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WOMEN'S STUDIES

Womanhouse at 50
History & Impact

Edited by
Ellen C. Schwartz



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'Womanhouse' at 50

History & Impact

WOMEN'S STUDIES

Sobre la editora

Ellen C. Schwartz received her PhD in Byzantine art history from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, in 1978. She taught for 41 years in the Art Department, later the School of Art & Design, at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI. She is the author of a number of publications and presentations on Byzantine art, focusing primarily on arts from Eastern Europe and expressions of Byzantine influence. She edited 'The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Art and Archaeology' (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), and maintains the "Byzantine Art and Architecture" section in 'Oxford Bibliographies in the History of Art,' 2022 (first edition, 2013). She also published a study of the enigmatic film "Last Year at Marienbad." Her publications on women's art include nine entries in Michael Rush, 'The Rose Art Museum at Brandeis' (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2009).
Dr. Schwartz's work on 'Womanhouse' emerged from her teaching experiences in the School of Art & Design and for the program in Women's Studies, especially her seminars in Feminist Art History. She has lectured and prepared written materials for descendant exhibitions in Michigan. Her panel on the original exhibition at the 2022 College Art Association annual conference formed part of the source material for the book at hand. To widen understanding of the impact of 'Womanhouse,' she solicited and edited further contributions and wrote the introduction and conclusion for this volume celebrating the 50th anniversary of the historic 1972 'Womanhouse.'

Resumen

This illustrated volume brings together a wide variety of perspectives on the historic installation, 'Womanhouse' (1972). The introduction discusses the background and creation of this first whole-house feminist installation, a class assignment for the Feminist Art Program in the newly established California Institute of the Arts under the direction of Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro. Two of the original artists offer remembrances and speak to the project's impact on their long careers of artmaking. Artistic descendants of the exhibition are discussed: these include whole-house installations which respond to the original, expanding the conversation by including artists of differing races, ethnicities, and gender expressions, and several iterations which served various roles in their communities. Two shows in galleries commemorating 'Womanhouse' and its artistic offspring are also considered. Next, several contemporary artists present their work and discuss how it relates to 'Womanhouse' and the questions it raised. Finally, a contemporary re-imagining of 'Womanhouse' is offered, giving a contemporary take on the historic exhibition.
While much has been written about the original exhibition, rarely have we heard from some of the original artists about how their participation affected their careers and artistic output. In addition, this volume offers information on some of the descendant exhibitions. Discussion of these and their impact in the communities housing them underscores the importance of 'Womanhouse' in the lives of women in the years since 1972. Consideration of shows in galleries highlights the difference between them and the house installations. Reactions of contemporary artists offer new insight into the longevity of the original. And a contemporary re-imagining of 'Womanhouse' surprises the reader with unusual additions and re-evaluations.

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