Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Miriam Schapiro, 1989 September 10

Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

Contact Information
Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington. D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Miriam Schapiro on September 10, 1989. The interview took place in East Hampton, NY, and was conducted by Ruth Bowman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Miriam Schapiro has reviewed the transcript and has made substantial emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written prose.

Interview

[Tape 1, side A; 45 minute sides]

RUTH BOWMAN: This is Ruth Bowman recording for the Archives of American Art on September 10, 1989, in East Hampton, New York. And we're going to be talking about the distant past. At least for me it's the distant past, but I guess it's intermediate in our relationship since we go back to the days of Toward a New Abstraction at the Jewish Museum. You went to California quite soon after that, didn't you?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes, we went to California in 1967.

RUTH BOWMAN: You went to the University of California in San Diego?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes, Paul Brach went as a chairman, the originator of the present art department, and I accompanied him and taught in his department. Those were the days where the word nepotism was used as a perjorative word in academia, and as time has gone on, it's become less major and less serious.

RUTH BOWMAN: But people still say, "You mean he and his wife were both on the same faculty!"

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Not so much anymore, because now husbands and wives are sharing appointments. For example, she'll teach the first part of the year, and he'll teach the same class in the last part of the year.

RUTH BOWMAN: So, what was your status?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, I left New York, my family, all my friends, my network, my gallery, André Emmerich, everything that I had going for me—the beginnings of my career and so forth—to trek westward with Paul who had a job waiting as chair of this department. And what he told UCSD was that he couldn't possibly take this job without some promise of work and a studio for me to paint in; he said I would be happy to be part of the university even on the level of lecturer (which is the lowest level you could be). And that was true, that's the way I felt. I really wasn't seeking status in academia.
So they said that would be fine and they got him out there and they told him—I remember it was the first day he was there—they told him, no, they were sorry, but there really would be no job for me. And now, meanwhile, everything had been packed and shipped. Our son was nine years old and he was in the act of being transferred to another school. So Paul said to his boss, who was the provost, "What do you mean? What's happened? I was promised that we would both have a place here." And the provost said, "Well, it's just been rescinded and there's not much I can do about it." Paul, telling this story later, said he played the biggest poker bluff of his life, which was that he said to the man, "I'm sorry, if she can't be here, I can't be here." And he turned on his heel, and he walked toward the door, and he put his hand on the knob, and he started to open the door and leave, when the provost yelled after him, "Just a minute, just a minute." Paul turned around, and he said, "Yes?" And he said, "All decisions can be reversed." And Paul said, "Will this decision be reversed?" And he said, "I think so." And so, after all of this we achieved my lectureship.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you had a studio. They were separate buildings, weren't they, from the department.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes.

RUTH BOWMAN: They were outbuildings?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: That's right.

RUTH BOWMAN: I remember going there. And how long were you, the two of you, at San Diego?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, the curious thing was, we weren't there very long, maybe a couple of years, when Paul got this letter from Herb Blau telling him they were starting a very interesting academic institution in Los Angeles and would he come up and talk to them because they wanted him to be the first dean of the art school

at Cal-Arts. And he did that, and he moved. I didn't move with him because Peter had one more year before high school.

RUTH BOWMAN: So you stayed on as a lecturer?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I stayed. . . . No. The minute Paul left, they made me a professor.

RUTH BOWMAN: [laughs] That's very interesting.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, because of the nepotism. I mean, they knew who I was, what my status was in the art world.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you were showing at Emmerich in New York? But you had no place to show your work in California?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Not yet, no.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you stayed another year. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes.

RUTH BOWMAN: . . . and had this commuting back and forth. About 400 miles, I guess.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes.

RUTH BOWMAN: And Cal-Arts was then in Valencia?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Cal-Arts was in the old convent the first year.

RUTH BOWMAN: Oh, downtown.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Near MacArthur Park, yeah. And then, the next year, the year I moved up to Santa Monica, Cal-Arts moved to its new home in Valencia.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you moved to Moreno [at] that charming little house.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: With the big back yard?

RUTH BOWMAN: With the big back yard.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: For our dog.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you had the old white Mercedes with the license plate "M.S."?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes! [laughs, astonished]

RUTH BOWMAN: I remember that.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And Paul had a Porsche.

RUTH BOWMAN: And the commute was quite long. It was, what, about an hour? Up to hot old Valencia?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you, what were you doing? You didn't teach at Cal-Arts, did you?

RUTH BOWMAN: Oh yes, one of the bases of Cal-Arts was the absence of nepotism. You can't imagine how many husbands and wives there were there. The deanship of dance was shared by husband and wife. A man would be in maintenance and his wife would be secretary to a dean, for example.

RUTH BOWMAN: So it was a family kind of experience.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It was a family orientation, and Paul and I had no problem with that. He was the dean and I worked for him. We didn't have titles. We were called "member of faculty."

RUTH BOWMAN: And what kind of subjects were you teaching? You were teaching drawing?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It really was at UCSD that I began to form my philosophy of teaching. I began to see how restrictive a life it was to be a teacher. I felt that it was incumbent on me to know everything in order to inform

students.

RUTH BOWMAN: I have to interrupt to remember something.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes.

RUTH BOWMAN: That when we visited you in San Diego—in LaJolla—we went for a drive near the campus of the university, and we were on the crest of a hill looking out on the ocean and you, as you always did with me, gave me a new window on seeing, by talking about the light on the water.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Oh, I remember that.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you were at that time making geometric paintings. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Um hmm. Hard-edged paintings.

RUTH BOWMAN: . . . hard-edged paintings, and you had a silver-on-blue painting [_____—Ed.] and you were talking about the relationship of the light. And you were the first one to point out to me that at certain times of the day the water was brighter than the sky. And you pointed out this great silver triangle in the water which I had never seen.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Hmm.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you must have been, I mean, your students must have really gotten a lot of that.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: My insights? [laughs]

RUTH BOWMAN: Your insights, your ways of seeing.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, you know what it's like when you go to university, and your students don't really know anything about art. I was teaching beginning classes for Paul. I would be teaching perhaps one-seventh of a class after the large lecture in the lecture hall, which contained all seven of these groups. These were enormous numbers of students that were being taught. And remember, it ended up at Berkeley with the student's revolution, where students cried, "We've become anonymous. We're nobodies in this." Sometimes the professor didn't even appear, and his voice was recorded on tape, as a televised appearance."

RUTH BOWMAN: So the whole University of California system needed a shake-up. And you were there right in the crisis?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: We came right at that time. My sense of teaching was that I had a group of receptors who sat there, I was at the head of the class, and I felt—except for my insights and what I knew about art [chuckling]—I felt no more equipped to really be there in that position than the man-in-the-moon. I mean, I felt that it wasn't a logical or proper way for me to be teaching. It was at that time that I began to formulate different ways of teaching.

RUTH BOWMAN: Now there were other people that Paul brought or that you knew there like the Antins, Eleanor and David Antin?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And Paul brought. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: Harold Cohen with him.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: He brought Harold Cohen and the Antins, he brought Newton and Helen Harrison. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: You, this was a community that you had there.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes.

RUTH BOWMAN: And in the community, did you talk together about the problems of teaching in this way?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: No, because I'm not sure everybody felt as I did. The way I felt led to a revolutionary experiment which then took place at Cal-Arts.

RUTH BOWMAN: Where you had the freedom to do that?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes. Well, in the interim between my staying the extra year at UCSD and then leaving and going to Cal-Arts, I met Judy Chicago. Judy came to San Diego to give a lecture, and subsequently she had me visit Fresno where she was teaching and give a lecture. The difference between the atmosphere that I was living

in and the atmosphere that she had created was astonishing to me. I felt she was involved in an appropriate historical change. And I think that what I reacted to was really part of what was necessary for the future and was actually what the Berkeley students were up in arms about.

RUTH BOWMAN: And this was about 1970?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It was just about ‘69, ‘70. The Berkeley students were decrying the loss of personal contact, any possibility of intimacy in teaching. And what was happening with Judy and her group is that she was reinstating all of that. Subsequently, we got together. And the way that happened was that I presented to the male group who were working for Paul at Cal-Arts the possibility that Judy and I would team-teach a women’s class. They didn’t really know Judy, and she carried a very volatile mythology around her, so they were cautious. But I persuaded them that, since I was fifteen years older than she, I would be the leavening influence, and I told them I believed that this program could develop into something very important. And so, by virtue of their faith in me and my past performances in terms of my career, and what they had seen of me as a teacher and so forth, they agreed to let us do that. That was a big move. However, as far as Cal-Arts was concerned, it wasn’t so radical, because at Cal-Arts at that time they were doing the most amazing things. Victor Papenack, who was teaching design, had his students making radios for a penny each that could be shipped to Third World people. This was a radical notion. In the music department, they had imported dancers from West Africa, and they were constantly doing a chicken dance in the halls. They flapped their arms and spoke very little English. And then, again in the halls, starting at six o’clock in the morning, students and teachers practiced their tai chi. Ravi Shankar was another one of these people. Gene Youngblood was a brilliant analyst of film and movies, and he was there at that time. So, it was just a grand melée of radical procedures. And our feminist art program simply took its place.

RUTH BOWMAN: When you announced the course, what happened with the students?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: We announced the course and the students were shy and curious, and so we sat at a table and talked about what it would be like. We also talked to the faculty. I remember the whole faculty attending a retreat at that time. And the woman who ultimately taught the design program for women only—Sheilah deBretteville—explaining what her class would be like. Judy and I talked about what we had planned. I didn’t know at that time, nor did Judy, that we would do Womanhouse. Once we met the students in our class—there were twenty-one—we talked about doing a community project and it turned out to be Womanhouse.

RUTH BOWMAN: And Womanhouse had a catalog?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Oh yes. Not only a catalog. Womanhouse was a phenomenon, a cultural phenomenon, not only in California but everywhere.

RUTH BOWMAN: It was nationally known.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: . . . but it was also internationally known. [I later met a German woman who told me she showed slides of Womanhouse in her class in Berlin.—MS] When Womanhouse was finished, we were interviewed by Encyclopedia Britannica. An hour program was done on KPFK. We were written up in Time, Life. We received incredible publicity. And when you think that the young people, students in an art class, made and experienced this event, it was really quite extraordinary.

RUTH BOWMAN: Womanhouse was a building in which environments were made by each student?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, it was an artistic project. And it wasn’t linear in the sense that when you enter my home you enter a vestibule and then you go into the living room. I mean, the sequence was unpredictable. We took over a house, and the house had many rooms. Each student was interested in a particular rooms, and so they created a sort of happening-environment in each of their rooms. One woman painted enormous leaves on the wall. This was her expression of love of beauty and regard for nature. We called it the leaf room. It was very beautiful. And near that [was—Ed.] a more traditional bedroom, where several students working together created a room patterned on “Gigi,” a story by Colette, the French writer. The room was the bedroom of a courtesan. It was a very elegant room. The women went to an antique dealer and talked him into loaning them incredible Victorian furniture. They made a very dense, perfumed room with lace and satin and a vanity, I remember, with all sorts of encrusted silver hair brushes, and so forth. But the point is that they created an atmosphere, an environment, which was specific to itself, and that had nothing to do with the other rooms in the house.

RUTH BOWMAN: And each room was really separate—the kitchen, the bathroom?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Every room was separate.

RUTH BOWMAN: And did they sort of draw straws for who got what room, or did it just fall into place?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, the radical part of our teaching was based on consciousness-raising. So every day we would sit in a circle in a particular room, and the session I remember best took place in the kitchen. In this old abandoned mansion we sat on the floor, had our talk time, and then we got our mops and cleaned it up. But the kitchen talk was one hell of a drama; that's what I remember. Everyone told her story of growing up with her mother and her experiences in the kitchen. And I remember someone saying at some point, "These stories seem to add up to our relationships with our mothers like a metaphor for a bottle of milk. Is it half empty or half full?"

RUTH BOWMAN: Marvelous.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: That would ultimately be a description of their relationships with their mothers. It's really very true, isn't it? Was she giving or taking away in her nurturance?

RUTH BOWMAN: And to objectify all of that into an environment must have been quite a challenge.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, here is the part where I asked myself, "A teacher?" "What kind of a teacher can I be?" But ultimately I accepted myself as a facilitator. My growing philosophy of education was based on the idea that they had as much to tell me as I had to tell them. The only difference was in our ages. That indeed if I had lived longer than they did, which I had, I had more experiences perhaps. But they might have had denser experiences. Remember, those were the days of heavy drugs. And in our separate performances at Womanhouse one of the groups made a marvelous theatrical piece about drug users, and that certainly wasn't my experience.

RUTH BOWMAN: How did the academic deans, how did the management of the school react to all of this? What was their relationship to you? I mean, you were doing something, I'm sure, beyond what had been done before, ever.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Ruth, remember worked for the Disneys, who were considered not conservative but reactionary people.

RUTH BOWMAN: Right.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: So your question is well put. However, the one Disney (by marriage) who was head of the school had been converted in some way. He became enormously tolerant of this whole weird [chuckles] environment that was Cal-Arts. And no one in management ever said anything. When you came into Womanhouse to see the performances, or went through the rooms, you knew immediately you were in the face of something you'd never seen before in the art world. There was Judy's "menstruation bathroom.," My room had a dollhouse in it. Everybody made something quite different, and these rooms were all inspired by a woman's point of view. We made a film of Womanhouse. Danny Selznik, who was on our board, brought the idea of Womanhouse to the American Film Council and they gave Joanna Demetrakis a grant to film Womanhouse. We have that as a record.

RUTH BOWMAN: Of those twenty-one students, how many stayed in touch with you? How many moved into the art world?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: About half of them.

RUTH BOWMAN: I know one, Robin Mitchell. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Robin Mitchell, Faith Wilding, Suzanne Lacy, Mira Schor. . . . Oh, a number of them stay in touch.

RUTH BOWMAN: Right, and are they still in California and still working?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Faith and Mira are in New York and doing very well. Faith and Mira would always do well, in my opinion, but their journey was so different from that of David Salle and Eric Fischl, who were their colleagues at Cal-Arts, because theirs was a woman's point of view in the art-making process and that was not something that was really acceptable. When you walked into my house earlier, did you see that piece on the wall that was like a dress? That's Mira's piece. It looks like a dress, reads like a book, and has secrets.

RUTH BOWMAN: That's breath-taking.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: The idea of women making a strong mark in the art world was not so acceptable, so it was hard for these young women to be successful in New York. They're all late bloomers.

RUTH BOWMAN: Late bloomers because it's been a hard, hard for women for the most part, not always. If you think back on this period of the early seventies, and what was happening, do you think that California was a better place to begin this than the East?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And how! My life would never have been what it is today if I hadn't had that eight years in California. My life changed there. The difference between the California women and the New York women was that the New York women were "head" women, and in California they were "body" women, which is not to say that the New York women weren't involved with their bodies but not in the same way. Because in California people are sun worshipers who live in a climate which emphasizes involvement with their bodies.

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, and health is very important.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Health is very important and. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: Exercise.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: . . . .and exercise and concentrating on your body, making it exist for you. In New York that doesn't happen. In the intellectual community or in the artistic community the concentration is on what is mental. To give you an example, Judy Chicago would be a wonderful example of a "head-body" person and Lucy Lippard would be a wonderful example of a "head" person. And they were both important figures in the woman-artist movement.

RUTH BOWMAN: And when in this decade did the idea of making a special publication, Heresies, come up?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, curiously enough, I brought that idea back from California to New York.

RUTH BOWMAN: Ah hah.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: When I left New York in 1967, and had a new development in my life—in my thinking, in my art—when all this happened, some people who had been my New York friends before California couldn't quite handle it, and I lost a lot of friends. But one friend was faithful, Joyce Kozloff. So when I came back to New York with Paul. . . . Peter, our son, remained at San Francisco state. I said I had a few ideas that I would like to present to the woman artists of New York, and Joyce called a meeting and we presented the idea of a school or the idea of a magazine, and the idea of a magazine was the one that really caught on. Although there was a school, the Feminist Art Institute, which subsequently opened. I organized it with a group of women, including Betsy Damon. I worked there only six months. Two of my students were Holly Hughes and Katherine Clark.

RUTH BOWMAN: Really?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes, but it was the magazine, Heresies, which caught on like wildfire and became one of the most interesting small publications in the seventies and eighties. It's about to have its tenth anniversary. It is one of the best philosophical statements of feminist thinking. You know, the popular image of a feminist is as a bra-burner, but there's a hell of a lot more to it than that.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you were really involved in the structuring of the movement, though, for artists in California, primarily to begin with.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I figured out a lot of different things which we then put into motion. I started lecturing, for example, very early. And I remember a meeting where all the woman artists were called together at Dotty Seiberling's, on Central Park West in her big apartment. All the women came. Joan Snyder dragged her bicycle into the apartment. [chuckles] And Judy and I told how lecturing was a very important and educative part of our experience. We had to let people know (a)that there were woman artists out there in America, and (b)that they were doing marvelous things. I collected slides of what they were doing. As a result I developed the largest private archive of woman artists' slides in the country, which I will give to some institution some day. And I've been lecturing since 1971. Well, that night we talked to all these people, to Joyce, to Michelle Stuart, to Joan Snyder, Pat Steir, and more. And we said, "You need to get paid for lecturing." Some of them were speaking in public, but they were accepting fees of fifty dollars. It was a process of raising their consciousness. Well, those were the old days, you know; we didn't know any better. But anyway, I developed a lot of processes. Would you like to hear my recent mode?

RUTH BOWMAN: Absolutely! [chuckles]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: There is a show going around now called Making Their Mark.

RUTH BOWMAN: Oh, absolutely.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It's gone to four places, and I've been asked to lecture at most of the places.

RUTH BOWMAN: It's coming to Philadelphia?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It's coming to Philadelphia, and I'll talk at Philadelphia and I talked at Ohio. I couldn't go to

New Orleans. But anyway, it occurred to me—they have a very handsome catalog published by Abrams, very serious.

RUTH BOWMAN: Big book.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Very big book. It occurred to me that if women were now going to be taken very seriously and granted true status as artists in America, then we had to figure out some way that we would not be reinventing the wheel. So that the list of artists who were in this show should not be in concrete as the only list. I began my lectures about the show with half of my slides of the women in the show and half of women not in the show.

RUTH BOWMAN: What a wonderful idea!

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And the point being that there is no way to suddenly create standards and say, “These are better than these.” We are coming to a place now where people are being educated, taking themselves seriously, presenting themselves as professionals, doing remarkable work. And some of them get into one show and some of them get into another show and some of them don’t get into any shows. We can’t take one show, like Making Their Mark, and say, “This is it. This is what the achievement is. These are the women who are in the mainstream. This is final.” We can’t do that. So, I called up a lot of my friends, and I said, “Look, I’m going to talk at Ohio and this is the way I’m going to present this. How do you feel about it?” And they said, “Yeah, well, I’ve been thinking along the same lines, and I’m going to do that at such and such place.” We must keep thinking in the largest possible terms. What does this mean to history? What does it mean to the way the economy moves in our country? How shall we shape this now? What chance do we have to shape it? What can we teach people? So my own sense of my role is not that it’s so revolutionary (although people are always telling me it was or it is) more that it’s evolutionary.

RUTH BOWMAN: I remember—I don’t want to make this sound like it’s the end of the interview—but I remember a farewell party that was given for you. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I remember.

RUTH BOWMAN: . . . in which we sat around and talked about what the changes had been in our own lives for the past decade, going right around the room. I’m not quite sure what I was doing there. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: You talked a lot.

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, it’s ‘cause you made me. [laughter]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And you had a good time.

RUTH BOWMAN: You challenged me, you challenged me.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I did challenge you.

RUTH BOWMAN: And I remember what it was about, it had to do with power.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Um hmm.

RUTH BOWMAN: And I learned a lot from listening to the women who had been totally immersed in a movement I knew nothing about, really, except second hand. And to have had that first-hand experience of a sort of mini-consciousness-raising session, I think, went to my head. [chuckles]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I was very proud of you though, because you were demonstrating exactly what a person should do in that situation, which is to say, “I don’t really know a lot about what this is, but I’m going to find out.”

RUTH BOWMAN: Yeah, well, I think that as a teacher of finding out, you are probably as good as anyone there is. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: [chuckles]

RUTH BOWMAN: . . . because you do question. We talked, you and I, many years ago on a cross-town bus going from the warehouse where we had been looking at, I think at your work—on a 49th Street cross-town bus, or 50th Street—and you were talking about color. And I was thinking that these informal situations. . . . In planning this interview, I was thinking the informal situations of your experience in California with other than the people who were your colleagues and. . . . I mean, collectors, for instance. We haven’t talked at all about dealers and collectors in California and how you felt about living in that scene at that particular time. And interacting,

because you just do not go passively, Miriam Schapiro, into any environment.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: [laughs]

RUTH BOWMAN: I mean, for instance take the Los Angeles County Museum. I mean, you went to the County Museum and looked at their exhibitions. Did you feel that you had a relationship with the museum or its staff?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, you bring another story to mind, which is the story of that big show, Women Artists, 1550 to 1950. Again, the women in California—or in Los Angeles at that time—really were extraordinary. Under June Wayne's aegis, at one point there were meetings of a group she called "Joan of Art."

RUTH BOWMAN: "Joan of Art?"

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It was a group devoted to the idea of being a professional artist, a group that met regularly and discussed everything under the sun, and later Joyce Kozloff and someone else went out and counted the number of woman artists hanging in the LA County Museum. You don't remember this?

RUTH BOWMAN: Oh, yes, I certainly do.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And there were five.

RUTH BOWMAN: Right.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Inclusive of all departments: rental department, Oriental department. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: Decorative arts.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: . . . decorative arts. I'm talking about absolutely every department. Renaissance, Medieval, contemporary. In all there were five women on display. And the two women came back to this meeting and, ah!, everyone was up in arms. "My God, my God, what can we do!" And then this kind of information sifted out through the feminist network, and ultimately Linda Nochlin and Anne Sutherland Harris put a show together called Women Artists, 1550 to 1950. It all began when Anne Sutherland Harris was invited to some sort of top-level dinner, and she was sitting next to the director of the L.A. County Museum. And she said to him, "Don't you think it's a little unfair, after all, this research was done, and only five women showed up? Don't you think you have to make amends? Doesn't anything occur to you?" "Well," he said, "make me a proposal." So she did. Later she connected with Linda. The proposal was approved and it took them, I think, three years to go through all of Europe. They made a fabulous show—which everybody hated! (laughs]

RUTH BOWMAN: Everybody hated because it did put quotations. . . . This revision of history made the art establishment uncomfortable, don't you think?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Very. And yet it's part of education; it had to be done. There is a kind of anxiety that arises about a separate culture, a separate group. How can we do that to art history? How can we take one half of the population and make it totally separate and different? Well, the point is, at the time in history when these things are subject to finger-pointing, one has to make an educational analysis. But certainly none of us ever wants to live separately. I mean, we just wanted to bring ourselves to the attention of the other gender. And of course, coming back to the discussion of power, we do live in a patriarchy, and the rules are set for us women, and we need to move, to integrate ourselves into the totality of society, and we need to bring our own point of view with us as we do that. So when we talk about it in this way, it doesn't seem so anxiety-producing or scary. It's just that some of the interpretations and some of the media carryings-on do make this more volatile that it needs to be.

RUTH BOWMAN: You mentioned June Wayne a few minutes ago and her impact. Did you and June ever work together? Did you ever work at Tamarind, for instance?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes. I worked at Tamarind.

RUTH BOWMAN: And you made prints in the early sixties?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Right. Paul made prints, I made prints, and we took our son with us, and he made a print. [laughter] He was about six years old.

RUTH BOWMAN: I think that it's very important for the Archives to be able to structure, from our rather informal interview, what it was that was different in Los Angeles in that period that you were out there, 1967-1974. For instance, there's the Women's Building now, which was not in existence then.

[Tape 1, side B]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, the Women's Building was an outgrowth of many organizations. There was a wonderful organization called Double X, I remember, which had theme exhibitions. I remember one particular show years ahead of its time. Later the them passed into the New York art world via the East Village. It was called Glitz and Glitter. And what was that? That was about texture, and it was about the kinds of things that women love, women are interested in. The artists took a simple idea, the idea of glamorizing fabric, the texture of clothing, e.g., making it an art form to stand on its own. Here were ideas about who a woman was and what she liked and what the direction of her thought was. And all of this would be funneled into some sort of art issue or art program, but at that time this wasn't popular, so the audience for feminist art was pretty much a female audience until these ideas kind of crept slowly across the country into the East Village and were taken over by, say, punkers or different kinds of artists, many of whom were male. So, one of my little teeny gripes right at this moment is that nobody has dealt with the variety of ideas that we women seeded in the art world. The force that ultimately captured all of these ideas is called pluralism.

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, that was what was concerning me. Who or how was the license given to women? I mean, you did it, obviously.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: We took it.

RUTH BOWMAN: Yeah.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: We took it. When we did Womanhouse, we were scared to death, because it had never been done before—such a mammoth project, you know, on an idea that had never been set forth before. And the thing I think that impressed me so much, Ruth, and which gave a real backup to my democratic sensibilities was when I saw women walk into that house and just gasp! Some of them crying. Some of them. . . . There was never a word said; it was always the expression on the face, "I know this. This is art, but I know what this is about. I know what this is about. I know what this is about."

RUTH BOWMAN: So it was a parallel activity to the establishment, or what is art. It wasn't really a challenge to what is art, it was another art form?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It was a reinforcement for women also.

RUTH BOWMAN: A reinforcement?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: A reinforcement of attitudes and ideas and feelings that women already knew about. It was their lexicon. It was in their vocabulary, They knew all about it. For example, German TV was here the other day, I told you on the phone, and they did a short piece on me, and we had some of my older work around. I had a huge heart here in the studio, and I told about things that belong to women—like hearts, for example. Now you see hearts in the shape of candy boxes, embroidered on pillows, you see hearts in quilts. And what has happened throughout history is that for some reason women have been associated with sentimental things (like hearts), and their art or whatever it is they do has been trivialized, and they've been trivialized, till they now fit very neatly into the second-sex category. Well, what I was saying for the camera the other day was that people forget that the origin of the word sentiment also gives rise to sentience and sensibility. And those are all words about feeling. So if you take the sentimentality away from women, you're taking their feeling away, and you can't do that to them, to us. You can't take our feelings away.

RUTH BOWMAN: So this kind of verification or validity is what you're giving to what women already like. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: . . . and do.

RUTH BOWMAN: . . . and do, and putting this into a legitimate part of the art world has been really a battle. It hasn't just happened.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: No. And it has been a battle.

RUTH BOWMAN: And it isn't over yet.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: No.

RUTH BOWMAN: Although it happens in subterranean ways. The point about mainstream art, as it was defined in terms of minimalism, let's say—just to take one aspect of the art world—it's always been a legislative form of art. It's, I mean, I don't want to use heavy words here, but it's like feelings I had when I went to Rome and saw what they call Mussolini art. You know what I'm talking about.

RUTH BOWMAN: The architecture in particular.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: The architecture in particular. Oh my God, I saw some bizarre things. But that is a legislated

art. It's not really an art that comes from creative democracy. It comes from something that's handed down from on top. I'm making it very simple. I mean, we have to talk about the structure of patriarchy, the economics of dictatorship, the taste of Mussolini; we have to talk about a lot of things, but what I'm saying is that what traditionally women have made in art, through their needlework mostly, has been the incorporation of certain kinds of what are now considered trivialized images.

RUTH BOWMAN: Um hmm.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And I incorporated women's traditional art into my own work through collage. I showed slides of what women made in my lectures. I traveled around the country collecting all these slides and showing contemporary art by women. I would show hearts as interpreted by maybe fifteen American women, working in the middle seventies. Each one was different. Some would be fantastic sculpture, done with extraordinary materials, like that stuff that comes out of the washing machine.

RUTH BOWMAN: Lint. [laughs]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Lint! Formed into a gray heart. [laughs] I was trying to describe an art activity that was current, whether or not it was receiving a lot of publicity.

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, certainly you've reached an enormous number of people. I remember when I first came to California there was, Anonymous Was a Woman. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Anonymous Was a Woman was a poster, a book, a celebration of women's creativity at Cal-Arts. As a book we published, it was a gathering of letters the women in our Feminist Art Program sent letters to a variety of established women in the art world: critics, poets, curators, artists—and they were asked, "How'd you do it?" We're young. We're students here. We want to know." And then this beautiful collection of replies came back, and we published them.

RUTH BOWMAN: Under the quotation from Virginia Woolf.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Exactly.

RUTH BOWMAN: And was it Virginia Woolf's life, or just the quote that made you choose the title?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: We were very proud of Virginia , you know. She really is a heroine to creative feminists, in the sense that her life is so instructive to us. Her devotion to her art. The fact that she was so original. Also the tragedy of her life. You know, these things belong to us. Like Sylvia Plath's life, or like Frieda Kahlo's life. It's always somehow inspiring to think of someone who had great suffering and yet great achievement at the same time. We are inspired by their redemption. These women are all heroines. Certainly it was Virginia Woolf's life as well as her work. And also her attitudes toward society, and her particular way of being a feminist. For example, she had a lot of trouble joining groups. A lot of women have trouble joining groups. But that doesn't stop you from expressing your point of view in whatever manner you choose to do it. That's what she did. She made her little pamphlets, and she was a journalist. She published books, and she wrote her own books. She and her husband were a partnership; they published together. And ultimately she took her life. And all of that made for a genuine kind of myth for women who were at that time being so conscious of the fact that they were women, and that they had a history. We needed to have role models. Everything came together at the same time: Art and consciousness, myth and reality. You asked me before, and I don't think we went into it, why did I think that California was a particularly fertile ground for all this to happen? I don't think it could have ever happened in New York. New York is hell-bent on separating one person from another because of the competition. And in California there was some chance for us to get together. And it was as simple as that.

RUTH BOWMAN: Since you travel, and since you lecture widely, do you feel that California has changed in any way and become more like New York? I mean, this isn't totally relevant, but I'd be interested.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: No, but I think the, California. . . . I'm taking a guess, now, because I'm, been, I've been traveling more in San Francisco lately, exchanging my loft for a house in San Francisco and staying there for a while. My guess is that from what people tell me, Los Angeles has become a very serious art center, with a serious new museum—MOCA—and serious galleries and so forth. And it would seem to me that that's a kind of entrenchment of the status quo of the kinds of art scenes you have in New York, and the subsequent institutionalizing of particular points of view.

RUTH BOWMAN: Do you think that women are as organized as women in this decade as they were, say, fifteen, twenty years ago?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: No, there's been a lot of burnout. Many of people like myself, who gave so much to the movement and cared so much about what was happening, have retreated, to our own studios. We've become

very selfish, wanting to concentrate on our own work, wanting to advance our own careers, and some of us wanting to live the better life, you know, out in the country, not fighting the competition the world offers—so much of the time. Other women will take up the struggle for parity.

RUTH BOWMAN: Um hmm.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: When you get to be my age you realize how there isn't black and white, that most of us live in an enormous area of gray, and that that gray itself has incredible numbers of shadings. So you can't say a feminist should be like this, or people should be like that, or if you're a Marxist you should only wear black, as some of my friends do. [both chuckle] You know, you can't legislate all these things. You can't be pietistic. You just have to take people as they are and learn from them.

RUTH BOWMAN: But you used the word "democracy" earlier.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes. Because I think what we women did was to democratize art. I think today a lot of what goes on in galleries—I'm not saying it's successful—is a democratization of art. For example, there's an important movement towards recognizing ethnicity. Recently I was amused because one of my paintings wasn't permitted to go to Russia. The man who was organizing the show said, "Well, your work is not political [chuckles] so therefore you don't qualify for this show, because we're just showing political work." In 1972 it was the reverse. I was excluded from shows because I was political. But now there's a new politics, and the new politics calls for new laws and new rules. So what's political today is that you have to be a non-mainstream ethnic, an outsider, and then whatever you do is considered political. I'm not putting this trend down. I'm just trying to point out how the shifts and changes go, and how complex it is, and how it's all in the area of gray.

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, and what you were implying is that this depends a great deal on curators, which brings me to a new area—the curators and dealers—and we haven't really talked very much about that. And I wondered in your California experience whether this was a factor in your life, or if they were ever factors in your life, at all. Or whether it was really the teaching and the experience with other artists that was important.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I think what was most important to me was the shift in my work, in the early seventies in California. Right after Womanhouse, I glued fabric on the painted surface of the canvas. And that was really a no-no as far as New York was concerned. In fact, Al Held said of me (I had a lot of New York admirers before I came to California), "Well, she left the true faith."

RUTH BOWMAN: [chuckles]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I had a show in 1973 the André Emmerich Gallery, an enormous show of my work, and all the canvases had fabric on them. My colleagues were just astonished.

RUTH BOWMAN: You still had the hard edge in the. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes.

RUTH BOWMAN: You were still cutting that fabric very tight.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: The fabric—which is really, in a larger sense, the fabric of my life—was so important to me. And then from that came my research into women's traditional art and. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: The aprons.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: The aprons and the needlework and ultimately our producing that fabulous issue of Heresies, called "Women's Traditional Art." I'm so gung-ho about Heresies because it really is an encyclopedia of everything I'm talking about. Every issue was different, and each issue was published by a new collective. So the process of publishing was different and the content was different.

RUTH BOWMAN: You were involved in the beginning as a fundraiser for getting it off the ground, and you were involved in the editorial policy, and you were involved in the content. When did you move away from Heresies?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: As I said before, a lot of us experienced feminists burned out, and so we were no longer on the active collective of producing the magazine. We became associates. We could always be called on to donate a picture for fundraising, and to give advice if it was needed, but we gave the magazine over to people who were younger and came after us and had different ideas from us. So the policy and the content changed.

RUTH BOWMAN: In California you were teaching at Cal-Arts for five or six years?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Not even that.

RUTH BOWMAN: Not even that.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: No, four.

RUTH BOWMAN: Four years. And you. . . . Judy Chicago came down from northern California.

RUTH BOWMAN: She came from Fresno for about two years, and left.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Two years, and left. And I continued the Feminist Art Program in my own manner for two years after she left. I concentrated more on publishing. We published Anonymous Was a Woman, which you and I just talked about, and we published another wonderful publication called Art: A Woman's Sensibility. The cover of that publication was reproduced in The Village Voice, because we showed Merit Oppenheimer's fur-lined teacup, and up to that point, Ruth, almost everybody. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: Nobody knew she was a woman, right.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Everyone thought it was a man.

RUTH BOWMAN: I remember that, because it was such a revelation. I think some of the curators at the Modern [Museum of Art—Ed.] didn't know.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: That's right. [chuckles]

RUTH BOWMAN: And I think that kind of research into the history of art by women began at that time.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Oh, absolutely. And that's when we began to affect the women art historians. The CAA was very important in that work.

RUTH BOWMAN: The College Art Association, right.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: We were encouraged by the College Art Association to form the Women's Caucus. And the Women's Caucus was very instrumental in changing the face of art history by giving moral support to those women scholars who had not as yet done independent research.

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, I think I remember seeing at a College Art Association meeting Linda Nochlin having lunch with Dr. Jansen, whose entire department was composed of women, and they were all very good scholars. She was challenging his book on that history of art which omitted women, and he was listening. I wasn't clear on how the women's caucus was formed. I remember some of the people involved

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I was there at the beginning.

RUTH BOWMAN: You were there at the beginning, _____.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I remember the famous lunch hour. They couldn't schedule us in a normal timeframe. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: You mean a section on women and art?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yeah, they couldn't do that, because the program had already been made up. But the president of the women's, of the CAA that year was female, and she encouraged the organization to give us a lunch hour.

RUTH BOWMAN: Was that Ann Hansen?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes. I came up from LA and I gave my description of Womanhouse, because we were in the process of creating it in LA, and the meeting of the CAA was in San Francisco. And so many artists spoke, because we wanted to really share all the new thoughts and ideas that were going on in our heads with the art historians. Giving my description of the lipstick bathroom, for example, in Womanhouse, I felt like I was talking to a message center, that I was bringing information to really important minds, and I was just hoping and waiting for them to turn around and do something with it. And I must say it took about ten years. [laughs]

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, I think the women's caucus is an established organization, and I think it's healthy and going. It's probably in academe that women really have to fight the hardest.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I think you're right.

RUTH BOWMAN: I mean, even harder than the artists who go from gallery to gallery.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I think you're right.

RUTH BOWMAN: But as far as national organizations are concerned, or political action on behalf of women, I think that much of that is not happening now. You said before that burnout took place. Do you know exactly when what you referred to as burnout began to happen to you?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: In 1974 we came back to New York. We bought a loft on West Broadway. We'd had this place in East Hampton for about thirty-five years. And then a big enthusiastic moment in my life came when I came back to New York and Joyce brought me to the attention of all her feminist friends in New York, and we formed Heresies. There were a lot of meetings. We were very excited, and that was a moment of great fervor in New York for me, after experiencing wonderful intellectual and creative times in California. Then Joyce and I, Robert Zakanitch, and a few other artists, formed the Pattern and Decoration movement. The journalists gave us that title. We became very celebrated, and were particularly appreciated by Europeans.

RUTH BOWMAN: Europe.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Our work traveled all over Europe. One day in my life Bruno Bischofberger came to my studio.

RUTH BOWMAN: Who?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Bruno Bischofberger, a collector from Zurich. He bought everything I had done that year. It was the first time in my life I'd ever seen real money, and it was the first time in my life that I was appreciated on such a grand scale. [laughing] This was happening to all of us. So the pressures became different. We had to produce, to have shows all over, to talk, to go to openings of shows on the continent and in the U.S., and so that mediated my radical activities somewhat
[Interruption in taping]

RUTH BOWMAN: So changes began to take place.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, yes. The formation of the Pattern and Decoration group started in California. You were describing my studio in LaJolla, and you remembered what it looked like?

RUTH BOWMAN: Oh, absolutely.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, Bob Zakanitch came there and visited me, and he said, "I want to start a movement." But he didn't say it that first time he visited me. We got to know each other and become friends and so forth, and there was a sympatico feeling between us in terms of how we worked, and what our approach was to art. And then after I got more heavily involved with the structure of the women's movement, the networking and the ways of disseminating information and all of that, he came again, and now it was years later, and that's when he said, "I want to start a movement." He said, "You know, there are a lot of people who work the way we do." And I said, "I can think of so and so, and so and so," and he said, "And so and so, and so and so." He said, "How do you do that?"

RUTH BOWMAN: [laughs]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: So I said, "Well, how did the Cubists do it?"

RUTH BOWMAN: "How did the Cubists do it?"

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: And, "How did the Impressionists do it?" What is it? I said to Bob, "You've really described it already. If there's a period in history when a number of artists are working in a similar way, what's interesting is for these artists to talk to each other. "Okay," he said, "I'm making a meeting at my loft," he said, "and I want you to come." I said, "Well, you live in New York. I live here in California. You better make it during one of my vacations." He said, "I will." And we had a whole group of people, and included were about five women and five men. And that was very exciting to Joyce and me because we had been so immersed in the women's part of it, that the idea of having, being part of something exciting that included men and women, I felt, "Oh, my God, you know, it's really come true! We can do it!"

RUTH BOWMAN: Democracy is happening.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It's not only that, but we can share our ideas with the men—really interested in working in some other ways. The thing about Pattern and Decoration for us feminists was that in women's traditional art you see pattern and decoration. And of course the decorative was always considered a trivialization, but here were men who were interested in an analysis of the decorative. Why make the decorative? Where does it happen? Does it happen in Islam in the same way that it happens with the Navajos? We began to come together and share our information. Talk to each other, show our slides, and tell what it was that motivated us. One guy, I remember, was interested in the fourth dimension, in patterning. This was all fascinating. So we were feeding

each other. And then, because it was an interesting group, news got out about these meetings. . . . This is the part were the dealers were interesting to me, and where the collectors were interesting to me, because being part of a brand-new movement, it was exciting to see who did take this up and why. And then it was exciting to see ten years later who got rid of it, and why.

RUTH BOWMAN: Oh, well, that's a whole other interview, I think.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: That's right.

RUTH BOWMAN: But you stayed on in California while you were making this kind of art.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It started, of course, in California. It had to do with my own expansion of my creative self in terms of bringing the fabric to the surface of the canvas as a symbolic and deeply felt gesture of integrating my entire life. My life of nesting, my life of home-making, my life of creating in the studio, my life of leaving my painting because I can't think of what to do right now and go and baking brownies, and then returning to the studio. It was an effort to bring all the parts of my life together, as my husband says, into one seamless existence. Anyway, the part about Pattern and Decoration being so exciting to people is that it had a lifespan of about ten years, in which we were all very busy, and then after that it began to subside. I remember going out to Stockton, California, to give a talk, and the women all knew about me—in my audience in the museum. And at one point in my discussion, after showing many slides of my own work and the work of other women who worked in Pattern and Decoration, I said, "Well, this is a movement which has had its moment and is a little bit on the wane." A woman got up in the question and answer period and said, "Ms. Schapiro, maybe to you it's on the wane, but not out here in Stockton!"

RUTH BOWMAN: [laughs]

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: What she was scolding me for was the fact that I was being so provincial, that I was just representing what New York was doing, or New York was thinking.

RUTH BOWMAN: It happened very fast when you went back to New York.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: What?

RUTH BOWMAN: You became a New Yorker again?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Yes, it happened very fast. What can you do?

RUTH BOWMAN: Well, you are obviously a national or an international artist, so that that's not an issue, but I think from the point of view of this particular oral history it's important for us to know what you feel is the contribution you made and how you feel about what happened then, and from what you've had to say thus far, it was a profound experience for you, and I wonder if you could pull together some of the things that you feel. . . .

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well. . . .

RUTH BOWMAN: Factual or feeling.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: I think the neat thing about my life was that it all started from my experience, and we both know that even if I talk about my intellectual experience or my experience with people—anything outside of my studio—we know that the artist can provide nothing for society unless it comes from within. We really don't admire artists who ape other artists; we don't take them seriously. We say, "Ah, yes, we've seen this before." So I think what's been neat about my life is that I am totally aware that all my experiences come together in the studio, and afterwards I could branch out and share whatever it was that developed from the work in the studio. I could share it with others, and I did that in many, many ways.

RUTH BOWMAN: So you ran this constant parallel activity?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: New forms, new ideas would happen in the studio, they would reflect my lifestyle, my interest in them would change my lifestyle, new energy would affect the way I organized women around me, the way we formed collectives, had collective experience, what we produced, then we would write about it, or we would make poems up, you know, or we would take photographs, or we would gather data of what it was we were doing. All the time in teaching, in art, outside the studio, in the exhibitions we'd had, in all the networking we would do, we just kept documenting our progress. And I feel the process and the content, Ruth, coming together, in the ways that we've talked about it today. That was my particular contribution. [See the last page of this transcript for an addendum from MS listing her contributions—Ed.]

RUTH BOWMAN: It's very clear that it's a very dense period in which an enormous amount happened, and I think it's clear that you brought to California, very early on, a great deal of background, and I hope that somewhere

else in the Archives we have this. I'm curious to know what happened to all the data you've collected, and what happened to all the records? Do you have all this material?

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: Well, I have been asked by the Archives to give it to them, and when I get it together I certainly hope to give it to them, but I also hope to write a book.

RUTH BOWMAN: That will be very exciting. [chuckles] Being familiar with your present work, I can imagine that it's going to be a book that is organized in a very exciting and original way, too.

MIRIAM SCHAPIRO: It's funny you say that, because really that has preoccupied me, and I have thought along those lines quite a bit.

RUTH BOWMAN: Yes, well, I think the way books are made need a bit of input from Miriam Schapiro. I want to thank you on behalf of the Archives for this probably seventy-minute conversation, and we'll see to it that you get a transcribed copy of it. I'll hope that the other two, the period before California and the period after California, are very well documented. Thank you.

[End of interview]

Addendum from MS regarding her contributions:
1. Discovering women's traditional arts.
2. Revising art history to include women's accomplishments in past centuries.
3. Lecturing and writing about the art of women in the seventies and eighties (at this writing in 1990).
4. Erasing the line between art and craft.
5. Renewing interest in quilts and quiltmaking.
6. Organizing the first major teaching program at Cal-Arts for women artists only (with Judy Chicago).
7. Acting as a leader in the feminist art movement.
8. Acting as a leader in the Pattern and Decoration movement.
9. Organizing Heresies with others.
10. Organizing the Feminist Art Institute with others. (I actually taught there one semester.)
11. Contributing to post-Modernism by challenging Modernism—in my work through the combining of formal art with artifacts from women's culture.
12. Inventing "femmage" (see #11).

END OF INTERVIEW

Last updated... *May 19, 2003*