

**Los Angeles Filmforum, Anat Egbu, and Los Angeles Nomadic Division present  
Womanhouse Now: Films and Experimental Shorts  
Tuesday June 28 – Sunday July 10, 2022  
Online**

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2021 is our 46th year. [www.lafilmforum.org](http://www.lafilmforum.org)

Including a pre-recorded conversation from the in-person screening with Judith Dancoff, Cheri Gaulke, Karen LeCocq, Johanna Demetrakas, and Anat Egbu Senior Director Stefano Di Paola

In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Womanhouse a site specific installation and performance-space, Anat Egbu Gallery in partnership with LAND (Los Angeles Nomadic Division) and LA Filmforum have organized an afternoon of films including Johanna Demetrakas 1974 documentary on the Womanhouse home alongside a set of experimental shorts from participating artists like Shawnee Wollenman, Judith Dancoff, Judy Chicago, and Cheri Gaulke. After the screening there will be a conversation moderated by Anat Egbu Senior Director, Stefano di Paola.

As the first female-centered art presentation of its kind, Womanhouse opened in January 1972 paving the way for new subject matter, new techniques, new ideas and a new way of looking at art. This exhibition examines the spirit of experimentation and collaboration that defined west coast Feminist Art and traces the period that immediately preceded and succeeded Womanhouse from 1970 to 1976. Tracing the narratives, origins, and legacy of this historic period through Fresno Feminist Art Program, Womanhouse, Womanspace, and The Woman's Building allows for a multi-faceted conversation about the energy and trajectories that this period of art history unleashed.

**LAND (Los Angeles Nomadic Division)** is a nonprofit public art organization founded in 2009. LAND commissions site-specific projects with contemporary artists and collaborates with community partners to present innovative arts programming outside of traditional institutions.

Review of the exhibition by Jori Finkel:

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/02/17/womanhouse-feminist-art-turns-50>

Special thanks to Judith Dancoff, Cheri Gaulke, Karen LeCocq, Johanna Demetrakas, Shawnee Wollenman, Judy Chicago, Stefano Di Paola, Barret Lybbert, Laura Hyatt, Hugo Cervantes, Kate Amend, Lisa Remington, and Dana Duff.

Note: This program contains copious female nudity

### **Screening:**

total = 111 min.

#### **Judy Chicago & the California Girls**, by Judith Dancoff

1974, 25 minutes, 16mm, screening digitally

At the height of the 1970's Women's Movement, on the cusp of revolutionary change, American artist Judy Chicago began a unique experiment: to train only young women artists in an all-woman art program at Fresno State College. So many young women were going into art schools, Chicago states, so few coming out the other end as professional artists. The film "Judy Chicago & the California Girls" documents this first all-woman art program, in a compelling and candid portrait of a country and culture in the midst of great social change. Highlights include a visit by radical feminist theorist Ti-Grace Atkinson, Chicago's early performance pieces the "Cock Cunt Play" and the "Cunt Cheer", and Chicago's female-centered philosophy that shaped her later work. Some of Chicago's students who appear in the film and went on to become important artists in their own right include Faith Wilding, Suzanne Lacy, Nancy Youdelman and Vanalyne Green. <https://judychicagoandthecaliforniagirls.com/>

#### **Blades of Grass (Women in The Wind)**, by Karen LeCocq

1971, 2:51 min., color, silent, filmed on super 8mm, screening digitally

I gathered together 15 women who were willing to be filmed naked. I instructed them to close their eyes and gently rock back and forth and side to side in circles. I told them to imagine themselves as blades of grass gently blowing in the wind. Jan Lester was the camera person. There was a variety of body shapes and colors giving a very organic and natural appearance to the scene.

#### **White Environment (White Cunt)**, by Karen LeCocq

1970, 3:15 min. color, silent, filmed on super 8mm, screening digitally

I constructed a room 17' x 8' from 2x4s and sheet rock. The walls were painted white. The ceiling was a large stretched canvas over a 2" x 2" pine frame. Hanging from the ceiling were 129 pieces of clear nylon thread with 2" plastic discs attached at the end. I covered the floor with 4" polyurethane foam. The entrance measured 6'h x 3'w and was 4" thick polyurethane foam slit down the center. The viewer had to slip through the center to enter. In the 4 corners of the room I installed 4 crimson 15 watt lightbulbs that cast a warm rich glow. A small fan was installed to move the ceiling discs. The moving discs created a liquid motion. The concept behind the soft spongy floor, the liquid motion on the ceiling, the push in, expanding contracting entrance all dealt with my experience as a woman. I was allowing the viewer to enter inside me and enjoy my softness, my liquidness and my way of feeling.

#### **Eclipse in the Western Palace**, by Cheri Gaulke

1977, 5 minutes, b&w, sound

Cheri Gaulke filmed this piece with a Sony PortaPak camera in her studio in Pasadena in 1977. At the time Gaulke was a student in the Feminist Studio Workshop at the Woman's Building and was subletting studio space from Barbara T. Smith. In the video a female body part appears to devour an army of high heels until she causes the eclipse of this Western form of torture with a warrior yell and by slamming her legs together. This is an early artwork that shows Gaulke's interest in women's feet and shoes as metaphors for mobility in society and as an opportunity to critique gender codes in fashion. Over the years Gaulke has created numerous works in video, sculpture, and performance art, including her Pacific Standard Time interactive installation at LACE called Peep Totter Fly (2011-12).

#### **Woman and Smoke**, by Judy Chicago

1971-72, 15:13, screening digitally, color, silent

Between 1968 and 1974 Chicago executed a series of increasingly complex fireworks pieces that involved site specific collaborative performances around California. Some of these works were intended to

transform and soften the landscape, introducing a feminine impulse to the environment, while others focused on re-creating early women-centered activities like the kindling of fire or the worship of goddess figures. Chicago explains that “the smoke provided a liberation from formal structure, while color was intended to feminist and soften the environment.” These ephemeral smoke pieces were a response to what Chicago considered the male-dominated 60s art scene, and then-growing emphasis on monumental outdoor Land Art male artists.

**Dressing**, by Shawnee Wollenman

1972, 12:47, digital, color, sound

This film—originally shot on 16mm—was made by Shawnee Wollenman in 1972 while she was a student at CalArts. Artist and fellow CalArts student, Catie Marzio sits on a stool directly facing the camera as she proceeds to wrap her entire body in white medical gauze. The wrapping covers every part of her, every limb, extremity, and her entire face, in a gesture both silencing and suffocating, while perhaps suggestive of a cocoon. The film features a “soundtrack” of heavy, slow breathing. Wollenman’s work is concerned with violence and challenges women face around the world. Interestingly, after completing her BFA in fine art at CalArts, Wollenman pursued graduate degrees in nursing and psychology and worked for many years as a Registered Nurse in addition to continuing her art practice. Wollenman was one of the founding artists who participated in the Fresno State Feminist Art Program.

**Womanhouse**, by Johanna Demetrakas

1974, 47 minutes, color, sound, 16mm screening digitally

WOMANHOUSE is an historic documentary about one of the most important feminist cultural events of the 1970s. Judy Chicago (best-known as the creator of THE DINNER PARTY) and Miriam Shapiro rented an old Hollywood mansion and altered its interior through decor and set-pieces to "search out and reveal the female experience...the dreams and fantasies of women as they sewed, cooked, washed and ironed away their lives." WOMANHOUSE is a fascinating historical look at feminism, its reception in the 1970s, and the ever-important relationship between art and social change.

**Guests:**

After working in documentary film for a number of years, **Judith Dancoff** left filmmaking for her true calling as a writer. Her award-winning short stories, essays, and a novella have appeared in numerous publications including The Georgia Review, Alaska Quarterly Review, Southern Humanities Review, and others. Her awards include a Pushcart Prize nomination, and residencies at Hedgebrook, VCCA, and Djerassi, where she was the McElwee Family Fellow. Her work continues to be inspired by ideas of feminism as well as an exploration of the artistic practice. A secondary interest stems from her father's work as a Manhattan Project physicist. She is currently at work on a hybrid memoir/novel about her father. For more information about Judith's writing, visit <http://judithdancoff.com/>.

Visionary filmmaker **Johanna Demetrakas'** first documentary, Womanhouse, about a ground-breaking feminist art installation, won a spot in the Whitney Museum's New American Filmmaker Series, played at the Venice Biennale and was later acquired by the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Her second effort, Right Out of History: The Making of Judy Chicago's Dinner Party, was met with international acclaim at the London and Berlin Film Festivals. Her recent film Crazy Wisdom was nominated for a Jury award at the Santa Barbara Film Festival. Demetrakas is also an Emmy nominated editor of over two dozen films including: Busrider's Union which she co-directed with legendary cinematographer Haskell Wexler and the Emmy winning Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony, winner of both the Audience and Freedom of Expression Awards at Sundance. She is on the faculty of USC's School of Cinematic Arts.

**Cheri Gaulke's** long career has included solo performance art, as well as the creation of collaborative groups Feminist Art Workers (1976) and Sisters Of Survival (1981). She has created 10 public artworks in

Southern California. She has made 27 films since the 1970s and is currently directing her first feature documentary, *Acting Like Women*, about feminist performance art in 1970s-80s Los Angeles.

**Karen LeCocq** is a mixed media sculptor who has shown internationally in galleries and museums, among them: The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, New York, The Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA. Her work gained international recognition through its use in the Absolut Vodka Signature Artist campaign. LeCocq was part of the first feminist art program taught by Judy Chicago in 1970 at California State University Fresno. Her education continued with her participation in the second feminist art program from 1971-73 at California Institute of The Arts under Chicago and Miriam Shapiro where she was part of the internationally acclaimed project, Womanhouse in 1972. LeCocq has been the recipient of numerous awards including Sculptor of the Year from Absolut Vodka and the Honor Roll of Feminist Artists from the Veteran Feminists of America for her major contribution to the second wave feminist revolution, 1966-1980.

**Stefano Di Paola** is Partner and Senior Director at Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles. Stefano joined Anat Ebgi in 2014 and has helped to grow the gallery's program, helping to bring on artists such as Faith Wilding, Jordan Nassar, Janet Werner, and Tammi Campbell. He is additionally a partner in the project space, Sow & Tailor, alongside artist Greg Ito and his wife Karen Galloway. Previous to joining Anat Ebgi, Stefano worked at the ONE Archives in Los Angeles and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Italy.

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Los Angeles Filmforum screenings are supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles, the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, and the California Community Foundation.. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

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