

“(...) Radical Change was in the Air”

Judy Chicago's Pedagogical Work at Fresno State College in 1970

Marie-Christine Schoel

Abstract

In the context of the anthology's inquiry into the impulses that the critique of the institutional framework of art education provided for the emergence of novel artistic practices, this analysis places Judy Chicago's work at Fresno State College at the center of the investigation. Whereas the establishment of the Feminist Art Program (FAP) and the withdrawal of female art students from campus is considered the steppingstone for the development of a feminist art education, this study retraces a longer trajectory of the interplay between institutional critique and art pedagogy as impulses for the spatial concepts and feminist artistic practices that emanated out of the FAP. The investigation begins with Chicago's smoke atmospheres staged on the art department construction site in the spring of 1970, when the campus was experiencing violent protests, student boycotts, and clashes between Black and Chicana/o activists and conservative groups. These interventions, which attempted to “disappear the art building,” operated as performative institutional critique that established the groundwork for the FAP's construction of an educational space fostering collective, cooperative, and performative practices, and thereby challenging gendered notions of the educational, the studio, and the private realms. However, the decision to withdraw from campus precisely when “radical change was in the air”—and when students were actively occupying and transforming campus space—reveals tensions within the program's approach to institutional critique and raises questions about missed opportunities for solidarity with broader civil rights movements. Such shifts have to be understood in the broader context of how spatial politics, institutional critique, and feminist pedagogy intersected in ways that both challenge and potentially reinforce exclusionary practices within art education.

Keywords

Judy Chicago – feminist art pedagogy – Fresno State College – educational space

1 Introduction

A radical act of institutional critique in the educational sphere can be found in Judy Chicago's withdrawal of female art students from the campus of Fresno State College (now California State University, Fresno) in 1970. Referring to the marginal number of women working as professional artists after graduation, Chicago proposed this dislocation and, thus, the founding of the Feminist Art Program (FAP) as a countermeasure (Chicago, 1982, p. 70). This off-campus space was intended to enable women's inquiry into the techniques and content of artistic practices away from the institution, which was deemed male-dominated. The development of her educational process depended on Chicago's search for a place that would allow her to distance herself from the Los Angeles art scene (Levin, 2018, p. 137) and the art education she had received (Chicago, 2014, p. 22). As Laura Meyer's research illuminated, the lesser-known Fresno FAP has to be recognized as a precedent for the FAP at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and the project *Womanhouse* (1971/1972),¹ which "could never have been founded *ex nihilo* at CalArts" (Meyer, 2009, p. 5).² Therefore, the Fresno feminist educational space, which was thought of as 'a room of one's own' after Virginia Woolf (Wilding, 2009, p. 80), has to be credited with having laid the groundwork for the development of novel art practices, such as collaboration, consciousness-raising as a source of content, and the exploration of traditional female connotated media such as needlework, as well as video and photography, performance, role-playing, and the use of costume.

In both cases, the Fresno and CalArts FAP, the withdrawal of female students from the campus is generally seen both as the springboard for the development of feminist pedagogy and art making and as producing predominantly white feminist spaces. Lesser attention has been paid to the environmental, performative, and collective works Chicago created on the Fresno State campus before founding the FAP. In the course of a mixed-gender, site-specific sculpture class in the spring term of 1970, Chicago and her students staged smoke atmospheres on the construction site of the Art Department. While her two smoke works at museum sites were deemed to display a critical stance towards the institution—her *Santa Barbara Museum Atmosphere* (1969) left burn marks on the façade of the museum (Hopkins, 2023, p. 56)³—her smoke works on the Fresno campus have to be regarded as enacting an equally critical stance towards the institutional framework albeit, in this instance, the educational institution. This critical intervention becomes particularly significant given that the smoke atmospheres emerged amid the student protests, boycotts, and political upheaval that gripped the campus in spring 1970, positioning the collective and performative smoke works within a broader context of the contestation of the educational institution.

Taking the smoke atmospheres as precedents for the FAP at Fresno, the study looks at the interplay of institutional critique toward the built environment of art education, feminist pedagogy, and feminist artistic practices. This not only confirms that the feminist art pedagogy implemented at Fresno State College offers an example of how the critique of the educational institution provided productive impulses for avant-garde art practices—even as feminist theory has contested the male-coded connotation of the avant-garde term itself (Schor, 2016, pp. 17–20). The trajectory from dissolution through displacement to reconstruction of educational architecture reveals both a challenge to the built environment and the emergence of transformative pedagogical approaches. The smoke atmospheres' performative dissolution of institutional boundaries thus established the groundwork for the FAP's alternative construction of educational space, demonstrating how spatial critique can evolve into pedagogical innovation. However, this analysis also sheds new light on questions about solidarity and the exclusionary potential of separate feminist spaces as, while the FAP successfully challenged gendered notions of educational space, its retreat from campus stands in tension with a moment of collective political resistance spearheaded by Black studies and Chicana/o studies students.

2 Smoke Pedagogy: 'Disappearing the Art Building'

In the latter half of the 1960s Chicago, then still known by the name Gerowitz,⁴ started working with colored smoke during street parades and social gatherings with artists in Los Angeles, Pasadena, and in the surrounding beaches, mountains, and deserts. In calling the works 'atmospheres', she underlined the effect that unfolded when "disengaging color from any object context."⁵ After Chicago took up her position as an assistant professor at Fresno State College in the spring term of 1970, she taught a site-specific sculpture class and, together with students, staged two atmospheres on the construction site of the Art Department. At the time the smoke atmospheres were executed, social unrest had erupted on the Fresno State College campus. As Kenneth Seib (1979, p. 5) noted in his detailed account of the events at the College, the

relatively unknown California State College of about twelve thousand students is an ideal source of study, for what happened at Fresno State during the past decade is largely what has happened at similar colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Faced with the Free Speech Movement that erupted in the mid-1960s two hundred miles north of Fresno at UC Berkeley, violent protests against the

Vietnam War on university campuses, Black and social rights activism, and with the increasing momentum of the feminist movements, young academics challenged established curricula. The progressive movement in academia was met by a conservative backlash in the latter half of the 1960s, which led to the first student boycotts on the Fresno campus on February 24 and 25, 1970. Sit-ins, a hunger strike, and a campus march ended in violence between Chicana/o students and students from the agricultural department (Seib, 1979, pp. 11, 44, 63–66). The first smoke atmosphere was executed on February 17, only a few days before the first student boycott erupted, and was later described by the Fresno Staff Bulletin as follows:

Miss Chicago [...] made points soon after she arrived on campus for the spring semester. [...] she held an art demonstration on the site of the new Art Building, at the time only a hole in the ground. The demonstration was called a smoke Atmosphere. It employed chemical smoke, thick and multihued, which could be sculpted in the air. Unfortunately, an unseemly wind somewhat ruined the effect. (Levin, 2018, p. 134)⁶

The tense situation on campus had still not eased by the time the second atmosphere was staged on the construction site in April 1970. The riots continued, and further demonstrations unfolded in response to the killing of four students at Kent State University in early May, and this resulted in a declaration of emergency on the Fresno campus on May 19 (Seib,



FIGURE 8.1 Judy Chicago, *Atmosphere: Disappearing the Art Building, Fresno State College, 1970*. © 1970 Judy Chicago. Courtesy of the artist and the Nevada Museum of Art

1979, pp. 69, 73). The photographic documentation of the second atmosphere shows two people squatting on the ground lighting flares while another fire burning in the background indicates a third flare (see Figure 8.1).⁷ The smoke blurs the background into foggy hues of fuchsia and blue, merging into the sky and making it impossible to discern the outlines and dimensions of the construction site.

As becomes evident in the photographic documentation, a fundamental concern of Chicago's work with smoke lies in disturbing perception through dissolving spatial parameters and disguising the architecture through optical intervention. Looking back, Chicago herself remembers the atmosphere as an attempt "to try and 'disappear' that masculine looking structure" (Levin, 2018, p. 134). Whereas her atmospheres have been regarded as 'feminizing' the environment (Pinder, 2023, p. 52), there is an underlying impetus to the work and its use of flares at this historical moment that is related to violence, death, and militarization. In the same year as Chicago's smoke atmospheres on the Fresno Campus, Chris Burden, in his performance piece, *Deadman* (1970), placed flares around his supposedly dead body, which was covered by a tarpaulin as he lay on La Cienega Boulevard in front of the Riko Mizuno Gallery in Los Angeles. Phillip Kaiser (2019, p. 25) read *Deadman* as an example of the evocation of death in works by the Southern California artists at a moment in which "death was omnipresent in the military infrastructure located in Southern California's industrial complex" and which, therefore, reflected "the trauma of the Vietnam War, which lasted until the mid-1970s." The invocation of death and militarization of the smoke works in the context of the university campus linked them back to the violence that ignited in the course of student riots and to the milieu that the university presented for the contestation of the US's military invasion into Southeast Asia. In this context, it is particularly striking that the smoke atmosphere on the Fresno campus was referred to as an 'art demonstration' in the Staff Bulletin quoted above. The term 'demonstration' denotes a reading of the work as coming together or uniting in the expression of dissent or with the intention of revolt. As Moira Roth (1983, p. 94) stated in her early historiography of the women's performance movement, such dialectics of performative practices and social rights movements must be considered critical for the burgeoning performance movement of the 1970s. Faith Wilding (2009, p. 94), one of Chicago's students at the FAP, described this interrelationship by writing, "Sitting in at a lunch counter, occupying a building, blocking a street, marching and singing, were performative acts that enacted changing social relations and body politics." All of Chicago's atmospheres display a collective, performative approach, with friends, fellow artists, and pyrotechnicians involved in the process of lighting and dispersing the smoke. However, the notion that students were

engaged in an 'art demonstration' on campus indicates an intersection of performativity, protest, and pedagogy. The multifaceted meaning of the word 'demonstration' is, thus, expanded towards its connotation of showing or instructing.

Whereas Chicago's atmospheres in urban settings can be considered to have critically engaged with the built environment, the staging of the atmosphere within the construction site of the new building of the University's Art Department represents a particular configuration that should be further examined.⁸ Staging the smoke work within the construction site drew attention to the physical supporting structures of the institutional space and to the material reality of its edification, thereby hinting at their meaning as symbolic carriers for social and educative issues. The construction site, in turn, can be read within the historical context of the rapid growth of the educational sector in the aftermath of the Sputnik shock as marked by the entry of the Soviet Union's satellite into space in 1957.⁹ In the 1960s and 70s, it was "particularly striking and in many ways novel [how ...] architectural design was put into the service of the educational aims" (Muthesius, 2000, p. 21). In the wake of the increasing awareness of the influence that the built environment had on the learning process, the idiom of a 'school without walls' presented a progressive planning concept for inclusive and flexible learning environments that facilitated student participation and self-determination in the learning process (Holert, 2021, pp. 50–54). Against this backdrop, enveloping the construction site in hues of colored smoke intervened in the material conditions of the construction of the learning environment by simultaneously laying bare the material framework of the educational institution and letting it disappear. As a result, the built environment was questioned as a prerequisite for learning in the context of a site-specific sculpture class that, itself, presented a break with the spatial parameters of studio art education. As Chicago (2014, p. 20) reflected, her utopian wish for the establishment of a women's art community that would provide the "means to show, distribute, and sell [artworks by women artists]; teaching other women artmaking skills; and establishing and writing our own history" seemed feasible in the climate of the 1970s when "radical change was in the air." Considering the atmospheres as interventions on campus, the metaphorical meaning of radical change lingering in the air is tied back to the deployment of smoke as a pedagogical tool. The smoke interventions performatively engaged with the relation of the body to the building of the educational institution, and it can well be regarded as posing an approach to the questioning of the means of access and participation within the institution and of the spatial policy of the educational environment.

3 Building a Feminist Educational Space

When Chicago arrived at Fresno State College in the spring semester of 1970, a group of students, spearheaded by Faith Wilding and Suzanne Lacy, were meeting regularly for consciousness-raising sessions while a group of faculty members was working towards the establishment of a women's studies department (Wilding, 2009, pp. 81–82). After Chicago proposed the idea of a women's class to the Dean of the Art Department, he introduced her to Faith Wilding, who would later become Chicago's teaching assistant. Together they organized and held interviews with students in the midst of turmoil still affecting the Fresno campus. As Wilding depicted:

bomb scares caused building evacuations, antiwar marches and demonstrations took place weekly, five professors had been fired for their political activism. Most of the women we interviewed were art students, some of whom were already taking Chicago's outdoor site sculpture class. (1994, p. 34)

Personnel decisions repeatedly led to protests, such as those following the controversial dismissal of faculty, including the Black rights activist Marvin X and other instructors from the Ethnic Studies Program and the English Department, among them Everett Frost, Faith Wilding's husband at the time (Seib, 1979, pp. 20–33, 54). Against this backdrop of institutional repression, Chicago decided to break with the traditional institutional framework and curriculum, meeting 15 selected students off campus, alternating between the private spaces of the participants involved until they signed a 7-month lease for a 5,000-square-foot building for which each student paid \$25 per month to cover rent, tools, and further expenses (Wilding, 1994, p. 34). The former barracks were located in a run-down part of the city, at the opposite end of town from the University, and henceforth, as Karen LeCocq, one of the FAP students, elucidated, "far away from the prying critical eyes of the male-dominated Art Department" (Yudelma & LeCocq, 2012, p. 71).

Chicago deemed the renting of a space to be a fundamental step in the pedagogical process through which she introduced her students to the professional artist's need for a studio space (Levin, 2018, p. 145). In addition to the studio space, the barracks provided a spacious kitchen used to cook weekly studio dinners (Yudelma & LeCocq, 2012, p. 65), a darkroom was installed, and a long shelf in the storage room off the kitchen was converted into a "film-editing table for splicing Super-8 film."¹⁰ As Wilding (2009, p. 87) described, "there was an office with a telephone, a small library, and an art history research space

where we began the first women's art history slide collection." Smaller spaces were partitioned off for the installation of individual environments, and one room, fitted out with carpet scraps, was used as a 'rap room' for consciousness-raising sessions, and, thus, provided a gathering space for discussions about research projects as well as for conversations with visiting artists and



FIGURE 8.2 Judy Chicago, *Janice Lester in the Costume Room, Feminist Art Program, Fresno, 1970*. © 1970 Judy Chicago. Courtesy of the artist and the Nevada Museum of Art

writers such as Miriam Schapiro and Ti-Grace Atkinson (Wilding, 2009, p. 88). Another hangout was “the rickety old porch, on which we gathered to smoke, sun ourselves, and talk endlessly” (Wilding, 2009, p. 87).

One of the initial tasks Chicago presented her students was to build a forty-foot-long drywall. The assignment aimed to introduce the students to technical skills, to the use of tools, and to construction techniques, as well as the need to wear appropriate attire for physical work such as work boots (Roth, 2012, p. 80). This contested a crucial step in Chicago’s eyes as “the fixing-up process seemed a natural way for the women to learn to use tools, develop building skills, and gain confidence in themselves physically” (Garrard/Broude, 1994, p. 67). As Wilding reflected, “The ‘Wall’ was as much symbolic as it was real; it defined our big exhibition/performance/studio space” (Wilding, 1994, p. 87). As Wollenman Johnson recalled, the wall was built opposite the entrance to the studio. Its position created a theatre-like setting with the wall functioning as a backdrop for performances and role-plays, and the partitioned-off space behind the wall as a costume storage and changing area (see Figure 8.2).¹¹

In the context of the aforementioned pedagogical design concept of the open plan learning environment, this building of a wall as a pedagogical tool within the FAP seems to almost ridicule the idea of the ‘school without walls.’ The collective construction of a drywall can be seen as a radical diversion from the aim of the smoke atmospheres, which was to disappear the construction site as previously discussed. However, both contrasting approaches entail wrestling with the relationship of the body to the built environment through the performative. While the building of the wall, the handling of sheetrock, the use of tools, and the wearing of workwear and boots constituted performative acts rather than mere prerequisites for the implementation of performative practices, this collective engagement with architectural space emerged as a continuation of the performative spatial interventions established through the smoke atmospheres. The performative engagement with the built environment, enabled the students to interact differently within the educational space. As Wilding described,

[t]he most transformative aspect of the studio was how we began to claim and use the space. Since most of us worked and hung out there daily for many hours, we were able to see each other’s work as it developed, to give suggestions, encouragement and critique, and collaborate technically and conceptually. This organic process of becoming collaborators in a space of our own was one of the secrets of the Program’s astonishing success. (2009, p. 88)

As becomes evident in Wilding's statement, having the FAP students take control of the design of the educational space fundamentally affected their art-making processes. As Wollenman Johnson remembers, working collectively in such a way was previously impeded by the campus as it lacked designated studio space for its students. Therefore, students had worked on their projects in the personal spaces that were available to them, mostly at home.¹² Thus, by being a shared space, the studio enabled immediate communication around practical experiences and knowledge exchange, the sharing of tools and materials during the working process, and fostered collective authorship. By encouraging the students to take matters into their own hands and by creating the possibility of working collectively, the FAP challenged the hierarchical relation between educators and students, as Chicago collaborated with the students on performance works (Chicago, 2014, p. 27) and increasingly pushed the group towards self-dependency (Chicago, 1982, p. 84). This, in turn, affected the class structure and the spatial and temporal parameters of art pedagogy and studio work. As Wilding recalls,

Working off-campus in a building we controlled dissolved the normal academic time and space boundaries. [...] Instead of holding structured classes, we worked in groups, rotating responsibility for leadership. The groups included: consciousness-raising; reading/discussion; autobiography writing; photo/film techniques; art-history research; performance and play-acting; studio work with individual instruction from Chicago; group critiques; and Wednesday night dinners for social time. Each woman planned her weekly work schedule and formulated her semester's goals according to the credits (between 6 to 15) she was receiving from the college. We soon developed strong emotional and psychological bonds. Most of us ended up working (and practically living) at the studio every day. (1994, pp. 34–35)

The spending of social time together in the educational space was supported by incorporating facets of the domestic in the form of furnishings, shared meals, and a general approach of consistently spending time together. In addition to the kitchen, which provided room for social gatherings, the 'rap' room, furnished with carpet scraps, was dedicated to consciousness-raising sessions (Meyer, 2009, p. 7), the collective coming into consciousness about the social implications of personal experiences and feelings. The blending of the private with the educational space was further enhanced by the fact that one of the students, Cheryl Zurilgen, lived on the second floor with her partner, who worked in the studio downstairs, opposite the FAP studio.¹³ The juxtaposition

of domestic spaces and spaces for the production of art enabled the immediate channeling of emotional and personal, autobiographical, awareness-raising processes, group discussions, and emotional support into the making of art. However, this intensive communal environment also generated tensions. Despite their shared working-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds, conflicts emerged among the FAP students, and some participants have retrospectively criticized Chicago's confrontational pedagogical approach (Meyer & Wilding, 2010, pp. 41, 48, 49). Nevertheless, others benefited from the support of the group. (Wilding, 2009, p. 94)

The capacity for both conflict and nurturing within the same space reveals the complex implications of the FAP's spatial experiment, which fundamentally traversed the idea of the educational sphere as a counterpart to the private realm. Thus, the feminist pedagogical space of the FAP in Fresno resembled spatial programs of socialist utopian cooperative living. At the Chicago Hull-House (founded 1889 by Jane Addams), for example, through the "equalitarian division of labor—domestic, logistical, pedagogical, and sociocultural—at odds with mainstream political institutions" all facets of living blended together as the "bedrooms were regularly borrowed for activities such as the making of costumes for the play put on at Hull-House" (Gourbe, 2015, p. 15). While it is acknowledged that the feminist pedagogical spaces of the 1970s had their precedents in such settlement movements, it is important to point out that while the educational space at the FAP in Fresno incorporated facets of the domestic, it simultaneously represented a conscious withdrawal from the private realm. In aiming to convince her students of the need for a studio space, Chicago pointed out the limitations that the home posed for artistic creation declaring that "You can't make an eight-foot painting in your bedroom" (Levin, 2018, p. 145). In contrast, being part of the FAP enabled the students to work in a designated studio space, to execute large-scale pieces, and experiment with a variety of materials. Thus, the artistic practice was brought from the individual private realm into the shared studio space that, in turn, integrated aspects of the private into the educational process, thereby opening up room to speak about the personal.

4 Concluding Remarks

Taking the smoke atmospheres as precedents for the FAP reveals a continuous engagement with educational space as pedagogical tool—demonstrating how Chicago's initial performative interventions on campus established the spatial critique that would define the feminist pedagogical experiment. The

withdrawal from campus was not merely an escape from institutional constraints, but rather it represented a continuation of the engagement with educational space as a pedagogical tool. The link between institutional critique and the emergence of novel approaches to art making developed from the dissolution of the material conditions of the art educational institution enacted through the atmospheres to the construction of a feminist educational space. These spatial interventions established a model for transforming rather than simply rejecting institutional structures, demonstrating how the dissolution of academic time-space boundaries could generate new forms of artistic practices and pedagogical engagement that fostered the unlearning of gendered, institutionally grounded structures and discourses about how and whom to educate.

This trajectory from dissolution to reconstruction demonstrates the inherent ambivalence of separatist strategies. While the spatial critique enabled transformative pedagogical innovation, it simultaneously raised questions about missed opportunities for broader coalition-building. Considering the political turmoil that gripped Fresno State College during the formation of the FAP, the proliferation of political activism by Black and Chicana/o students and active feminist reading groups raises the question why it was considered necessary to withdraw the female art students from campus as radical change was not only 'in the air' but actually occupying the campus ground. This specific historical context sheds new light on questions surrounding the politics of feminist separatist groups and their relationship to broader social movements. In this regard, Aruna D'Souza's term 'whitewalling'—the reproduction of racial exclusion through seemingly neutral spatial practices (D'Souza, 2018, p. 9)—provides a critical lens for examining the structural racial implications of the FAP's spatial strategy. While Chicago's students withdrew to construct their own educational space, Chicana/o and Black studies students actively continued their struggle to transform the institutional structures that the FAP had abandoned.

However, it can be argued that rather than constituting a mere escape from political and social struggles on campus, this investigation also reveals how Chicago's atmospheres emerged from and were embedded in the campus protests' practices of politicized engagement with and critique of the educational institution. Thus, both provided a catalyst for the dissolution of the time-space boundaries of education that characterized the FAP, whose collective, performative approach, exploration into the personal, as well as materials and practices deemed inappropriate for the traditional canon of art, mark the reason for its historically significant role as "one of the most important sites for the development of a politicized approach to the making and theorizing of feminist art" (Jones, 2007, p. 300).

This trajectory, from smoke atmospheres to feminist pedagogy, ultimately demonstrates how artistic practices and political protest were inextricably intertwined on the contested American university campus, reciprocally influencing and transforming each other to catalyze innovation and generate novel forms of art production, while simultaneously illuminating the enduring complexities of separatist strategies within broader movements for educational and social justice.

Notes

- 1 After the FAP moved to the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in 1971 and was subsequently co-taught by Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, the dislocation of the students into a derelict mansion off campus led to the creation of the seminal project *Womanhouse* (1972). The students renovated the house and installed artworks that addressed the gendered connotations of the home and women's roles within the family; the resulting exhibition ran from January 30 until February 28, 1972. For a detailed history of the FAP at CalArts and *Womanhouse*, see, for example, Broude and Garrard (1994), Chicago (1975), Kaiser and Végh (2021), and Levin (2018).
- 2 Similarly, Faith Wilding, a student at the FAP at Fresno State College and CalArts points to the political activism and the establishment of a women's reading group by her and Suzanne Lacy. These circumstances "were auspicious for the success of Judy Chicago's plan to teach an all-women's art class", see Wilding, 2009, p. 84.
- 3 As Chicago retrospectively stated in the context of the reading of her smoke works at museum spaces as forms of institutional critique: "It looked like the museum was on fire. I *loved* that, [...] because, of course, museums were not exactly hospitable to women artists" (as cited in Gotthardt, 2017). For a general reading of Chicago's atmospheres in relation to Land Art, a key resource is the conversation between Philipp Kaiser and Judy Chicago (Nevada Museum of Art, 2019).
- 4 In late 1970, Dextra Frankel invited Chicago to Cal-State Fullerton, this time for a solo exhibition of her recent body of work, the *Pasadena Lifesavers*, doughnut shaped forms sprayed on sheets of acrylic, and her *Domes*, half spheres in pairs of three mounted on tables that were formed out of Plexiglas as well as photos of her atmospheres. The exhibition invitation announced the change of her name, from Gerowitz, the name of her deceased husband, to Chicago, the name of her birth city. In October, the announcement was printed in *Artforum* 9(2), October 1970, two months before Chicago's eponymous Boxing Ring Ad in *Artforum* 9(4), December 1970.
- 5 Frankel, D. (1970). *Judy Gerowitz* [Press material for the Cal-State Fullerton exhibition]. Dextra Frankel papers (UA-194 DF_Box1_F12). University Archives and Special Collections, California State University, Fullerton, CA, United States.
- 6 Gail Levin writes that Dal Handerson, faculty of Fresno State, took photos of performances by Chicago that she staged with her students (2018, p. 134).
- 7 On the left half of the photo, standing on a small elevation, another figure has turned the back towards the camera. Considering the stature and the full, dark, curly hair, the figure can be identified as Judy Chicago amidst the lighting of the flares by participants.
- 8 As Gail Levin in her biography on Judy Chicago contextualizes the erection of the building: "The department of fine arts was favored by a local philanthropist and trustee who worked in ceramics herself and had facilitated a new edifice for the arts building that was under

construction when Judy came on the scene.” Levin also reports on another site-specific work that Chicago realized on the Fresno State Campus on the 21st of March 1970, the first ever celebration of Earth Day: “For Earth Day, Judy got permission to stage an environmental show on campus and had students haul in dirt, grass and other such materials, intriguing most of them but disturbing the dominant culture of future farmers and homemakers, for whom moving dirt was work—pure, simple, and hard—not art” (Levin, 2018, pp. 134, 138). At this point, I have not encountered any further information on the funding of the Art Department’s building or Chicago’s Earth Day performance, which would provide a compelling example not only of anti-canonical Land Art but also, given the context of the violent clashes between students of the agricultural department and Black and Chicana/o students, of the political tensions embedded in such site-specific work.

- 9 Tom Holert pointed out the connection between the education sector and space conquest in the context of the research on the education crisis in the aftermath of the Sputnik shock (Holert, 2021, pp. 18–19).
- 10 S. Wollenman Johnson (personal communication, September 6, 2024).
- 11 S. Wollenman Johnson (personal communication, August 12, 2024).
- 12 S. Wollenman Johnson (personal communication, August 12, 2024). While the lack of studio space could be read in the context of a displacement of women artists into private, domestic working spaces when discussing feminist art education, it is important to point out that this lack of designated studio space on the Fresno State College campus affected all art students. In response to this limitation, the Fresno Feminist Art Program made it a point of providing its students with a dedicated workspace, sharing the costs among the group.
- 13 S. Wollenman Johnson (personal communication, August 12, 2024).

References

- Broude, N., & Garrard, M. D. (Eds.) (1994). Conversations with Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro. In N. Broude & M. D. Garrard (Eds.), *The power of feminist art: The American movement of the 1970s, history and impact*. Harry N. Abrams.
- Chicago, J. (1982). *Through the flower: My struggle as a woman artist*. Women’s Press.
- Chicago, J. (2014). *Institutional time: A critique of studio art education*. Monacelli Press.
- D’Souza, A. (2018). *Whitewalling: Art, race and protest in 3 acts*. Badlands Unlimited.
- Gotthardt, A. (2017, July 21). *When Judy Chicago rejected a male-centric art world with a puff of smoke*. Artsy. <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-judy-chicago-rejected-male-centric-art-puff-smoke>
- Gourbe, G. (2015). Prologue. In G. Gourbe (Ed.), *In the canyon, revise the canon* (pp. 5–18). Shelter Press.
- Holert, T. (2021). *Politics of learning, politics of space: Architecture and the education shock of the 1960s and 1970s*. De Gruyter.
- Hopkins, C. (2023). Changing the atmosphere: A brief history of Judy Chicago’s smoke sculptures. In M. Gioni, G. C. Carrion-Murayari, & M. Norton (Eds.), *Judy Chicago: Herstory* (pp. 56–57). Phaidon.
- Jones, A. (2007). The legacy of feminist art. In J. V. Aliaga & E. Expósito (Eds.), *Gender battle* (p. 300). Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea.

- Kaiser, P. (2019). *Disappearing—California c. 1970: Bas Jan Ader, Chris Burden, Jack Goldstein*. DelMonico Books/Prestel.
- Kaiser, P., & Végh, C. (Eds.). (2021). *Where art might happen: The early years of CalArts*. Prestel.
- Levin, G. (2018). *Becoming Judy Chicago: A biography of the artist*. University of California Press.
- Meyer, L., & Wilding, F. (2010). Collaboration and conflict in the Fresno feminist art program: An experiment in feminist pedagogy. *n. paradoxa*, 26 (Feminist pedagogies), 40–51.
- Meyer, L. (2009). A studio of their own: The legacy of the Fresno feminist experiment. In L. Meyer (Ed.), *A studio of their own: The legacy of the Fresno feminist experiment* (pp. 3–34). The Press at the California State University, Fresno.
- Muthesius, S. (2000). *The postwar university: Utopianist campus and college*. Yale University Press.
- Nevada Museum of Art. (2019, January 24). *The conversation between Philipp Kaiser and Judy Chicago* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO5sG9IBIJM>
- Pinder, K. (2023). Where there's smoke: Chicago's atmospheres for a better world. In M. Gioni, G. C. Carrion-Murayari, & M. Norton (Eds.), *Judy Chicago: Herstory* (pp. 52–55). Phaidon.
- Roth, M. (1983). *The amazing decade: Women and performance art, 1970–1980*. Astro Artz.
- Roth, M. (2012). Interview with Suzanne Lacy. In J. Fields (Ed.), *Entering the picture: Judy Chicago, the Fresno feminist art program, and the collective vision of women artists* (pp. 78–86). Taylor & Francis.
- Schor, G. (2016). Die feministische Avantgarde: Eine radikale Umwertung der Werte [The feminist avant-garde: A radical reevaluation of values]. In G. Schor (Ed.), *Feministische Avantgarde: Kunst der 1970er-Jahre: Sammlung Verbund, Wien* [Feminist avant-garde: Art of the 1970s: Verbund Collection, Vienna]. Prestel.
- Seib, K. (1979). *The slow death of Fresno State: A California campus under Reagan and Brown*. Ramparts Press.
- Wilding, F. (1994). The feminist art programs at Fresno and CalArts, 1970–1975. In N. Broude & M. D. Garrard (Eds.), *The power of feminist art: The American movement of the 1970s, history and impact*. Harry N. Abrams.
- Wilding, F. (2009). Gestations in a studio of our own: The feminist art program in Fresno, California, 1970–71. In L. Meyer (Ed.), *A studio of their own: The legacy of the Fresno feminist experiment* (pp. 79–102). The Press at the California State University, Fresno.
- Youdelman, N., & LeCocq, K. (2012). Reflections on the first feminist art program. In J. Fields (Ed.), *Entering the picture: Judy Chicago, the Fresno feminist art program, and the collective vision of women artists* (pp. 64–77). Taylor & Francis.

