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**MUSEUM**

## **Judy Chicago's Most Comprehensive New York Survey to Date Opens October 12, 2023, at the New Museum**

**"Judy Chicago: Herstory" Includes "The City of Ladies,"  
Featuring Work by 80+ Women Essential to Chicago's Practice**



**New York, NY (Updated October 9, 2023)**—The New Museum presents "Judy Chicago: Herstory," bringing together six decades of the artist's work and including an exhibition-within-the-exhibition spotlighting women essential to the history of art and Chicago's own practice. On view from October 12, 2023, through January 14, 2024, Chicago's most comprehensive New York museum survey to date spans four floors of the New Museum, tracing the artist's sixty-year career across painting, sculpture, installation, drawing, textiles, photography, stained glass, needlework, and printmaking. On the Museum's Fourth Floor, a total installation featuring Chicago's embroideries, sculptures, drawings, and carpet design contextualizes her practice by bringing together artworks and archival materials from more than eighty women and genderqueer artists, writers, and cultural figures, including Hilma af Klint, Hildegard von Bingen, Claude Cahun, Elizabeth Catlett, Simone de Beauvoir, Artemisia Gentileschi, Emma Goldman, Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe, Charlotte Salomon, Remedios Varo, and Virginia Woolf, among others. Titled after fifteenth century author Christine de Pisan's "Le Livre de la Cité des Dames," "The City of Ladies" continues Chicago's work as a feminist activist and cultural historian claiming space for women in narratives that previously obscured or denied their contributions—much like her seminal work *The Dinner Party* (1974–79).

"Judy Chicago: Herstory" will encompass the entirety of Chicago's practice, from her 1960s experiments in Minimalism and her revolutionary feminist art of the 1970s to her series of the 1980s and 1990s—such as the *Birth Project* (1980–85), *PowerPlay* (1982–87), *Holocaust Project* (1985–93), *Resolutions: A Stitch in Time* (1994–2000), and *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction* (2012–1018)—which expand the purview of her Second Wave Feminist agenda to confront environmental disaster, genocide, social inequity, birth and creation, mortality, and the construct of masculinity. The exhibition includes legendary works such as

*Rainbow Pickett* (1965), originally presented in “Primary Structures” at the Jewish Museum, an exhibition which consecrated the minimalist turn in contemporary sculpture; *Atmospheres*, her radical performances initiated in 1969 employing colored smoke and fireworks to activate rather than scar the landscape; a suite of visionary abstractions from the 1970s—such as *Through The Flower* (1973) and the *Great Ladies Series* (1973)—exemplifying Chicago’s iconography rooted in feminist theory; the *Birth Project*, a cycle of dozens of works begun in 1980 combining needlework, embroidery, and painting to celebrate the birth process; and documentation of “Womanhouse,” the fabled 1972 installation staged in an abandoned Hollywood mansion by Chicago and Miriam Schapiro’s Feminist Art Program. These historic works are joined by recent series including *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction* (2012–18), exploring death as it affects both individuals and the planet, and *The Female Divine* (2022), a series of eleven monumental banners designed by Chicago and produced by the nonprofit Chanakya School of Craft in Mumbai posing questions such as “What if Women Ruled the World?” Tracing her prolific practice across many decades and intersecting art movements, “Herstory” demonstrates the vast range and impact of Judy Chicago’s work over more than half a century.

The exhibition also explores Chicago’s manifold contributions as a feminist activist and cultural historian, presenting her work in dialogue with other women and gender-nonconforming artists, writers, and thinkers whose memory she has helped keep alive through her tireless activities as both researcher and historical preservationist. Combining artworks and source materials in a distinctive exploration of artistic influences and reverberations across history, this exhibition proposes a new, radical model for a solo exhibition—an “introspective,” rather than a retrospective. In this collaborative curatorial approach, the artist is invited to conceive a personal museum based on a model of historiography that is porous, hospitable, and accepting. Chicago’s show-within-the-show entitled “The City of Ladies” includes work and archival materials from Hilma af Klint, Eileen Agar, Anni Albers, Lola Álvarez Bravo, Anna Atkins, Alice Austen, Djuna Barnes, Simone de Beauvoir, Otti Berger, Annie Besant, Hildegard von Bingen, Rosa Bonheur, Marianne Brandt, Nannie Burroughs, Claude Cahun, Julia Margaret Cameron, Leonora Carrington, Countess Virginia Oldoini Verasis di Castiglione, Elizabeth Catlett, Pop Chalee, Elizabeth S. Clarke, Ithell Colquhoun, Imogen Cunningham, Sonia Delaunay, Maya Deren, Emily Dickinson, Sophie Drinker, Suzanne Duchamp, Leonor Fini, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Artemisia Gentileschi, Gluck, Emma Goldman, Natalia Goncharova, Martha Graham, Alice Guy-Blaché, Florence Henri, Barbara Hepworth, Hannah Höch, Kati Horna, Georgiana Houghton, Zora Neale Hurston, Frida Kahlo, Gertrude Käsebier, Käthe Kollwitz, Emma Kunz, Dorothea Lange, Edmonia Lewis, Mina Loy, Dora Maar, Jeanne Mammen, Maria Martinez, Maria Martins, Mary Louise McLaughlin, Maria Sibylla Merian, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Louise Nevelson, Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, Anaïs Nin, Georgia O’Keeffe, Méret Oppenheim, Agnes Pelton, Mary Richardson, Margaret Sanger, Augusta Savage, Ethel Smyth, Gertrude Stein, Varvara Stepanova, Florine Stettheimer, Dorothea Tanning, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Toyen, Sojourner Truth, Remedios Varo, Pablita Velarde, Beatrice Wood, Virginia Woolf, and Unica Zürn, as well as a number of unattributed works.

On the Museum’s Seventh Floor, the exhibition continues with two “call and response projects,” a phrase Chicago uses to describe works in which she invites people to participate. Launched during a world tour of *The Dinner Party* (1974–79), the *International Honor Quilt* (1980–87) invited individuals from across the globe to celebrate a woman of their choice by submitting their own small, triangular quilts which were then included in subsequent tour stops, effectively amplifying the reach and scope of *The Dinner Party*. For *What If Women Ruled the World?* (2022), Chicago collaborated with Russian dissident and Pussy Riot founding member Nadya Tolokonnikova to collect hundreds of responses from participants from eight countries that answer the work’s titular questions, as seen in a series of monumental banners hanging in the

Fourth Floor which Chicago created in relation to the 2020 couture show by Maria Grazia Chiuri, Dior's Creative Director. This new digital activation temporarily transforms the New Museum's Seventh Floor into a "question center" where the public is invited to participate in Chicago's imaginings of an egalitarian future.

Contextualizing Chicago's feminist methodology within the many art movements in which she participated—and from whose histories she has frequently been erased—"Herstory" showcases Chicago's tremendous impact on American art and highlights her critical role as a cultural historian claiming space for women often omitted from various canons. Part-expanded self-portrait and part-historical, revisionist archive, "Herstory" is both a solo exhibition and a polyphonic survey of the feminist arts over multiple centuries.

"Judy Chicago: Herstory" is curated by Massimiliano Gioni, *Edlis Neeson* Artistic Director, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Kraus Family Senior Curator, Margot Norton, former Allen and Lola Goldring Senior Curator at the New Museum and current Chief Curator at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, and Madeline Weisburg, Assistant Curator, assisted by Ian Wallace, Curatorial Assistant. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by Phaidon and the New Museum, featuring texts by Glenn Adamson, Connie Butler, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Ann Goldstein, Jennifer Higgie, Candice Hopkins, Amelia Jones, Quinn Latimer, Margot Norton, Kymberly Pinder, Ian Wallace, Madeline Weisburg, and Carmen Winant; and an interview between the artist and Massimiliano Gioni.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

### **Judy Chicago in Conversation with Massimiliano Gioni**

Thursday, October 12, 6:30–8:00 p.m. | New Museum Theater

Join Judy Chicago for a conversation to celebrate the opening of her career-spanning exhibition "Herstory." She will speak with Massimiliano Gioni, *Edlis Neeson* Artistic Director, to reflect on her sixty-year career, her pioneering role in feminist art and discourse, and the expansive "exhibition-within-an-exhibition" installed in "Herstory" that places her work in dialogue with art and writing by women across centuries.

### **Family Day**

Sunday, November 5, 11:00–1:00 p.m.

Bring your family to the New Museum for art-making activities inspired by "Judy Chicago: Herstory"! This free program is designed for families with children ages four to twelve.

### **Birth: A Convening on Art and Human Reproduction**

Thursday, November 9, 6:30–8:30 p.m. | New Museum Theater

"Why were there no images of birth?" With this question, Judy Chicago launched *The Birth Project* (1980-85). She studied creation myths, surveyed women about their birthing experiences, and produced an iconography of birth across drawings, paintings, and collaboratively embroidered textiles. Now, forty years later, this convening takes up Chicago's "awe, terror, and fascination" with birth to explore it through a contemporary lens. Together with artists, activists, and writers, we will ask: What is at stake in the representation of birth today? How do developments in technology, surrogacy, and family structure affect the experience of giving birth? What do issues of reproductive justice, including abortion access, medical racism,

and maternal care, mean for artists and cultural institutions? What new speculative futures could artists imagine for human reproduction?

Speakers include scholar Dána-Ain Davis, artist and technologist Ani Liu, artist and activist Viva Ruiz, and artist Carmen Winant.

### **Atmospheres: Art, Feminism, and Ecology**

Thursday, December 14, 6:30–8:00 p.m.

For her *Atmospheres* series from the 1960s and 70s, Judy Chicago set off smoke bombs and pyrotechnics in various Californian landscapes to create dramatic, ephemeral performances. She “softened” and “feminized” the landscape, expanding her feminist politics to include a commitment to the natural world. This conversation bridges ecology, landscape, and liberatory politics to ask what’s at stake for artists working with and within the natural world today. How are social and environmental issues intertwined in artistic practice? And what does the legacy of 1970s ecological feminism mean for artists today?

Speakers include artist Torkwase Dyson and Joan Jonas and curator and writer Candice Hopkins.

More information on public programs is available [here](#). For press tickets, please contact [press@newmuseum.org](mailto:press@newmuseum.org).

## **SUPPORT**

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## **ABOUT NEW MUSEUM**

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

Image: Judy Chicago, *Birth Trinity*, from the *Birth Project*, 1983. Needlepoint on canvas. Needlework by Susan Bloomenstein, Elizabeth Colten, Karen Fogel, Helene Hirmes, Bernice Levitt, Linda Rothenberg, and Miriam Vogelmann. 51 x 130 in. (129.5 x 330.2 cm). The Gusford Collection. © Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo © Donald Woodman/ARS, New York