

Rebecca Hand building 25/06/2020

Welcome to this weeks hand out, as part of Pride Month we are looking at Judy Chicago an American artist who is included in a list of queer ceramic artists on the Gardiner Museum website. We are looking at a piece of work called the Dinner Party, I went to see this work in the 1980's in London. I remember it was in a ware house space near Angel, either near where the Post Office was or on White Lion Street, N1. I hope you are well and looking after your selves.

Judy Chicago



The Dinner Party Judy Chicago 1974 - 1979

Judy Chicago was born in 1939 in Chicago, United States of America. She was born Judith Sylvia Cohen. She is an American feminist artist, art educator and writer known for her large collaborative art installation pieces about birth and creation images which examine the role of women in history and culture.



The Dinner Party was an important icon of 1970's feminist art and a milestone in 21st century art. This piece of work is on show at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Centre for Feminist Art, at the Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA. The Dinner Party comprises a massive ceremonial banquet, arranged on a triangular table with a total of thirty - nine place settings, each containing an important women from history.

The settings consist of embroidered runners, gold chalices and utensils and china painted porcelain plates with raised central motifs that are based on vulva and butterfly forms and rendered in styles appropriate to the individual women being honoured. The names of another 999 women are inscribed in gold lustre on the white tile floor below the triangular table. This permanent installation is enhanced by rotating History gallery exhibitions relating to the 1038 women honoured at the table.



The Dinner Party Judy Chicago 1977.

Some of the women featured included Anna von Schuman (1607 – 1678) a Dutch artist who wrote a book that argued women should be educated in all subjects, Virginia Wolf (1882 – 1947) an English writer who wrote novels that centred on female characters. She was critical about the lack of female perspectives in history and literature. Georgina O'Keeffe an American artist born in 1887 – 1986, known for her paintings of enlarged flowers, New York skyscrapers and New Mexico landscapes.



Judy Chicago applying gold lustre to floor tile 1977.



Evelyn Appelt at China Boutique , pouring porcelain casting slip into a mould for floor tiles 1977.

The Dinner Party took five years to complete. The piece came into fruition with the assistance of over 400 people, mainly women, who volunteered to assist with needle work, creating sculptures and other aspects of the process. When the Dinner party was first constructed it was a travelling exhibition. Although art critiques felt her work lacked depth and the Dinner Party was 'just vaginas on plates'. It was popular and captivated the general public.