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BALTIC

Judy Chicago



Judy Chicago, Purple Poem for Miami, 2019. Fireworks performance Commissioned by the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Courtesy of the artist; Salon 94, New York; and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco

In her 80th birthday year, **BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art**, Gateshead is pleased to announce it will present the first major UK survey of works by pioneering feminist artist, author and educator **Judy Chicago**.

Opening **Saturday 16 November**, the exhibition will span Chicago's fifty-year career, from her early smoke performance 'actions' in the desert in the 1970s, to her most recent series, *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction* (2013–18), which has not been previously shown outside of the US.

Judy Chicago explores Chicago's work from the perspective of the human condition, connecting birth and death with the emotional journeys experienced by the artist whilst highlighting Chicago's ongoing concern with the devastating effects of climate change on the natural world.

The Birth Project (1980–85) is presented in dialogue with *The End*, linking the two extremes of being – birth and death. Alongside this, the detailed series of drawings and

watercolours constituting *Autobiography of a Year* (1993–94) and *My Accident* (1986) offer a glimpse into the emotions the artist experienced over the course of one year and the impact of an accident in her life.

The exhibition will include a selection of photographs from Chicago's iconic early *Atmospheres* series (1969–1974), which proposes a feminist approach to land art, intended to transform and soften the landscape – inserting a feminine impulse into the environment. A triptych of photographs from Chicago's most recent work, *A Purple Poem for Miami* (2019) will be seen for the first time in a commission for BALTIC's entrance area light box.

Over the past five decades, Chicago has approached art as a means to effect intellectual and social change for women. Her work has employed media from traditional crafts such as needlework and china painting to deploying pyrotechnics and explosives in her actions, and creating paintings and prints that document personal and environmental narratives over long periods of time. At the heart of her most recent work is a consuming awareness of the environment and the impact of climate change on the natural world. This survey at BALTIC – the first exhibition curated by Irene Artistizábal since joining the gallery as Head of Curatorial and Public Practice – will mark the artist's first UK institutional survey, and a timely presentation of some of the most significant works in Chicago's career.

Irene Aristizábal said: “We're so pleased to present the UK's first institutional survey of Judy Chicago – the exhibition coincides with a renewed interest in Chicago's work following her recent major exhibitions at the ICA Miami; CAPC, Bordeaux and the Brooklyn Museum. Chicago's work hasn't had the deserved visibility in the UK and this exhibition aims to redress this whilst engaging with subjects close to Chicago's heart and to the public consciousness such as the extinction emergency and what feminism means today.”

Notes to Editors

Judy Chicago: In Conversation

A public talk with Judy Chicago in conversation will take place at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead on Saturday 16 November at 18.30. Tickets go on sale at www.baltic.art/tickets on Monday 16 September 2019.

#judychicagoatbaltic

Press Contacts

Sutton
Fiona Russell, fiona@suttonpr.com

About Judy Chicago

Judy Chicago is an artist, author, feminist, and educator whose career spans five decades. Her influence both within and beyond the art community is attested to by her inclusion in hundreds of publications throughout the world. In the early seventies after a

decade of professional art practice, Chicago pioneered Feminist art and art education through a unique program for women at California State University, Fresno, a pedagogical approach that she has continued to develop over the years. In 1974, Chicago turned her attention to the subject of women's history to create her most well-known work, *The Dinner Party*, which was executed between 1974 and 1979 with the participation of hundreds of volunteers.

From 1980 to 1985, Chicago worked on the *Birth Project*. Having observed an absence of iconography about the subject of birth in Western art, Chicago designed a series of birth and creation images for needlework which were executed under her supervision by 150 skilled needle workers around the country. While completing the Birth Project, Chicago also focused on individual studio work to create *PowerPlay*. In this unusual series of drawings, paintings, weavings, cast paper, and bronze reliefs, Chicago brought a critical feminist gaze to the gender construct of masculinity, exploring how prevailing definitions of power have affected the world in general — and men in particular. *The Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light* premiered in October 1993 at the Spertus Museum in Chicago, then travelled to museums around the United States until 2002. *Resolutions: A Stitch in Time* was Judy Chicago's last collaborative project. Begun in 1994 with skilled needle workers with whom she had worked for many years, *Resolutions* combines painting and needlework in a series of exquisitely crafted and inspiring images which — with an eye to the future — playfully reinterpret traditional adages and proverbs. In 2011 and 2012, Chicago's important contributions to southern California art were highlighted in *Pacific Standard Time*, a Getty funded initiative documenting and celebrating the region's rich history. She was featured in eight museum exhibitions and kicked off the Getty PST Performance Festival with the restaging of two events, *Sublime Environment* (a dry ice installation) and *A Butterfly for Pomona*, the first fireworks piece Chicago had done since 1974.

In 2017, Chicago completed her fourth dry-ice installation titled, *Be No More*, for SFMOMA's one year anniversary "Birthday Bash" and was commissioned by Tate Liverpool to create the spectacular, gigantic mural titled "Four Lads from Liverpool" to commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Beatles' album, Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band. Later in 2017, Chicago had solo exhibitions at Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco, The Brooklyn Museum in New York, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) in Washington DC. The Brooklyn Museum and NMWA shows examined for the first time her creative process in *The Dinner Party* and explored the feminist studio environment she established.

Judy Chicago's most recent body of work, *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction*, will debut at the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) in Washington DC in the fall of 2019 to coincide with the publication of a major monograph by Scala in conjunction with NMWA, Salon 94, and Jessica Silverman Gallery.

For over five decades, Chicago has remained steadfast in her commitment to the power of art as a vehicle for intellectual transformation and social change and to women's right to engage in the highest level of art production. As a result, she has become a symbol for people everywhere, known and respected as an artist, writer, teacher, feminist and humanist whose work and life are models for an enlarged definition of art, an expanded role for the artist, and women's right to freedom of expression. In 2018 Chicago was named both one of Time Magazine's "100 Most Influential People" and a 2018 "Most Influential Artist" by Artsy Magazine. In 2019, she received the Visionary Woman award from the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

Her work is in the collections of the British Museum, Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), National Gallery (Washington DC), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Hammer Museum, Getty Trust and Getty Research Institute, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Tate Modern, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Art Institute of Chicago, and over 25 university art museums such as Brandeis, Cornell, Harvard, Illinois, Michigan, UCLA, Canterbury (New Zealand) and Cambridge (UK).

About Through the Flower

Through the Flower was founded by Judy Chicago in 1978 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organisation. Its original mission involved providing a fiscal structure for donations to help complete *The Dinner Party*. But this quickly changed, and soon *Through the Flower* began to organise the worldwide exhibition tour that brought *The Dinner Party* to sixteen venues in six countries and three continents, where over one million people viewed Judy Chicago's monumental tribute to women in Western civilization.

Through the Flower has supported numerous projects since its inception including *Birth Project* and *Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light*. In 1990, *Through the Flower* relocated from California to New Mexico and began a series of educational seminars, workshops and lectures around the state. It also launched a number of exhibitions of Feminist artists, instituted the Founding Feminist Award, and the New Mexico Women's Cultural Corridor project, which tied together various sites in the state devoted to women.

More detailed information about these and other Through the Flower projects can be found [here](#).

About BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England and has welcomed over eight million visitors since opening to the public in July 2002. BALTIC presents a distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation and commissioning of contemporary visual art.

Housed in a landmark ex-industrial building, BALTIC consists of 2,600 square metres of art space, making it the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution. BALTIC has gained an international reputation for its commissioning of cutting-edge temporary exhibitions. It has presented the work of over 460 artists of 60 nationalities in 220 exhibitions to date.