

**News Release  
Public Information  
Department**

August 2002

**Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* to Be On View at Brooklyn Museum of Art September 20, 2002–February 9, 2003**

**Press Preview Wednesday, September 18, 10 a.m.–noon**

The iconic feminist installation Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, a gift to the Brooklyn Museum of Art from The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, will be on view from September 20, 2002 through February 9, 2003 in the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Gallery on the fifth floor. It will be permanently installed beginning in 2004 on the fourth floor of the Museum.

Museum Director Arnold L. Lehman said, "We are extremely grateful to The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation and to its president and BMA Trustee Dr. Elizabeth A. Sackler for making this truly remarkable gift to the collection and for providing *The Dinner Party* with a permanent home where it will be seen by generations to come. An extraordinary work of art, it is as relevant today as it was when it was first created in the 1970s."

"It has been an honor and a joy to guide *The Dinner Party* back to the Brooklyn Museum, where it was seen more than two decades ago. It is my hope that the permanent housing of *The Dinner Party* provides ongoing visual joy and intellectual opportunities for all who come to visit. It is a monumental work that I feel certain shall anchor its place in history, awaken our sensibilities to the past, and inspire possibilities for the future," stated Dr. Sackler.

*Judy Chicago: The Dinner Party* is made possible through the generous support of The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation. Related educational activities are supported by The Museum Educational Trust. *The Village Voice* is media sponsor of this presentation of *The Dinner Party*.

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In Washington D.C. this season a related exhibition, **Judy Chicago**, comprising more than ninety works of art spanning forty years, will be on view at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, October 11, 2002 through January 5, 2003. An accompanying book will be published by Watson Guptill.

Since it was first presented at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1979, *The Dinner Party* has been seen by more than a million people in six countries on three continents. The Brooklyn Museum, where it was on view October 18, 1980 through January 18, 1981, was the fourth venue.

*The Dinner Party* is a symbolic history of women in Western civilization. Triangular in configuration, it employs numerous mediums including ceramics, china painting, and needlework to honor women's achievements. An immense open table, covered with fine white cloths, is set with thirty-nine place settings, thirteen on each 48-foot side, each commemorating a goddess, historic personage, or other important women. Ishtar, the female pharaoh Hatshepsut, Theodora of Byzantium, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Sojourner Truth, Sacajawea, Susan B. Anthony, Emily Dickinson, and Virginia Woolf are among these thirty-nine women selected by Judy Chicago to have their own place settings at the table. The monumental installation rests on a porcelain surface, the Heritage Floor, inscribed with the names of 999 additional women.

*The Dinner Party* took more than five years to complete. For two years (1974–76) Judy Chicago worked alone in her Santa Monica, California, studio, conceiving and executing her extraordinary vision. The undertaking proved so ambitious that eventually 400 women and a few men from all over the country became involved, volunteering their time, from one month to several years.

"I am honored that *The Dinner Party* has found a permanent home at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Elizabeth Sackler's act of generosity and vision demonstrates that one individual can still make a difference, in this case, interceding in history to help ensure an ineradicable place for women," stated Judy Chicago.

Along the first wing of the triangular table are place settings representing women from prehistory through classical Rome, beginning with Primordial Goddess and ending with Hypatia, symbolic of the decline of the classical world. The second

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wing begins with Marcella, denoting the rise of Christianity and concluding with Anna van Schurman in the seventeenth century. Recognizing the American Revolution, the third wing begins with Anne Hutchinson and then moves through the twentieth century to the final place settings paying tribute to Virginia Woolf and Georgia O'Keeffe.

Each place setting includes a 14-inch, hand painted china plate, sculpted in spiraling forms suggestive of flowers, female genitalia, or butterflies. The artist once said of these forms, "My images are about struggling out of containment, reaching out and opening up as opposed to masking or veiling."

Also included with each place setting are ceramic flatware, a ceramic chalice, and a napkin with an embroidered gold edge. The place settings rest upon elaborately embroidered runners, executed in a wide variety of needlework styles and techniques taken from the periods in which the thirty-nine women had lived.

The Heritage Floor is composed of 2,304 white luster-glazed triangular-shaped tiles inscribed in gold with the names of 999 women selected by a research team of twenty people over the course of more than two years.

Judy Chicago, whose name has become synonymous with feminist art, grew up in the city of Chicago and later took the name of her hometown as her surname. She was educated in California and her early exhibited works included minimalist, abstract, and early feminist art. In 1970 she started the first Feminist Art Program at California State University, Fresno. *The Dinner Party* utilizes a wide range of crafts generally regarded as women's work in order to, in Judy Chicago's words, "tell women's history through women's crafts."

*The Dinner Party* was purchased by The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation from the Judy Chicago Charitable Remainder Trust, which will help support Through the Flower, a non-profit arts organization whose mission involves expanding the vision embodied in *The Dinner Party*. The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation seeks to raise awareness of the contributions of women in all areas of art and culture with a specific focus on feminist art.

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Elizabeth A. Sackler, a public historian, was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Brooklyn Museum of Art in the fall of 2000. Dr. Sackler is President and CEO of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation and President of The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation. The founder and President of the American Indian Ritual Object Repatriation Foundation, she is also a member of the National Advisory Board of The National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C.

A series of educational programs and lectures related to *The Dinner Party* and feminist art, sponsored by The Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, will be presented at the Brooklyn Museum of Art during the fall and winter.

End

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[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Admission:**

Contribution \$6; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$3. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

#### **Museum Hours:**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.;  
First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.;  
Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

#### **Directions:**

**Subway:** Seventh Avenue express (1 or 2) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 1 or 2. **Bus:** B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.