Administrative Summary

Creator: California Institute of the Arts
Title: California Institute of the Arts Feminist Art Materials Collection
Dates: 1971-2007
Date (bulk): (bulk 1972-1977)
Quantity: 2.3 cubic feet
Repository: California Institute of the Arts. Library.
Valencia, California 91355-2397

Abstract: The California Institute of the Arts Feminist Art Materials Collection contains articles, brochures, correspondence, exhibition catalogs, invoices, newsletters, and other materials documenting the influence of feminism on the training of artists and the making of art. The collection covers the years 1971 to 2007 with the bulk of the material ranging from 1972 to 1977.

California Institute of the Arts Archive
Identification: CalArts-003
Language of Material: English

Restrictions on Access
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Related Material Located in the California Institute of the Arts Archive Archives
Unprocessed collections with related material are located in the CalArts Library Archives.

Preferred Citation

Acquisition Information
Collected by California Institute of the Arts as part of the California Institute of the Arts Archive.

Processing Information

Accruals
Future additions are possible.

Administrative History of the California Institute of the Arts Feminist Art Materials Collection

California Institute of the Arts, commonly known as CalArts, is located in Valencia, California, and grants degrees in the visual and performing arts. Incorporated on September 1, 1961, it was the first degree-granting institution of higher learning in the United States created specifically for students of both the visual and the performing arts. It was the dream and vision of Walt Disney to create such an institute and he provided funding for it in his will. Initially formed through the merger of the Chouinard Art Institute (founded 1921) and the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music (founded 1883), it opened at its present campus in Valencia, California, in November 1971.

In that same year, CalArts faculty members and noted artists Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro co-founded the Feminist Art Program (FAP). Based on the experimental program Chicago had started at Fresno State College the previous year, the FAP at CalArts was one of the first in the country to offer team taught courses on female art history taught exclusively by women for women only. Also founded in 1971 was the Women’s Design Program, led by Sheila de Bretteville. Like the FAP, the Women’s Design Program was a one-year program that focused on participation in various processes by which art is created, including group consciousness raising sessions, performance workshops, and reading of feminist literature.

Approximately twenty-five young women artists joined the FAP during the program’s opening year. Work on the program’s first class project, “Womanhouse,” began on November 8, 1971. The purpose of “Womanhouse” was to “provide a better understanding of women artists by themselves and by the predominately male art community.” Together the artists transformed a deserted, seventeen-room, Los Angeles mansion into an exhibit space. Each artist chose a portion of the house in which she had complete freedom to “explore aspects of female experience” through her art.

The completion of “Womanhouse” coincided with the West Coast Women Artists’ Conference, hosted by CalArts. Despite its name, the conference included participants from states all over the country. On the evening of Friday, January 21, 1972,
the conference commenced with a tour of "Womanhouse" followed by performances presented in the living room of the 
	house. The next morning, Schapiro opened the official conference during which various women artists gave talks, showed 
slides of artwork, and discussed the exclusion of women from major museum exhibits and gallery spaces. "Womanhouse" 

opened for public exhibition on January 30, 1972. Approximately 4,000 visitors viewed the house and attended the evening 
performances over the course of the installation’s exhibit period.

Activities related to feminist art continued to emerge throughout the early 1970s. On June 6, 1972, an exhibit entitled 
“Ablutions,” created by Chicago and three students, Suzanne Lacy, Aviva Rahmani and Sandra Orgel opened for public 

exhibition off-campus. In 1973, Chicago, de Bretteville, and art historian Arlene Raven founded the Feminist Studio 

Workshop (FSW), the first independent school for women artists. That same year, the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles was 
also founded. Other events held at CalArts included the Feminist Art Festival which took place from May 27-31, 1974. 

However, despite the positive impact of such activities, the FAP dissolved, mainly as a result of Chicago and Schapiro’s 
departures in 1973 and 1975 respectively.

Although many of the organized feminist art programs at CalArts formally ceased to exist, beliefs and ideas cultivated from 

the programs of the early 1970s continued to be influential. In May 1998, CalArts students, alumni, and faculty began 

meeting to discuss those programs and their effects on feminist art. Based on these meetings, the Feminist Art Workshop 
took place from September 28-October 3, 1998. Individuals from CalArts, as well as people from other Southern California 

art institutions, participated in various discussions, events, and workshops. From March 5-10, 2007, a student-organized 
event entitled “Exquisite Acts and Everyday Rebellions” was held consisting of exhibitions, performances, workshops, and a 
day-long symposium of panel discussions. Such events are responsible for preserving the role CalArts played in the feminist 

art movement of the 1970s.

Bibliography


1970 Judy Chicago founds Feminist Art Program (FAP) at Fresno State College.

1971 Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro co-found Feminist Art Program (FAP) at CalArts.

Sheila de Bretteville founds Women’s Design Program at CalArts.

November 1971 CalArts opens at present campus in Valencia, California.

Work begins on FAP’s first exhibition, “Womanhouse.”

January 21-23, 1972 West Coast Women Artists’ Conference held at CalArts.

January 30, 1972 "Womanhouse" opens for public exhibition.

June 6, 1972 “Ablutions” opens for public exhibition.

1973 Woman’s Building in Los Angeles founded.

Chicago, de Bretteville, and art historian Arlene Raven found the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW).

Chicago leaves FAP/FSW to work on collaborative project entitled “The Dinner Party.”

May 27-31, 1974 Feminist Art Festival held at CalArts.

1975 Schapiro leaves FAP.

1981 FSW closes.

September 28-October 3, 1998 Feminist Art Workshop held at CalArts.

3, 1998

Scope and Contents of the Records

The California Institute of the Arts Feminist Art Materials Collection contains articles, brochures, correspondence, exhibition 
catalogs, invoices, newsletters, and other materials documenting the influence of feminist art on CalArts. The collection 

covers the years 1971 to 2007 with the bulk of the material ranging from 1972 to 1977.

The collection consists primarily of materials related to CalArts’ Feminist Art Program (FAP). However, materials related to 

other feminist art programs and events, including the Women’s Design Program and the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW), 
are also included. The largest series in the collection, Publications, is divided into two series. The first series in comprised of 

materials published by CalArts while the second series consists of materials published by outside publishers. In addition to 

factual information about various feminist art programs and events, the Publications series also gives insight into
perspectives on feminist art from the opinions of program participants, other CalArts students, and individuals not
associated with the institution. The Events series consists of materials related to feminist art events such as exhibits,
symposiums, and workshops. However, this collection does not include documentation for every feminist event related to
CalArts. Likewise, the administrative records are not comprehensive as they focus mainly on the sale of Feminist Art
Program publications.

Due to the large amount of duplication within the collection and the scattered nature of the materials, this collection was
reorganized during processing to bring consistency to its arrangement and to improve research access.

The collection is organized into four series:

Series 1: Administrative Records, 1972-1986
Series 4: Oversize Materials, 1971

Index Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Subjects:
California Institute of the Arts
Chicago, Judy, 1939-
de Bretteville, Sheila
Feminism and art
Raven, Arlen, 1944-2006
Schapiro, Miriam, 1923-

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Genres and Forms of Materials
Articles
Black-and-white photographs
Brochures
Correspondence
Exhibition catalogs
Invitations
Invoices
Magazines (Periodicals)
Newsletters

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Series 1. Administrative Records, 1972-1986,

Physical Description:.2 cubic foot

Scope and Content Note

This series contains documents related to the administration of the feminist arts programs at CalArts and includes correspondence, invoices, and other materials. Financial documents refer mostly to the sale of publications by the Feminist Art Program (FAP).

Files are arranged alphabetically by title, and chronologically within each folder.

Box 1:1 Board of Equalization, 1978-1980
Box 1:2 Correspondence, 1972-1974
Box 1:3 Invoice Book, 1977, 1984
Box 1:4 Invoice Forms, undated
Box 1:5-1:9 Invoices and Orders, 1976-1977, 1981-1986
Box 1:10 Payment Request Forms, undated

Physical Description: .3 cubic foot

Scope and Content Note

This series contains information about events related to feminist art. Some events were held at CalArts while others took place off-campus, but involved participants from CalArts programs. Documents include announcements, brochures, exhibition catalogs, invitations, and photographic materials promoting feminist art activities, programs, and projects.

Files are arranged alphabetically by title, and chronologically within each folder.

- Box 1:11  "Ablutions", 1972
- Box 1:12  "Exquisite Acts and Everyday Rebellions", 2007
- Box 1:13  "Faculty Art Show", 1973
- Box 1:14-1:15  "Feminist Art Workshop", 1998
- Box 1:16  "Festival of the Arts", 1974
- Box 1:17  "It's All About Time Past", 1975
- Box 1:18  "Joyce Kozlaff Paintings", 1974
- Box 1:19  "Old Mistresses: Women Artists of the Past", 1972
- Box 1:20  "Robin Mitchell: Paintings and Drawings", undated
- Box 1:21  "West Coast Feminist Speakers Bureau", undated
- Box 1:22  "Womanhouse", 1972


Physical Description: 1.4 cubic feet

Scope and Content Note

This series contains publications related to feminist art. Some publications were created by CalArts while others were published by outside publishers.

Subseries 3-1. **CalArts Publications, 1971-2007,**

Physical Description: .6 cubic foot

Scope and Content Note

This subseries contains articles, exhibition catalogs, newsletters, and other materials created by CalArts. Many of the publications sold by the Feminist Art Program (FAP) are included in this subseries.

Files are arranged alphabetically by title, and chronologically within each folder.

- Box 2:1  *Alt*, [circa 1989]
- Box 2:2  *Anonymous Was A Woman*, 1974
- Box 2:3  *Art: A Woman's Sensibility*, 1975
- Box 2:4  *The Big News, Articles, 1972-1973*
- Box 2:5  *The Box, 1971*
- Box 2:6  *The Bridge, "Feminist Art Festival, May 27-31", 1974*
- Box 2:7  *Broadsheet 1, undated*
- Box 2:8  *CalArts, "The CalArts Program that Transformed Feminist Art", 2007*
- Box 2:9  *Cal Arts Today, "Shattering the Glass Slipper", 1982*
- Box 2:10  *Exhibition, 1981*
- Box 2:11-2:12  *Exhibition Space, 1995*
- Box 2:13  *Lilly/Walt, undated*
- Box 2:14  *Networks 1, "Women’s Design Program", 1972*
- Box 2:15  *Publications Sheet, undated*
- Box 2:16  *Register of Women Artists, 1973*
- Box 3:1  *The Shrine, The Computer, and The Dollhouse, 1975*
- Box 3:2  *Walt, "Feminism at CalArts: The Ideal Persists", 1983*
- Box 3:3  *West Coast Women Artists’ Conference, 1972*
- Box 3:4  *Womanhouse, 1972*
Subseries 3-2. **Non-CalArts Publications, 1971-1978,**

Physical Description: .4 cubic foot

Scope and Content Note

This subseries contains articles, books, brochures, and magazines that focus on, or make reference to feminist art, but were not published by Cal Arts. This subseries offers insight into various aspects of feminist art from a non-CalArts perspective.

Box 3:5  
**Art Journal,** "The Education of Women as Artists: Project Womanhouse", 1972

Box 3:6  
**By Our Own Hands,** 1977

Box 3:7  
**The Creative Woman,** 1978

Box 3:8  
**Daily Pilot,** "Should Women’s Art Be Neuter or Female", 1974

Box 3:9  
**Films By Women,** 1975

Box 3:10  
**Evening Outlook,** "Womanhouse: A First", undated

Box 3:11  
**Everywoman,** 1971-1972

Box 3:12  
**Icographic,** "The Women’s Design Program", 1973

Box 3:13  
**Los Angeles Times,** "Lair of Female Creativity", 1972

Box 3:14  
**Los Angeles Times View,** "Emergence of the Feminist Artist", 1972

Box 3:15  
**New Day: Films About Women and Men,** undated

Box 3:16  
**New York Times,** "Winning the West", undated

Box 3:17  
**New Woman,** "An Interview With Two Artists From Womanhouse", 1972

Box 3:18  
**New York,** "Vaginal Iconology", undated

Box 3:19  
**Time,** "Bad-Dream House", 1972

Box 3:20  
**WARM: Women's Art Registry of Minnesota,** 1974

Box 3:21  
**W.E.B.**, 1972

Box 3:22  
**Woman’s Work: American Art,** 1974, 1974

Box 3:23  
**Women In American History: Lectures and Videotapes,** 1974

Box 3:24  
**Women’s History Research Center, Inc.,** [circa 1974]

Series 4. **Oversize Materials, 1971,**

Physical Description: .4 cubic foot

Scope and Content Note

This series consists of oversize material that was removed from the collection and filed separately in an oversize box. Oversize material is located in box 4.