

WOMEN ARTISTS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY ART HISTORY

A SECONDARY SCHOOL FOCUS

by

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ABSTRACT

Given the recent emphasis in Art Education on the historical and critical as well as the productive modes of inquiry, it is important that art educators become aware of past biases and distortions in conventional approaches to Art History and become responsive to current changes in the art world. In this thesis, the proposal is made that a reconceptualization of Art History in Education is needed to expand the framework of the discipline beyond the narrow structure of conventional approaches to allow for the inquiry into the lives and works of women artists. The expanded model proposed in this thesis encompasses the knowledge, constructs and skills that would enable students to investigate the important themes and meanings revealed in the artistic forms of contemporary women artists.

A rationale and framework for this expanded approach to critical and historical inquiry is established through a review and analysis of literature. An examination of basic orientations in Art History scholarship and teaching helps to identify the past biases of conventional approaches and provides directions for a re-evaluation of art by women. An analysis of the selected views of sociologists, artists, and art educators concerning the function of role models and their relevance to students provides the rationale for a study of contemporary women artists. Finally, a summary of major developments in Aesthetic Education regarding methods for critical and historical enquiry establishes a framework and methodology for the study of women artists and insures that the content is related to important goals in art education.

It is upon this theoretical framework that a model is presented to illuminate one possible open-ended approach to the study of art by women in a cultural and historical context. The first component of this study focuses on the often unique social, economic and political conditions faced by women artists in various times. It is within this historic cultural context that specific works are analyzed, interpreted and evaluated. This context takes into account not only the history of the artists but the needs and interests of the students.

The second component of this study provides new strategies for seeing and understanding the ways contemporary women artists have expanded their use of color, form and space to explore a changing self image and a holistic view of nature. Two interrelated themes--interpretations of a human reality revealed in images of women and interpretations of the reality of nature through abstraction--are explored to provide new opportunities for cultural and aesthetic awareness.

Finally, a unit, designed and implemented by the author, provides the secondary school teacher with a specific approach to teaching about the work and lives of important women artists. In this unit, students are provided with opportunities to discover new role models, to work collectively and individually, and to integrate the critical, historical and productive modes of inquiry in a major project.

It is hoped that in this investigation the materials will provide a supplement to existing approaches to Art History and Criticism, and will help establish a broad view of our artistic heritage so that men's art history may eventually become human art history.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Art History and the Neglect of Women Artists

Until recently, Art History has failed to account for the wide range of art created by women. Basic survey texts, for example, used in most introductory art history courses--Janson's History of Art, Gardner's Art Through the Ages and Gombrich's The Story of Art, fail to include any reproductions of work by women artists. The teaching and study of Art History appear to operate from a Western European male perspective and it has focused mainly on art works of "key historical significance," i.e., the monuments of Western art by male artists.

Unfortunately, art educators have been persuaded to follow this approach and women artists' contributions have been neglected in the theory and practice of art education. Not only are women artists generally excluded in art history surveys, curriculum materials, reproductions and slides used by art teachers, but they are given little discussion in the most widely read art education texts used in art teacher training programs. As this thesis will show, art education has not been responsive to major developments in the art world and in society and our students have been deprived of a relevant cultural heritage which includes artistic contributions of both men and women.

Given the fact that art educators have adopted a view of art history from the perspective of the traditional art historian, we must understand the origins and validity of this approach in the discipline itself. If we perceive a biased perspective we must discover how a bias

could develop. This understanding may serve to de-mystify the discipline of art history and it may indicate why many contemporary art historians have chosen recently to re-interpret our artistic heritage. Finally, these new art historical inquiries help us address and correct this bias and enable us as art educators to give voice to neglected perspectives of art history.

The poor representation of women artists in art history education is a condition that finds one of its origins in a convincing but biased perspective which has, until recently, governed the discipline of art history and the process of historiography. It is acknowledged among historians such as Panofsky (1953) that art historiography is determined, not only by factual evidence but also by a somewhat subjective interpretation of that evidence. According to Panofsky (1933), in choosing works of "historical significance" art historians obey, knowingly or not, a principle of "pre-selection" which is dictated by their "cultural equipment," i.e., their values and interests (pp. 1-25). The art, for example, that historians choose not to discuss could reflect their biases in favor of certain artists, groups of artists or styles of art (Feldman, 1980, p. 22). Because, in the past, most art historians have been white males, it would appear that they have pre-selected history from their perspective.

The last decade has seen the emergence of a more self-conscious investigation by some art historians into the biases and assumptions which have limited the language and structure of art history and contributed to the neglect of women and non-white male artists. In these investigations, a number of historians such as Sandler (1973), Sloan (1973) and Feldman (1980) have identified a western ethnocentric

bias in the teaching and study of art history. Feldman (1980) describes art historians' obsession with monuments that belong to the western tradition and Sloan (1976) and Berger (1973) illustrate how art history projects a kind of "cultural imperialism"--racism and sexism. This assertion becomes believable when we realize that, until recently, no scholarly surveys of Afro-American or women artists were available. It is also supported with visual documentation in Berger's analysis of Western art--Ways of Seeing. Here, the sexism and racial prejudice projected in much art history can not be overlooked. Feminist art historians such as Nochlin and Harris (1976), Tufts (1974) and Fine (1978) have also researched and documented the ways art history has contributed to the neglect of once recognized and acclaimed women artists through poor documentation, mis-attribution and paternalistic historical and critical attitudes.

The elitism, racism and sexism, identified as ills which have infected the history of art and art history education are perhaps a reflection of the same cultural ideological ills plaguing the society as a whole. According to John Stuart Mill (1869), the subjugation of women in all aspects of society and culture was both a cause and a symptom of a fundamental imbalance and lack of wholeness in the modern world reflected in many of the inequities and social problems that beset Western Society.

Though the injustices of the past cannot be changed, they need not be repeated. With the rising tide of feminism and the woman's art movement in the 1970's, historians found the impetus for a re-discovery and re-interpretation of the contributions of women artists to our cultural heritage. Beginning with Linda Nochlin's (1971) landslide

question, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", historians began investigating the contributions of women artists in each century and the reasons for their neglect. In these scholarly studies, art historians such as Fine (1978) and Nochlin and Harris (1976), found recurring patterns of critical/historical bias and social and institutional obstacles which thwarted the artistic development and recognition of women artists in each century. At the same time, a number of accomplished women artists of the past who, despite the obstacles, became accepted as court painters, as professionals, and were often unstintingly appreciated by their contemporaries, were identified and given scholarly in-depth study (Tufts, 1974, p. x).

In a major survey, Women Artists 1550-1950, Harris identifies a number of women artists in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries whose work could easily be defended in both introductory survey courses and in more detailed period surveys. She argues for the inclusion of Sofinsba Anguissola, the first woman artist to become a celebrity during her time; Maria van Oosterwyck and Rachel Ruysch, extremely accomplished Dutch still life painters; and Rosalba Carriera, Angelica Kauffman and Vigée-Lebrun, Rococco and Neo-Classical portrait painters. She claims that "by the time a survey reaches the nineteenth century, major women artists are even more abundant and their neglect harder to justify" (p. 44).

In other efforts to redress the neglect in art history, major exhibits such as Women Artists 1550-1950 have travelled internationally, making visible the long-forgotten works of women artists, in order that they be re-examined. Large collaborative works such as "Dinner Party", conceived and co-ordinated by Judy Chicago, have made visible the

accomplishments of women in all fields and have provided valuable role models for women. Excellent survey books on women artists, such as Nochlin and Harris' Women Artists 1550-1950, Greer's The Obstacle Race, Tuft's Our Hidden Heritage, Wilson and Petersen's Women Artists: Recognition and Re-appraisal, and Fine's Women and Art have documented the history of women artists within the context of their times and discussed techniques and meanings of their art as well as the conditions that fostered or inhibited their development.

In addition, excellent biographies and autobiographies such as Georgia O'Keeffe, and Mary Cassatt: A Biography of the Great American Painter, have provided deep, rewarding insights into the lives and works of exceptional women artists. Journals such as the Feminist Art Journal, Chrysalis and Women Artists Newsletter have forged new lines of communication for women and offered scholarly reviews of their work.

Respected critics such as Lucy Lippard, in her book From the Center, Lawrence Alloway, Cindy Nemser and Gloria Orenstein, have begun to forge new criteria by which to evaluate the forms and meanings of art by contemporary women within the context of their lives. They have provoked considerable dialogue concerning the questions of a female sensibility, a female form language, and on the value of a new feminist art criticism. Their writings, found in both feminist art journals and well-established art journals such as Art in America and Art Forum, are bringing to public attention the major achievements of women artists in the 1970s and 1980s who Laurence Alloway (1976) claims constitute a new avant-garde.

Finally, numerous women's studies courses in art history, some of which are documented in Fine's, Gellman's and Loeb's Women's Studies and

the Arts (1978) have implemented these four main objectives in feminist art programs: a) inquiry into the history of past and present women artists; b) re-interpretation of the image of women in traditional art; c) consciousness-raising concerning the barriers that have prevented women from producing the quality and quantity of art that men have produced; d) change in the status of women in the art world (White, 1976).

In summary, the contributions of outstanding women artists to the fund of knowledge in art history have slowly been acknowledged and re-interpreted by artists, art historians and art critics. The inclusion of women artists into art history content has begun to enrich the field by making men's art history human art history.

New Developments in Art Education

In the field of Art Education, the Women's Art Movement has also been a catalyst for a recent internal questioning of assumptions and biases that have created inequalities and distortions in the field. The Women's Caucus for Art, which grew out of the National Art Education Association, has played a central role in addressing current issues regarding the status of women in art, art history and art education. Research, conferences, workshops and a newsletter sponsored by the W.C.A. have focused on topics such as women's studies in art history, hiring practices in college and university art departments, and affirmative action projects concerning fair exhibition practices, granting and funding practices and critical/historical practices.

Individual research efforts in art education have also recently responded to basic questions regarding women's role and status in art

education, art and art history. Major areas of research have addressed three central concerns:

1. Sex differences in art preferences (Chalmers, 1977), in children's art production (Feinberg, 1977), and in career attitudes (Whitesel, 1977).
2. The status of women as leaders and professionals in the art academe (Llovano-Kerr, 1979; Packard, 1977; Michael, 1977).
3. Women's roles and sexism in art and art education (Bastion, 1975; Collins, 1977, 1978; Dobbs, 1975; Loeb, 1975; Sandell, 1979; Snyder Ott, 1974; Whitesel, 1975). (Sandell, 1979).

While the writing and research on these important issues has exposed basic problems of inequity in art education, particularly in the way it affects professional women in the art academe, it has had little effect on our teaching. Georgia Collins (1977) and Ren~~ee~~ Sandell (1979), professors of art education in major American universities, have undertaken research relating the issues of the feminist art movement to contemporary art education practices. In a recent article, Sandell (1979) states, "Art educators, examining current sexual-political concerns in art and society, may note that the educational efforts of artists, art historians and art critics who comprise the women's art movement have, for the most part, by-passed school-age children" (p. 8).

In the area of art history education, evidence of the gap between the new developments in Art History and contemporary practices in art education in the secondary schools is particularly notable. Enid Zimmerman (1981) describes her experience:

Within the last decade a number of books have been published about women artists who worked from the middle ages to the present time. As an art educator and active supporter of the women's movement, I am aware that this movement has had no

impact on the art materials, art textbooks and art curricula used in our schools. Those who are preparing to be art teachers, and those who are teaching art, are generally unaware of the history of women's art and are unprepared to integrate women's art into the mainstream art curricula in the schools. (p. 5)

To substantiate these claims it will be shown in Chapter II of this thesis that the neglect of women's contributions to the fund of knowledge in secondary school art education can be found in four areas: i) major art education research and texts; ii) teacher training courses for art educators; iii) curricula; and iv) teaching practices.

The Importance of the Study

While the neglect of this important aspect of art history can not be overlooked, it is evident from a number of workshops this author has conducted with groups of B. C. Art Teachers, that a small core of practitioners have become conscious of the need to include art by women in the curriculum. The majority of art educators, however, do not understand the importance for students of their inclusion in art curricula, are not aware of the reference materials now available or have had inadequate preparation in their teacher training programs.

In order to correct this situation, more research is needed in art education which can discover how art by women can broaden and balance the fund of knowledge in art history. Additional research is needed which can reveal how this knowledge can be integrated into school curricula and how it can promote student competencies and sensibilities which would enable individuals to become responsible world citizens capable of intelligent, non-biased understandings of visual forms.

Five major questions for art education research emerge from an analysis of this current situation. These questions provide direction for research undertaken in this thesis.

Firstly, we should ask in what ways do students require a relevant cultural heritage which includes both women and men artists as role models? An investigation into the often overlooked concept of role models and how they operate for students in secondary school art education can provide a focus for this understanding. This research which forms Chapter II may help to convince art educators who are not presently conscious of the important contributions of women artists (and their significance for students) of the need for their inclusion in art curricula.

Once we are aware of the importance of women artists, we need to know how art by women contributes to the fund of knowledge in art education and how the acquisition of this knowledge relates to the basic goals of art education. We also need to know how this content can be integrated into art curricula. It is proposed, in Chapter III of this thesis, that critical and historical inquiry methods discussed in the recent literature on aesthetic education can provide a structure and reveal basic themes for a study of women artists in art education. Basic aims of aesthetic education applied to knowledge about art by women in a historical, social context will insure that this research contributes and becomes related to the important goals of art education.

The aims in art education related to the study of women artists can be summarized concisely. They are:

1. Learning to understand the functions and meanings of art by women in a social, cultural and art historical context.

2. Development of visual skills and sensibilities which would enable individuals to broaden their understanding of the meaning of visual forms by women.
3. Learning to appreciate the role of the woman artist in a historical context.

The third, fourth and fifth questions are more specifically related to content and emerge out of the general directions established in Chapter II. The third question should address itself to the role of the artist. What, for example, was the role of the woman artist from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries and how has this changed in the twentieth century? How have social, educational, economic and critical/historical conditions affected her role and her art production in these time periods? In addition, we should ask how women artists have influenced major movements in art, changes in society and shifts in culture. In Chapter IV, entitled "Art History and the Emergence of Women Artists," the role of women artists will be explored. It will be shown how art by women studied in its historical context gives added meaning to the understanding of the art by providing knowledge from an inter-disciplinary perspective.

A fourth very important question about women artists would ask how the contributions of outstanding individuals to the fund of knowledge in art history is significant to students. While art by women should be seen in its historical context, this thesis will show how the aesthetic value of art by women should not be reduced only to social, economic and political factors. In Chapters V and VI, this thesis will expand in depth upon several major themes which twentieth century women artists have chosen to explore in a variety of forms. These themes have been

selected, not only because they relate to major concerns of secondary school students but also because they are not explored in traditional approaches to art history. Although the focus is limited to particular women artists of the twentieth century, the themes explore some fundamental meanings which reveal truths particularly relevant to our social and cultural reality in the late twentieth century. Because of the fundamental nature of these themes, this study remains open ended; it is capable of being expanded to include the other unique contributions of women artists not discussed. This inquiry can also provide important insights for, and become related to, the mainstream art of the twentieth century. Sources for meaning and understanding of these art forms will come from the various academic areas including Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Women's Studies, Feminist Studies, Art History, Art Criticism and Art. This interdisciplinary approach will allow for a broad correspondence with related fields of knowledge.

Based on the framework established in Chapter III and the body of knowledge acquired in Chapters IV, V and VI, we must finally ask: "How do we establish a revised curriculum which takes into account women artists?" A curriculum model is then provided which adapts the ideas and issues developed in previous chapters to the goals of aesthetic education and to the needs of students. This concise model, developed and implemented by the author in a secondary art program, can be expanded to include an enlarged content and changed to suit the individual needs of students and teachers in different settings. A list of audio-visual materials which relate to this unit is provided. Suggestions for follow-up studio activities based on the concept that both artistic expression and inquiry can synergistically provide a dynamic

forum for creative and intellectual growth, are also provided in this unit.

Through intelligent curriculum revision, integration of neglected areas of art historical inquiry (such as the study of women artists) can be brought into the secondary curriculum by the art educator. We can not wait for traditional art historians to restructure their texts and teaching of art history. We must respond to the important changes in society and the art world and to the needs of students who are entering this world. As Feldman (1980) states, "art historians have not displayed sufficient curiosity about the structure of their discipline in relation to the general public--the school students, students of art history and the general public" (p. 9).

In summary, a study of the art of outstanding women artists within the context of their lives, may begin to make "men's art history human art history. It will expand knowledge and bring new perceptions of existing knowledge" (White, 1976, p. 343). If art is, as McFee describes, "the objective expression of people's concept of reality, the nature of social roles and a feedback system that keeps the social organizations going" (in Chalmers, 1978, p. 20), we as art educators have a great responsibility to provide for our students a wide range of art which communicates a broad view of reality. Cassirer (1944) suggests that through visual forms men (and women) attempt to grasp the reality of their world. He suggests that an understanding of the conditions and meaning of existence through expressive form provides the key to "inner freedom" and is a "means of self liberation" (p. 149).

By providing content and methods for critical and historical inquiry into the expressive forms created by women as well as men, art

educators enable students to discover through visual exploration a richer and broader view of reality. Provided with this knowledge, our students are more prepared to discriminate, make intelligent choices and find deep meanings in art and in life. An attempt in art education to provide role models of women as artists and to recover the lost correspondence of women's sensibilities in artistic forms, will enable our students to discover new keys for survival in a world characterized by a fundamental lack of balance and wholeness.

CHAPTER II

THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLE MODELS FOR FEMALE STUDENTS

The Concept of Role Models -- Major Considerations

As art educators, it is important to be conscious of the type of art that we present to our students and how our selections of art, made available through books, slides and reproductions, affects them. It is important, as Feldman (1980) suggests, that our selection of artists "ought to be influenced by some theory about what interests his or her pupils; what children need to know; what they are not likely to see elsewhere; what they can understand and respond to" (p. 9).

One reason we should carefully consider the selection of artists and their work that we discuss and present is that artists can serve as role models for our students. As this research will show, relevant artist role models serve very important functions in aesthetic and psychological development. Without access in art education to both male and female artists from varied cultural groups, our female students could be denied equal access to role models, and all students could be denied access to a broad range of artistic and aesthetic experiences.

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the concept of modelling and to discover what functions role models serve for our students. It is also important to find out which artists, teachers most often discuss in class and whether we make available a broad range of visual materials and books which include women artists. We must become aware of the implications of our choices for our students and be willing to examine our biases. Finally, we must discover how to broaden our discussions

about artists and our selections of slides and reproductions so that the works of women as well as men artists are provided for students.

Before examining the function of role models, it is important to know why, in the past, this factor has been overlooked in art education. Feldman (1980) suggests that "the ideology of art education tends to accept without question a somewhat romantic approach to influence, which is that it is a bad thing: the artist--child or adult--must above all be original" (p. 25). The fact that role models are not discussed in the current research in art education may be partial proof of this romantic ideology. A number of art educators, Lanier (1981), Feldman (1980) and Chalmers (1978), have recently suggested that art educational research should begin to explore "the economic, ethnic, educational and class factors that shape artistic and aesthetic experience" (Feldman, 1980, p. 84). However, some of the only direct discussion concerning the function and nature of relevant artist role models can be found in the writings of feminist artists, art educators and historians and art critics. They speak of the past neglect in art history of women and the devastating affects that the lack of role models has had on young artists, in both their artistic production and response to art. Similar discussions are found by the art educators who speak out on behalf of minority cultural groups. For this thesis, however, the question must be asked: how important is it that we make information about women artists available to our students and do we present a stereotype of the artist which must be corrected?

In order to answer this question, we must look beyond art education to the writings of Sociologists--the originators of role theory--and to artists whose many statements refer to influence and modelling. This

clarification of the often overlooked concept of role models is necessary if we are to discover how they function for students, artists and all members of society. Within this framework, it is possible to discover how art educators have overlooked the ways students are affected by role models. It is also possible to discover in research, curricula and practice what artists we as artists/teachers present to students and if these models are relevant to female as well as male students. These understandings provide the motivation for re-assessment and change in our selection of defensible art objects for art educational inquiry.

A Sociological View

Sociologists, Psychologists and Anthropologists have employed the role model concept in theories of socialization for decades (Brookover, 1971). In social interaction theory, self concept and identity emerges from an individual's interaction with others. This interaction is determined by roles or "sets of normatively prescribed expectations of behavior, including rights, obligations, skills and attitudes" (Brookover, 1971, p. 557). The most prestigious occupations, such as the professions, have involved forms of "career socialization." Professionalism in and out of the art world "has implications for the practice of work and for the recipients of the products or services that the profession offers" (Woolacot, 1976, p. 19).

Whereas socialization involves active inculcation and teaching in and out of school, enculturation involves the acquisition of behavior by the young through modelling, imitation and identification, whereby the

behavior of available models serves to narrow the behavioral alternatives available (Segall, 1971).

From a sociological point of view, art students derive cues for artistic behavior through both the teacher and the artist model presented to him/her in school and through media. For those educators who view artistic development as originating in "deeply rooted creative impulses" (Lowenfeld, 1970) the idea of role models and modelling is an unpopular concept. This principle is, nevertheless, supported if we look at the statements by acknowledged artists.

Artists' Views

Role models for artists may include the lives and works of acknowledged or little known artists of the past or present. An artist's letters, diaries, memoirs and works are some of the forms through which behaviors, ideas, attitudes and skills may be identified or even imitated. While it becomes apparent on one hand, that "contemporary western artists and audiences alike, often tend to regard evidences of influences with contempt," artist diaries and journals are woven with references to each other's influence (Gombrich, 1965, p. 24). Elaine de Kooning (Chipp, 1966), claims that "Western art is built on biographical passion of one artist for another: Michelangelo for Signorelli; Rubens for Michelangelo; Delacroix for Rubens; Cezanne for Poussin; the Cubists for Picasso; the philanderer for anyone he sees going down the street" (p. 210).

In their statements, several artists specifically refer to other artist models as providing confidence, support and cultural pride. Paul Cezanne, for example, in a letter to Emile says, "We turn toward the

admirable works that have been handed down to us throughout the ages, where we find comfort; a support such as a plank is for a bather ... yes, I approve of your admiration for the strongest of all the Venetians: we are celebrating Tintoretto" (Chipp, 1968, p. 243). Judy Chicago (1977), in Through the Flower, refers to the identification and cultural support she attained in her study of the lives and works of Georgia O'Keeffe, Virginia Woolf and Anais Nin. She says, "the acceptance of women as authority figures or as role models is an important step in female education. If one sees a woman who has achieved, one can say: I am like her. If she can do it, so can I. It is this process of identification, respect, then self-respect that promotes growth" (p. 108). Eugene Grigsby (1947), spokesman for ethnic artists, also claims that models of relevant ethnic artists are essential to the self-esteem and motivation of young Black, Chicano or Native artists. Models with whom young people can relate and emulate give to young people a cultural pride and link with a cultural heritage.

Artist models also provide a language of form from which the young art student may cultivate aesthetic literacy and an artistic expression. According to Grigsby (1977), Woodruff, an Afro-American artist known mainly in the 1960's and 1970's, found the forms and images of his protest art initially through the works and ideas of Diego Riviera, the Mexican mural painter. This contact and modelling, according to Grigsby, gave Woodruff the groundwork upon which to build his own unique protest style.

Artists such as Calder, Miro, Dennis and Chicago, also claim that respected artists provided them with stylistic and formal art elements upon which they could build. Calder states, "My entrance into the field

of abstract art came about as a result of my visit to the studio of Piet Mondrian in Paris in 1930" (Chipp, 1968, p. 561). The Spanish painter, Joan M~~K~~iro, stated, "I learned the structure of a picture from Cubism." A few years earlier, Maurice Dennis, a spokesman for the Symbolist painters, said, "Gauguin freed us from all the hindrances imposed upon our painter's instinct by the idea of copying ... the theory of equivalents which we had extracted from Gauguin's expressive imagery, furnished us with the means toward this goal ... Gauguin gave us a claim to lyricism" (Chipp, 1971, p. 103). Chicago (1977) says, after examining the work of Woolf, Nin and O'Keeffe,

I had discovered a quality of transparency, both in the writing and in the imagery.... This realization helped me affirm my own impulse as an artist--to make my work openly subject matter oriented (while still being abstract) and to try to reveal intimate emotional material through my forms. (p. 176)

Despite the denial of modelling and imitation by many artists, it is apparent that artists' role models serve some very important personal, cultural and aesthetic functions for artists which are essential to aesthetic and artistic development.

Having established a sociological framework for our description and function of role models and a verification of their importance through artists' statements, let us look at how educators view the function of role modelling and the artist as a role model.

Art Educators' Views

Few art educators refer to an artist's work as providing a "role model" for a student. The idea that students model their artistic and aesthetic behavior on other artists is, as Gombrich (1965) has said,

"been regarded with contempt by artists and their audiences" (p. 24). This is generally true in art education as well.

There are several reasons why few art educators have, in the past, realized that students do use and require relevant role models in some stages of development. Diana Korzenik (1979), in her article Socialization and Drawing, claims that art has rarely been examined in the context of socialization, because art educators have been mainly fixated upon the romantic notions of "child art." However, Victor Lowenfeld (1970), the most influential proponent of child art, claimed that young children's deeply rooted creative impulses develop naturally without social or artistic influence from outside. While Lowenfeld's view is applicable to young children, Brent and Marjorie Wilson (1971) have found that adolescents are quite naturally concerned with how others have perceived and expressed their reality and that they can benefit from certain outside influences. In regards to the work of mature artists, Gombrich (1965) suggests that "the more we become aware of the enormous pull in man to repeat what he has learned, the greater will be our admiration for those exceptional beings who could break this spell and make a significant advance on which others could build" (p. 25).

According to Eisner (1979), the resulting emphasis on individual personal expression and freedom from intervention in art education had its roots in the general social and political climate of the war and post-war period of the 1940's and 1950's, in which the allies were fighting to preserve freedom in the world. The value of freedom found its endorsement in Lowenfeld's views which might be relevant only to young children.

Even though there is still little direct reference to the artist as a role model, there is currently more willingness to acknowledge the general importance of outside aesthetic and social influences which affect creative expression and perception. Contextualists such as Vincent Lanier (1980), in Six Items on the Agenda for Art Education in the 80's, stresses that art should be reviewed in its social and political context, in order that children become aware of images that further and endorse their "social oppression." Edmund Feldman (1980), in Anthropological and Historical Conceptions of Art Curricula, suggested that "art lessons can begin with an examination of something other than a child's own artistic expression ... and that a teacher's criteria for selection ought to be influenced by some theory about what interests his or her pupils; what children need to know; what they are not likely to see elsewhere; and what they can understand and respond to" (p. 7). These views indicate that some art educators are willing to account for social and aesthetic influences that are derived from other "artists'" work and that a broad selection of work should be shown.

There are, however, a few notable exceptions amongst art educators who explicitly acknowledge children's socializing activity; the use of imitation and role modelling in their art. Feldman (1980) sees also that:

the influence of one artist on another is identified by various means: by establishing a teaching relationship; by acknowledgement of a young artist that he admires an older or dead artist; sometimes by showing only that the artist has seen the work of an earlier artist or artists; and finally by internal or visual evidence. (p. 85)

Most of the discussion about influence and modelling, however, has centred around the idea of copying and imitating the work of peers as a process of social interaction and socialization. Marjorie and Brent

Wilson (1977), Diana Korzenick (1979), and Angolia Churchill (1970) have examined the reasons for children's desire to copy or imitate their peers, popular images or their elders. Angolia Churchill (1970) speculates, for example, about why nine and ten year olds want to copy. By copying children want to find out how grown-ups perform ... and perhaps what the culture has in store for them. Marjorie and Brent Wilson (1971) have studied the influence of popular images, derived from media, in children's art as well as the influence of peers.

There are two more general groups of artists and art theorists who repeatedly discuss and explain the importance of artists as role models. Ironically, both feminist artists and ethnic artists and educators, most often discuss the nature and importance of artists as role models, yet they are two of the groups that have been traditionally denied relevant models in western art history. Judy Chicago (1976), artist and art educator, in Through the Flower, claims that the serious lack of women artists presented by traditional art history has left women students without historical context with which to identify, without relevant role models with which to find personal directions, without a language of form on which to build, and without the self-esteem derived from knowing women can succeed in the art world. Educators such as Stephen Dobbs (1975) argue that we can not create women models in art history from a series of minor women artists, but Nochlin and Harris (1979), Tufts (1976), and Greer (1979) claim there are many valuable and equally important women artists of the past who have been excluded from a culturally and sexually biased art history. They feel that these models should be included in the art we present to students and that the institutional, social and cultural obstacles presented to women artists

of the past and present should also be related to any discussion of women artists.

It would be incorrect, however, to conclude from these statements that role modelling in art is entirely sexually based. The artist an individual admires or chooses as a model is often primarily based on compatibility of insights and a shared human feeling for the exploration of line, color or form. A female student may find this compatibility with a male artist or a male student with the work of a woman artist. However, because women artists have been neglected in art history there are limited possibilities for identification, particularly for female students. From the role model point of view, traditional art history tells students that women can't be artists, and that a woman's view of reality expressed through visual forms is not important.

Surveys, such as Contemporary Canadian Women Artists (1980) and studies such as Whitesel's Attitudes of Women Art Students are some of the only works that have researched the effects of lack of role models on student behavior. Both works found that female artists and students experience a deep sense of isolation, alienation from cultural heritage, poor self-image and low career aspirations due, in part, to a lack of available female role models in art history education.

Eugene Grigsby, Jr. (1977), in Art and Ethnics, speaks out on behalf of Afro-American, Mexican American and Native Indian artists. He claims that "the self-image of youth is based to a large degree upon models seen in the course of intellectual development" (p. 8). The inclusion of the good works by all cultural groups in society is a duty, according to Grigsby (1977), and to ignore this responsibility is "to castrate a group and to deny them any knowledge of their ancestors" (p.

8). He claims that Clark, in his book Civilization, is biased in his singular exclusion of other than European artists. Historians such as Sandler (1973) and Sloan (1973), have called this approach to art history a form of cultural imperialism. Nochlin (1979) has called it an art of white male dominance which has cut women and multicultural groups off from relevant role models that many people can take for granted.

Although this survey of traditional, feminist and multicultural art education views on the function of role models could be expanded, there are some important implications for art education in the views covered. Firstly, except for related views of the Wilsons, Feldman, Churchill and Whitesel mentioned earlier, there has been little thorough mainstream art education research into the existence and functions of role models. Multicultural and feminist studies have, however, provided us with some important direction for further research in this area.

Secondly, there seem to be some general sexual and cultural biases in the presentation of artists and their work in general art history education. These distortions center around a stereotype view of the artist as the white, male archetype.

In order to determine the validity of the last but most relevant claim, it is important to know which artists are recommended by influential educators and local teachers. The author will review the statements regarding recommended selections of art by seven widely read educators in their most commonly used texts. The B.C. Art Curriculum (1981) will be examined in the same way for its recommendations as will a questionnaire given to ten B.C. Secondary School teachers.

Some Biases and Distortions in Art Education

This section will analyze what Eisner (1972), Lansing (1976), Hubbard (1967), McFee (1977), Churchill (1970), Chapman (1978) and Horwitz, Luca and Lewis (1973) suggest as appropriate selections of art to use in art education. Their selections will be analyzed for cultural and sexual bias as well as other distortions.

Starting with Eisner (1972), we find a number of general statements that acknowledge that teachers provide important models when they select examples of student and professional work. He states that, while multicultural models of art are important to provide, they are not readily available. While his general statements seem to indicate awareness of the importance of varied models that reflect the variety of cultural groups in our student population, at no time does he suggest ways of finding these important models. At no time does he mention the value in providing models for female students.

In one section, Eisner discusses organizing themes for viewing art and he suggests the example of images of women. The art he suggests, however, as examples of this theme, are all works by male artists despite the excellent available works of women by women such as Cassatt, Valadon and Marisol. Nowhere in his book does he cite specific examples of works by women or multicultural artists and one is left puzzling over his initial generous statements.

Lansing (1975), on the other hand, suggests that teachers should only concentrate on exposing students to the art of professional and well recognized American artists because art history is so broad and difficult to cover. He recommends that a representative artist from each major style would offer the best view of our artistic heritage.

This exposure to art, he says, will benefit students' personal development by "showing them their place in history, showing them the spirit of America and increasing their confidence" (p. 109). He offers no examples, however, of women's, black or Native art.

In terms of the effect that art appreciation has on a student's visual expression, Lansing says, great art provides students with "a source of ideas about content, composition and procedure" (p. 109). In addition, it allows them "to see what has been done and what is to be done" and "enables them to judge the significance of their own work" (p. 109). This statement does indicate awareness of the general function of role models.

In a general way, Lansing also talks about cultural factors affecting creativity and cites Meads' examples of Bali, Japanese and New Mexico students who display different cultural symbols and characteristics in their art work. He adds that artistic personalities can only be built in a cultural environment that values a person's cultural characteristics, yet, at no point in his book, Art, Artist and Art Educators, does he suggest that art educators provide specific examples of art from other cultures or of women. Because his specific prescriptions for selections of art do not support his general statements the reader is once again left with a contradiction.

Guy Hubbard (1967), in Art in the High School, agrees with Lansing that children should be exposed primarily to American art. He claims that culturally deprived children have the lowest respect for our culture and often contribute nothing to the nation or themselves, and that, because of this, they need the most help to adapt. He does not

suggest, however, that they be exposed to art works from their own particular cultural group.

Churchill (1970), Horowitz, Luca and Lewis (1973), and Chapman (1978) recommend the presentation of multi-cultural art. Chapman claims that traditional notions of America as a cultural melting-pot are responsible for educators' emphasis on American art. She feels this approach is detrimental to the artistic development of ethnic children. No part of the artistic heritage, she asserts, can have personal meaning for children unless it connects with their own lives. She adds that these connections must be made explicit. In relation to these statements made in 1978, it is notable that in her book no explicit mention is made of the importance of studying women artists and the connections they have to the lives of female students. She does, however, include reproductions of the work of a number of major contemporary women artists.

McFee, in Art, Culture and Environment, feels that children should be exposed to the art of many cultures and that children of ethnic groups in our culture should bring art objects from home to discuss. She claims that all art should be understood in its cultural context. Art from the cultures of each child, she says, will aid in personal development, will help them to "pursue their identity and understand their roots" (p. 293). In addition, it teaches children to appreciate ehtnogroups, "respect their cultures" and it helps them to "understand the diversity of art in the world" (p. 280).

Unlike Lansing and Hubbard, McFee recognizes the necessity of including relevant artists as role models for artistic development and feels it is the art educator's responsibility to provide the kind of art

which each student can relate to, depending on his culture. Of all seven views, only McFee explores in any depth the general function of role models. In her article, "Society and Identity," she discusses social and political obstacles to her own development as an art educator and the importance of positive role models for all women (in Loeb, 1979).

While there is a general acceptance of the idea that students benefit from exposure to art which is relevant to them, a number of the seven art educators fail to back up their general statements with specific suggestions which support their general views. Paulo Freire (1972), in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, may be referring to this type of approach when he says, "every approach to the oppressed by the elite as a class, is couched in the terms of false generosity" (p. 128). Friere's statement is particularly applicable to the approach of Lansing who on one hand acknowledges the importance of a relevant cultural heritage but, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of accepted works by American male artists.

In a questionnaire which the author gave in 1980 to a group of ten B.C. Art Teachers, a similar contradiction appeared in their answers. While nine out of ten teachers did agree that artists' lives and work functioned as role models for students, five out of ten teachers mentioned that the stereotype of the artist's personality and role as presented in their commonly used text books, film and video was that of the white "eccentric," "nonconformist," "individualist," "middle class male." Janet Woolacot (1976), in Social Relationships in Art, examines the validity of this generalization and traces its origins.

From the Renaissance onward, for example, the role of the painter developed specific definitions. Artists gained a

reputation for being eccentric, wild and subject to great emotional extremes. Freedom, independence and a throwing over of accepted rules and regulations were the characteristic features of this notion. (p. 15)

Georgia Collins (1979), in An Androgynous Model for Art Education, claims that this western view of fine art and artists has created a definition of the artist which has eliminated the crafts person, including many women and multi-cultural artists who have accepted aesthetic social, political, practical function as one integral aspect of their role and their work.

The contradiction becomes more clear in the teacher questionnaire in which general beliefs were compared to specific prescriptions concerning artist role models. In a question which asked, "What selections of work do you present to students or have available in your class?" most teachers answered with statements like: "selections from the whole of art history," "Canadian and European artists," "Classic and modern artists," "as inclusive as possible," and "everything available." Such statements indicate that teachers try to use a representative selection of role models which would be relevant to all students. However, when I later asked for "a list of 15 artists whom you most often show and discuss with your class," Emily Carr was the only woman mentioned (and only once) and there were no Eskimo, Native Indian, Afro-American, Mexican American, Oriental or Indian artists mentioned.

Finally, in a survey of the new (rough draft) B.C. Art Curriculum Guide (1980), there are no specific recommendations in either historical or critical guidelines to include multi-cultural or women's art. Of the dozens of artists which are suggested as examples of particular historical and aesthetic concepts, only one woman artist and no multicultural non-white artists were mentioned.

The implications for art education of the general lack of understanding of the function of role models and the biases concerning selection of art are important to consider if art educators are to offer equal access to aesthetic and artistic experience.

Summary and Implications

From an analysis of statements by sociologists, artists and art educators, a number of conclusions and their implications can be formulated. While many more views are relevant to this discussion, this selection does serve as a guide through which to focus on some of the most glaring distortions inherent in the function and selection of role models in art education today.

1. The statements of artists and sociologists indicate that role models provide a number of major functions for the artist or art student. They provide support, self-identity and a link to an artistic heritage. Role models also provide a "language of form"--the stylistic and formal art elements upon which to build understanding in art. Without a language of form pupils are required to invent the history of art over and over again in both their artistic expression and aesthetic response. When connections can not be made between students' work and that of others, he/she loses interest in an artistic heritage and acquires an a-historical perspective of life and art.
2. Art educators, on the whole, do not realize the importance, or fully understand the function of artist role models as they affect students and as they affect curriculum development. A conflict exists between psychological definitions of creativity and the

notion that all art is based on earlier works of art. More study and research are needed in this area to determine how role models affect the development of sexual and cultural identity, aesthetic literacy and self-esteem. The concern about relevant role models is, of course, more prevalent amongst groups that have been deprived of them.

3. A contradiction exists between general beliefs about providing a broad and relevant range of role models and specific prescriptions that are given. If the latter were accepted as a statement about which role models were adhered to by most art educators, it is obvious that this model follows a stereotype which represents only 25%-40% of our population. White, western, male fine artists appear to be the most commonly accepted role models. With the exception of very general statements by Lanier, McFee, Chapman, Feldman and Lewis, et al., few traditional art educators recommend the inclusion of women artists.

Because the artist role model plays an important function for students and has profound affects upon their ability to connect to an artistic heritage and build upon it in their own art expression, it is important that art educators re-examine the range of artists and art works that they present to students. As Chapman (1978) suggested, the connections of artistic heritage to students' lives must not only have personal meaning but must be made explicit. One way of providing broader connections is by introducing the lives and works of both women and men artists within a historical context. In this way, art educators can provide students with a view of the artist free of stereotypes. "Then a new generation of students will be educated toward understanding

and appreciating art created by all members of society" (Zimmerman, 1981, p. 5).

The importance of providing a broad range of art and role models is only one perspective from which to view the issues concerning art by women in art education. Important issues such as historical and critical practices, institutional obstacles and the question of a female sensibility are other areas which are relevant to art history and important to students in their understanding of our artistic heritage. In a very recent book by Edmund Feldman, The Artist (1982), the author has attempted to enlarge our perspective of art history by including a chapter on women artists and describing the historical conditions that affected her achievement. Although this chapter lacks depth and is too brief to provide a model for curriculum revision, it is commendable and indicates a growing awareness amongst art educators of the importance of women artists to our cultural heritage.

Although few art educators have addressed the need for a historical inquiry into art by women in secondary art programs, a model for aesthetic education has been developed in art education which is suited to an in-depth study of women artists. Given the recent emphasis on the historical and critical dimensions of aesthetic education the time is ripe to expand the focus of this model not just to the vernacular, folk and popular arts but also to the art of women.

CHAPTER III

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN ARTISTS

Aesthetic Education -- Major Considerations

A valuable body of knowledge concerning the lives, work and historical context of women artists, has been developed through recent research in the areas of feminist art history and art criticism. If art educators are going to provide a relevant and meaningful artistic heritage for secondary school students this material must be integrated into art curricula.

Aesthetic education can provide the goals and methodologies necessary for the integration of women artists into art curricula. An examination of the recent writings by Edmund B. Feldman (1980) and Vincent Lanier (1980, 1981) on aesthetic and visual literacy will reveal ways that a study of women artists can be integrated into and contribute to the main goals of aesthetic education.

The central conception and purpose of aesthetic education grew out of a disenchantment with the purely studio and production oriented approaches to art education which had dominated the field for several decades. In the 1960's more radical art educators began to question creative self expression as the central purpose of art education. The sole pattern of art education, they claimed, was based entirely on the behavioral model of the artist and had ignored the models of art historian and critic. Barkan (1966) suggested that critical and historical modes of enquiry were essential for the development of perceptual skills and aesthetic criteria both for visual discrimination

and creative expression. He proposed that a new construct for art education be expanded to include the triumvirate model of the artist, the art historian and the art critic. "The central idea and conception of purpose in this new direction could be identified by the term 'aesthetic education'" (Lanier, 1980, p. 19).

Aesthetic education, unlike past studio and production oriented approaches to art education, focuses primary attention on how we respond to visual images rather than only on artistic expression. Feldman (1980) sees the importance of teaching the language of vision to students not only through direct performance but also through inquiry into the function and meaning of a broad range of visual forms.

It will be necessary to learn strategies of seeing--strategies which entail all sorts of inquiries, discourse and inference of living, making, using and valuing that particular art objects require or suggest. In other words, teachers will have to learn to teach by examining works of art together with their pupils--works of art that were made outside the classroom. (Feldman, 1980, p. 9)

Lanier (1980) clarifies the goal of this new direction identified as aesthetic education. He suggests that, "The purpose of art teaching is the literate citizen, one who is affectionately knowledgeable about all the visual arts of the past and the present and of other cultures and our own, and how these arts can be dealt with" (p. 19). The literate student, he suggests, is one who is not just efficient in his perception of visual images but has a "strong background in a wide range of visual documents. In short, the proper single purpose of art education should be aesthetic literacy" (p. 19).

Because aesthetic literacy requires primary attention on the aesthetic response or aesthetic experience, new understandings were needed

concerning the nature of this response. Langer (1953) began by reminding us that response to visual form is not only a natural behavior for most people but that it is the necessary means for completing the process of the expressive symbol. Without response, the expressive symbol exists in a vacuum and holds no meaning. Mary Erickson (1979) states this relationship between art object and beholder in another way. "The aesthetic experience ... comes into existence only when an aesthetically worthwhile object is perceived aesthetically by a subject" (p. 81). Lanier (1980) places the aesthetic experience within the context of the classroom and relates it to the central issue--our students and the central goal--aesthetic literacy. He suggests that:

... aesthetic literacy ... involves the critical study of questions and problems of aesthetic theory, to the extent that they can be simplified and made intelligible to the age and grade level of the pupils. Aesthetic literacy would focus primary attention on how we respond to works of art or other aesthetically evocative stimuli rather than on the character and qualities of the objects themselves. (Lanier, 1980, p. 20)

Not only is critical response to visual forms a fundamental part of art and aesthetic experiencing, but it is also a necessary means to independent thought in an increasingly visual world. Feldman (1976) contends that the individual who can not understand visual images has no control over how they affect her/him. The danger for the half literate person is his defencelessness and openness to manipulation by the persuasive images and hidden messages in all kinds of visual imagery.

According to Feldman, the partially literate student is also deprived of the tools for the understanding of deep truths and meanings which a more critical perception could discover. If, then, we accept the responsibilities of visual literacy we must teach our students to

analyze and understand a variety of images which confront them in a wide range of popular, folk and fine art objects made by both men and women.

The goals of aesthetic education provide the framework for the meaningful study of art by women by secondary school students. Because aesthetic education stresses and describes the value of knowledge in a wide range of visual documents, the way has been paved for a study of art by women. While art by women has been neglected by traditional studio or art historical approaches, we can now begin to see its relevance to a comprehensive aesthetic literacy. A critical approach to inquiry into art made by women, allows students to develop skills and knowledge about visual forms created by that half of our population previously ignored in traditional art historical approaches. Through writings in aesthetic education we can see how a critical understanding of visual forms by women as well as men is a necessary means to independent thought in an increasingly visual world. Strategies of seeing and inquiry into art by women would greatly benefit from discourse concerning study of their lives, conditions for production, the function and the value of their art at different times in different periods. In order to make the study of questions and problems of aesthetic theory intelligible and relevant to all the students we teach, aesthetic literacy would involve the acquisition of skills and knowledge about the unique contributions and unique conditions faced by women artists through the ages.

Critical and Historical Methods

The need for visual literacy and critical perception of art by women can not be separated from the goals of aesthetic education and its

importance can not be denied, but how do we achieve this goal? The critical and historical methods discussed in the writings of aesthetic education can direct us to this end.

Criticism or the critical method, seen as a way of asking questions about visual objects, can be applied to the study of women artists. The teacher's job, according to Feldman (1980), is one of directing and ordering the visual experience and verbal response. In Becoming Human Through Art (1970) he describes a four-staged critical method appropriate for students in this study--description, formal analysis, interpretation and evaluation. Through this method students would be directed from the obvious to the more complex aspects of an image and would arrive at a judgement or evaluation. They would first identify obvious visual objects in the work; secondly, identify the relationships between the formal elements and contextual factors; thirdly, find meaning in these forms; and, finally, would evaluate the work in the context of other works.

The obvious advantage of this critical method is that students would be allowed to evaluate a work by a woman artist--not according to some pre-determined standard but--only after their own in-depth understanding of the work in its context. Dorn (1981) sees that this method "allows us to suspend evaluation of the object in view until we have had a chance to interact with the object, its context and its background" (p. 12). Lanier (1981) suggests, in a discussion of his valuation theory, that the critical method can be a way of prizing in which the appreciation of a new aesthetic object can become the goal rather than the ranking of it against traditional standards.

Feldman's critical method enables art by women to be appreciated in its own context. In comparison, the traditional critical method suggested by Osborne (1976) and Broudy (1974), would reduce art by women to a level of insignificance by ranking it against standards of traditional art which do not apply. Prizing, according to Osborne (1976) and Broudy (1974), would entail the judgement of works of art by ranking them against artifacts "honored through the test of time." Osborne (1976) suggests that the monuments of Western (male) art serve as the key exemplars and that these works establish "a new standard of appraisal for future work" (p. 39). While Feldman's method allows students to find meaning and understanding of art expression by women after prolonged study and inquiry, the traditional method forces students to apply standards established in art history which have served to negate almost all art by women. This premature closure would prevent students from appreciating art by women in its own right.

Art historians and critics such as Lippard, Raven and Nochlin speak of the danger of this reductionist approach to criticism. They describe how this traditional approach has not only furthered misinterpretation of art by women but, in many cases, has removed it from traditional art history. Arlene Raven (1973) describes how it has operated:

She (woman) has not participated in the mainstream of the (male) culture, and the culture does not operate from her perspective. Her contribution has neither spoken to nor been understood by that system, and the content of her art has been bypassed by interpretations which could not reveal it. (pp. 14-20).

Lucy Lippard (1976) speaks of her reasons for attempting to broaden the accepted tradition of a formalist art criticism which has bypassed the art of women to a new feminist criticism which is more capable of its interpretation. Although she acknowledges the objective human

criteria by which we judge art by women and men, she has developed a critical method which allows for more personal and lyrical interpretations of art, gives more attention to values, meanings and political content, allows for a discussion of historical context and bridges the hierarchies of art/craft and male/female which have tended to devalue women artists.

Because of its flexibility, Lippard's method harmonizes with aspects of Feldman's critical method. While Feldman provides organization to the sequence of our questions he does not, however, fully appreciate the particular issues and questions which are relevant to a study of art women. It is then to the field of feminist Art History and Art Criticism that we must begin to look for the major issues concerning women artists.

Lanier (1981) describes a general interdisciplinary approach which will be used in this thesis to open up layers of meaning found in art forms by women. He says that questions "can be approached by a dialogue curriculum, which would allow teachers and pupils to build a base of knowledge about all the visual arts, both vernacular and fine, from all the disciplinary viewpoints" (p. 20). The disciplinary viewpoints most relevant to this study are Art Criticism, Art History, Philosophy, Sociology, Feminist Studies and Psychology.

The knowledge of art history is integral to an intelligent approach to art criticism. Lanier (1981) suggests that "the history of an object in many of its ramifications contributes to the meaning, and thus to the potential, for response that object has for the viewer" (p. 7). The artist and artistic production takes place in a socio/cultural context and an understanding of art history includes knowledge about the social,

cultural and institutional conditions that affect production. In a discussion of Rosa Bonheur, for example, we can enlarge our understanding of "Horse Fair" when we become aware of the context of her life in a strict Victorian society. The fact that she was a member of the Saint Simoneons, who believed in the complete equality of men and women, helps us to understand the origins of her unique attitude, her willingness to break conventions and her freedom to study in slaughterhouses the anatomy of animals. With the support of a liberated father we can understand how she broke the tradition of women as portrait and still life painters and entered the prestigious field of history and narrative painting. Without a broad historical perspective and the understanding of historical and social context, "the view is limited to negotiation of formal qualities and obvious content" (Lanier, 1981, p. 8).

Art history is particularly valuable to a study of women artists when it is gained from current writings in feminist art history. Either women artists' accomplishments have been entirely lost or they have been misinterpreted in traditional historical accounts. While both Pliny and Vasari wrote about Renaissance artists like Sofonisba Anguissola without resorting to stereotypes, the accounts are very brief and have been overlooked by some contemporary historians. In the few traditional books on women artists such as Sparrow's Women Painters of the World, much of the commentary is directed towards the artist's appearance, personality and morals and, therefore, loses its aesthetic value. As this thesis will show in Chapter IV, these traditional historical accounts are also often marred by sexual biases and stereotyping which tends to demean the woman artist and distort the value of her work.

Feminist and non-biased historical works by Nochlin and Harris (1976), Tufts (1974), Fine (1978), and Greer (1979) account for educational, social and historical factors which offer insight into the tradition of women who have created art. By viewing art by women in the context of their history we can see how their perceptions have been built upon a language of form developed through time and, also, how these perceptions and expressions have been affected by institutional conditions. Unlike traditional approaches to art historiography which concentrates on style alone, feminist art history maintains that art must be seen in historical context. Particularly in Nochlin and Harris Women Artists 1550-1950 we see a balance on aesthetic as well as social cultural factors. We see that:

Individual commentaries consider the work of each artist in the context of her time, tell the story of her life, often quoting from letters, journals and the memoirs of contemporaries, and discusses not only the techniques and principles of her art but also the conditions and expectations that fostered or inhibited her development. (Nochlin and Harris, 1979, cover)

As we move into a study of women artists in the twentieth century, we can understand art by women more in terms of its dynamic interrelationship with mainstream and avant-garde movements (Sondheim, 1977). Less constrained by social and institutional conditions, contemporary women artists have begun to produce art with some of the same advantages as male colleagues and have begun to influence major movements in art. The question of influence, which has fascinated art historians for centuries, viewed within a feminist perspective may provide meaningful questions. An interesting question of influence, derived from feminist art history might ask, not only how women artists have been influenced by the world around them but also how they have influenced it. This investigation could be particularly fruitful among artists married to

each other like Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock, or Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson.

Sociology, Philosophy, Women's Studies

Sociology is another academic field which helps us to understand the relationship between the arts by women and other aspects of social life. Janet Woolf (1981), in The Relevance of Sociology to Aesthetic Education, suggests that,

The best kind of sociology would investigate the social process of the production and also the reception of works of art, but without resorting to crude empiricism or to abstract theorizing. In other words, it would be concerned with artists and what they do and with mediators and other practitioners, and not merely theorizing about art as ideology. (p. 77)

A sociological perspective of art by women helps us to uncover questions concerning the role of the woman artist. Sociology can provide us with questions about social, economic, educational and critical factors which determine the role she has played in various time periods. An examination of women artists' educational conditions, for example, shows why they were limited to a few genres and why they were often dismissed as amateurs.

Historians Nochlin (1976) and Greer (1979), for example, illuminate several important educational limitations on women artists which remained unchanged until the 19th century. Firstly, most women artists were daughters of artists, married to artists and were often trained by a male relative. Discouraged from entering the workshop of a master, and prevented from entering the great academies in France and England, women had no other access to art training. Dependency and obedience demanded by this family training often obliterated women's sense of freedom which provides the conditions for true creative expression.

Women often served as models and helpers in fathers' or husbands' studios and were denied the participation in some aspects of culture. Women, until the 19th century, were also denied access to life drawing classes--during a period when the most esteemed genres of art depended, to a large extent, upon the ability to depict the human nude convincingly. This condition would be particularly relevant in a discussion of 17th and 18th century flower painting on portraiture. This important fact helps us to explain why women worked so often in these "minor" genres and so rarely in the more esteemed forms of religious and historical painting.

A sociological inquiry into art by women can also give insight into the ways gender is a variable in both art production and response to art. While Chalmers (1977) has studied differences in the aesthetic preferences of men and women, Feinberg (1977) has discovered the ways boys as opposed to girls depict certain themes in art. More work must be done to determine whether these differences are due to socialization or to innate biological differences. At any rate, the hotly debated issue of a "feminine sensibility" in art is one that deserves attention in any discussion of art by women (Lippard, 1976). The more complex aspects of this issue deserve lengthy discussion in the next chapter.

In Women's Studies courses (Loeb, Gellman and Fine, 1978) we see that a sociological feminist inquiry into the image of women in art history also raises our consciousness about how images can serve to reinforce or change the social roles of women. By comparing, for example, the images of women by artists such as Kathe Kollwitz, Niki de Saint Phalle, Marisol, Audrey Flack, to the images of women by male

artists such as de Kooning, Picasso, Roualt and Rosenquist, we can see some differences in women's and men's views of female identity.

Janeway (1974) suggests that male projections of fantasy into a female image have often acted as negative stereotypes. She says:

Perceptive men have spoken for centuries of the mysterious woman, the female enigma, hiding her inner qualities from the world. Upon this blank space, this turned-away face of the self, they have projected their desires and fancies, time out of mind. Fertility fetish from the caves of the Stone Age, virgin goddess, all-giving mother, demoniac maenad, sybilline prophetess, malign witch, angel in the house, golden-hearted whore, we have been all these things and more.

A sociological feminist perspective can assist students in questioning and challenging the idealized or objectified images of women. It can help her/him understand the meanings of the images of women by women artists and how women have also been portrayed as competent, active and talented people. As female students are exposed to the more real images of woman as artist, worker, mother and social activist, she will be less likely to internalize a limited self-image and will be more inclined to develop broader aspirations for herself as a mature adult. Finally, through readings in feminist theory by writers such as Shulamith Firestone, a broader understanding may be gained about the history of women's role and the political reasons for change.

While Art History and Sociology provide historical depth and aesthetic meaning to our response, Philosophy can extend this knowledge to universal ideas and directions for our future. Through the philosophic writings of Ernst Cassirer (1944), Susanne Langer (1953), Erich Neumann (1963) and Fritof Capra (1980), we can find meanings which connect art forms to large ideas and world views. The Berkeley physicist and philosopher, Capra (1981), for example, in his recent book The Turning Point, speaks of a cultural transformation occurring in our

society which was inspired by the social feminist and ecological movements of the 1960's and 1970's. It is possible to intuit in the works of recent environmental artists a synthesis of what Capra calls a systems view that is ecological, spiritual and feminist in its essence.

Through the philosophic writings of Capra and others we can extend the meanings revealed in contemporary art by women into ideas of cultural transformation and ideological change in Western Society. A search for these larger meanings in art enables us to comprehend how art relates to other disciplines and to culture as a whole.

The critical method as described by Feldman and Lanier allows for questioning in a wide range of disciplines. The knowledge gained from this inquiry allows us an understanding of how and why we place aesthetic value on art made by women.

The questions we ask and the knowledge we gain from this inquiry can be organized into curriculum materials that are useful in the secondary school. The materials to be presented in Chapters IV, V, and VI may be described as curriculum content rather than a curriculum model. This curriculum content provides a base of knowledge which must be adapted by a teacher through methodologies suited to a particular school situation.

Design of the Study -- Elements and Components

The content of this thesis is also concerned with components that make up what Berleant (1970) terms the "aesthetic field" (p. 49). Some aspects of content developed in this thesis can be described within the framework of aesthetic education outlined by Lanier (1981) in Popularization Without Misrepresentation: Curriculum Content for Aesthetic

Literacy. The elements described by Lanier which are important to this study are the object, the history (or the social environment in which both object and viewer developed and presently operate), and the viewer. These elements provide a structure for the content of this thesis as it relates to the goals of aesthetic education. An understanding of these components as they are defined by proponents of aesthetic education can provide a useful framework for the important themes, understandings and meanings relevant to a study of contemporary women artists.

The object is the most obvious consideration in terms of content and Lanier and Feldman offer several relevant theories on what constitutes a defensible selection of art objects and what should be considered in their viewing. These will assist us in our selections of women artists for consideration.

Feldman (1980) suggests that our selection of objects for inquiry not be limited to those that serve only aesthetic functions. He proposes that "the so-called art by 'geniuses' ... represents a very small proportion of the total aesthetic production, and that this approach to human creativity ignores the magical, utilitarian, religious, political and industrial functions of art, especially in non-Western cultures" (p. 88). The concept of genius also ignores the societal determinants of creativity and treats it as an innate gift of a few rare individuals. Elizabeth Janeway (1974) agrees with Feldman and suggests that, in the folk arts by women, for example, we find creativity which, if conditions had been different, might have been directed to the more prestigious areas of painting and sculpture. She says:

Creativity is not really a rare gift ... it is present not just in the high arts of music and drama and dance and literature and painting and sculpture; it is present in folk art too. The quilts our great-grandmothers made, the knitting patterns they

adapted, the embroidery with which they enlivened simple traditional styles of clothing, were all products of creativity. So were folk songs and work songs and country dances, weaving and pottery making, and all the crafts that were in earlier days a necessary part of life. (p. 14)

Feldman and Janeway would seem to suggest that in a study of art by women, the functional and industrial arts by women should not be overlooked even though they may not require the same type of accomplishment demanded by the sculpture and painting of fine artists. While the author is in whole-hearted agreement with this concept, this thesis is not capable of discussing all the art discriminately categorized in the past as "minor arts." What will become an important consideration of this thesis, however, will be the many art forms which employ the use of non-traditional crafts for social and aesthetic functions. The breakdown of the art/craft hierarchy in much of the contemporary art by women, is a major aspect of contemporary art and has important implications for student response and art expression. Notable critic Lawrence Alloway (1970), in Women's Art in the 70's, describes how the functional arts of women have contributed to a new direction in contemporary art.

Craft techniques such as sewing, weaving and knotting fibres ... in broad use among men and women, at present can be programmatically associated with women because of their traditional domestic appreciation. Many women working with these means do construe a kinship with their female ancestors or with third world women--that is with women in whose lives these operations really are (or were) fundamental. If today there is a female penchant for crafts, it would seem to be on this conscious basis, as an iconography in which process acts significantly, not because there is an instinctive female urge to craft. Aesthetics of art and the operations of craft have overlapped so a common base of work, accessible to men or women, is apparent. (p. 71)

Theories concerning a defensible selection of objects for aesthetic inquiry include all the visual arts forms. Lanier (1980), in a discussion of students' every-day contact with the popular arts contends that,

"as art teachers, we owe it to them to enlarge the content (from folk arts, popular arts and vernacular arts) to include the fine arts as well" (p. 17).

The sculpture, painting, graphic and multimedia art by women help us to understand a broad range of expressive forms which reveal feelings and truths about ourselves and about nature, culture and environment. If we adopt Langer's (1957) view, we can see the importance of examining the deep meanings in the art of women. She says:

Artistic form is congruent with dynamic forces of our direct sensuous, mental and emotional life: and that works of art are projections of "felt life" as Henry James called it, into spatial, temporal and poetic structures. (p. 174)

Art works by women have much to say about the "felt life"--the sensuous, mental and emotional experience of women at various points in time. Their meanings are essential to a holistic view of culture.

The scope of this thesis will be limited to visual arts by women in the twentieth century. There are a number of reasons for this decision. Firstly, a comprehensive study of contemporary women artists is not available for use in the secondary art program while historical surveys of women artists in earlier periods are. Secondly, as institutional limitations have lessened in the twentieth century, women artists have had an increasingly important impact on the direction of modern art and culture as a whole. Finally, the themes that are central to a study of contemporary art by women are congruent with some major interests and needs of students at the secondary level.

The three inter-connected and open-ended themes which have emerged from this author's research into contemporary women artists will be developed in the chapters which follow. Taken together they will show

how woman's emerging sense of identify through a struggle for self-definition in artistic expression has begun to liberate her from the confines of limited roles and an unexplored self. From an exploration of self-identity women artists have moved into new dynamic relationships to nature, culture, politics and environment. Giving visual form and expression to these relationships, women artists have become leaders of a new socially and aesthetically relevant art. Finally, their art is at the heart of a far-reaching cultural transformation.

The three themes which organize the body of this thesis are central to the interests and concerns of students at the secondary school level. As Feldman (1980) suggests, the criterion for a defensible selection of art for study "ought to be influenced by some theory about what interests his or her pupils; what children need to know; what they are not likely to see elsewhere; what they can understand and respond to" (p. 19).

Chapman (1978), in her book Approaches to Art, provides us with a useful theory or set of guidelines concerning viewer interests and needs at the mid-adolescent age level. She suggests that two concerns are central to adolescents. In her first point, she reminds us that secondary school students are particularly interested in their sexual and social roles and their emerging self-identity. The second major concern naturally evolves around "the adolescent's consciousness of the link between career status education and money" (p. 215). Vocational choice is then a major concern for the secondary school student. Chapman suggests that teachers should become more aware of those images in art that have the potential for making a vital connection with these social, economic and vocational concerns of the adolescent. Further,

she sees that the teacher must help the student see, feel and think about the connections.

The selection of each of the three themes--the role of women artists, the struggle for self identity and the movement through abstraction towards nature, environment and culture relate to viewer concerns on many levels. An exploration of the role of women artists and the conditions that have oppressed them are very relevant to what students should know about sexual roles. As Lanier states, "youth should learn to be literate above all about those visual documents which explore the conditions and reasons for their social oppression" (p. 19). Through the interdisciplinary inquiry into the image of women in contemporary art, students can learn how stereotyped images help to define roles and reinforce the oppression of women. Through a study of images of women by women, students can appreciate other women's and their own struggle for self identity. Through the real and genuine images of women as artist, mother, worker, etc., students can explore a variety of roles and vocational options which are open to them. Female students can free themselves from the stereotype of the passive and even subservient woman who accepts without question the domination of others. Through inquiry into the political, collaborative and public art forms by women in the last decade, students can become aware how, through political action and collaboration, women can change the social structure. Students are able to see how artists, through a new interdisciplinary role, have made art responsive to environmental, cultural and social needs. Finally, students can gain a broader image of the artist--one which includes women; one which is socially and environ-

mentally responsible; and one which is instrumental in the transformation of culture.

In summary, the criteria for the selection of art forms to be studied in this thesis is based on a wide range of considerations related to the aims and concepts of aesthetic education. The following concise outline will assist us in tying together the criteria for objects before going on to a discussion of their history.

The Object of Study

Art forms by women in the 20th century are selected which relate to her struggle for self identity and her new role in cultural and environmental transformation. Considerations which have determined the selections are:

1. Art services various functions and a selection of art would reflect these functions:
 - . aesthetic
 - . social/political
 - . utilitarian
2. Art must be seen in its historical context and the factors which affect its production and reception must be understood. The role of the artist is dependent on the following factors:
 - . social conditions
 - . historical/critical attitudes
 - . educational conditions
3. Art selections must relate to the interests and needs of the student viewers and the connections to these concerns must be made explicit:

- . adolescent concerns - social/sexual identity and career
- . adolescent needs - understanding of images that explore oppression and promote aesthetic, social, and political understandings.

We have now developed a structure for the content of this thesis based upon the object and the viewer components of aesthetic education. To complete this structure we are reminded by Lanier (1981) that no object exists in isolation from history. The history component of this content model would include the historical, social and educational factors which affect the production and reception of a work of art. We must also look at the role of the woman artist and how it functions in society and culture. We must look at the life of the artist and how it is reflected in the expressive art forms produced. Finally, we must place her work in an art historical context.

Although many of these historical factors were discussed in the previous analysis of methodology these elements should be tied together in a more coherent outline before in-depth discussion in the next chapter on "Art History and the Emergency of Women Artists."

The History of the Art Object and Artist

- a) The Art Historical Context: includes the form, media and content of the art form as it relates to major movements in history and art history. It would include an inquiry into the principles and techniques of art by women and aspects of influence, patronage and style as they relate to a work in an art historical context. The relationships between the expressive character of the image and the formal devices which contribute to its realization would be a major consideration.

- b) The Artist's Biography: including all the important events in an artist's life. The origins of the need to make art, the support offered by family and friends, the geographic location of the artist's life and its influences, and the artist's philosophy of life.
- c) The Social/Cultural/Historical Context: including the training and educational conditions faced by the woman artist; the social roles and expectations which affected her as an artist; and the historical/critical attitudes which affected the production and reception of her art. The role of the artist and the function of the art would be major considerations.

To introduce this major study of art by contemporary women the historical context of the woman artist will be researched in the following chapters. While the history does not exist in isolation from the art itself, the work described in the later chapters will gain more meaning if seen against this historical backdrop. It is against the background of women's social roles, training and reception in the art world that we can best comprehend the exploration of self-identity in images of women by women discussed in Chapter V. It is against this background that we can truly appreciate woman's role in shaping an art that through abstraction moves out from the self to intuit a new interpretation of the reality of nature and human life.

CHAPTER IV

ART HISTORY AND THE EMERGENCE OF WOMEN ARTISTS

Although art making is and always has been a creative activity performed by individuals with the desire to give form to feeling, socio/cultural factors affect its production and reception. Art History and Art Education have tended to over-emphasize the psychological aspects of creativity and ignore the social and institutional conditions generally productive of art. Feldman (1980) sees that the psychological basis of Art Education, which originates from a curiosity about the source of artistic creativity within the individual, "results in an essentially ahistorical conception of creativity. Social and collective factors (religion, class ethnicity) tend to be ignored" (p. 86).

Art historian Linda Nochlin (1971), in her very influential article Why Have There Been no Great Women Artists? suggests that it is no accident that the whole question of the conditions productive of great art have been overlooked or relegated to the province of some other discipline. She sees that "a dispassionate, impersonal, sociologically--and institutionally--oriented approach would reveal the entire romantic, elitist, individual-glorifying and monograph-producing substructure upon which the profession of art history is based" (p. 6). Calling into question this romantic approach, Nochlin reveals the whole myth of the Great Artist--"subject of a hundred monographs, unique, godlike--bearing within his person since birth a mysterious essence, rather like the golden nugget in Mrs. Grass's chicken soup, called Genius" (p. 7).

If one, however, casts a dispassionate eye on the conditions under which great art has been produced, we can find several consistent social and economic factors that are necessary for success. Firstly, Nochlin (1971) reminds us that almost all great and not so great artists had artist fathers. Holbein, Durer, Raphael, Bernini, Picasso and Braque are all examples. Further study also reveals that most artists sprang from the lower and middle classes and rarely from the aristocracy. Nochlin suggests that the confining social expectations of the aristocracy often placed such severe limitations on the young upper class artist that much of their creative potential was subverted (a condition also suffered by women artists, with a few exceptions like Mary Cassatt).

If we abandon, then, the "golden nugget" theory of genius and focus attention on the institutional factors which affected the production of art by women and its reception, it is possible to expand our understanding of her work. We can also see how, in the past, it was "institutionally impossible for women to achieve excellence or success on the same footing as men, no matter what their talent or genius" (Nochlin, 1971, p. 37). Through an examination of the social roles imposed on women artists, the training they received and the historical, critical attitudes they faced, we can understand some of the factors which influenced the form and content of their work in past centuries. Against this historical background we can better appreciate the struggle of women artists in the twentieth century who, with the help of the feminist movement, have challenged these limitations and attempted to redefine their role as artists. We can appreciate more fully how contemporary women artists have begun to emerge from the confines of

institutionally imposed oppression to play a prominent role in the direction of contemporary art and the transformation of culture.

It is also hoped that, by stressing the institutional or external rather than the personal or internal preconditions for achievement in art, we have provided a paradigm for investigation of other areas of art history.

By examining in detail a number of major factors that affected women artists in 16th century Renaissance (Italy); 17th and 18th century Reformation (Northern Europe); 18th century Age of Enlightenment (France); and the 19th century era in France, England and America, we can gain a fuller understanding of the role of the woman artist in different times and places in history.

The production and reception of art by women has been subject to a number of factors out of which four appear to be most influential according to recent research in feminist art history (Petersen and Wilson, 1976; Harris and Nochlin, 1976; Fine, 1978; and Greer, 1979). They can be summarized as follows and investigated in each period under consideration:

1. Historical and Art Historical conditions (her relation to major historical movements).
2. Social/Economic conditions for women (her social role).
3. Educational conditions (her training in art).
4. Historical and critical attitudes (reception of her art).

The Role of Women Artists: Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries

The Renaissance. In the Middle Ages, women were regarded primarily as bearers and rearers of children and keepers of the domestic hearth.

"Considered subordinate and inferior to men, both custom and prejudice kept them from considering careers outside the home" (Harris, 1976, p. 13). The domestic duties in pre-capitalist societies, which included the making of clothes and food production, were extremely varied and arduous and there was little time or inclination to become literate or educated in the arts. Unless women were born of aristocracy or unless they were nuns it was impossible to become even half-literate or practiced in the medieval arts of embroidery or manuscript illumination. Even then, women were excluded from professional status in the few guilds to which artists belonged (Gies and Gies, 1978).

With the birth of the Renaissance, the role of women changed. There emerged a Humanist philosophy and a belief in the ancient ideals of glorious Greece and Rome. A new interest in the individual developed and it was thought that education could be a conduit to enlightenment and virtue which had been lost during the darkness of the middle ages. By the 16th century there was near consensus as to the virtue of educating women of the upper classes--they would be more interesting companions to men, better mothers for their children and more able to maintain conversation in the court circles of the time. Baldessare Castiglione, in his influential book El Cortegiano, suggested that almost all "the attributes and accomplishments necessary to the male courtier were also appropriate for the female, including a high level of educational attainment and the ability to paint, play musical instruments and sing, write poetry and make witty and stimulating conversation" (Nochlin and Harris, 1976, p. 13). From the courts of the northern Italian Renaissance, emerged a new type of woman with a less submissive and confined role. Taught by the Humanist scholars, she

became central to the literary and philosophical salons. She began to develop a distinct recognizable personality (Fine, 1978). This new view of femininity was, however, not without its restrictions. The ideal Renaissance woman was expected to fit the platonic concept of beauty--for ugliness was considered a reflection of evil. The ideal woman was a slim young beauty on the brink of maturity. In addition to her youth and beauty, she was expected to show in all her conduct, modesty and purity (Nochlin and Harris, 1978).

In the Renaissance, the role of the artist took on a new professional status and it became possible for the exceptional woman artist to enter its ranks. "The appearance of a talented woman in their midst was always welcomed as evidence of the superabundant creative genius to be found in the city where this phenomenal woman lived" (Nochlin and Harris, 1976, p. 24). Although it was thought that women were not really destined by God to become artists or anything that required genius, it was accepted that the new creative spirit could occasionally infect a woman as it had in antiquity. The influence of Castiglione's treatise on the new role of women can be seen in the journals and self-portraits of women artists. Sofonisba Anguissola and Lavinia Fontana often portrayed themselves as attractive but modest young ladies, educated in Latin and the general arts and adept in their ability to play the virginals. Biographers, in their brief documentation of women artists, often compared them to Timarete, Irene and Iaro, three women painters of antiquity (Nochlin and Harris, 1976).

It was not, however, without overcoming a number of serious educational limitations, that women artists of the Renaissance managed

to reach a level of achievement and success. Unlike her male colleagues, she was discouraged from leaving home and training in the workshop of master artists. The only training available to her was through family and she had to be fortunate enough to have an artist father. The dependency and obedience demanded by family training often served to restrict her freedom and creative spirit. Often serving as helper or model in her father's studio she had little time for her own painting (Greer, 1979).

The greatest limitation of her training, however, arose from the taboo against women attending life drawing classes. It was believed that their presence could only ruin their reputations and corrupt their virtue. This condition was particularly debilitating during a time when the most esteemed genres of art--history and religious painting--depended to a large extent on the ability to depict the nude male convincingly. As this discriminatory ruling remained unchanged for four centuries, it becomes understandable why so many women artists had no alternative but to concentrate their energy on the less esteemed genres of portrait and still life painting in the 16th through 18th centuries.

The restricting social expectations placed on women artists were also obstacles to self-confidence and freedom that a creative life demands. All of the celebrated and well-received women artists of this time were unable to rely on their talent alone. For the most part, the woman artist was only noticed and accepted if she was young, attractive, modest and demure--virtues admired more than her talent (Fine, 1978, p. 6). A few women artists such as Gentileschi and Lama, who strayed from these codes of conduct, were severely criticised for their independent

and assertive behavior and, as a result, lost favor with patrons, artists and historians.

Finally, historical/critical attitudes affected not only the production of art by women, but its reception by patrons and critics. One consistent response on the part of critics, which undoubtedly made women artists feel like strange curiosities, was the constantly expressed amazement that a woman could paint on a competent level. Germaine Greer (1979), in the Obstacle Race, quotes many examples of a double standard used by male critics and biographers in their documentation of women artists. The work is good for a woman but will never attain the quality of art by men--sums up the content of much of this patronizing criticism. The historian, Passeri (1614), attempts to remind women of their proper subservient role:

It is true that the Lord did not endow them (women artists) properly with the faculty of judgement, and he did this in order to keep them restrained within the boundaries of obedience to men, to establish men as supreme and superior, so that with this lack women would be more docile and amenable to suggestion. (Nochlin and Harris, 1976, p. 32)

Some historians such as Vasari have, of course, written less biased accounts of women artists and have compared women artists like Fontana and de Rossi to the great women artists of antiquity. Many others, however, such as Titi, Mazzolari and Passeri have paid more attention to aspects of a woman artist's appearance, personality and ladylike manners than on a discussion of her work. As a result, most historical accounts of women artists are of limited value (Nochlin and Harris, 1976).

The most negative reactions to women's art can be found in cases where women left the less prestigious genres of still life and portraiture and ventured into history and religious painting. Especially

in the cases of Lama, Fontana and Gentileschi, who competed for major public commissions, we can find documentation which is a direct condemnation of her talent and her femininity. Lama, for example, was cruelly attacked for her "ugly appearance" as well as her lack of talent--even though her work was highly acclaimed by the church. Gentileschi, who painted powerful historical paintings of heroic women, was damned for her lack of modesty and so-called scandalous private life.

Despite prejudice, second-rate training, rigid social expectations and lack of safe reliable contraception, a few women artists overcame these problems in the Renaissance--"proving that none was insurmountable once the idea had been successfully planted in people's minds that creative genius might, on rare occasions, be found in a woman" (Nochlin and Harris, 1976, p. 28).

There were several highly acclaimed women artists in the Renaissance who set precedents and paved the way for the growing number of women artists in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. While Sofonisba Anguissola opened the profession to women by becoming a self-supporting international celebrity, Fontana provided the first model of women in a public role competing for large church commissions. Lama and Gentileschi are important for their full-scale dramatic, historical and religious works and their competent depictions of the nude figure. They provide a model for the few daring women who, in later years, broke away from the "minor genres" to explore sculpture and history painting.

The Reformation. With the advent of the Protestant Reformation in the 17th century and the emergence of the bourgeoisie in Northern Europe, the role for women became re-defined once more. The new ideal lady of the Reformation was the domestic and chaste wife of a well-to-do burgher

(Fine, 1978). Whereas the aristocratic Renaissance woman was praised for her physical beauty and social graces, the middle class woman of the Reformation was praised for her inner beauty, goodness and domesticity. And, while the salons and courts were the seat of literary and artistic activity for women in the Renaissance, the home and family became the inspiration for artistic activity in the Reformation. Popular still life paintings of the time celebrate the home and themes of daily existence.

While the Humanist idea, that women also need education, spread to the middle classes in Northern Europe and was made possible in the increasing number of schools for girls, this education was usually limited to matters of household management and the basics in mathematics and reading--enough to make young ladies thrifty, obedient wives and business women (Fine, 1978). While most women artists continued to receive their art training in their father's or husband's studios, two important exceptions emerged and foreshadowed a later trend. Rachel Ruysch, for example, was trained by the flower painter, Willem van Aelst, and Judith Leyster with the renowned Frans Hals. The restrictions, however, which prevented women from attending life drawing classes and becoming adept in drawing the nude male, remained unchanged. Women artists had little choice but to devote their talents to still life and genre painting.

While the domestic role for women did not allow for the social and artistic contacts provided by the courts of the Renaissance, being a competent woman still life artist did not require such a rigorous social life. Because her patrons became the general populace rather than the aristocracy or royalty, the energy devoted to appearance, social skills

and ladylike manners was freed for domestic duties and art making. Although family duties were time-consuming, a number of women still life painters, like Rachael Ruysch, managed to sell her work easily, support her family and earn the freedom to paint (Tufts, 1978).

Although genre and still life were considered minor art forms, historical and critical attitudes were not as negative if women confined themselves to these fields. However, numerous cases of misattribution have been discovered. Still life and genre paintings by women artists were occasionally assigned to the oeuvre of a teacher or male colleague. For example, several of Judith Leyster's genre paintings, including the famous "The Jolly Topper," were for centuries attributed to her teacher, Frans Hals. It wasn't until the 20th century that a number of Hals' paintings were cleaned and a small J.L. and a * were found at the bottom right corner of the works. As misattributions are being discovered, the oeuvres of many 17th century women artists are being filled out.

Despite the fact that a large number of women painters like Peeters, Moillon, Coster, van Oosterwyck, Vallayer and Merian were celebrated artists in the 17th century and contributed greatly to the development of still life and genre painting, only Rachel Ruysch and Judith Leyster have found their way into popular art histories. It seems that many of these artists could now be included and could illustrate Dutch and Flemish still life along with Jan Davidz or de Heem.

While the role of the woman artist in the 17th century remained restricted by educational opportunities and family pressures, her visibility in genre and still life become notable. "In all those specialties where academic training mattered less, women artists were

highly successful" (Harris, 1976, p. 43). The numbers of women artists in Northern Europe are also an indication of the growth of interest in an artistic career among European women in the 17th century. In France alone, some 28 women artists are recorded as active artists, a substantial jump from the three recorded for the previous century (Harris, 1976). Their numbers were to grow even more rapidly in the next century when France became the dominant country in the history of women artists.

18th Century France. The Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason in France was characterized by a spread of wealth and education--progress, change and the perfectibility of humanity were the new ideals. "France tested democracy, empire, a restoration of the monarchy and then a new revolution as ordinary men and women demanded and fought for personal freedoms that had formerly been the privilege of the few" (Fine, 1978, p. 39).

As new political and economic theories and movements for reform developed in the wake of the revolution, the powerful aristocracy of the ancien regime was experiencing its last moment of glory in the fashionable salons of the time. As the French Revolution progressed the male population was granted individual civil rights but the lot of women was unimproved and, in some ways, even worsened.

In actuality, there were two opposing forces at work in the role of women in the 18th century. On one hand, the women of aristocracy held a central role and were granted high status as hostesses in the early 18th century salons. According to Fine (1978), Goncourts saw that:

Woman was the directing reason and the commanding voice of the 18th century.... She held the revolutions of alliances and political systems, peace and war, the literature, the arts and

fashions of the 18th century, as well as its destinies, in the folds of her gown. (p. 40)

Some salon hostesses such as Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun, a portrait painter, and Madame de Stael, an outstanding literary figure of the period, were creative in their own right and demanded great respect from their contemporaries. A hostess was judged successful if she had social skill, charm and talent.

Women reigned in early 18th century salon society but the 1789 Revolution and the romanticism of the popular Rousseauen philosophy dethroned them. Upper class women in their zealous pursuit of knowledge were seen by some male contemporaries, such as the influential Goncourt brothers and the followers of Rousseau, as over-intellectualized monstrosities who would be happier if returned to the "natural state"--as subordinates of men and contented wives and mothers. Although feminism was discussed and fought for by major thinkers such as Condorcet and Wollstonecraft during the Revolution, the gains of liberty, equality and fraternity were seen to benefit only the male population in the end. Although various women's societies helped to overthrow the Gerondists for the sake of progressive social reform, the Jacobins, despite their political radicalism, became hostile to the women's movement. They declared women's societies illegal and instigated reforms that applied only to men. Thrown back into the powerless role of housewife and subordinate, the role of women took another step backwards. Rousseauen propaganda actually took hold in the 19th century Victorian era only to be questioned again in the 20th century.

Against this historical background, the idea persisted that a well educated young lady should at least know how to draw and paint. A

number of serious professional women artists emerged from the salon society of pre-revolutionary France. Artists like Rosalba Carreria and Vigée-Lebrun worked primarily in pastel and developed their technique to a spectacular level in their portraits of family, royalty and aristocratic patrons. Rosalba Carreria, Angelica Kauffman and Vigée-Lebrun, all international celebrities, produced huge bodies of work. They were sought by royalty and patrons of many countries and a few of these women artists left home to work in the courts of Madrid, Dusseldorf, Vienna and St. Petersburg. Their work sold for high prices and some of these artists became extremely wealthy (Harris, 1976, p. 42).

Because women artists were relatively rare until the 19th century, their scarcity gave them curiosity value. Unless they were young, attractive, popular in court and aristocratic circles, good at social relations and unless they fitted the stereotype of the gracious lady, they rarely received the recognition or adulation given their more aggressive and sometimes eccentric, male colleagues. As the French Revolution progressed and the salon society crumbled, many women were assigned a more subservient role. Women artists were hedged in by new social restrictions that attempted to keep her in her proper place. Major ambitions were discouraged and women artists were praised for minor accomplishments. The sentimental genre scene with its heart-warming or tragic scenes of domestic life became a specialty for women artists who wished to establish a clearer identity in their double role as housewife and artist.

Artists' academies, the main centers of artistic training in the 18th century, also held contradictory attitudes to women members.

On one hand a few women were elected members by most of these institutions. On the other hand, election did not mean admission to all the privileges enjoyed by male members. Some would not allow women to attend meetings, others did. None allowed them to attend drawing classes or to teach, to compete for prizes or hold office. Their election was essentially honorific, like the award of an honorary degree. (Harris, 1976, p. 36)

This arrangement was accepted with only limited protest until Labille-Guiard, in 1791, succeeded in opening the Paris Academy to more women even though they remained only honorary members.

Despite these persistent academic restrictions, Labille-Guiard opened up the valuable forum of the Salon, so that women could exhibit their work alongside their contemporaries. Increasing numbers of women, not all bent on becoming professionals, exhibited in Salons of the Academy. This trend grew in the early 19th century and from the years 1801-1835, the percentage of women exhibiting in the Salon grew from 14.6% to 22.2% of the total number of artists showing (Fine, 1978, p. 43). As painting and drawing continued to be part of an upper class education and as the number of women artists increased, the stereotype of the lady amateur became so prevalent that the serious woman artist was now in constant danger of being dismissed as a dabbling dilettante. This stereotype became a new obstacle faced by women artists in the 19th century. Undaunted, the numbers of women artists grew and a few unique individuals emerged in the next century.

19th Century - England, France, America. An investigation into the role and status of women artists in early 19th century England, France and America shows that, in many respects, a step backward had been taken. While creative women achieved some respect and independence in the Salons of France, in frontier America and in the literary circles of

England for short periods in the 18th century, "it was back to the hearth and home and to the cult of domesticity in the beginning years of the 19th century" (Fine, 1978, p. 90). The Rousseauian ideal of the 19th century woman was carried to England and from England the Victorian ideal was exported to America. The 19th century view of the lady artist was one of a fragile, vulnerable creature--safe only in the protected environment of the home and family. Women's demands for professional equality were seen as threats to the status quo, to the sanctity of the family and to woman's "Godgiven" destiny of wife and mother.

Seen in this light, the constant solicitude for women's weakness, their sexual purity, their social vulnerability can be understood as a lightly veiled threat, a way of keeping them in their place by protecting them from achievement and independence. (Nochlin and Harris, 1976, p. 57)

By the middle of the 19th century, however, with the Industrial Revolution well underway, a full-fledged feminist movement took hold in America. This pioneer western feminist movement, "having comparatively little history or tradition was spurred on by the abolitionist struggle and the smoldering ideas of the American revolution itself" (Firestone, 1970, p. 17). Although suffrage was only a small aspect of what the women's rights movement was about, violent reaction and constant defeats on this one issue eventually broke the back of the movement. Women's energies were diffused into any other radical cause than their own. The radical feminism of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony affected only limited changes--a few legal reforms had been won, women entered the labor force in a service capacity and women began to be educated in large numbers. For women artists, despite major petitions and formal protests sponsored by dissatisfied activists in the 1850's, discriminatory rules for admission to Academies in England, France and America

only began to change in the late 1800's. But radical feminism was only dormant--the second wave in the early twentieth century and the third wave in the 1970's provided the next big boost to women's freedom and right to participate equally in all areas of art and society.

For women artists of the 19th century, the result of frustration and despair caused by second rate training and discriminatory attitudes "was often achievement at a level of competent mediocrity" by those individuals tenacious enough to pursue artistic careers (Nochlin and Harris, 1976, p. 58). Serious, fully qualified women artists had to accept training in second-rate art schools or private studios. In France women were completely excluded from the Ecole des Beaux Arts until after 1878. Marie Bashkirsteff, in her journal, expressed horror and outrage about her lack of opportunity as a woman. "... we went to the Ecole des Beaux Arts. It is enough to make one cry with rage. Why can not I go and study here? Where can I get instruction as complete as there?" (Nochlin, 1976, p. 56).

Even when Pennsylvania Academy, the Royal Academy and the École des Beaux-Arts eventually opened their doors to women artists they were only allowed to work from casts or the draped living model. It wasn't until the twentieth century that women could draw the nude model and even then separate classes for women were maintained. By that time the nude figure was not a prime subject of major painting.

Much of the work done by women artists such as Osborne, and Spencer, fall into the tradition of the narrative genre painting made popular by Hogarth in the 18th century. The more intimate works of the Victorian period such as "Nameless and Friendless" (1857) by Emily Osborne, offer insight into the actual experience of women at the time

(Nochlin and Harris, 1976). Two notable exceptions to this trend of small scale genre painters were Rosa Bonheur and Lady Butler. Both artists are important for their huge dramatic narrative and historical paintings. An understanding of the fortunate but unusual circumstances of their lives in supportive and liberated segments of 19th century society enables us to understand how they broke convention and produced major work. While Bonheur was supported and encouraged by her father and members of the Saint Simonians (who supported the fight for women's rights), Lady Butler was encouraged by members of her upper class family (who also supported the equality of men and women). The fact that both women were permitted to study aspects of life not normally considered proper for "lady artists" freed them to explore other sources of creative energy and new genres. While Bonheur, in her "man-like" attire, studied animal anatomy in slaughter houses, Butler staged English battle scenes with casts of hundreds of soldiers and horses. In Bonheur's painting "Horse Fair" (1853), and Butler's "Scotland for Ever" (1881), we can feel in the colors and dramatic forms a boundless self-assurance, energy and sense of self-direction rarely seen in other 19th century work by women.

Critics and historians, however, employed several tactics to discourage women artists from attempting such demanding forms of monumental painting or sculpture. "Separate but unequal was the leitmotif often repeated in discussions of the woman artist's accomplishments" (Nochlin, 1976, p. 55). The 19th century critic, Legrange (1960), advises, for example:

Let men busy themselves with all that has to do with great art. Let women occupy themselves with those types of art which they have always preferred such as pastels, portraits and miniatures. Or the painting of flowers.... To women, above all,

falls the practice of the graphic arts, those painstaking arts which correspond so well to the role of abnegation and devotion which the honest woman happily fills here on earth, and which is her religion. (Nochlin, 1976, p. 56)

Another hypocritical rationalization for injustice to women artists can be found in a type of 19th century criticism that refers to women's susceptibility to influence. George Moore, quoted in Greer (1979), speaks of women artists who "astonish us as much by their want of originality as they do by their extraordinary power of assimilation" (p. 212). Although the question of influence has remained an unexamined aspect of historical study, it has been regularly assumed that women are influenced by male artists and never the other way around. In Marguerite Gerard's case, for example, it has been traditionally presumed that she collaborated with and received clandestine aid from her mentor, Jean Honore Fragonard. Nochlin (1976) has found, however, that Gerard's work, when examined under X-ray and Infra Red Vidicon, reveals no evidence of Fragonard's freer brush stroke. Ironically, the "Stolen Kiss," once attributed to Fragonard, is now being considered as part Gerard's oeuvre. The critical historical attitudes of the 19th century can, in many ways, be seen as a reaction to the growing visibility and number of women artists and an attempt to keep them in their place by confining them to the so-called minor crafts and idioms of art.

While many of the forms of overt and implicit discrimination served to keep some women's achievements to a level of mediocrity, a few notable exceptions emerge in the late 19th century. Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, among the most daring and innovative painters of the day, offer the welcome example of artists who by-passed mediocrity and superficial popularity (Nochlin and Harris, 1976). By joining the independent pioneers of Impressionism and rejecting the traditional

limitations of the Academy, Cassatt escaped much of the discrimination of the still patriarchal art system and moved on to create her own style within the Impressionist movement.

The Emergence of Women Artists in the Twentieth Century

The creative potential of women artists in the twentieth century has been most clearly expressed during times when women's rights, status and identity have been critical. The sexually egalitarian radical movements in the late 19th and early 20th century in Russia, the New Deal programs in America in the 1930's and the social/political movements in America in the 1960's and 1970's did much to elevate the role of women artists.

An investigation of the unusually important role played by women in the intelligentsia and related radical political movements in Russia around the turn of the century shows that women were generally accepted as complete equals by male colleagues or co-conspirators (Harris and Nochlin, 1976). Motivated in their search for knowledge and powered by a desire to serve the people, Russian women attended Russian universities and went abroad to study. "The Kuristka, or woman student, was a recognizable revolutionary type, in fact she was the very personification of radical activism" (Nochlin, 1976, p. 62). She was painted many times by pre-revolutionary artists and she aroused a good deal of controversy. She and her professional sisters were considered the backbone of the successful revolutionary propaganda which dealt with the conditions of the peasants and the need for an egalitarian political base (Hale, 1933, p. 36).

Against this background we can understand the vigor, independence and power of women artists like Goncharova, Exter, Popova and others at this time. Not only did they seem to be on a level of complete equality with their avant-garde male colleagues but they were innovators of vanguard movements. While Goncharova was one of the first to introduce the mechanical into painting, Popova and Exter had moved on to pure abstraction of the most "architectural and non-referential sort" (Nochlin, 1979, p. 63).

The Constructionist movement, which began in Russia, spread in the 1920's and 1930's to Europe and America and overlapped the Cubist and Precisionist movements. A number of women made important contributions to these movements. Sonia Delaunay, Russian born although working in Paris, formulated the theory of color "orphism" or orchestration in collaboration with her husband, Robert Delaunay. Although Sonia Delaunay deserves and has received considerable recognition as one of the artists who freed Cubism from dull color and subject matter, a few critics downplayed her achievement because of her involvement in the decorative arts. Marie Laurencin, the only woman associated with the Cubists, has often been considered a muse to male artists of the movement, although art historians such as Rene Sandell (1980) suggest she contributed a unique vision as an artist of this movement. Marlow Moss, one of the founding members of the Abstract-Creation group, worked in a neo-plastic style often mistaken for that of Mondrian. However, Nochlin and Harris (1976) suggested that "unlike Mondrian, she sought a solution to the problem of translating physical energies into abstract equivalents by intuitive rather than mathematical means" (p. 314).

Although these important women artists helped to forge the path into abstraction, an easy assumption has often been made that the men of the movement were always the initiators and the women merely the imitators. A number of these assumptions are now being questioned as art historians study more carefully the works and the documents of women artists.

In the Expressionist movement, centered in Germany, Paula Modersohn-Becker and Käthe Kollwitz also made important contributions. Modersohn-Becker was the first German painter to integrate Post Impressionist color with a personal expressive style. Kollwitz, also associated with the German Expressionist movement in her use of expressive line and the human form as subject, is considered as one of the major graphic artists of the early 20th century. Her art, one of urgency and social protest, is particularly relevant in our time.

In the Surrealist movement, a more visible and cohesive group of women artists emerged in pre-World War II Europe. Within the Surrealist movement a number of women artists joined others in their explorations of the world of dreams and unconsciousness. The Surrealists, however, held two conflicting and equally confining views of women as *Femme Enfant* (naive woman-child) or *Femme Fatale* (the sorceress). In an attempt to transcend these ideological confines, artists like Remedios Varo, Leonor Fini, Leonora Carrington and Dorothea Tanning introduced archetypal symbols into their work to explore a wider range of models for women and a broader view of feminine principles in life.

In the case of the remarkable burgeoning of women artists in America during the 1930's, "the issue is not so much that of radical stylistic innovation, as of the sheer numbers of women involved and the

range and variety of their pictorial expression" (Harris and Nochlin, 1976, p. 63). The fiercely egalitarian spirit of the Roosevelt years found its focus in New Deal Art programs which united artists of both sexes. The catastrophe of the Great Depression caused art to be placed under the jurisdiction of the government for nearly a decade. This gave women artists two previously denied rights: the right to participate in major exhibits with equal access to funding and the right to be judged on the same basis as men. Louise Nevelson, Alice Neel, Lee Krasner and Isabel Bishop were among the 41% of women artists who received aid during this period. The New Deal's social consciousness filtered down from government into the exhibition practices of New York Galleries. During the thirties and early forties women comprised between 25% and 30% of the exhibitors in the large artist-juried group shows (Fine, 1978, p. 145). Women like Audry McMahon and Juliana Force were also prominent among the professional administrators of the federal art programs and they helped to formulate more fair government granting procedures. Both women and men could compete equally for large public building mural commissions and other forms of non-relief patronage. Both men and women could make a living from their work.

While Isabel Bishop and Alice Neel were exploring various forms of Social Realism in their figurative works, Lee Krasner was moving from Cubism into abstraction in her huge Abstract Expressionist works. Louise Nevelson, also moving in the New York milieu of immigrants, expatriots from Europe and W.P.A. artists had begun her huge wood sculptures in the Constructivist manner.

While the egalitarian spirit of this decade helped to eliminate overt sexual bias, a deeper grasp of a feminist consciousness does not

seem to have taken hold in social consciousness of this time. The myth of emancipation operated in the 1930's (and in every decade until the 1970's) to defuse the frustrations of the modern woman. Despite the fact that women still had little real power, the "gender-blind" considerations and immediate gains for women artists coupled with an over-riding nationalistic zeal kept women artists from organizing around and promoting a more lasting equality. For most artists their direction was motivated more by an "interest in distinctly American forms of expression and a desire to view American art and life in a broader human and historical context" (Marling, 1976, pp. 10-11).

Even though several groups such as the National Association of Women and the New York Society of Woman Artists were formed to consolidate the ideals of equality for women in the 1920's-1930's art world, they were labelled and dismissed as the left wing of the feminine artistic movement. Although these movements planted the seeds for a new trend of thought in the minds of the progressive and politicized artists it was not until the 1970's that a major women's art movement took hold (Firestone, 1970).

The upheaval of World War II caused a general turning away from social and political causes. Women were encouraged to quit their jobs in the labor force and return to the role of the middle class housewife. The myth of the "Feminine Mystique" which took hold in the 1950's was the product of a conservative backlash. In the art world the Abstract Expressionist movement reflected the general turning inward to individual personal expression and away from public or political solutions to world problems. Within this highly individualized and existential art community, women artists such as Lee Krasner and Elaine de Kooning took

second place to their artist husbands and colleagues. Lee Krasner (b. 1908) suggested that it was impossible to tackle single-handedly the sexist aspects of the art world, continue her painting and stay in the role as Mrs. Pollock (Fine, 1978, p. 209). Krasner remained in Pollock's shadow for years and only recently has the extent of her talent been realized.

Even Louise Nevelson (b. 1899), whose powerful sculptural assemblages were supported and bought during the New Deal era, withdrew for almost ten years from the gallery scene from 1946 to 1955 because of blatant sexism and because she rejected the dominant mode of Abstract Expressionism. Georgia O'Keeffe (b. 1887) led an equally independent and productive life but, had it not been for her determination and life-long support from her husband Alfred Steiglitz, the photographer and the promoter of American and European Art in the 1920's, 30's and 40's, her work may never have found such exposure nor received such consistently favourable reviews. For almost thirty years the influential Steiglitz was her chief advocate, and organized yearly exhibits of her work. O'Keeffe was labelled a "new woman." Not only is she recognized as one of the pioneers of American abstract art but she has also served as a model for women in the 1970's who wished to continue her spirit of independence and achieve recognition through a more egalitarian system.

Except for a number of women artists in pre-revolutionary Russia and in America during the 1930's, women remained on the periphery of most art movements until past mid-century. While the numbers of women artists grew rapidly during the first half of the century, only a few women artists like Mary Cassatt and Georgia O'Keeffe found their place

in the cultural mainstream. A number of women artists were associated with, and made significant contributions to, the major art movements--Impressionism, Cubism, German Expressionism, Dada and Surrealism--but they often had to compete as men and on male terms while still being pressured to prove themselves in their old female roles which were at odds with their self-appointed ambitions. Within this context it was difficult for women artists to come to a full understanding of their own life experience and to find an authentic form language with which to express this experience. Shulamith Firestone (1970) describes how authenticity was difficult for women artists no matter what their talent: "The tool for representing, for objectifying one's experience in order to deal with it, culture, is so saturated with male bias that women almost never have a chance to see themselves culturally through their own eyes. So that, finally, signals from their direct experience that conflict with the prevailing (male) culture are denied or repressed" (pp. 177-78).

Fortunately, however, some of the outstanding women artists of the 1930's, 40's and 50's endured and confronted this conflict in their own, often private, world. These early survivors remained in direct contact with their experience even though their unique vision and expression was sometimes obscured by a style of art movement they had little part in originating or affecting. Their struggle for self-definition and self-identity remains visible in their art and their successes and defeats have had much to teach the latest movement of politicized women artists of the 1970's and 1980's.

Fortunately, a number of women artists such as Helen Frankenthaler and Joan Mitchell from the Abstract Expressionist period managed to

endure discriminatory exhibition practices of the 1950's. As Munro (1979) suggested, "by exploiting all other avenues that lay open to them--their talent, their beauty, their families' money, insofar as it was forthcoming, they were able to do the work they were capable of" (p. 53). As a group, however, they were isolated from each other in cutthroat competition and they refused to bond together as sisters for fear of losing hard won recognition. Often excluded from male bonding places such as "The Cedars" in New York, they struggled alone. Their art, however, was on the whole less "doom-haunted" and concerned with the single "trade-mark" image than that of Pollock, Rothko and Newmann. Their lives and art took on a changing organic (esthetic) shape as they adapted and invented novel stylistic devices for probing the raw material of memory. Krasner, Frankenthaler and Mitchell moved, each in their own ways, beyond the conventions of the time to create works that express a felt connection between mind, body and nature.

In the 1960's, another group of women artists emerged who worked their own ground amidst the confusion of Pop, Op, Minimal and Conceptualisms. This group of artists came into their own in a decade of economic boom, social upheavals and the War in Vietnam.

In the art world of the 60's, characterized by the evaporation of significant subject and demythologizing in art, these women emerged slowly and singly to assert a "sensibility beyond banality" (Munro, 1979, p. 83). While using elements of Pop Art, Nikki de Saint Phalle went beyond the often slick stereotyped images of women of other Pop artists to explore the image of women in her huge "Nanas." Her ironic, multifunctional super-women can be seen to symbolize the conflicting

demands of women in the 1960's. Escobar Marisol extended this exploration of identity by trying on roles in huge sculptural tableaux, which reveal aspects of her own consciousness. She uses plaster, wood and found objects in juxtaposition to reflect the social and political attitudes of a patriarchal society.

Working with new materials, another group of women artists in the 1960's created sculpture to tap new sources of subjective memory and feeling. Louise Bourgeois, Lee Bontecou and Eva Hesse began to make abstract works in environments that were concerned with process and explored the human body as subject. Bourgeois' marble, latex and plaster sculptures create environments which explore conflicting feelings of nostalgia, eroticism and sexuality and which reveal an intimate bond between image, materials and the artist. In Bontecou's steel and canvas pieces, with their dark central cavities forced into high relief, there is another sense of what Lippard (1976) calls body identification. Finally, the young German-born artist, Eva Hesse, used fiberglass, latex and other rubbery substances to exteriorize her own painful but fruitful confrontations with herself in sensuous geometric sculpture. She began turning out works of a strange appearing prophetic character that synthesized the ordered structure of Minimal Art with the emotional intensity of Expressionism. By rejecting the reductive purist stand that came out of the 1960's, Hesse can be seen to have opened the door for more recent women artists like Harmony Hammond, who continue to work on the difficult edge between content, the pictorial impetus and abstract form (Lippard, 1982, p. 112).

Bourgeois, Bontecou and Hesse helped lay the ground for a new freedom from formalism resulting in many of the far reaching experiments

of the 1970's. However, like their predecessors, a consciousness of their position of women, insofar as it informed their work, was individualistic, without political understandings of that position. It was not until the Women's Art Movement spread its gains into all areas of the art world that women could opt for a life as an artist without the alienating experiences many of these women endured (Munro, 1979).

The feminist movement moved quickly into the many realms of society and women's art movement was born. By 1971 women artists all over North America were coming out of the isolation that had made them separate and self-despairing. On an international level, women artists, art historians and critics were getting together and talking to each other. Members of the movement became politicized through feminist writings such as de Beauvoir's The Second Sex and more recent feminist treatises such as Firestone's The Dialectics of Sex or Greer's The Female Eunuch. The movement began to operate on all fronts to address and seek alternatives to the discrimination and biases which were woven into the entire fabric of the male-dominated art world.

"1970 was the tremendous watershed," says Lippard. "Before then there was no community of women in the arts" (1976, p. 61). The Women's Art Movement that followed worked benefits for women artists on the personal, educational and political fronts and affected changes in exhibition practices as well as the direction of art criticism.

The first phase of the movement was a period of consciousness-raising through which women learned that sex is an issue in art just as in other fields. The sense of community and support offered through consciousness-raising groups provided a forum for self-definition and bonding that male artists had given one another. By bringing their own

concerns into consciousness, women artists could reaffirm and sharpen their directions and make contacts to further career plans.

On the educational front, artist-educators like Judy Chicago began questioning whether art school and college art programs were meeting the needs of female students. In her book, Through the Flower, she made these observations:

They sit in classes taught primarily by men, look at slides of work done almost exclusively by male artists and are asked to work on projects that have little to do with their lives and concerns. If they make images that are relevant to the facts of their femaleness, they are put down, ignored, laughed at or rejected. Is it any wonder that few young women succeed in becoming serious artists? Often women pay large amounts of money for an entirely inadequate education. Why? Primarily because they do not realize there can be alternatives. (Chicago, 1977, p. 91.)

A statistical investigation of art education for women bears out many of Judy Chicago's claims. Firstly, women form the majority of the art school student body. One survey found that, in 1972, women composed 72% of the entire art school population in the U.S.A. (Fine, 1978, p. 145). As Chicago (1977) suggests, however, many female students are not happy with the male dominated art educational system. In a 1980 Survey of Contemporary Canadian Women Artists, by Sasha McInnis-Hayman, close to 73% of the 300 artists surveyed mentioned that discriminatory attitudes on the part of male professors seriously damaged their education. "It's too bad you're female, but you can paint as a hobby when you're married," was an approach used by many male professors, according to the respondents (McInnis-Hayman, 1980). In addition to this discrimination, 92% of the sample reported having had fewer than 10% female instructors during their training in post-secondary art colleges. Many artists suggested that lack of female teachers and artists in art history deprived them of important role models. In another study by Whitesel

(1975), this lack of women role models was shown to have contributed to low self-esteem and career aspiration among women art students.

In an effort to provide a more relevant, challenging and supportive educational environment, pioneering efforts have been made to provide alternative art programs. Beginning with the Fresno Women's Art Program (1970), Cal Arts Feminist Art Program and Womanhouse, led and directed by Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro, a model program was designed and carried out. These radical departures from traditional art programs allowed female students to investigate and discuss the work of other women artists who had been left out of traditional art history. They provided a forum for consciousness-raising concerning the barriers that had prevented women from producing the quality and quantity of art men had. Alternate exhibition and critical procedures were discussed and planned. Finally, a more supportive studio environment was developed to enable students to explore the forms and expressive concepts that evolved from their own felt lives.

The success of these programs inspired a whole network of feminist art education programs and courses in the United States. The Women's Interart Center (N.Y.), the New York Feminist Art Institute, collective projects such as the Dinner Party and dozens of Women's Studies in the Arts programs developed to meet the needs of the serious female artist.

While the problems of isolation and discrimination could be addressed within the separate educational or community programs, these more equitable co-operative practices had to be applied to the larger world of granting agencies, galleries, museums and art criticism. Without this, women artists would remain locked in a female ghetto. Discriminatory practices required documentation and careful analysis so

that women artists would know what they were up against and what needed to be done.

Concerning exhibition, funding and critical practices in the United States, it was through political action that the radical arm of the Art Workers Coalition, Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) and the Ad Hoc Committee, sought funds and members to protest the low representation of women in the Whitney Museum's Annuals. The success of these protests which increased the works of women in these exhibits from 5% in 1969 to 23% in 1973 provided the impetus for others to review funding and critical practices. These surveys summarized by Munro (1979) show that the gap between the aspirations of women artists and their legitimation has been shockingly large:

In the spring of 1972, Tamarind Lithography Workshop published a 132-page booklet, Sex Differences in Art Exhibition Reviews.

The conclusions startled even the reviewers concerned:

96.5 per cent male shows reviewed in Newsweek, to 3.5 per cent by women.

92.0 per cent male shows in Art in America, to 8.0 per cent by women.

78.6 per cent male shows in Art News to 21.4 per cent women, and so on.

In 1976, Vandegriff Research published a pamphlet, Funding a Future for Women in the Humanities. Again the figures were astounding:

3.5 per cent, of all grants in 1975 by foundations in the visual-arts, dance, theater, museum and historical fields went to women, both individuals and as project directors.

This has occurred despite the fact that approximately a third of people in the professional work force in the arts are women.

24.6 per cent of Rockefeller grants in the arts, in 1974, went to women.

18.4 per cent of Ford grants, went to women artists.

13.1 per cent of National Endowment for the Arts grants, in 1975, went to women.

The conclusion was not only that the male dominated free-enterprise system worked against women, but that since the WPA ended in 1943, government itself had failed to divide funds equitably between male and female artists.

While current statistics indicate the difficulties for women artists in receiving funding and fair documentation, we can also see how current exhibition practices reflect an inequality in Canada's galleries and museums. Avis Rosenberg (1980) reports:

In 16 commercial galleries across Canada in 1977, 94 of the 563 artists represented were women (16.7%).

In 50 museums and galleries across Canada during the 1970's, out of 1377 solo shows, 313 or 22.7% were one-woman shows.

Acquisition purchasing for permanent collections, in major galleries such as the Art Gallery of Ontario reveals even less equitable treatment of women artists according to Rosenberg (1980).

The Permanent Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario

1960 - 183 (5.5%) works by women artists/3346 total # works

1970 - 326 (7.4%) works by women artists/4382 total # works

1976 - 434 (7.2%) works by women artists/6007 total # works.

In response to the inequities in funding and exhibition practices and in response to the need for an alternate support community, a new network of organizations was formed. Women artists realized that the art world was unwilling to provide them with fair treatment and that they would have to collectively fight for it. Women artists, critics and historians knew they could no longer remain isolated in their mutual discontent and that collective action was their only direction in the face of century-old prejudice and sexism. They knew from watching their male colleagues that a supportive environment was the key to survival in the often difficult world of the artist. A major women's art movement grew out of the actions of the following organizations. They are summarized by Renee Sandell (1979) in her article The Women's Art Movement as an Educational Force:

1. Organization and cooperatives for women artists such as Women Artists in Revolution (W.A.R.), Los Angeles Council of Women Artists (L.A.C.W.A.), Red Stockings, Women Art Students and Artists for Black Artists' Liberation (W.A.S.A.B.A.L.), Women's Ad Hoc Committee (which protested the Whitney annual), West-East Bag (W.E.B.), Artists in Residence (A.I.R.), WHere We At, Women in the Arts (W.I.A.), Women's Interart Center, Washington Women's Art Center (W.W.A.C.).
2. Women's caucuses in existing established professional organizations such as the Women's Caucus for Art (which emerged from the College Art Association) and the National Art Education Association Women's Caucus, with special programs and publications.
3. Exhibitions of women's art such as: "X to the 12th Power"; "Unmanly Art"; "13 Women Artists"; "Women Artists Here and Now"; "26 Contemporary Women Artists"; "Ten Artists (Who Also Happen to be Women)"; "Women Choose Women"; "Womanhouse"; "Old Mistresses: Women Artists of the Past"; "The Dinner Party"; "Women Artists: 1550-1950" (p. 6).

Another area that required attention if women were going to receive fair documentation and representation has been the field of art criticism. Work was required on two fronts. Critical practices which had

been in the past so paternalistic and unfair to women, had to be re-examined. Patterns of stereotyping needed to be understood and brought to attention. Finally, new criteria needed to be developed which would be capable of revealing the content and meaning of art by women in a context that did not reject its sources.

Working of the first front, Cindy Nemser (1972) in Stereotypes and Women Artist has illuminated two patterns of criticism which have propagated stereotypes of women artists. She builds a composite picture of the various attributes art critics have assigned to women artists and she compares them to those assigned to male artists. Firstly, she discovers a pattern of comments which relate to women's "feminine sensibility," i.e., her passive and fragile or domestic nature. Bye's (1910) comment "man's sphere is that of creation ... woman's that of preservation and nourishment" is typical of this first stereotype. Other biologically engendered stereotypes, which have been critically associated through this century with women artists have created a composite of a personage who is "non-creative, imitative, captivating, passive, emotional, narcissistic, narrow minded, selfish, intuitive and elemental" (Nemser, 1972, p. 161).

In more recent years a type of "phallic criticism" has developed, according to Nemser. Here the term feminine takes on bodily attributes. A woman's art is like her body, in the eyes of the critic. The art critic, Harold Rosenberg, according to art educator Linda Bastian (1975), wrote in Vogue (May 1967) that "women poets and heroes are locked in a kind of passivity. They do not exactly grasp what they are or who they are" (p. 14). Another approach used by R. Keziere in Vanguard in response to Georgianna Chappell's light installation (1981)

was to label her work "decorative." The implication that it was a superficial piece and didn't penetrate below the surface, seemed entirely out of place in response to this powerful work. Dozens of other examples of phallic criticism are documented by Nemser (1972).

Nemser and others enabled women artists to detect stereotypes and objectify rather than internalize prejudice. By the mid-70's women, generally speaking, were no longer as willing to accept what appeared to be overt critical attempts to keep her in her place. The women's art movement was in full force and, through consciousness raising, media and informal dialogue, women had become more practiced in the art of self-definition. A new woman had become visible--she knew herself apart from the stereotyped roles and as a result, "phallic criticism" rarely went unchallenged.

A new type of criticism was needed, however, which could evaluate the aesthetic effect and communicative effectiveness of art made by women. A verbal dialogue was initiated by art critics and historians, sympathetic to, and closely identified with, the feminist movement. Linda Nochlin, Cindy Nemser, Arlene Raven, Elizabeth Baker, Gloria Orenstein, Pat Sloan, Lawrence Alloway, Judy Chicago and Lucy Lippard became involved in establishing new criteria and a new context for the discussion of art by women. They either sponsored or contributed to publications of various sorts to disseminate information to and about women in the arts such as Women and Art; The Feminist Art Journal; Woman-space; Women Artists Newsletter; Heresies; Chrysalis; Women's Caucus for Art Newsletter; The Report of the National Art Education Association Women's Caucus; Visual Dialogue; Womanart.

Several recurring characteristics of this new style of feminist art criticism became apparent. They are summarized as follows:

1. A more permissive lyricism; an acceptance of personal or autobiographical interpretation of content; a response to art as a human experience within the context of other experience; a reaching out to a broader audience; a discussion of originality in terms of values and ideologies (not just stylistic innovation), and a reaction to the anti-content formalist tradition of art criticism (Lippard, 1976; Sondheim, 1977).
2. A reluctance to compare women's work to a history of men's work which has, in the past, rejected its sources. A denial of historical determinism and a preference for a dialogue in the present; an interest in responding to women's work within the context of her experience and the embryonic history of other women's art; an interest in reaching a broad audience which, of course, is half women; a desire to understand the elements and conditions which underlie the experience of each sex and a willingness to examine how and why this may be visible in their artistic forms (Lippard, 1976; Nemser, 1976).
3. A resistance to hierarchies--art/craft hierarchy, critic/artist hierarchy, male/female hierarchy, object/content hierarchy; a greater interest in a holistic view; a cooperative role in helping women realize themselves in relation to their history and in terms of new standards for women's art (Alloway, 1979; Nochlin, 1980).

Working alongside the artist, the art critic has contributed a valuable verbal dialogue. Women's art has not been transformed in a vacuum; the audience for women's art is large and the new feminist

criticism has forged another line of communication through which artists and their audiences can begin to discuss ideas germane to the movement. Within this context several major questions have surfaced which have sharpened the general awareness of women and their art. A major issue has been the question of a female sensibility. Is there an identifiable women's art and to what differences does a female sensibility refer in contemporary art? Although a female sensibility has, in the past, been a closed and negatively prescriptive formula, contemporary critics like Lucy Lippard, and artists such as Miriam Shapiro and Judy Chicago wished to provide a positive definition for the term. Women's art is different, they claim, that does not mean it is inferior. In an effort to identify the forms associated with a contemporary female sensibility, Lucy Lippard (1976) suggests the following characteristics:

A central focus (often "empty," often circular or oval) parabolic bag-like forms, obsessive line and detail, veiled strata, tactile or sensuous surface and forms, associative fragmentation and autobiographical emphasis. (p. 144)

Shapiro and Chicago (1977) go a step further in identifying the central feature in women's art. They suggest the core image, the concave form or metaphor for a woman's body is the central form and can be found in O'Keeffe, Hepworth, Bontecou and in almost all woman's art.

Linda Nochlin (1976) and others have challenged this strenuously imposed ideological program of "biological determinism" and suggest "historical and local factors play a greater role in determining style than does the sex of the artist" (p. 65).

Lawrence Alloway (1979) finds no imagistic technical or stylistic factors to define most women's art. He claims "the innovative factor is precisely the attribute of non-stylistic homogeneity" (p. 73). He says that the patterns of cross-stylistic contacts is unusual and refreshing

in the history of active artists. Nevertheless, he claims that women are unified in a new avant garde "because its members are united by a desire to change the existing social forms of the art world ... they are compatible for social and political purposes and these take priority" (pp. 73, 74).

In this author's study of twentieth century women artists, the truth lies somewhere within all of these views. A pattern of loosely related themes and concerns seem to have been evolving in art by women since the turn of the century. Paralleling the changing historical, educational and social circumstances, women artists seem to have been involved in a continuously evolving search for self-identity and self-definition within a culture over which in the past they have had little control. Perhaps only at progressive moments in history, and certainly in the last ten years has this long soul-search for fulfillment finally emerged from a continuous maze of false solutions to find itself within the possibility of attainment. The forms of art and the artist's emerging from this long journey have kinship perhaps because of an instinctive and eventually conscious and politicized urge from within to establish their presence on the continuum and to achieve a "one world view" (Munro, 1979). These themes are explored in depth in the following chapters. While Chapter V traces the emergence of a new self-image in the works of artists like Mary Cassatt, Kathe Kollwitz and Marisol, Chapter VI traces the development of a new ecological vision of nature in the environmental sculptures of Jackie Windsor, Nancy Holt and Mary Miss.

Whether or not femininity results in unconscious symbolism or choice of media, it is apparent that many women artists today are consciously

deciding to work with components of a female form language to achieve works rich in personal content that can be read by a larger and larger audience. A pattern of loosely related themes and concerns seems to have been evolving in art by women in the 1970's and 1980's.

One trend that is clearly evident in art by women today is work that is autobiographical. Women artists like Laurie Anderson, Adrien Piper and Eleanor Antin are documenting interior and exterior lives in performance pieces. Their work emerges out of a way of looking at the world that is personal, eclectic, historical and anti-reductive and that focuses on the process of art for its own sake. These artists, by making private histories public, give a new voice to a feminist consciousness.

Other artists like Joyce Weiland, Sylvia Mangold, Gathie Falk, Ellen Lanyon and Judy Chicago use aspects of fantasy and realism to turn symbols of women's everyday domestic concerns into art. In environments like Womanhouse, Judy Chicago and other artists turn household images, the symbols of women's oppression, into a forum for self-awareness and political consciousness.

In addition to household imagery, artists like Mary Frank, Lynda Benglis, Hanna Wilke and Carolea Scheeman use "body works" and "sexual imagery" to explore aspects of women's sexual identity and to assert femaleness as a positive force.

Other artists like Miriam Schapiro, Shiela Hicks and Joyce Kozloff explore new possibilities for using craft material to form conceptual statements. By extending the traditions of decorative art that goes from archaic Greece and Islam to the blankets of Navajo women and the

quilts of American pioneers, these artists transpose the so-called applied arts into major works of art.

Out of this need to discover women's history has developed a need to work on huge collaborative works that allow for a sense of sharing. Artists like Joyce Weiland, Miriam Shapiro and Judy Chicago have challenged the stereotype of the artist as non-conformist, anti-social and highly individualistic by exploring a more communal-socialist format for art making.

A quest for archetypal images and women's history has been evident in the works of other contemporary artists like Judy Chicago, Rosemary Mayer, Harmony Hammond, Faith Ringold and Bette Saar. Judy Chicago redefines history through her symbolic "Dinner Party," celebrating women artists from prehistoric to modern times, while Rosemary Mayer incorporates elements of goddess lore into her huge fabric and metal sculptures.

Out of this call to refeminize society has come a group of artists who make architecture-sculpture in the environment which seeks to attain a harmony with mother earth and with the rhythms of seasonal cosmology. Using organic materials such as ground rock, earth, rope and saplings, artists like Jackie Winsor, Mary Miss, Nancy Holt and Alice Aycock integrate their works into the natural site and incorporate the use of real space and real time (Morris, 1978). Instead of "the conquest of nature these artists concentrate on the connective aspects of the web," and assert a view of nature as a unified whole (Lippard, 1979, p. 88). Building on ancient memories of the earth as mother, these artists trace the prehistoric roots of architecture and sculpture to the earth itself.

Returning now from the historical journey through the twentieth century and having arrived at an understanding of the origins of the women's art movement of the 1970's, we can conclude with a general description of the role of the woman artist in the 1980's. Many women artists have clearly emerged from the private world of the self and through collective action have made the link-up in their work and their organizations between their personal dissatisfactions, their inner fantasy of change and the larger human world. Judy Chicago (1977) defines her own personal experience in this process: "I found my way back to my life as an artist through my identification with other women, and together with them was able to see the realization of a female art community that could house the hopes, the values and the aspirations of all of us" (p. 204).

No longer satisfied with the traditional images and definitions of women created by men, women artists have begun to define their own image. Having put aside the social conditioning that demands modesty, niceness, and subservience, women artists have begun to measure their lives in terms of producing good works and affecting culture.

Having established a support community and a stronger identity, women have ventured beyond the movements and styles defined by male colleagues. They have ventured into, and far beyond, the traditional portrait, still life genres once assigned to them. They have moved into experimental works in sculpture, performance, and multi-media works that reveal new concepts of art, culture and nature.

Unwilling to settle for the art-craft hierarchy established by an elitist art history, women artists are also exploring media such as

fabric, weaving, needlework, and stitchery in large-scale works to make conceptual statements that go beyond the limitations of modernism.

Dissatisfied with the aloof romantic stereotype of the artist as individualist and isolationist, women artists are pursuing public, collaborative, political, interdisciplinary and ecological works which are socially and culturally relevant to our society.

Contemporary women artists can be seen as striving for a synthesis of the dualities of past/present, nature/culture, male/female, feeling/-logic, and science/art that have been produced by a single vision, patriarchal and technological view of culture. They can be seen moving beyond the polarized world view to a dialectical relationship with art, nature, culture and humankind. As Munro (1979) has seen, women artists are "returning to that earlier gestalt in which natural science and art were so closely enmeshed to be aspects of the same imaginative process, and where past, present and future are felt as "one unbroken thread of consciousness" (pp. 54, 57, 58). The new woman artist has, unlike artists of the 1950's and 1960's, not had to break with her past and fruitlessly strive for endless new styles. An evolutionary growth is now possible which encompasses a "cross-stylistic homogeneity" (Alloway, 1979). Within this more holistic approach to art, Chicago envisions that "perhaps we can also reach across that great gulf between masculine and feminine and gently, tenderly and firmly heal it" (1977, p. 206).

In conclusion, this chronological study of women artists from the Renaissance to the present period has provided an overview of the emergence of women artists within the historical, social and political context of the time. By focusing on the changing historical conditions which affected her achievements it has been possible to understand more

about the woman artist's role in art history. Within the context of the women's art movement and the changes in society in the 1970's, it has been possible to understand the recent flowering of women artists in the last decade.

Chapters V and VI will explore in depth the form and meanings of the major works by contemporary women artists. By focusing on two basic themes--self and nature, or what the philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1944) calls the two aspects of our "double reality"--these chapters will explore works by contemporary women artists that give us new interpretations of nature and human life.

CHAPTER V

EXPLORATION OF IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY ART BY WOMEN

Images of Women by Women -- Discovery and Reaffirmation

In art history scholarship and teaching the theme of "images of women" has been explored from the viewpoint of male artists often excluding images of women created by women. Recent research by art historians John Berger (1977), Elizabeth Janeway (1974) and Estella Lauter (1978) suggests that many of these images by well known artists such as Rubens, Ingres, Manet, Picasso, Roualt, Dali, de Kooning, Rosenquist and Wesselman, project stereotypes of women which reinforce the reality of female oppression and serve to hide the nature of feminine identity.

John Berger (1972), in Ways of Seeing, examines the tradition of the nude in art and describes how it is always conventionalized according to a typical manner of perceiving women in the Western Culture. From a marxist point of view he shows how the women portrayed by Rubens, Ingres and Titian can be seen as "static images of sexual nakedness. This nakedness is not however, an expression of her own feelings; it is a sign of her submission to the owners feelings or demands" (p. 52). The women are not naked and shown as themselves but as passive nudes disguised and on display for the enjoyment of the spectator. According to Berger, even when the ideal image of the nude was broken in the early twentieth century, a new stereotype replaced it. He claims that "there was little to replace it except the 'realism' of the prostitute--who became the quintessential woman of early avant-garde

twentieth century painting (Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Roualt, German Expressionism, etc.)" (p. 63).

Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" (1907), for example, a painting considered by many to be "the white whale of modern art," could be seen as such a statement about lower class women in a turn of the century Barcelona whore house (Russel, 1974). Closely related to Rubens' "Judgement of Paris," in which the artist was "called upon" to decide whether Venus, Juno or Minerva was the best looking, Picasso made the image "new" by taking the women and "the future by the throat" and abstracting the quintessential woman through cubism (Russel, 1974, p. 3).

"Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" (1907) marked two shifts as far as visual conventions were concerned. While on one hand, it marked the beginning of Cubism and a new way of perceiving pictorial space, on the other hand it marked the end of Picasso's figurative subjects rendered in harmonious and unified style. What had begun as a sensitive portrayal of tenderness and strength in his earlier portrayal of women ended up in what art historian Leo Steinberg has called "a tidal wave of female aggression" (Russel, 1974, p. 6). While this work has been seen as a landmark in the history of modern art, some feminist art critics such as Cindy Nemser (1976) question the tradition in 20th century art of the profoundly disturbing and distorted images of women. In reference to some of the painting by Picasso, de Kooning, Warhol, Rosenquist and Wesselman, she wonders if these artists somehow infer women as responsible for society's corruption.

Elizabeth Janeway (1974), in Images of Women, analyses the desires and fantasies that many artistic and literary men have projected onto

the image of women. Stereotypes of the "virgin goddess, the all-giving mother, the malign witch and the golden-hearted whore," have functioned "as a mask, as a screen, as armor--most of all, as a barrier between the inner self and the world" (p. 9).

Berger and Janeway analyze the communicative power of stereotyped images in the way they define and control human behavior. Berger claims that passive idealized images of women projected in traditional art cause women, like men, to survey their own femininity and to experience the self as an object. Janeway (1974) describes how traditional images of women, which pass for the true self in public, fix the self in social reality because they can be recognized by others. She sees that,

... self and image are not the same, but they cannot live apart from each other. Each acts continually on the other in a constant tension; for while the private self is the only source of authentic experience, this experience can only be stated and understood through the public image; and we are dependent on being understood to value for ourselves the experience we have known. (p. 11)

Artistic images of women are a communicative tool which inform the public who women are and how they interact in society. Like other forms of art these images are expressions of certain people's ideas of reality and of the nature of social roles. Images of women, which portray her as an object of others' fantasies, not recognized for herself, stimulate the use of women as objects in society.

According to Janeway, women have withdrawn for too long into the private world of the self, have left the falsified images of art and media in command and control.

The result is a disastrous spate of false images, of cheats which are cheats for men too, which fail even in the social world, so that public reality itself is coming unstuck. Because women have let the false images stand as our representatives, we have falsified ourselves, diminished ourselves, chosen to divide ourselves and exist in a hopeless, endless

stasis, unable either to act truly or to be ourselves in freedom and enjoyment. (p. 12)

She says that women must begin to discard the old image, listen deeply to what experience has shown, and stubbornly and daringly create a new image from true lived experience.

It is not surprising that, with the growing awareness of the power of the image, politicized women in the last decade have sought to re-discover and create a more authentic self-image in art. Shiela Rowbotham (1973), in Woman's Consciousness Man's World, describes the process of this search which has led to the study of woman's image from a feminist perspective.

In order to create an alternative, an oppressed group must at once shatter the self-reflecting world which encircles it and, at the same time, project its own image onto history. In order to discover its own identity, as distinct from the oppressor, it has to become visible to itself. (p. 27)

One way that women can become visible to themselves is through a study of the images of women by women artists in the twentieth century. Beginning with the Impressionist portraits of Mary Cassatt and working through the various decades it is possible to rediscover and re-evaluate the specific experiences, values and attitudes which formed the authentic felt lives of individuals.

While Chapter IV focused on women artists as they encountered both external and internal barriers to becoming artists, this chapter will show women artists on the other side of the door; discovering, naming and re-defining themselves on their own terms. While many of the artists discussed in this thesis predate the women's art movement, they laid the ground work in their own often private and isolated worlds for conscious exploration of women's identity in the art of the 1970's.

The object-centered and formalist esthetic of modernist criticism often overlooked the important and complex meanings of many of these works. The purist esthetic of much contemporary art, which culminated in the minimal art of the 1960's, was based on the concept that "works of the imagination could be purified of the personal, the subjective, the tragic and the narrative in the favor of a world of things and pure form" (Munro, 1979, p. 18). In the earlier movements of Impressionism, Expressionism, Realism and Surrealism, many of these works were labelled as shallow, sentimental, "feminine" or "narcissistic" by dint of their introspective, literary or autobiographical associations and because some were made by women.

The emergence of the women's art movement has helped to form a new esthetic in which the personal and autobiographical is seen as a valuable source of artistic expression (Alloway, 1974). Experiencing and coming to terms with one's inner reality, physical identity, and one's social reality, has become a valid basis for the perception of the world and the artists' possibility in it. Many women artists have re-affirmed the notion that the body is the familiar source of memories, dreams, and creativity. An interest has been rekindled in, not only the creation of new images of women but also in the reevaluation of the Impressionist, Expressionist, Realist and Surrealist representations of women by earlier women artists.

This study of women's image in art will begin in the early 20th century with Mary Cassatt's treatment of the maternal image. Beginning with the age-old theme of mother and child it is possible to see how changing artistic, ideological and historical conditions generated five very different interpretations of this image.

In the second group of works, beginning with the surrealist artist Dorothea Tanning and including contemporary artists like Niki de Saint-Phalle and Mary Frank, it is possible to gain a fuller understanding of the search for a new physical and sexual identity. In these works created from 1940 to 1980 we see women confronting and questioning the tyranny of her biological destiny and exploring new identities through artistic form. From this study it is possible to understand the meanings behind the more politicized sexual iconography and organic images found in the abstract works of contemporary artists.

Finally, the third section of this chapter will explore the artistic image of women in myth, society, and history. In this group of works, beginning with Alice Neel in the 1930s and ending with Eleanor Antin and Judy Chicago in the late 1970s, artists adapt and invent new stylistic devices to explore the relationship of the private inner self to the public image. In this section it is possible to make deep investigations into the texture of contemporary life and into ways women have perceived and experienced their position in society. In the last part of this section, women artists also redefine and reclaim their identity in history, myth, and religion. By bringing knowledge and appreciation of women's history into consciousness, artists like Judy Chicago create new mythic images and explore a new system of feminist values.

Despite the fact that these artists originate in different countries at different times and work in many styles with varied media, their common search for integration of aspects of the self and wholeness of experience, unifies them. In most of the works it is possible to detect a desire for "connectedness, relatedness and continuity" (Munro,

1979, p. 58). If there is a woman's sensibility in art perhaps we will find it here in this search for a fuller self-identity and holistic view of life.

Out of this critical inquiry into the history of the image of women in art, two general purposes may be served: one individual and one social. Through dialogue we articulate our own inner life of feelings and responses so that we become more conscious of its elements and its esthetic meaning. Secondly, we reveal the fact that women's social reality and inner reality share some common threads and that they can be understood only within the historic context which incorporates the lives and accomplishments of both men and women.

Finally, in these images the self speaks and is recognized. As Elizabeth Janeway (1974) suggests, a history of authentic images provides the key to survival in the journey from the private world of isolation to the public world of social and cultural reality. She suggests that:

Crazy Jane, so long alone, will finally find her name; and in so doing she will become more than the cold, passive observer. Because she is recognizable, because singular experience has been transformed into an image which can be shared and understood, the image affects the interior lives of its audience until they become--Jane and all of us, or the Jane in all of us--not just audience, but participants. This is the task we are undertaking today, the creation of a true symbol of ourselves out of our special, lived experience which will explain our identities, both to others and to ourselves. (p. 19)

The Maternal Image -- The Domestic Role

The mother and child theme has captured the attention of both women and men artists for many centuries. That the maternal image has played an especially important role in women artists' iconography is hardly surprising. Historically it has been the central life experience for

most women, stretching across "barriers of class, period and nationality" (Harris and Nochlin, 1976, p. 66). However, even in the case of a universal subject, the variations in artist's expression of domesticity are more striking than the similarities. Much of this has to do with individual artists' personal response to social and historical conditions of the time, the ideology of a particular art movement, the status of women and the importance of the family at the time the artist lived.

Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) is a logical starting point for this survey because she bridges two centuries and contains within her work both the traditional domestic image of the middle-class mother of the 19th century--the angel of the hearth--as well as the more independent and self-defined woman which slowly emerged in the 20th century (Beecher and Stowe, 1869). Like all the Impressionists, Cassatt's work is avant-garde stylistically but, unlike her allegedly radical contemporaries, Cassatt does not conform to the standard male images of women painted at that time.

Cassatt's art offers a new vision of the unconsidered aspects of domestic bourgeois life because she defined her world through women, apart from their relationships to men. After her student days at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and during her productive years in Paris, her subjects were nearly exclusively female. In her three major themes--friendships, the toilette and mother and child--Cassatt portrays women, not in an idealized or passive manner, but as real active individuals, complete in themselves (Fillin Yeh, 1976, p. 359).

The majority of her oil paintings and pastels show mothers and children who are together yet seem to be individuals in their own right.

Although this theme is rooted in the substructure of the late Rousseauian 19th century--as icon of a conservative Protestantism--her image of motherhood in "Baby's First Caress" (1891) is approached directly, devoid of the extreme religious content of the traditional Virgin and Child image, or of the animalistic physicality of her contemporary, Paula Modersohn-Becker (Harris and Nochlin, 1976, p. 66). In "The Bath" (1891) we feel a real and concrete presence; an intimate and intensely believable moment of sensuous contact between a mother and her child. "Touching, touching: it is the touching of these pairs of figures that distinguishes Cassatt's works from those of the other Impressionists" (Munro, 1979, p. 20). Degas' women, in contrast, are often removed or isolated in their own preoccupations. For him the unifying device is formal: it is light glancing off arms, costumes or angles created by moving arms and legs. Cassatt, however, acknowledges strong emotions often expressed in physical contact. In "Little Ann Sucking Her Finger, Embraced by Her Mother" (1897), Cassatt's mother is warmly attentive while her child looks out, perhaps straining to be elsewhere. Always caught in an active movement her mother and children never appear engulfed by each other's dependence or helplessness. The assertive figures which crowd the foreground of this picture form a compositional device often used by Cassatt as a metaphor for the strength she sees in all her female subjects.

In "Young Mother Sewing" (1902), Cassatt again challenges stereotypic views of the passive mother, which disembody them. Unlike Renoir's "Madame Charpentier and Her Daughters" (1878) who is idle, Cassatt shows women with work to do. The mother is a separate, self-involved entity, engrossed by her needlework, while she remains open to

the contact with her self-contained daughter who leans across her lap. Cassatt uses, in this oil painting, all the aspects of the Impressionist esthetic: lightness of palette, fresh gestural brush strokes, and an intimate contemporaneity of subject. However, by establishing the autonomy of mother and child, "she departs from conventional imagery which stresses childish dependency" (Fillin Yeh, 1976, p. 362).

Cassatt's images of female companionship in domestic life challenge the tradition which defines women only in their relationship to men. Cassatt's portrayals, for example, of her mother and sister in domestic interiors often stress the activity in which her subjects are engaged rather than emphasizing appealing details of physique or appearance. In "Reading the Figaro" (1883), Cassatt's mother is involved in mental activity. Mrs. Cassatt's squared-off figure emphasizes the shape of the newspaper she is reading. In her drypoint aquatint, "Gathering Fruit" (1893) and oil painting, "Young Women Picking Fruit" (1891), one finds images of friendship between women that reverse the stereotype of women, isolated in their competition for men. This latter oil is a study of a conversation: captured in mid-sentence, the woman turns to speak to her companion. Cassatt's women are active and alive--they have much to say to each other. "Such images of friendship and closeness between women are nearly unprecedented in Impressionist art" (Fillin Yeh, 1976, p. 361).

Cassatt's own lifestyle as a single woman and committed artist extends beyond the limits of middle class propriety as did her art. She grew up in a matriarchal American family; travelled and studied alone;

rejected the narrow esthetic of the French Academy; joined the progressive Impressionist group and initiated a daring new color drypoint/aquatint process called "à la poupée" (Harris and Harris, 1976, p. 242). In her etching aquatint, "The Fitting" (1891), a Japanese quality of design, liberated line, and brilliant pattern looks forward to the abstraction and simplicity of the image seen in her later work. Cassatt's radical sensibility, however, originated in her belief that, as she said, "Women should be somebody, not someone" (Fellin Yeh, 1976, p. 363).

In her final years the horror and sadness of the First World War and the moral disintegration of Europe that followed, overwhelmed Cassatt. "She wrote with anguish about the bombardment of Reims, for it had not seemed possible to her that men would fling bombs out of air planes" (Munro, 1979, p. 73). In the end she lost interest in painting and in her mother and child theme. She could find only one single hopeful thought and she turned to the image of a new woman in her last memoirs. "After the war ... there will be a great revival and surely a new view of things. It is then that the women ought to be prepared for their new duties, taking part in governing the world..." (Munro, 1979, p. 74).

Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), born in Germany, twenty years after Cassatt, also abhorred the senseless destruction of human life caused by the two world wars. While Kollwitz also focused on the mother and child theme, her images went beyond concerns of middle-class domesticity. The daughter of a non-conformist preacher of a humanistic religion which emphasized ethical rationalism, Kollwitz developed a strong social conscience and became intensely concerned with the plight of the poor

and unemployed. Mother and children, whom she saw as the most helpless victims of war, poverty and starvation, became the main subject in Kollwitz's drawings, lithographs and woodcuts.

So strong was Kollwitz's identification with the women she drew that she unwittingly gave them her own features. In her lithographs "The Survivors - Make War on War" (1923), and "Self Portrait" (1934), one can identify the similarity between her own hollow eyes, rugged features and tragic yet determined expression and the peasant woman with whom she identified.

Although Cassatt and Kollwitz were both influenced by the 19th century view of women, and conceived of motherhood as the natural destiny of their sex, Kollwitz "inserted motherhood into the bitterly concrete context of class and history" (Harris and Nochlin, 1976, p. 67). In her etching, "Poverty" (1897), the poor mother is unable to feed her child due to economic circumstances. This image was inspired by the wave of strikes which spread rapidly through Germany in the 1890's and left many families destitute. For Kollwitz, the poor working-class mother was the true proletarian victim of history.

Although conservative in style and unconcerned with the new Impressionist esthetic, Kollwitz's work is radical in content. Her compassion for the poor has been drawn from the same reservoir of social concern that inspired Rembrandt, Goya and Daumier. In fact, her anti-war series has often been compared to Goya's "Disasters of War" both because of its content and use of graphic media (Lippard, 1981).

In her woodcut, "The Mothers" (1922-23), a pyramid of mothers form a protective tower to restrain and hide the children so that the next generation would not be sacrificed to war. Having lost a son, Kollwitz

experienced personally the tragedy of war. Her pacifist statement, like the clear and articulate lines she used to express it, are strong, uncompromising and somber. The graphic medium, the black/white contrasts, the emotive linear quality are formal devices and in keeping with the German Expressionist works of Munch, Heckel and Kirchner. In this woodcut all unessentials are eliminated and massive large scale abstracted forms are emphasized, giving evidence of a new stylistic direction in Kollwitz's later works. In her bronze sculpture, "Tower of Mothers" (1937), we see this theme repeated in three dimensions where forms have been simplified for maximum power.

By the 1920's, a confirmed socialist, feminist and pacifist, Kollwitz had relinquished the ardent revolutionary stand she held as a radical New Secessionist in her early years. While in "Outbreak" (1903) we see Black Anna leading her people to fight in the peasants' battle, in "Solidarity" (1931-32), and "Demonstration" (1931) we see the woman and mother taking charge of her own fate through non-violent but united protest. In these images we see mothers, helping to galvanize a human chain--a bulwark against rising fascisms and worker oppression. The "dramatic chiaroscuro" and the gripping "emotive line" reveal the intensity of purpose and clarity of vision that permeates much of Kollwitz's work (Lippard, 1981).

This later period between 1910-1935 represents something of a hiatus in Kollwitz's professional life. She had been elected as professor of art and head of the Graphics division at the Prussian Academy of Art and had formed the Society for Women Artists in order to bring the work of women artists before the public (Fine, 1978). In "Two Chatting Women with Two Children" (1930), the bold but more carefree

lines evoke a sense of comradeship and solidarity between women. These portraits of working-class women give visual expression to the positive and hopeful aspects of proletarian life and a woman's community within it.

In her later years, however, Kollwitz faced debilitating isolation. With the death of her husband and the Nazi government's removal of all her work from major museums, Kollwitz tried to live up to her favorite writer Goethe's belief in the "iron resonance of life" (Lippard, 1981, p. xiv). In her last series on the subject of Death, she portrayed the monumental woman, protector of life, struggling with the eventuality of death.

The impact and importance of Kollwitz's powerful images of mothers, both as victims of war and poverty and determined activists for peace, did not, however, come to an end with her death. Her moving prints and posters have become particularly appropriate in our time during the struggle for a more egalitarian humane world and nuclear disarmament (Lippard, 1981).

Paula Modersohn Becker (1876-1907) also chose as her main subject motherhood of the poor. The striking difference between her conception of the role of mother and that of her German contemporary Kollwitz is further evidence of the changing views of women in the early twentieth century and the individual interpretations of her role that were possible. In "Mother and child" (1906), Modersohn Becker has removed the image of the mother from a historical or social context and has reduced her to purely biological dimensions. Here the monumental mother is simplified to pictorial essentials and the narrative and social comment is eliminated. Lying on the floor, enveloping a tiny infant in

the linear rhythms of her body, this proletarian madonna suggests that motherhood is an instinctive rather than a social function.

The arresting simplicity of composition, the boldness of color and form and the earnest compassion that emanates from the heavysset, coarsely featured mother defies the popular spiritual idealized image of Madonna and Child. This work is more reminiscent of Daumier's "The Soup," or Van Gogh's "The Potato Eaters." But here, as in many of her works, the mother has entirely transcended time and place. She is bound to her biological destiny and removed from the context of family and community. As Nochlin (1976) suggests, she is the archetypal mother--the "anonymous goddess of nourishment" (p. 67).

Although the theme of mother and child became less popular in the mid-twentieth century, suggesting a lack of interest in this traditional subject, the American sculptor, Marisol Escobar (b. 1930), projects a view of mother which is relevant to the 1960's. In "My Mother and Me" (1968), an assemblage of two figures confront the viewer with a disarming presence. Both figures are trapped by box-like bodies from out of which emerge carefully sculpted and realistic hands and heads. The cast iron loveseat upon which the child stands and the mother sits, encloses them in mutual dependency. The mother's head is surrounded by a black box-like helmet which is severed at the top to reveal a lobotomized brain-like dome. Her unfocussed gaze and a forced toothy grin suggest a kind of domestic madness. The child's painful withdrawn grimace is contrary to the happy and contented expression of Cassatt's children. While Marisol employs the pop art approach to commonplace images, her work evokes a haunting message of incarceration and confinement. The self-confident 19th century conception of the mother and

housewife, charged with the sacred tasks of domestic order and childhood protection is transformed by Marisol in the 1960's to the image of woman as frustrated housewife, mother, sex object--uncreative and trapped within a world of mass produced goods. In this piece the mother has become "a victim of domestic madness" (Seifert, 1980, p. 5).

In Marisol's "Tea for Three" (1960), suburban housewives share a cup of tea. Three mask-like heads emerge from one box-like body that suggests a block of nondescript subdivision homes. A butter dish, a school building and a claw-like machine are perched upon these heads as if they were hats. Two hands emerge from the block bodies and one claw-like hand holds the communal cup of tea. Here the symbiotic relationship of the housewife and her house is reminiscent of the work of poets Sylvia Plath, Adrienne Rich, Anne Sexton and Erica Jong in which household objects function as "metaphors and morphologies" for the frustration and despair of the housewife in the 1960's (Seifert, 1980, p. 2). Anne Sexton, in her poem "The Housewife" (1961), saw that: "Some women marry houses" (in Seifert, 1980, p. 48). In a later poem, "Self in 1958" (1966), the self becomes imprisoned by the doll house as in an artificial womb from which she will never be set free. She asks, "What is reality? I am a plaster doll. I pose, I live in a doll's house ... a cardboard floor, windows that flash onto someone's city.... But I would cry, rooted into the wall that was once my mother" (p. 73). These lines could also have been spoken from the mouths of Henrik Ibsen's women in his play The Doll's House written around the turn of the century or by Marisol's imprisoned housewives in the 1960s.

Marisol's images of housewife and mother represents the surrender of the 1960's woman to the anarchy of the material world in which

"unspeakable terrors" are given visual form" (Seifert, 1980, p. 3). Her work represents the first stage of awareness from which have emerged works like "Project Womanhouse" by Judy Chicago and co-workers (1972). Seifert (1980) suggests that in this piece, fantasy replaces anger and domestic objects and situations are transformed through imaginative juxtapositions to render them impotent and imbue them with a new life-giving force. Created by a group of female students in 1972, under the direction of Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro, in a rundown house in downtown Los Angeles, the house became a metaphor, as in Sexton's poem, for the female body. Each woman was given a room in which to develop her own dreams and fantasies. The images which developed were a result of consciousness-raising sessions on the subject matter of the woman and the home. As Chicago (1977) saw, the result was a "total environment, a repository of female experience and womanly dreams" (p. 268).

The kitchen in "Womanhouse" becomes the clearest symbol for the female body. The floor, ceilings and walls and all the kitchen objects were painted fleshy pink. Plastic fried eggs cascading from the ceiling transform into breasts as they travel to the floor. According to Judy Chicago, "The association of women with the kitchen and with the giving of food led to the idea of the nurturant kitchen" (p. 106). The "Bridal Staircase," "Menstruation Bathroom," "Sheet Closet," "Dining-Room," and "Nursery," are some of the other rooms which employ juxtapositions of animate and inanimate objects and fantasy to transform the household objects into a feminist statement. Without using the explicit image of woman, "Womanhouse," by Chicago and co-workers and other works by Sylvia Mangold, Ellen Lanyon, Marjorie Strider and Gathie Falk manipulate

realistic and abstracted household objects in room environments as metaphors for domestic and maternal experience in the 1960's and 1970's.

In conclusion, it has become apparent that the maternal image and the domestic experience has been portrayed by women artists from a variety of perspectives. The role of mother/housewife affords no singular or stereotypic interpretation. While in the earlier twentieth century, a number of artists saw the mother as protector, activist and archetype, as the century progressed the traditional view of mother and housewife fell into question. The invention of the birth-control pill in the 1960s, coupled with the writings of Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir, made it possible for women to reflect upon and consciously choose either motherhood, a career, or a combination of the two. Along with these changing interpretations of the maternal image came a search for a new physical image and sexual identity, which could allow for a transcendence from stereotyped roles into a more self-affirming identity based on free choice rather than purely biological factors alone.

The Physical Image -- A New Sexual Identity

In Dorothea Tanning's (1910) surrealist portraits of women, one becomes aware of a conscious questioning of sexual identity. In "Maternity" (1946), a mother and infant, identically dressed in tattered white gowns and bonnets, stand isolated in a huge sulphurous yellow desert expanse. Sharing the blanket upon which the mother stands is a white-haired baby-faced Pekingese who acts as a desert sphinx or portent (Harris and Nochlin, 1979). In the foreground, a large wooden door indicates the passage from which this young but despairing woman has come. In the distant background another door appears. In the center of

this open door looms a biomorphic mechanical body of an older woman. She hangs, puppet-like, from strings attached to black, menacing clouds. The mood of isolation and paralysis is reinforced by the lifeless expanse of the deadly yellow desert. In this and other works, Tanning's imagery evolves from the subconscious dream world. She depicts the solitude of woman, her unfulfilled wishes and the existential despair in contemplation of woman's fixed biological destiny.

In another work, "Birthday" (1942), Tanning again employs typical surrealist techniques to give form to her search for a new sexual identity. Unusual juxtapositions of people, objects and places, as well as meticulous brushwork which makes the imaginary real, are devices which allow her to explore women's sexual and psychic evolution. In "Birthday," the woman appears bare-breasted and shoeless--she appears vulnerable and threatened by the strange weeds that grow from her body. She has just opened one door of a passage but many doors loom ahead in the steps to womanhood.

In much of Tanning's work like "Evening in Sedona" (1975-76), woman's sexual initiation appears ominous and frightening. In "Eine Kleine Nachtmusic" (1946), two young nubile girls stand in a long, dark hotel corridor. Once again they stand rigid with tattered garments draped below their waists. A torn and mangled sunflower--an image suggesting deformation--dominates their view. Four doors appear down a long corridor and only the last one stands ajar, admitting a thin ray of light. The doors, which could symbolize the traditional stages of woman's life--puberty, motherhood, middle age and death--appear ominous and uninviting. Only the last door sheds light and one is reminded of the confusion faced by a young girl "overwhelmed by the consequences of

an unquestioning acceptance of the dictum that biology is destiny" (Orenstein, 1979, p. 54).

Tanning spoke for women in her art by uncovering the shared desires and anxieties faced by women in the 1940's. During the post-war years, women were encouraged to return to the domestic role. Without the advantages of adequate birth control, many women faced once again the fears of isolation, loneliness and the frustration of a predetermined destiny. Within the Surrealist movement itself, women, according to Orenstein (1979), were not seen to have a destiny apart from man. She was seen either as a sorceress or divine muse--"La Femme Fatale" or the naive woman-child--"Femme Enfant" (p. 38). Like a number of other surrealist women artists such as Carrington, Fini, Oppenheim and Varo, Tanning by-passed these limiting views and uncovered the unconscious fears of isolation and anxiety of the creative woman. These issues confronted in the work of Tanning, would be addressed again in the collaborative and feminist works of Joyce Welland and Judy Chicago in 1970s and 1980s.

The Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo (1910-1954), also reveals, in her portraits, the full truth of her physical and biological experience. At the age of 15, Kahlo survived a major accident which broke her spine and prevented her from fulfilling her obsessive longing to have children. Although she suffered 29 years of pain and 32 operations, Kahlo confronted her reality through her art. Like an "artist-Curandera" or Shaman she "painted to perform miracles" and to exorcise the pain that accompanied her in life (Orenstein, 1972, p. 9). In "Las Dos Fridas" (The Two Fridas), Kahlo portrays herself as "identical but antithetical twins--one is dark and the other light" (Orenstein, 1972, p. 6).

Through this juxtaposition she suggests an inner dialogue of the light and dark aspects of her psyche. Orenstein (1972) suggests that the notion of duality seen in the two-headed figurines of ancient Tlatilco art might have provided the inspiration for this piece. It could also be interpreted as the balance of life and death which Kahlo was constantly reminded of. The heart-shaped palette held by the light figure is reminiscent of the magical Milagro, a small silver charm made in the shape of the part of the body that is diseased. The Milagro, according to Orenstein (1972), usually placed in the church to bring about a cure, becomes a motif of this painting invoking the healing power of the heart. In this painting and "Lo que el Agua Me Ha Dado" (1938) Kahlo reaffirms her growing belief in the interconnectedness of all life; her Mexican heritage, her present reality and the dialectic of life and death.

"Hospital Henry Ford" (1932) is a self-portrait of the artist undergoing an intimate personal crisis related to one of the many miscarriages provoked by her near fatal accident. Tears streaming down her face, she is attached by visible strings--"the physical and emotional ties to her unborn child." Gloria Orenstein (1972) sees these strings as "concrete representations of the spiritual and psychological bonds between her artistic expression and the traumas related to the biological crises of female sexuality that she portrayed in her many canvases depicting birth, Caesarean operations and miscarriages" (p. 7). In this work one feels the brutal anguish of Frida's suffering. Through surrealistic juxtaposition of objects and of a Detroit setting in the background, one recognizes the "dehumanization and alienation of the

production-line attitude that has been so characteristic of the handling of women by the medical profession" (Orenstein, 1972, p. 7).

As Mexican artist Juan O'Gorman said, in writing about Frida's choice of themes, "Frida's painting is anything but morbid ... there is nothing but health, the health of telling everything and of having overcome everything" (Orenstein, 1972, p. 7). Frida dared to challenge the conspiracy of silence which has kept images related to women's physical and biological experience hidden from conscious expression and understanding. Kahlo was the first woman artist to give esthetic form to the drama of her biological existence and was a pioneer in the quest for a more authentic sexual identity sought after in many of the contemporary abstract works by Judy Chicago, Mary Frank, Adrien Piper and Hannah Wilke. No longer seeing herself as a sexual object for the pleasure of others, Kahlo initiated a turning of tables in which women are revealed as sensual and sexual beings with their own autonomy, power and sufferings.

Niki de Saint-Phalle (b. 1930) is one of the more contemporary artists who challenged sexual stereotypes in her huge sculptures of Nanas. These larger-than-life-sized figures, decorated with brilliant pop art colors and whimsical folk motifs, are a fine blend of the humorous, grotesque and the sexual.

These joyful fertility goddesses called Nana's re-define the concepts of beauty and love. "Black Venus" (1967) (or Aphrodite)--goddess of love and beauty, born from the foam of the ocean--has been traditionally portrayed in art according to accepted concepts of beauty held by the white race (Hedges and Wendt, 1980, p. 193). Here, the goddess is black--reclaiming the right of black women

to take pride in her body. Unlike the vulnerable, delicate and dangerously seductive Greek goddesses, "Black Venus" is huge, strong and playful. She balances on a leg of monumental strength as she dances with her beach ball. She wears the symbol of love on a colorful swim suit and celebrates her inner power and harmony with nature (Hedges and Wendt, 1980).

In 1963, de Saint-Phalle extended her Nana into even more monumental proportions in her room-sized figure called "Hon" (She). This author had the opportunity to visit the 82 foot long by 30 foot wide figure in Stockholm's Moderna Mussett in 1966. Hon lay on her back and contained numerous rooms into which one entered through a doorway between the legs. Complete with an expanding and contracting heart and lungs, this figure becomes a metaphor for the mechanized image and context of modern women. The viewer can partake of beverages at the bar located in the breast and eavesdrop on recorded love talk from the love nest. "Hon" also contained a cinema with Greta Garbo movies, a planetarium, an aquarium, a telephone and music room. "Hon" is neither delicate nor subtle and her satirical and playful comment on Popular stereotypes of women is particularly relevant to the image of women in the Pop art era. Critics Semmel and Kingsley (1980) suggest that this multi-functional ironic super-woman symbolizes the "conflicting demands of the pop goddess/mother/whore fantasies" that abounded prior to the women's movement (p. 5). In contrast to the slick, glassy look of the near-pornographic iconology of Wesselman, Lidner and Ramos, "Hon" can not be dismissed, however, as a tantalizing sex object. By exaggerating proportions and functions of this great goddess and by confronting the viewer with ludicrous spatial and temporal dimensions one becomes forced

to confront stereotyped notions of a woman's sexual identity and role in history.

In the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, women artists like Mary Frank, Linda Benglis, Louise Bourgeois and Hannah Wilke have used clay, latex, rubber and plastics to explore in sculptural form the sexual identity of women from a feminist point of view. Through abstract form, artists like Mary Frank candidly celebrate women's sexual and sensual identities in large scale clay sculptures. Assembled out of fractured, stretched slabs of hollow stoneware, her figures are caught in an organic process of transformation. In the past, women have been conditioned to see themselves only as sexual objects for men's pleasure: now, artists like Mary Frank are revealing women as sexual beings who are free to direct and experience their own sensual needs.

In "Lovers" her figures are caught in a moment of union with the forces of nature. Background, foreground and figure merge in unified space through an emotional coloration given to her moving forms. The raw edges of her figures left agape, the burnt raku impressions of ferns, the speed and movement of the half shells of bodies evoke a cross over of anguish and ecstasy as her lovers seek their way to the earth floor.

Her images of women, lovers, animals and plants find their roots in their oneness with nature. No longer is women's sexual identity defined only in relation to men but her sexual energy finds its source in the common wellspring of nature, and from this source her physical form takes shape. Susan Griffin, in Woman and Nature, speaks of this relationship.

Because we know ourselves to be made of this earth temporary as the grass. Wet as this mud. Our cells filled with water.

Like the mud of this swamp. Heather growing here because of the damp. Sphagnum moss floating on the surface, on the water standing in these pools. Places where the river washes out. Where the earth was shaped by the flow of lava. Or by the slow movement of the glaciers. Because we know ourselves to be made from this earth and shaped like the earth, by what has gone before. (1980, p. 223)

The Mythic Image, History, and Social Change

On a philosophical level, the image western society holds of women can be seen as a mythic image which controls aspects of the multi-dimensional process of consciousness (Kazanis, 1976, p. 176). A number of contemporary women artists can be seen searching to the source of the image in history and myth in order to define and project a new image.

To begin with, a myth is what Mark Schorer describes as a "large controlling image, that gives philosophic meaning to the facts of ordinary life; that is, which have organizing value for experience" (Watts, 1970, p. 3). The large mythic image, according to Alan Watts (the great discussant of East and West), that grounds our present view of experience in the West is that of absolute duality based on the polarity of good and evil. This polarity finds its equivalents in not only concepts of white/black, rational/intuitive, god/devil, behavior/-instinct but also in the male/female myth of polarity. The word symbols and visual images developed in Western culture separate and divide the poles of masculine and feminine from their place in the continuum. These polarities are what Watts describes as "abstract terms" which "divide in thought what is undivided in nature," and "what lies between the poles is more substantial than the poles themselves" (1970, pp.

45-46). The polarized structure of Western thought has made us suspicious of the unity of polar opposites and of the oneness of men and women.

As Barbara White Kazanis, in her article "The Myth of Masculine and Feminine Polarity," has seen, "It is precisely this view of the arts, women and the imaginal experience as morally suspect and perhaps downright evil, that necessitates the search for a new mythic image" (1979, p. 176).

It is within this context that women artists especially in the 1970's have attempted to search to the source of the mythic image in felt life. From this source they have attempted to create a new mythic image that reconciles opposites and establishes the feminine principle in the continuum of life and culture.

Surrealist artists such as Leonor Fini (b. 1908) and Leonora Carrington (b. 1917) explore a world of female archetypes in a search for a holistic and matriarchal world view. Their paintings are largely dominated by the theme of woman as subject, rather than object. She is portrayed as "Goddess, as The Great Mother, as the Alchemist, as the Spinner and Weaver of the destinies of men, and above all as Spiritual Guide and Visionary. She is ultimately the 'Magna Mater' not the 'Femme Enfant'" (Orenstein, 1973, p. 40).

Leonor Fini is one of the artists who was always extremely conscious of the dangers involved in woman's relinquishment of her creative autonomy to sacrificial love. Her paintings of sphinxes such as "The Small Guardian Sphinx" (1942) and "The Guardian of the Phenixes" (1954), are images of the emerging power of consciousness and of the feminine principle in life as the embodiment of spiritual rebirth. Here the

woman is a powerful figure in her own right, surrounded by symbols of the Great Goddess (the tree, the triangle, the sistrum, etc.) (Lauter, 1980, p. 45).

In a later work, "The Thinker" (La Pensierosa, 1954), Fini portrays a more androgynous figure--a bald priestess who enacts various dimensions of the power of Demeter and Isis. Wearing dark leotards and an iridescent, wing-like cloak, and leaning upon her cupped hands this figure, like Isis, is not only creator, mother and protectress but also the embodiment of knowledge and wisdom. In this work and "The Guardian of the Phenixes" (1954) the woman thinker belongs to herself and "has both knowledge and power without being violated sexually to attain it. Fini's images of this embodiment of Mana are notable achievements, entirely consonant with the aims of modern feminism in that they reveal the feminine roots of our civilization..." (Lauter, 1980, p. 46). In her later works, "Heliodora" (1965) and "Chimere, Chimera, Chimere" (1961) Fini uses archetypal images to explore contemporary themes related to women's sexual identity and its historic roots.

Leonora Carrington, one of the originators and leaders of the feminist movement in Mexico and an active member of the Surrealist group in Paris and the United States, also recognized the need for the re-integration of the feminine principle for personal transformation and human evolution. In "The Lepidopterus" and "The Butterfly People Eating a Meal," Carrington explores the symbolism of the Black Swan. According to Orenstein (1973), the Black Swan is the secret sign of the Goddess of the Old Religion for the Britons of the Stone Age. In this work, the Swan is being fed food for the dead because the Old Religion and Great Goddess has been buried. By eating the food, the power of the Goddess

is being revived and enlightenment is attained. The egg is the female symbol which is prevalent in both her painting and her plays. It is also, according to Orenstein (1979), the philosophers' stone--the universal vessel of creative, spiritual rebirth. It represents the unification of opposites and the integration of the conscious with the unconscious self (Orenstein, 1979, p. 41).

Carrington's paintings like "Reflection on the Oracle" attest not only to her deep involvement in the study of alchemy, magic and the occult, but also her interest in a psychic liberation based on the integration of the dualities of male/female principles found in the mythical imagination of prehistoric cultures. As will be shown in Chapter VI, female archetypes, as they have been explored by Carl Jung and Eric Neuman are now being actively sought by contemporary feminist artists such as Marybeth Edelson, Betsy Damon and Judy Todd in their earth works.

Faith Ringold, Rosemary Mayer and Judy Chicago are also forging new connections to a matriarchal history and mythology and are incorporating elements of the Demeter myth into their abstract sculptural imagery. These artists reveal in their images of women the need to explore women's contribution to culture in order to make "connecting links between the generations" (Nemser, 1976, p. 22).

Judy Chicago, in "The Dinner Party" (1979), has cooperatively executed an epic art work that is both an esthetic celebration and a symbol for the class struggle based on the division between women and men. This controversial environment--a moveable feast of sculpture, ceramics, china painting and needle work--challenges the hierarchies and power structures that have denigrated women in culture and negated

women's contribution to culture. One of the most ambitious works of art made in the postwar period, this collaborative piece transcends the elitist aspects of the modernist esthetic and addresses both myth and reality in attempts to reaffirm a more positive female identity in history.

By surrendering the myth that "men's history is history," Judy Chicago and over 300 participants have created a multi-media environment that leads the viewer on a tour of Western Civilization that bypasses what "we have been taught to perceive as the main path" (Lippard, 1980, p. 116). It traces the history of women's achievements in politics, art, science, philosophy, music, and other fields, from prehistoric to modern times. A radical feminist rather than a marxist feminist, Chicago feels that everything is predicated on myth, not economics, and that feminist art has the capacity to be the purveyor of new myths and to transform culture (Lippard, 1980, p. 115).

For all of its didactic content, "The Dinner Party" is first and foremost a work of visual art (Lippard, 1980, p. 116). Upon entering the room from a hallway lined with banners and documentation, one perceives a shimmering white triangle glowing in the darkness. As one draws closer, this abstract ancient symbol of female energy comes into focus as a richly ornamented ceremonial table set with 39 abstracted and sculptured plates set upon richly colored hand-embroidered runners. These plates are dedicated to 33 accomplished women throughout history. The 48 foot open triangular table sits upon a luminous white raised platform, inlaid with 999 tiles, gold scripted with the names of other accomplished women from the mythical past of the Great Goddess to the present era. While each setting tells a unique story in abstract

symbolic form, it serves as a metaphor for individuals in society. Chicago weaves several themes through the forms and materials until words, images and meanings become threads of the same fabric.

Following the primarily visual experience the viewer, with the aid of the written biographies of each celebrated woman (found in the book, The Dinner Party), becomes absorbed in another level of meaning embodied in the piece--the historical aspect. The first wing of the table has 13 settings which celebrate accomplished women from pre-history (primordial Goddess) to the decline of the Greco-Roman empire (Hypatia); the second goes from Christianity (Marcella) to the Reformation (Anna van Schurman); the last goes from the 17th to the 20th centuries (Anne Hutchinson to Georgia O'Keeffe). Each woman whose name has survived, stands for millions of others who contributed to society, improved conditions for women, and whose life might have provided a role model for the future had their work been acknowledged in history.

Taken as a whole, this symbolic piece, is anathema to the modernist tradition of "high art." Not only does it break down the barriers between audience and art in its capacity to figuratively and literally "move" an audience through real and specific feelings, but its esthetic forms and political content have become synthesized in both the process and product to create a socially relevant art.

"The Dinner Party" reflects in its form, inherently feminist processes and values. While Chicago established the parameters of all imagery, the project members had constant input and responsibility. In the book, The Dinner Party, most participants insisted that the process was positive and even transformative. The structure integrated "the consciousness raising and criticism/self-criticism techniques" that are

at the core of feminist activism (Lippard, 1980, p. 117). The process aimed at a new role for artists and for the practice of art making (Lippard, 1980, p. 117). The collaborative techniques, political content and integration of "minor" techniques such as needle work found in "The Dinner Party," find their parallel in an earlier environmental work by Canadian Joyce Weiland entitled "True Patriot Love/Veritable Amour Patriotique," exhibited at the National Gallery in Canada in 1971 (Rabinovitz, 1980/81). Searching further into history, the collaborative process harks back to the quilting bee and even to the medieval craft guilds of the Middle Ages. The politics behind this collaborative tradition offer an alternative to the highly competitive, elitist role of art and artist without sacrificing aspirations towards individual expression and beauty traditionally expected from high art.

"The Dinner Party" passed through a number of stages in its esthetic conception. The story begins in the late 1960's when, as Judy Gerowitz, she attained recognition as a successful West Coast minimal sculptress. After becoming a feminist, Chicago temporarily stopped making art objects and immersed herself in writing, reading about women's history, developing Feminist art programs and conducting performances.

By 1972 Chicago had evolved a female abstract formal language based on the butterfly-vagina image. With its expanding and contracting centralized forms, and pale lush colors, this image became the basis for an entire iconography with which to reveal degrees of "confinement and liberation, compression and release" found at the core of female sexual, social, historical and political experience" (Lippard, 1980, p. 118). These two morphological forms combined in one image relate to larger

archetypal symbols which stand for the stasis and movement--the dynamic poles of life energy. Women's bodies are at the core of feminist art, entangled as they are with our exploitation and central as they are for our campaign for reproductive rights and political rights. Chicago, along with Harmony Hammond, Rosemary Mayer and Miriam Schapiro, have been struggling to create a new public image and symbol suitably powerful, evocative and flexible for the breadth of women's history.

The images on the plates in "The Dinner Party" are, however, not literal or imitative. As critic Lucy Lippard sees, "they are rather a blending of historical fact, iconographical sources, symbolic meanings and imagination" (1980, p. 123). The setting of the 18th century astronomer, Caroline Herschel, for example, represents not only the accomplishments of a woman who provided for science new knowledge about comets and stars, but a woman who despite restrictions managed to continue to work in a field which rarely acknowledged women. On this plate the wings lift off the two-dimensional surface in a gesture which represents the efforts she made to become an independent woman. An eye forms the centre of the plate and it "looks out upon the embroidered universe which covers Hershel's runner and provides her with an image of the skies at which she gazed" (Chicago, 1979, p. 86). The crewel work, a stitchery technique popular during the 18th century, repeats the colors and penwork hatching on the plate so that the foreground (plate) and background (runner) create a tension and form a unified whole.

While Chicago wished to blur the distinctions between art categories, she has not been willing to say a pot and painting are the same thing. She says, "it has to do with intent. I want to make art" (Lippard, 1980, p. 124). She has found that each medium brings with it

certain content and image possibilities and has found needlework to be the vehicle of her biggest step away from modernism (Lippard, 1980, p. 124). In her latest work, "The Birth Project," which is still underway, she continues exploration of this medium in artistic form.

While hundreds of thousands of men and women have flocked to see this epic work and many have found inspiration for a new understanding of art and culture and women's role in it, the art world continues to avenge the challenge Chicago and co-workers have presented.

Many have disregarded or over-simplified the piece, seeing it as just sociology or feminist dogma or a lesson in history. However, without sacrificing esthetics, "The Dinner Party" has begun to affect culture by transforming the circumstances that have in the past silenced creative women, into the subject matter of art. Through written media and symbolic visual forms the whole polarized nature of the human condition in Western Culture is revealed. By introducing new images of women into culture, new definitions of art and artists into creative processes and by reaching new audiences for art Judy Chicago affirms her belief that artistic images can suggest new myths which in turn can affect cultural values, preferences, and assumptions.

Moving from myth and history toward the present world of society and culture, women artists have also been interested in searching for a new public image which reflects their experience and values. Many of the artists discussed in this section confront the political and social conditions which have affected women in the 20th century. Others, through their art, try on old and new roles in an attempt to understand or exercise potential identities. Some have cast a critical but compassionate eye upon the ever-changing reflections of women's role in

society as it has been defined by others in media and popular culture. By exploring the social roles of women as student, worker, artist, scientist, activist, beauty queen, socialite and feminist, these artists have made new public images of women visible in the context of history. Through this consciousness a new ground has been prepared for a definition of self which has led to the social/political experiments in the art of the 1970's and 1980's.

In her chapter, "Through the Looking Glass," Shiela Rowbotham (1974) describes the search for a newly defined self-identity within a broad political framework. The art under discussion in this section relates to the initial phases of this larger cultural transformation which has been taking place during the feminist movements of the 1970's and 1980's.

The vast mass of human beings have always been mainly invisible to themselves while a tiny minority have exhausted themselves in the isolation of observing their own reflections. Every mass political movement of the oppressed necessarily brings its own vision of itself into sight. At first this consciousness is fragmented and particular. The prevailing social order stands as a great and resplendent hall of mirrors. It owns and occupies the world as it is and the world as it is seen and heard. But the first glimpse of revolutionary possibility leaves a small but indestructible chink in its magnificent self-consciousness. Capitalism now carries not chinks but great slits and gashes. It bears the mark of revolution. (p. 27)

Beginning with the American, Alice Neel (b. 1900), one finds an artist whose own personal life and her confessions about it have made her a model of rare courage and openness for many in the Women's movement today (Fine, 1980). Born in Pennsylvania, Neel attended the Philadelphia School of Design for Women. After completing her studies there she married a Cuban man and went with him to Havana only to return alone to New York in 1927. After various personal disasters, including

the loss of a child in infancy, a period of extreme poverty, a nervous breakdown and attempted suicide, Neel decided to pull all her strength together to continue with her art. After settling permanently in New York and participating in the New Deal Public Works of Art Project, she moved to Spanish Harlem where she remained for twenty-five years. It was within this context that she found her inspiration for many of her intense and revealing portraits of women.

Many of Neel's portraits of women, such as "T.B. Harlem" (1940), expose an inner reality but within a framework of "social and temporal accuracy" (Harris and Nochlin, 1979, p. 323). This intensely moving portrait of a dying woman is a striking example of Neel's social and human concern. Bandaged and weak, this figure rests on a pale mauve pillow, partly shrouded with crumpled sheets. She looks out with dark Christ eyes and tenderly engages the viewer. This image stands as a symbol for the world Neel knew in Spanish Harlem during the 1940's--"an age of massive social failure" (Munro, 1979, p. 120). While this image may be a generalized symbol of the suffering of many Third World women in a capitalistic society, she is nevertheless an individual who maintains a stoic dignity. Eleanor Munro (1979) compares the intensity and human compassion found in this work to that of Franz Kline before he abandoned the figure for Abstract Expressionism. She compares it to "Franz Kline's mad, dying Nijinsky; no more than a skein of black naked nerve ends ... drawn at the very turning point of the painter's leap from figurative art to abstraction" (p. 120). Munro (1979) also provides an insight into an aspect of Neel's greatness and the reason she stayed with the human concern in her portraits.

Indeed, it was just during those middle years of Alice Neel's life, when her social conscience was moved and her hand released, that most other advanced painters in New York began to formulate an esthetic of transcendence over suffering (another word might be 'escape') through Abstract Expressionism. But for what ever reasons, nervous, psychic, ideological or all three, Neel stayed with the human figure. (p. 120)

In her recent portraits of artists such as "Isabel Bishop" (1974) and writers such as "Linda Nochlin" (1973), Neel exposed the changing social reality of our present era. About her subjects she says, "You see everything in their faces. I like to think too that I have reflected the Spirit of the Ages. I have painted the faces of the 50's, the 60's and the 70's. Each of these decades is completely different" (Munro, 1979, p. 130). In 1970, Neel undertook a cover portrait of "Kate Millet" for Time magazine (Harris and Nochlin, 1976, p. 323). As an outspoken advocate for women's rights, Neel captured in this portrait the spirit of the radical feminist movement of the last decade and the inner being of a courageous individual. Neel has probed Millet's inner self--her determination, her fears and panics and her tenderness. With brilliant colors and sweeping dark lines charged with energy, she develops her complex character. Formal elements are reduced to essentials and as in many of her works Neel has "directly translated into line, color and image her own coping with a life of extreme stress" (Munro, 1979, p. 120). That she had suffered much and learned how to live through her art--this was both Neel's and Millet's salvation in a world experienced as barbarous, unjust and yet ripe for change (Millet, 1977).

Isabel Bishop (b. 1902) also lived in New York from the 1930's onward and concentrated on portraits of the poor or working woman. Her interest, however, lay less in the uncovering of social injustice and

more on the mobility and contemporaneity of the modern woman. Like Reginold Marsh, another Social Realist with whom she is often linked, Bishop sought to connect the grand manner of the classical tradition with contemporary urban American subjects. In her partly abstracted etching and aquatint, "Campus Student" (1972), women are captured in impressions of movement as they cross the courtyard. As in many of her impressions of women such as "Women Walking" (1963), Bishop seemed compelled by the dynamics of mobility from one place to another, one role to another, or one class to another. She says, "If they (the working women) want to move into another class they can, and its that mobility that connected for me something that I was absolutely focused on--the attempt to make forms which to the spectator were mobile or move-able, that could move" (Fine, 1978, p. 205). In many ways Bishop captured the humanitarian and egalitarian spirit of the Roosevelt years and the spirit of the 1960s and 1970s in America.

Her most successful portrayal of young women encountered on subways, at lunch bars and in the New York streets are almost always monumental in size and engrossed in activity. Even "Nude Reaching" (1963) is self-contained, non-idealized, individual who appears caught in a spontaneous moment. Bishop's palette of muted greens, oranges, ochres and whites create a surface which lends a vibration to her moving figures. Layers of color extend beyond sharp gestural outlines as her figures shift in and out of light and dark spaces. These women appear to be in transitional states of being. As Nochlin and Harris (1979) have suggested, "she arranges her figures in an endless variety of contrasts and juxtapositions suggesting a world of multiple possibilities within a feminine syntax" (p. 325). Although Bishop does not work

consciously from a feminist point of view she does believe her work has a "content different from men's" (Nemser, 1976, p. 20). After her major retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 1975, Bishop received a renewed public acclaim and was acknowledged as an artist who sympathetically recorded the life of an era and women's potential in it (Fine, 1974).

The works of Marisol Escabor (b. 1930) strikingly demonstrate yet other forms of self-definition within a social context. Her interest in the theme of woman as mother is explored in Part I of this chapter. Using herself as a model, Marisol makes plaster castings, drawings and carvings of her own face--often incorporating them into sculptured assemblages depicting women in other traditional social roles.

Marisol's iconography finds its origins in several sources but is transferred through her own expression. In "Three Women with an Umbrella" (1965-66), her use of everyday household objects juxtaposed with women figures in mundane roles in popular urban settings recalls aspects of pop art. In her assemblage of masks, "The Mayflower" (1961), she draws upon colors and motifs of early American folk art and Pre-Columbian pottery as well as Mexican painted boxes (Fine, 1978, p. 219). Her multilevelled social comments and the underlying seriousness of her intent transcends, however, the semi-deliberate banality of pop productions and moves beyond the functional aspects of folk craft to an original art form evolving from her own life experience.

Her fifteen figure mixed media piece, "The Party" (1956-1966) is a monumental work through which she explores and satirizes the role of the socialite and party-goer. The fifteen figures confront the viewer, each elegantly gowned, bejewelled and dramatically coiffed. In the bodice of one figure is the luminated slide projection of a diamond necklace, in

the head of another stares the single eye of a miniature working T.V. repeating social banalities (Fine, 1978). One frozen figure, with hair covering eyes and hand over mouth, withdraws from the sight of the other ladies as they proudly move before her. Another "wall flower" is actually two-dimensional--literally part of the wall. A robot-like man in a tuxedo guards the door. Marisol's own self-image appears painted, drawn, or moulded in plaster on each of the figures. The repeated image of Marisol is startling and suggests her empathy with these programmed figures.

In a formal sense we can see Marisol's her teacher, Hans Hoffman's, influence on the "push pull" spatial relationships found in her geometric dissections of the figure. In Marisol's work a tension exists between the two-dimensional flat frontality of and drawing on most of her figures and the three-dimensional emergence of a hand, a face or an object (Schulman, 1923). The mask-like faces recall the Mexican masks and at the same time plaster face casts in Jasper John's "Target with Four Faces" (1955). In "The Party", Marisol's use of two- and three-dimensional forms suggests a tension between confinement and a desire for liberation in her women.

"Baby Boy" (1962-63) is another work which synthesizes formalism and fantasy to make a social comment. This work deals with the victimization of women in capitalist America. A gargantuan 7 1/2 foot, chubby-cheeked baby boy grasps in his wooden hand a tiny stuffed woman with a realistically painted Marisol face. The giant boy wears a cocky expression on his contorted wooden face. Upon his boxed-in torso is painted a flag-like striped jacket and boxer shorts. While critic Leon Schulman (1973) suggested that this piece depicts the insecurity and

self-consciousness of a boy and his relationship with his mother, for Marisol the baby monster was a symbol of a political oppressor. In an interview with Cindy Nemser (1975), Marisol said about the boy, "for me, that meant America. This huge baby monster is taking over. I even had the flag there and stripes. And people think it's a child" (p. 188).

In this piece, Marisol makes the connection between patriarchy and oppression of women. As Cindy Nemser (1976) suggests, Marisol, in her numerous sculptures of male power figures follows the tradition of women writers and artists who were the first to reveal in their art the fact that capitalist patriarchal systems mean personal oppression for all humankind. Nemser sees that:

... in the visual arts these connections have been made by Marisol in her sculptures of male power figures, by Judith Bernstein in her Union Jack - Off Flags and Big Screws, by May Stevens in her Big Daddy paintings, by Nancy Speers in her Female Bomb series and by Nancy Grossman in her drawings and sculptures of encapsulated males who are simultaneously victims and victimizers. (p. 22)

Looking back into the earlier decades of the twentieth century these connections can also be seen in the works of Kathe Kollwitz and, to some extent, Alice Neel.

Not only did Marisol help to form a tradition of art that is political, which by the 1970's had become a major concern in art by women, but she helped to make the stereotyped social images of women visible. In her sculptural work "Women Learning" (1965-66), an older woman literally gazes into a looking glass to bring the vision of a wiser and more knowing self into sight.

Eleanor Antin (b. 1935), an American performance artist, explores aspects of her inner and outer self through theater art, as Marisol did through assemblage sculpture. In her performance pieces, Antin names

and gives social personalities to parts of her inner human psyche and sets them upon their own autobiographical track. Antin, like another performance artist, Adrien Piper, explores through her art the relationship between the self and the image and the self and the other. While Antin and Piper both explore "the phenomenology and transformations of the self, through the other" (Sondheim, 1977, p. xxiii), for Piper the "other" is the "Mythic Being" (the masculine part of her being). For Anton the "other" becomes four beings--the King, the Ballerina, the Nurse and the Black Movie Star.

Through improvisation and written dialogue, Antin's characters exchange dialogue on the important questions of love, the economy and politics. Through this trying on of roles and through dialogue, she attempts to "flush out" the truth of all sides of herself.

Antin also integrates videotapes, photo narratives using puppets and other visual devices in her episodes of life and work. A famous photo narrative "Adventures of 100 Boots" in which she set those hundred soles on a journey across fields and ditches to the Museum of Modern Art for an exhibit, is a striking example of the public nature of her multimedia art (Munro, 1979, p. 418).

Antin's use of role playing, props, and performance creates a hybrid art form--and an experiment with a rich history. Carl Jung, with his concept of the anima animus, Duchamp with his characters Dandy, Mutt and Rose Silavy, and Alan Kaprow, one of the inventors of the Happenings of the 1960's, provide the tradition for this eclectic art form (Munro, 1979). Like other performance artists, Nancy Kitchel, Laurie Anderson

and Adrien Piper she employs literal, photographic, and written appearances of the self to bring sectors of a private history into a public context.

The performance work of artists like Antin is in many ways a revolutionary break in the history of art on several levels. Like many of the portraits discussed so far, Antin's work is imbued with the personal and yet relates to a socio-cultural reality. Hers is a lively conscious stand against the technological attack on the environment, society and women, and the reductionist attitude of the modernist esthetic. She exposes, not the one abstracted socially acceptable image of the self as woman, but masculine and other selves as well through live performance. Although she dissects, her art is aimed at integration of the separate parts. It projects a personal meaning and content within the social and cultural context of life in order to expand the notion that the personal is political. Her art is meaningful not only to a local segment of the cultured public--in fact, much of her work is not affiliated with the commercial context of art galleries. Like the other performance artists mentioned, her work has been oriented to the general public and receives broad coverage in journals and books. Through her art, one gains access to a very real understanding of the many voices at work in the psyche of contemporary women and the many social roles available to her.

In many ways, Antin's theatrical experiments and explorations of self in society represent a transition from the past to the present. From the point of view of media, her work represents a transition from the oil on canvas portraits of Cassatt, Bishop and Neel, the graphics of Kollwitz, the sculpture of Saint Phalle and Marisol to contemporary work which incorporates multiple media, multiple views and sometimes even the

immediate involvement of artist and audience. From an esthetic view, her work represents the transition from traditional uses of space and time to environmental works by Aycock and Miss which explore 'real architectural space and expanded temporal dimensions. From a feminist perspective her work can be seen as the transition out from the private explorations of self into the public worlds of society and the larger culture. Here a new woman can be seen and heard, not just by a cultural elite but by the general public in everyday environments.

The artists discussed in this chapter helped to shatter the stereotype image and bring a new image of women into sight. Through explorations of traditional maternal and domestic roles, sexual identities and historical/social images this first group of 20th century women artists prepared the ground for an identity which includes self awareness and, participation in the socially relevant movements of art in the 1970's and 1980's.

CHAPTER VI

MOVEMENT TOWARD NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ABSTRACTION

New Interpretations of Nature

Chapter V sought to reveal a new interpretation of human reality in the figurative images of women by 20th century women artists. Through Realism, Impresionism, Surrealism and other stylistic idioms, artists represented in Chapter V seemed to probe an inner psychic landscape to externalize the forms and feelings of their felt lives. This chapter will show how a second group of women artists have extended earlier artistic explorations of the self and society in new interpretations of man's relationship to nature.

While the themes of women and nature have been explored separately in Chapters V and VI, taken together they weave the interlocking threads of an integrated reality revealed in artistic form. As Ernst Cassirer suggests in his philosophic essay, "Language and Art," "Art is not a display and enjoyment of empty form. What we intuit in the medium of art and artistic forms is a double reality, the reality of nature and human life. And every great art gives a new interpretation of nature and life" (in Verene, 1979, p. 157).

From works studied in Chapter V, we have been given a new interpretation of human reality /through the self-images of women. Along with new modes of thinking and a new system of aesthetic and social values, a feminist awareness of reality was explored as it evolved in the artistic forms of women artists throughout this century. In this chapter, artists can be seen to extend the awareness of self and culture through

explorations of nature and the dynamics of space and time. Chapter VI will explore the evolution of a new ecological vision through artistic forms which reconceptualize nature as a living organism rather than a mechanical system--a view which finds its parallel in both mythical thought and modern physics.

It is not surprising that these interpretations of the human reality and the reality of nature, while seeming unrelated seem to find a common source in what might be called a "feminist spirituality." In his recent book, The Turning Point, the theoretical physicist, Fritjof Capra, provides a definition of this vision which he believes is at the center of a cultural transformation and which links feminism and ecology. He suggests that this view, culminating in the women's movement of the 1970's, finds its parallel in modern physics in a "systems view of life." He says, "A feminist spirituality is based on an awareness of the oneness of all living forms and of their cyclical rhythms of birth and death, thus reflecting an attitude that is profoundly ecological" (Capra, 1982, p. 415). It is from this common source that a feminist and ecological vision can be seen to integrate as they are revealed in the works discussed in this thesis.

The ancient association of women and nature also interlinks women's history with the history of the environment and is a source of the natural kinship of a feminist awareness and ecological vision intuited in the artistic forms under discussion. Throughout this century, women artists can be seen to have evolved an awareness of this connection and have been involved in the creation of a new vision of this double reality.

In mythical prehistoric cultures nature was associated with the many manifestations of the Goddess and was seen as a somewhat unpredictable but kind and nurturing mother (Neumann, 1963). The unity of the spirit and nature were bound together in the view that this great mother is embodied in all of nature and in the earth itself. Huge earth mounds and temples were constructed to celebrate this Great Goddess and to mark the seasons and cycles of nature (Cassirer, 1944).

Under patriarchy, with the advent of agriculture and finally with the rise of Newtonian Science, "nature became a mechanical system that could be manipulated and exploited together with the manipulation and exploitation of women" (Capra, 1982, p. 40). The reconceptualization of nature as a machine rather than a living organism sanctioned the domination of both nature and women. The Cartesian view of the universe extended the mechanistic model to all living things which were regarded as machines constructed from separate parts, to be exploited by different interest groups. Capra suggests that "it has now become apparent that overemphasis on the scientific method and on rational thinking has led to an ever increasing separation between biological and cultural aspects of human nature and to the neglect of intuitive wisdom and ecological awareness" (Capra, 1982, p. 41).

The dislocation of nature and culture and spirit and matter has also been apparent in the art movements of the second half of the 20th century. The erosion of the modernist faith "in the living bond between human kind and the natural world and the power of art to reveal it" (Munro, 1979, p. 43) had become evident to many by the 1950's.

By the mid 1950s, a growing sense of fear and fatality developed amongst artists of the Abstract Expressionist movement as art became a

matter of increasing financial profit. Control of the art market had gradually drifted away from the artist into the hands of dealers and investors. Many of the major artists of the movement faced premature deaths and "there were signs of a truly radical break preparing itself" (Munro, 1979, p. 48). The 1960s became a decade of what Judd (1954) called "demythologizing," "denigration of seriousness," and "evaporation of the significant subjects," perhaps as a defence against an increasingly dehumanization caused by the mid-century technological attack on human beings and the environment (Battock, 1966, p. 154). The art world continued to be heavily male dominated and women artists often worked in isolation. John Cage (1961) saw the crisis in art as a statement about the emptiness of the modern age. He suggested, "The absurdity of man's position in the world has become the guiding idea of many artists. The most meaningful act that can be performed, they insist, is to emphasize the meaninglessness of life" (p. 50).

By the 1970's an issue quite beyond pure esthetics was voiced by a few in the art world. As Munro (1979) saw it, "the question, banished since the 1930's from discussions of art, of value in the larger human sense, of what the arts were in effect existing for" was raised with frequency. Barbara Rose (1968) began to write thoughtfully about the problem the modern artist has experienced in finding a spiritual subject in a secular age and Lucy Lippard (1976) began a searching for women artists whose work revealed new layers of meaning and new directions in art.

Out of this multifaceted crisis in art and society a few sociologists, historians, scientists and philosophers have turned their attention to what Capra (1982) calls "a paradigm shift ... a profound

change in thoughts, perceptions and values that form a particular vision of reality" (p. 30). Lucy Lippard (1979) quotes Marcuse and his warning that a necessary shift "would require a new climate wherein new experiments and projects would be suggested to the intellect by new social needs.... Instead of the further conquest of nature, the restoration of nature; instead of the occupation of outer space, the occupation of inner space..." (p. 88). In The Turning Point, Capra describes four aspects of this shift. He shows through extensive analysis that it has already begun and that it originates from an ecological point of view. From the point of science it is a systems view. It is a spiritual view and it is a feminist view.

In the last decades a note has also been sounded amongst artists which can be read as a shift in what Robert Morris (1978) calls "valuation on experience." Lucy Lippard (1981) sees it as a call to "refeminize society." The focus has shifted for many artists to meaningful new explorations which can heal the gap between the spirit and nature as an alternative to "science's rejection of the concrete experience which is so much part of the archaic concept of nature" (Lippard, 1981, p. 137). Statements by Cassirer (1944), Capra (1982), and Marcuse (1967) illuminate the fact that many of the artists who are revealing ecological, spiritual and feminist meanings in art are women. These statements also illuminate the fact that many of the artists who have concentrated on the connective rather than destructive aspects of the web have also been women. Paralleling the artists studied in Chapter V who explore new dimensions of the human reality, artists studied in Chapter VI can be seen exploring dimensions of space and time which extend beyond the conventions of modernist movements. From their works we can intuit new

forms of the human relationship to nature and a new ecological vision of the environment.

This study, starting with Georgia O'Keeffe in the early 20th century and ending with Alice Aycock in the 1980s, further illuminates the ways women artists have concentrated on the connective aspects of our double reality. Not one of the subjects discussed in this chapter can be seen to have moved beyond what Eleanor Munro (1979) calls the "nature-self-art" correlation to what Robert-pincus-Witten calls "epistemic abstraction" or purely intellectual content in art (Munro, 1979, p. 22). While the idioms and media change in each of the groups studied in Chapter VI, no matter how abstract or how far removed in the end the work may look, most of the artists "affirmed the presence of" that "content in their work" (Munro, 1979, p. 22). Their art, informed and inspired by their source of creative energy in life and nature, will show that there is a movement in abstraction, not away from interest in the dynamic forms and cycles of nature and human life but towards them and to their deepest sources in authentic experience, myth, and feminist thought.

Starting with Georgia O'Keeffe at the beginning of the century and ending with environmental sculptors like Nancy Holt and Alice Aycock in the 1970's and 1980's, it is possible to see how many of the artists choose organically inspired forms, and focus on the dynamic framework of space and time, "the framework in which all reality is concerned" (Cassirer, 1944), p. 42). Although many of the older artists such as O'Keeffe, Krasner and Frankenthaler were part of original modernist movements and were often seen as "conservative" in their failure to abandon the "significant subject," they can now be seen as survivors who

have provided for younger artists a faith in the power of art to reveal new meaningful interpretations of that double reality.

The artists to be studied, for whom the dynamics of nature, environment and the human reality have been a focus and for whom abstract form has been the idiom, fall into three groups and will be studied in parts I, II and III in this chapter.

Part I begins with Georgia O'Keeffe, whose work signals the coming of International Modernism to America in the early 1900's. Through abstraction, O'Keeffe set the stage for the growing belief in the modernist esthetic--that art had the power to pierce the surface appearance of natural forms to release feelings through correspondences. She extended Kandinsky's theory of equivalents to find correspondences in the patterns of light, forms of the desert hills and colors of the mid-west which were capable of affecting the emotions and tones of the body. It is possible to find in her work the beginnings of a feminist spirituality, an ecological vision and an awareness of the unity of all living forms.

This chapter will explore the ways Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler and other Abstract Expressionists extended the use of abstract form and how they dispensed with representation of the image in favor of enacting the psychic state in physical movement to reveal deeper meanings in life.

While these artists built on mainstream movements in the first half of the century, this study will analyse the sources and conditions that moved these artists to extend the modernist esthetic beyond the conventions of the time. By transforming the raw material of their felt lives

and "by transcending the germ of inspiration through wonderful mutations" (Munro, 1979, p. 22), these artists uncovered strata of meaning in nature and life that have profound meaning to current movements in environmental sculpture and culture as a whole.

The evolution from Abstract Expressionist painting to new forms of Experimental Sculpture will provide the focus of part II. Concentrating mainly upon Eva Hesse, this section will study how women artists of the 1960's began to emerge from under the shadow of a heavily male dominated Op, Pop, and Minimal art scene to expand the process of the self/nature revaluation with new materials. Taking their own paths, artists like Eva Hesse, Louise Bourgeois and Lee Bontecou began to explore new dimensions of inner-space with organic use of non-art materials. Using stretched canvas, latex, rubber, and rope, these artists with "excruciating visceral directness" (Munro, 1979, p. 53), explored the human body and its relationship to the dynamics of nature. By extending the risk of Action painting beyond pure gesture, these artists opposed prevailing trends to formalism and created sculpture involving a synthesis of form and feeling. The scale and meaning of much of this new sculpture originates from its materials, context and situation rather than from a purely psychological necessity (Lippard, 1976). This use of risk and gesture, now more independent of purely psychic needs, reveals new dimensions of our double reality. This work provides the bridge to understandings of environmental sculpture studied in part III.

In the group of artists studied in part III we see a turning point from the "private to the public" and from the gallery to the environment (Lippard, 1979). In addition, there is an evolution of a more conscious

ecological vision in the way these artists unite their sculpture-architecture with the natural environment. Working from this ecological perspective, these artists transform awareness of space and time through powers of the imagination opened by understandings of mythical, feminist and scientific thought. They tap gestalts in which nature, art and life are so closely enmeshed as to be aspects of the same speculative process (Munro, 1979). They find correspondences of form in ocean currents, galaxies, the double helix, the DNA molecule and in the cycles and seasons of nature. As Munro (1979) noted, their touchstones in art are not the style markers like Cezanne or Picasso but ancient earth mounds, and the archeological monuments of Mexico, Greece, India and China.

These artists interpret nature with environmental sculptures that make literal use of the subjects their forebearers painted. With raw hemp, pulverized rock, saplings, earth and growing plants, these artists yearn to regain contact with the earth with an art that offers a concrete real experience. Using a "present sense of space" (Morris, 1978) and integrating temporal dimensions in their work they display "an awareness of the mythical roots of sculpture and architecture in the earth and female body" (Lippard, 1979, p. 88).

These young artists have not had to break with their past in order to become themselves, as it seems the creative male has been impelled "to overthrow his father by symbolically rejecting his art" (Munro, 1979, p. 53). Miriam Shapiro, Judy Chicago, and other artists studied in the previous chapter, opened up a new potential for bonding to the communal human past by establishing a feminine presence in the continuum of culture.

By keeping alive the dialogue between the self, art and nature, many of their foremothers bequeathed "a special promise" to these younger artists who have picked up the thread "to reclaim the natural and human world as a topic of interest" (Munro, 1979, p. 55). Through the work of these women artists we have been offered a new interpretation of our double reality which, if perceived, may provide new mappings for a cultural transformation.

Toward Nature -- Early Abstraction in Painting

Beginning with Georgia O'Keeffe in turn of the century America, we enter the same time period when Kathe Kollowitz through increasing abstraction and Lenor Finni through Surrealism were exploring their personal roots in images of women. It is the purpose of Part I of this chapter to explore the ways O'Keeffe through early abstraction and Krasner and Frankenthaler through Abstract Expressionism embraced the new modernist esthetic--the belief that art had the power to pierce the surface of appearances and release wellsprings of feeling through its correspondence in nature.

While O'Keeffe, Krasner and Frankenthaler shared many elements of style found in the works of their contemporaries, forms and meanings emerge in their work which, through a growing momentum, trace their own path through abstraction. One can correctly say that these artists are members of Abstract and Abstract Expressionist schools, but there is a "literalness" to many of their works that seem to press beyond the convention of that "Americanism" that peaked in the 1940's and 1950's (Munro, 1979, p. 235). Munro (1979) suggested that O'Keeffe's flowers may aspire to be experiences of expanding growth, Frankenthaler's work

may aspire to "be" experiences of the sky and Mitchell's may "be" walks in the country (p. 235). According to Munro's (1979) interviews with these artists, they continued to learn from correspondences in nature what form was and never abandoned the remembered sensory experiences in nature for explorations of pure and empty form. Not only did they retain the significant subject in their abstract work, but their images and forms were seen to change and transform. Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, on the other hand, leapt into pure form and gesture and began to adopt the "single image" as a trademark. As Munro (1979) noted, "this was an effective 'male modus operandi' during the coming to prominence of the Abstract Expressionists" (p. 28). Although effective, it is possible that this self-limitation caused the frightening impasse and sense of meaninglessness that many of the prominent males felt near the end of their lives. Either because of an intuitive understanding and acceptance of growth or because they had abandoned the goal of "market success," the artists discussed here were not pressured into these moulds. Lee Krasner, for example, who was married to Jackson Pollock and understood the idea of the single image, was quoted as saying: "For me, all the doors are open. One can't stand still. It takes enormous energy to keep growing and it's painful, the constant state of change. And yet I have never been able to understand the artist whose image does not change" (Munro, 1979, p. 28).

It is this continued belief in living bond between the ever-changing human and natural world and the power of art to reveal it that unites these artists. Not victims of the existential despair or premature deaths that tragically claimed many of their male colleagues,

these artists continued, often in isolation, to allow the raw material of their whole lives to invade their artistic forms.

Beginning with Georgia O'Keeffe's work, we see the signals of the arrival of Modernism to North America. At the same time, her life and work anticipates a future concern found in the Earth Art of the 1970's. The modernist esthetic, argued first by Emersonian Transcendentalists in science and later by Kandinsky in Concerning the Spiritual in Art was passed down to O'Keeffe by her progressive teachers, Dow and Amon Bennet and through the Steiglitz circle during a time when the imitative 19th century tradition still held in America (O'Keeffe, 1976). In her work, we see this modernist faith in the power of art to reveal that sense of the living bond between the human and natural world.

In one of her earliest abstract works, "Music" (1919), O'Keeffe had taken that leap from an art that imitates nature to an art that through abstract correspondences reveals underlying stratas of meaning. Two events can be seen to have married in her mind to spark this radical leap into abstraction. O'Keeffe often recalls with wonder the sense of the unknown she experienced as a young child, enchanted with the music and colors of the Dominican Catholic Church she visited. Although her sensitivity to the land and the lines and tones of music may have been awakened back in her early childhood on Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, her teacher, Bement, helped crystallize those magic images. It occurred to her in one of his classes in which students were asked to draw from music, that patterns of flowing lines and colors placed in certain relationships could play on the nerves and senses like pure and passionless music. This painting with its strands of blue and pink swelling forms presents to the viewer a symbolic expression of this inner

reality. Landscape, sound and sensuous references to the human body interweave as images in abstract form.

After teaching art in Texas schools, marrying Alfred Steiglitz and moving to New York, O'Keeffe began to reflect on the principles of shape and color of Japanese art, the Cubist, Surrealist and Expressionist works seen at the 1913 Armory Show, the ideas of Emerson on self-reliance and Kandinsky's theory of correspondence. The theory of correspondences, rooted in the Kantian view of art, suggested to O'Keeffe that nature presents the mind with a number of symbolic representations which are related to each other and evoke certain feelings in the mind and body (Munro, 1979).

By 1924, O'Keeffe had begun the rapturous flower paintings which caused such controversy and speculation in New York. The "Black Iris" (1926), so voluminous and yet so tragic in its dark translucent anatomy, is one of O'Keeffe's most unusual works of this series. Like "Two Calla Lilies on Pink" (1928) and "Jack in the Pulpit V" (1930), the flowers are blown up beyond the edges, simplified and abstracted into sensuous form. This close-up technique may have been inspired by the photographs of Paul Strand and Steiglitz. Some are reminiscent of Imogene Cunningham's photos of magnolias with erect stamens. But while these images come from O'Keeffe's perception of the real world they are also equivalents for the artists' feelings. There is something rapturous and even radical in these sensuous images. Multiple tensions exist between the part and the whole, closed and open shapes, raw edges and fleshy forms. Many people have read a sexual and feminist content into these works (Chicago, 1976). Although O'Keeffe rarely made a cause out of being a woman, it is interesting to note that only a few years before,

in 1919, the suffragette case triumphed with the passing of the 19th Amendment (Munro, 1979). In the year she painted the "Black Iris" she gave a speech to the National Woman's Party in Washington. Whatever her intent, these flowers stirred up a controversy in New York and as Munro (1979) saw it, "They spoke powerfully to the Freudian Zeitgeist and seemed to many to reveal for the first time the true nature of that perplexing creature, the Suffragette" (p. 87). Georgia O'Keeffe put it in another way: "A flower is relatively small. I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it--I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see in flowers" (O'Keeffe, 1976, p. 23).

The "Lake George Barn Series" (1918-33) are the most precisionist of her paintings with their crowded shuttered buildings that offer no escape, and small black windows that reveal no life indoors. Once again, however, these forms may be the equivalent of O'Keeffe's feeling stirred up by her visits to Lake George. It is well recorded that O'Keeffe felt restless during the summers in upstate New York (O'Keeffe, 1976). She longed for the solitude and open sensuous spaces of the New Mexico desert she had left. Only three summers after this series, she began her treks back to Taos where she worked for days on end painting the black and red hills, the dark crosses on blood red skies, the deaths heads and flowers.

In "Grey Hills" (1942) and "Pedernal and Red Hills" (1936), O'Keeffe focuses her search on the human body in landscape. By giving us a natural world she makes correlatives to our own body. Using a slightly elevated vantage point, with middle ground eliminated, she focuses the viewer on the sensuous rhythms of the hills. The sourceless

light found in all of her works recalls the mystique of earlier works and according to her teacher, Arthur Dove, was a symbolic device that linked religion, science and art at the turning point to modernism. Used not only to lend pictorial unity, this sourceless light is also an affirmation of a belief in an "underlying natural order" (Clark, 1976, p. 23). By the 1920's light had come to represent for many artists not only the unifying principle, but what Dove called the essential identifying characteristic of an individual artist. While for O'Keeffe it represented the eternal, for Frankenthaler it later came to evoke the sublime and for Mitchell the virtuous (Munro, 1979, p. 482).

In "Pelvis with Moon" (1943), O'Keeffe explores the way line is affected by light. Edges that curve into three dimensional space; edges that fade or are broken and edges that create a strange perspective may seem at first arbitrary. However, by extracting these essential lines and eliminating detail, O'Keeffe has revealed a "truthful rendition of desert sunlight on bleached bones" (Harris and Nochlin, 1976, p. 306). Through the interplay of line and shape, a tension is created between foreground and the weightless blue shapes. O'Keeffe says, "I was most interested in the holes in the bones ... what I saw through them.... They were most wonderful against the Blue--that Blue will always be there as it is now after all man's destruction is finished. I have tried to paint the Bones and the Blue" (1976, p. 74).

This painting is perhaps the most moving example of her recurring theme of motion and stillness. For O'Keeffe, these were perhaps the alternating poles of energy she found most basic to the rhythms of nature and the human body. Through her works, one feels the moving and changing world of wind upon bare hills, forms expanding and contracting,

rhythms of growth and death, cycles of night and day. There also exists a quiet and "permanent ground" in the stars, the eternal blue sky, the weathered earth and bones (Munro, 1979, p. 91). It is through these rhythmic alterations that Georgia O'Keeffe has provided for a world in need of such images "both an active model and reassurance of the permanence of some values and ideals" (Munro, 1979, p. 91).

While O'Keeffe signalled the coming of International Modernism to America, Lee Krasner was one of the first generation Abstract Expressionists who picked up the thread of this new esthetic and with Hoffman, Pollock and others, helped to shape a new art.

In an interview with Munro (1979), Krasner talks of the main events that influenced the direction of her life and art and directed her on a path different from many of her male contemporaries.

First, she recalls the wild natural surroundings of her home in Brooklyn, the synagogue and the linear patterns of the scriptural illuminations. These images gave her a feeling for gestural line in nature. Then was her decision to defect from Judaism because of the oppressed position of women in the church. Reflecting on her aversion to dogma and narrow ideologies, this decision confirmed her belief in her self worth and the importance of independent thought. Her subsequent decision to replace her faith with art led her to future involvements with the W.P.A. The government murals she executed at this time introduced her to the huge scale found in her later works. Later, a class with Hans Hoffman introduced her to a feeling for nature "imploded into the rational structure of cubism" (Munro, 1979).

In "Milkweed," a highly charged line traces razor thin pods that soar upward across several torn block shapes and fall through space to

the ground. The dark shapes create a tension with the lines as they move in and out of space. Unlike the clear cut cubist line, hers is intense, thrusting and charged with feeling. Hoffman's system of push-pulls and interrelated thrusts may have been the device which Krasner transformed to create an all-over field of energy. However, correspondences to nature and her life were still visible in her images. The linear patterns she so admired in the scriptural texts can be seen in her paintings but now they are free to explore space and evoke nature's dynamic energy.

It was at this point that Krasner met Jackson Pollock, whose breakthrough freed many of the Abstract Expressionists to take on the canvas as a "thing in itself" to "work up" in "Surreal automatic gestures" (Munro, 1979, p. 113). For a short period during their eleven year marriage Krasner, like Pollock, gave up her nature-derived line to explore pure gestural line and form. She soon felt this to be a mistaken decision and returned for inspiration to the raw material of her life and nature (Nemser, 1973).

During these years, Krasner was overshadowed by Pollock and the "erascible Eighteen" as they began consolidating their idiom and ridding their works of any Surreal, Cubist or figurative elements. Although she was criticised for not taking this "conceptual leap into the future" she rejected the closed ideology of formalist esthetics and the single image in favor of an esthetic that operated between the poles of nature, art and life. In "Bald Eagle" (1955), Krasner returned to her old work, and collaged old and new images into a unified whole. Nemser (1973) suggests that this reliance on instinct to return to the source was more

a sign of her prophetic gift and the strength of her "life force" than her failure (p. 44).

Her fear of the consequences that lay ahead for some who accepted closed theories and the single image can be seen in "Prophesy" (1956). In this highly disturbing image of half-man, half-beast, a heavily lidded prophetic eye hovers in the upper right corner. This work was painted in what Krasner describes as some truly anguished months when her despairing husband faced a crisis of emptiness and ceased painting altogether. "Prophesy" foreshadowed the great tragedy of Pollock's death and many of his colleagues (Munro, 1979, p. 112). Years later, when the events of her life in this heavily burdened time led her to analysis, Krasner recalled a childhood memory in which this archetypal "half-man, half-beast" leapt out at her in a fearful dream (Munro, 1979, p. 104).

After partly recovering from these difficult times, Krasner painted 17 huge canvases. Their titles, "Listen," "Earth Green," "Springbeat" and "Upstream" tell a poignant tale. Having abandoned the harsh dialectic of black and white color, which for many of the Abstract Expressionists became associated with the horrors of World War II and the life/death balance, Krasner flooded these canvases with whole fields of abstract green leaf forms, fuschia, mauve and white flower-cloud images and yellow light. These works were praised by notable critic Clement Greenberg, but Krasner instinctively moved on to explore aspects of that darker unresolved side of herself.

There was still a whole store of conflicting emotions to assimilate after returning to the empty Pollock home; great waves of dark amber and white worked themselves to resolution in "Charred Landscape" (1960), and

"White Rage" (1960). Greenberg was disappointed with this work but Krasner, believing that real growth encompasses both past and present, anguish and joy, continued in this idiom until its meaning was resolved (Nemser, 1973).

In later works like "Majuscule" (1971) and "Palimgenesis" (1971), colors had flooded back into her expansive planes of flat color. The images of organic growth can be read as gestalts in the way positive and negative shapes interrelate in rhythmic activity. Krasner says: "I merge the organic with what I call the abstract. I see both scales. I need to merge these two into the ever present" (Nemser, 1973, p. 44).

Finally, in the 1960's Krasner emerged from the dark shadows of the movement to claim her place as a survivor. The modernist movement, originally bound to international exchange and faith in the power of art to explore the underlying stratas of meaning in life and nature had ended with a deep sense of "despair, parochialism and male chauvinism" (Munro, 1979, p. 50). However, by rejecting all the closed ideologies presented to her in her life, her religion, patriarchy, existentialism, formalist esthetics, and the single image, she maintained her great faith in the human spirit and nature's organic rhythms of change. She reached for a holistic integration of her art and life and was there in the 1960's and 1970's to take her place and pass on her special promise to a younger generation of artists working in nature through abstraction. Her shows at the White Chapel Art Gallery in London (1965) and at the Whitney (1973) were received with overwhelming enthusiasm. She has become a model for many in recent years--a survivor and a greatly gifted artist who revealed a new organic vision of our double reality.

A number of other women artists of the first wave of American abstraction worked idioms and styles other than Abstract Expressionism. Each contributed to the melting pot out of which the new American art was to come, but more significantly each retrained the source of inspiration in the double reality of life and nature and gave it new form.

There was the Canadian, Emily Carr, who through her expressionist B.C. landscape images upheld the dignity and independence of the native people and tapped the rhythms of the B.C. rainforest. There was Alma THomas, child of a black family in the deep south, who tapped the motifs of African art to arrive at her own idiom--in the present decade called Color-Field painting. There was Louise Bourgeois who drew upon the sources of subjective feeling and memory to create erotic, appealing and threatening environments out of latex rubber and cement. Finally there was Louise Nevelson, whose Constructivist wood environments made a "metaphysical proposition in a faith depleted age" (Munro, 1979, p. 20).

During the 1940's, there was also a second generation of Abstract Expressionists who found new ways of "bringing the landscape home," as their teacher, Hans Hoffman, put it. Enriched by the stream of new input into the movement and working in an idiom well rooted in early 1940's, Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell and Elaine de Kooning took off to explore forms of relationships to nature that probed inner psychic landscapes as well as outer physical orbits.

This second generation of Abstract Expressionists were born to be winners. Nurtured by supportive families, sheltered from the depression and the war, and schooled in the progressive egalitarian high schools of the 1930's, these artists gained a strong footing. However, World War

It had a subduing effect on the spirit of optimism and the reactionary views concerning women in and out of the art world in the 1950's caused many of these artists to turn inward to pursue their self-appointed artistic goals in private. Machismo was in the air and few of these women artists were invited to the male bonding places like the Cedars or the Club. Barnett Newman's famous image of "Vir Heroicus Sublimis" became a symbol for what critic Herbert Crehan called that "proud and inflexible archaic male sensibility lifted from the Old Testament" (Munro, 1979, p. 484). These women worked under this shadow. Women got shows those days only through connections with men and few made it in the increasingly competitive and market-oriented gallery system.

Helen Frankenthaler's "soak and stain" technique, while seen in the 1950's to be an extension of Pollock's gestural drip idiom, allowed her to retain the nature-derived subject without resorting to illusionistic uses of space--a goal dearly sought for but unattained by many others who restricted themselves to a pure form. In "Mountains and Sea" (1952), the lyrical biomorphic shapes recall the influence of Arschile Gorky and Wassily Kandinsky while the technique of soaking and staining canvas with free gesture recall aspects of Pollock's action paintings. In this work, however, Frankenthaler went beyond these idioms to reach a new synthesis of meaning and form. She added color and light to Pollock's breakthrough and, as Barbara Rose (1971) stated, she "managed to change the fracture and surface of painterly painting by dissociating for the first time the painterly from the loaded brush" (p. 57). This first formulation of the atmospheric image was inspired by a trip to Nova Scotia and Cape Breton in 1952 in which she saw foreground (sea) and background (mountains) in a dialectical relationship.

Upon her return to New York, she decided to thin down her oil paint and with her whole body in action, pour paint onto raw canvas on the floor. This innovative technique, like the spontaneous immediate process of watercolor, allowed her to integrate the surrealist faith that intuitive forces within could reveal deep universal meaning through form. This spontaneous process served Frankenthaler, whose prepared mind understood the qualities of abstract space and form and their ability to evoke feeling. While painting "Mountains and Sea" she said, "I had the landscape in my arms" (Rose, 1971, p. 54).

In later works, "Flood" (1967), "Jacobs Ladder" (1957), and "Interior Landscape" (1964), Frankenthaler moved further toward the edge of invention by eliminating the use of applied line to indicate edges of space. Instead, blurred or sharp edges are created by the intersection of flooded colors. In nature, line exists only where two forms meet and Frankenthaler captured this vital edge. In these works her organic color is associative and illusive. Precisely at the time Pollock, Kline and de Kooning were turning to impasto blacks and whites, Frankenthaler began exploring a bizarre palette of colors. Beiges, mauves, greens, rusty browns and reds are found in unusual juxtapositions. The "mystical" white of the canvas corresponds to the light which permeates color in the natural world and it glows through her translucent washes of earth and sky. While her images are abstract, she has captured an essence of the underlying structure of nature's forces through a world of color, shape and form.

In many works like "Blue Tide" (1963), Frankenthaler overcame illusionist space and the figure ground dialectic that plagued Pollock and others. By marrying figure and ground, and sinking both into the

surface of the canvas she maintained a balance of energy between subject/object, gesture/stillness, line/plane, emotion/tranquility. Here the upper crimson shape, for example, appears distant or far depending on the shapes and colors of its neighboring forms. Nothing exists in isolation in her works--it is all part of a holistic field of energy and color.

Frankenthaler, either with hand, sponge, brush or by pouring, controls and moves with her liquid forms through a highly developed sense of hand-body coordination. The kind of movement she creates--the billowing, churning, splashing, flooding--are not only weather and ocean related energies, but they are body movements which correspond to emotions and states of mind (Rose, 1971). A unity is created between her art, herself and nature as she works in this new sphere. If art and poetry are reconstructions of the world or "emotions recollected in tranquility" (as Wordsworth said), or "emotions elevated to a new state" as Cassirer (1944) suggested, Frankenthaler's painting is art of the highest order (p. 163).

Without resorting to imitations of nature, Frankenthaler's work evokes a memory of the emotion as an experienced moment of a total reality. While retaining loose abstract painterliness she achieved a sense of deep optical rather than illusionistic space; while retaining her images of nature she resolved the figure ground dialectic, and without abandoning the modernist faith she went beyond stylistic innovation to find secret meaning incarnate in form.

Other women artists worked this old-new ground of Abstract Expressionism to give new understanding of our double reality. There is Joan Mitchell, whose paintings such as "Posted" (1977) and "Quator for Betsy

Jolas" (1976) presents us with a constant dialogue between nature's cycles of winter, spring and summer as the equivalents for the life, death, rebirth cycle of life. As Munro (1979) has seen, "hers is a psychic struggle for which we take the natural as symbol" (p. 183). There is Elaine de Kooning, whose image of the Towering Male presents us with a symbol of the patriarchal dynamics of culture and society. Finally, there is Nell Blaine, and Grace Hartigan, whose light-filled dispersive images of interiors and urban landscapes give insight into modern man's relationship to the natural world.

While on one hand, the artists discussed here adapted many of the formal devices shared by others in the movement and embraced the original modernist faith in the power of art to reveal truths about our present reality, their work opens perhaps more than others to what Munro (1979) sees as a surprising "directness" of experience and disarming "literalness that seems to push beyond conventions of mid-century art" (p. 208). As Munro (1979) says, Frankenthaler's works in this ambiguous sense may be said to aspire to 'be' experiences of the sky and Mitchell's may 'be' walks in the country" (p. 208).

These forebearers laid the ground work in two dimensions with oil and canvas for a generation of sculptors like Eva Hesse and recent earth artists who make literal use of the subjects they painted. While Mary Frank's and Mary Anne Caruthers-Aikin's works are literally made out of earth, Nancy Holt's and Mary Miss's use of space, literally incorporates multiple views, protracted distances and separate spaces. Time is in this new work in a way that it never was in past sculpture or painting. While O'Keeffe used painterly light to evoke a sense of infinite time, Eva Hesse uses natural light with translucent materials, and Nancy Holt

uses the real light of the sun and stars to mark cyclical time in her "Sun Tunnels." Mary Miss's involves the viewer in sculptural space which can only be experienced by moving through it temporally. She gives us a present active sense of time rather than illusionistic time.

While Frankenthaler created a non-illusionistic deep space by almost merging foreground and background in layered stains, Mary Miss creates a real architectural space in which one's own space co-exists with what is perceived. Alice Aycock imbues space with emotional coloration by creating equivalents in architectural space.

These young environmental sculptors extend many of the correspondences explored by O'Keeffe, Frankenthaler and Krasner and transform them through the meshes of their minds into new sculptural forms. While Abstract Expressionists reached into the raw material of their lives and experiences in nature, these young artists probe further into the fields of science and architecture as well as the structures of the mythical imagination, and the self to tap original sources of experience and to re-establish the unity of spirit and nature.

Nature and Physicality -- Organic Use of Materials

The second group of artists discussed in Part II of this chapter came into their own in the free experimentation and radicalism of the 1960's. During this decade much that was conventional in art was questioned--easel painting, traditional sculpture--and a bewildering emergence of new isms--Pop, Op, Conceptual art--set the stage with a new cast of characters. Jasper Johns, Robert Rauchenberg, Andy Warhol and others replaced the older artists of the Abstract Expressionist era.

From under the shadow of a heavily male dominated art scene, a

number of women artists began to take their own paths with non-art materials. Working with latex, rubber, plastic, rope and fabric, artists such as Eva Hesse, Lee Bontecou, Louise Bourgeois and Lynda Benglis began experiments in sculpture that explored the human body and its relationships to the dynamics of nature. They tapped the sources of subjective feeling directly through their organic use of materials, context and situation in order to embrace more concrete experiences in three dimensional form. Their art opens more than other recent art to a surprising directness of experience embedded in the nature of materials and spatial perception. Through the use of environment the focus has shifted from objects to forms in space to reveal more temporal kinesthetic dimensions of subjective experience.

A number of important developments characterized the cultural and social world of the 1960's which contributed to the emergence of women artists in this group. It was an era of economic boom which on one hand created a fiercely competitive climate in the art world but, on the other hand, provided new opportunities. It was also a period when art departments of universities were graduating women artists in greater numbers. Then there was the birth control pill which, by 1965, changed life for virtually all women and provided a means for self-liberation. Finally, by 1969 there were the beginnings of the women's movement which originated in the writings of Betty Friedon and Simone de Beauvoir. "1970 was the tremendous watershed," says Lippard, and a community of women artists was born (1976).

Beginning in the early 1960's, with Louise Bourgeois, we see the emergence of environmental sculptures that use abstract organic forms to explore women's experience. Her "Lairs" (1964), recalling the "organic

origins of architecture from caves and animal burrows to wasps and swallows' nests" reveal an early precedent for "thinking sculpturally from the inside" (Lippard, 1979, p. 88). This new approach to sculpture extended in the sculpture-architecture discussed in part III merges inside and outside forms as a symbol for body-house images.

The latex pieces hang, fold and rise with erotic combinations of limpness and stiffness and are the plaster interior pieces turned inside out. Soft latex and hard plaster and marble are materials that tap subconscious feelings and evoke a sense of what Lippard calls "body ego" (1976, p. 187-190). The hanging nest-like bags also refer to skeins of wool associated with the artist's mother and are nostalgic references to her childhood in France.

Nature is also an indirect and perhaps subconscious source of many of her images. In "Les Repas du Soir" (The Evening Meal), amoeboid forms suggest fetal imagery. Split shells of wood revealing physical tension can be seen as a metaphor for anxiety and birth. In "Le Trani Episode" (1971), phallic images are at times "benign, fat, nestling, almost motherly" (Lippard, 1976, p. 243). Bourgeois, aware of the eroticism in her work, sees such merging of opposites as a youthful perception of the dangerous father and protective mother (Lippard, 1976).

Bourgeois' images of women and women's experience are ambivalent in the way she juxtaposes nurturing forms of growth with the emergence of sharp, threatening forms of oppression. "Confrontation" (1978) though not figurative, integrates symbolic references to sexuality and the destructive and seductive aspects of women's and men's roles in Western society. More importantly, however, Bourgeois' work demonstrates a new

directness and honesty which, unlike much of the minimal sculpture of the 1960's, reveals an intimate bond between art and its maker.

Lee Bontecou was also a major force during the sculptural renaissance of the 1960s and influenced some later materials-and-process-oriented artists like Eva Hesse. Her untitled sculptures of 1959 and 1960, sculpted from the canvas of worn out conveyor belts and sewn onto steel frames, are capable of numerous interpretations. According to Munro (1979), to some they have overtones of antiquity, calling to mind the skinned flattened bird masks of Chinese bronzes. To others they may be the icons of industrialism or the totems of war. To many, especially women tuned into a feminist consciousness, these shapes "were sexual apertures, the private parts of Maloch's mother herself; splayed on the marble examining tables of museum walls... but whatever your predilection, that black funnel spoke to you" (Munro, 1979, p. 378).

Out of these sensual and psychic needs has come a tendency of more recent women artists like Eva Hesse to fuse the formal with emotional intensity, in experimental sculpture. Eva Hesse, perhaps the most abstract and also the most prophetic of these artists, between the fall of 1965 and her death at thirty-four in 1970 made 70 sculptures which have assured her place as a major artist.

Emerging out of the turbulent 1960's, Hesse witnessed on one level the bewildering and challenging social/political upheavals in society and, on the other hand, the eclecticism of the fast paced emergence of Op, Pop, Minimal, Conceptual, Happenings, and other isms in the art world. Her original involvement with Abstract Expressionism evolved through experiments in various idioms, to her own disarmingly honest

sculptural experiments that with "excruciating visual directness" explore the human body (Munro, 1979, p. 53).

Having suffered numerous family tragedies and deaths related to the horrors of World War II, Eva Hesse struggled with the absurdities and contradictions of the human condition in the context of her own self-doubts. Given to much psychological insight and self-discussion concerning her life, Hesse was aware of the implications of all her actions as part of her internal history. Within this context, her life and art became so close that in one way they were aspects of the same process. So while her prophetic sculptures made with non-art materials--rubber, latex, rope and cloth--do not reveal literal references to her physical being or life history, they are the projections of an externalized selfhood in a distilled abstract form. They are perhaps what Robert Smithson referred to as "psychic models" of a "very interior person" struggling with irrational forces and unknown factors of her felt life (Lippard, 1976, p. 6).

"Hang Up" (1966) is a rectangular cloth-bound frame measuring six by seven feet. From it a great metal loop protrudes about 10 feet. The relationship between the hard rational geometry of the frame and the irrational looped appendage can be seen as "absurd" in one sense and symbolic of deeper levels of meaning on another. Hesse says, "it has a kind of depth or soul or absurdity or meaning or feeling on intellect that I don't always get" (Lippard, 1976, p. 157). The empty rectangle, bound with shades of dark and lighter fabric, may be read as the rational objective side of Hesse. The 'absurd' loop which yearns for freedom but withdraws back to the rational structure may be a metaphor for the intuitive "irrational" force within her. Taken to a more

universal plane, the rectangle may be a metaphor for the rational, masculine polarity in Western culture which dominates or imprisons the intuitive feminine aspect of the continuum.

Hesse said, "my life and art have not been separated. They have been together." From a more formal point of view she says "Hang Up" deals with a tension between two- and three-dimensional shapes, "it is a pictureless picture from whose surface a drawn line escapes into real space" (Lippard, 1976, p. 56). In this piece, Hesse went beyond the rational structure of minimal art or the pure gesture of Abstract Expressionism. She subjected herself to both pure physical risk in a gestural use of materials and the ordered structure of the grid to explore the unknown relationship between the two.

"Contingent" (1969), was one of Hesse's last and most successful synthesis of beauty and ugliness, order and chaos. It is eight luminous rectangular strips of fiberglass and rubberized cheesecloth--each worked, shrunk and pulled into various proportional and textural changes. In this serial work she uses perfection and imperfection, regularity and irregularity, opacity and translucency to reconcile the opposites of reason and emotion. Lippard sees that "in combinations of a shape and highly sensuous textures, the way forms swell or sag, lie or lean, the ways in which one can feel one's own body assuming these positions or relating those shapes to another body, Hesse's existential humor and eroticism meet" (Lippard, 1976, p. 187). What was formerly part of the metaphorical and expressive fabric of painting is now offered in a literal way in three dimensions. In a period of Minimalism when neatness and straight edges were close to "the godliness of success," Hesse continued to explore the organic form which was real to

the sense of touch and which occupied real space (Lippard, 1976, p. 199).

The humorous aspect of "Contingent" may be its unexpectedness. Once Hesse established an order in her serial arrangement of components, she abandoned it to explore more subjective relationships. In "Addendum" (1967), neat rows of rubber tubing emerge from small breast-like wooden forms and fall to the floor in abandoned confusion. In "Hang Up" the outrageous loop leaps out of the picture frame eight or ten feet into the viewers' space and defies the structure of the picture plane. In that heyday of structure and rigor Hesse seemed very radical and eccentric. She challenged all systems and dogma to arrive at her own synthesis of logic and intuition.

The eroticism in her art is that behind the abstract forms lurks a submerged personage or "the image of a human figure ... a primitive or dream life incarnation," and "fearful attraction of contact" (Lippard, 1976, p. 185). Although, as critic Lucy Lippard suggests in her major book on Eva Hesse, it would be a mistake to see Hesse consciously anthropomorphizing her work--"the plaintive aspect, or distant resemblances to a gawky, childlike human figure ... in pieces like 'Lacoon,' 'Sans I,' and 'Vinculum I' ... emerges from a profound identification between the artist, her materials and her forms" (p. 187). Her bandaged forms with cords which spew forth in search of connection, could be read as surrogate mother forms, maybe for the mother Hesse lost. The bean-shaped images may read as phallic, the nets and grids as forms of bondages or imprisonment of women in a patriarchal society.

Hesse died just before the Women's Movement emerged as a major force in the art world, and although she saw herself as not being taken

seriously as a woman artist and "almost a freak," she was aware and spoke of the injustice she had suffered as a woman. After reading de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, she says, "I've always suffered with these thoughts but now I've temporarily found a spokesman" (Lippard, 1976, p. 205).

If decisions are directed originally through one's body needs and if it is through sensuous tactile impressions of the world that we begin the process of image making, Hesse tapped that common source. Through her materials and abstract forms she has revealed and reconciled submerged elements of ourselves rarely externalized in such moving visual form.

Through their experiments with non-art materials artists like Bontecou, Bougeoisis, and Hesse liberated forms of inner space previously unexplored in art. Their work provides a framework for further understanding of new uses of space and time in the environmental sculpture, studied in Part III.

Toward Environment - Sculptures Architecture

Much of the environmental sculpture of the 1970's is characterized by a return to an ecological awareness of nature and use of expanded notions of time and space found in mythical thought. Much of the traditional sculpture of the past is unrelated to the natural environment, exists without a temporal base and involves uses of abstract space, images and representations. The focus of environmental sculpture having grown out of the sculptural experiments of the 1960s has shifted from sculptural object to sculptural space. It can only be perceived temporally as one moves through and around the piece in which spaces are

concrete and real. Often evolving out of the site and concerned with the rhythms and laws of nature, contemporary environmental sculptures have gone a step further to reunite art with the natural and human realities.

By tracing the expanded concepts of space and time of contemporary environmental sculpture to their roots in mythological thought as described by Ernst Cassirer (1944), it is possible to develop a broader esthetic base for understanding and evaluating the public art of the 1970's and 1980's (Staley, 1977, 1980).

Ernst Cassirer (1944), highly regarded for his writing on the philosophy of symbolic form and philosophy of culture, and suggests that "there is no natural phenomenon and no phenomenon of human life that is not capable of mythical interpretation and which does not call for such an interpretation." Myth, he claims (like the memory of childhood play), overcomes passivity and gives the original life and force to more abstract forms of esthetic and theoretical expression. For environmental sculptors, mythical concepts of space, time and place provided the impetus and structure for artistic expression which functions in harmony with nature. The current use of the mythological imagination has provided the means for a reconciliation of art and nature.

In order to develop the relationship of mythical concepts of space and time in contemporary earth art, a fuller discussion of the mythological imagination is required. In the chapters "Myth and Religion," and "The Human World of Space and Time," in his book An Essay on Man (1944), Cassirer provides an excellent framework for an understanding of the dynamics of mythological thought in regard to nature, space and

time. This chapter will first outline these concepts and then relate them to particular examples of contemporary environmental sculpture.

1. The Mythical View of Nature is, according to Cassirer (1944), characterized by a deep feeling of sympathy and solidarity with all of life. This unity is based on feeling and emotion rather than on thought. Whereas scientific thought describes and explains nature through classifications, categories and systems, mythical thought experiences all of nature as forming a continuous whole. Magical rituals fuse primitive man to each other and to all living things. Ancient earth monuments celebrate the seasons and cycles of nature. Totemism and animal worship assert man's bond to his animal ancestors. The unity of spirit and nature are bound together in the view that the great female mother is embodied in all of nature and in the earth itself.
2. Mythical Time. For primitive man time is conceived of in terms of cycles of life and seasons of growth. Past and present blend into each other without sharp lines of demarcation. The unity of universal time is manifest in the mythical view that one has lived in one's ancestors and one lives on in one's descendants. The law of sudden metamorphosis is the law of spontaneous change where suddenly everything may be turned into everything. Time is not conceived of as a pure form but a never resting, continuous stream of events in which nothing returns in identical shape and no progressive order exists.
3. Mythical Space is, according to Cassirer, the space of action and concrete events. It functions as an emotional coloration given to all life's events and qualities. Space for primitive man is

related to the visual, tactile and acoustic senses. It is not a system of abstract geometric relations removed from real experience as it is in our modern concept of space. Mythical space is experienced in the present in concrete actions through time.

Performance art of the 1960's and 1970's opened the door to broader concepts of space and time for environment artists. Francoise Sullivan of Quebec, in "Dance dans la Neige" (1948), is more concerned with the space of action than abstract space found in the art forms of the past. This piece explores the relationship of dancer to the winter environment and expresses a sympathetic emotional feeling for nature. Sullivan, like other Dada artists, helped to eradicate the abstract and permanent form in favor of more temporal kinesthetic arrangement of forms.

Like performance artists, contemporary environmental sculptors have acted on a need to share their art with a broader audience than that imposed by the gallery art market. Having departed from the individualistic model of the artist as hero and visionary, isolated from social interaction, the contemporary environmental sculptor functions more as a public figure (Woolacot, 1976). Jack Burnham (1974), in Artist as Shaman, suggests that these artists are like the shaman of preliterate societies. They fill an active role in uniting man with each other and with all of nature.

Nancy Graves, in her huge wall piece "Shaman" (1970) gives visual form to the artist's identification with the mythological imagination. Using steel, latex, gauze, oilpaint, marble dust, and acrylic, she recreates the image of the shaman and alludes to this important role in unifying man and nature. In her huge taxidermy-sculpture "Camels" (1968), a set of four life-sized fur covered Bactrian camels, one is

reminded of another aspect of the mythical view of nature. Like the practice of totemism, Graves asserts man's bond to the animal world. Her "Camels" evoke a sense of wonder and amazement for all their aptness and ability to adapt to a harsh climate. In her film "Izy Bouker" (1971) one is left to meditate on these marvelous creatures as she reclaims the natural world as a topic of artistic interest. According to Munro (1979), Graves' sculptures are a witty amalgam of natural history and art which signalled a turn in the tide of formalist concerns and helped create a direction for other artists of the 1970s and 1980s. The art critic Frankenstein (1969) suggested that "Camels" was "the most subversive thing that had happened to art since the early modernists abandoned the subject altogether" (p. 25).

In the movement from the gallery to the outdoors, many recent artists like Judy Todd, in her earthmound "Hill Reclamation Ritual" (1978), have brought art closer to the ancient memories of the earth as a great female mother. Eric Neuman (1963), in his book The Great Mother, produces mytho-anthropological evidence that the identification of earth with mother is a general human phenomenon found in all cultures up until modern times. Paul Shepard (1967), in Man in the Landscape, claims that it was the advance of Judeo-Christian religions that replaced the worship of the great goddess embodied in mother earth with the worship of male gods who dominated the earth. The resulting fear and desire to control nature created the "profoundly antimaterialistic separation between spirit and nature." Freud (Shepard, 1967) suggests that the ancient view of earth as female still operates in hidden ways in dreams and in art. "Hill Reclamation Ritual" gives expression to this mythical view of mother nature.

Cassirer (1946) wrote in Language and Myth, that "The sun and the moon were only intelligible to prehistoric people when copied in terms of the human body, and mythical time is always conceived both as the time of natural processes and the events of natural life." An ancient example of this mythical concept of time is evident in the huge "Silbury Hill" (2660 B.C.), found in Wiltshire, England. According to Dames (1976), this is one of four seasonal monuments which celebrate spring, summer, fall and winter in the forms of the human body. This earth mound, an autumnal image of the pregnant vegetarian goddess, has re-emerged in the works of current environmental artists such as Maryanne Caruthers-Aikin, Judy Todd, Robert Smithson and Alice Aycock. In "Garden Mounds" (1976-78), Caruthers-Aikin photodocuments her sculpture garden--12 earth mounds or raised beds which are places for dreaming as well as burial. A sense of time as the natural stages of human life is given material form in this piece which serves as a "psychological nutrition diet-testing unit in conjunction with the University of Oregon Medical School" (Lippard, 1981).

Nancy Holt also explores a mythical sense of time in "Sun Tunnels" (1973-76), located in the deserts of the Great West Basin, Utah. Although she uses more objective forms, this piece also explores the cycles of seasonal cosmological time. Holt (1977) says:

... by marking the yearly extreme positions of the sun, Sun Tunnels indicates the cyclical time of the solar year. The center of the work becomes the center of the world. The changing patterns of light from our sun star mark the days and hours as it passes through the sun tunnel star holes. These apertures which reflect circles and ellipses of light on the concave walls of the 18' long tunnels, bring back to earth the motion of the sun and planets. (p. 30)

In Holt's mythical view of time, the past, present and future blend without sharp demarcation. She says, "time is not just a mental concept

or mathematical abstraction ... time takes on a physical presence in the desert. Rocks are ageless.... The desert evokes a sense of rotating space and universal time" (1977, p. 31).

In her piece entitled "Circle" (1979), constructed out of local stone on the Western Washington University Campus, the participant is engaged in a more physical and concrete encounter with time and space. Several huge concentric stone circles entice the viewer into their spaces. Rounded entrance ways and window-like openings provide telescopic glimpses of the environment as one moves through the piece. As in mythic space, Holt's circles require of the viewer more of concrete actions than understanding of images and representations found in the abstract spaces of traditional sculpture. Movement through and around the circles imparts a feeling of enclosure and stability, yet the openings create a sense of freedom by drawing into the piece the expansive outdoor spaces (Lippard, 1979).

The circular shape often used by Holt is, according to Kepes (1957) in Morphology in Art and Science, an ancient symbol of unity, stability and divine harmony and suggests the cyclical nature of time. It has been used in ancient cultures in huge monuments such as the "Great Circle at Stonehenge" and the "Ring of Brodgar" in Orkney, Scotland, perhaps to give material form to the mythic view of man's unity and solidarity with nature.

Mary Miss engages the viewer in topological space in her untitled work (1973) constructed on a Hudson River landfill. Because of its immense size and sequential layout of five wooden forms, this piece cannot be perceived in one glance. The viewer must move through the

work which in time reveals a series of changing perspectives of proximity, separation, openness and closure. As the large holes cut in the fence-like forms are perceived, the sand, the river and the New Jersey setting are telescoped into the interior space. Miss carefully integrates her sculpture into the environment so that object and site become one.

In another work entitled "Parimeters, Pavilions, Decoys" (1979, constructed on the grounds of the Nassau County Museum of Fine Arts, Miss incorporates four structures which must be experienced temporally and sequentially. A central square pit with a protruding ladder and three towers remain partly hidden from casual sight when standing on her field of activity. The viewer is compelled by her cues to travel to the perimeters, heights and depths of her piece to experience the objective and subjective meaning of the work. The lofty towers and subterranean pit cut under the earth's surface allow us to tap our own memories and recreate our own idiosyncratic spaces. Shepherd's (1967) description of travel for primitive man in which the inner spirit world is co-existent with the outer world, where each new place contains subjective and objective clues to the next, finds expression in Miss's work. Her attraction to the dualities of inside/outside and action/rest in the Nassau piece and "Blind Set" (1976) recall Emerson's open-closed archetypal symbols. They are, he claims, the basic phases of our feelings as well as nature's forms (1971). Miss returns to us this original sense of space--a synthesis of feeling and activity experienced in childhood and mythical life.

A quieting, soothing sense of space is produced in the work of the Canadian sculptress, Jackie Winsor. Her wrapped and bound works like

"Bound Square" (1972), and "Four Corners" (1972) involve that process of ritualistic repetition which by the 1960's was seen to carry a conscious political statement (Alloway, 1976). Munro (1979) adds that, "If Gertrude Stein's diction and rhythm were the immediate model, people all over the world have attested to the quieting effect of repeated hand or body movement" (p. 431) in weaving or chopping wood. Jackie Winsor says, "when you repeat an action again and again you produce an effect of certainty or serenity" (Munro, 1979, p. 432).

The heavy, rough-hewn logs and rope forms seem to recall the artist's origins in Newfoundland and her childhood as the daughter of carpenters and granddaughter of a farmer-fisherman. In a paper concerning Cassirer's view of space and time applied to contemporary sculpture, Rosalie Staley (1980) discovers that "there is an affinity to the Japanese "MA" spatial concept in Jackie Winsor's early sculptures. In ancient Japanese architecture, 'MA' is a sense of place which is open to change ... a consciousness of space in depth" (Staley, 1980, pp. 14, 15). Winsor's "Burnt Piece" (1977-78) shows this consciousness of natural space as a changing place, open to cycles of natural destruction and transformation. Her sculptures reveal a quiet perception of space which is in harmony with natural cycles and rhythms and suggestive of "simpler," more integrated times.

Having journeyed through the spaces of some environmental sculpture we have arrived at the concept of shelter--the natural habitat for the inner and outer experience. In a talk given by artist Alice Aycock in San Francisco in 1979, she referred to the writings of Gaston Bachelard (1964), in which he asserts the phenomenology of the house as a metaphor for the universe and the cellar as a metaphor for "the subterranean

forces" of the unconscious mind (p. 18). In her talk, she described her interest in "real" spaces which create feelings and stir up both mythical and childhood memories. She referred to the small passageways into Egyptian tombs and how the restriction of their size impinged upon the person entering them in both a physical and emotional way.

In "Williams College Project" (1974), Aycock entices the viewer into an earth-covered concrete chamber measuring 4 feet by 6 feet and 2 feet high. Because of the angle of the opening and the size of the chamber, the cellar is impossible to enter and a tension is created. The viewer is forced to complete the image and to call upon his/her associations of dark, underground places. In this piece, Aycock gives physical concrete form to the enticing but threatening forces suggested by a journey into the dark well of the unconscious. Aycock's pieces recall memories based on the concrete emotional experiences of childhood and mythic space rather than on the abstract notions of space inherent in modern architecture.

In her "Small House on Stilts" (1978), Aycock also makes her enticing sky house impossible to inhabit. One imagines oneself moving up her structures because of recognizable entrances, rooms, etc., but once again the wish is only realized as in dreams--by the very act of being uttered. By manipulating the symbolism of the attic as a metaphor for the conscious rational mind she instills her space with objective and subjective meanings. The towering aspirations of the logical mind are given a humorous twist in this piece. Her work seems to satirize, with its strange angles and odd supports, architectural monuments created according to rational systems of abstract space. In her architectural structures, she returns to shelter, a space which is

articulate of more emotion and which expresses the ambiguities of the deepest human desires (Kuspit, 1980). Her use of materials, earth, concrete and unpainted wood, reinforces the primordial quality of her meaning. Cassirer's view of mythic space, as the space of action and emotional coloration given to forms and events, is found most dramatically in Aycock's narrative structures.

Mythical concepts of space and time have emerged most visible in the environmental sculpture of the 1970's. Entropy, ecology, seasonal and cosmological time, the present tense of space and the space of action and emotion, are contemporary concepts which find their roots in the mythological imagination. In this chapter, I have attempted to show how mythic concepts of time and space, described by Ernst Cassirer, have provided artists with a link to the deepest sources of meaning in nature and to the deepest sources of the self.

According to Newman (1963), the history of natural science shows that a man's view of nature develops parallel to his experience of his own nature. Environmental artists have introduced their own critical esthetic standards based on personal experience of nature, time and space with those of traditional mythology. Having integrated and also transcended mere repetition or reproduction of mythic space and time, many environmental artists have taken the first step to bridging the schism between culture and nature and creating a truly original public art.

CHAPTER VII

A CURRICULUM MODEL FOR THE INQUIRY INTO THE LIVES
AND WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY WOMEN ARTISTSIntroduction: Objectives of the Unit

Although a number of art educators have been working toward the goal of non-sexism in art education through individual research efforts, practical and direct efforts such as the development of curriculum materials on women artists have been almost non-existent. It is the purpose of this final chapter to begin to fill this gap by outlining a high school unit on "Women Artists of the Twentieth Century." This model, developed and implemented by the author in a secondary art program, adapts some of the ideas discussed in the previous chapters to the needs of secondary students and the goals of aesthetic education.

The unit is intended as a supplement to the more traditional art history programs implemented in secondary schools. It is hoped, however, that the time will come when these compensatory programs are unnecessary and that women artists' contributions to art history are fully integrated into the mainstream--into teacher training courses, into modern survey tests, and into curriculum materials available to art educators.

It is important that all students at this time have access to the work and life stories of women artists and that they are allowed to identify themselves and their relationships to the world not only through a men's perception of reality but also that of women. No part of history can have meaning for students unless it connects with a broad range of experiences, concerns and interests. An art history program is

inadequate that fails to assist all students in gaining an appreciation of the arts of other cultures and of men and women. In regards to female students, it is through identification with women as well as male artists that they can overcome a lack of self esteem, the fear of success and a sense of isolation that stems from both social conditioning and a culture that has neglected the artistic contributions of their sex. As artist Judy Chicago (1977) stated in her book, Through The Flower:

The acceptance of women as authority figures or as role models is an important step in female education. If one sees a woman who has achieved one can say: I'm like her. If she can do it, so can I. It is this process of identification, respect, and then self respect that promotes growth. (p. 108)

A unit on Women Artists should provide not only relevant role models but it should enable students to develop the necessary visual tools, and interpretive skills to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate the visual forms they encounter in art and media. By encouraging students to become aware of new trends and issues in contemporary art by women such as political art, autobiographical art, a conscious search for archetypal imagery, exploration of female sexuality, a return to crafts and decorative arts and a mythical and ecological view of nature, students can become more knowledgeable and selective in their visual judgements about their own work and that of others.

In this unit, for example, students will be encouraged to explore and broaden their understanding of two major themes in art which have been projected in art history mainly from a male point of view. By studying and exploring two aspects of our double reality--the human relity and the reality of nature--in the art of women, it is hoped that

students will be better prepared to discriminate and make intelligent judgements about their own and others' work.

The theme that serves as the initial focus for this unit concerns itself with the human reality as it is revealed in the images of women by women artists. Through the works of artists such as Mary Cassatt, Käthe Kollwitz, Alice Neel, Marisol, Niki de Saint Phalle and Judy Chicago, students can learn how women artists have transformed in sensuous forms, in rhythms, in color, in lines and design the raw material of their felt lives. Through critical and historical analysis students can be led to discoveries about how, through the use of formal elements these artists externalize their experiences, concerns and values in a variety of mediums. Students can make meaningful connections between the works of art, the lives of the artist and their own lives. This study can lead students to an awareness of the ways women have struggled against internalized conditioning and external institutional conditions to arrive in the late twentieth century at a redefinition of self that real growth demands. Through a comparison of these works to some of the more traditional images of women in media and some art, students can learn to question the myths and stereotypes that have grown up over hundreds of years concerning the nature and role of women.

For centuries students have seen images of women idealized, objectified and veiled in religious significance. The female has often been depicted as passive maiden, madonna, siren, vamp or witch but rarely as a real person involved in real life and work. According to John Berger (1972) and Paula Harper (1972), classical and baroque art is filled with male fantasies of control and power over women. Stereotyping of women in art, however, deprives the young woman artist of

self-knowledge and self-esteem necessary for expression and it encourages women to take a role incompatible with creative development.

In order to overcome the poor self-image created by a stereotyped view of women in traditional art, art teachers must encourage students to challenge and question these images. We must expose our students to the portraits of women by women artists in order that they can better understand women's exploration of their own identity in artistic form. As they see more images of women portrayed as competent, talented people they will be less likely to internalize a limited view of themselves and will be more inclined to develop broader aspirations for themselves as mature adults.

It is also the objective of this unit to enable students to explore the many ways women artists in this century have interpreted the relationships of man to nature. Beginning with the works of Emily Carr, Georgia O'Keeffe, Lee Krasner and Helen Frankenthaler, students can extend the awareness of self and culture to their roots in nature. They can discover how artists have transformed images of nature through abstraction and through correspondences which play on the human emotions. Through analysis and interpretation of these works, students can gain an understanding of the ways these artists explored the felt connection between self art--and nature--a vision that is central to much of the art of women and one that is badly needed as man continues to exploit the environment.

Through the works of Eva Hesse and Louise Bourgeois, students can discover how artists have expanded the process of self/nature/art revaluation with new materials in experimental sculpture. In the past, women have often been reluctant to explore images and art media that

stems from aspects of their own life experience because some of these experiences have not been considered important. Through a study of the sculpture of Bourgeois and Hesse, students can gain confidence that the material of their own lives is a valuable source of imagery and that it needn't be cloaked in what might be called "masculine" form or traditional materials.

In the works of Nancy Holt, Alice Aycock and Jackie Winsor, students can trace the development of a mythical and more conscious ecological vision of nature in environmental sculpture. By discovering how these artists integrate mythical concepts of real space and time in outdoor works made of rock, hemp, raw sapplings and growing forms, students can share in an art that celebrates the cycles and rhythms of nature.

Finally, it is the studio-oriented section of this program that enables students to become active participants in the rediscovery and celebration of women artists. By allowing students to bring the history of women artists to life in a plastic form such as a ceramic sculpture or diorama, they play a key part in the movement to make men's art history, human art history. By making art by women visible to others, students can help promote new social and aesthetic changes by raising the consciousness of others. As Ernst Cassirer stated in An Essay on Man, "art turns all these pains and outrages, these cruelties and atrocities, into a means of self-liberation, thus giving us an inner freedom which cannot be attained in any other way" (p. 149).

A specific unit on Women Artists, which this author implemented with a Grade 12 Ceramic class in 1981 outlines the various components of the unit--the problem, the approaches of study, the media and materials,

the activities and the evaluation procedures. At the end of the unit additional activities are suggested which provide the focus for other studies on women and art.

The Problem

Inquire into and study the lives and works of twelve women artists of the twentieth century, who explore the themes of women and nature. Select one woman artist and in small groups write a short biography and criticism of her work. Create with clay or other materials, a sculpture or diorama which gives creative visual expression to important aspects of her life and work.

Approaches to the Study

The unit involves students in three realms of artistic learning--the productive, the critical and the historical. By integrating the appreciative and intellectual activities involved in the initial inquiry and study of women artists with the active and creative process involved in making a sculpture or diorama, students become more than passive recipients of a standard art history. By integrating the behavioral models of the artist, critic and historian in one major project students gain an understanding of how the various activities relate. Students can also make visible their knowledge and appreciation of individual artists by bringing them to life in dioramas which can be shared by others.

This unit is also designed to provide students with the opportunity to work collaboratively in large and small groups and individually, on both the initial inquiry into the lives and works of women artists and

in the production of the diorama. By providing optional work processes, students learn to expand their definition of what an artist or historian does. Hopefully, this integrative approach will open up new creative options that can be applied to future studies of art history as well as their own studio work.

Art Materials

Sculpture clay, 1/2" plywood for the base of the diorama, paint, oxides and glazes. Other materials such as moss, sand, twigs, balsa wood and modelling paste could be used in the diorama. Ceramic modelling tools, brushes, paper, pencils are also needed.

Instructional Material

Survey books, biographies, autobiographies, exhibition catalogues and monographs on each of the individual artists should be provided. Bachmann and Pilands Women Artists, an Historical Contemporary and Feminist Biography (1978) is now available in many major libraries and it will supply an adequate reference list of books and articles on each artist. (See also the bibliography of this thesis.) In addition to the material in this thesis, a concise selection of important information on each artist could be xeroxed from several sources and stapled in a booklet for future use. One slide unit such as Harper and Row's, Women Artists: Twentieth Century could provide essential reproductions of most of the artists' work (see list of Audio Visual resources). Four general reference books which survey the work of most of the artists included in this unit provide a minimal amount of information and are excellent additions to any school library. They are:

- . Harris, Ann Sutherland and Nochlin, Linda. Women artists: 1550-1950. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979,
- . Lippard, Lucy. from the center; feminist essays on women's art. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1976.
- . Nemser, Cindy. Art talk. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975.
- . Fine, Elsa Honig. Women and art. New York: Allanhead and Schram, 1978.

Activities and Procedures

1. Motivating Activity

- . As an exercise to provoke class discussion, students are requested to bring to class reproductions of advertisements, photographs, paintings or sculpture which they found sympathetic or offensive toward women. The pictures stimulate an animated discussion amongst students and result in an increased awareness concerning the function of images, how they reflect attitudes and reinforce societal expectations and perceptions. Students discussed issues such as the denigration of women by sexist imagery in art and the exploitative nature of commercial advertising.
- . A second exercise was designed to acquaint students with possible reasons for the exclusion of women artists from most Art History texts. Linda Nochlin's (1971) short essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" was read and discussed.
- . Students are then introduced to the recent efforts of many art historians to reevaluate and rediscover many of the women artists

who have either received inadequate recognition or whose contributions have been misunderstood. (See Chapter IV of this thesis.)

2. Study and Appreciation of Women Artists: 1850-1950

- . This section of the program takes the form of a slide lecture and discussion. Slide reproductions of five works of each of twelve women artists are shown and discussed. Several self-portraits or photos of each artist are also shown. The artists fall into two groups: the first group includes artists Mary Cassatt (painter and graphic artist), Kathe Kollwitz (graphic artist), Alice Neel (painter), Leonor Finni (painter), Marisol (sculptor) and Judy Chicago (painter, sculptor and performance artist). The works of these artists are discussed as they interpret the image of women. A brief introduction is given which pertains to the artist's life, the time period in which she worked, prevailing art movements she was associated with, her nationality, education, influences, social milieu, the status of women during the time she lives, and the reception she received in the art world. From this brief introduction, students are encouraged to discover relationships between the artist's life and the meaning of her work. They are encouraged to (1) describe the elements of the work without interpretation, (2) analyse the relationship of colors, shapes, forms and space, (3) interpret the meaning of the work in its historical context, in comparison with other works and in relation to what they know about her expectations, (4) discuss how the material and style fits with the idea, (5)

evaluate the work by asking, how does it stand up personally and historically? Is it original? Is its meaning important? Does the work give an insight into some aspect of the human condition or to women in particular?

A similar process of esthetic evaluation takes place during the viewing of the works of the six artists whose work interprets the relationship of man to nature. This second group of artists also includes women of different nationalities, of different time periods, who work in a variety of materials and styles. The artists included here are Emily Carr (painter), Georgia O'Keeffe (painter), Imogen Cunningham (photographer), Helen Frankenthaler (painter), Eva Hesse (sculptor), and Nancy Holt (sculptor). Other artists such as Alice Aycock, Nancy Graves, Jackie Winsor and Mary Miss could be included here to give more emphasis to contemporary artists. The focus of this slide presentation and discussion is to arrive at an understanding of how artists, through the use of shape, color, form, space and time, reveal deep meaning about the relationship of man to the environment. Chapter VI of this thesis can be used to help direct inquiry into some of the major issues in contemporary art such as the use of real space and time in sculpture, the idea of a public art, the use of new media and processes, the notion of a feminist spirituality, the concept of inner space in sculpture, and the idea of correspondences. Students are encouraged to analyse and interpret the works in their historical context and in relation to the conditions faced by the woman artist during her life. They should also be encouraged to see the ways many of the contemporary artists have influenced the direction of current

movements and the ways their work suggest a more ecological view of nature.

3. Selection and Investigation of One Woman Artist

Students select an artist whose work and life they appreciate and find most connection with. They form small groups of 2 or 3 students and explore all the material available on one artist. They consider aspects of her life and work such as her environment, education, home, method of working, art influences, subject matter, media, patronage, treatment by art historians and critics, family, social expectations, as well as her thoughts and concerns about being a woman artist. From this material they write a short biography of the artist and present it to the members of the class along with descriptive quotations and photographs which give a visual impression of the artist in her home, her studio and her environment.

From this material students are asked to make small interpretive sketches of the artist and the important objects, people and places in her life. These sketches and notes provide visual clues and directions for the creation of a larger diorama.

4. Sketch and Layout of the Diorama

The group discusses the preliminary ideas and drawings, decides on which ideas are important and plans a way to integrate them in one diorama. Students can discuss general feelings they have about the artist and how they can reveal these feelings through a realist, surrealist, abstract or symbolic interpretation. Each group is assisted in a discussion of organizational problems, use of symbolism, ways of

simplifying and elaborating ideas, the use of emphasis and detail and other elements and principles which may enhance their portrayal of the artist in one setting. Technical problems concerning the use of materials are also important to discuss. Where clay is not appropriate, other materials can be used. One group, for example, used modelling paste and sand to interpret the rolling hills of the New Mexico desert in the Georgia O'Keeffe piece.

At this point, the group must decide on practical details such as the size of the diorama and of the individual parts. For the base of the diorama, plywood measuring 2 x 3 feet was selected. Most groups shaped the base to suit the floor plan--whether it was a studio floor, a landscape or a gallery setting. Members of the group then decided on the approximate size of each object including the artist and indicated this size on the scale drawing. Students then discussed the production of the diorama and decided who would sculpt what objects. Several students decided to work on some objects together. The group also came to a decision about how to work out differences and individuals were encouraged to discuss problems when they developed. Each student was encouraged to express individual ideas in their own piece while keeping within some basic group direction.

5. Production of the Diorama in Clay

- . The base is cut and can be sculpted with modelling paste, painted, stained or covered with material.
- . Students produce the objects in clay through additive or subtractive sculpting techniques. Armatures can be used where

- necessary for support of large pieces. (Most students in this group were familiar with sculptural techniques in clay.)
- . Surface texture and detail are applied or carved from the pieces through slip trailing sgraffito or incising.
 - . Large objects are hollowed out. All objects are allowed to dry in a damp cupboard.

6. Firing, Staining, Glazing and Assembly of the Diorama

- . Students bisque and stain glaze or paint individual pieces.
- . Students complete diorama and assemble it on a plywood base with glue.

Exhibition and Evaluation

A. Exhibition ideas

Dioramas are exhibited in the school library and local community center in conjunction with the books available on Women in Art, and a possible noon hour slide and film presentation (see resource materials).

B. Evaluation

Group and teacher evaluation of the project takes place. It considers the following factors:

- (1) Technique - what part was the most difficult or successful--the research, autobiography, creation of the figures or the objects or the painting and assembly? How did it work as a whole? To what extent do the parts provide evidence that the student developed increased control over the clay? Are the parts joined carefully so that they don't crack or separate? Has the student tried to find solutions to technical difficulties such as proportion, use of detail and line? Does the combination of materials work?
- (2) Process - How well did the group share ideas, plan and carry out the sculpture? Was there room for individual expression? Were ideas cross-fertilized by sharing? How thoroughly did the group conduct research? Did one person do more than others?
- (3) Content - How well did the group and individuals portray the artist, her environment, her work and the things which influenced her? What type of expressive character does the work display? How much depth and empathy is shown in the work? To what extent have the students attended to the organization of form in the work? Do the forms function as a whole and do they display a creative imagination? Does the work provide a sense of insight or illuminate some aspect of the artist or the self that was previously obscure?

C. Conclusions from Evaluation

Upon completion of the diorama and individual presentations students were asked to answer a short questionnaire. Based on this questionnaire, group discussion and teacher observation, the author was able to make the following evaluation.

Students responded with enthusiasm throughout the project. Many of them thought it would be "dull and boring" because it was concerned with art history. They felt, however, that because they could work in groups, create their history in clay and discover interesting artists they could help direct and be actively involved in the whole process. Most students thought the ceramic work was the most exciting part and that doing a biography was the hardest.

Most students gained a lot by working in small groups. They found they could "share more ideas and help each other when they got stuck." They found "working with others made such a big project less scary." On the whole, students expressed pride in their work and enjoyed talking to the public about it during the various exhibitions. The constant dialogue and co-operative spirit which existed between the groups enabled all students to share the excitement about all of the artist dioramas. The finished pieces varied in composition, expressiveness, style and in meaning. The finished pieces were so

engaging and expressive of each artist and her life that it felt as though the students had known the artist.

The students felt an excitement about discovering women artists they had not heard of before. They felt instrumental in giving them recognition and discovering their own roots. One student said, "I thought before that Emily Carr was the only woman artist, but now I know I can keep looking and there will be more." Another said she discovered "Women had as much potential as men in art but that women hadn't got as much recognition in the past. I hope we can change that."

To conclude this thesis, it is important to re-emphasize the value in providing to all students a meaningful heritage. As art educators we can not wait for traditional art history to integrate the work of women artists into survey books. We must recognize and respond to the immediate need to provide our students with the materials and incentive to explore a broader cultural heritage, role models of women as well as male artists and art that interprets issues that are important in the late twentieth century. As all our students gain more confidence and self-esteem through a link with their past, their own potential to express their values and concerns through their art will grow. While the proposed unit and suggested activities are in no way exhaustive, they may provide a framework upon which to develop other curricula materials on women in art, aided by the wealth of information, research and new publications available in this growing field.

Suggestions for Other Activities

Objectives

- a. Provide resources - films, slides, video, surveys, books which consider a range of women artists from medieval to modern times in the context of women's heritage.
- b. Discover other themes and media used by women artists in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- c. Discover the variety of self portraits in the work women artists.
- d. Discuss and explore the social institutional conditions that fostered or inhibited the development and recognition of women artists.

Activities

- a. Develop slide registry of the of women artists according to themes such as:
 - 1) Women sculptors
 - 2) Women still life painters
 - 3) Canadian women artists
 - 4) Contemporary women artists
 - 5) Women printmakers
- b. Find examples of women's art that share common subject matter and concerns:
 - 1) Everyday life in the home
 - 2) Motherhood and children
 - 3) Women as artists (not muse)
 - 4) Social protest
 - 5) Nature as mother.

Find examples of women's art that uses non-traditional fine art media:

 - 1) China painting
 - 2) Fabric
 - 3) Food & household objects
 - 4) Embroidery and stitchery
 - 5) Growing plants
- c. Photograph your own bedroom and use the images for a collage which describes you.

Draw a self portrait realistically, abstractly.
- d. Consider how women in each century were affected by the conditions:
 - 1) Art education - father artists, academies, life drawing classes.
 - 2) Art criticism
 - 3) Patronage
 - 4) Social expectations and roles
 - 5) Family, husbands
 - 6) Art history
 - 7) Misattribution
 - 8) Economics

- e. Study and compare artists who work collectively and discuss the function and value of this process.

Make puppets and write a short play which tells the life story of several artists and include factors which inhibited or fostered her development.

Compare the works of Joyce Weiland and Judy Chicago and discover how each of their collective art projects such as "True Patriot Love" and the "Dinner Pary" achieved unique ends. Plan a collective mural project that incorporates some of these ideas.

- f. Discover the ideas and issues surrounding performance art. What is it and what forms has it taken?

Compare the work of Eleanor Antin, Adrien Piper and Anna Bannana. Develop a performance piece which includes viewer involvement, interdisciplinary art forms, autobiographical content, or audio visual materials.

- g. Study and explore the question of a female form language or feminine sensibility in art.

Discover the writings of art critics Lucy Lippard, Cindy Nemser and Lawrence Alloway. Debate three views on the existence of a female aesthetic. Ask, do women have such a different range of experiences from men that they bring to art a different set of values, concerns and meanings? If so, describe them and show examples to support your position.

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APPENDIXLIST OF AUDIO VISUAL MATERIALS ON WOMEN ARTISTS

<u>Company</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Content</u>
<u>International</u> <u>Tele-Film</u> <u>Enterprises</u> 47 Densley Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6M 5A8	<u>The Artist Was</u> <u>a Woman</u>	58 min. color film	Social history of women artists. Renaissance to 20th century
	<u>Right Out of</u> <u>History</u>	75 min. color film	Documentary of the Dinner Party
	<u>Never Give Up</u> <u>- Imogen</u> <u>Cunningham</u>	28 min. color film	Documentary on Imogen Cunningham
<u>Harper & Row</u> <u>2350 Virginia</u> <u>Ave.,</u> <u>Hagerstown,</u> <u>Maryland,</u> <u>21740</u>	<u>Women Artists:</u> <u>A Historical</u> <u>Survey 1500 to</u> <u>1900</u>	120 slides and notes	A survey
	<u>Women Artists:</u> <u>Twentieth</u> <u>Century</u>	80 slides & notes	
	<u>Women Artists:</u> <u>Third World</u>	80 slides & notes	
	<u>Women Artists:</u> <u>Images -</u> <u>Themes and</u> <u>Dreams</u>	80 slides & notes	"A look at women's sense of themselves and sources of imagery in creating art."

Work by Contemporary Women Artists

<u>Company</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Content</u>
<u>Educational Dimensions Box</u> 126, Stamford, Connecticut, 06904	<u>Mary Cassatt:</u> <u>An American</u> <u>Impressionist</u>	1 filmstrip (16 mm) 1 cassette	Her work
	<u>Of Women and</u> <u>By Women: The</u> <u>Crafts</u>	20 slides & teacher guide	
	<u>Four Women</u> <u>Artists</u>	2 filmstrips	Sculptors: Marisol, Nevelson
		2 cassettes, 18 min. each	Painters: O'Keeffe, Frankenthaler
<u>Environmental Communications</u> 66 Windward Ave., Venice, California, 90291	<u>Women Artists</u> <u>1550-1950</u>	80 slides and booklet	From Nochlin & Harris' Exhibition in L.A. County Museum of Art. Major portrait, landscape, figurative, and abstract painters.
	<u>S.F. Bay Area</u> <u>Women Artists</u>	40 slides and booklet	27 painters
<u>Women in Focus, #6 - 45</u> Kingsway, Vancouver, B.C., V5T 3H7 872-2250	<u>Signed by a</u> <u>Woman</u>	Video 60 min.	California Artists Interviews:
	<u>Great Artists</u>	Video 30 min.	A survey
	<u>Stone</u> <u>Symposium 1975</u>	Video 30 min.	3 stone sculptors (women)

<u>Company</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Content</u>
Sandak 180 Harvard Ave., Stamford, Connecticut, 06902	<u>Womens' Work: American Art 1974</u>	76 slides and commentary	Show held at Philadelphia Civic Center Museum
	<u>Judy Chicago: The Dinner Party</u>	80 slides	Documentation
	<u>Women Artists: 18th to 20th Centuries</u>	120 slides	Moguide, Photography, Graphics, Painting, Sculpture
	<u>Women Artists: 18th to 20th Century</u>	60 slides	
	<u>Nature: Image and Metaphor</u>		To be released Spring 1982