



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Archives of American Art*

## **"Feminist Education at the Feminist Studio Workshop, The Woman's Building in Los Angeles" by Ruth Iskin, 1976**

Extracted on Aug-08-2022 09:18:27

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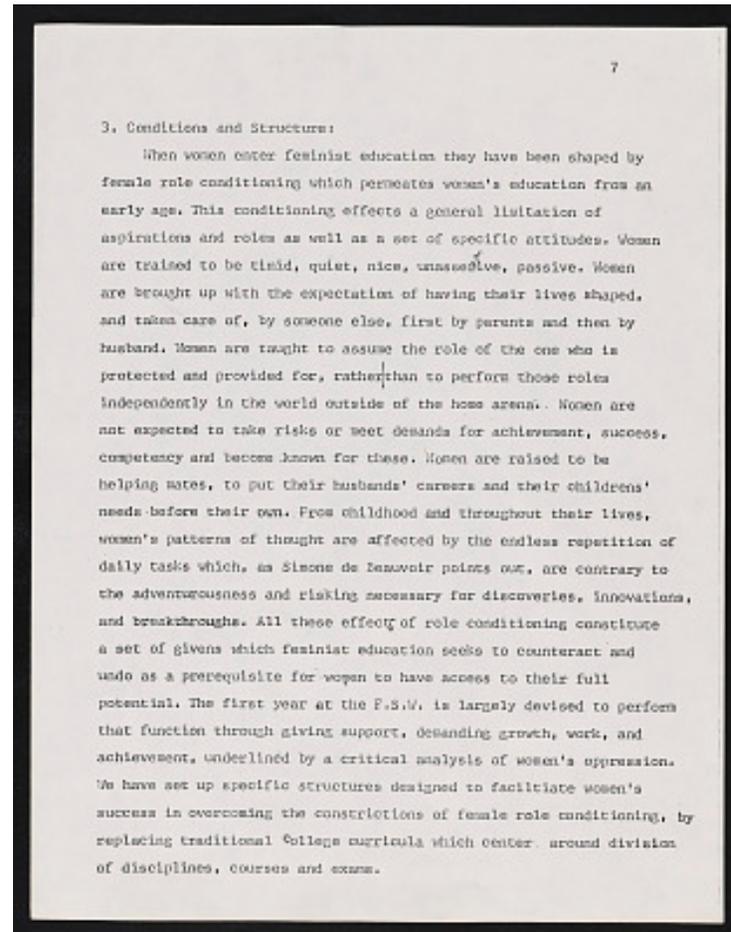
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### 3. Conditions and Structure:

When women enter feminist education they have been shaped by female role conditioning which permeates women's education from an early age. This conditioning effects a general limitation of aspirations and roles as well as a set of specific attitudes. Women are trained to be timid, quiet, nice, unassertive, passive. Women are brought up with the expectation of having their lives shaped, and taken care of, by someone else, first by parents and then by husband. Women are taught to assume the role of the one who is protected and provided for, rather than to perform those roles independently in the world outside of the home arena. Women are not expected to take risks or meet demands for achievement, success, competency and become known for these. Women are raised to be helping mates, to put their husbands' careers and their childrens' needs before their own. From childhood and throughout their lives, women's patterns of thought are affected by the endless repetition of daily tasks which, as Simone de Beauvoir points out, are contrary to the adventurousness and risking necessary for discoveries, innovations, and breakthroughs. All these effects of role conditioning constitute a set of givens which feminist education seeks to counteract and undo as a prerequisite for women to have access to their full potential. The first year at the F.S.W. is largely devised to perform that function through giving support, demanding growth, work, and achievement, underlined by a critical analysis of women's oppression. We have set up specific structures designed to facilitate women's success in overcoming the constrictions of female role conditioning, by replacing traditional college curricula which center around division of disciplines, courses, and exams.



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