherently a social practice which takes it out of the traditional notion that it's purely an aesthetic practice. I don't believe art really is just for the purpose of self-satisfaction and self-expression. At the heart of it, when it really means something is when you find your way into making ideas that resonate for other people. If you keep it too narrowly within yourself, it makes it harder for people from another space to find themselves in it. And then to, sort of turn over the little rock and look what's underneath, they won't. It's too set. It's too easy. It's funny because I use autobiographical material. I know that was one of your questions, and I choose it, because I often use it as a way to talk about the other. The other being the Chicana and what is it in our lives, or where's it been. But people don't know and don't understand. We're always operating in a vacuum.

We're all well known on the west coast because people in L.A. know that Chicano and Mexican culture is, but not many places other than that. So over the years, especially as I showed more in New York or when I showed internationally, I felt a responsibility to help people understand. So even though I began autobiographically to help myself -- you know the homages to the different women, Dolores del Rio and Frida Kahlo -- those were things to help myself when I was going through bad parts of my life where I had decisions to make about not having children, or what it meant to be married, or aging, or beauty, or responsibility, or your family. The way I could make it, think it out, was through these ideas. Then what I discovered is that they were important to other people because they were in the same quandary as I was. I became more focused and conscious about how to

do that. At the beginning, it was happenstance. I was very naïve and unconscious and I just spit this stuff out. I just had to do it. Then I realized, "oh, why are all these other people like" and I started figuring out it is a conduit for other people. I became very clear about how I wanted to do that. I went through a whole period of time of works that went beyond an autobiographical sense. They were like cultural biographies. I started using the form, the laboratory or the library, because I was looking at the process of investigation and analysis, sort of turning the colonial history upside down, to look at what it really was. At the same time, always filtering in these little pieces of the private. So the private/public paradigm evolved very slowly through my work. I didn't have that vocabulary.

When I started making artwork we were still using ideas like minority and majority and then later. in the multicultural years when I worked with museums, we started talking about centre/margin. That was another part. It wasn't until quite recently, maybe within the last six or seven years, that the private/public became some part of that dialogue. So the autobiographical form, that has cut across all of that, has been a way to allow me to use myself, my family, my sister, all the things in my life as a way of telling stories and narratives that also questions what happens to women, what happens to families, what happens in racial politics, what happens in the economy of this country and why do we stand by and let those things happen. Even though they look very personal and mythological, and in some instances, they're quite convincing aesthetically,

I believe that they're based on really severe questions about the current society that we live in and the trajectories that brought us to that point. Because I really, really believe in the power of history. That even though we're five hundred years after the first colonization, we are living through the result of that. We really are. It's not finished. I don't even like the word post-colonial because I think it's really not post. We're just doing it a different way. I watch those farm workers in Salinas. They're as close to slaves as you can get in the modern day. They're indentured servants. They have to pay five dollars to ride on a bus that they get killed in because they sit on wooden boxes because the employer won't even put seats or seatbelts in them. They work from morning to night, seven days a week, and half the time, they sleep in their cars and nobody wants them in their neighbourhood. At the same time, they absolutely must have them to do the work that literally no one else in America will or can do. And in a way, they're the modern day slaves. So to me, those questions are still really important even though I live in a very different environment now then we did when we were children. Art can really ask those questions. It can't give me answers. But it can ask questions that make other people try to answer them. And that, to me, is the power of it.

Question 6: What goals are you still working toward - personally and professionally?

I do have some goals. One is that I would like to have a book about my work. I think it's time. In particular, because I've been working on the chapters to the

autobiographies they're already in a concept of a book, as chapters. I very much want to produce my autobiography through the chapters of the exhibitions. Not that it's about things being written. I do, at times, have these fanciful ideas that somehow, somewhere, a major museum will give me a retrospective so that I can show the trajectory over time. I think I'm sort of like an underground phenomenon. For years, because they were all ephemeral, work collected, if you didn't see them in those three months they were there, you never ever knew about them except through word of mouth. There were no documents. Where would you see an image?

I've been reviewed in Art in America twice and Art Forum once. The rest of the time there were no catalogues, or very few. How would you ever have known what they were. Except people know. But they've never actually seen them except through slides in an art history lecture or something. It really has to do with what is that "never a prophet in your own land"? It's L.A., you know. I think it should be L.A. It should be a place where there are many other Chicanos and Mexicans who would really benefit. For years I just thought of New York. It's the centre of everything. But these last few years, I've been thinking more and more about L.A., which would be the hardest place for me to ever get a retrospective because Chicanos are to L.A. as Puerto Ricans are to New York in the art world. If you don't know the art politics of race, you wouldn't know, but I am to the Chicano community as Pepon is to the Puerto Rican community. We are like a handful of people that have ever been shown at major museums. I think Celia Munoz and

I are the only two.

These are not short-term goals because they would take me awhile. Then I look at Louise Bourgeois. She was in her eighties and getting her best shows. I think women have a much longer life than men in the art world. In the sense that they're late bloomers and the art world is more prescribed to women now then it ever has been in the past. So I do think that that's a possibility.

I try to be strategic. Even though I talk about the accidental quality, especially when I was younger, now that I do know and have a certain recognition, I'm a little bit more careful about where I want to be shown and where I won't be shown. And Mexico and Latin America are really big goals for me. I've never concentrated on them at all. I've been shown there only a couple of times -- once or twice in Mexico and once or twice in Latin America -- but I've been thinking more and more about how to do that and with what galleries and museums. In the next few years, I plan to concentrate more on that. And then another really, really big goal is being able to do public work. I don't mean public commissions because I'm not particularly interested in that. I want to get outside the walls of the museum and the gallery. I've been wanting to do landscape mixed pieces and I don't know what it is but I get the desire. It's been going on since 1987, me dragging things from the outside inside like branches and dirt, and finally I thought, "Why don't I just go out there?" That would be so much simpler. So potentially that's

something that I will do.

Question 7: What do you think are today's crucial lessons for art educators to teach?

Well, maybe if I talk about the program that I'm working on that might answer some of the next questions. That's an easier way for me to think about it because I did come through public education. Starting from the early 1980s forward, I worked in what was then called multicultural education. I worked in staff development where we developed models for cooperative learning, in a way, looking at what they called relational learners. Relational learners were, for many years, in the school system atypical. They were the students who didn't learn best competitively, individually and in their seat. They were the kids who learned best in relationship with other students, in cooperative models, in hands-on activity. Over the years spent developing cooperative, cultural learning style, taking into account how people receive information, the way in which they use it and then something called, conflict resolution -- which were skills and techniques to keep people, once you put them together, from getting at each other's nerves -- those were the underpinnings first for public education. Later when I started looking at the role of arts education, I saw some parallels or reference points. I like Howard Gardner's work a lot -- that multiple intelligence, spatial intelligence, relational intelligence, notational, linguistic, things outside of the normative pattern of measuring an intellectual intelligence as though it only has certain hallmarks -- his stuff gets you towards something

called situated cognition, which is learning in the company of masters in ways of thinking and making.

Those ideas circulated in my mind for a long time from all the different places that I taught. I wrote a little bit for a while when the New Museum was doing that book on arts education. I can't remember the title but it has a wonderful slide series that goes with it. And then along came this opportunity that Judy Baca and Suzanne Lacey had started. It's at Cal State so it's a regular state college but it was, instead of a department, they called it the institute. They called it Visual and Public Art. They framed the base of it and my job was to translate it. So, overarching premise art is inherently a social practice. Second premise art is made for someone. Everyone who makes art, makes it for someone, not just themselves because if it was just for themselves, they'd never have to show it and they could just keep it at home. The idea that there was a public component, not thinking of the program as based on preparing people to do public commissions. That might be part of it, but looking at an arts education as an intersection where many roads cross. The primary road would have been fine arts, wherever that goes -- to MFAs, to exhibits, to museums, whatever, -- but there are other roads. The roads that cross into arts administration and public policy, the roads that cross into arts education, the roads that cross into museum studies, the roads that cross into cultural art history criticism, the roads that cross into the environment, design, and landscape. There is this place that they all cross. Any of the paths that you would take once leaving this crucible, you would

have the basis skills that people in all those realms would need. So when I inherited their thinking, they had already laid out some areas. I added to them based on the other teaching experience I had.

So the model that we use comes out of the notion of outcome-based education which is, normally you go to an arts school, what's your major I want to major in painting, ok here's the menu of courses take twenty-seven of these and eighty-two of those, do that and you get a degree. We don't say that. We say demonstrate the mastery of these six skilled areas: one, research and analysis. Show us that you can take material, contemporary or historical, and analyze it, make sense out of it, that you can define a context for the art making or art work that you're going to engage in.

Second, demonstrate to us that you have an audience, a public, a community, some way of knowing -- even if it's just your ten friends in your dorm or the people in your neighbourhood, or the woman that belonged to the homeless shelter that you donate time to, whatever it is -- show us that you know what that community, what that public is and demonstrate skills to interact with them, whatever they might be and we set up some parameters.

Then, the third one is collaboration. Nobody makes work alone even if it's talking to fabricators or museum directors, even in the most traditional level, you don't make it

alone. In a really experimental and adventuresome way you might actually be working with linguists. You might be working with scientists. You might be working with landscape people. You might be working with school children. You might be working with musicians. Collaboration is a whole area of skills. And, in that. is organizing and planning.

Then the fourth one, which is what most programs are based on, is production. So demonstrate the skills in a particular area, whether it's photography or painting.

The fifth one is something we call evaluation and revision. Having identified the history of the work or the kind of work you might want to do, having developed a public and a community that you have a relationship with, having worked with other people, having produced something, test it and change it if it doesn't work in a relationship to the public, to the collaborators, to the history, to your skill, revise it and fix it. The last is distribution. You are responsible for figuring out how that work gets to the people that you said it mattered to in the first place. If that means doing an exhibit yourself, if that means curating, if that means finding work in the public, if that means going on the radio or getting a PSA or doing a docent tour or writing a curriculum book, whatever you have to do you show that you can take that work out.

So those are the six skills but they work in anything. Over the years, what I've

been developing there, particularly important is the idea of integrating theory and practice. Artists tend to be practitioners and the theorists say what we do. The Binstock story. He's a theorist, I'm the artist. I mean I've run into this before and I said to somebody who wrote really tacky things, I said, "well let me see if I've got it straight, you think and I do? Is that what you perceive us engaging in? You've got it all wrong. I think and do." As if there's this idea of theory and practice are inseparable, one informs the other. Theorists don't give ideas to practitioners; practitioners also give ideas to theorists. That's how they make theories from observations of practices people engage in. So the integration of theory and practice and the idea once again of situated cognition, that you learn by doing in the company of masters, so residency programs are important. The capacity to make really wise decisions as you move through it so you're not in this suspended animation for four years and then you go out and try to mount a project or a piece and you've never done it before. So our students work with everything from prisoners' groups to museum directors and they set up projects and they work in teams and they're responsible or even sometimes just in pairs, they make real things and we test them out.

We even make money sometimes from them and the money goes back to the programs. But that's a really important part of it. And then the one that I've been really struggling with. In Judy and Suzanne's work, they both do work outside of themselves. They're not artists who one could ever say began from the self and then moved out.

However they've done it that isn't part of the obvious repertoire. I'm, on the other hand, someone who works through the self toward society. We're trying to rebalance the program so that there's enough self-expression, enough personal and private involvement, and at the same time, that there's cognizance of the larger social world, of the public commitment that we have and how do you get people to do both.

And then I guess overarching all of this, that is, for me the thing that makes me so interested in it, is the public/private paradigm. You know minority/majority, centre/margin, now we're in private/public. That we live in a time where, and I see it there because of Pebble Beach, that there are people who can basically live their entire public lives in private. They live in gated communities. They have on-line service. They don't bother with … you'll never see them at the grocery store. They don't go to the cleaners. They don't even go to movies. They have all other ways of being. And then you drive to Salinas or Watsonville and what do you see? People who are living their private lives in public because they don't have sufficient housing, recreational space. They just can't afford the privatization that other people so easily have. So somehow the artist stands between the strange and permeable boundaries of those private and public worlds because we're either in museums or are we outside, are we inside and that the self and other is part of the private/public paradigm, that to me is the area that I feel overtime an arts education program has to address. That we cannot continue to perpetuate in public schools, and in other places, this notion of the masterpiece, of the

canon, and then set people free with this small little view of what art is. Then three-quarters of the rest of their lives, they don't have the tools to make choices, to make decisions, to influence and be influenced by the power of what the aesthetic world can be. They don't even know how to fix their houses because they buy kits, food, everything is fixed for them. That somehow if one were to look at art in a broader sense and not fall back on fine and folk and all the little categories, you could build greater skills for people to live well which is what art really is -- living well in whatever resources you have, making choices, satisfying that aesthetic impulse, making the world more inhabitable. I see that one of the goals of arts education is creating intelligent consumers to some degree.

Question 8: How would you describe the state of art education today and what improvements need to be made?

Yes to number ten and nine. I think we're in a struggle now for this redefinition. I would say we just got that $600,000 grant from the Lionel Luvs Reader's Digest Foundation for the programs. Richard has the music and the performing arts and I have visual and public art. We're one of six schools in the country that actually was invited to participate and, when they were forming the initiative, they asked us to send in materials. So I know from the language of the initiative that they actually took greatly into account the philosophies that we have about making art and about the role of this private/public paradigm and the concept. Our program is called the reciprocal university of the arts so

we're building a university within a university in which we will go out into communities and work. We have four in the region -- underserved communities, multi-racial, multi-cultural -- and we have two partners in each of the four cities -- a major partner and a secondary partner. We will work with them to define performances and projects and residencies that will be of value to them. Ultimately our goal is essentially to build a bridge into the university for students who might not think about the university as a destination but the reciprocity comes with, instead of just this outreach model, then they come into the university. We're developing a community faculty that would come in to teach, sometimes give lectures. Students and community members will come into the campus for events and we'll make a loop. That, to me, is really important because I lived through the years of the outreach programs where big museums woke up from a deep sleep and said, "why are there no black people here? Well I better go find some. Can I have some money for that?" We didn't want to do a program like that because we saw, in the past, when major institutions partnered with smaller institutions, the smaller institutions got sucked up and depleted and the big ones got good reputations and more money and resources. So that's why we want them to come in. We're developing the first phase of it is a youth coordinating committee that is made up of teens from each of the four regions which will be interesting because many of these places have real deep conflicts with each other so we'll have to bring in special people to help us do it. But that program that we're developing and that initiative is actually, I think, a barometer. Chicago Art Institute. San Francisco Art Institute. Carnegie Mellon. There are, maybe,

half a dozen art schools around the country that are building strands in called community and artist, artist as a cultural citizen. There's a vocabulary changing. I think there will be for many, many years, probably forever, the dichotomy between fine art and community art because of the market, because of the investment. People who've invested that money in those works of art paid half a million dollars to sit on the acquisitions board at a MOMA are not going to give it up and they're not going to want that artist's art and somebody from the community to get the same status because why did they invest all that money. I'm not saying that there won't always be dichotomies or hierarchies but I think what's really important is more and more young people who have artistic inclinations, who have a good spirit, won't be forced to make that single choice. My only measure of success is if I get in that museum. And look what's happening, places like UCLA where faculties have galleries in New York so they arrange their masters students to have shows. So those masters students at twenty-six are hot, hot, hot and they write about them in all the magazines and at thirty-two they're has-beens. They've been to the show and there's nowhere else to go. And so I think that illusion, that false destination, at least know there's other options and it won't be like it was before; those who can make art and those who can't teach. I remember being taught that once. That's the story I heard when I was in art school. We thought the arts education people were really below us and that's why I think deciding in some way what these skill areas are and putting everybody through them, then you don't create this whole hierarchy. I think there are changes in arts education. I think it's a really interesting time. I was always on the periphery of it until I

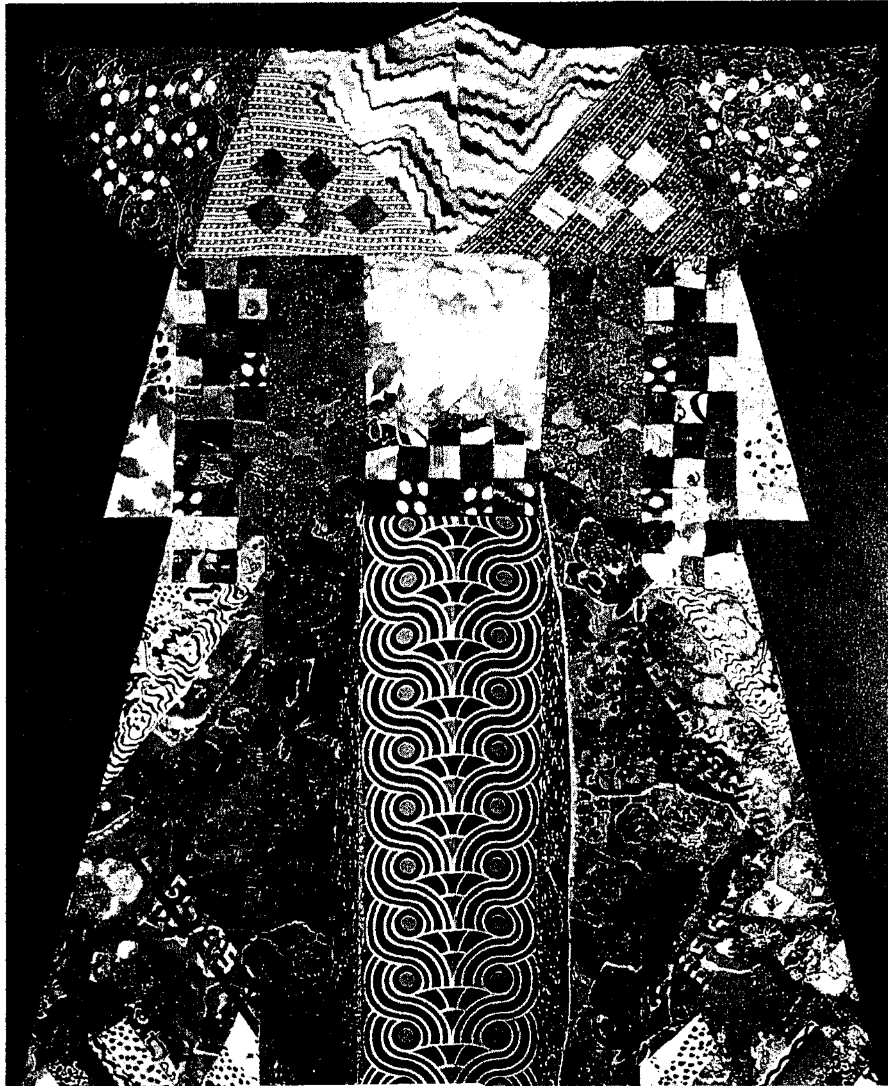
went to teach at the university and building that program has made me come back into contact with people that I knew in different ways. It's a time of change.

If I could name one person that really has been pivotal to me, that I've never known, its Ana Mendieta. The whole excavation of the body, the translation of human geography and the land, and the things growing, these primordial mythologies of women as mother earth, as fecundity, she has everything and she took every conceivable risk.

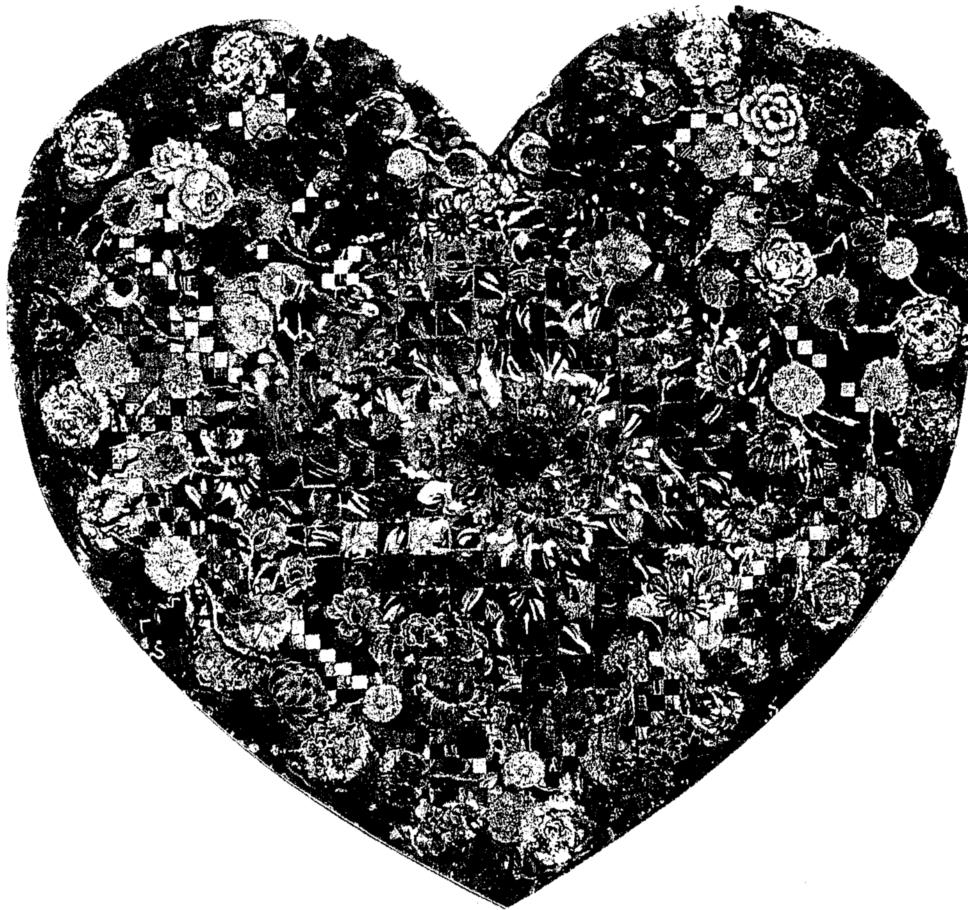
Part 2: Miriam Schapiro

My second interview was with the eminent artist Miriam Schapiro. She came to prominence by being one of the prime movers in the founding of the feminist art community in the United States. Throughout her career Miriam has built on the mentorship that supported her by establishing and supporting a network so that women artists could grow.

Miriam Schapiro



Miriam Schapiro
Vesture Series #2, 1976
Acrylic and fabric on canvas
60 x 50 inches



Miriam Schapiro
Atrium of Flowers, 1980
Acrylic and fabric on canvas
64 x 60 inches

Miriam Schapiro
The Stronger Vessel, 1994
Silkscreen and acrylic on canvas
72 x 60 inches

Question 1: What were the most meaningful experiences in your becoming an artist and what roles did your family, friends and/or husband play in your becoming an artist?

Well, most meaningful to me. was that I got encouragement from my mother and father. Also I was taught by my father ,who himself, was an artist. He was also a jack of all trades so art meant a great deal to him. I do things which he did. For example, I don't how many artists today keep morts which are those collections of images pictures. photographs and clip outs from the New York Times and magazines and stuff. But, I used to see him do that. And then I began at an early age to do that. In fact I have books of that stuff here and I have boxes of it. Some are collated and some are not but I get a lot of imagery from looking through my collections.

My father and mother were disciplinarians so I had to, for example, in the summers when we could take a cottage by the beach, leave New York City. My father would work in the city all week but he'd come out for the weekends and I had to prepare drawings --- 5 drawings for him -- which he would crit. This started at a very early age, so of course, I got to the shore and all I wanted to do was play with my friends and everything. The night before he was coming, I would make the 5 drawings. But anyway, it will give you some idea of how important that was, and my mother of course, supported him in encouraging me to be an artist.

I just realized I forgot something for the first question. The other influence on me as a very young person was my uncle, Roy Gordon, who like my father, was also an artist. Neither one of these men were artists who had studios where they worked every day. It was pre-Depression years, the 20's, 30's, and the 40's and both of them had to work to earn a living. So, my uncle worked all his life for one company, which was a company that supplied Montgomery Warden and Sears Robust catalogues with images of women's lingerie. I knew early on my uncle was busy airbrushing around the breasts. Those images were going to the catalogues. It was very precise work and he did it really well. He kept his job his whole life. My father had many jobs. My father was a lighting fixture designer but he was also involved in politics. He was the head of the Rand School of Social Science which was the pre-cursor to the first major influence in education for adults. The Rand School was at 7 E. 15th St. in New York City. My father also was very influential in organizing the I.L.G.W.U. which was the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. So, all of that affected me in growing up, and whereas, I never became an organizer for the I.L.G.W.U., I did become an organizer for the Women's Caucus and so forth. And all of that comes from my father.

Question 2: What artists have influenced your work and tell me about your thoughts on being considered an influence on other artists today?

Well, as I grew up I wasn't knowledgeable about women in art. Because I never

saw any books with women and I was never taught in school. I went to public school. I went to high school. I went to Hunter College. And then I went to the University of Iowa. No one ever showed me a slide of a work of art by a woman. I really didn't know where I fit in the world. It was very awkward in those days to be very ambitious, to be an artist, if you were a woman. So, I knew everyone else's work and as I developed and matured, I really was taken by the major artists of the century and that was Picasso and Matisse. I loved Matisse for his colour and for what seemed like an impulsive approach to capturing figures in motion. And of course, as you know, I loved the cutouts and that was a tremendous influence in my life because of all the cutouts I've done. Anyway, I loved Picasso's work because he was so inventive. All great artists have an immense imagination and are usually restless and want to put down whatever, from a point of view of form, whatever appears to them as being real. So that's the farthest thing from photographic imagery. The thing that makes a dream come true in the art is the ability to morphologically change all living things. To make them not as they seem in real life, but as, for example, take a Picasso's Head. A Picasso's Head is not a Picasso's Head. It's Picasso's idea of fragmentations of a head. So, cubism, in that sense, is a way of bringing together facets of what Picasso saw as a head, a face, ears, nose, eyes, mouth, cheekbones, hair, a lot of parts. He would rearrange them and he had a focus, which was cubism in its planer sense. So the planes that moved in space, back and forth, back and forth, or even in short space like working on the head, back and forth, back and forth, that was what he was interested in. And, well, there's a whole life's work in that. If you come after him,

and you think about that, that was an influence on me.

I also loved the idea that European artists were not afraid of moving out of the realm of pure painting. In America, we're very puritanical. For a long time when I was growing up, real artists didn't do pots ,or didn't do textiles, or didn't do dress design, or didn't do any of that sort of thing. But as time went on, I found that I was interested in a lot of other things. I didn't feel I was allowed to do them because the rules in New York, where I lived most of the time, were very strict. Canons were there and it was very strict about what was art and what wasn't art.

Question 3: Did you want to say anything about your thoughts on being considered an influence on other artists today?

Not until we come to the whole issue of feminism and my feelings about seeing myself completely as a woman, in finding my content for my art. Then I'll say something about that.

Question 4: How much of your work is autobiographical and is it a challenge to include your own image in your art? Why?

Well, all of my work is autobiographical and always has been. My work has concentrated itself on old values, on formal values. At first I was obsessed with not being

a colourist and then I found out I was a colourist. Then I was obsessed with that. In my earlier years I made a big project for myself for finding out what space meant to me -- colour and space and the composition of imagery, of pictures, and then ultimately of course, the use of fabrics with tactility and for the way that they could enlarge my scope of shallow space. I don't consider myself as an image, the image of me. I don't consider that so important. Actually, my dealer insisted that I put myself into many of my pictures. She insisted that I put myself into the Russian series, and somewhere else, twice she did that.

Question 5: What's the theory behind that?

Well, the theory behind that for her, was that these paintings would live and that I already had 12 women in them so what would be wrong with having one more. It was a simple kind of thinking but it also liberated me, in a way, because I never wanted to show my face. So I did that on two occasions. Actually, the most famous one was where I put my head and Frida Kahlo's head together so it looks neither like her nor like me, but something like each one of us. And both in the painting and in the print, which became my most popular print, that seemed to hit something in the way the public saw my work. Anyway, I seem to forget the original question so I don't know.

Question 6: So, why is it a challenge to include your own image?

It's not a challenge; it's something that happened.

Question 7: How valuable is art education and do you consider yourself as much a teacher as you are an artist? Explain.

Well, I wear many hats so it's not only that I'm a teacher, but I'm also a speaker. And I'm a lecturer on various subjects in art of interest to women. Now that the gender issue isn't so closed, men are men and women are women, I think that feminism has managed to teach men something. So, at least when I went to college, I was told that art is neutral so it didn't matter what gender you were. Well of course, great liberation came when I found out what gender I really was in art. You know because that then generated all of the originality in my work. When I was an abstract expressionist, I changed to being an abstract impressionist. Then that moved on to being really a formalist without any content to the work except the rearranging of the forms. And then, in the 70s came my great revolution, which was that I began to find a content in art. I think the interesting thing about my art is that when I found the content, I refused to give up the form. So I put everything together. Who I was and who I became, joined. Then I think my paintings had a singular attitude. A singular way of being expressive.

About art education, I have to tell you that I was interviewed by a very serious woman who was doing her doctoral thesis in art education. I found this fascinating. She

came here and we spent a long time together and I gave her lots of material. But when her thesis came out, she sent it to me, and I hardly appeared in it, maybe one paragraph. But my students appeared in it, at much greater length. The reason for that, was that this woman and her teachers -- not so much the woman herself let's say -- the teachers were only interested in theory . My students who came of age during the period of theory really, really were lucid on the subject. Whereas I'm not interested in theory and I never have been because I know that my gifts lie in exactly what I do. I also have the gift, of perhaps, inspiring younger women to think about themselves and content for the art. Basically I think what art education should do, and there's a great woman who I met through my dealer, who was at the Getty last year, Marilyn Stewart. I have enormous respect for her because she's a real thinking woman, and yet, she has the quality of being a populous. I think in today's atmosphere the idea of being a populous is very significant in culture because it fits in to the democratization of art. You are bringing people closer together, to ideas and thoughts through works of art. I think Marilyn does that.

She has a lot of influence on me as a person who was in art education and she did the most unbelievable things. She would be in Minnesota and she'd call me, before hand, and tell me we were going to be on speaker phone and who was there was her class. She'd ask me questions and I would respond. She said the class really loved it because she had prepared them by showing them my work so they were familiar with who was going to be on the phone. I thought that was a fresh and wonderful way to be involved with

teaching. I think teaching is something you have to be totally open to. But most of what teaching is, is based on is not theory but is who you are – the absolute importance of knowing yourself and being yourself and sharing yourself. Do you know that when I went on one of my gigs to Kent State in Ohio, this was a number of years back, I knew they had a wonderful flea market, and of course, I'm mad about flea markets. So I told the person that I was reporting to that I was taking my class on a field trip and we would do our learning outside of the school. There happened to be mostly women in the class -- I think it was all women that day -- and when we went on the field trip there was a woman that was standing next to me. There were machines on the table that were being sold -- strange machines, strange objects that you wouldn't know what they were -- and I asked the woman next to me, who was one of the students, to tell me what this object was. I didn't know but she had had engineering as her pre-existence and had worked in the field. She told me exactly what it was. It happened to be a kind of primitive sewing object, a little machine that would sew, and she told me other things. So I was able to learn from her and so were the other students. So the point there, was not that I was the teacher, but that I was an enabler who brought out of someone else something that we could all learn about.

That's my idea. I still teach. I love teaching and I have a very unique method of teaching which is based on consciousness raising. Do you know what that is? Well, before you go home ask me for the original sheet which tells you the questions to ask in a

group, when a group of women come together. You don't ask them all in one night. You have many nights where the same group comes together and you ask the questions. So the kind of work I do now, for example, I did a class at the Parish Museum last year. I had about twelve women and I only had four sessions. I spent the whole first session talking, not me talking, but we went around the room. I would just ask questions. The first question is always the same question. I ask what brought you to this group today and what are you interested in and why are you here. And usually they're shy and the normal thing between students and teachers is what does she want me to say? There's no way of telling, of answering that, so what I did was answer my own question. What brought me there today and that had to do with some of things I've already told you about – the kind of background I had, my mother and my father, my grandfather whatever. The point was that they were to understand that if I didn't have a whole bunch of taboos on talking about myself then they shouldn't either. They catch that, just like that. Then when you went around the room, you got really interesting responses. People told who they were. So the teacher, or the enabler in that sense, has to be a bit of a psychologist. And has to be also very interested in each story that's being told. From that, I get the next question because, in listening to all of them, I can see that certain things are emphasized more than others, so I then make up a question for them where they'll go around again and talk. It will be a different kind of question. Let me see if I can give you an example. Ok, I did this process at the University of Washington in Seattle and it was a group of graduate students. They were all women but one man. One man was there.

That was really fascinating. When the time came to do the second round, I found the question and the question was for each one to answer, how ambitious are you? I got incredible answers. And I got incredible answers because they knew I wasn't being judgmental. So they could be free and talk. And the talk was with an unusual group of brilliant women. Women who were articulate and could give voice to their feelings. Well, I went around once, and when we came to the man, he wanted to pass. It was ok if you wanted to pass. Went around the second time. He wanted to pass again. And then, there was a third question. This time when I came to him, he was all bottled up and suddenly exploded and said, "how can you women talk like this? You don't even know each other, you don't know anything about each other and look how you're talking!" Now wasn't that a man telling what he thought? Men, invariably meet each other, talk to each other and they give each other what's called their credit cards, who they are. Whereas in this case, these women just talked brilliantly but very, very much from their deepest feelings, their fears, their anxieties, whatever it was. And then the class dispersed and the man held me back and he said, "something telling happened to me today". And I said what, and he said, "well I live with a woman and she always accuses me of not listening." Before I said something to the effect of the gender roles and the gender dialogue and the gender difference and theory and this and that. But when I have an experience like that, these are thoughts that I think about men -- they don't listen or they're not interested or don't bother me or I've got other things on my mind, whatever. You can read as much theoretical text as you want, but it isn't worth a damn next to having a real experience

with a guy saying that when he really means it, and he's trying to share with you, and he's trying to have taken in all that he listened to, all during the session, and make some meaning for himself. That's teaching. Because what I did in the first time I taught, which was during the period of Womanhouse, was, I can say this in hindsight, I actually democratized the group so that I no longer had the role of the teacher with all that authority. What I had was a woman sitting there with a group of women who were much younger, who had experiences and they had experiences and we all shared are experiences. That's what the consciousness raising groups were. When you shared experiences, you learned from each other. Why my individual classes now -- the four day classes -- are so successful, is that on the first day after they've shared their experiences there is a bonding that takes place that's unbelievable. So in the next three days, you should see the art work that gets done! I mean construction pieces of paper that are this big or great big paintings with three of them where they painted, what have you. On my last day, I do show and tell because I think it's really important that one of my roles as a teacher... Anyway, my idea of a teacher is not that I've read a whole bunch of stuff and I'm passing it on, they can do the reading, what do they need me for, but my idea of a teacher, is that you've lived a certain kind of life. You've had different kinds of experience. You've met different kinds of people. You've looked at different kinds of art. You've read different kinds of book. Anyway, and all that's in you, is going to register with the people who are your students, who are listening to you at the appropriate moment. And in the case of Womanhouse, I learned there, how this is applied to a project where you're actually

working on something, because what you want to do, is liberate the mind of a student so that they'll make their best effort, and what happened, of course, is the bonding. Then they move away from the teacher and I've had some pretty weird experiences that way too.

When you get them to organize themselves in terms of trust, then they're free of some anxiety that they may have had about exposing themselves in a classroom -- getting up and talking -- that sort of thing disappears. And then, of course, what happened in Womanhouse is that when you have this level of trust, and you're sitting in a circle, and you're talking about one room that you're in, then everyone shares their ideas. Now I was raised to think that that was the worst thing you could do in art, that you had to be original and it was incumbent on me to always be thinking of how I could be original. It was tearing me apart. It wasn't until I was forty-eight years old that I began to have these new experiences of working with other people in different projects, magazines, the Womanhouse project, the Crystal quilt project. It was only then that I began to understand how sharing could make something more beautiful, more original. That by bringing a whole bunch of ideas together -- it's not like I'm talking about a committee -- I'm talking about an organic process which makes people talk to each other about the making of art. Did you ever see the museum in Paris? Have you been to Paris? Have you ever seen the museum with all the plumbing, and what have you, on the outside, with the stairwell on the outside, the Pompidou Centre? That was collaboration, that building.

When the architects are in their offices with all their assistants, those are collaborations. When I work in print shops where there are all sorts of people there to guide me and to help me, not only learn the techniques of printmaking, but also to listen to my ideas and propose shifts and changes. Those are collaborations. And only now, are they beginning to say that print shops are collaborative efforts. They never would say that before because the old idea was that you had a master, there we go again, and then you had assistants who had nothing to do with the masters.

Question 8: Tell me about your thoughts on being considered an influence on other artists today.

I told you the story of Marilyn calling me up. Ok the point there had to do -- in terms of role models -- had to do with Marilyn seeking me out as her role model and wishing to pass that on. And the reason that my relationship with Marilyn worked was because we had free access to each other in terms of communicating, in terms of talking to each other. That's not always easy. So yeah, I feel fine about being able to be a role model to other people because of the specific kinds of experience I've had, and the sense I have, that I should pass it on. That it's important to pass on because I know that I pioneered in a lot of art experiences and I think that's important to know about. All your life experiences are important. One of things I do every two or three years is have a big yard sale here. Well, lately it's been because people in my family have died and I've had

their estates. I like the democracy of a yard sale. I like the idea that you pass things on to others. That they feel they need that, or they feel that they can use something your aunt had, that's a very rich thing for me to see. I went to Scholastic one day, long before I knew Marilyn, to be on a committee. We sat around a table and we introduced ourselves . I saw this man across the table and I said, "don't I know you from somewhere?" and he said to me, "oh, I know you, I come to all of your yard sales." I liked that. So the thing is, that I think that I have to emphasize to you all the time about knowing who you are. Knowing where your strength lies and what your weaknesses are. And sometimes knowing what your weaknesses are, gives you strength because you're not in the dark anymore. I know there are places I can be a real wimp but I'm not upset when I am a real wimp because I know that's part of me too.

Question 9: What goals are you still working toward, personally and professionally?

When we were waiting for you today, sitting in our car waiting for the bus to come, Paul read me a letter to the editor of the New Yorker. We were reading the New Yorker magazine and it was an interesting letter. It was a discussion of a book review they had published on Betty Freidan's latest book. You could see it was an intelligent mind at work, but the person had one wrong thing to say, as far as I'm concerned, and this fits in with what one of my goals is. What this person said was that, I want to be the kind of feminist who uses her own mind and isn't influenced by a party line. People who

are artists are generally such individualists. They don't really want to be followers of anyone else which is why my former teaching is so successful to me. And for me, because the whole act of discovery is right there in the four days, and it's a discovery not for the whole class as a class, but for each individual person. And the reason I was drawn to feminism was because early, early on, despite what the newspapers and magazines and all the rest of the media said, I saw that it was an individual act.

A woman who wanted to go into the coal mines in West Virginia thirty years ago -- I'm sorry twenty years ago -- was never going to be the kind of feminist I was going to be. Nor was the woman who stayed at home and raised four children and did church work and volunteered to be a docent in a museum. That woman was never going to be the same feminist I was going to be. And the more I lived, and the more I saw that, the more I realized what a wonderful movement feminism was, because in fact, each person does chart her own course for being independent, for knowing herself. It has nothing to do with the party line. I never even knew what a party line meant. When I first belonged to the movement, I was interested in forming my own definition of feminism. It had to do with my making art. It had to do with that more than it had to do with my attitude towards men. As long as a certain kind of patriarchal situation is there, there are certain attitudes about the way men are, the way they're raised, the way they're besieged to be men or macho, and how much they suffer for that. Those ideas of mine are always going to be in place until times change. But that wasn't my main interest. My main interest

was about bringing the main notion of feminism to art, to the creation of art. And that was, what did you have to say as a woman and how is that manifesting itself in your work and is your work interesting?

When I first used to lecture, I had -- and I still have them -- wonderful, wonderful slides of what women made in the 70's. In the 70's, there were women who were interpreting this whole issue of feminism. So there were women who were making narrative art about the loss of a lover. There were women that were making art that was based on their own discovery of their female physical self. So in opposition to phallic symbols that took the shape of Cleopatra's needle or some great big totem pole of god knows what, like a tree that starts from the bottom and moves towards heaven, the women found that their vulva was shaped in an entirely different way. And then women in the 70's were making images about it, lots and lots of women. My painting Ox is one of the most famous because, at that point in history, of all the women who were making art, I was already famous, so naturally people took up on it. That's not to say there weren't other fabulous works that were made with fabric, that were made out of every material possible. I mean the first time I ever saw a woman's show, a work of art that she'd made with the stuff that you get out of the dryer. She would shape it and make something out of it. And then the first time I saw, in California, Judy and I, Judy Chicago and I had sent out the notice that we were leaving La Jolla. She was in Fresno and we were going together. We were going to tour up to San Francisco. We were going to go into

women artists' studios all along the way. And so the women in the network got everybody ready for us and it was on that tour that I first saw what women were making as art.

One woman had a little pocketbook with a handle on it that was made out of a string or something and she had attached it to the shade, so when the shade was pulled up, the little pocketbook sat in her window like some kind of icon. I don't know why, but that was to her art. Another woman had sent her kids off to school, her husband had gone to work and she was working on the couch itself. She was embroidering on the couch animals. So that in the couch, when you looked at it, you could see the needle and the yarn that she was working with, embroidering, you know, stuck in the place where she had last left it. And I'm talking about 1970. I began to see a tremendous amount of things that I had no idea about in terms of art. I'd never seen this before. I have all those slides in, I think, three or four places. They've asked me if they could duplicate my collection but that's a big job. I try not to do it, but ultimately, all of that stuff will go to Rutgers because they're doing a Miriam Schapiro art archives. But when women artists die, their estates that have everything applied to their art can be sent to Rutgers.

I began to use the fabric in a different way. You can see those are older images of mine -- handkerchiefs and ribbons -- you can also see how formal they are, so that when I say I brought the two parts of my life together that's what I mean. My goals are to keep

on talking about what I know, and to tell people what the varieties of feminism are to my knowledge, and wherever I find ignorance, to try to explain what I think feminism is, emphasizing the fact that there is no party and it's not a party line. And also to enlighten people by telling them that there are certain reasons why people emphasize bra burners and party lines and so forth because basically I think men are threatened by women, and they're threatened by women uniting. Do you realize that when I was growing up it was unheard of for two women to go to a restaurant and have dinner together? Because then they would be accused of being lesbians which was supposed to be a bad thing. And now, women go out all the time together and it's accepted. Professionally what my goals are is that I see myself basically as a creative person. And now that I'm at an advanced age, my goal is to continue to be a working professional.

Miriam Schapiro: Do you have any other questions based on what I've said that you want me to answer?

Emily Griffith: I don't think so, not at the moment...do you want to answer anything else?

Miriam Schapiro: I think they' all sort of blended together.

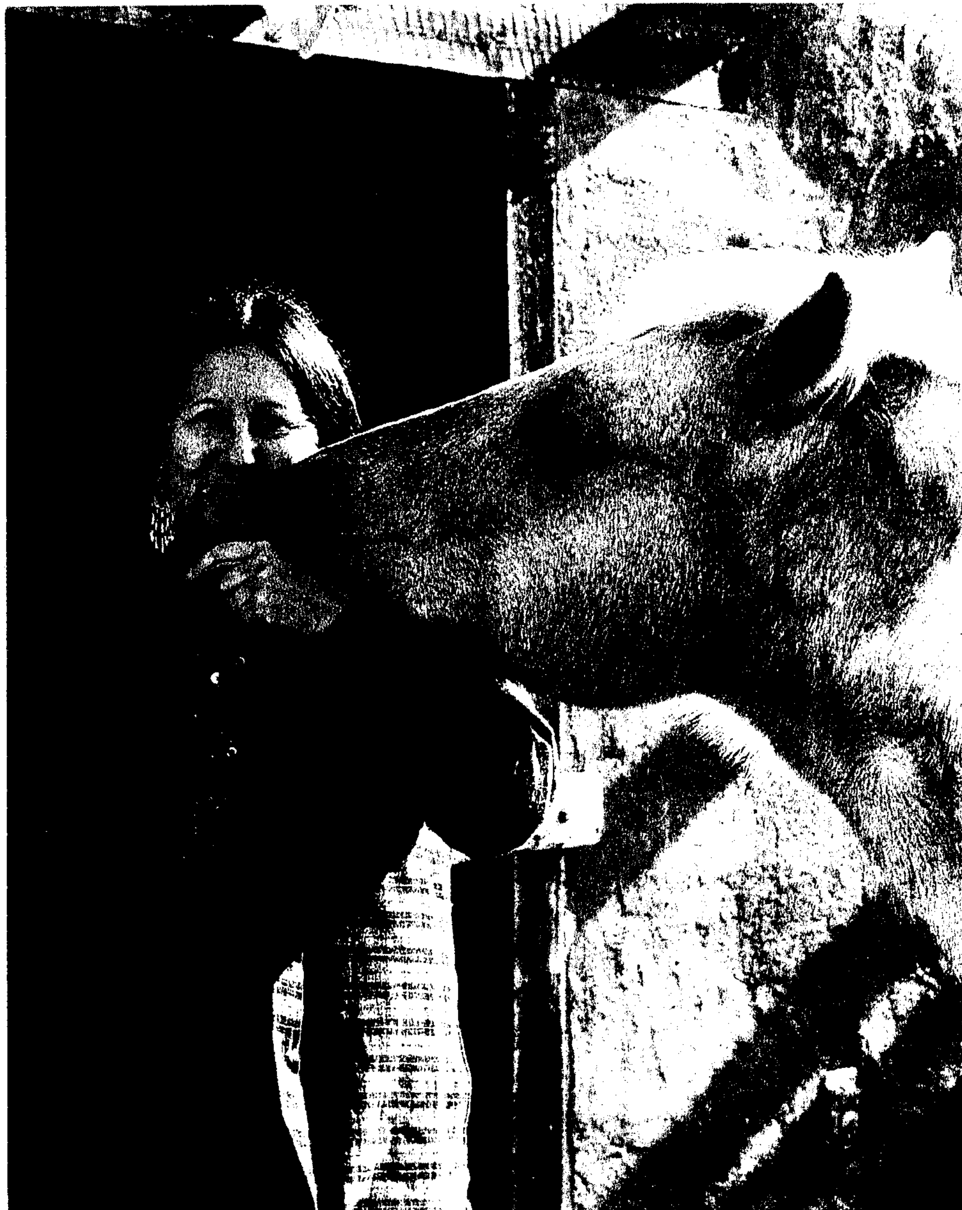
Emily Griffith: What do you think of art education today?

Miriam Schapiro:

I don't know if I know that much about it. I haven't met that many people. I think that the only powerful experience I had was with this woman who was getting her doctorate and who was only interested in theoretical information. I'm not anyone to answer that, nor do I think your other two women are either. If you wanted answers, then you go to Mary Shore and Faith Wilder because they're up on their artists and their writers and their speakers. Those are my students from Womanhouse and they know what the lingo is but I don't. But I'll tell you this much, that I am delighted that there is a dialogue going on about gender and art and I know that it's very hot and that people are really interested in it for a period of time. Then something else will take its place. But I think that the education now should really start with that. In other words, I think we women have had a lot of education and we've formed our own opinions of ourselves. How philosophically we were feminists, whatever that meant for us individually. But now I think it's important for women to educate men. Someone used a wonderful expression; they said that ultimately men would be enfolded into a point of view about gender, or mostly of some women. And the reason I say some women, is that, always having lived in a patriarchy where men have made all the rules, or as Simone de Beauvoir says, "the truth for all of us is the truth as known by men." I think that... I've had men come up to me after my talks. I can think of Minneapolis as a very good example. Basically the most startling question that men have is, what do women want. The point is that for a very long time women didn't know what they wanted. So as they know more what they want, then men have to know too.

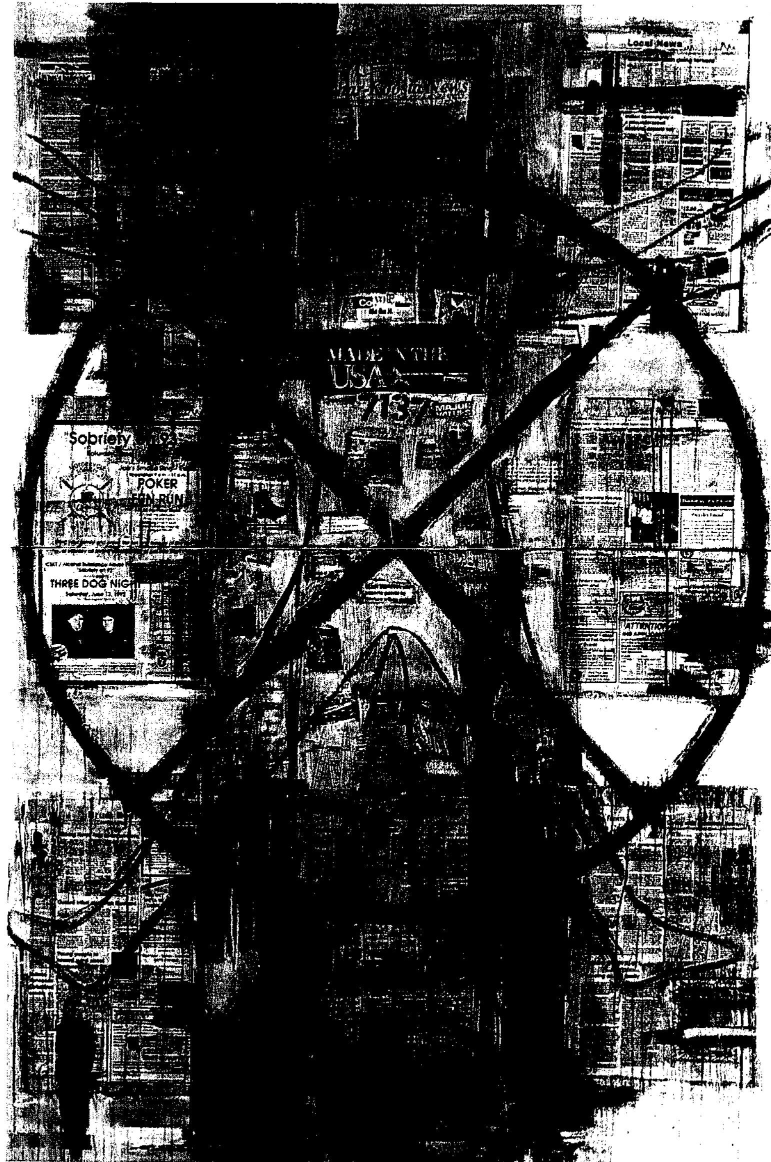
Part 3: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

My final interview was with Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Jaune is a Native American artist who largely struggled on her own. It was only when she was established that a support group rallied around her. Her influence as an art educator can be seen by the role model she presents to young women. Her statement is that you can make it if you want to.

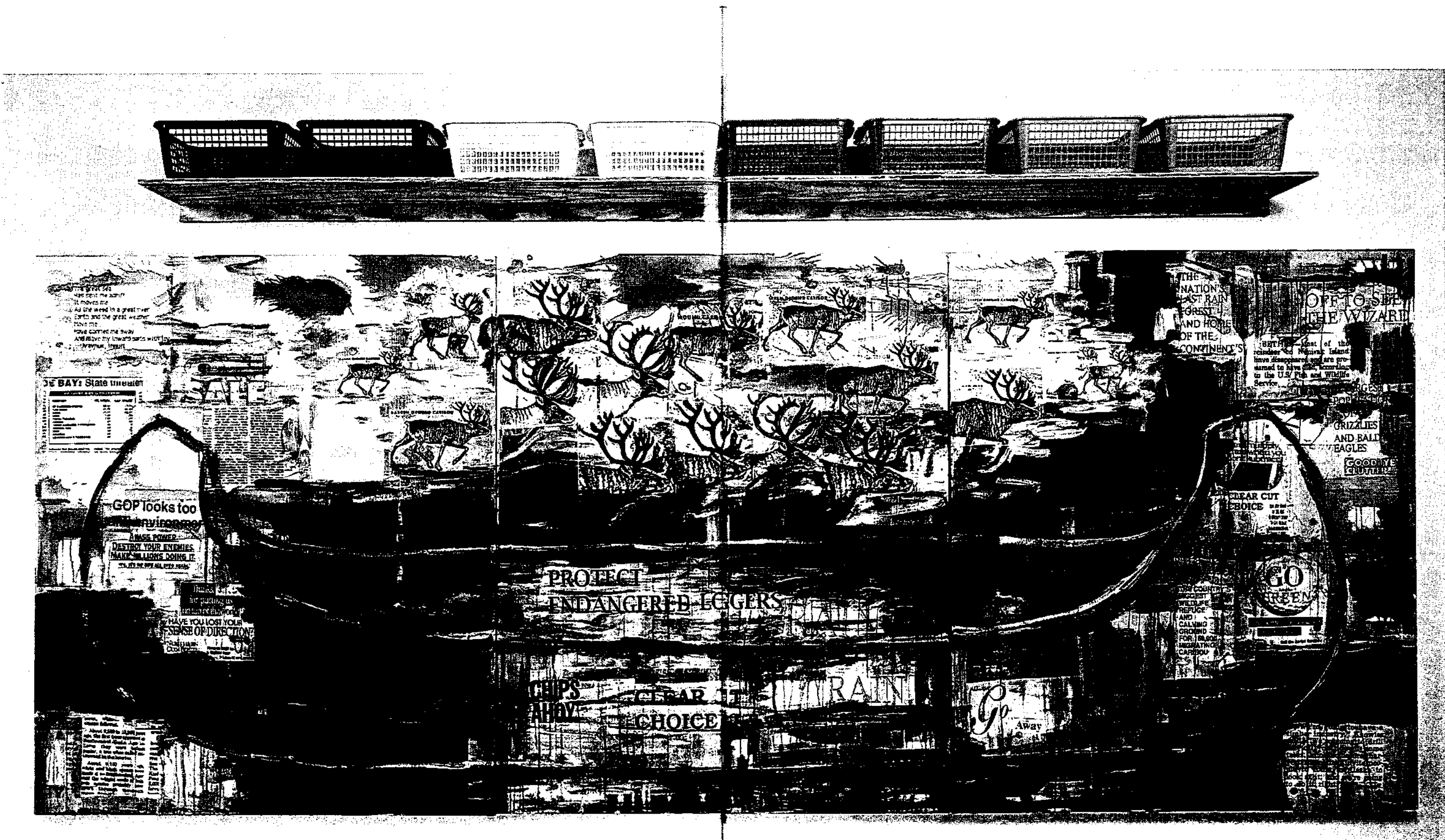


Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
<u>Paper Dolls For A Post Columbian World...</u>, 1991
Pastel and pencil on paper
40 x 29 inches



Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
The Red Mean: Self Portrait, 1992
Oil, mixed media, collage on canvas
90 x 60 inches, diptych



Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
Tongass Trade Canoe, 1996
Acrylic, mixed media, collage on canvas
60 x 150 inches, triptych

Question 1: What were the most meaningful experiences in your becoming an artist and what roles did your family, friends and/or husband play in your becoming an artist?

I would have to say that early on before grade school drawing in mud and dirt with sticks and probably carrying and folding newspaper to make purses with things inside of them.

I would make a hairbrush, comb, lipstick and mirror out of the newspaper and then fold them up to carry around in my pocket. I didn't know then that there was a word for artist, or even that that kind of a person existed. When I went into first grade at school -- there wasn't kindergarten then -- I loved the smell and taste of library paste, tempera paint and crayons. I loved the smell of them but they didn't taste very good. But they smelled so good. It was because of the combination of tactile and physical experience that I just fell in love with them. Drawing and painting with them was my favourite thing to do. I had never been exposed to them before the first grade. I would have to say that both of those experiences left an indelible mark on me and became benchmarks in my love for the process.

Throughout my teens, and into my twenties, I didn't get any support from my father and stepmother about art. I just kept hearing that artists could not make a living

with their art. It was not a career you would be able to get a job with.

When I started junior college with my bean picking money, I was told by a male professor that women could not be artists. There were only men in the class. He made it very clear to me that women could not be artists. I might be able to be a teacher, he told me, but not an artist. He also told me I could draw better than the men in class but that it was beside the point.

It was in my later twenties that my husband and children encouraged me to go back to college for a degree in art education. They knew I wanted to work in art more than anything. They thought that getting a degree in art education and being able to teach what I loved so much would be the right thing to do. So they encouraged me and I did it. I got a degree in art education from Framingham State College in Framingham Massachusetts. Then they encouraged me to go ahead and keep making my art. Eventually it developed into a full time career. They were always supportive and encouraging about art.

Question 2: Tell me about some key experiences in the art world that effected the onset of your career.

One important and key experience involved Lize and Harvey Hoshour, a couple who lived here in Albuquerque. He was an architect and she owned a gallery. They came

to the University of New Mexico to view a woman's painting show. I met them at the opening and they invited me to come and visit their gallery. This led to me participating in their gallery and becoming good friends with them. They had great influence on me and on my ideas about art. I learned a lot from them. There were other people who also participated in their gallery that were art world luminaries like Robert Nadkin, Betty Parsons, Richard Nones, John Knight and Daniel Burins. That had a great impact on my life at that point in time.

I still remain close friends with Lise and Harvey and it is through them that I met Betty Parsons. I did not, however, join Betty's gallery in New York. Esteban and Harriet Vicente came to visit at the University of New Mexico. Esteban was a visiting artist and he gave me great encouragement in my work. In fact he even suggested that I quit school and just make my art. This was wonderful encouragement however I did not do it because I felt I needed the degree.

Later they sent Susie Krall, a New York painter who was on a vacation here in the southwest, to visit the Hoshour Gallery. I introduced Susie and her companion, Jules Pfeifer a cartoonist, to the Hoshours. They came to the gallery and each bought a drawing of mine. They invited me to visit them in New York which I eventually did. When I was in New York, Susie took me to meet Joan Cornbley, her former dealer. That eventually led to doing an exhibition with Joan on 57th street in 1979 which was reviewed

in Art in America . It was published on a page right across from a page reviewing David Thaley's first show in New York. I think that that was probably a key experience for me.

Fritz Scholder, a noted Native American painter here in the Southwest, introduced me to his dealer in Scottsdale Arizona. His dealer came to visit my studio, selected work and later gave me a solo show. Because of that introduction, I showed with Marilyn Butler for twenty years.

At another point in time I invited a group of Native Americans to go with me to visit galleries in Santa Fe. Out of that group, the Clark Benton Gallery selected my work to keep in their gallery. And, eventually Bill Benton, one of the owners and director of the gallery, invited me to do a solo exhibition there. I also did subsequent exhibitions with him. It was a small, but very good, gallery in Santa Fe. He had Lois Lane, Susan Rothenberg, Roy de Forest, Alex Katz and Joe Braynard and other artists in his stable. So those are some of the early influences or influential experiences I guess you could say and very nice ones I might add.

Question 3: What artists have influenced your work and tell me about your thoughts on being considered an influence on other artists today.

Definitely the abstract expressionist artists of the 50s and 60s because that was my art history when I started school in 1958. So artists like Joan Mitchell, Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg, Picasso, and other artists who were notable at that time certainly had an influence on my work. I think that's exhibited in my work today.

Later, older artists that I researched on my own -- Miro, Paul Klee -- definitely played a role in influencing my work. And then Indian art from the past -- hide painting, Indian crafts like beadwork, petroglyphs and pictographs -- continue to influence my work.

Outsider artists and folk artists, I love a lot. I think that influence certainly shows in the texture or the collaging in my work. And then today, artists that I'm fascinated with are Louise Bourgeois, Annette Messager from France. Also, Meret Oppenheim who just recently had a travelling exhibit in this country and subsequently a couple of good works about her work which weren't available before. I regret that they weren't available because all we know about her is the fur-lined tea cup. She has a much more extensive body of work than that. I find her fascinating. I find the politics of these women and their political ideas very interesting, in addition to their work.

From time to time I'll see someone, a beginning artist perhaps, who has certainly looked at my work. Sometimes they copy the work directly or sometimes they change it

somewhat. I suppose that that's the highest form of flattery. It certainly is nothing like the influence that Jasper Johns or Miriam Schapiro has had on the art world. I suppose it's like a grain of sand in comparison to that.

Question 4: What experiences or events contributed to the development of your work?

I would say all of the above. Those were certainly key and crucial things to the development of my work. The stories I just told you about my beginning in the art world and the people who have influenced my work; those were all key experiences in the development of that work. Further, I think that my travels across the United States and through Europe, meeting with Indian communities -- particularly going to reservations -- gave me political ideas and information about Indian life today which has contributed greatly toward the past decade of paintings.

Question 5: What is your personal philosophy regarding your art?

I would say that it is to be true to myself first of all and to speak from the heart, which is what we say in the Indian community. Meaning that you be as truthful as you can and speak what's on your mind straight from the heart.

Question 6: How much of your work is autobiographical and is it a challenge to include

your own image in your art? Why?

All of it's autobiographical. I mean, it's about my journey through life and what I see and hear. Once it's sifted through my computer bank and comes out, I try to tell a good story that will enlighten the viewers, or teach somebody something, or perhaps, change their mind about something. That's always my intent, to tell the truth about the way something is, and perhaps, entice someone else to hear that.

My image comes out in different ways. I think the self-portrait piece that Smith College eventually purchased, was one of the most interesting self images that I've painted. I used Leonardo da Vinci's Golden Mean called The Measure of Man. He had a male figure in there. I called mind the Red Mean for Native America. It's actually a medicine wheel laid over top of my body. I traced the figure from my own body so it's a female figure instead of a male one. Threaded throughout the background are newspapers and stories from my reservation. My put my enrolment number on my chest and it says that I'm made in the U.S.A. I think that that painting will stand through time as a description, not only of my own personal self, but of other women as well in that it's a measure of a woman. So I think of that one, although there are others. I use my horse as a stand in for myself. Or sometimes other animals -- a rabbit who's also a trickster, a coyote who's a trickster -- stand in place of my own image which is an anthropomorphic idea most Native Americans have anyway.

Question 7: What goals are you still working toward, personally and professionally?

I'm sort of fractured sometimes because I'm not just an artist working in the studio painting. I'm also a proselytizer for my ideas. I go out and teach at universities and do workshops on non-toxic materials -- an area I've been collecting information on for some years. I like to share that with others, especially in art departments where major toxic materials have been used. Materials which kill brain cells. That's my contribution to support environmental causes.

Secondly, I've been invited all over the country as a keynote speaker at art education conferences. I meet art educators and public school teachers there. I'm interested in levelling the playing field. Speaking there, I'm dealing with racism, but also, I'm interested in including a message about protecting the earth. By getting that information across to children and teachers, I hope we can effect a whole new generation of tax paying citizens in this country who will have a different idea about the environment.

I've been putting ideas together, making notes and plan to do some new lectures about that very thing, protecting the environment. I think that we can actually bring that in to the art departments and/or visiting art ed teachers. A lot of the art programs have been slashed and so we don't have art departments within the public schools anymore in

most places in this country. We're dependent on people like myself going in and teaching, and so, I've been in contact with some of the local teachers here to go into local schools and do workshops.

I'm sort of spread thin sometimes because I wear quite a few hats. Sometimes I go out to the reservations and lecture there. I go to the tribal colleges and do lectures or workshops there about Indian consciousness raising and career development. I organize Indian exhibitions and will continue to do that. I've got a woman in Ireland right now who's interested in me putting together an exhibition for Ireland so I have that to work on. I think there are goals that I've been working on for many years. It's just that I gather new information and form some new ideas, change my lectures and think of some new ways to do that.

One goal that I would like to add to this is some curriculum development for the public schools and putting together CD-ROMs to go with that. That's something that I've been interested in for quite awhile. I have been mulling that over in my mind so I think that's probably one goal that I haven't accomplished yet. I'm actually looking forward to doing it. I'll continue to make my own work because that's a visual place as well as a narrative one I can use to get my ideas out and seen.

Question 8: What do you think are today's crucial lessons for art educators to teach?

Well for me, as an art educator and an artist, I think two lessons. One is a lesson about racism. This country's multicultural base is only going to increase until the pond turns and all of the ethnic peoples will no longer be called minorities. They'll be the majority in this country. I think it's absolutely crucial [to deal with the issue of racism] so that we don't have a revolution in this country. I think that's one important crucial lesson.

The second important crucial lesson is how to work with our environment and stay within the means we have. We have to clean up our local areas and make them livable. That means the air, as well as the water and land. I think learning how to live with smaller dwellings and less stuff is something we need to learn. I think that art is a place where some of those lessons can be taught. I also think that every school needs to have a victory garden so that children can see things grow and begin to understand how the earth works. I think you can't have any feeling for the environment until you've actually planted something yourself and watched it grow. So I think that that's something that art educators have to get into. That's a lecture I'm going to work on for art ed conferences and bring it to their attention. There are a few places that are already doing those kinds of gardens with the schools but I don't think they've incorporated it into art departments. They see it only as science and it's not. It's where all of our early art came from, from the environment.

Question 9: How would you describe the state of art education today and what improvements need to be made?

I think that art education is in a very nebulous place today because so many budgets have been cut. It's seen as frivolous. In my lectures, I refer to the fact that without art we wouldn't have the history of humankind and the knowledge about our ancestors that art has given us. Art recorded everything: how people lived, what they wore, what their governments were like, how they celebrated life. Everything about humans that we know today, came to us through art. Somehow we became the stepchild of history, social science, and science itself, when at one time, art supplied all of those things for people. I think we have to get back in line here and become part of the curriculum; as substantial a part of the curriculum as the rest of the school curriculum. I think those are improvements that need to be made. We need to make improvements in the curriculum itself. I talk about ways to do that when I lecture about art ed.

Question 10: How valuable is art education and do you consider yourself as much a teacher as you are an artist? Explain.

Absolutely. I am an artist/teacher and a teacher/artist at all times, in all ways. My work is always about enlightening people as well as enhancing their lives. It's about getting them to see *other* in a new way; the *other*, meaning the other side of things. In

almost all the work I do, there's a lesson there for living; something about life and seeing it in a new way. You can turn the coin over and see the other side of things. If you intend to make this a level playing field, that's exactly what you have to do in life --turn the flipside over and see the other side.

People of colour have to do that everyday of their lives. They live in a two part world -- if not more parts than that -- the white world as well as their own ethnic world. Everything they do, they have to flip it over and look at the opposite side. And I really do mean opposite. A lot of times, the white world is totally opposite from where we, tribal people, come from. Our world is about just meeting the needs that we have and not taking more, not being greedy. We are about being a guardian of the environment and caretakers of it, whereas the white world is about exploiting, being greedy, taking more than what you need. It doesn't matter if you pollute that, because I won't be here. Somebody else has to clean it up. Tribal people don't see the world that way. And so, it's often the opposite side, the opposite view. It's as different as Asian philosophy is from European philosophy. All of my work, and all of my art, is about describing the *other* in life. My lectures are about that. About getting people to see that there's another side to things that you must consider. That you must consider the other people in your tribe and not just yourself. I'll continue to do that.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Prior to the 1970's, early literature dealing with women artists was very simplistic in its approach and was limited to a description of women's art as an extension of their biographies. Examples of this can be found in the writings on Artemisia Gentileschi and Georgia O'Keeffe. Over time, the literature on women artists has become more complex as progress has been made in terms of viewing and portraying women artists in ways that include their influences and directions. Writings on Judy Chicago, for example, take a broader view of her career including her aspirations and the influences she experienced. I believe this is more relevant and important today because it is more reflective of how we define ourselves. Even though the literature which currently exists on Amalia Mesa-Bains, Miriam Schapiro and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is broad in its scope, my thesis adds to existing interpretations of the three women, because I examine not only their professional lives but also their personal lives.

Part 1: Early Feminist Inquiry

Feminist inquiry in art history really began in 1971 with a groundbreaking article by Linda Nochlin entitled Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? The author explains:

> In the field of art history, the white Western male viewpoint, unconsciously accepted as *the* viewpoint of the art historian, may – and does – prove to be inadequate not merely on moral and ethical grounds, or because it is elitist, but on purely intellectual ones. (pg.146)

Nochlin goes on to discuss the reasons there have been no great women artists. First, there is "the question of the nude". As Nochlin explains, in the Renaissance period to be classically trained as an artist, one had to study the male nude in detail. Therefore, it was essential for every young artist to take classes in life drawing. But in Renaissance times, this was not an option for women artists. As late as 1893 women art students were not permitted to life drawing classes at the Royal Academy in London and even when they were, after that date, the model had to be "partially draped." (pg. 159)

The second reason explaining the absence of great women artists is what Nochlin called "the lady's accomplishment". Women, at that time, were groomed to be modest and self-demeaning. Their role was to take care of their family and husband. Thoughts of doing anything else were deemed selfish. This outlook helped guard men against unwanted competition in their serious professional activities and assured them of 'well-rounded' assistance on the home front. (pg. 165)

The third and final reason is "successes". Nochlin explains that only a few

women became successful artists in their own right, and this was because they were either the daughters of artist fathers or, later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they had a close personal connection with a stronger or more dominant male artistic personality. (pg. 168) This final argument might explain the success of some of the famous women artists in history.

Perceptions of Gentileschi

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1652) was one of the most successful Italian painters of the 17th century. Ann Landi (2002) in Who Was the Real Artemisia? called her "the darling of feminist art historians for the past quarter century, the subject of at least three novels, and the heroine of an R-rated French movie." (pg. 1) Feminist scholars are intrigued by her story. She worked in the shadow of her more famous and successful father, Orazio, and at times, was even his nude model. Artemisia was raped at the age of seventeen by her father's associate, Agostino Tassi. The sensational trial involved Artemisia being tortured by thumbscrews in an attempt to ascertain the veracity of her statements and a series of counter-allegations against her chastity before Tassi was finally imprisoned and exiled from Rome. "Beginning with her rediscovery by the first generation of feminist art historians, she has gained an almost cult like status as a woman who triumphed in an era dominated by supremely talented men." (pg.2)

One of the most important books written about Artemisia is by a feminist art historian, Mary D. Garrard (1989) entitled Artemisia Gentileschi: the Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art. Garrard writes at length about one of Artemisia's most famous paintings, Judith Slaying Holofernes (1612-13). The story of Judith and Holofernes dates back to a period in Jewish history around the second century BC. It is the story of a widow who puts herself at risk in the camp of a besieging army in order to kill the general thereby disheartening his troops and liberating her people from a deadly siege. There are many versions of this story. In some versions Judith seduces the general before killing him, and in other versions, it is the general who seduces Judith. Garrard suggests that it was a rape and illustrates the similarity of Judith's and Artemisia's tales. Garrard suggests that Artemisia has a special affinity with Judith because not only are they both women, but also because they were both the objects of unwanted sexual aggression. She explains:

> In this image – as even the most conservative writers have realized – Judith's decapitation of Holofernes provides a shockingly exact pictorial equivalent for the punishment of Agostino Tassi. … we can trace the progress of her experience, as the victim first of sexual intimidation, and then of rape. (pg. 208)

Griselda Pollock, in her work entitled Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories. (1999) disagrees with Garrard's analysis of Artemisia's

work. Pollock found Garrard's argument very compelling; it brought the artist to life and showed her work as a personal testimony to her own tragic events. But she argues; the theme of biographical art appears throughout art history. Pollock also asks what has feminism brought to art history? And is that important and unique? She uses Artemisia as a case study to discern "the traces of incompletely repressed psychic materials that might index a historical subjectivity." (pg. 98) She concludes that "in her Judith subjects, as much as in Susanna, man is threatened with the violence that is typically, if metaphorically, enacted upon women ... these images graphically show what that violence looks like, making it visible by inverting the gender of its executioners and victims." (pg. 124)

Perceptions of O'Keeffe

Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) was a pioneer of modernism in America. A member of the circle of Alfred Stieglitz, she met him in 1916 and married him in 1924. She is best known for her near abstract paintings based on enlargements of flower and plant forms. In Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays (1988), Linda Nochlin argues that O'Keeffe's versions of these forms are completely different from the way in which flowers were depicted in earlier centuries. O'Keeffe's depictions resemble female genitalia or reproductive organs. In her study of O'Keeffe's Black Iris, Nochlin asserts that "the connection 'iris-female genitalia' is immediate: it is not so much that one stands

for the other, but rather that the two meanings are almost interchangeable." (pg. 93) What is interesting to note is that O'Keeffe refused to validate these ideas and, in fact, stated: "Eroticism! That's something people themselves have put into the paintings. They've found things that never entered my mind." (Broude & Garrard, 1992, pg. 443)

Like Artemisia, O'Keeffe was overshadowed by a prominent male artist in her life - her husband, Alfred Stieglitz. Although some feminist art historians are eager to advance this interpretation, others argue that Stieglitz was influential in helping O'Keeffe establish and support her career. In the October 1916 issue of Camera Work, Stieglitz states that he "had never before seen a woman express herself so frankly on paper." Building on the first of these interpretations, Whitney Chadwick, in her book Women, Art and Society (1990) goes further saying:

> The ideology of femininity, which presented O'Keeffe as Stieglitz's protégée and which constructed her considerable talent as "essentially feminine," legitimized male authority and male succession. (pg. 306)

In her article entitled Georgia O'Keeffe and Feminism: A Problem of Position, (1991) Barbara Buhler Lynes analyzes Stieglitz's photographs of O'Keeffe. She argues that while Stieglitz sometimes presented O'Keeffe as an assertive and independent woman and as an artist, at other times, he depicted her as a femme fatale and explored her

body in a personal tribute to female sexuality. She explains:

> And by having her gesture suggestively in front of her work in several images, he confirmed that in his view her expression was intricately related to her body and, therefore, a revelation of female sexual experience. (pg. 440)

Part 2: A Broader View – Perceptions of Chicago

Decades later, Judy Chicago (born 1939) was at the forefront of the feminist art movement on the West Coast of the United States. She is truly one of the first women artists that forced art historians to look at the subject of women artists from a broader perspective. Paula Harper states:

> Judy Chicago became a mover and shaker in the feminist art movement of the early seventies, playing an influential role in challenging the top-down imposition of taste validated by established art institutions and based on the assumption of a universal aesthetic standard. She and the other early feminist artists paved the way for subsequent challenges from minority artists in the postmodern period. (Harper, 1990, pg.5)

At Fresno State College n 1970, she designed and taught the first feminist art

course. The following year, she and Miriam Schapiro joined together to offer a feminist art program at the California Institute of the Arts. The explicit aim of the program was "to help women to restructure their personalities to be more consistent with their desires to be artists and to help them build their art making out of their experiences as women." (Gouma-Peterson, 1999, p 10).

In January 1972, women from the feminist art program opened a site-specific installation in an old house located in the residential neighbourhood of Hollywood. They called it Womanhouse. The series of installations included Chicago's Menstruation Bathroom, Kathy Huberland's Bridal Staircase, Miriam Schapiro and Sherry Brody's Dollhouse, and Faith Wilding's Womb Room. Womanhouse was a celebration of the domestic lives of women. According to Gouma-Peterson:

> Traditional women's arts and crafts, painting, collage, assemblage, weaving, needlework, and sculpture, as well as performance pieces were combined into an all-encompassing environment. Out of their lives, fantasies, and politics they had shaped a new aesthetic sensibility that questioned the status quo." (1999, pg. 70)

Judy Chicago's singular most significant contribution to women's art history was her piece, The Dinner Party (1974-1979). Chadwick described it as "a monumental testament to women's historical and cultural contributions." (1990, pg. 376) More than

one hundred women contributed to this piece. It consisted of an equilateral triangle of forty-eight feet per side with thirty-nine place settings each one commemorating a woman or legend from history, and beneath the triangle, a marble floor inscribed with an additional nine hundred and ninety-nine names. Each place included a ceramic plate, with a central-raised motif designed by Chicago to symbolize the woman honoured, a brilliantly coloured runner executed in needlework techniques appropriate to the subject's period, and a chalice. Josephine Withers in Judy Chicago's Dinner Party: A Personal Vision of Women's History called it "a transcendental vision of women's history, culture and aspirations." (Broude & Garrard, pg. 451)

Because the work of Judy Chicago deals with issues such as personal history and stories, critics have been forced to look at her work from a much broader perspective and examine her life and personal achievements.

Two significant articles support my contention that a more encompassing view of women artists is relevant today. The first is The Feminist Critique of Art History (1987) by Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews. The authors espouse the notion that art criticism and art history viewed from a feminist perspective is a recent phenomenon. Over time, it has moved from a first generation in which "the condition and experience of being female" was emphasized to a second generation that offered a more complex critique of both art and culture. (pg. 326)

The authors assert that Linda Nochlin's article Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? is significant because it prompted the writing of a series of biographical and expository studies on neglected women artists. Further, books such as Women Artists 1550-1950 (Harris & Nochlin, 1976) and American Women Artists (Rubenstein, 1982) aimed to "prove that women have been as accomplished, even if not as 'great' as men, and to try and place women artists within the traditional historical framework." (pg. 327) Gouma-Peterson and Mathews conclude by explaining:

> The first decade of feminist art thus was buoyed not only by anger, but by a new sense of community, the attempts to develop a new art to express a new sensibility, and an optimistic faith in the ability of art to promote and even engender a feminist consciousness. (pg. 332)

Gouma-Peterson and Mathews also discussed themes such as art versus craft and the female sensibility and images by women. They argue that a large part of traditional female creative output has traditionally been invalidated as art because it conveyed a female experience. It was therefore relegated to the category of "craft" through the creation of an aesthetic hierarchy that qualitatively differentiated "high" art from "low" art", in fact, these authors also discussed the possibility that a female sensibility and aesthetic do exist. Reviewing psychological studies such as Carol Gilligan's In a Different

Voice (1982) and biological studies such as Susan Griffith's Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (1978), they identify exploration of female sexuality as a theme in feminist art and theory. For example, artists such as Hannah Wilke and Louise Bourgeois were getting in touch with, and reclaiming their bodies and expressing that in their art. In their historical study, Gouma-Peterson and Mathews argue that stereotypes such as virgin, mother and muse to whore, monster and witch play an important role in female imagery in art.

In discussing the first generation feminist art criticism, Gouma-Peterson and Mathews declare Lucy Lippard to be "the first writer to attempt to devise a specifically feminist art criticism." (pg. 343) They also examine Moira Roth, who "delineated two strains in American feminist art and theory in 1980: the overtly political and the spiritual." (pg. 343) In reviewing artists such as Suzanne Lacy and Martha Rosler (second generation art criticism and methodology) who have been very vocal in the debate over the nature of feminist art and criticism, Gouma-Peterson and Mathews argue that a more radical critique of traditional methodologies exists among second-generation art critics than among art historians.

Discussing feminist art historical methodologies, Gouma-Peterson and Mathews analyze the difference between American and British art historians and critics such as the writings of Norma Broude, Mary D. Garrard, Carol Duncan, Griselda Pollock, Rozsika

Parker and Tamar Garb. They conclude by stating:

> Since feminism is not a self-contained methodology, but a world view, its impact is at once harder to trace and ultimately more significant. It does not impose itself on art and history as a canonic manifesto or a closed system, which pretends to delineate the validity and invalidity of the art of the past and present, but instead offers a vibrant and ongoing critique of art and culture. It goes beyond attention to women's issues to embrace a totally new consideration of the production and evaluation of art and the role of the artist. (pg.356-357)

Years later Elizabeth Garber, Yvonne Gaudelius and Mary Wyrick in the The Relevance of Women's Art and Art Education (1991) discuss the importance of women's issues in relation to teaching in the schools. In the first section, they provide four arguments in support of this view. The first argument pertains to the issue of relevancy. They argue that incorporating women's issues into the curriculum incorporates "real life" issues into the curriculum. Their second argument is that children need to be aware of, and become sensitized to, the lives and issues of under-represented groups. Third, children need to learn strategies to identify and confront sexist practices. Finally, it is necessary to preserve and affirm a cultural heritage in which representatives of many groups of people -- including women, people of colour, rural and urban dwellers, and persons of different socioeconomic classes – are makers, not objects of depiction.

The authors discuss what they call "what we as teachers can do" and they have five suggestions. The first is to make students aware of the inequities. This could be achieved by comparing the number of female and male artists in art world publications and art history books. Second, we must ask why there are fewer women artists. They suggest that students try to consider the following statements: women artists don't make as good art; women are not full-time professionals; and women artists have expended their energies making craft and minor arts. Third, we must investigate how we as a society value art forms. Why are needle arts and fibers (called minor arts) more often thought of as "women's work" and painting and sculpture (called major arts) more often considered the domain of men? Fourth, we must investigate historical conditions that affect art making. For example, teachers should help students investigate the expectations for women and men, the education of each sex and ideas about the artist. Finally, teachers should utilize women artists and artists of colour in teaching about art. They conclude by stating that their aim is to increase knowledge and understanding of women's art to art education today.

Part 3: Traditional Contemporary Perceptions

I will now look at some of the writings on Amalia Mesa-Bains, Miriam Schapiro and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. I will argue that generally these writings are narrow in their scope and tend to label these three women as either Chicana, feminist or Native

American and to focus on that aspect of the artist's identity. When past work does approach autobiographical, it is tentative and limits itself. I suggest these descriptions be broadened to also include their roles as artist, teacher and leader.

Perceptions of Mesa-Bains

In Art on the Edge and Over, (1993) Linda Weintraub devotes a chapter to Amalia Mesa-Bains. Weintraub defines Mesa-Bains as an artist committed to instigating social change: "she is an artist, critic, author, psychologist, lecturer, political activist, cultural historian, teacher and researcher. What unites her efforts in all of these capacities is her advocacy for the Mexican population in the United States." (pg. 92) Mesa-Bains was born in California. Her father crossed the border between Mexico and California as a child during the Mexican Revolution in 1916, and her mother came to the US from Mexico on a day pass in the 1920s. Weintraub discusses Mesa-Bains in terms of her "insider's perspective on the outsider's existence." (pg. 93) She argues that Mesa-Bains seeks to synthesize the collective experience of Mexican-Americans but tries never to sentimentalize it. Her work celebrates the complex traditions of Chicano life. It also protests the remains of three centuries of colonialism and demands the empowerment of Chicano people in the United States.

Weintraub, in her analysis of some of the altarpieces made by Mesa-Bains, argues

that "one of Mesa-Bains's themes is the dichotomy between the Mexican mind – which tends to dwell on inference and imagination – and the Anglo mind which inclines toward cognitive thought processes and data." (pg. 93-4) She contends that Mesa-Bains addresses dual audiences, "affirming community pride for the Chicano population while challenging the disrespect often displayed by the Anglo population." (pg. 95)

In the March/April 1995 issue of Art Papers, Anne Barclay Morgan interviewed Amalia Mesa-Bains. Morgan describes Mesa-Bains as both an artist and a critic. As an artist, her work is primarily interpretation of traditional Chicano altars, and as a critic, she has worked to define a Chicano and Latino aesthetic in the United States and Latin America. Morgan centered her article around this question of artist and critic. She asks Mesa Bains: "do you have problems in writing about Chicano art for publications that are not Chicano-run?" "Apart from the structure of the language, do you feel that there is a certain aesthetic or something in the fabric in the Spanish language that would speak about Chicano art more 'appropriately' than English does?" and "are there any critics you know who are not Chicano, who you feel write with understanding and whose viewpoints you like?" (pg. 25-27) Like Weintraub, Morgan identifies Mesa-Bains solely in terms of her Chicana heritage.

Lucy Lippard, in her book Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America (1990) views Mesa-Bains in a different light. To her, Mesa-Bains is interested not only

in the tradition of domestic folk-ritual within minority art communities, but also the "reclamationist"' phase of feminist art history that pursues the "secret history of women." (pg. 82) According to Lippard, Mesa-Bains "fuses material and religious opulence while forgetting neither their erotic implications nor the tragic history and economic poverty that produces such riches." (pg. 84)

In conclusion, the writings on Amalia Mesa-Bains tend to focus solely on her ethnicity and not on the larger picture of why she is making art and who helped her to get there. She sees her influences and roles in a much more complex and multi-layered way, as we will see later in the discussion of her interview.

Perceptions of Schapiro

There is much more written about Miriam Schapiro attributed, in part, to her groundbreaking work with Judy Chicago on Womanhouse, and also because she helped launch the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 1970s and 1980s. However in some of the writings, she is still viewed one-dimensionally. For example, an article in the March/April 1998 issue of Fiberarts entitled "Miriam Schapiro: Woman-Warrior with Lace", Schapiro is described by Linda Stein as "a rebel as well as a mover and shaker." (pg. 35) According to Stein, Schapiro has fought since 1970 to erase the line between high art and craft. By using icons such as the heart shape, which was considered taboo due to

its sentimentality and femininity, Schapiro challenged the male-dominated art establishment and demanded they take notice.

An essay published in the exhibition catalogue entitled Miriam Schapiro: Reconstructing Women's Traditions (1999) by Cynda L. Benson at the Savannah College of Art and Design describes Schapiro as contributing "perhaps more than any other artist, to an increased awareness of women's traditions, both in the so-called 'high' arts and the traditional craft media." (pg. 7) Benson writes about Schapiro's creation of the word "femmage", about her founding the Pattern and Decoration movement and about her work with Judy Chicago on Womanhouse. She concludes by stating that Schapiro literally and metaphorically reclaimed women's traditions.

Thalia Gouma-Peterson's article in the spring 1997 issue of American Art entitled "Miriam Schapiro: An Art of Becoming" took a broader approach to the life of Miriam Schapiro. Gouma-Peterson devotes the first section of her article to writing about Schapiro's upbringing. The section, "a sense of isolation", discusses the role Schapiro's father and mother played in her life. She also writes about Schapiro's college education and her relationship with her husband, Paul Brach. She notes that Schapiro had women artist friends but never felt that she could discuss her personal or professional problems with them. Gouma-Peterson argues "the absence and muting of women artists as professionals, both in the history of art and in the contemporary New York art scene,

profoundly affected Schapiro." (pg. 14)

The second section of her article called "moving toward autobiography" discusses Schapiro's shift toward compositions that revealed fragments of her inner life and personal desires. Gouma-Peterson analyzes her series of Shrines and states that "in these geometrically structured paintings, she created a new and original artistic vocabulary that allowed her, albeit covertly, to name the unspoken – the story of her life." (pg. 15) In looking at Schapiro's femmages, collaborations and pattern painting in great detail, Gouma-Peterson provides the reader with a deeper understanding of Schapiro's work. In it she describes Schapiro's work as complex and layered and states that it opens the door to realities that are multiple and changing. She concludes: "hers is a questioning art – one that challenges the idea of identity as something stable, immediately apparent, and readily recognizable." (pg. 43) Through my interview with Miriam Schapiro, we see a much more in-depth discussion of her life and career which helps us understand her as an artist and educator.

Perceptions of Smith

The article "Native American Women Artists: Claiming Identity" by Ann Nash in the fall 1993 issue of Proteus: A Journal of Ideas focuses on Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's Native American background, as do most articles written about her. Nash explains:

> [her] art challenges the viewer to analyze his/her worldview and reconstruct this view from the perspective of Native American history, society, or culture. It is an exercise in "what's wrong with this picture?" that intrigues and engages the viewer who is caught looking. (pg. 34)

According to Nash, Quick-to-See Smith's work can be traced to specific American Indian vehicles for visual expression and storytelling including ledger drawings and parfleches (rawhide suitcases) as well as to the dripped paint, big brushstrokes and collaging used by Willem de Kooning and Robert Rauschenberg. She explains that "this stylistic mixing up, borrowing and trading is characteristic of Native American traditions." (pg. 35)

There are four essays that accompany the catalog Subversions/Affirmations: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. In the first essay entitled "When Word and Image Dance Together", Gail Tremblay explains:

> Over the years, [Jaune Quick-to-See Smith] has worked in many media, has used and invented an impressive vocabulary of techniques to express the complex and nuanced environment inhabited by indigenous people in this country, and by doing this, she has made significant contributions to contemporary cultural life. From this foundation, her work has grown into a dialogue between the painter and

> the viewer that becomes more engaged and engaging as the viewer learns to read her work. (pg. 27)

Tremblay analyzes three works in great detail and discusses the political and personal messages that are layered in them.

The second essay entitled "Creation Story" by the Native American poet Joy Harjo is a lyrical meditation on Quick-to-see Smith's themes and narratives, focusing on the symbolic content of the work. In the third essay by Lucy Lippard called "Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's Public Art", she explains: "I am concentrating here on Smith's public art because she is one of the few Native American artists to have gained access to this field." (pg. 80) Lippard examines her upbringing, education and early years as an artist as well as analyzing some of her public art from 1989–1991. She concludes:

> What distinguishes Smith's public projects from most related work, however, is the way they are culturally embedded in history and politics, as well as in the places they are located. A passionate concern for interconnected life and a belief that art can communicate and help people to care runs through all of her work. (pg. 92)

The final essay in this catalog is "A conversation with Jaune Quick-to-See Smith"

by the exhibition's curator, Alejandro Anreus. He devotes the first half of the interview to asking questions about her childhood. For example, "tell me about your parents"; "when did you start drawing?" and "tell me about your earliest memories of school." He then discusses her role as an artist and as an activist before concluding by asking her whether she had a particular philosophy regarding her art. These discussions in focusing on Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's First Nations identity and activism limit the reader's views of the artist and are in danger of producing a new stereotype.

In conclusion, I believe that in my selective literature review I have successfully demonstrated three points. First, that the early feminist critical literature provided a very simplistic view of women, their lives and their art. Second, that the critical literature on Judy Chicago demonstrates a considerably broader view and is reflective of a more inclusive view of women in general. Third, that the critical literature on the three women artists I review and report on in the subsequent chapters of this thesis provides a wider interpretation of women artists.

Chapter Three

Findings from Interviews

Part 1: Early Identity as Artists

Based on interviews conducted between July 19, 1999 and January 15, 2000, I have identified four major themes: all three women saw themselves as artists from an early age; they all felt a deep sense of alienation from the accepted art world and established their own networks; within these networks these women all found mentors and allies who greatly influenced their careers; and finally, all three women have made crucial statements and lessons for today's art educators. In this chapter, I will summarize the findings regarding these themes. Complete transcripts of each interview are included as appendices for readers. All quotations in this chapter are from these transcripts.

These transcripts revealed that all three women believed they were artists from the time they were young. This very early commitment to being an artist, whether they understood what that meant or not, shaped each of their views of their own art, as well as their views of art education in general.

Throughout Amalia Mesa-Bains' cross-disciplinary career, she worked to define a Chicano and Latino aesthetic in both the United States and Latin America. She pioneered

the work of documenting and interpreting long-neglected Chicano traditions in Mexican-American art, both through her cultural activism and through her own altar installations. An example of this is the piece entitled Cihauteotl (Woman of Cihuatlampa), 1997. Cihuatlampa is a spiritual and mythical place of the untamed spirit. Amalia's piece offers a critique of the restrictions placed upon women in the patriarchy and explores the mythical existence of primal beings whose fierce femininity is reflected in the structure of a large-scale, hand-held mirror and vestments made of copper mesh or coloured feathers.

As educator and community advocate Amalia has served the San Francisco Unified School District, the San Francisco Arts Commission, and the Board of Directors of both the Galeria de la Raza and the Centre for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens. Currently she is the Director of the Visual and Public Art Institute of California State University at Monterey Bay. Through holding these various positions, she has become a spokesperson, not only for her cultural and ethnic community but also, for women and the artistic community.

There are generations of artists in Amalia's family, which leads one to wonder how great a part did artistic nurturing play in her development. Her father's side of the family is filled with people who made things and who constantly solved problems by working with their hands. Her mother's artistic influence, if any, goes unnoticed and

unmentioned. Amalia grew up thinking that she had the ability to make anything or fix anything. She says:

> I think I was really lucky because I had a lot of support and because this family had already seen artists and knew what artistic temperaments and signs of an artist were. The minute they saw them in me, they expected them. So because they expected them, they reinforced them.

There can be little doubt that Amalia sensed a nurturing climate, one in which she could grow and take risks as an artist. She also believes that her own Mexican culture has a high regard for artistic ability and this furthered her artistic temperament:

> I've been to conferences where the President of Mexico opened it and started with his poetry because more importantly, art is integrated as a sense of a refined person, not a job or profession or role but to be artistic. You go to markets and the poorest people arrange plastic bags by colours, sort fruit and make designs, it is a way of thinking.

Therefore, in Amalia's case nurturing takes on a double role. Not only does she have strong family support but she also has strong cultural support for her artistic role and work.

Amalia calls herself 'lifer' - someone who is an artist from a very early age. Her parents bought her an easel when she was about seven or eight and she created her own studio in the back of the house where the washing machine stood and where the dog slept. This illustrates her parents' support of her need for privacy and space. She says:

> I always was an artist from when I was really, really young. I used to trace in the air. I realize it was contour drawing but I didn't know what it was. So anyway, I was tracing and my mother thought what a loony child! We used to ride this bus from Sunnyvale, the little town then was pre-Silicon Valley, to San Jose. My mother was so embarrassed by this continual tracing in the air that she got a little pad and a pencil and always carried it in her purse. The minute I started doing it, she'd give me (the pad and pencil) and I really think that those things became a way of making art, constantly with a paper and a pencil, constantly drawing.

Amalia believes she developed a strong self-concept because of two factors -- family and her cultural links. In her mind, these are key elements in her identity as a woman and as an artist. Her work illustrates this. For example, the installation of the vanity table from Venus Envy Chapter One, 1993 has the artifacts and props of everyday life tied together to the particularized objects a Catholic and Chicana girl might own and use. The signifiers of female identity are overlapped with the motifs of Catholicism;

itself a religion that is both a uniting force for much of the Mexican-American community and an outsider's faith that was first imposed upon, and later adopted by, the community. Thus Amalia's life is an example of the blending of theory and practice.

In a similar fashion, Miriam Schapiro saw herself as an outsider and responded by constructing her own art world with collaborators. In the early 1970s, Miriam Schapiro co-founded the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts out of which came the groundbreaking collaborative installation *Womanhouse*, a full-scale feminist environment created in an abandoned house in Hollywood. Miriam, along with Judy Chicago and twenty-one women students, created a room-by-room installation celebrating women's experiences in the home. Traditional women's arts and crafts, painting, collage, assemblage, weaving, needlework and sculpture as well as performance pieces were combined into an all-encompassing environment. This project marked the beginning of Schapiro's legendary collaborations with ordinary women who gave her samplers, doilies, tea towels etc. to incorporate into her femmages. This is an important statement of Miriam's ties to women in general, including those who are not artists, and also of her general social commitment. Her work speaks for, through, and to her community by incorporating that community into her work. Along with her monumental heart, fan, and house-shaped canvases layered with pieces of fabric and paint such as Barcelona Fan (1979), Schapiro helped launch the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 1970s and 1980s and developed a colourful and sensuous style that has influenced a generation of

younger artists. In the 1980s and 1990s she moved toward autobiographical figural compositions such as The Stronger Vessel (1994) that includes an image of herself and some Russian women such as Sonia Delaunay and Natalya Goncharova whom she admires. By piecing fragments of her own autobiography together with the experiences of other women she has become the voice of a feminist vision.

Miriam, like Amalia, came from a family of artists. Schapiro's father was head of the Rand School of Social Science and held other distinguished positions during his life. He was very influential in the organization of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Her uncle, Roy Gordon, another important influence in her life, worked his entire life for the company that supplied the images of women's lingerie for the Montgomery Warden Sears Robust catalogues. His job was to airbrush around the images of the models. According to Miriam, this was very precise work, and because he did it so well he kept his job for his whole life. Although Miriam talks little about her mother, she does say that both parents gave her great encouragement in becoming an artist when she was young although they were also disciplinarians. She comments:

> In the summers we would take a cottage by the beach and leave New York City. My father would work in the city all week but he'd come out for the weekends. I had to prepare drawings - 5 drawings for him - which he would crit, and this started at a very early age. So, of course I got to the shore and all I wanted to do

was play with my friends and everything, so the night before he was coming I would make the five drawings!

Like Amalia, Miriam's family was a positive influence in her development. It also appears that most of Miriam's support from a young age was male. Both Amalia and Miriam had mothers who were influential in their upbringing but the artistic support seems to derive from the male side of the family in both cases.

As a Native American woman, a mother, and a grandmother, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith speaks (in her life and work) with singular authority about the diversity of North American culture and the role of art within a democratic society. Since 1979 Quick-to-See Smith has received over eleven awards including the 1997 Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Visual Arts from the Women's Caucus for Art, as well as the Joan Mitchell Foundation's Individual Artist Grant. Quick-to-See Smith is an important contemporary artist; one who subverts our false notions of reality and affirms essential truths in her work. An example of this is *Tongass Trade Canoe* (1996) where the central image in this piece is a large canoe of the sort that explorers, trappers and traders used on their journeys west. Surrounding it is text from various publications and newspapers discussing what should be done with the rain forest in Alaska. One can read headlines like "GOP looks to environment" or, "Amass power. Destroy your enemies. Make millions doing it." Above the canoe are images of a herd of barren ground caribou and woodland

caribou. Jaune juxtaposes text and images to build a sense of what we gain and lose through various actions.

Jaune knew from a very early age that she loved art, but unlike the other two women, it seems to have come from within not from familial or cultural influences. When asked about her upbringing, she recalls being alone. She did not have any support from her father or stepmother throughout her teens and into her twenties. She recalls:

> I would have to say that early on before grade school, drawing in mud and dirt with sticks and carrying and folding newspaper to make purses with things inside of them [were my most meaningful experiences in becoming an artist]. I would make the hairbrush and comb and lipstick and mirror out of the newspaper and then fold these up and carry them around in my pocket. And I didn't know there was a word for artist or even that that kind of a person existed. Then when I went to grade school in the first grade - there wasn't even kindergarten then - I loved the smell and taste of library paste and crayons. I loved the smell of them but they didn't taste very good. And tempera paint. I loved the smell of and it didn't taste very good either, but they all smelled so good. It was a combination of tactile and physical experience with them that I just fell in love with those materials. And then drawing and painting with them was my favourite thing to do.

In summary, all three women were making art from a very early age. Mesa-Bains and Schapiro both came from families that accepted and encouraged art making. It is worth noting that while Quick-to-See Smith struggled largely on her own, she was not discouraged from engaging in her art. From an early age, all three show strong personal determination to become artists. Each believes their early commitment has greatly influenced their artistic philosophies.

Part 2: Outsiders

Another common experience of the three women artists is a shared feeling of not fitting into the art world as it existed. As a result, each artist established her own networks.

Amalia stayed outside the practices of the everyday art world because she felt it was elitist. She strongly believes that her role, beyond being an artist, is as an advocate for the disenfranchised. She explains:

> Well, there's the art world and then there is the world of art that I grew up in which is the Chicano world of art. We set out to create our own institutions and our philosophy was that art serves the community and we were not artists, we were cultural workers. Our notion was that the art system, as it existed, was an

elite system that was an extension of the racist domination of a society that really disregarded us. So we sought to build a community--based system that was like an antidote to the commercial and even the museum world. The philosophy at the beginning was an anti-elite community-based system to educate the community and to serve the community and that's what you did and so your work was within that realm.

Amalia sees herself not only as a spokesperson for her community but also as a creator of that community. Therefore, for her, art plays a fundamental role in the creation of community as well as of self. For Amalia, art is not decoration. More importantly, art is the interaction between the personal self and the community in which one lives. Amalia is the creation of the community that supported her as a child.

For the better part of the next twenty years of her life, Amalia stayed within this self-contained art world. She operated solely on the West Coast. She believed there was no place for her in either the art world centre of New York or in the government centre of Washington. Most important for her was her colleagues within the Chicano art world. Amalia explains:

The Chicano movement and the Chicana art movement within that is very self-contained. If anything, our relationships of influence, in terms of what influenced

us, had to do with religious painting, or had to do with yard art, or had to do with native sand stuff, or with crafts, weaving, carving. Those were the things that were a part of the world that was of value to us.

Amalia believes her artwork is autobiographical. This autobiographical form of her work is an extension of the childhood support she received from her family and her community. She explains:

> So the autobiographical form that has cut across all of that has been a way to allow me to use myself, my family, my sister, all the things in my life, as a way of telling stories and narratives that also questions what happens to women, what happens to families, what happens in racial politics, what happens in the economy of this country and why do we stand by and let those things happen.

Unlike Amalia, Miriam grew up in New York and was a practicing artist there. But like Amalia, she still felt like an outsider with no one to relate to. Art was a man's world. Miriam comments:

> As I grew up, I really wasn't knowledgeable about women in art because I never saw any books with women in them and I was never taught in school. I went to public school, I went to high school, I went to Hunter College and then I went to

> the University of Iowa and no one ever showed me a slide of a work of art by a woman. I really didn't know where I fit into the world. It was very awkward in those days to be very ambitious to be an artist, if you were a woman. When I went to college I was told that art is neutral so it didn't matter what gender you were. Well of course great liberation came when I found out what gender I really was in art. You know because that generated all of the originality in my work. In America we're very puritanical so for a long time when I was growing up, real artists didn't do pots or didn't do textiles or didn't do dress design or didn't do any of that sort of thing. But as time went on I found that I was interested in a lot of other things but I didn't feel I was allowed to do them because the rules in New York where I lived most of the time were very strict.... canons were there and it was very strict about what was art and what wasn't art.

Miriam's concerns reflect a growing awareness of herself as a woman and as a woman artist. She slowly began to collaborate with other women artists and soon established her own network with other emerging feminist artists. In the 1970s, Miriam teamed up with Judy Chicago in California and went travelling across the state in search of fellow women artists. That was the first time she saw what other women were making as art. She recalls:

> One woman had a little pocketbook with a handle on it that was made out of a

string or something. She had attached it to the shade so when the shade was pulled up the little pocketbook sat in her window like some kind of icon. I don't know why, but that was art to her. Another woman had sent her kids off to school. Her husband had gone to work and she was working on the couch itself. She was embroidering animals on the couch. So that, in the couch, when you looked at it, you could see the needle and the yarn that she was working with, embroidering, you know, stuck in the place where she had last left it. I began to see a tremendous amount of things that I had no idea about in terms of art. I'd never seen this before.

Miriam 's time in California was extremely influential to her because she finally came to understand that she was not alone in her ideologies and in her art making. Miriam's strong family support gave her the strength to follow her dreams. She felt she could define herself as a woman artist without the fear of having to conform. For Miriam, her community consisted of the emerging feminist artists across the United States.

In contrast, Jaune's struggle to be an artist was a solitary one. Unlike Amalia and Miriam, she did not establish any support networks. She comments:

I just kept hearing that artists could not make a living with their art or that that was not a career or that you would not be able to get a job with that. And then

> when I started junior college with my bean picking money, I was told there by the male professor - and it was all men in the class - that women could not be artists. He made that very clear to me - that women could not be artists. I might be able to be a teacher he told me. He told me also that I could draw better than the men but that was just beside the point.

Like Amalia, she sees her work as autobiographical:

> All of it is autobiographical. I mean it's about my journey through life and what I see and what I hear. Once it's sifted through my computer bank and how it comes out, I try to tell a good story that will enlighten the viewers or teach somebody something or perhaps change their mind about something. That's always my intent, to tell the truth about the way something is, and perhaps entice someone else to hear that.

In summary, both Amalia and Miriam established networks within their communities. For Amalia, it was the Chicanos and Chicanas within California and for Miriam, it was the emerging feminist artists from across the country. Jaune did not speak of establishing networks within the Native American communities. Instead, she recalls the isolation and the continuing struggle to be recognized as an artist. Despite this, there are some striking similarities between the women in terms of their journey to become artists. All three

speak with great self-confidence. There was never a question of changing their paths, nor of failure. All three women felt destined to become prominent artists and spokespersons in their respective fields.

Part 3: Role Models

Within the networks these three women established, they all found mentors and allies who greatly influenced their careers. For Amalia, it was the women she called her 'co-madres':

> At the beginning, the strongest influence was the other community-based Chicano and Chicana artists. You called them co-madres. It's funny because co-madres means co-mother and it's usually a relationship two women have in regard to a child. So the woman who has the child asks the other woman to be her co-mother and the idea is that somehow you're going to provide extra guidance and if that person should die or be unable to take care of that child, you will. And we all became co-madres without children. And our 'children' was our work. And that was what we helped each other with. So over the years I would say that Carmen Lomas Garza, Judy Baca, Ester Hernandez, were the core people that I shared that - and do still share - relationship with.

Amalia also found mentors outside the Chicano art world:

> A man named Bob Bishop who was the founder - he's dead now - of the Museum of American Folk Art - the one at Lincoln Centre. Bob Bishop took an incredible interest in me and introduced me to people. Phillip Yenawin who used to be the Art Education director at MOMA was another person who took an interest in my work and opened doors for me. Lots of museum people, which is interesting because I was a critic of their system. But nonetheless because I was involved in it, you see, sometimes people have respect for people who stand up to them and who exchange ideas. So I think it's two systems: one is the internal system of your community and of other women who give you support and help you build your strength and then the people from the outside, larger world who actually make and facilitate bridges for you into exhibiting.

Her final, and most important, ally was her husband:

> By the time Richard met me I was already in art school so as a musician he completely accepted that art would be a central part of my life and because music was his - and it's another form of art - there was really no question. The thing that I think Richard has given me, and done for me, is that he's provided a kind of organizational support. When we were young, it was passing my paintings up

and driving them to different exhibitions and locations. And then later it was helping me financially figure out how to pay for what I do. I lucked out. And actually, I think, I say this to everyone, if you're a woman artist, you better find somebody who is like your wife. A husband who sees your work as absolutely essential and who would devote themselves to producing that. If you have to be taking care of somebody else to do their work, you're not going to get it done. Every woman artist that I know that I think has been -- I don't want to use the word successful because it's a very narrow definition -- but is able to produce regularly, has someone that supports them and really thinks that what they do is important. [Someone who] is right there with them. When women don't have that, and on top of that also have children and others to care for, they have a huge gap in their work career.

Amalia established an intricate set of networks to support her. She has her Chicano community support through co-madres or co-mothers. Also she reached out and found mentors from outside that community who have supported her work and its potential. Finally, she has found a loving and supportive partner in her husband.

In contrast to Amalia, Miriam was not interested in seeking out mentors or allies. Instead, what was most important for her was establishing a strong network so that individuals - she as well as others - could grow in a supportive environment. Miriam

explains:

> I was raised to think that you had to be original in art and it was incumbent on me to always be thinking of how I could be original. It was tearing me apart. It wasn't until I was forty-eight years old that I began to have these new experiences of working with other people in different projects - magazines, the Womanhouse project, the Crystal quilt project. It was only then that I began to understand how sharing could make something more beautiful, more original.

Miriam does not mention her husband or children as being a support network for her. Her network was based on a community of artists which she helped form. Miriam is a strong and independent woman. Rather than fuse with communities, she formed them.

Jaune, who struggled on her own for so long, says that there is a long list of people who supported her and encouraged her:

> These are important - these key experiences. One was that Lise and Harvey Hoshour, who lived here in Albuquerque, he was an architect and she owned a gallery came to the University of New Mexico to view a woman's painting show and at the opening they invited me to come and visit their gallery. That led to me participating in their gallery and becoming good friends with them. They had great

influence over me and my ideas about art. I learned a lot from them and the people who also participated in their gallery. Esteban and Harriet Vicente came to visit at the University of New Mexico. Esteban is a visiting artist and he gave me great encouragement to make my work. In fact he suggested that perhaps I should even quit school and just make my art which was wonderful encouragement. However I did not do that because I felt that I needed the degree.

Jaune also recalls finding mentors within her Native American circles:

> Fritz Scholder, who's a noted Native American painter here in the Southwest, introduced me to his dealer is Scottsdale, Arizona who came to visit my studio, selected work and later gave me a solo show. At another point in time, I invited a group of Native Americans to go visit galleries in Santa Fe with me and out of the group the Clark Benton gallery selected my work to keep in their gallery and eventually Bill Benton invited me to do a solo exhibition there.

Like Amalia, Jaune had a great ally in her husband and children:

> My husband and my children encouraged me to go back to college and get a degree in art education because they knew that I wanted to work in art more than anything. [They] thought that maybe getting a degree in art education in order to

teach what I loved so much would be the right thing to do. So they encouraged me to do that so I did. They also encouraged me to go ahead and keep making my art and, eventually that developed into a full time career. They just were always supportive and encouraging in that.

All three women have tackled this issue of network building in their own way. Amalia has her co-madres, mentors and her husband. Jaune similarly has found support from within and without her community and her family. Miriam presents an alternative, but not an opposing view. She has found her community by establishing it herself. However, all three agree that their work is autobiographical, and in the end, all three have been founders of various art communities.

Part 4: For Today's Art Educators

As artists and as teachers, these three women all have made key statements that I believe serve as crucial lessons for today's art educators.

Amalia, unlike the other two women, was actually a practicing teacher for twenty years before pursuing her career as a full-time artist. She worked in staff development where she helped develop models for cooperative learning. Now she applies all of that experience into her work at California State University in a program called the Institute

for Visual and Public Art. The premise of this program is that art is inherently a social practice. In the program students are asked to develop mastery in six specific skill areas. The first is research and analysis. Students must define the context for the art making or artwork in which they plan to engage. Second, they need to demonstrate that they have an audience for the work and that they have the skills to interact with that audience. Third, they need to show that they have the ability to collaborate with others in order to produce the artwork. The fourth is production where they have to demonstrate that they have the skills to actually produce the artwork. Fifth, evaluation and revision which means testing the artwork and seeing if it works in relation to the public and collaborators and if it doesn't, revise it. The last is distribution, which involves figuring out how the artwork gets to the people that were identified as the ones it mattered to in the first place.

Amalia explains:

> So those are the six skills but they work in anything. Over the years I've been developing the idea of integrating theory and practice. It's about the integration of theory and practice and the idea, once again, of situated cognition; that you learn by doing in the company of masters so residency programs are important. The capacity to make really wise decisions. So you're not in this suspended animation for four years and then you go out and try to mount a project or a piece and you've never done it before. We're trying to balance the program so that

there's enough self expression, enough personal and private involvement and, at the same time, that there's enough cognizance of the larger social world - of the public commitment that we have and how you get people to do both.

Amalia calls her program the 'reciprocal university of the arts' and feels that she is building a university within a university. One where students and teachers go out into multi-racial and multi-cultural communities and work with individuals to design projects and residencies that will be of value to them. Ultimately the goal is to build a bridge into the university for students who might not have thought of university as a destination.

Miriam, who defines her role in another fashion, considers herself, not as a teacher but, as an enabler. One who helps bring ideas out of people so that everyone can learn from them. She has a very unique teaching method based on consciousness raising. When asked to teach small sessions over a period of several days, Miriam spends the first day just talking with the group. She always asks the same first question: 'what brought you to this group today and what are you interested in and why are you here?' Miriam then answers the question herself and talks about her background and her upbringing in the hopes that the group will understand the need to all be honest with one another. Then Miriam listens to each of their stories. She develops her next question based on the things that have been emphasized more than others in those stories. Her hope is that by doing this, another interesting dialogue will ensue. By sharing experiences with one another,

Miriam believes you also learn from one another. With the sharing comes a bonding and then the atmosphere in which to create art becomes very special. Miriam explains:

> My idea of a teacher is that you've lived a certain kind of life and you've had different kinds of experiences. You've met different kinds of people. You've looked at different kinds of art. You've read different kinds of books. And all that's in you is going to register with the people who are your students, who are listening to you at the appropriate moment. Because what you want to do is liberate the mind of a student so that they'll make their best effort and what happened, of course, is the bonding. Then they move away from the teacher. And when you get them to organize themselves in terms of trust, then they're free of some anxiety that they may have had about exposing themselves in a classroom - of getting up and talking - that sort of thing disappears. When you have this level of trust and you're sitting in a circle then everyone shares their ideas.

Jaune takes her role as teacher very seriously and believes that art should play a crucial role in education more broadly. She explains:

> Without art we wouldn't have the history of humankind today and the knowledge about our ancestors that art has given us. Art recorded everything -- how people lived, what they wore, what their governments were like, how they celebrated life

-- everything about humans that we know today came to us through art. And then somehow we became the stepchild of history and social science and science itself when, at one time, art supplied all of those things for people. I think we have to get back in line here and become part of the curriculum and as substantial as the rest of the school curriculum.

Specifically, Jaune believes that art education should focus on the relationship between the races as well as the relationship between people and the environment. When asked about the lessons art education should play, Jaune says:

> One is lessons about racism because this country's multicultural base which is only going to increase until the pond turns and all of the ethnic peoples will no longer be called minorities but they'll be the majority in this country. I think it's absolutely crucial so that we don't have a revolution in this country. I think that's one important crucial lesson. The second important crucial lesson is how to work with our environment and stay within our means with the environment that we have and to clean up our local areas and make them livable and that means air as well as water and land. I think learning how to live in smaller dwellings and with less stuff, I think that's something that we need to learn.

From these artists' reflections, I suggest my own position in the following section.

Chapter Four

Concluding Remarks

In this thesis I have examined the formative experiences of three significant contemporary women artists: Amalia Mesa-Bains, Miriam Schapiro and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. I have examined them in terms of the impact of their lives on their visions of art and their place in it. The themes I focused on have shown how art has played a formative role in the development of these three women as women and as artists and that the two are inseparable.

Based on the three interviews, four broad themes emerged. The first theme was that these three women artists saw themselves as artists from an early age. The second theme was that as all three women matured, they felt a deep sense of alienation from the accepted art world and established their own artistic networks. The third theme was that within these self-established networks these women found mentors and allies who greatly influenced their careers. The fourth and final theme was that, as artists and as teachers, all three women have made crucial statements and therefore lessons for today's art educators.

What I think is clear from my research is that all three women have great strength and have received some form of valuable support from their families or networks. It is

too easy, and also dangerous, to generalize but it would appear that for some women artists, a sense of community and the support of that community is essential to their development. If this is indeed the case, then we might wish to examine the nature of art education in our schools and museums.

Here are some questions and issues that art educators might address: Do we need to provide different kinds of voices and support for aspiring young women artists or artists from various ethnic backgrounds? If so, how should this be done? Would this mean re-writing the curriculum? Could this also mean revising the gender balance in art museums and in textbooks? Should women artists be part of the classroom experience to demonstrate inclusion? A common theme for the women artists I interviewed was a lack of institutional support early in their careers. This might mean financial support mentoring and more studio time to encourage women artists. This might be done through a special education program such as an honours program. The triumph and stories of the careers of the women artists who I interviewed reaffirms the strong flexibility inherent in the art education system as they have been accepted and influential in their own right as they give voice to their personal experiences. The question remains: was this a triumph of the individual over the system or did the system accommodate them? Clearly, both of these factors need to be addressed. There has to be room inside any education system to encourage those students who might succeed as well as time and resources to encourage those driven to succeed.

Regardless of the outcome of my previous point, these women artists have helped regenerate thinking about art education and have made strong contributions to the field. Let me return to my four themes one last time and suggest that the challenge for educators rests in my results. Firstly, if these three women in fact identified themselves as artists from a very early age, what can and should any school system do to encourage this? Second, as these three women found themselves alienated from the art world, how can any school system bridge the gap? Thirdly, these three successful women artists forged their own networks and found their mentors within them. Why can't these networks be formed within a school system? Wouldn't it be far better to include practicing women artists inside the schools to help women such as these form friendships and mentoring ties? Fourth, all of these women have made significant comments about the nature of art education. Clearly these should be included in a written curriculum of some sort. The time is at hand to acknowledge the place and the voice of women artists in the classroom. Artists are no more of one type than are scientists. They vary in what they do and how they do it. If education is, in part, about honouring difference, then understanding the roles of women as artists in our society needs to have a primary place in our education system.

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