



NOREEN MCGONIGLE  
NOREEN MCGONIGLE  
NOREEN MCGONIGLE  
NOREEN MCGONIGLE  
NOREEN MCGONIGLE

# JUDY CHICAGO'S DINNER PARTY: CONTEXTUALIZING THE CRITICAL REACTION

*The Dinner Party* [fig. 1], the ground-breaking, feminist, over-life-size installation sculpture, is a monumental fusion of decorative and fine arts, operating as a symbolic tribute to the history of women completed in 1979 by the artist Judy Chicago and her collaborative team. Since its conception, *The Dinner Party* sparked controversy across the nation. It was first exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (S.F.M.O.M.A) in 1979 and its subsequent history has been chockfull of rejection and condemnation. These sentiments would remain largely unchanged in the critical literature until 2002, when *The Dinner Party* was included in a special exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. During its re-exhibition, *The Dinner Party* was overwhelmingly embraced by critics and viewers around the globe. This shift in critical reaction experienced by *The Dinner Party* from 1979 and 2002 can be traced and understood through historical contextualization and the reviews of art critics.

Judy Chicago, artist, educator, feminist, and intellectual, was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 20, 1939 under the name Judy Sylvia

Cohen. At the age of five, her passion for the arts was sparked through art classes she took at the Art Institute of Chicago. From then on, she embraced a life devoted to the arts. She would continue her training at the Art Institute of Chicago but would complete her Bachelor of Arts at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1962. She went on to earn her Master of Fine Arts from UCLA in 1964. She married Jerry Gerowitz in 1961, but their marriage was short lived due to a fatal car accident in 1963, resulting in his death. After receiving her masters, she began to establish herself in the art world under her married name, Judy Gerowitz. Her early works consisted of practicing typical styles of the time, which included spray painting and minimalist painting along with various sculpting techniques.

Feeling unfulfilled and underwhelmed by her works and the path her career was taking, she began making changes. By 1969, she joined the faculty at California State University in Fresno where she established the first Feminist Art Education Program. In 1970, she changed her name to Judy Chicago as an overt act against the traditional western naming culture, in which a woman was ex-

pected to take the last name of her husband.<sup>1</sup>

Chicago and, Miriam Schapiro, another artist, elected to relocate the Feminist Art Program to the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California where they would also join the faculty. The new program launched many interesting projects. *Womanhouse* (1972), the most prominent of all of the projects, was a series of installations that “explored the postwar ideal of feminine domesticity” in fantasy-like environments.<sup>2</sup> A year later, Chicago, along with art historian Arlene Raven and designer Sheila de Bretteville, co-founded the Women’s Building in Los Angeles.<sup>3</sup> She established an organization called Through the Flower in 1978 as a way to help enable the completion of her most ambitious work to that point, *The Dinner Party*. She went on to create several more works of art, including *Birth Project* (1980-1985) and the *Holocaust Project* (1985-1993), which similarly use art to analyze and interrogate history. Furthermore, she has written several books including *Through the Flower* and *The Dinner Party: From Creation to Preservation*. She and her career are still thriving in 2018 and she continues to be a champion of women’s rights.

Chicago began work on *The Dinner Party* in 1974 after attending a real-life dinner party where it occurred to her that women had never had a Last Supper, like the one Jesus and his disciples celebrated.<sup>4</sup> This evolved into a massive multi-media installation consisting of a three-winged, open, triangular-shaped table, set within a dark room, amid six colorful tapestry banners [fig. 2]. Each side spans forty-eight feet in length. The table is resting on top of a raised floor, known as the “Heritage Floor,” [fig. 3] comprised of 2,300 tiles made of hand-cast

porcelain with the names of 999 women from mythology to history inscribed in gold luster. Chicago says that “the floor is the foundation of the piece, a re-creation of the fragmented parts of our heritage, and, like the place settings themselves, a statement about the condition of women.”<sup>5</sup> The names were selected to represent a range of nationalities, experiences, and accomplishments. The floor acts as a structural and metaphorical support for the table.

The three wings of the table form an equilateral triangle, with thirty-nine place settings intended to represent thirty-nine individual women of history evenly distributed across the wings. Each wing includes thirteen place settings as a reference to the thirteen attendees at the Last Supper. The thirty-nine women included were selected based on their actual accomplishments and their spiritual/legendary powers. The place settings are the most significant component of *The Dinner Party*. The tables are covered with linens and meet at each corner with an embroidered cloth. They are all set on an embroidered runner with a ceramic gold chalice, utensils, embroidered napkin, and a china-painted plate. Each wing is separated into three categories based on historical time periods. Wing one encompasses prehistory, starting with the Primordial Goddess, continuing onto the development of Judaism, moving onto the societies of the early Greeks, and ending with the Roman Empire; wing two includes females who existed from early Christianity to the Reformation; and finally, wing three embodies strong figures from the American Revolution through the Women’s Revolution, starting with Anne Hutchinson and ending with Georgia O’Keeffe. Every place setting is executed within the characteristics of the guest’s specific historical

context.

One of the most discussed place settings at the table is the Empress Theodora's, the famous Byzantine empress and advocate of women. She was raised by her father, a trainer of animals, on the fringes of the Byzantine Empire. After his passing, in order to support her family Theodora became an actress, a profession synonymous with prostitution and highly reviled by Byzantine society. Later she found Christianity and abandoned her former career as an actress.<sup>6</sup> She met Justinian I, the nephew of the Emperor Justin I and heir of the Byzantine Empire in 522. Shortly after, they decided they wanted to get married, but the laws prohibited him to marry an actress, even a former one. Justinian had the law repealed and they were married in 525. Theodora was crowned empress alongside Justinian in 527. Historically, it is known that Theodora and Justinian ruled together as political and intellectual equals. Theodora was a champion of women's rights as a result of the humiliation of women she witnessed and experienced first-hand during her career as an actress. As a result, she fought for the rights of all women. A few of her undertakings, intended specifically to improve the lives of prostitutes included closing the brothels, establishing safe houses for protection, and passing laws forbidding forced prostitution. Her other endeavors for all women included passing laws to give women more rights in divorce cases and abolishing the law that allowed women to be killed for adultery.

Her exemplary life and achievements are represented by her place setting. The Byzantine era is known for their intricate mosaic designs, which can be found in Theodora's place setting [fig. 4]. The plate is painted to

resemble the traditional mosaic designs of the Byzantine era, in particular, this design alludes to the famous mosaic of "Theodora and Her Attendants" from 547 CE located in Ravenna, Italy in the Basilica of San Vitale. They both use a gold, green, and purple color scheme, which are traditionally imperial colors. The imagery on the plate "is a symmetrical abstract butterfly form, each wing stretching to the edge of the plate."<sup>7</sup> The wide stretching wings are representative of her wide acceptance of women and all oppressed people. A basilica plan was the traditional architectural plan for churches in the Byzantine era; this plan is reflected in the symmetry of the plate imagery along with the Roman arch colonnade imbedded in the upper wings. The plate rests on a runner embroidered with "a mosaic like halo."<sup>8</sup> A similar halo can be found in "Theodora and Her Attendants" which creates a distinct parallel between the two works. Finally, her name is embroidered in gold and the letter "T" portrays the dome of the Hagia Sophia from 530 CE, one of Theodora's most prominent and celebrated architectural feats.

The cornerstone of each place setting is the painted china plates. Every plate is fourteen inches in diameter and contains a central motif based on the butterfly and/or the vulva. These forms are described by Chicago as central core imagery. This central motif was a critical aspect in the piece itself and contributed directly to the reception of the piece. Chicago explained her intentions for this in her memoir *Through the Flower*: "I wanted to express what it was like to be organized around a central core, my vagina, that which made me a woman."<sup>9</sup> Thus for Chicago, central core imagery is the making of images that depict female sex organs. These motifs were intended to symbolize

pride in female identity.<sup>10</sup> Her objective, at that time, in depicting the vagina was twofold: first, to show that the one thing uniting these forgotten women of history was their shared genitalia and second, to reclaim and celebrate the vagina. The vagina has been used for centuries by men as a way to enforce an “otherness,” degrade women, and had rarely been represented in imagery outside of pornography. She wanted to change its meaning to be emblematic of female heroines throughout history.<sup>11</sup>

The year 1970 was a crucial turning point of the Women’s Liberation Movement. Second wave feminism had been initiated by Simone de Beauvoir in her 1949 publication, *The Second Sex*, but did not take off until the late 1960s. For women artists, the 1950s and 1960s mark a difficult time, as there was no place for women in the especially macho art narrative of Abstract Expressionism. By 1971, Linda Nochlin had published her famous essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” in which she argues that women were undervalued and strategically excluded from the art canon by patriarchal art institutions. In the 1970s, the women’s movement spilled into the art world, igniting a new era of feminist art. Women artists were tired of being isolated from one another and suffering professionally. They had been left out of history long enough, so they began to change the art world by exploring female experience and identity through their art. In the wake of feminism, women also began to redefine their relationships with one another and society. It was an era of “re-branding,” so to speak. Artists began taking traditional women’s crafts like needlepoint, embroidery, and quilting, and incorporated them into their work, as we see Chicago do in *The Dinner Party*.

The concept of *The Dinner Party* was one that evolved over time. It began with the idea of creating one hundred abstract portrait plates. This developed into the thought of creating a series of “Twenty-Five Women Who Were Eaten Alive” in order to symbolize the “women who had been left out of history.”<sup>12</sup> Gradually, the idea evolved into *The Dinner Party*, as it exists today. Chicago describes it as, “a reinterpretation of the Last Supper from the point of view of women, who, throughout history, had prepared the meals and set the table.”<sup>13</sup> Historically, women have been confined solely to the domestic domains of cooking, cleaning, raising children, and pleasing their husbands. The art women could produce had been defined and restricted by their gender. Women were confined to working with “feminine” arts, which in a visual context, include embroidery, china painting, quilting, and pottery.<sup>14</sup> As arts typically produced by women, these media were not considered “high art,” which is why they, along with their female creators, were not included in the canon of art history. The main reason Chicago employed these media in *The Dinner Party* was to use these historically feminine, low-grade media in a way that challenged gender roles and elevated them to the realm of “high art.”

As her ideas grew, Chicago realized she needed to assemble a team to assist her in the creative process. Five years later, with a team of almost five-hundred men and women, most of whom were volunteers, *The Dinner Party* was complete and ready for exhibition. The first opening was on March 15, 1979 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. It remained there for three months, during which it had over ninety thousand visitors. The attendance for this show broke all of the Museum’s previous attendance



records, including those reached during the shows of the two famous male artists, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Even though, Johns' and Rauschenberg's exhibits were regarded as the Museum's "most popular" shows at that time, *The Dinner Party's* attendance records were double the amount of both of theirs.<sup>15</sup> Following the SFMOMA, *The Dinner Party* was scheduled for a nation-wide tour.

Upon opening in San Francisco, *The Dinner Party* sent shockwaves across America and people were at the ready to share their opinions. Most of the reviews were negative and illustrated how disturbed viewers had been. In particular, one of the most infamous negative reviews of *The Dinner Party* was written by Hilton Kramer, a male American art critic for the *New York Times* described as one of "the most influential critics of his era." In October of 1980, he wrote a review of *The Dinner Party* before it opened at its second stop on its nation-wide tour, the Brooklyn Museum. He wrote, "*The Dinner Party* reiterates its theme- the celebration of women, both real and mythological throughout the ages – with an insistence and vulgarity more appropriate, perhaps, to an advertising campaign than to a work of art."<sup>16</sup> He believed that Chicago exploited and vulgarized imagery of female sexuality with "abysmal taste" arguing that even advertising companies working in "these liberated times" and with no boundaries when marketing a product, would not dare to do what Chicago did in their advertisements. He described her attempt at using "sex organs" to represent women's achievements throughout history as "crass, solemn, and single minded." He concluded his review by saying, "it is very bad art, it is failed art, it is art so mired in the pieties of a political cause that it quite

fails to acquire any independent artistic life of its own. To this male observer, it looks like an outrageous libel on the female imagination."<sup>17</sup>

Kramer's critical reaction to *The Dinner Party* is a clear rejection of the piece in its totality. Kitsch art was a term used to criticize art that was perceived as lacking taste and or attempting to copy high art but failing to do so. He used this term on multiple occasions to describe *The Dinner Party*, which bolstered his conclusion that it is, in fact, not only bad art, but failed art. Many art critics, primarily male, did not understand or accept the fundamental premise of the work. Chicago was using female genitalia to metaphorize female heroines throughout history and their gender-based exclusion from history. The art community refused to except this because it was in their eyes, "pornographic." Chicago was pushing the boundaries of accepted artistic iconography and Kramer, along with many other critics of his time, rejected it.

Maureen Mullarkey, an art critic for the American-Catholic magazine, *Commonweal*, also wrote a negative review of *The Dinner Party* in 1981. Her review attacked almost every aspect of *The Dinner Party*. She analogized the imagery of the exhibition to the images found in *Playboy Magazine*. She wrote, "It shares with the air-brushed nudes in center-fold displays a dogged refusal to regard the real thing. Substituting titillation for discernment, *The Dinner Party* distorts the women it pretends to commemorate."<sup>18</sup>

Chicago Tribune critic, Marla Donato, wrote a well-known negative review of *The Dinner Party*, but on decidedly different grounds. She claimed that she understood and agreed

with many of the negative reviews previously put forth, that this was not a work of art, but rather, a platform for Chicago to launch herself to celebrity level status. Donato claims that Chicago used this work as an attempt to play the role of God. She said that “evidence of her massive ego” can be found in her autobiography *Through the Flower*, solidifying the arguments that this entire installation was to boost her ego.<sup>19</sup>

Donato’s review, unlike Kramer’s and Mullarkey’s, focuses less on the actual work of art and more on Judy Chicago as a person and artist. Her criticisms promote the idea that Chicago was misrepresenting herself and her intentions in *The Dinner Party* for the sake of fame and in doing so, was not producing art at all. Donato’s argument that this piece is “self-aggrandizement: a giant extravaganza to feed what has been described as the massive ego of Judy Chicago” takes on a distinctly personal standing that seems to have more to do with politics, and identity politics in particular, than it has to do with art.<sup>20</sup> It also coincides with the long-held notion that women are least supportive of other women who are direct, aggressive, and self-confident.

Between 1979 and 1996, *The Dinner Party* toured seven states within the United States and six international cities until it was retired to storage from wear and tear. Throughout those years, the controversy of *The Dinner Party* seemed to skyrocket. Criticism began to grow and was now coming from several fronts. The years between 1980 and 1989 witnessed critical debates around the poles of multiculturalism and essentialism as limiting factors of *The Dinner Party* within the feminist movement.<sup>21</sup> Essentialism, otherwise referred to by Chicago as

“central core” imagery, was no longer an acceptable signifier of the feminist movement. The feminist movement of the 1980s was “committed to multiculturalism” in order to be fully inclusive. As a result, Chicago was attacked with charges of racism by several feminists of color and others due to her supposed lack of inclusivity in *The Dinner Party*. The most outspoken review that became the touchstone of further critiques was by the author of *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker. She was extremely critical of Chicago for not representing the genitals of Sojourner Truth, the only black woman at the table, in the same way she depicted all of the white women. Rather than genitalia, Truth had faces inscribed on her plate<sup>22</sup> [fig. 6]. Feminist scholar, Hortense Spillers, wrote that “the excision of the genitalia here is a symbolic castration. By effacing the genitals, Chicago not only abrogates the disturbing sexuality of her subject, but also hopes to suggest that her sexual being did not exist to be denied in the first place.”<sup>23</sup>

1990 was the year Chicago and her *Dinner Party* would receive the most publicized condemnation. It began when Chicago entered negotiations with the University of the District of Columbia in Washington, D.C. (UDC) regarding her interest in donating *The Dinner Party* to the predominately African-American school. She had been approached by Pat Mathis, a “former assistant secretary of the treasury under President Carter, who had been a longtime supporter of Chicago, and was a current board member of the University of the District of Columbia (UDC).”<sup>24</sup> Mathis wanted to create a permanent exhibition space exclusively for *The Dinner Party*. At the beginning of the Summer, Chicago had decided to donate her work to UDC, a notoriously underfunded



school, to be a part of the University's newly anticipated multicultural center for the arts. However, newspaper articles containing false information regarding the donation were published in local newspapers throughout the Washington D.C. area, igniting the United States government, who funded the school, to intervene.

On July 26, 1990, the debate was brought to the House of Representatives under the pretense of discussing the UDC budget and was centered around an amendment that would deduct \$1.6 million of the UDC budget request. A Republican representative from California, Robert Dornan, gave a three-minute speech regarding his opinion of *The Dinner Party*, using words like "disgusting" and "garbage." He was shocked that it had received partial funding in 1979 from the National Endowment of the Arts because in his opinion, it was "ceramic three-dimensional pornography" and "you would not let your children near it."<sup>25</sup> Representative Stan Parris introduced a bill that would penalize the University and withhold all federal funding if it accepted Chicago's donation. As a result, Chicago had to pull her offer, leaving *The Dinner Party* homeless again.

This is not entirely surprising in the context of the times. The eighties and early nineties were a period of deep conservatism. Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States in 1980, marking the beginning of an especially conservative era. Within his first year as President, he announced sweeping rollbacks on federal anti-discrimination regulations and endorsed the Human Life Bill that would prohibit all abortions and all contraceptives. He won re-election in 1984, giving him four more years as President. In 1991,

Susan Faludi published her nonfiction book, *Backlash* chronicling the recent losses of the feminist advances of the 1970s.

The tide turned in 2002, when the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, under the guidance of Dr. Elizabeth A. Sackler, chair of the foundation and board member of the Brooklyn Museum, at last purchased *The Dinner Party*. The foundation then gifted it to the Brooklyn Museum for a special exhibition that would take place in 2002. After viewing the exhibition, co-chief art critic of the *New York Times* and art historian, Roberta Smith gave a glowing review of *The Dinner Party*. "As with most works of such prominence, its historical import and social significance may be greater than its aesthetic value, but the three are so intricately and distinctly enmeshed that an altogether different kind of weight results."<sup>26</sup> Smith equated *The Dinner Party* with various aspects within American culture that were equally debated, but still of a distinctly significant importance. They were "Norman Rockwell, Walt Disney, W.P.A. murals and the AIDS quilt."<sup>27</sup> She posed herself the question, "Is *The Dinner Party* good or bad art?" resulting in her response, "it's more than good enough, and getting better all the time."<sup>28</sup>

Art is often determined to be either good or bad based on societal values at a specific moment in time. As a result, opinions of art shift over time. Since society's norms and beliefs are always changing, could this explain Smith's statement that *The Dinner Party* is continuously getting better? She believed that seeing *The Dinner Party* again twenty-three years later was like seeing it for the first time in a new light, and she came to different conclusions accordingly.

Stevenson Swanson, an editor for the Chicago Tribune, also published a review of *The Dinner Party* when it was shown at the Brooklyn Museum in 2002. He wrote, “With the passage of time and the rise of women in politics, business and the arts, it can be difficult to understand why so many people turned out to see a work whose point might seem obvious now—to give women a place at the table by proclaiming their contributions through the ages.”<sup>29</sup> Swanson and Smith shared a similar understanding of how and why the reception of *The Dinner Party* shifted so drastically from 1979. Both feminism and vaginas were no longer as controversial and, in fact, had become popularized in American culture.

*The Dinner Party* is now one of the major cornerstones of the Brooklyn Museum of Art. As of November 7, 2017, 1.5 million people have attended *The Dinner Party*, as it is housed and contextualized in the world’s only center for Feminist Art, the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art in Brooklyn, New York.<sup>30</sup> It is often described as the most pivotal feminist work of art of the century, and the first full articulation of feminist art in history.

For example, the normalization of vaginas in American culture can be tied to Eve Ensler’s *Vagina Monologues*. Published in 1996, *The Vagina Monologues* is a stage show based on numerous interviews Ensler conducted with women around the world regarding their specific relationships with their vaginas. When it was first written and performed, the play sent shockwaves across the world. Ensler covers a wide variety of topics regarding the vagina, demystifying a number of topics, including smell, pubic hair, periods, sex, masturbation, rape, and birth. Like Chicago,

Ensler wanted women to reconnect with their vaginas and mend the fragmented relationship they have as a result of society’s proscriptions.<sup>31</sup> She addressed the societal connotations that have been projected onto vaginas. That the word automatically insinuates pornography, Ensler has attempted to correct by reminding us that the word is a medical term and society has appropriated it into something unspeakably shameful. Like Chicago’s *Dinner Party*, *The Vagina Monologues* is now regarded as an important work of art and socio-politics.

The gradient shift in opinions of *The Dinner Party* can be attributed to several changes within society. In 1979 through 1981, Chicago’s use of vaginal motifs on the plates caused apprehension among countless viewers and institutions, as highlighted in the grand condemnation of the House of Representatives. The Brooklyn Museum’s acquisition of the work allowed for *The Dinner Party* to be revisited in a new social context and receive the praise that is now so freely given.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Deborah Johnson, "The Secularization of the Sacred: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party and Feminist Spirituality (1977-1979)," in *Women Making Art: Women in the Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts since 1960*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Laura Meyer, "Constructing a New Paradigm: European American Women Artists in California, 1950-2000" in *Art, Women, California: Parallels and Intersections, 1950-2000* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 103.

<sup>3</sup> Lauren O'Neill-Butler, "Party Line: 30 Years Later, Judy Chicago's Dinner Party Has Enough to Go Around," *Bitch Magazine*, April 2007, 36.

<sup>4</sup> The Attic (online).

<sup>5</sup> Judy Chicago, "The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists Writings* (California: University of California Press, 2012), 410.

<sup>6</sup> The Dinner Party. The Brooklyn Museum. Nov. 4, 2018. [https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner\\_party/place\\_settings/theodora](https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/theodora).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist*. 1st ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975), quoted in Jane F. Gerhard, *Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism, 1970-2007* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Laura Meyer, "Constructing a New Paradigm: European American Women Artists in California, 1950-2000", 103.

<sup>11</sup> Lisa E. Bloom, *Jewish Identities in American Feminist Art: Ghosts of Ethnicity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 40.

<sup>12</sup> Judith E. Stein, "Collaboration" in *The Power of Feminist Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 1994), 228.

<sup>13</sup> Judith E. Stein, "Collaboration" in *The Power of Feminist Art*, 228.

<sup>14</sup> Phyllis Rosser, "There is No Place Like Home" in *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, Action* (New York: IconEditions, 1994), 64.

<sup>15</sup> Jane F. Gerhard, *Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism, 1970-2007* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 137.

<sup>16</sup> Hilton Kramer, "Art: Judy Chicago's 'Dinner Party' Comes to Brooklyn Museum: Review," *New York Times*, October 1980, C.1.

<sup>17</sup> Hilton Kramer, "Art: Judy Chicago's 'Dinner Party' Comes to Brooklyn Museum: Review," *New York Times*, October 1980, C.1.

<sup>18</sup> Maureen Mullarkey, "The Dinner Party is a Church Supper," *Commonweal*, 1981, <http://www.maureenmullarkey.com/essays/dinnerparty.html> (accessed Nov. 4, 2018).

<sup>19</sup> Marla Donato, "Judy Chicago's 'Dinner Party' stirs controversy in art world." *UPI NewsTrack*, Nov. 16, 1981, *NewsBank*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism, 1970-2007*, 131.

<sup>22</sup> Lorraine O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity" in *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, Action* (New York: IconEditions, 1994), 154.

<sup>23</sup> Lorraine O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity" in *New Feminist Criticism: Art, Identity, Action* (New York: IconEditions, 1994), 154.

<sup>24</sup> *Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism, 1970-2007*, 199.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Dornan. "Congressman Discussing the Dinner Party." C-SPAN video, 4:33. June 14, 2016. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4603955/congressman-discussing-dinner-party>.

<sup>26</sup> Roberta Smith, "For a Paeon to Heroic Women, a Place at History's Table," *New York Times*, 2002, E.34.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Stevenson Swanson, "Feminist 'Dinner Party' Finds Permanent Setting," *Chicago Tribune*, September 22, 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Sarah Cascone, "How and Why 'The Dinner Party' Became the Most Famous Feminist Artwork of All Time," *Artnet News*, November 7, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Eve Ensler, *The Vagina Monologues*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2018.

## Images



Figure 1: Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1970



Figure 2: *The Dinner Party* Entry Banners



Figure 3: Partial View of "The Heritage Floor"



Figure 4: Detailed Image of Theodora's Place Setting