



California State University, Sacramento
University Galleries • College of Arts & Letters
6000 J Street • Library Gallery • MS 6131 • Sacramento, CA 95819
T (916) 278-4189 • www.csus.edu/university-galleries

Contact: **Kelly Lindner** / kelly.lindner@csus.edu

Tel: 916 278 6898

For Immediate Release

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The University Galleries

presents the exhibition

She Laughs Back: Feminist Wit in 1970's Bay Area Art

University Library Gallery

February 6 – April 13, 2024

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 8, 2024, 5:00 – 8:00 pm

Artist Panel: *Why Is That So Funny?* Thursday, February 8, 2024, 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Hinde Auditorium, The University Union

The University Galleries at Sacramento State presents ***She Laughs Back: Feminist Wit in 1970s Bay Area Art***, on view at the University Library Gallery from February 6, 2024, to April 13, 2024, with an opening reception and artist panel on Thursday, February 8 including Lorraine García-Nakata, Kathy Goodell, Joan Moment, M. Louise Stanley, and curator Elaine O'Brien, Ph.D.

She Laughs Back is serious fun. Ninety-five artworks – figurative paintings, drawings, sculptures, and mixed-media works – made in the 1970s by nineteen regional women artists fill the gallery, provoking **laughter, smiles, grins, and raised brows**. Engaging and accessible to visitors, the art's subversive intention arrives soon after the smiles.

She Laughs Back is the first exhibition to shed light on this significant production by Bay Area women artists. Overlooked by art history yet crucial to global contemporary art's backstory and relevant to the present, ***She Laughs Back*** gives us an expanded and more inclusive 1970s art history clearly tied to Northern California's signature humor-based visual culture and radical liberation politics.



The power of humor was a revelation. I discovered I could use it as a bridge to more disquieting issues.

M. Louise Stanley

The art in ***She Laughs Back*** was not made just for fun. In the crucial period of the 1970s, when most feminist artmaking occurred worldwide, these then-young artists deployed humor to advance women's liberation. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the Greater Bay Area was at the center and origin of global human rights movements that

contested entrenched social hierarchies and redefined the political debate to include identity politics. Visual humor – satire, burlesque, puns, parody, wit – became a means of personal and political empowerment. Women's jokes about gender roles left the private world of girl talk and strode onto the public stage. The artists in ***She Laughs Back*** made the personal political and produced irreverent, "bad girl" art that undercut patriarchal conventions.

Participating Artists: Suzanne Adan, Dori Atlantis, Olive Ayhens, Viola Frey, Lorraine García-Nakata, Kathy Goodell, Lori Greenleaf, Vicki Hall, Elaine Gay Jarvis, Roz Joseph, Jean LaMarr, Judith Linhares, Yolanda López, Joan Moment, Donna Mossholder, Gladys Nilsson, Trina Robbins, M. Louise Stanley, and Nancy Youdelman

Curator: Elaine O'Brien, Ph.D., Professor of Modern & Contemporary Art, Department of Art, Sacramento State. O'Brien has published and organized academic panels, exhibitions, and symposia and lectured nationally and internationally on global feminism, underrepresented women artists, and regional art of the 1970s.

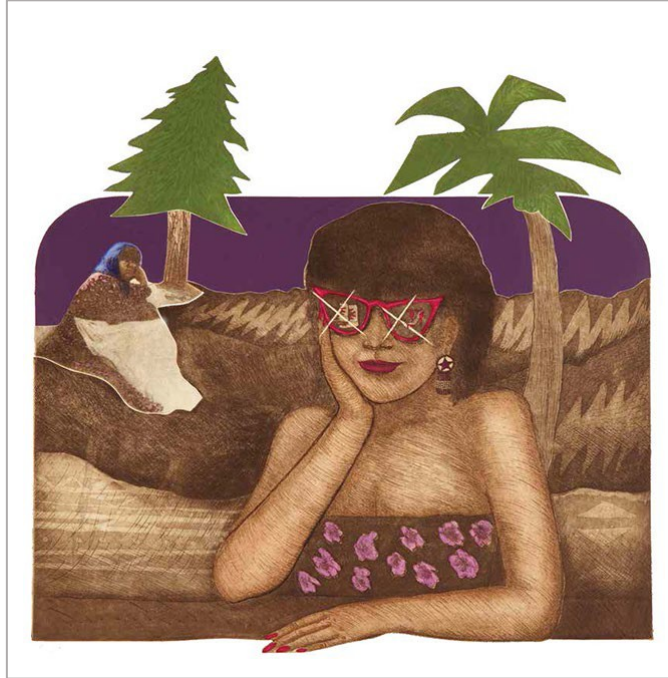


This project is made possible with major support from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

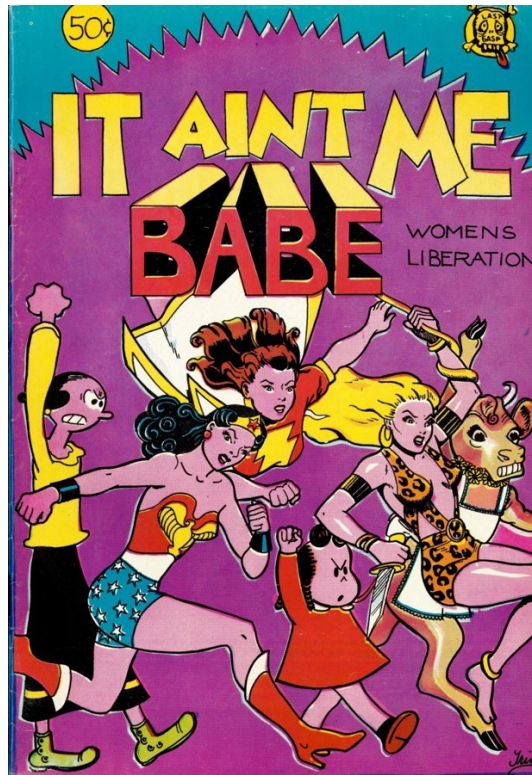
Selected works on view in *She Laughs Back: Feminist Wit in 1970s Bay Area Art*



Gladys Nilsson, *Three Nude Ladies*, 1982, watercolor, 7.5 x 11.5 in., Private Collection



Jean LaMarr, *Just-Wanna-Dance*, 1983, mixed media, 27 ½ x 28 in., courtesy of the artist



Trina Robbins, *It Ain't Me, Babe: Women's Liberation*, issue cover, 1970, courtesy of the artist



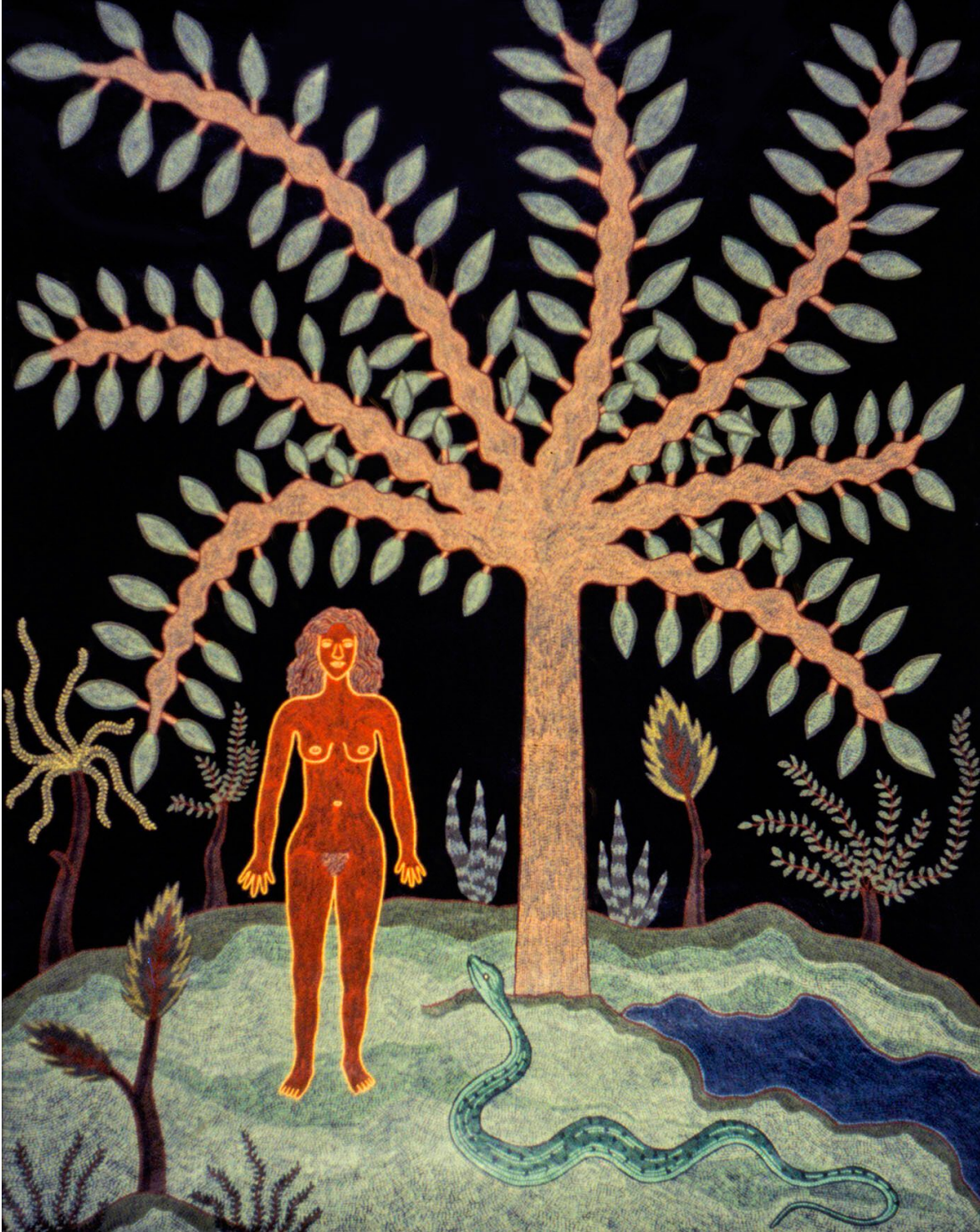
Miss Chicago and the California Girls, 1971, 16 x 20", poster produced by the Feminist Art Program. Fresno State College, California, 1970-71. Photo by Dori Atlantis. Henrietta Sparkman, Judy Chicago, Nancy Youdelman, Shawnee Wollenman, Janice Lester, Sue Boud, Judy Schaeffer, Cay Lang, Christine Rush, Cheryl Zurilgen, Dori Atlantis, Faith Wilding. Nancy Youdelman collection



Judith Linhares, *Going into Darkness*, 1976, gouache on paper, 25 x 30 in., Eric and Lori Greenleaf Collection



M. Louise Stanley, *Mystic Muse and the Bums Who Sleep on the Golf Course Behind the Oakland Cemetery*, watercolor, 1970, 11 x 25 in., courtesy of the artist



Joan Miro, *Eve and the Serpent*, 1974, acrylic, rubberized canvas, 69 1/4 x 54 3/4 in. 1974, courtesy of the artist



Yolanda López, from the photo series *Tableau Vivant*, 1978, courtesy of the artist's estate

For more information about the exhibition or to obtain images, contact Kelly Lindner, Galleries and Collections Curator, University Galleries / kelly.lindner@csus.edu / (916) 278-6898