

The Materiality of Judy Chicago

A solo show by Judy Chicago

Curated by Allison Raddock

Galleria Alberta Pane

8 May - 22 November 2026



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In conjunction with the upcoming 2026 Venice Biennale, Alberta Pane is delighted to host a solo exhibition by world-renowned American artist **Judy Chicago** (b. 1939) at its Venice gallery: ***The Materiality of Judy Chicago***, curated by **Allison Raddock**, which will run from **8 May to 22 November 2026** (opening by invitation only on 7 May). This focused exhibition aims to offer a comprehensive overview of Judy Chicago's work, through the lens of the materials and innovative techniques that have defined the artist's six-decade career while introducing viewers to a new series of work which will make its debut at Galleria Alberta Pane.

A pioneering figure in feminist art, Judy Chicago was for many years primarily associated with her iconic project *The Dinner Party* (1974-79)—viewed by millions of people since its creation and acquired in 2001 and permanently housed in 2007 by the Brooklyn Museum as the centerpiece of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art—to the point where the artist used to wonder, *"Would the body of my art ever emerge from the shadow of The Dinner Party?"*

From spray-painted car hoods and porcelain plates to needlework and glass, Judy Chicago has continuously challenged artistic hierarchies, embracing techniques historically dismissed as "craft" to expand feminist and conceptual art practices. For this exhibition, curator Allison Raddock has conceived a journey that, moving through some of the most important series of the artist's career, extends to her most recent works. It includes collaborations with Studio Berengo in Venice, JRP|Editions in Zurich, and the Corning Museum of Glass in New York for the creation of a new series entitled *Judy Chicago: Lilies/Goddesses*. Eight new sculptures in glass and bronze will make their world debut in Venice.

In the last decades, the perception of the artist's work has shifted, and Chicago's layered and rich production has been fully recognized, with major institutional exhibitions, for the contribution it has made to the history

of art. In this sense, her first retrospective, held in 2021 at the de Young Museum in San Francisco and curated by Claudia Schmuckli, was pivotal in revealing the breadth of themes and techniques that have shaped her lifelong artistic journey.

Chicago's new series grew from her 2024 *An Homage to Arles*, commissioned by LUMA Arles as part of their re-conception of the New Museum's 2023 retrospective, *Herstory*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni. Together with the 2024 groundbreaking exhibition *Revelations*, at Serpentine North in London, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and inspired by Chicago's illuminated manuscript of the same name (originally conceived in the early 1970s), the understanding of Chicago's oeuvre was transformed while also demonstrating the consistency of her ideas across her career, despite differences in media, scale and imagery.

An Homage to Arles culminated in a burst of fireworks techniques that emanated from a group of metal lilies floating in a pond, an obvious reference to both Monet's lilies and the work of the Impressionists, which Chicago first saw (and was deeply influenced by) when she was a child studying at the Art Institute of Chicago. The sculptures in the Lilies/Goddesses series vary in their scale to accommodate a variety of sites—from tabletops or sculpture bases in interior spaces, to outdoor lawns, ponds and potentially, even produced in monumental size.

With the inclusion of *Judy Chicago: Lilies/Goddesses* in the Venice exhibition, viewers can appreciate aspects of Chicago's vision as an artist while also raising urgent contemporary issues. One facet of the artist's work in dry ice, colored smoke, and fireworks that has rarely been discussed is its apocalyptic dimension, which also links it to *Revelations*. At first, the intention of these pieces (which were much smaller in scale than the more monumental, recent works—though not in vision) was to “soften” or “feminize” the often harsh, manufactured environment. Gradually, as the pieces increased in size, her concerns included a desire to emphasize the beauty and vulnerability of our planet and the ever-growing tragic consequences of global warming and climate change which, at this point, threaten both our planet and everyone who shares it—human and non-human alike. Chicago's goal has been to challenge the patriarchal paradigm that has brought us to this point and to emphasize the importance of incorporating female voices into a truly diverse, safe, and egalitarian future.

Also included in the exhibition are drawings and minimalist sculptures from the late 1960s, plates and drawings from *The Dinner Party* (1970s), embroidered textiles and drawings from the 1980s *Birth Project*, acrylic and oil paintings from *PowerPlay* (1980s), as well as more recent photographs from the *Garden Smoke* series.

Artist, writer, educator, and feminist Judy Chicago has spent decades championing a broader definition of art, an expanded role for the artist, and women's fundamental right to freedom of expression, becoming an internationally recognized symbol of these commitments. *The Materiality of Judy Chicago* offers a compelling visual narrative that celebrates her artistic journey and underscores her belief in art as a powerful vehicle for intellectual transformation and social change. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue conceived by the graphic design studio Multiplo and edited by Alberta Pane, featuring an exclusive interview between Chicago and Massimiliano Gioni.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Judy Chicago's (b. 1939, Chicago IL, USA) career spans almost six decades, during which time she has produced a prodigious body of art that has been exhibited all over the world. In the 1970s, she pioneered feminist art and feminist art education in a series of programs in southern California. She is best known for her monumental work, *The Dinner Party*, a symbolic history of women in Western Civilization executed between 1974-79. Subsequent bodies of work have addressed issues of birth and creation in the *Birth Project*; the construct of masculinity in *PowerPlay*; the horrors of genocide in the *Holocaust Project*, on which she collaborated with her husband, photographer Donald Woodman; and most recently, mortality and humankind's relationship to and destruction of the Earth in *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction*, which debuted at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC in 2019.

Over the course of her career, Chicago has remained steadfast in her commitment to the power of art 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 for her work and life as models for a broader definition of art, an expanded role for the artist, and women's right to freedom of expression. In 2018 she was named one of *Time* Magazine's "100 Most Influential People" and *Artsy* magazine's "Most Influential Artists". In 2019, she received the Visionary Woman award from the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and was an *honoree* at the annual Hammer Museum gala in Los Angeles. In 2020 she was feted by the Museum of Arts and Design at their annual MAD Ball. Since then, she has been the recipient of multiple honors and awards and her work continues to be shown internationally. Her works are in collections at major museums around the world. For more information visit: www.judychicago.com.

ABOUT THE CURATOR:

Allison Raddock is a curator, art advisor, and market specialist with over 25 years of experience navigating the international art world. Grounded in the New York gallery scene and globally engaged, she has built a career at the intersection of curatorial rigor and advising, with a particular focus on modern and contemporary art.

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Private Opening (by invitation only): Thursday, 7 May, 3PM - 8PM

Press Conference: Monday, 4 May, 10AM - 1PM

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