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*Archives of American Art*

## **The Woman's Building Records, Feminist Studio Workshop, Publicity, 1975-1981**

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## FEMINIST EDUCATION:

### WHO SAID A WOMAN CAN'T

It began in 1973, when eighteen women from around the country traveled to Los Angeles to participate in an exciting and innovative educational program founded by Judy Chicago, Sheila deBretteville and Arlene Raven; the Feminist Studio Workshop. The Woman's Building, which housed the school, galleries, Woman's Graphic Center, a bookstore and a coffee shop, opened in the old Chinaro Building on Grandview St. The Woman's Building and Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW) were entirely created and run by women who participated in them. There were no models for feminist educational institutions; teaching methods, programs and administration evolved throughout the first year. The feminist art movement flourished and by 1974 the Woman's Building had a national reputation as a viable institution for women in the arts.

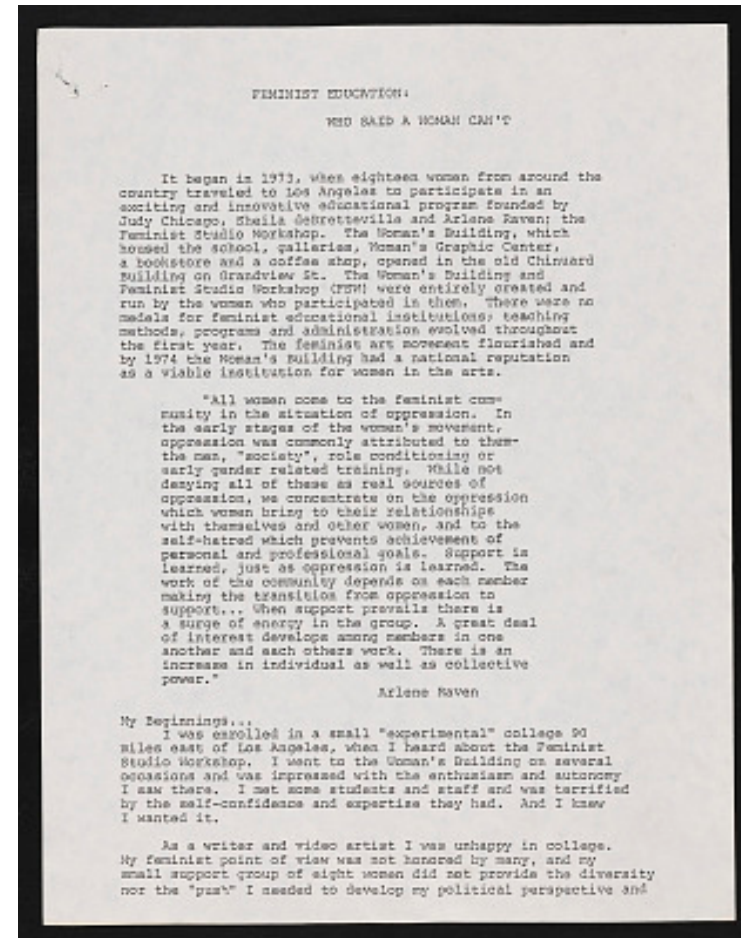
"All women come to the feminist community in the situation of oppression. In the early stages of the women's movement, oppression was commonly attributed to them- the men, "society," role conditioning or early gender related training. While not denying all of these as real sources of oppression, we concentrate on the oppression which women bring to their relationships with themselves and other women, and to the self-hatred which prevents achievement of personal and professional goals. Support is learned, just as oppression is learned. The work of the community depends on each member making the transition from oppression to support... When support prevails there is a surge of energy in the group. A great deal of interest develops among members in one another and each others work. There is an increase in individual as well as collective power."

Arlene Raven

#### My Beginnings...

I was enrolled in a small "experimental" college 90 miles east of Los Angeles, when I heard about the Feminist Studio Workshop. I went to the Woman's Building on several occasions and was impressed with the enthusiasm and autonomy I saw there. I met some students and staff and was terrified by the self-confidence and expertise they had. And I knew I wanted it.

As a writer and video artist I was unhappy in college. My feminist point of view was not honored by many, and my small support group of eight women did not provide the diversity nor the "push" I needed to develop my political perspective and



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