

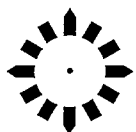
DOIN' IT IN PUBLIC

**FEMINISM AND ART AT THE
WOMAN'S BUILDING**

**Ben Maltz Gallery
Otis College of Art and Design**

**Curators
Meg Linton and Sue Maberry**

OTIS Otis College of Art and Design



**PACIFIC
STANDARD
TIME:**
ART IN L.A. 1945-1980

An initiative of
the Getty with arts
institutions across
Southern California.

Presenting Sponsors



The Getty

Bank of America



OTIS Otis College of Art and Design

Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building
is made possible by a generous grant from the Getty Foundation with
additional funding provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the
Visual Arts, Henry Luce Foundation, Department of Cultural Affairs
of the City of Los Angeles, and the Barbara Lee Family Foundation.

This book is published with the assistance of the Getty Foundation as part of a two-volume set in conjunction
with the exhibition **Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building**, October 1, 2011–
January 28, 2012, organized by the Ben Maltz Gallery at Otis College of Art and Design. This project is part
of the Getty's initiative Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980.

Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building

ISBN 0-930209-22-2

Copyright © 2011 Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design

From Site to Vision: the Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture

ISBN 0-930209-23-0

Copyright © 2011 Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design and the Woman's Building

Otis College of Art and Design

9045 Lincoln Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045

www.otis.edu/benmaltzgallery; gallerinfo@otis.edu; 310. 665. 6905

Ben Maltz Gallery is grateful to all those who gave their generous permission to reproduce the publications' images. Every effort has been made to contact the owners and photographers of objects reproduced and to secure all permissions and we apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions. Anyone having further information concerning copyright holders is asked to contact Otis College of Art and Design so this information can be included in future printings.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photography, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

Editors: Meg Linton, Sue Maberry, Elizabeth Pulsinelli

Design: Susan Silton

Production assistance: Kevin Wong

Printer: CS Graphics, Singapore

Edition: 2,000

Cover: **Founders of the Woman's Building: Sheila Levrant de Bretteville (L), Arlene Raven (M), Judy Chicago (R)**, circa 1973. Photographer unknown. Woman's Building Image Archive, Otis College of Art and Design. Flyleaf: **Great Lady Rising event as part of the 5th Anniversary Celebration of the Woman's Building**, 1978. Kate Millet's sculpture being installed on the roof. Woman's Building Image Archive, Otis College of Art and Design.

Judy Chicago, Suzanne Lacy, Sandra Orgel, and Aviva Rashmani, *Ablutions*,
1972. Courtesy Through the Flower Archives. © Judy Chicago.



ENDING THE SILENCE

Vivien Green Fryd

Starting with its inception in 1973, the Woman's Building (WB) provided many women an open, supportive, and safe environment to explore the subject of sexual violence against the female body. Some of these artists were centered in the WB while others were associated with it; the boundaries that existed in the Los Angeles feminist art world during 1970s and early 1980s thus were amorphous. The WB fostered a strong sense of community throughout Southern California, and many of the artists collaborated in creating artworks imbued with a feminist consciousness that critiqued the media, deconstructed images of the patriarchal order, broke down barriers between public and private realms, and strove to end the silence about sexual violence against the female body. Through performances, paintings, videos, installations, posters, and exhibitions, these feminist artists contributed to the rape and incest crises discourses. They wielded their strategic agency through their art to empower women, reconstruct gender norms, and challenge cultural norms, attitudes, assumptions, and laws.

More specifically, the artists under the aegis of the WB studied within this essay participated in the processes of "bearing witness and giving testimony" that is central to traumatic events. "Testimony is coming to voice, an insistence on speaking and not being silenced or spoken for," and "giving shape to what once seemed overwhelming, incomprehensible, and formless."¹ As Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougaw explain, "Testimony records a movement from individual experience to the collective archives, from personal trauma to public memory."² The feminist artists connected

with the WB not only fought to end the silence about sexual violence in American culture and challenged patriarchal images of women that encouraged such violence, but they also made the trauma knowable and visible. As Cathy Caruth explains about traumas: "The striking juxtaposition of the unknowing, injurious repetition and the witness of the crying voice" demand a listener or viewer "for the belated repetition of trauma" that can only be known after the traumatic event.³ In hindsight, the frequent repetition of the subject during the 1970s and early 1980s resulted in art that functioned as a ritualized site for witnessing, disrupting conventional patriarchy, empowering women, and urging social action.

The Rape Crisis Movement

In addressing these subjects in their art, artists in the WB joined the newly emerging rape crisis movement. A brief outline of the history of the movement follows, because it is relevant to a consideration of their artwork. Feminists in Berkeley, California, founded the first rape crisis center in early 1972. Similar centers were formed the following year in Washington, D.C., Ann Arbor, Boston, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis.⁴ Anti-rape squads held rallies in Seattle and Los Angeles (1972), and Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR) took shape in 1973, when a small group of women challenged Philadelphia's police, hospitals, and courts "to treat survivors of sexual assault with dignity and compassion—and to confront the culture of violence against women that underlies the crime of rape."⁵ The New York Radical Feminist Speak-Out on Rape (1971), the New York Radical Feminist Conference on Rape (1971), the Rape Speak-Out in San Francisco (1972), and the joint New York Radical Feminist-National Black Feminist Organization Speak-Out on Rape and Sexual Abuse (1974) all addressed rape from a woman's perspective.⁶ In May 1976, the International Tribunal of Crimes against Women was held in Brussels. Over two thousand women from forty countries shared experiences "of sexual slavery, weekend sex tours, sexual mutilation, rape, battery, enforced participation in pornography, and murder," in an effort to give victims a voice, raise public awareness, and suggest solutions.⁷ The National Organization for Women (NOW) joined the anti-rape movement, focusing on such short-term goals as a national communications network and educational campaigns. When NOW turned its attention to the Equal Rights Amendment, the National Coalition against Sexual Assault formed in 1977 to fill the gap and create a national structure for rape crisis advocacy.⁸ Simultaneous with the rise of this anti-rape movement was the larger proliferation of images and representations of sexual violence in the mass media. Such images existed in profusion in the post-World War II pornography industry, an increasingly realistic movie industry, on television, and in photojournalism, contributing to a broader dissemination of images of sexual violence. Some of the feminist artists associated with the WB responded directly to media representations of violence against women.

Speak-outs and meetings in New York City inspired the feminist author and

historian Susan Brownmiller to write *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975). This "rape classic," published in sixteen foreign editions, argues, "all rape is an exercise in power" in which women "are trained to be...victims." "Rape is not a crime of irrational, impulsive, uncontrollable lust," Brownmiller asserts, "but is a deliberate, hostile, violent act of degradation and possession... designed to intimidate and inspire fear" by the "would-be conqueror."⁹ As the historian Roy Porter summarized her thesis, Brownmiller exposed rape as "not the sickness of perverts, but the sickness of patriarchy," and as a political crime.¹⁰

Other texts written during the 1970s made violence against women visible in the public sphere, ending the era of silence.¹¹ They overturned myths of rape as rapture by exposing the act as a crime of power and control. These anti-rape treatises supported efforts for legislation, which indicates the political activity that was happening at the same time. As Susan Griffin concluded in 1971, in one of the first widely read anti-rape texts, "Rape, the perfect combination of sex and violence, is the penultimate act" for wielding patriarchal power; it is "the quintessential act of our civilization."¹² Three years later, Catherine Calvert supported Griffin's conclusion in an essay in *Mademoiselle*, reporting that most psychologists consider rape to be "more a working out of hostility and aggression than any flowering of a frustrated sexual urge." Calvert depicted sexual violence as an arena in which power and powerlessness are played out, and advocated that it must be realigned in order to reach "a détente in the sexual free-fire zone that is the country of rape."¹³

In her pioneering 1986 article in the *Yale Law Journal*, Susan Estrich explained the legal difficulties confronting a woman who wanted to prosecute a man for what she calls "simple rape"—rape by a friend or neighbor—as opposed to "stranger rape," which she claimed was prosecuted more frequently and successfully than many other violent crimes.¹⁴ Estrich articulated in the courtroom and classroom the problems that these feminists a decade earlier had protested against.

The anti-rape movement was an outgrowth of second-wave feminist consciousness-raising (C-R) groups and "speak-outs," where women publicly discussed that which had been silenced. C-R became the primary educational and organizing program of the women's liberation movement. Intended to raise awareness and understanding of women's lives and concerns, C-R groups underlined the idea that "personal" injuries and frustrations were not unique but common among women—that is, the issues were political. As one of the earliest sourcebooks about rape explained, "Through the process of consciousness-raising, women moved on from the discovery that sexual assault was not just an individual and unique experience to the realization that rape, as an issue, was a means of analyzing the psychological and political structures of oppression in our society."¹⁵ Ellen Bass and Laura Davis's *The Courage to Heal* (1988) later would advocate C-R as a means for survivors of rape and sexual abuse to begin their recovery process.¹⁶

Representations of Rape in the Woman's Building

Artists participated in C-R groups in Judy Chicago's Feminist Art Program at Fresno State College in 1970-71, in a similar program at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) facilitated by Chicago and Miriam Schapiro in 1971, and subsequently in courses taken and works produced through the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW) at the Woman's Building. They repeatedly discovered, as one of the earliest sourcebooks about rape predicted, that the theme of rape was omnipresent in their discussions. As a way of vocalizing their concerns about the issue, they first turned to performance art. While performance remained a primary medium to address the subject, by the mid-1970s and early 1980s other art forms had evolved, including installations, drawings, videos, posters, and painting.

While participating in one of Chicago's classes at CalArts in the spring of 1971, Suzanne Lacy, who had studied under Sheila de Bretteville in the Woman's Design Program at CalArts, proposed a performance in which an audience would enter a large theater with low lights and listen to audio recordings of women narrating their stories of sexual abuse. Lacy and Chicago located seven women willing to share the horrors that they had experienced, and recorded their previously untold stories. These testimonies formed the background for *Ablutions* (1972), which Lacy created in collaboration with Chicago and two of Chicago's other students—Sandra Orgel and Aviva Rahmani. *Ablutions* was performed in the spring of 1972 in Los Angeles, just before Chicago left CalArts to form the WB with Arlene Raven and Sheila Levrant de Bretteville. The performance employed visceral items—one thousand unbroken egg yolks, twenty gallons of beef blood, wet gray clay, broken egg shells, piles of rope and chain, and beef kidneys that covered the floor and walls—along with women's bodies submerged in tubs of egg yolks, clay, and blood. *Ablutions* combined bodies, objects, and voice recordings to expose the horror of sexual violence against the female body and embody themes of female bondage, fertility, cleansing, and recovery.¹⁷

It must be noted that no self-help book for rape victims had yet been published at this point; *Ablutions* predated by seventeen years texts that encouraged victims to speak out, such as Bass and Davis's *Courage to Heal*. Significantly, Lacy, Chicago, Orgel, and Rahmani made an artwork that constituted an early testimony of sexual trauma, providing a precursor to works that artists connected with the WB would create to address similar themes. *Ablutions* represented an early attempt by feminist artists to consider their increasing concern with rape in American culture.

While teaching in the FSW at the WB, Lacy elaborated on the themes of *Ablutions* in *One Woman Shows* (1975). A community of women, assembled anonymously by a chain-letter process, sat together in the WB, facing Lacy. Lacy named herself as a woman who had been raped, a woman who is a whore, and a woman who loves women. Dressed in paint-soaked clothing in her persona as the "woman-who-was-raped," she read police statistics gathered from that day's rape reports. She then threw herself

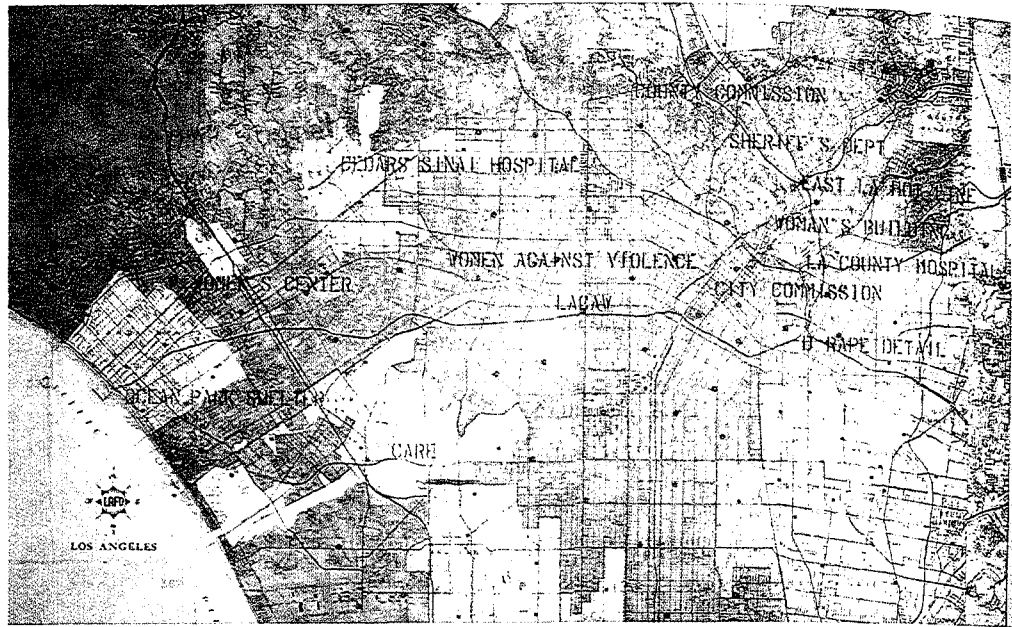


Suzanne Lacy, *Maps, Three Weeks in May*, 1977. Using daily police reports, two wall-sized maps of Los Angeles and a rubber stamp spelling "RAPE" were used to document where and when women were raped throughout the city. © Suzanne Lacy.

against a wall, leaving an imprint of black from her paint-soaked clothes.¹⁸

Ablutions and *One Woman Shows* were precursors for *Three Weeks in May*, which was sponsored by the Studio Watts Workshop (a community development corporation that worked with artists), the WB, and the City of Los Angeles. On Mother's Day in 1977, shortly after Los Angeles had been designated "Rape Capitol of the Nation," various events took place around the city that addressed the subject of sexual violence against women.¹⁹ In its diversity, complexity, and range of activities and artworks, *Three Weeks in May* was extraordinary. The project included installations, speeches by politicians, interviews with hotline activists, self-defense demonstrations, speak-outs, media articles and programs, and performance art, all designed to grab media attention and generate awareness and discussion about rape in American culture. In addition to Lacy, a number of feminist artists were crucial to the deployment of *Three Weeks in May*. Other key participants included the general public (particularly the television-watching public and the live audiences who viewed the performances), police, politicians, self-defense instructors, anti-rape and anti-domestic violence activists, and the print and electronic media.²⁰

Three Weeks in May centered on an installation, *Maps*, based on police statistics about the incidence of rape in the city. On the first map Lacy stenciled the word "RAPE"



Suzanne Lacy, *Maps, Three Weeks in May*, 1977, Los Angeles. Map documents the location of women's organizations providing assistance and resistance. © Suzanne Lacy.

in four-inch, red letters over every location where a woman had been raped over a three-week's period. She updated the map daily, using data from the Los Angeles Police Department's central office. Around each red "RAPE" stamp, she inscribed fainter red markings that alluded to the estimate that there are nine unreported rapes for every one reported. A second map showed the locations of sites of assistance and resistance: rape prevention centers, rape hotlines, hospital emergency rooms, and crisis and counseling centers. This map was designed as a link to the "revelation of the problem" and to counteract any suggestion of "continuous victimization."²¹

In addition to literally mapping the confluence of rape and rape crisis centers in Los Angeles, Lacy coordinated thirty public and private activities during the three weeks "to 'activate' public awareness of the maps and to call attention to the reality of rape as a social phenomenon."²² These included an opening press conference called at the recommendation of the city attorney and attended by him, the deputy mayor, Lacy, and Jim Woods of the Studio Watts Workshop; a Women's Coalition luncheon to explain the project to business and professional women; *Moment of Concern*, a moment of silence held on Mother's Day in various churches to commemorate victims of rape; *Breaking the Silence*, a private ritual attended by a select group of women and performed by Anne Gauden and Melissa Hoffman; four performances by Leslie Labowitz; a guerrilla event in which Lacy, Judith Loischild, Phranc, and Hoffman chalked the red



Suzanne Lacy, *A Woman Was Raped Here...*, 1977. Guerrilla performance by Lacy with Phrane and Melissa Hoffman, as part of *Three Weeks in May*, 1977. © Suzanne Lacy.



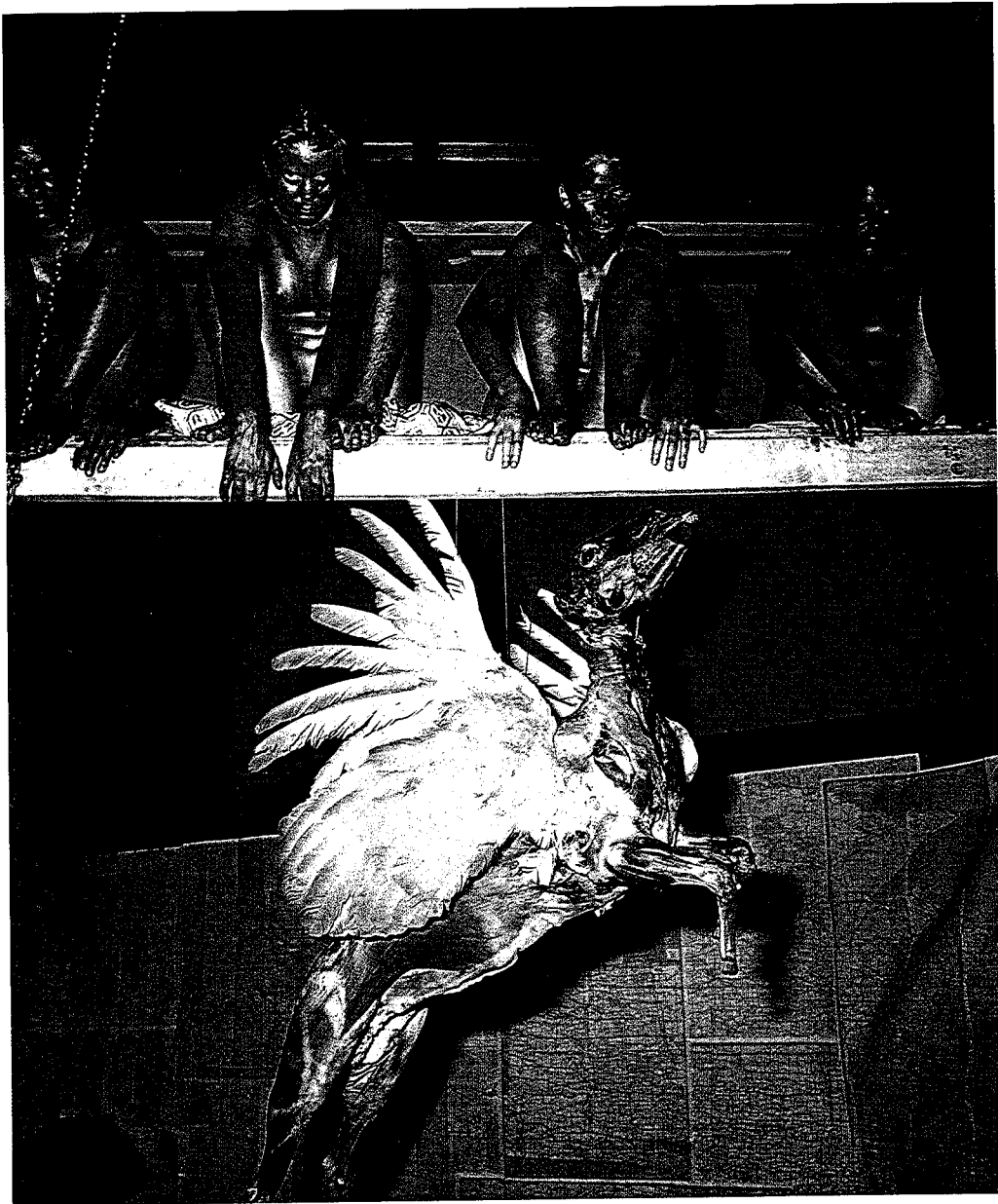
Suzanne Lacy, *A Woman Was Raped Here...*, 1977. Guerrilla performance by Lacy with Phranc and Melissa Hoffman, as part of *Three Weeks in May*, 1977. © Suzanne Lacy.



Cheri Gaulke and Barbara Smith, *Liebestod*, 1977. Performance as part of *Three Weeks in May*. Pasadena, California. Photograph by Suzanne Lacy. Woman's Building Image Archive, Otis College of Art and Design.

outline of a woman's body on sidewalks throughout the city, adding the words, "a woman was raped near here," the date of the assault, and a flower; a performance entitled *Liebestod* by Cheri Gaulke and Barbara Smith for a group of women activists and law enforcement officials; a three-part performance entitled *She Who Would Fly* by Lacy and Labowitz; Laurel Klick's *Exorcism*, a ten-step private ritual to exorcise a sexual assault she experienced; and self-defense demonstrations at the Los Angeles Trade Technical School, the City Mall, and the ARCO Plaza. At a one-day rape speak-out at the WB, women revealed stories that had never been publicly acknowledged, while elected officials called press conferences and participated in rallies and activist events. The final event was a self-defense demonstration.²³

Gaulke and Smith's *Liebestod* featured images of Chinese foot binding and other restrictions on women's freedom, reiterating some of the themes in *Ablutions*. The performance title, derived from Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, means "love-death," and also alludes to the suffering of Chinese women with bound feet. *Liebestod* was presented at a banquet attended by women from the American Civil Liberties Union; Women Against Violence Against Women, an activist organization devoted to



Suzanne Lacy, *She Who Would Fly*, 1977. View of installation and performance as part of *Three Weeks in May*, Los Angeles. © Suzanne Lacy.

stopping the use of images of physical and sexual violence against women in the mass media; the Ocean Park Battered Women's Shelter; and the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women. Some women shared their own experiences with rape during the event, providing testimonies of sexual trauma.

During the evening of May 21, 1977, Lacy and Labowitz opened up to the public *She Who Would Fly*, a personal, smaller scale performance and installation in the Studio Watts Workshop's Garage Gallery. Three to four visitors at a time were admitted into the gallery space, where they were confronted by a lamb cadaver with white-feathered wings suspended between floor and ceiling as if in flight. In Christian iconography, the lamb symbolizes Christ in the role of collective sacrifice and mute victim.²⁴ Women's testimonies of rape were pinned to their corresponding locations on maps that covered the walls. As the viewers read the stories, they eventually became aware that they were being watched by four nude women stained in red greasepaint, crouching "like vultures"²⁵ on a ledge above the door. Lacy describes these women as "avenging Valkeries" [sic], or "avenging angels, metaphors for a woman's consciousness that often splits from her body as it is raped," and also "bird-women [who] reminded visitors they were voyeurs to the pain of very real experiences."²⁶ The Valkyrie maidens of Odin, who choose the heroes to be slain in battle, are not objects of desire but women "who actively look rather than returning and confirming the gaze."²⁷ The masculine spectator's gaze, scopophilic and fetishizing, was thereby subverted. These predatory-looking, grotesque women watched over the female spectators to protect them from further violation, and over male spectators to create a "forced empathy, a moment of recognition which was the central aesthetic point: shock."²⁸ The installation created a viscerally difficult environment in which the viewer was forced into the role of witnessing trauma and performing what the artists considered "a ritual exorcism."²⁹

Three Weeks in May succeeded in creating a vast community among feminist artists, lawmakers, police, media reporters, and the general public to bear witness to a variety of testimonies and performances of sexual trauma, not only ending the silence but also advocating changes in attitudes and the legal system, as well as encouraging women to learn self-defense.

Many of the activities connected with *Three Weeks in May* consisted of the repetitive nature of trauma—repeating activities like stamping the map or writing and reading testimonies. The phenomenological nature of trauma was also reenacted in *In Mourning and In Rage*, another collaboration between Lacy and Labowitz under the aegis of the WB. *In Mourning and In Rage*, which included participants from the Rape Hotline Alliance, the Los Angeles City Council, families of victims, and women from the community, was held in front of Los Angeles City Hall in 1977 to commemorate the victims of the serial rapist-murderer known as the Hillside Strangler. Seventy women gathered at the WB in Los Angeles and filled twenty-two cars. Led by a hearse and two motorcycle escorts, the motorcade traveled to City Hall, where news media and members



Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz, *In Mourning and In Rage*, 1977. Photograph documenting a performance conducted at City Hall protesting the media's portrayal of the Hillside Strangler's victims, Los Angeles. © Suzanne Lacy.

of the City Council waited. Each car bore stickers: "Funeral" and "Stop Violence Against Women." The funeral procession circled the building twice. Out of the hearse climbed nine seven-foot-tall women robed in black with headdresses shaped like coffins and a tall woman clothed in red with a scarlet headband. The women-in-black and woman-in-scarlet formed a procession, two abreast, walking toward the steps in front of City Hall. Simultaneously women from the motorcade positioned themselves on either side of the steps, "forming a black-clothed chorus from a modern tragedy."³⁰ They unfurled two banners, designed to fit a television screen, which read: "In Memory of Our Sisters" and "Women Fight Back." The first mourner walked to the microphone and proclaimed in an even yet impassioned tone, "I am here for the ten women who have been raped and strangled between October 18th and November 29th." The chorus chanted, "In memory of our sisters, we fight back," while the woman-in-scarlet wrapped the first mourner in a red shawl. Each of the subsequent women read a statement that connected the "seemingly random incident of violence in Los Angeles with the greater picture of nationwide violence toward women."³¹ The second speaker, for example, cited the three hundred and eighty-eight rapes in Los Angeles during the

same six-week period that were not connected to the Hillside Strangler, while the third remembered the four thousand thirty-three women raped there during the previous year. Each speaker was covered with a red cloak and greeted by the chorus. The original woman-in-scarlet then approached a microphone and declared loudly and powerfully, "I am here for the rage of all women. I am here for women fighting back."

In fact, *In Mourning and In Rage* began "more in mourning and not in rage," but some of the participants at the WB who were rape survivors advocated a more activist stance that would show female empowerment. The women-in-black symbolized repressed anger and "the power of women who have historically banded together as mourners, and as givers of life and death in their culture," and as "powerful and defiant overseers of one's voyage into death." Bia Lowe suggested adding the woman-in-scarlet to the nine mourning figures in black in order to signify outward anger and self-defense, and to provide a powerful color against the prevailing black.³²

Lacy and Labowitz's "performative method" blended "art and life, aesthetics and ethics to focus on the political significance of women's experience."³³ Their visceral presentation of *In Mourning and In Rage* resulted in some audience members weeping, as is evident in the video that documents the event (*In Mourning and In Rage*, by L.A. Women's Video Center).³⁴ They transformed a civic space into a site for grief, mourning, and remembrance. By speaking on behalf of murdered and violated women in Los Angeles and other places throughout the United States, the participants created a site of belated witnessing, memory, and testimony to that which had been silenced. The public bore witness via the event itself and its repetition in the media.³⁵ Like *Three Weeks in May*, *In Mourning and In Rage*'s repetitive format—repeating phrases and ritual actions, cloaking of speakers, and its chorus-like theatrical format—reenacted the phenomenological structure of trauma.

The videotape of the performance was shown at the WB on June 16, 1979. The video not only documented the event, but also served as "a vehicle for testimony, a screen of memory," and asked "that we bear witness to its act of witness."³⁶ The video, in other words, contributed to performing the act of bearing witness to unspeakable acts that had been formerly silenced, and participated in the process of repetition characteristic of trauma. Video was a new, experimental electronic medium at the time—black and white, produced on portable reel-to-reel equipment, and edited with a tape splicer. Through flickering light, discontinuous and grainy images, and scratchy sound (the results of over two hundred edits), the disjunctive narrative of *In Mourning and In Rage* evokes the disruption of lived experiences and psychic coherence that is associated with trauma.

Representations of Incest in the Woman's Building

Although rape had been a prominent theme during the early 1970s among second-wave feminists connected with the WB, the subject of incest was not addressed in

American culture until the end of the decade. In 1979, newspaper reporter Elaine Woo called incest "the last taboo."³⁷ Ellen Weber reported three years earlier in *Ms.* magazine: "One girl out of every four in the United States will be sexually abused in some way before she reaches the age of eighteen," and "the magnitude of the problem of incest is perhaps only matched by the degree of secrecy which surrounds it."³⁸ Louise Armstrong's "The Crime Nobody Talks About," published in *Woman's Day* (March 1978), stated that more than one million cases of child abuse and neglect had been reported in 1975, with twelve percent involving sexual abuse. Florence Rush described incest in *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (1980) as "a national epidemic."³⁹ Armstrong's *Kiss Daddy Goodnight* (1978), which included sixteen personal stories and a list of resources, was one of the first mass-market collections of first-person accounts of incest. Sandra Butler's *Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest* (1978) similarly confronted this seemingly unspeakable subject before it attracted the interest of television, radio, newspapers, magazines, pediatricians, social workers, and therapists.⁴⁰ Later, Kathleen Brady's *Father's Days: A True Story of Incest* (1979); Rush's *The Best Kept Secret*; Judith Lewis Herman's *Father-Daughter Incest* (1981), which was preceded by an article published in 1977; and Ellen Bass and Laura Davis's *The Courage to Heal* addressed the topic.⁴¹ As Armstrong observed, "Incest is a big secret—not because victims are hiding pleasure. There is no pleasure. Incest is a secret because it is a power situation where victims are punished and silenced by fear."⁴²

As language was forming and research was becoming available to the general public, it is not surprising that a number of artists connected with the WB created visual and verbal testimonies about these sexual traumas that feminists and others identified as a major social problem. For example, the WB's Incest Awareness Project (1979–1981) was a series of events and activities designed to make incest a public issue, create positive images of women moving from victimhood to survivorship, and promote recovery. Author Rush spoke about child abuse at the WB through the Incest Awareness Project in July of 1980; Butler gave a lecture after Wolverton's performance of *In Silence Secrets Turn to Lies/Secrets Shared Become Sacred Truths* (October 1979) in conjunction with the exhibition "Bedtime Stories: Women Speak Out About Incest" (1979); and Susan Forward, author of *Betrayal of Innocence: Incest and Its Devastation* (1979), spoke at an Incest Awareness Project event.⁴³ Explaining her decision to participate in the Incest Awareness Project, Angelo remarked that although feminists, therapists, and social workers began to expose the horrors of incest and to treat survivors, "public ignorance and professional misunderstandings" still existed, especially in terms of "prevention, intervention and healing."⁴⁴

As early as 1975, Linda Oldon led an extension class at the WB focusing on the subject of incest. Two artists connected to the WB—Paula Lombard and Leslie Belt—also addressed incest. While in the Summer Art Program at the WB with Angelo, Lombard performed *Incest I* (1976). She cut up a painting and handed out the pieces to her fellow



I HEARD A WOMAN SAY THAT THOSE OF US WHO EXPERIENCED
 INCEST ARE FEROCIOUSLY INDEPENDENT.
 SHE TALKED ABOUT THE STRENGTH IN US ABOUT OUR
 DETERMINATION AND DREVE TO MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS.
 I SAW IN MYSELF REASONS FOR HOW SERIOUSLY I LIVE
 MY LIFE AND CLAIM THAT AS POSITIVE AND POWERFUL.
 I HEARD A WOMAN CALL HERSELF AN INCEST SURVIVOR.

Paula Lumbard 1979



Above: Paula Lumbard, *Self Portrait/Liberation*. 1979. Chalk pastel on brown paper, 40" x 50". © Paula Lumbard.

Left: Cover of *Spinning Off* newsletter announcing the exhibition "Bedtime Stories: Women Speak Out About Incest." October/November 1979. Woman's Building Image Archive. Otis College of Art and Design.

students as she told of her experiences. This performance marked the first time that Lombard had spoken publicly about her childhood trauma.⁴⁵ In her monologue in *An Oral Herstory of Lesbianism* (1978), Belt jumped rope and recited a sing-song reminiscent of the familiar children's ditty, "Not Last Night but the Night Before." However, Belt's contained a jarring difference. The first stanza stated: "My grandfather was a child molester until the day he died; I was first molested by him at the age of five." She explained in sing-song manner while jumping rope that she remained silent around her father "cuz I was afraid of what he'd do," her grandfather "cuz he already knew," her mother "so she wouldn't be sad," and anyone else "cuz I thought I was bad."⁴⁶ Belt intended to take "the familiar and seemingly innocent meter of the childhood chant played against the hypnotic slapping of the rope" to create "a visceral experience of what it was like to be a child who was caught up in an adult's relentless desire."⁴⁷ The repetitive sound of jumping rope, combined with the rhyming structure of the song, iterated, enacted, and rewrote traumatic history in an attempt to gain mastery over tragic loss.

Angelo, who was a former student and later a faculty member in the FSW, addressed the subject of incest in a video called *Part 1, On Joining the Order: A Confession in which Angelica Furiosa Explains to Her Sisters How She Came to Be Among Them* (1977). This single-channel video was never intended to be an actual story of incest.⁴⁸ Performing as a nun—which Angelo had also done with Candace Compton in *Nun and Deviant* (1976)—Angelo created a fictional persona who confessed her incestuous relationship with her father and their mutual betrayal of her mother. The video created controversy. Los Angeles City Council member Ernani Bernardi blocked its inclusion in a federally funded art exhibition and the FBI questioned the artist to determine whether or not the work could be considered pornography.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Angelo exhibited the work across the United States, in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand; while doing so, she discovered that many women in the audience felt compelled to share their own experiences.⁵⁰

Discussion with Labowitz and audience responses to *On Joining the Order* led Angelo to elaborate further on the topic of incest. The resultant Incest Awareness Project, organized through the WB, was cosponsored by the Women's Resources Program of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center (LAGLCS) and Ariadne: A Social Art Network. Ariadne was a loose umbrella and conceptual framework established by Lacy and Labowitz in 1978 for women artists, social activists, media specialists, and government officials to facilitate funding, organize art activities, and support artists' use of the media with the intention of addressing sexually explicit and violent imagery of women in American visual culture.⁵¹ The many and varied activities of the Incest Awareness Project included "Bedtime Stories" (1978), an exhibition at the WB; art therapy workshops for children in the Los Angeles County's Sexual Abuse Program; community dialogues, counseling and referrals provided by the LAGLCS; and a large-scale, multimedia project entitled *Equal Time in Equal Space*.⁵²

"Bedtime Stories," curated by Lumbard and Belt, consisted of performances and static artworks by eighteen women and children who had experienced incest. "Rather than focusing on victimization," the exhibition "graphically" presented "a feminist perspective on the complex aspects of sexual abuse in the family," showing the journey from victim to recovery. To expose the "big secret" that involves the perpetrator's power over the victims, Belt wanted to allow women and children to speak out, feel empowered, and be able to recover.⁵³ They placed child-size furniture around the exhibition space, intending to convey the idea that, as Belt explained, "the teeny little bodies that fit comfortably in those chairs are being abused, pressed against, by adults twice their size."⁵⁴ The two-tone walls of the exhibition space moreover signified the child's experience of day and night as two different realities: yellow below for the daytime of normal activities, and black above for the looming nighttime, the "darkness of forced adult sexuality."⁵⁵ Lumbard and Belt, both incest survivors, intended to challenge the "secretive, or non-existent status" of incest and make its pervasiveness in American culture visible through video and performance.⁵⁶

At the entrance of "Bedtime Stories" stood Lowe's life-size photomontage, *Once Upon a Time She Thought Incest Was Something She Had to Carry Around All by Herself*. A young girl in overalls holds aloft a globe on which a photograph of her smiling nuclear family appears in negative. Evoking the ancient Greek god Atlas, who was forced to carry the world on his shoulders, the girl has the strength to carry her own burden: the memories, guilt, shame, secrecy, and fear associated with incest. Lowe intended to show the girl "about to throw off the weight of keeping the family together," giving incest survivors "a sense of direction and community rather than the feelings of defeat and isolation that come from the family's conspiracy of silence."⁵⁷ *Once Upon a Time* also functioned as a logo for the Incest Awareness Project.⁵⁸

The exhibition was divided into three sections to underscore the process a woman undergoes from incest victim to survivor. The first section addressed the secret of incest. Lumbard's charcoal drawing, *Incest #3*, shows the artist as a young girl on a bed in fetal position, which suggests her isolation and confusion about incest. A large bird behind her flies away, signifying recovery and her transformation from victim to survivor.⁵⁹ Diane Silberstein's *No Doll* consisted of five hundred color, Xeroxed paper dolls with open mouths. Lined up along the gallery walls, these likenesses of the artist bore a variety of expressions, which proceeded from grief to anger and finally to relief. Tyaga's *Telling*, a large, mixed-media drawing, also represented dolls. These life-size babies sat in disarray, seemingly abandoned, and expressing ferocious outrage. Powerlessness and disembodiment were also conveyed in Lyricon Jazzwomin McCaleb's installation *Silent Screams*, in which a stuffed military uniform sat in a chair surrounded by empty alcohol bottles with a little girl's dress on its lap. One white glove of the absent-yet-present military man held the child's dress while the other clutched a leather belt, which trailed on the floor "like a whip."⁶⁰

The second section of the exhibition dealt with one of the consequences of incest: when a child becomes a liar to maintain the secret. On opening night, Terry Wolverton performed *In Silence Secrets Turn to Lies / Secrets Shared Become Sacred Truths*, which was inspired by memories of her molestation by her stepfather between the ages of five and eleven. Of the performance Wolverton said:

I constructed a physical environment in which I could move through layers of experience; revealing first those secrets I had thought were too terrible to share, exposing the lies I told about myself to seem more acceptable, and finally moving into honesty and self-awareness.⁶¹

From a dark red canopy, Wolverton hung streamers upon which she wrote: "Do not say no; don't ask your stepfather to not get drunk; don't say that you do not want to touch your father's penis." In another section, she wrote on black streamers lies she had told herself: that she was ugly, unlovable, and not angry. In the performance, Wolverton ripped these words apart; over the discarded paper she poured a circle of salt for purification. She then entered the center of the room, sat on a chair, and read a letter informing her mother of her childhood sexual abuse. At the close of the performance, Wolverton invited the audience to write their own stories in a notebook; some added their own memories of similar childhood experiences.⁶²

The third section of "Bedtime Stories" focused "on the strength women have found in themselves as survivors of incestuous assault." Here an installation entitled *Letters Home* (1979) contained letters by five women to men who had engaged them in sexual relations when they were children. Quimetta Perle's *Adolescent Journal* consisted of hand-embroidered excerpts from the journal she kept during the time of her incest experience.⁶³

The Incest Awareness Project also sponsored the innovative, ten-day video installation *Equal Time in Equal Space (ETES)*, directed by Angelo and co-produced by the Women's Video Center with a media campaign led by Ariadne. In preparation for this complex project, Angelo facilitated meetings among seventeen women, who were of differing ages and came from a variety of backgrounds.⁶⁴ The women participated in journal writing, body work, and eleven C-R sessions over a period of ten weeks on a variety of topics: mothers, sexuality, anger and authority, class, race, religion, and feelings about speaking out about individual incest experiences. As the title indicates, the intention was "to give equal time and equal space to each woman's recollections and analyses of incest."⁶⁵ Divided into roles of performer, camerawoman, and organizer, the participants worked under the guidance of Angelo, who conceived of and facilitated the entire project.

This large-scale, multichannel video installation was designed for a small audience. Six video monitors were set up facing each other in a large circle, with

audience members distributed evenly around them. Each monitor carried the image and voice of a different woman from the C-R groups: Anita Green, Lowe, Lombard, McCaleb, Christine Wong, and Wolverton.⁶⁶ The viewers thus witnessed a C-R session on incest as the "monitors 'talked and listened' to each other, responding in such an appropriate and coordinated fashion that the audience soon forgot the technology and found themselves included in an intense and painfully honest group discussion."⁶⁷

As medium, video "asks that we bear witness to its act of witness."⁶⁸ In this case, each video monitor "testifies to the act of having seen."⁶⁹ Angelo created a space for a series of witnessing. The video bears witness to each woman's testimony of sexual trauma. The audience members seated between each video constituted what Shoshana Felman calls "second-degree witnesses (witness of witnesses, witnesses of the testimonies)."⁷⁰ The result gave "shape to what once seemed overwhelming, incomprehensible, and formless" and created a public memory.⁷¹ *ETES* expressed "outrage" for the "experiences of pain, betrayal, and loss of childhood," but also rejoiced in the fact that "these are women bearing witness together."⁷² As the therapist Butler observed:

I celebrate the coming together of the women who are in front of and behind this pain, the strength, the clarity, and the vision that emerges from our coming together to continue the acts of creation that are our lives and the lives of those who will follow us.⁷³

In its use of the new technology of video as a vehicle for social change, *ETES* was experimental and visionary. The installation challenged the positioning of women as victims in the media, instead empowering women to speak out, end the silence, and move from victimhood to survivorship. Significantly, the artists adopted and publicized the term "incest survivor," as opposed to "victim."

ETES, in conjunction with Wolverton's *In Silence Secrets Turn to Lies*, Lowe's *Once Upon a Time*, and the works in the exhibition "Bedtime Stories," joined the growing body of literature being published contemporaneously about incest. Together, they shaped a discourse on the links between patriarchy, incest, and women's social subjugation.

Conclusion

During the 1970s and early 1980s, artists used performances, exhibitions, videos, posters, installations, and other media to create works that addressed sexual violence against the female body. Their works functioned as a ritualized site for witnessing, disrupting conventional histories, ending the silence by making the unknown known, and reenacting or performing the phenomenological structure of trauma. They created repetitive traumatic sites that surround, involve, and challenge the viewer to witness, acknowledge, remember, and end the silence about sexual trauma experienced by women.



Nancy Angelo, director and producer, *Equal Time in Equal Space*, 1980. Collaborative video installation as part of the Incest Awareness Project. Photograph by Bia Lowe. Woman's Building Image Archive, Otis College of Art and Design.

Looking back at the activism of the 1970s, feminist art historian Moira Roth asserted, in 1983, that the feminist movement had become "beleaguered" after "an amazing decade of achievement." She argued that feminists were "exhausted by, and sometimes disillusioned with, the struggles of the last decade" and were now confronted by a dominant "right-wing" ideology—manifested by the election of Ronald Reagan as president—that led artists to rethink their strategies.⁷⁴ Lacy concurred, writing that rape "dropped from view" during the 1980s, due to a "political and cultural backlash against feminism."⁷⁵ The anti-rape movement waned during this decade in part because NOW was focused upon the Equal Rights Amendment. As a result, no national effort with specific, short-term goals was directed against sexual violence.⁷⁶

Examinations of rape and incest, which had existed as a kind of paradigmatic practice for feminist artists connected with the WB, thus dissipated by the mid-1980s. Many artists instead focused on issues related to ecology, nuclear threats, class, race (including African American, Asian American, Latino, and Hmong artists), and identity politics.⁷⁷ During this decade, the WB underwent profound changes in response to the social, political, and economic climates of the United States, including attempting to redefine and broaden its constituency to include more women outside of the white middle class by which it had previously been dominated. In 1991, the WB closed its doors. Three years later, Congress finally passed the first comprehensive federal legislation "to stop domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking": The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was reauthorized in 2000, again in 2005, and signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2006.⁷⁸

Unfortunately, sexual violence against women still exists. Today, Eve Ensler is one example of a feminist carrying on the important task of creating works that testify against sexual violence against women. Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* is an Obie-Award-winning play performed on college campuses throughout the United States and in over one hundred and nineteen theaters throughout the world. Ensler, who was born in 1953, originally performed the play in 1997 and published it in 1998. The play has since been translated into forty-five languages. Ensler originally intended her project to celebrate female sexuality and the female body,⁷⁹ but her interest shifted to preventing violence against women. In 1998, Ensler founded V-Day. Her website proclaims, "Today, V-Day is a global activist movement that supports anti-violence organizations throughout the world, helping them to continue and expand their core work on the ground, while drawing public attention to the larger fight to stop worldwide violence (including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation [FGM], sexual slavery) against women and girls."⁸⁰

Ensler has visited over fifty countries, including Afghanistan, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Zambia, the Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Egypt, and Iraq, speaking the unspeakable and providing a forum for silent victims. For example, Ensler worked with Filipina "comfort wives," who were kept as sexual slaves by Japanese troops during

WWII. In 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the war, Ensler launched the Global V-Day Campaign for Justice to "Comfort Women." Despite ostracism by family members because of the "shame" of their past, Filipinas spoke out for the first time about their horrific experiences. In 2008, more than three thousand five hundred V-Day events were scheduled in one thousand two hundred and fifty locations in the United States and around the world.

Feminist artists connected with the WB provided a model for Ensler and others who create art as a powerful vehicle for social change today. Although the artists connected with the WB largely ceased to create works about sexual violence after the Incest Awareness Project (and many of them, such as Angelo, did not pursue art making as a career), they provided a precedent by giving testimony and constructing and performing trauma for others to bear witness and give testimony, thereby ending the silence and contributing to cultural memory. The artists of the WB were part of the movement to politicize sexual violence against women, and they became powerful voices in the rape and incest crises discourses. Most significantly, they empowered women by ending the silence.

Notes

1. Hannah J. L. Feldman, "More Than Confessional: Testimony and the Subject of Rape," in *The Subject of Rape* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993), 16-17; and Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougaw, eds., *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony, and Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 7.
2. Miller and Tougaw, 13.
3. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996), 204.
4. Mary Ann Lergen, "The Anti-Rape Movement Past and Present," in *Rape and Sexual Assault: A Research Handbook*, ed. Ann Wolbert Burgess (New York: Garland, 1985), 5. See also Susan Griffin, *Rape: The Politics of Consciousness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986; reprint of 1979 original), 103-11. Griffin states that Washington, D.C., had the first rape crisis center.
5. Griffin, *Rape*, 111; Women Organized Against Rape website, <http://www.woar.org/about-woar.html> (accessed July 2, 2010).
6. Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1975), 405. An account of the New York Feminists Rape Conference can be found in Noreen Connell and Cassandra Wilson, eds., *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women* (New York: Plume Books, 1974), 59-112.
7. For information about this tribunal, see Diana E. H. Russell and Nicole Van de Ven, *Crimes Against Women: Proceedings of the International Tribunal* (Millbrae, CA: Las Femmes, 1976); and Suzanne Lacy, "Time, Bones, and Art: An Anatomy Lesson of Feminist Art and Sexual Violence," Suzanne Lacy Archives, Oakland, California, n.d., 9.
8. Lergen, 11.

9. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*, 153, 256, 309, 391. For the phrase "rape classic" and general information about Brownmiller and her book, see Brownmiller, "An Informal Bio," <http://www.susanbrownmiller.com/susanbrownmiller/html/bio.html> (accessed July 2, 2010). See also Brownmiller, "Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape," http://www.susanbrownmiller.com/susanbrownmiller/html/against_our_will.html (accessed July 2, 2010).
10. Roy Porter, "Does Rape Have a Historical Meaning?" in *Rape*, Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter, eds. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 218.
11. Nadya Burton, "Resistance to Prevention: Reconsidering Feminist Antiviolence Rhetoric," in *Violence Against Women: Philosophical Perspectives*, Stanley G. French, Wanda Teays, and Laura M. Purdy, eds. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 182-200.
12. Susan Griffin, "Rape: The All-American Crime," *Ramparts* 10 (1971): 29.
13. Catherine Calvert, "Is Rape What Women Really Want?" *Mademoiselle* 78 (March 1974), 134, 191.
14. Susan Estrich, "Rape," *Yale Law Journal* 95 (May 1986): 1097. She elaborated on these ideas in her book *Real Rape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 3-4.
15. Connell and Wilson, 3.
16. Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994; 1st ed. 1988).
17. For information about *Ablutions*, see Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 218-19; Sharon Irish, *Suzanne Lacy: Spaces Between* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 15-18; Suzanne Lacy, "Time, Bones, and Art," 5-6; "Suzanne Lacy," interview by Moira Roth, March 16, 24, and September 27, 1990, Transcript, Smithsonian Archives of American Art Oral History Collection, Washington, D.C., <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/lacy90.htm> (accessed July 2, 2010); and Stacy E. Schultz, "Naming in Order to Heal and Redeem: Violence Against Women in Performance," *n. paradoxa* 23 (2009): 38-39.
18. Suzanne Lacy, "Three Weeks in May," *Frontier: A Journal of Woman's Studies* 11 (1977): 9-10. See also Leslie Labowitz and Suzanne Lacy, "Evolution of a Feminist Art: Public Forms and Social Issues," *Heresies* 2 (1978): 80; and Irish, 46-49. After Lacy spoke, three women whom Lacy had invited moved to different parts of the space with the invited participants to perform simultaneously, creating "a patchwork quilt" in which a multitude of voices enacted "simultaneous rituals" ("Evolution of a Feminist Art").
19. Nancy Ward, Ad Hoc Committee on Rape, Department of Human Relations, Los Angeles County, 1976, as quoted in Lacy, "Three Weeks in May," 12. See also Meiling Cheng, *In Other Los Angeleses: Multicentric Performance Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 117. Cheng discusses *Three Weeks in May* as "a series of collaborative public actions" and as site-specific.
20. As Jennie Klein observes, "Three Weeks in May was not simply an activist event in which artists participated, but was instead a carefully orchestrated performance designed to facilitate interaction between various groups and coalitions... [including] elected public officials, activists from the feminist community, media reporters, office workers, and feminist artists." See Klein, "The Ritual Body as Pedagogical Tool: The Performance Art of the Woman's Building," in *From Site to Vision: the Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton, eds. (Los Angeles: Woman's Building and Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 210.
21. Lacy, "Time, Bones, and Art," 15; Lacy, "Three Weeks in May," 22.
22. Jeff Kelley, "The Body Politics of Suzanne Lacy," in *But Is It Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 235.
23. Lacy, "Time, Bones, and Art," 16; and Kelley, 235-6. See also Vivien Green Fryd, "Suzanne Lacy's *Three Weeks in May*: Performance Art as 'Expanded Public Pedagogy,'" *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 19 (2007): 23-38.
24. Cheng addresses the iconography of the lamb within the context of Lacy's *Lamb Construction* (1973) performed at the WB. She later suggests that the lamb cadaver in *She Who Would Fly* signifies "women under attack." See Cheng, 112, 118.

25. Richard Newton, "She Who Would Fly: An Interview with Suzanne Lacy," in "The Art/Life Experiment," *High Performance* 1 (1978): 12.
26. Suzanne Lacy, "Artist Resource Site, Three Weeks in May: She Who Would Fly," September 27, 2003, http://www.suzannelacy.com/1970sviolence_3weeks_fly.htm (accessed July 2, 2010); Kelley, 238. See also Lacy, "Three Weeks in May," 54.
27. Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988), 85.
28. Suzanne Lacy, letter to the author, January 10, 2004.
29. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz, "Feminist Media Strategies for Political Performance," in *Cultures in Contention*, Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier, eds. (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1985), 124.
30. Leslie Labowitz and Suzanne Lacy, "In Mourning and In Rage," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 3 (1978): 52-55.
31. Suzanne Lacy, "In Mourning and In Rage (With Analysis Aforethought)," *Ikou* (1982): 6.
32. Labowitz and Lacy, "In Mourning and In Rage," 54; and Roth, "Conversation with Suzanne Lacy," 45.
33. Jennifer Fisher, "Interperformance: The Live Tableaux of Suzanne Lacy, Janine Antoni, and Marina Abramovic," *Art Journal* 56 (1997): 30.
34. *In Mourning and In Rage*, video created by Jerri Allyn, Nancy Angeló, Candace Compton, and Annette Hunt under the auspices of the Los Angeles Women's Video Center through the WB in consultation with Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz, 1977. Long Beach Museum of Art Video Archive, Getty Research Institute. Transferred by the Long Beach Museum of Art Foundation and the City of Long Beach, 2005.
35. I derive these terms and ideas about trauma from Lisa Saltzman's interpretation of Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Bunker Hill Monument* (1998) in "When Memory Speaks: A Monument Bears Witness," in *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*, Lisa Saltzman and Eric Rosenberg, eds. (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2006), 83-85.
36. For information about the techniques and equipment used in the WB, see Cecelia Dougherty, "Stories from a Generation: Video Art at the Woman's Building," in *From Site to Vision*, 308. For information about how video as a medium asks the viewer to bear witness, see Lisa Saltzman, *Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 130.
37. Elaine Woo, "Bedtime Stories," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, October 23, 1979, B1.
38. Ellen Weber, "Sexual Abuse Begins at Home," *Ms. magazine* (April 1977), 64, 67.
39. Louise Armstrong, "The Crime Nobody Talks About," *Woman's Day* (March 1978), 52, 128; and Florence Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), 5.
40. Louise Armstrong, *Kiss Daddy Goodnight: A Speak-Out on Incest* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1978); and Sandra Butler, *Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest* (San Francisco: New Glide Publications, 1978).
41. Kathleen Brady, *Father's Days: A True Story of Incest* (New York: Seaview Books, 1979); Rush, *The Best Kept Secret*; Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman, *Father-Daughter Incest* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Judith Herman and Lisa Hirschman, "Father-Daughter Incest," *Signs* 2 (1977): 735-56; and Bass and Davis, *The Courage to Heal*. For a discussion of these self-help books, see Rosaria Champagne, *The Politics of Survivorship: Incest, Women's Literature, and Feminist Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 14, 37-42. See also Diana E. H. Russell, *Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), xviii, for information on the feminist books of the 1970s and 1980s. Florence Rush's book evolved from a presentation she gave on April 17, 1971, at a conference on rape sponsored by the New York Radical Feminists. See Rush, viii.
42. Armstrong, *Kiss Daddy Goodnight*, 215.
43. Susan Forward, *Betrayal of Innocence: Incest and Its Devastation* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1979).

44. Nancy Angelo, "Equal Time in Equal Space: Documentation of the Production and Exhibition of a Community Video Art Project on Women's Experiences of Incest," MA thesis, Goddard College 1982, 6. See also Michelle Moravec, "Feminism, the Public Sphere and the Incest Awareness Project at the Woman's Building," in *The Politics of Cultural Programming in Public Spaces*, Robert Gehl and Victoria Watts, eds. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010).
45. Paula Lombard, email correspondence with the author, June 2, 2009.
46. Leslie Belt, manuscript for *Incest Piece*, from Catherine Stifter's archives.
47. Leslie Belt, email correspondence with the author, July 6 and 10, 2009.
48. Nancy Angelo, Part 1, *On Joining the Order: A Confession in which Angelica Furiosa Explains to Her Sisters How She Came to Be Among Them*, 1977. Videotape. Long Beach Museum of Art Video Archive, Getty Research Institute.
49. Moravec, 5.
50. Angelo, MA thesis, 9.
51. Irish, 74.
52. "Incest': The Crime Nobody Talks About," press release by Ariadne and the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, n.d., *Ariadne Scrapbook*, n.p. See also Lacy and Labowitz, "Feminist Media Strategies for Political Performance," 132; and Terry Wolverton, *Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at the Woman's Building* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2002), 127.
53. Annette Hunt and Nancy Angelo, "Bedtime Stories: Women Speak Out About Incest," *Spinning Off* (October/November 1979), 1. The exhibition went to Toronto in 1981 for an exhibition at the University College Playhouse at the University of Toronto.
54. Moravec, 11; and Diane Elvenstar, "Incest: A Second Reality for a Child," *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1979, 18.
55. Hunt and Angelo.
56. Paula Lombard and Leslie Belt, "Statement by Curators of Bedtime Stories," in *Ariadne Scrapbook*, n.p.
57. Phyllis Rosser, "There's No Place Like Home," in *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, and Action*, Joanna Frueh, Cassandra L. Langer, and Arlene Raven, eds. (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 68. See also Moravec, 11.
58. Wolverton, *Insurgent Muse*, 128; and "Art Against Incest: Feminist Artists Challenge the Conspiracy of Silence," *FUSE* (July/August 1980): 280.
59. Moravec, 12.
60. Woo, B5.
61. Wolverton, *Insurgent Muse*, 130-31.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Woo, B5.
64. Angelo states that the ages ranged from late teens to mid-thirties, and their religious backgrounds were Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist, Jewish, Mormon, Presbyterian, and non-religious. Fifteen were Caucasian, one was an African American, another was Chinese American. Angelo, MA thesis, 32.
65. Moravec, 10.
66. Wolverton, "Art Against Incest," 281; *Insurgent Muse*, 134; and Angelo, MA thesis, 11.
67. Suzanne Lacy, interview with Moira Roth, March 16, 1990, transcript, Smithsonian Archives of American Art Oral History Collection, Washington, D.C., September 23, 2003, <http://artarchives.si.edu/oralhist/lacy90.htm>. See also Ruth Iskin, "Incest Survivors Go Public," *LA Weekly*, November 14-20, 1980, 4. In order for the tapes to play simultaneously, the decks were synchronized by pausing and playing each deck at the same time. For an

explanation of this technology, see Cecilia Dougherty, "Stories from a Generation: Video Art at the Woman's Building," in *From Site to Vision*, 312.

68. Saltzman, *Making Memory Matter*, 130.

69. Ibid.

70. Shoshana Felman, "The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's Shoah," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychology, and History*, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 213.

71. Feldman, 16-17; and Miller and Tougaw, 7.

72. *Equal Time in Equal Space*, in *Ariadne Scrapbook*, n.p.; and Sandra Butler, "Cause for Outrage and Celebration," quoted in Angelo, M.A. thesis, appendix.

73. Butler, "Cause for Outrage and Celebration," from Angelo, M.A. thesis, appendix.

74. Moira Roth, ed., *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America, 1970-1980* (Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983), 33.

75. Lacy, "Time Bones, and Art," 24.

76. Largen, 11.

77. For how race, identity politics, and class became issues among members of the Woman's Building, see Michelle Moravec and Sondra Hale, "At Home at the Woman's Building (But Who Gets a Room of Her Own?): Women of Color and Community," in *From Site to Vision*.

78. Diane Stuart, "About the Violence Against Women Office," December 27, 2001, and reauthorized in 2010: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/>.

79. Eve Ensler, *The Vagina Monologues* (New York: Villard, 1998).

80. V-Day website, <http://www.vday.org/about/more-about/eveensler> (accessed July 20, 2010).

Blanks in the historical record notwithstanding, the connections between the exhibition and the earlier conference were emphasized, as revealed by a photograph that features at center left the 1975 Women in Design conference poster and the 1978 "Women in American Architecture" exhibition poster. Tellingly, these two efforts to draw narrative lines between contemporary women designers and architects and female architects of the past were posted below a painted sign enjoining the viewer to "support our community." For a moment in 1978, an alternative timeline was created by de Bretteville based on her historical antecedents and her current community.

Early taxonomical efforts to reclassify previously excluded women such as Gray and Hayden led to deeper taxonomical interventions, such as arguing for inclusion of different art forms. A few years later, members of the Woman's Building connected formally trained women designers and architects to a still unknown artist, Grandma (Tressa) Prisbrey, who created structures out of found objects in her *Bottle Village*, located in Simi Valley, California. Suzanne Lacy initially brought Prisbrey to the Feminist Studio Workshop to speak to the students in January of 1976. Nancy Angelo, Barbara Bouska, Cheri Gaulke, and Linda Norlen, all students in the FSW, became intrigued by her.²⁸ They saw Prisbrey's materials, "the cast-offs of women's lives—dolls, empty bottles, broken pencils, frayed toothbrushes,"²⁹ as uniquely feminine and argued that her work belonged "in the tradition of quilts and crafts."³⁰ (The quilt became the emblematic object of feminist artists' taxonomical efforts in a hugely successful rehabilitation effort. Other women's media such as china painting and various kinds of needlework were also reclaimed as "art.") Prisbrey's *Bottle Village* had not received the same degree of recognition as other built environments made from found objects, such as Simon Rodia's Watts Towers. As Gaulke explained, "We have a very phallic culture that likes those kinds of protrusions [found at Watts Towers]. Grandma Prisbrey had never been taken seriously because she had made round structures that you had to go inside to experience the beauty, and that was all very sort of vaginal and very female."³¹ The four students therefore decided to honor Prisbrey with a one woman show at the Woman's Building, which they curated, installed, and documented.

While Prisbrey would seem a somewhat anomalous peer for Gray and Hayden, all three joined a mélange of references for a 1978 issue of *Spinning Off* (a monthly newsletter of women's culture at the Woman's Building). The issue was devoted to the topic of "space" and occurred in conjunction with the "Women in American Architecture" exhibition. Images from the Prisbrey exhibition accompanied quotations that highlighted the meanings of space for women, information about the exhibition, details of lectures by Raven and Iskin about Sophia Hayden, and architect and urban historian Dolores Hayden's work on feminist architecture.³² The inclusion of Prisbrey illustrates the way that members of the Woman's Building created chains of historical connection that progressed through a feminist lineage rather than the usual classifications of art history, which revolve around genre, style, medium, or school. The