

A Conversation with Judy Chicago and Suzanne Lacy_2010

Audio Transcript

00:05:57

Suzanne Lacy:

"I wanted to do this conversation tonight because I want an opportunity to acknowledge my teacher and my mentor.

I think that, you know, too many of us in the art world now it's sort of a competitive environment where people are always trying to do something new, and they're always trying to establish their identity. And in some fashion that does not acknowledge their lineage and what happens is that the tremendous wealth that we will be accumulating by now is lost when you keep cutting yourself off from your past. I have, I have a deep respect and you've transformed my life in some pretty phenomenal ways which we can talk about. And so I just, I want to say that, for me, this is very specifically, a conversation about mentorship and about teaching, and about women and art."

1:02

Judy Chicago:

"Thank you, Suzanne, you never know which students are going to succeed. And I have often been wrong, and I was totally wrong about Suzanne. Suzanne applied to as a 25 year old psychology major, and she told me she wanted to be in this class because she wanted to quote, 'be creative', I like cringed.

1:27

Suzanne Lacy

"It took me a year to figure out what you meant by that.

You know we were, we were in a particular era 68, to 71, and the entire country, it seemed like was sort of coming alive with various movements the feminist movement. You know as a follow on from the Civil Rights Movement, and I was working in race relations and when there I met Faith Wilding and Faith was an activist, as well as an artist, I was not. And she said 'Hey you know there's this interesting thing happening next year and I think you should be part of it.' Faith and I basically started the feminist art organizing at Fresno State, just I think the semester before you came by sticking up posters all over the campus saying 'Women come and meet.' And so, they all came and met."

Judy Chicago:

"ah, the 70s"

Suzanne Lacy:

"They were like 40 of them. This was actually 1969. There were like 40 of them, and we sat and looked at each other because we had not planned for 40 women, and we sort of looked at each other and said, 'Well, what should we talk about?' And Faith said 'Well, let's talk about sex.'

That was it, and we started really the consciousness raising there I was in psychology grad school and teaching class and feminist women's psychology, you know, furious at Freud. So it's an era when there was a lot of kind of ferment, but what I saw in what Judy

1. Valeria Medici

31 March 2021 at 18:15:10

extremely important for me as well

2. Valeria Medici

31 March 2021 at 18:16:34

Important point. Possibly one to focus on.

was offering was a kind of passion. That was. A kind of fullness of expression that made a lot of sense to me.”

3:07

Judy Chicago:

- 1 “And it was from the beginning of **content based pedagogical method, find your content, and select the media that best expresses that content.** And if you need to develop the skills to mistress that medium. This is exactly how I work. I mean I, and it was only much later that I began to really understand that, generally, because after years and
- 2 years and years of working with women, **that very often is content that motivates women whereas for man, it's usually form or technique,** you know, and for that year we basically focused on what women thought taught did, and created. And as an antidote to having spent all those years before entirely studying men.”

4:05

Suzanne Lacy:

“I think what was revolutionary was not just the kind of female centric version of what a vision that you have but I also think it was that you taught us a sort of empowerment. The first, we were all sitting around in the living room and everybody it was spreads no we were wearing sandals and Judy looks around at our sandals and says, ‘Okay, the next assignment is to go out and get work boots.’ I was so in love with my work boots. I wore them everywhere.

They gave me such a sense of power.”

3. Valeria Medici

31 March 2021 at 18:20:58

This entirely express my vision my practice.

4:40

Judy Chicago:

“ I think this is eventually going to be established that the 70s ushered in a historic change and that it introduced for the first time the possibility of women working openly out of their own experiences as women. For example, when you think about the fact that, up until 1971, when I did *'Red flag'* and *'The menstruation bathroom'* for *'WomanHouse'* there had never been an image of menstruation in Western art.

I mean there was only absence, that's what there was, absence. Absence of our experiences, absence of our perceptions, absence of our point of view.

3 I think one of the tenants of feminist art as certainly as I was interested in seeing it develop and tried to practice myself, was that the work needed to address issues of that, people cared about, in a way that people could understand, with the goal of making change.