

# Female Forms & Facets

Artwork by Women from  
1975 to the Present

*featuring*

JUDY **CHICAGO**

*with*

CAROLEE **SCHNEEMANN**

CINDY **SHERMAN**

PENNY **ARCADE**

JANINE **ANTONI**

LISA **YUSKAVAGE**

SARA **RISK**

JUDY **FOX**

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Central Connecticut State University ART GALLERY



2008



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Maloney Hall 1615 Stanley Street New Britain CT 06050





left to right, top to bottom

Judy Chicago *The Birth Project: Earth Birth*, 1985. serigraph, 18 x 35"

Candice Raquel Lee *Iris, Goddess of the Rainbow*, 2006. bronze, 6.5h x 10w x 16"l

Judy Fox *Venus*, 2004. filled resin, casein, 87 x 21 x 14"

Janine Antoni *Umbilical*, 2000. sterling silver cast, 3 x 8 x 3"

Cindy Sherman *Doctor and Nurse (Diptych)*. photograph.

Sara Risk *Self Portrait*, 1995. charcoal and pastel on paper; 21 x 17

Penny Arcade *Bad Reputation*. Photo: Steve Zehentner. (photo still from her performance)

Carolee Schneemann *Interior Scroll*, 1975, Vision Archive 2005. Giclee archival print, 90 x 17.5" Original photos: Anthony McCall.





MARCH 13 – APRIL 18\*

**OPENING RECEPTION**

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

4:30 – 8 pm

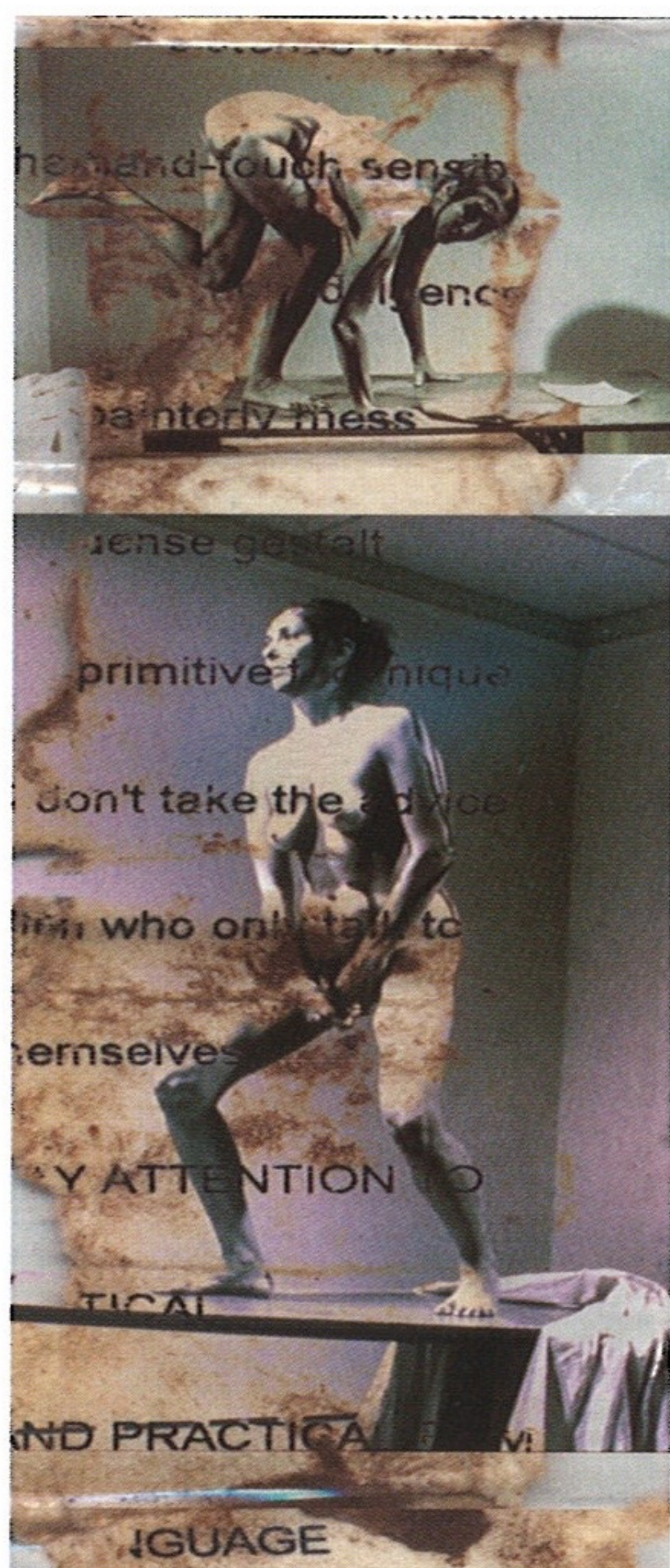
**PERFORMANCE by  
PENNY ARCADE**

5 pm

**ARTIST LECTURES**

3 pm

design • r. klonis dardzienski • ccsu media center



*Free wine, hors d'oeuvres, and  
other refreshments*

Regular Exhibition Hours:

Monday – Friday 1 – 4 pm

*(other times by appointment)*

\*Closed for Spring Break, March 17 – 22

Free Admission to the General Public  
Free Parking Available

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[www.art.ccsu.edu/Gallery.html](http://www.art.ccsu.edu/Gallery.html)



# Female Forms & Facets

A Celebration  
of Women  
in Art

In the allegedly enlightened aftermath of the Women's Movement of the 1970s, the following question haunts us. Do women retain their traditional role as sex symbol in today's visual culture?

*Female Forms and Facets: Artwork by Women from 1975 to the Present* explores the choices women artists are making about their own representation. At the conception of this exhibition was a desire to revisit Judy Chicago's fascinating core imagery, as well as the work of other Feminist artists from the 1970s. In stark contrast to more widespread images of women in our visual culture, this early Feminist Art is still fresh and highly relevant to many visitors.

Feminist Art here refers to that art which emerged in the context of a Woman's Movement and a Feminist Art Movement, although we don't dismiss the feminist themes and attitudes of Artemesia Gentileschi, Rosa Bonheur, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Tamara de Lempicka, just to name a few. In any case, the definition of "Feminist Art" is not the subject of debate in this exhibition. Suffice it to say that we embrace the broadest definition of Feminist Art but have limited our appellation of "feminist" to those artists who have identified themselves as such.

Feminist Art has always been concerned with the presence of women in the annals of art history, the representation of women in artwork, the visibility of women artists in the world's great museums, and the participation of women in the contemporary art scene. *Female Forms and Facets* is primarily concerned with giving women the opportunity to talk about themselves for a change.

While it is clear that WOMEN are the protagonists of this exhibition, *Female Forms and Facets* nonetheless remains an exhibition of questions. How do women choose to portray themselves?

What are women artists saying about women? What women's issues do women choose to address? Is there a feminine sensitivity that distinguishes work by women from work by men? Is "Feminist Art" today different from the Feminist Art of the '60s and '70s? Which contemporary artists are making feminist statements today?

The diverse range of artists in this exhibition, with artwork from the 1970s to the present, challenges the stereotypical ways in which women are seen. And after all, that's what this exhibition is about: not just looking at women but truly *seeing* women – women in all their forms and facets, women in all their brilliance and beauty, women in all their strength and intelligence, women as the givers and promoters of life, women as fertile earth deities and as erotic goddesses.

Will viewers see all these facets of women? Or will their eyes merely narrow in on lips, shoulders, hips, navel, breast, buttocks, vulva, nipples, clitoris? Do these images provoke shame, horror, delight, arousal? Is woman more than the sum total of her forms?

**Judy CHICAGO** is here represented by a quarter century of work that traces her development of a female-centered erotica. She offered a startlingly new vision of female representation in her "Dinner Party" (1979). From its dialogue about the women who made an impact on our human history to the celebration of female forms and female imagery on dinner plates that literally offer the substance of life, it is the quintessence of everything feminist and everything feminine in art and in history. From the collaboration that went into this work to its mainstream exclusion, this work represents the triumphs and struggles of women artists. Judy's works on paper hold similar messages about female empowerment and, according to her statement for this exhibition, reveal "my dedication to both process and meaning in art."



**Carolee SCHNEEMANN**'s two works, "Interior Scroll" (1975) and "Vulva's Morphia" (1995), are the perfect offering for our exhibition from such a prolific artist. Spanning twenty years in conception, both works demonstrate Schneemann's permutations of the female body with a refreshingly earthy interest in that body, rather than the antiseptic sex appeal her male predecessors had offered in pure white marble and nacreous Academic canvases. Challenging taboos and exploring a dreamlike world, Schneemann exposes a more hidden side of women.

**Cindy SHERMAN**, probably best known for her series of "Film Stills" in the late 70s but also undertaking a broad range of themes in photography, is here represented by works that, with her typical subtlety, raise questions about gender stereotypes.

**Penny ARCADE** (aka Susana Ventura) occupies a rare position in the American avant-garde and counter culture. A teenage superstar in Andy Warhol's Factory, she began creating her own shows in the mid-80s. Among Penny's many powerful and daring performances, the mainstream hit *Bitch! Dyke! Fag hag! Whore!* created the performance burlesque movement as it toured internationally in the 1990s. This performance and others, which draw on her immigrant, Italian working class background growing up in New Britain, will be screened for the duration of our exhibition. In addition, Penny is creating a short live performance for the exhibition's opening.

**Janine ANTONI** came to prominence around 1992, when she used her teeth as a carving tool in an installation entitled *Gnaw* and her hair as a mop in her *Loving Care* performance. Her complex, thought-provoking artwork combines process, concept, installation, performance, and more traditional art making process. Her contributions to this exhibition explore the relationships between women, specifically the relationship between mother and daughter.

**Lisa YUSKAVAGE** also came to prominence in the 1990s and not without controversy. The

blonde, buxom women of her canvases, evoking the exaggeratedly curved fantasy forms in men's magazines, offer the perfect counterpoint to the early Feminists' depictions of female forms. Lisa's warm colored paintings are at once sensual and satirical.

**Sara RISK**, who died in 1998 at the age of 33, created artwork that traces her personal struggle with body image and eating disorders. Soft-spoken, gentle, and petite, Sara realized works of breathtaking delicacy and poignancy that both move and impress the viewer.

**Judy FOX** is represented by two works. "Venus" (2004) is a celebration of femininity that brilliantly captures the essence of this exhibition. Her reference to the Earth Goddess, retaining the voluptuous amplitude and awkward pose of the Venus of Willendorf but now in warm flesh tones, has both an irony and a beauty that reestablish the place of the Goddess in 21st century iconography. In "Vanity" (2007), part of a series entitled "Snow White and the Seven Sins" (currently on display elsewhere), we see a metamorphosis of Judy Chicago's core imagery into a new surreal vision that both challenges and delights.

**Candice Raquel LEE** is an emerging young sculptor who reinterprets mythological subjects with a 21st century female eye. "My treatment of myth invites viewers to reassess initial impressions grounded in a conventional 'male' eye that perceives female bodies as passively and necessarily sexual." Her subjects, in bronze, include *Pythia*, *Lilith*, *Rosy-Fingered Dawn*, and *Iris, Goddess of the Rainbow*.

We hope *Female Forms and Facets* elicits questions about female representation and, hopefully, offers some new perspectives as well. Perhaps most importantly, we hope the viewer joins in our celebration of women, in all her forms and facets!

**Robert Diamond**  
*Curator*



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