

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

DRAFT

Historic name: Woman's Building

Other names/site number: Standard Oil Company Sales Department Building

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1727 N. Spring Street

City or town: Los Angeles State: California County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B C D

_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:	_____ Date
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ Signature of commenting official:	_____ Date
_____ Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Beaux Arts

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Roof: ASPHALT; Walls: BRICK; Foundation:
CONCRETE; Windows: STEEL;
Ornamentation: CONCRETE (cast stone)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The approximately 16,438-square-foot building was constructed in 1914 as an office for the Standard Oil Company Sales Department. Designed by architect Myron Hunt, the building is an excellent example of the Beaux Arts style applied to an industrial/office building and includes significant features—brick exterior walls with cast stone stringcourses and entrance details, segmental arch window headers, multi-light steel windows—emblematic of the style and property type. Located approximately 2.5 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles, the three-story brick building was occupied by Standard Oil until 1928. Following a series of owners and varied tenant use, from 1975 to 1991 the property was home to the groundbreaking feminist art collective known as the Woman's Building. The building has undergone few alterations since its original construction and its use as the Woman's Building and retains all aspects of historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

Setting

The Woman's Building is in the northeast section of the Chinatown neighborhood, approximately 2.5 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. The topography of the area is relatively flat, and the street pattern is irregular, an indication of the former rail lines that once traversed the neighborhood. This section of Chinatown is composed of small-scale industrial buildings dating from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1980s.

The building is located at the southwest corner of Aurora Street and N. Spring Street, directly southwest of the North Spring Street Viaduct (1927, Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument #900) and southeast of Los Angeles State Historic Park (the former site of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company's River Station). The building sits on an irregularly shaped parcel. It is flush with the sidewalk on its south and east sides, set back from Backer Street to the north, and abuts a smaller 1980s industrial building to the west.

Building – Exterior

The three-story building has an irregularly shaped plan and is constructed of brick with a concrete foundation. It is capped with a flat roof covered in rolled asphalt roofing. The building is clad with brick laid in a common bond pattern; the brick has been painted over in certain areas, presumably to cover up graffiti. The south (primary) and east elevations are ornamented with cast stone detailing, including a molded stringcourse above the third-story windows and a flat stringcourse above the first-story windows. A projecting galvanized iron cornice replaced the original cast stone cornice along the top of the parapet in 1920.

The south (primary) façade fronts on N. Spring Street. The first, second, and third stories of the façade are lined with evenly spaced single fixed multi-light steel windows with operable awning windows at the center sash. The second-story windows retain stepped segmental arch headers with keystones, and third-story windows feature slightly curved segmental arch headers. A flat lintel band tops windows at the first story. All windows retain molded cast stone sills, and windows at the first story are enclosed by metal security bars (added at unknown date). First story window glazing is largely covered in graffiti.

At the south end of the primary façade is a prominent entryway featuring classically derived cast stone ornamentation that extends to the second story and encompasses a multi-light arched window. The entrance comprises a pair of deeply recessed partially glazed wood doors reached via two concrete steps. Security screens have been added to the door glazing, and a transom above the doors has been replaced with a wood board (date unknown). The walls of the recessed area are cast stone, and the floor is covered with quarry tile. The entrance is distinguished by a molded rectangular opening with decorative cast stone brackets. Centered above the entrance is a

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cartouche inscribed with the intertwined letters “S,” “O,” and “C” for Standard Oil Company, the original occupant and owner of the building.

The east elevation fronts on Aurora Street. Fenestration on this elevation is similar to that of the south façade—same window headers at the first, second, and third stories)—except windows are paired rather than single. The elevation features three recessed entrances, each of which contains non-original wood doors (replaced at unknown date). Above the northernmost entrance is a metal fire escape, added in 1921. Multi-light French doors exist in place of windows at the second and third stories leading to the fire escape and were likely added when the fire escape was installed.

The north elevation is set back from the street and is fronted by surface parking enclosed by a tall metal fence. The elevation is largely devoid of fenestration, except for three single two-over-two light steel windows at the south end, which is set back and at a slight angle with the rest of the elevation. The windows are composed of an awning window in the upper sash and a fixed lower sash and feature simple concrete lintels and sills. The parapet at this elevation is stepped near the center and is capped with concrete. At the top of the elevation, along the parapet wall, is a painted ghost sign that reads “STANDARD OIL COMPANY.”

The west elevation is largely obscured by an adjacent one-story building. Its parapet is stepped at the north and south ends and is capped with concrete. Some paint remnants, presumably from signage, are present along the top of the façade at the parapet wall. Based on Google Street View images, the south end of the wall was graffitied between June 2024 and ARG’s site visit on December 27, 2024. Visible fenestration includes single two-over-two light steel windows, with an awning window in the upper sash and a fixed lower sash, and a simple concrete lintel and sill.

Building – Interior

Interior access to the building was not provided, and thus no interior description is available to include in this nomination.

Character-Defining Features

- Industrial setting directly southwest of the North Spring Street Viaduct
- Three-story height
- Irregular plan
- Flat roof with stepped parapet walls
- Brick cladding laid in a common bond pattern
- Multi-light steel windows with operable (awning) center sashes
- Cast stone lintels and windowsills
- Primary south entrance, including recessed paired doors with transom surmounted by arched window surrounded by classical cast stone detailing (capitals, keystone, etc.), cartouche inscribed with the letters “S,” “O,” and “C”, and molded brackets and entablature.

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- Segmental arch headers above second and third story windows, south and east elevations
- Cast stone stringcourse above third story windows, south and east elevations
- “STANDARD OIL COMPANY” ghost sign at the north elevation

Alterations

Based on its appearance and available building permits, it appears that the building at 1727 N. Spring Street has experienced only minor alterations over time. Most alterations occurred while the building was owned by the Standard Oil Company.

- 1920 Original cast stone cornice replaced with a galvanized iron cornice.
- 1921 Fire escape added to the east elevation. This is presumably when French doors leading to the fire escape replaced two windows at the second and third stories.
- 1934 Roof sign altered/demolished.
- 1938 Brick sills and lintels on the north and west elevations replaced with concrete. Two doors on the east façade replaced. Small portion in the center of the building floored over at the second and third floors. This was presumably to fill in a light well.
- 1946 Existing roof signage altered.
- 1959 Building re-roofed.
- 1971 Southern portion of the building re-roofed.
- 1985 Tension and shear anchors for seismic strengthening installed on all elevations.

Additional alterations were noted during a December 27, 2024, site visit. Generally, these alterations are minor in scope and do not affect the appearance of the building in a substantive way.

- Doors on the east elevation were replaced again.
- The transom of the primary south entrance was boarded up.
- Portions of brick cladding were painted over to cover graffiti, and graffiti is visible in some areas.
- Window and door security bars were added.

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Integrity

The Woman's Building is nearly unaltered and retains all aspects of integrity. The building remains in its original location, and its industrial setting has not changed since its construction in 1914. The few alterations that have occurred to the building are minimal, such as the replacement of secondary doors and the addition of security bars. Almost all of the building's original architectural materials and features (irregular plan, brick cladding, multi-light steel windows, cast stone classical detailing) are intact, and overall, the building continues to express its original design intent and exudes a strong sense of time and place. It therefore retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

SOCIAL HISTORY: Women's History

Period of Significance

1914-1928

1975-1991

Significant Dates

1914

1928

1975

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hunt, Myron

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Woman's Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with the Standard Oil Company and the company's central role in the early development of the California oil industry. Under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture, the building is eligible as an excellent example of Beaux Arts industrial architecture designed by master architect Myron Hunt. The first period of significance is 1914 to 1928, from construction through the years during which Standard Oil occupied the building. The property is eligible at the national level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Women's History for its association with the Woman's Building, a prominent feminist art collective that greatly influenced the development and evolution of the feminist art movement in Los Angeles and nationwide. The second period of significance is 1975 to 1991, from the Woman's Building's first occupation of the property until the institution closed. For its association with second wave feminism, and in particular for its distinctive role in fostering the creation and dissemination of feminist art, the property meets Criterion Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within The Last Fifty Years.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A—Commerce

Standard Oil Company of California

Following the discovery of the nation's first successful commercial oil well in Pennsylvania in 1859, hundreds of Californians began drilling wells in the hope that the state's numerous oil seepages would prove bountiful.¹ Nearly two decades passed before the discovery of California's first productive commercial oil well. In 1876, Star Oil Works drilled the state's first successful commercial well in Pico Canyon, just west of Newhall in north Los Angeles County. Pico Canyon Well No. 4 yielded approximately 100 barrels of oil per day and resulted in the formation of California's first commercial oil refinery and the beginning of the state's oil boom.²

Standard Oil Company was established by John D. Rockefeller in Ohio in 1870. By the late 1870s, Standard Oil had become one of the largest oil companies in the world. Standard Oil (Ohio) reached California in 1878 and established an office at 123 California Street in San

¹ Gerald T. White, *Formative Years in the Far West: A History of Standard Oil Company of California and Predecessors Through 1919* (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1962), 4.

² "No. 172 Pioneer Oil Refinery," *California Office of Historic Preservation*, accessed November 2020, http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21427.

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Francisco.³ Between 1878 and 1882, the company operated solely out of San Francisco. Its efforts were largely limited to marketing, rather than producing or refining oil. Beginning in 1883, the company began expanding outside of San Francisco, and it constructed an outpost in Los Angeles.⁴ Between 1883 and 1894, the company had developed a large lot between San Fernando Street (later N. Spring Street), Aurora Street, and the Los Angeles River/Santa Fe and Southern Pacific rail lines with warehouses, oil storage tanks, and horse stables.⁵

Through the 1890s, Standard Oil's interests in California remained relatively small compared to its holdings in the East. Intent on becoming a major player in the state's oil boom, the company purchased Pacific Coast Oil Company, California's largest oil producer at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1879, Pacific Coast acquired the assets of Star Oil Works, including its Pico Canyon wells in Newhall.⁶ By the turn of the century, Pacific Coast operated a large oil refinery at Alameda Point, owned over seventy producing wells in Ventura County, and retained large interests in Santa Clara and San Benito Counties. In 1900, Standard Oil purchased Pacific Coast's holdings, including land, wells, a refinery, pipelines, and a steamship, for nearly \$1 million.⁷

In 1906, Standard Oil merged Pacific Coast Oil with its Standard Oil Company of Iowa, a prominent marketing subsidiary in California. The merger resulted in the formation of Standard Oil Company (California), also known as California Standard.⁸ In 1911, Rockefeller's Standard Oil parent company was dissolved after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the company had an illegal monopoly under the Sherman Antitrust Act.⁹ Standard Oil's dissolution resulted in California Standard becoming an independent entity. By the mid-1910s, California Standard was the state's leading oil producer.¹⁰

In 1913, Standard Oil (California) commissioned renowned Southern California architect Myron Hunt to design a three-story brick office building at its storage plant at the corner of San Fernando and Aurora Streets in Los Angeles. Completed in 1914, the building housed the company's Los Angeles branch sales/accounting department and was equipped with the most modern lighting and forced air heating systems of the time. It cost some \$40,000 to build, and Earl F. Low was the contractor (**Figure 1**).¹¹

³ White, *Formative Years in the Far West*, 91-92.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵ Sanborn Map Company, "Los Angeles, California," vol. 1 Sheet 24b, 1894.

⁶ M.S. Vassiliou, *The A to Z of the Petroleum Industry* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009), 128.

⁷ "Standard Oil Company Invades California. All the Property of the Pacific Coast Company Absorbed by the Big Eastern Corporation," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 12, 1900.

⁸ Vassiliou, *The A to Z of the Petroleum Industry*, 128.

⁹ White, *Formative Years in the Far West*, viii. Standard Oil's dissolution was highly influenced by investigative journalist Ida Tarbell's book, *The History of the Standard Oil Company* (1904), in which Tarbell describes how John D. Rockefeller had come to monopolize the nation's oil trade.

¹⁰ Vassiliou *The A to Z of the Petroleum Industry*, 129.

¹¹ "With the Architects. Standard Oil Company to Erect Office Building in North End – Other Projects Taking Shape," *Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 1913; "Efficiency to be Keynote. Standard Oil Will Build Unique Block," *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1914.

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By the mid-1920s, California Standard was the leading gasoline marketer in the western United States. In 1926, the company purchased Pacific Oil Company, which managed the oil assets of the Southern Pacific Railroad. The acquisition increased California Standard's production capacity by nearly fifty percent. The company reorganized its corporate structure and assumed the new name Standard Oil Company of California, or Socal (later known as Chevron). That same year, Socal completed a new seven-story, \$1.5 million office building at the corner of 10th (later Olympic) and Hope Streets in downtown Los Angeles. Designed by noted San Francisco architect George W. Kelham, the building was constructed to house the main sales agency of the company's Los Angeles branch as well as its pipeline manufacturing, right-of-way, producing, traffic, and purchasing departments.¹²

Shortly after construction of the new office building at 10th and Hope Streets, Socal's sales office at 1727 N. Spring Street was used primarily as a warehouse and storage facility. In 1928, the company began leasing the building, and in 1932, the building was occupied by a furniture woodworking company.¹³ Between 1946 and 1959, the Spring Street building was sold to the Los Angeles Trunk Manufacturing Company. The company presumably occupied the building until a man named Paul Levine acquired the building in 1971.¹⁴ Levine leased the property to the Woman's Building, a pioneering feminist art collective, which occupied the building from 1975 until 1991. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the building was used as showrooms and artist lofts. The building was sold in 2004 and is owned by Toby Mазzie, Jr. The building was vacant at the time of nomination.

Criterion A—Social History: Women's History

National Significance of the Woman's Building

Located at 1727 N. Spring Street from 1975 to 1991, the Woman's Building is nationally significant for its association with the feminist art movement that evolved out of second wave feminism, a nationwide advancement between the 1960s and 1980s. More specifically, the Woman's Building is important for its leading role in feminist art education and the creation of a highly innovative community of feminist artists and organizations that influenced women artists nationwide.

The idea of claiming space—particularly public space—was central to the second wave feminist movement. In the book *Constructive Feminism*, author Daphne Spain identifies two primary means through which second wave feminists changed the use of urban space—through demanding inclusion and equality in existing male-dominated institutions and through the

¹² "Construction Begins Soon. Great New Building of Standard Oil Company Will Rise at Tenth and Hope Streets," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1923.

¹³ Los Angeles City Directories, 1927, 1928, and 1932. Building permit and city directory research did not indicate who occupied the building between 1932 and 1959. The building's function as a storage/warehouse facility likely remained the same.

¹⁴ Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety Permits 7379 (3/18/46), 43783 (10/1/59), and 32197 (6/2/71).

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formation of new autonomous places that “gave women the confidence to claim their rights to the public sphere.”¹⁵ While Spain’s work focuses on more ubiquitous feminist spaces, such as women’s centers, health clinics, and domestic violence shelters, she also recognizes rarer, albeit equally important, examples of women-centered places that developed during the second wave, such as feminist credit unions and feminist art spaces, identifying the Los Angeles Woman’s Building in particular.

Literature on feminist art spaces and that emanated from the 1970s feminist art movement has grown considerably since the 1990s. Art historians Meredith A. Brown, Joanna Gardner-Huggett, and Joanna Inglot have published work on New York’s Artists in Residence (A.I.R.) Gallery, Chicago’s ARC and Artemisia Galleries, and Minneapolis’ WARM Gallery, respectively, and artist Judith K. Brodsky has written about feminist art spaces more broadly.¹⁶

Whereas Inglot and Gardner-Huggett describe the regional and local impacts of WARM (in the case of Inglot) and Artemisia and ARC (in the case of Gardner-Huggett), Brodsky illustrates how these galleries, along with dozens of other feminist exhibition spaces and art collectives together formed a national feminist art network. Only Brown provides a detailed argument for how one, and perhaps two, women-centered spaces were singularly significant for their national impact on the feminist art movement. In her award winning essay “‘The Enemies of Women’s Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed’: A.I.R. Gallery’s Role in the American Feminist Art Movement,” Brown recounts the national influence of A.I.R.:

After A.I.R. opened in the autumn of 1972, other women’s cooperative galleries formed, and the number of galleries run for and by women artists continued to expand through the middle of the decade, creating a broad network of women artists’ spaces across the United States. As the first such space, A.I.R. influenced the development of this network, acting as inspiration or affirmation for women interested in forming their own galleries.¹⁷

While A.I.R. was shaped by and helped to shape the growing feminist art scene taking place in 1970s New York, Brown recognizes an equally influential movement happening concurrently in Los Angeles, led by the Los Angeles Woman’s Building:

Simultaneous activity on the West Coast among artists associated with the Los Angeles Woman’s Building also shaped the development of women’s art spaces across the nation.

¹⁵ Daphne Spain, *Constructive Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 2.

¹⁶ Joanna Gardner-Huggett, “Extrapolating Influence: The Challenges of Mapping the History of ARC and Artemisia Galleries, Chicago (1980-1985),” *Historical Geography* 45 (2017): 37-65; Judith K. Brodsky, “Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces,” in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 106.

¹⁷ Meredith A. Brown, “‘The Enemies of Women’s Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed’: A.I.R. Gallery’s Role in the American Feminist Art Movement,” *Smithsonian Archives of American Art*, accessed October 2020, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/publications/essay-prize/2012-essay-prize-meredith-brown>.

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The galleries connected with this other pioneering feminist space provided inspiration for women beyond Southern California...¹⁸

In order to construct a more inclusive and equitable world for women in the arts, beginning in the 1970s, feminist artists challenged traditional art institutions through the formation of their own alternative spaces. Across the United States, women artists established activist organizations, cooperative exhibition spaces, and other networks, which together acted to support the creation of feminist artwork and increase the visibility of women artists. By 1979, there were over 200 women's art organizations, including groups, networks, and publications focusing on the visual arts, dance, music, film, writing, and other artistic endeavors.¹⁹ The Los Angeles Woman's Building was one of the most influential of these arts organizations, and only one of three major women's multi-art centers listed in the 1979 *Guide to Women's Art Organizations*.²⁰ Its national impact is apparent in the breadth of women artists who studied and worked at and visited the building, in the subsequent feminist art spaces it inspired in other parts of the country, and in the highly influential feminist art content that originated from the building.

Art historian Jennie Klein likened the Woman's Building to a medieval nunnery that "attracted women from all over the world."²¹ In a commemorative article on the building after its closing in 1991, *Los Angeles Times* journalist Jan Breslauer described the building's far-reaching attraction: "They came from all parts of the country to Los Angeles. They were art school students from the Midwest, writers from the East, housewives from Orange County, second-time-around college students from the Inland Empire, women making the trek to a new feminist mecca."²² In addition to the building's founders, Judy Chicago, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, and Arlene Raven, none of whom were originally from California, women artists, including Cheri Gaulke, Sue Maberry, and Terry Wolverton, among many others, relocated to Los Angeles to study at the Woman's Building and have carried on the spirit of the institution through their continued teaching, writing, and artwork in Los Angeles and cities across the country.

In addition to inspiring women to join its feminist art community, the Woman's Building, its members, and the organizations it housed influenced the creation of other feminist art spaces. Most notable is Joanna Inglot's account of the building's influence on the creation of a feminist art collective and art program in Minnesota. In *WARM: A Feminist Art Collective in Minnesota*, Inglot credits a lecture given by noted artist and Woman's Building co-founder Judy Chicago on feminist art education for serving as the "pivotal stimuli for the formation of WARM's feminist

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *Guide to Women's Art Organizations: Groups/Activities/Networks/Publications*, ed. Cynthia Navaretta (New York: Midmarch Associates, 1979).

²⁰ The other two multi-art centers included in the guide are the Washington Women's Art Center and the Women's Interart Center. *Guide to Women's Art Organizations: Groups/Activities/Networks/Publications*, ed. Cynthia Navaretta (New York: Midmarch Associates, 1979).

²¹ Jennie Klein, "Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building," *A Journal of Women's Studies* 33, no. 2 (Special Issue, 2012): 132.

²² Jan Breslauer, "Woman's Building Lost to a Hitch in 'Herstory,'" *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1992.

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identity.”²³ She goes on to state that Chicago and the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW) were the catalyst for the creation of the Arts Core Program for Women at the College of St. Catherine (St. Paul, MN), an experimental program founded by members of WARM and modeled on the techniques and philosophy of the FSW.²⁴ The FSW, which was headquartered at the Woman's Building and whose name became synonymous with the building, has also been recognized for inspiring the creation of the New York Feminist Art Institute, founded in 1979. In addition to the FSW, the Woman's Building galleries represented a few of the earliest feminist art exhibition spaces in the nation and “provided inspiration for women beyond Southern California,” to create similar cooperative galleries in cities such as Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Boulder.²⁵

The third primary means through which the Woman's Building impacted the nationwide feminist art movement is through the content that originated from the building. The range of work created and disseminated by members of the Woman's Building is well documented in the multi-volume publication by feminist artists associated with the Building, first published online between 2007 and 2009: *Volume I: From Site to Vision: the Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, edited by Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton, and *Volume II: Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art and the Woman's Building*, edited by Meg Linton and Sue Maberry. Notable projects that illustrate the range and influence of the Woman's Building and its members include the Great American Lesbian Art Show (GALAS), a series of nationwide art exhibits featuring the work of lesbian artists and *Chrysalis: A Magazine for Women's Culture*, which at the height of its popularity, had a circulation of 13,000 readers. According to Klein, both of these projects had “far-reaching implications” for the broader feminist art movement.²⁶

History of the Woman's Building, 1971-1991

Origins of the Woman's Building

The establishment of the Woman's Building was the result of several years of activity by women artists who had been inspired by the feminist movement of the 1960s. Though the CalArts Feminist Art Program, the first of its kind in the nation, had made great strides in creating awareness and increased acceptance of women in the art world, Judy Chicago and other FAP faculty members still felt their efforts were limited within the confines of a male-dominated institution. In 1973, Chicago, art historian Arlene Raven, and graphic designer Sheila Levrant de Bretteville left CalArts to establish an independent school for women artists known as the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW). The FSW concentrated on the development of art-making skills, the advancement of women's identities and sensibilities, and feminist practices of making art.²⁷ Initially held in de Bretteville's living room, the FSW moved into the former Chouinard

²³ Joanna Ingot, *WARM: A Feminist Art Collective in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: Weisman Art Museum, 2006), 17.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

²⁵ Brown, ““The Enemies of Women's Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed”: A.I.R. Gallery's Role in the American Feminist Art Movement.”

²⁶ Klein, “*Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building*,” 133-34.

²⁷ Terry Wolverton, “Introduction,” in *Volume I: From Site to Vision: The Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 23.

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Art Institute building on Grandview Boulevard in Los Angeles in November 1973. The FSW named the new center the Woman's Building after the 1893 Woman's Building designed by Sophia Hayden at the Chicago World's Columbia Exposition. Hayden's Woman's Building, which featured the works of female artists from around the world, was demolished after the exposition and left behind little documentation.²⁸ The chosen name was meant as "an act against the historical erasure of women's art and an acknowledgement of the heritage [feminist artists] were beginning to recover."²⁹ The Los Angeles Woman's Building was committed to providing an outlet for women artists to proclaim their place in art history.³⁰

FSW faculty felt the Woman's Building should be shared by other feminist organizations and enterprises. Consequently, the galleries Womanspace, Grandview I and II, and 707; Sisterhood Bookstore; and the women's group theaters L.A. Feminist Theater, Women's Improvisational Theater, and the Women's Performance Project moved into the Woman's Building when it opened in November 1973.³¹ Womanspace closed in 1974 due to financial difficulties, and the FSW absorbed its gallery and events program with the support of the Woman's Building. From 1973 to 1975, the Woman's Building also housed a National Organization for Women (NOW) branch office, a coffeehouse, and Womantours, a feminist travel gallery.³²

In 1975, the old Chouinard Institute property was sold, and the Woman's Building was forced to relocate. After looking at a number of options, the FSW chose the 1914 brick building at 1727 N. Spring Street, originally the Standard Oil Company Sales Department offices in Los Angeles. In order to raise the funds needed to open the building, the FSW held the "Building Women" concert featuring several noted entertainers, including musicians Holly Near, Margie Adam, Cris Williamson, and Meg Christian; actress Lily Tomlin; and the New Miss Alice Stone Ladies Society Orchestra.³³ The Spring Street building had functioned as a warehouse for years and, as with the Chouinard building, was in need of a major renovation. The FSW class of 1975 was charged with remodeling the three-story, 18,000-square-foot space. Led by faculty member Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and student Cheryl Swannack, a team of FSW women and volunteers spent months sanding floors, painting, and learning how to frame a wall and install sheet rock (**Figure 2**).³⁴ Though Cheri Gaulke recalls the renovation experience as being quite grueling—students were covered in paint chippings and "coated with dust" on a daily basis—she

²⁸ Michelle Moravec, "Fictive Families of History Makers: Historicity at the Los Angeles Woman's Building," in *Volume II: Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art and the Woman's Building*, ed. Meg Linton and Sue Maberry (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 68.

²⁹ Arlene Raven, *At Home* (Long Beach: Long Beach Museum of Art, 1983).

³⁰ Hale, "Power and Space: Feminist Culture and the Los Angeles Woman's Building, A Context," 40.

³¹ Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry, interview by author, April 28, 2017.

³² Wolverton, "Introduction," 24.

³³ Wolverton, "Introduction," 24; Los Angeles Conservancy, "LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.: The Woman's Building" (video and presentation, Curating the City: LGBTQ Historic Places, L.A. Broadway Viaduct, Los Angeles State Historic Park, Los Angeles, March 16, 2017).

³⁴ Otis College of Art and Design, *The Woman's Building History: Cheryl Swannack*, in *Doin' It in Public: Feminism and the Art at the Woman's Building* (Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, 2011), online video, accessed November 2020, <https://vimeo.com/channels/1175715/193800955>; Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry, interview by author, April 28, 2017.

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also remembers it being a tremendously empowering and profound experience.³⁵ For many FSW students, the renovation was their first encounter with power tools and the first time they had been empowered to learn a physical trade. FSW faculty believed it was necessary for students to have a direct hand in creating their space in order to develop a sense of ownership over it. In the words of author Virginia Woolf, the women were determined to create “a room of one’s own”—a space occupied by and controlled by women.³⁶

The Woman’s Building: A Coming of Age

Over the next two decades, the FSW and a number of other groups and organizations, most of which were dedicated to feminist causes, occupied all three floors at the Spring Street space. Between 1975 and 1991, the building housed a bookstore, thrift store, Val’s Café, the Identified Woman Café, a women’s arts and crafts store, the offices of Women Against Violence Against Women (WAWAW), *Chrysalis* magazine, and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. The FSW also established an extension program, which offered courses in everything from creative dance and journal writing to self-defense and money management. The program was intended for those who could not attend school full time, including working women and mothers with young children.

Throughout the 1970s and ‘80s, the Woman’s Building hosted numerous programs and activities, including a full-scale gallery program, screenings of video and film about women and women’s issues, lectures by feminist activists, presentations by artists and art historians, the L.A. Women’s Video Center, the Center for Art Historical Research, and the Women’s Graphic Center.³⁷ The Woman’s Building cultivated performance art groups, such as Sisters of Survival, Feminist Art Workers, and The Waitresses. Its annual Women’s Writing Series featured nationally recognized feminist writers, including Meridel Le Seuer, Deena Metzger, Audre Lorde, and Adrienne Rich.³⁸

From its founding, the primary vision of the Woman’s Building was to create a public center for women’s culture. As an organization engaging with the public and the Los Angeles art scene, the Woman’s Building often collaborated with other alternative art programs, such as Self Help Graphics, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), Los Angeles Visual Artists (LAVA), and Cirrus Gallery. By the late 1970s, the FSW extension program had grown to over eighty courses a year. The building hosted numerous social and community events, including a women’s health day, benefit dances, fundraisers, open houses, and publication parties. In celebration of its fifth anniversary, the building installed nationally recognized New York artist Kate Millett’s Naked Lady sculpture on the roof (**Figure 3**). The installation was featured on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*. Three days later, the *Times* printed an article titled “The

³⁵ Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry, interview by author, April 28, 2017.

³⁶ Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry, interview by author, April 28, 2017; Wolverton, “Introduction,” 19.

³⁷ Wolverton, “Introduction,” 24.

³⁸ Laura Dominguez, “The Woman’s Building: L.A.’s ‘Feminist Mecca,’” *Lost LA, KCET*, February 21, 2017, accessed November 2020, <https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/the-womans-building-las-feminist-mecca>.

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Woman's Building: A Coming of Age," signifying the building's established presence as a prominent cultural institution.³⁹

Politics and Intersectionality

The Woman's Building faced a tough political, social, and economic climate beginning in the 1980s. During President Ronald Reagan's administration, federal art subsidies were dramatically reduced. Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) was cut drastically, leaving many nonprofit organizations struggling.⁴⁰ Enrollment in art programs decreased as women sought more practical degrees in business and finance. The FSW ended its programming in 1981 due to reduced interest in and lack of funding for alternative educational institutions. By the early 1980s, the three founders of the Woman's Building had moved on to pursue other opportunities and interests, and a new generation of leaders, including Terry Wolverton, Sue Maberry, and Cheri Gaulke, stepped up to the task of professionalizing the Woman's Building.⁴¹ The FSW extension program became more skills based, offering classes related to professional development. In order to obtain sufficient funding, the building established two profit-making ventures: the rental of artists' studio space and a design and typesetting business known as the Women's Graphic Center (**Figure 4**). Grant writing and fundraising took on a more prominent role at the Building. In 1982, the Woman's Building founded the annual awards event and fundraiser known as the Vesta Awards.⁴²

The nation's conservative political climate in the 1980s inspired artists to take on a more activist role than in the decade prior. The feminist art movement became increasingly intersectional, addressing a range of economic, political, racial, and gender issues.⁴³ As described by FSW alumna Terry Wolverton, in the 1970s, the Woman's Building had been a "women's organization about art," whereas in the 1980s, the building had become an "arts organization about women."⁴⁴ It was during the 1980s that the building began addressing a broader range of social issues, including the threat of nuclear war, the U.S. government's intervention in Central America, and gay and lesbian rights.⁴⁵ During this time, the Los Angeles Artists of Survival, an anti-nuclear artist collective, operated out of the Woman's Building. Directed by FSW alumna Cheri Gaulke, the Artists of Survival hosted Target L.A., an anti-nuclear music and arts festival.

In 1982, the Sisters of Survival, an anti-nuclear coalition and performance art group composed of Woman's Building artists Sue Maberry, Cheri Gaulke, and Nancy Angelo, staged the anti-nuclear performance *Shovel Defense* in front of Los Angeles City Hall. Dressed in nun's

³⁹ Suzanne Muchnic, "The Woman's Building: A Coming of Age," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1978.

⁴⁰ Terry Wolverton, interview by author, April 27, 2017.

⁴¹ Laura Meyer, "The Woman's Building and Los Angeles' Leading Role in the Feminist Art Movement," in *Volume I: From Site to Vision: The Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 110.

⁴² Wolverton, "Introduction," 28.

⁴³ Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry, interview by author, April 28, 2017.

⁴⁴ Terry Wolverton, interview by author, April 27, 2017; Wolverton, "Introduction," 31.

⁴⁵ Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry, interview by author, April 28, 2017; Wolverton, "Introduction," 31.

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garments dyed the colors of the rainbow, the Sisters of Survival toured in Europe and visited the Greenham Common Peace Camp in England where a group of women were protesting the use of nuclear weapons.⁴⁶ The Woman's Building was also home to the social and economic justice group the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), resulting in the building being surveilled by the FBI during the 1980s. Throughout the decade, the Woman's Building featured several exhibits and performances devoted to incest awareness. Terry Wolverton, Bia Lowe, Lisa Labowitz, Nancy Angelo, Nancy Taylor, and other members of the Building created the Incest Awareness Project, which helped to "raise consciousness about and redefine the issue of incest, and to reshape the public debate about it."⁴⁷

Expanding its Vision: The Woman's Building and Inclusivity

Many of the Woman's Building's most dedicated members in the 1980s were lesbian women. The FSW had always included a number of lesbian participants. Lesbian issues were not a central focus of discussion at the building until the late 1970s. Unlike straight members, who often spent part of their time outside the space with families, boyfriends, and participating in other community activities, for many lesbian women, the building provided an "all-encompassing social network."⁴⁸ In 1977, a group of artists at the building formed the Natalie Barney Collective, named after the renowned lesbian artist and expatriate. The Collective founded the Lesbian Art Project with the goal to "discover, explore, [and] create lesbian culture, art, and sensibility; make visible the contributions of lesbians and feminist human culture; [and] create a context for that work to be understood."⁴⁹ Through the Woman's Building, the Lesbian Art Project put forward numerous gallery installations by lesbian artists, and sponsored performances, open houses, and a series of social events, including all-women dances and a lesbian fashion show.⁵⁰

The Natalie Barney Collective set precedent for the creation of several new projects centered on lesbian identity and issues, such as The Lesbian Creator Series, which invited lesbian artists to speak at the Building; a long-term performance project known as *An Oral Herstory of Lesbianism*; and a 1978 performance known as *FEMINA: An Intraspace Voyage*. In 1980, the Woman's Building co-sponsored a sequence of exhibitions with the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center known as The Great American Lesbian Art Show (GALAS), one of the first open demonstrations of widespread support and solidarity in the lesbian community.⁵¹ Led by artist Tyaga, the GALAS consisted of three parts: an exhibition in Los Angeles showcasing ten renowned lesbian artists, a series of over 200 nationwide exhibits and events

⁴⁶ Cheri Gaulke and Sue Maberry, interview by author, April 28, 2017.

⁴⁷ Terry Wolverton, *Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at the Woman's Building* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2002), 132.

⁴⁸ Meyer, "The Woman's Building and Los Angeles' Leading Role in the Feminist Art Movement," 100.

⁴⁹ *The Lesbian Art Project*, May 24, 1978, cited by Moravec, "Building Women's Culture," in Meyer, "The Woman's Building and Los Angeles' Leading Role in the Feminist Art Movement," in *Volume I: From Site to Vision: The Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 100.

⁵⁰ Meyer, "The Woman's Building and Los Angeles' Leading Role in the Feminist Art Movement," 100.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 104.

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featuring the work of lesbian artists, and a slide registry comprising the artwork showcased in the national GALAS network. The GALAS opened at the Los Angeles Woman's Building with 500 visitors in attendance. Featured in the *Los Angeles Times* and reviewed in *Artweek*, the GALAS was the "first time lesbian art [had] received this level of mainstream recognition."⁵²

The 1980s also represented a shift at the Woman's Building to a greater focus on issues facing women of color. Through the 1970s, women of color occupied a minority position at the building, as was true in the second wave feminist movement in general. In 1980, the group Lesbians of Color confronted the GALAS planning committee and demanded an answer as to why no women of color had been asked to participate in the committee. This resulted in a considerable outreach program by the GALAS to include minority women's groups and create exhibition spaces in minority communities. The Woman's Building established a protocol for affirmative action in board recruitment and hiring and recruited artists of color to join its gallery committee. The Building hired Ricky Sharover-Marcuse, the woman who developed the Unlearning Racism model within Reevaluation Counseling, a social reform counseling organization, to speak with Woman's Building staff about how to address racism.⁵³

The Woman's Building also increased sponsorship of writing workshops, art installations, and other events featuring the work of minority women.⁵⁴ One of the first Woman's Building projects that focused on women of color was the Madre Tierra Press Project, which supported twelve Chicana artists and writers, led by Linda Vallejo, to produce broadsides that were printed in the Women's Graphic Center (**Figure 5**). In 1986, the Building initiated Cross Pollination, a project in which twenty-two artists, including Patssi Valdez, Cyndi Kahn, Michelle T. Clinton, and Suzan Ocona, were commissioned to create posters addressing their cultural heritage. In 1989, it co-sponsored *Three Generations of Black Women Writers*, which presented the evolution of concerns and literary styles in the work of African American women authors.⁵⁵ Though a truly inclusive, multi-cultural organization may not have transpired during its lifetime, in the words of artist Linda Vallejo, the Woman's Building "laid the groundwork" for greater inclusivity to be realized in the feminist art movement in the future.⁵⁶

In 1991, after suffering a series of financial setbacks, the Woman's Building closed its doors. Its Board of Directors have continued to remain active in preserving the building's history through collaborations with Metabolic Studio, Otis College of Art and Design, and the Getty Foundation. The building's papers are located at the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institute, and the Woman's Building slide collection was digitized by Otis with assistance from the Getty.⁵⁷ Over nearly two decades, the Woman's Building provided a space for feminist art

⁵² Ibid, 92.

⁵³ Betty Ann Brown, "Feminist Art Education at the Los Angeles Woman's Building," in *Volume I: From Site to Vision: The Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 143-145.

⁵⁴ Meyer, "The Woman's Building and Los Angeles' Leading Role in the Feminist Art Movement," 105.

⁵⁵ Wolverton, "Introduction," 31-32.

⁵⁶ Linda Vallejo, interview by author, April 26, 2017.

⁵⁷ Brown, "Feminist Art Education at the Los Angeles Woman's Building," 150.

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education and expression and played a critical role in establishing women artists in the mainstream art movement.

Second Wave Feminism and the Feminist Art Movement

Second Wave Feminism

The feminist movement of the early 1960s through the 1980s is often referred to as second wave feminism, a movement characterized by its fight for equality in the workplace, reproductive rights, and freedom of sexual expression. The second wave emerged in the midst of multiple anti-war and social liberation movements that had erupted in cities across the country beginning in the mid-1950s. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which centered largely on the plight of African Americans, gave rise to a number of social liberation movements in other minority and gay and lesbian communities, and amongst women.

During World War II, record numbers of women entered the workforce as able-bodied men enlisted in the military. By 1945, 18 million women in the United States were working in highly skilled and technical jobs in defense industries and support services.⁵⁸ Despite their accomplishments and ability to excel in male-dominated positions, many women were forced out of these jobs after the war so that returning veterans could be re-employed. Women who continued to work were largely restricted to low paying, often part time “pink collar” jobs, such as waitressing, teaching, and secretarial and clerical work.⁵⁹ Women of color, who had also participated in the wartime workforce, found it even more difficult to find a respectable job after the war and were often employed as household servants.⁶⁰ Even when working, many women still considered their primary career as that of the homemaker. These “career housewi[ves]” spent an average of 100 hours a week cleaning, cooking, and caring for their children and husbands.⁶¹ As a result, women were largely confined to their homes and had virtually no social lives outside their families. Society’s idea that a woman’s purpose was to dedicate her life to her family was perpetuated through the media. Women’s magazines featured articles on everything from how to raise children to hosting a successful barbecue; television sitcoms displayed mothers and wives perfectly content with the life of a homemaker.⁶²

By the late 1950s, women had become increasingly dissatisfied with the monotony and futility of career homemaking and began to long for their own identity. Women of all income levels and

⁵⁸ “World War II Homefront Era: 1940s: Women Replace Men in the Workforce,” *Picture This: California Perspectives on American History*, accessed November 2020, <http://picturethis.museumca.org/timeline/world-war-ii-homefront-era-1940s/women-labor/info?page=1>.

⁵⁹ “Interview: Elaine Tyler May,” *PBS SoCal*, accessed November 2020, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/interview/tupperware-may/>.

⁶⁰ Vanessa Martins Lamb, “The 1950’s and the 1960’s and the American Woman: The Transition from the ‘Housewife’ to the Feminist” (master’s thesis, Université du Sud Toulon-Var, 2011), 16.

⁶¹ “Interview: Elaine Tyler May.”

⁶² Martins Lamb, “The 1950’s and the 1960’s and the American Woman: The Transition from the ‘Housewife’ to the Feminist” 20 and 27.

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educational backgrounds had begun to express this feeling of unfulfillment. The “unhappiness of the American housewife” was reported on, albeit somewhat superficially, in newspapers such as the *New York Times* and *Newsweek*, as well as on national television networks.⁶³ In her book *Feminine Mystique* (1963), journalist Betty Friedan described it as the “problem that has no name:”

If I am right, the problem that has no name stirring in the minds of so many American women today is not a matter of loss or femininity or too much education, or the demands of domesticity. It is far more important than anyone recognizes.... It may well be the key to our future as a nation and a culture. We can no longer ignore that voice within that says: ‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.’⁶⁴

By the early 1960s, nearly 23 million women were employed either full or part time, in addition to their duties at home. They earned an average of sixty cents for every dollar a man earned working in the same position.⁶⁵ College educated women, whose numbers had risen by thirty percent after World War II, were typically paid the same as a man with a high school diploma, and female employees were treated as inferior, regardless of their position.⁶⁶ In 1961, President John F. Kennedy created the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) to address the issue of discrimination in the workplace as well as women’s rights more generally. Chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of former president Franklin D. Roosevelt, the PCSW issued a report with proposals as to how the government and other institutions could alleviate gender bias. Controversial topics such as abortion, birth control, and female poverty were largely disregarded.⁶⁷

In 1963, Congress passed the Equal Pay Act establishing equal pay for women and men performing the same duties in the workplace, and in 1964, Congress added a clause to the Civil Rights Act (Title VII), which forbade sex discrimination in private sector employment. Sex discrimination continued to be prevalent in the workplace, and the newly created Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) refused to recognize the complaints women filed alleging sex discrimination.⁶⁸ In 1966, in response to the EEOC’s lack of commitment to address sex discrimination, thirty women, including Betty Friedan and civil rights activist Pauli Murray, formed the National Organization for Women (NOW), a coalition of white women and women of color aimed at combatting sex and race discrimination at home and in the workplace.⁶⁹ In

⁶³ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), 22.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 32.

⁶⁵ U.S. Census Records, 1960-2009; Stuart A. Kallen, *Women of the 1960s* (Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2003), 21-22.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 28-31.

⁶⁸ Martins Lamb, “The 1950’s and the 1960’s and the American Woman: The Transition from the ‘Housewife’ to the Feminist” 51-52.

⁶⁹ NOW was one of seemingly few women’s organizations in the 1960s that promoted equality for women of color. Generally, the feminist movement of the 1960s and ‘70s is largely viewed as a movement of middle-class white women that often excluded women of color.

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1967, NOW ratified its Women's Bill of Rights, which focused on addressing many of the issues facing American women—opportunity for equal employment, adequate childcare facilities, equal opportunity to pursue higher education, the right of women in poverty to secure job training, and reproductive rights. NOW played a crucial role in the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment, which the majority of states had ratified by the late 1970s.⁷⁰

The second wave feminist movement coincided with a sexual revolution, during which women began to challenge traditional sexual roles and experiment with “taboo practices” like bisexual and homosexual sex.⁷¹ This sexual revolution provided lesbian women a safe and more open environment in which to be themselves, and many became deeply involved in the second wave. Lesbians were confronted with a dual discrimination based on their gender as well as their sexuality. More conservative feminist organizations feared that lesbian involvement would be used by men to discredit the organization and divert attention from the issues all women faced, not just lesbian women.⁷² NOW tried to distance itself from lesbian organizations, such as the Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian group begun in 1955 by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon.⁷³ Lesbians, many of whom held leadership roles in feminist organizations, were discouraged from being publicly open about their sexual orientation. Lesbians who joined gay liberation groups also faced discrimination, in this instance based on their gender from the predominantly male membership.⁷⁴

Lesbian inclusion and acceptance in the movement shifted in 1970 after the Second Congress to Unite Women held in New York. At the conference, president of NOW Betty Friedan described feminist advocates for the inclusion of lesbian issues in NOW's platform as a “lavender menace,” illustrating her and other straight feminists' concern that openly associating with lesbianism would hamper feminists' ability to achieve political change.⁷⁵ Friedan's remark enticed a backlash amongst prominent lesbian members of NOW and resulted in a vote in 1971 to affirm the legitimacy of lesbian oppression as a feminist issue, which NOW members overwhelmingly voted in favor of.⁷⁶ By the mid-1970s and 1980s, lesbians had taken on a prominent and public role in the feminist movement.

⁷⁰ Kallen, *Women of the 1960s*, 35; “Chronology of the Equal Rights Amendment, 1923-1996,” *National Organization for Women*, accessed November 2020, <http://now.org/resource/chronology-of-the-equal-rights-amendment-1923-1996/>.

⁷¹ Kallen, *Women of the 1960s*, 42.

⁷² Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur, “National Organization for Women (NOW),” *gbtq Archives*, 2015, accessed November 2020, <http://www.gbtqarchive.com/sshindex.html>.

⁷³ Anne M. Valk, “Lesbian Feminism,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2014, accessed November 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/lesbian-feminism>.

⁷⁴ Elise Chenier, “Lesbian Feminism,” *gbtq Archives*, 2015, accessed November 2020, <http://www.gbtqarchive.com/sshindex.html>.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

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The Feminist Art Movement of the Second Wave

Women in the art world were equally impacted by the widespread discrimination that had led to the second wave of feminism. Female artists faced sexism when pursuing professional careers, and art that depicted women's subjective experiences was disparaged and deprecated by the art world establishment. By the late 1960s, female artists across the country had begun to challenge the establishment for its exclusion of women artists.⁷⁷ The feminist art movement comprised a network of individual women and feminist organizations who worked together to change the art world through activism, information sharing, and the establishment of women-centered art galleries and institutions.⁷⁸

Frustrated by the lack of inclusivity and diversity in museums and galleries, women artists across the country joined together in dissent. In 1971, in response to an exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) titled *Art and Technology*, which failed to display the work of any women, a group of local female artists formed the Los Angeles Council for Women Artists (LACWA) to protest women's exclusion from the exhibition. A report written by the LACWA stated that, although women represented a majority (fifty-three percent) of the population, only four percent of the work displayed in group shows at LACMA between 1961 and 1971 were by women artists. The report put forth a program that included stipulations for greater inclusivity, including increasing the number of exhibits showcasing women artists as well as equal job and funding opportunities.⁷⁹ LACWA's efforts proved successful, resulting in the exhibition *Women Artists: 1550-1950*, which was first displayed at LACMA in 1975 and went on to tour the country.⁸⁰ LACWA's demands for equity and inclusivity paralleled those of the Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), who concurrently protested New York's Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), as well as the Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL) and the Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee, who joined forces to protest the Whitney Museum of American Art's Annual exhibition for its lack of female representation.⁸¹

By 1972, the feminist art movement had shifted from its initial phase of activism to consolidating autonomous women-centered spaces as a means of challenging the establishment.⁸² As described by art historian Meredith Brown, "The creation of alternative, autonomous spaces allowed women to further advance a supportive female community built around collective actions, skill

⁷⁷ Jill Fields, "Frontiers in Feminist Art History," *A Journal of Women's Studies* 33, no. 2 (Special Issue, 2012): 2.

⁷⁸ Brown, "'The Enemies of Women's Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed': A.I.R. Gallery's Role in the American Feminist Art Movement."

⁷⁹ "Los Angeles Council of Women Artists Report," *The Getty Research Institute*, June 15, 1971, accessed November 2020, <http://blogs.getty.edu/pacificstandardtime/explore-the-era/archives/i143/>.

⁸⁰ Moravec, "Fictive Families of History Makers: Historicity at the Los Angeles Woman's Building," 84-85.

⁸¹ Brown, "'The Enemies of Women's Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed': A.I.R. Gallery's Role in the American Feminist Art Movement."

⁸² Mary D. Garrard, "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations," in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 92.

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development, and solidarity.”⁸³ The earliest women-centered exhibitions occurred on the West and East Coasts in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1968, Josine Ianco Starrels organized the *25 California Women of Art* exhibition at the Lytton Galleries of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the first West Coast exhibition of women artists featuring the work of Selma Moskowitz, Betye Saar, Helen Pashigan, and Rita Letendre, among others.⁸⁴ The groundbreaking exhibition was a success, and Ianco Starrels was credited with highlighting “some of the strongest west coast women artists” of the period.⁸⁵ In 1970, curator Dextra Frankel gave Judy Chicago her first one-woman show at Cal State Fullerton, and an all-women’s show focused on race and gender issues was held at the Galeria de la Raza in San Francisco. That same year, the *X to the 12th Power* show sponsored by the Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) became the first all-women’s exhibition in New York. In 1971, Black women artists, including Faith Ringgold, Jerrolyn Crooks, Kay Brown, Pat Davis, Mai Mai Leabua, and Dinga McCannon, organized the *Where We At Black Women Artists* show at Acts of Art Gallery, likely the first Black women’s art exhibition in history.⁸⁶ Founded between 1969 and 1970 by members of WAR, the Women’s Interart Center became the “first alternative feminist space” in the United States.⁸⁷ In addition to offering myriad art workshops for women, the Center provided a series of exhibitions showcasing women artists’ work throughout the 1970s.⁸⁸

Founded in 1972, New York’s Artists in Residence (A.I.R.) Gallery is the first known independent women’s cooperative art gallery in the country. A.I.R. was primarily a professional organization for women artists that sought to change the way art produced by women was perceived by the art world and to inspire other women artists to do the same. The same year A.I.R. was formed, a group of artists in Los Angeles, including Judy Chicago, Miriam Shapiro, Betye Saar, Max Cole, Suzanne Lacy, Sherry Brody, Rachel Rosenthal, Wanda Westcoast, June Wayne, Faith Wilding, and others came together to plan a cooperative gallery to showcase their work and the work of other women. In January 1973, after a short stint in an old laundromat in Culver City, Womanspace gallery opened at the Los Angeles Woman’s Building on Grandview. While Womanspace operated for a mere eighteen months, it resulted in the formation of several other galleries at the Woman’s Building, including Grandview I and II and 707, and gallery space remained an integral part of the Woman’s Building during its eighteen years of operation.

A.I.R. Gallery and the various Woman’s Building gallery spaces served as models for several other feminist art collectives in New York (SoHo 20, 1973), Long Island (Central Hall Gallery, 1973), Philadelphia (MUSE Gallery, 1977), Chicago (Artemisia and ARC galleries, 1973), Minneapolis (WARM Gallery, 1976), and Boulder (Front Range Women in the Visual Arts,

⁸³ Brown, “‘The Enemies of Women’s Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed’: A.I.R. Gallery’s Role in the American Feminist Art Movement.”

⁸⁴ William Wilson, “In the Galleries: ‘Women’ Exhibition Nicely Balances Art, Femininity,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1968.

⁸⁵ Faith Wilding, *By Our Own Hands: The Woman Artist’s Movement, Southern California, 1970-1976* (Santa Monica: Double X, 1977), 42-43.

⁸⁶ Brodsky, “Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces,” 106.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

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1974). The common goals that these collectives had were to increase visibility and to offer intellectual and emotional support for women artists, as well as to provide a venue to showcase more radical art forms that were barred from mainstream art settings. Between 1972 and 1977, at least twelve major women's cooperative galleries were operating in the U.S.⁸⁹

New educational institutions that focused on feminist art and art making were also established during this time period. In 1970, art historian Linda Nochlin offered the nation's first course on women in the arts at Vassar College in New York. That same year, Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro formed the country's first Feminist Art Program (FAP) at Fresno State College (later California State University, Fresno). The FAP, which began with a group of fifteen women students, offered courses in practical skills, such as construction and handling power tools, as well as research classes where students were charged with rediscovering their "hidden heritage" by studying other women artists.⁹⁰ After founding the FAP, Chicago and Shapiro traveled across the United States to teach women educators about feminist art education. Between 1974 and 1975, Chicago and associated faculty collaborated with a group of women from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota to help start what eventually became the Arts Core Program for Women, as well as the feminist art collective known as Women's Art Registry, Minnesota (WARM).⁹¹ In 1973, Chicago, Arlene Raven, and Sheila Levrant de Bretteville left their teaching positions at the FAP, which by then had moved to the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), to establish an independent school for women artists known as the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW). The FSW concentrated on the development of art-making skills, the advancement of women's identities and sensibilities, and feminist practices of making art.⁹²

Headquartered at the Los Angeles Woman's Building, the FSW attracted students from across the United States as well as from other countries, including Mexico, Canada, Switzerland, and Holland.⁹³ While the FSW closed in 1981, the extension program, renamed the Woman's Building Educational Program, continued, offering classes in visual arts, graphics, book arts, performance art, video, and writing until the closing of the Woman's Building in 1991. The FSW paved the way for other educational programs focused on feminist art, including the New York Feminist Art Institute (founded 1979).⁹⁴ In 1982, the "Women Artists: A Resource and Research Guide" listed a handful of feminist art educational groups in the United States, though the FSW was the only one included that offered a full-time graduate level program.⁹⁵

Newsletters helped to further disseminate information within the national network of feminist artists. In 1971, Chicago, Shapiro, curator and art critic Lucy Lippard, and *New York Times* art

⁸⁹ Inglot, *WARM*, 7.

⁹⁰ Brown, "Feminist Art Education at the Los Angeles Woman's Building," 142.

⁹¹ Klein, "*Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building*," 132; Inglot, *WARM*, 18.

⁹² Wolverson, "Introduction," 23.

⁹³ "The Woman's Building: A Brief History," *The Woman's Building*, accessed November 2020, <https://thewomansbuilding.org/history.html>.

⁹⁴ Paula L. Chiaramonte, "Women Artists: A Resource and Research Guide," *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 1, no. 5 (October 1982): A1, A3-A20.

⁹⁵ Chiaramonte, "Women Artists: A Resource and Research Guide," A-4.

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writer Grace Glueck initiated a bi-coastal newsletter named *West-East Bag* (WEB). WEB was used to share information about goings-on at women's galleries, events and protests, and how to start consciousness-raising groups. WEB grew to include more than twenty cities in the United States as well as eleven international chapters.⁹⁶ According to art and film critic Carrie Rickey, there were six primary publications that played key roles in the distribution of feminist art information—the *Feminist Art Journal*, *Women Artists News*, *Woman's Art Journal*, *Women and Art*, *womanart*, *Heresies*, and *Chrysalis: A Magazine of Women's Culture*.⁹⁷ *Chrysalis*, the only West Coast publication, was founded in 1977 by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Arlene Raven, Kirsten Grimstad, Ruth Isken, and Susan Rennie, and headquartered at the Los Angeles Woman's Building. Although the magazine only operated for four years, the issues produced “were enormously rich in content and scope, proving to be a veritable sourcebook on everything from women's visual culture and spirituality to finances, transsexuals, and lesbianism.”⁹⁸ At its height, *Chrysalis* had a circulation of 13,000 readers.⁹⁹

While feminist artists were active throughout the country, and in New York and Los Angeles in particular, the characteristics of the movement were quite different when comparing the two coastal regions. In New York, which had become the epicenter of the American art world in the postwar period, women artists were primarily focused on gaining access to the largely male art community, founding parallel institutions to those of the contemporary art scene and protesting sexism within the establishment. In contrast, women in Los Angeles were more interested in forming an independent feminist art community.¹⁰⁰ As writer and art critic Lucy R. Lippard describes of her personal experience of the 1970s feminist art community:

There was nothing like [Los Angeles'] full-fledged woman's community in New York, where our branch of feminist art movement was too often preoccupied with fending off or competing with the male-dominated mainstream art scene. Los Angeles, by virtue of its relative isolation at the time, was freer to innovate than we were in the art capital.¹⁰¹

Unlike the mainstream art world, in which the West Coast was largely ignored, the feminist art movement was much more inclusive geographically speaking because the accomplishments of California's female art community were intertwined with the national movement's existence. According to historian Jill Fields, there were three pivotal moments in California's feminist art movement that had a significant impact on the national scale: the launching of the Feminist Art

⁹⁶ Brown, “‘The Enemies of Women's Liberation in the Arts Will be Crushed’: A.I.R. Gallery's Role in the American Feminist Art Movement.”

⁹⁷ Carrie Rickey, “Writing (And Righting) Wrongs: Feminist Art Publications,” in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 123.

⁹⁸ Klein, “*Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building*,” 133-134.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *How did the Los Angeles Woman's Building Keep Feminism Alive, 1970-1991?*, documents selected and interpreted by Michelle Moravec.

¹⁰¹ Lucy R. Lippard, “Forward: Going Around in Circles,” in *Volume I: From Site to Vision: the Woman's Building in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Sondra Hale and Terry Wolverton (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011), 11.

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Program (FAP) at Fresno State in 1970; the first large-scale feminist art installation in the United States, *Womanhouse* (1972, Hollywood), by Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, and their students in the FAP; and the opening of the “unprecedented Woman’s Building.”¹⁰²

Comparison of the Woman’s Building to Similar Properties

The Women’s Building, San Francisco

The Women’s Building in San Francisco (NR #SG100002359) is recognized as the first woman-owned and operated community center in the country. Its origins date to the founding of San Francisco’s Women’s Centers (SFWC), a group of organizations that coalesced to form an incubator for a range of women’s rights organizations and projects in the early 1970s. In 1978, a core group of women in the SFWC acquired Dovre Hall, a former Sons of Norway meeting hall in San Francisco’s Mission District and founded The Women’s Building (TWB). Since its founding, TWB has sponsored more than 170 organizations, several of which have grown into established non-profits, including The Women’s Foundation of California and Lavender Youth Recreation & Information Center. While established during the same period and similarly significant in terms of its impact on second wave feminism, the TWB was notably different in its mission from the Los Angeles Woman’s Building. As described in the building’s National Register nomination:

SFWC noted that LA’s facility was a cultural arts center, whereas the Women’s Building of the Bay Area would provide “space for social change community organizing projects and educations programs, as well as an information and referral center serving a spectrum of women’s needs.”¹⁰³

Other 1970s and 1980s Feminist Art Spaces

In assessing its national significance in relation to second wave feminism, and more specifically, the national feminist art movement that emerged out of the second wave, the Woman’s Building is best compared to other feminist art spaces created in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States, particularly those that functioned as multi-art centers and/or educational institutions. Important examples of these spaces include:

New York—The Women’s Interart Center is credited with being the “first alternative feminist space,” in the United States.¹⁰⁴ Founded between 1969-70, the Center was a multi-art organization that offered workshops in ceramics, painting, film, silk-screening, music, drawing, and video. The Center held regular exhibitions, panel discussions, and demonstrations that were

¹⁰² Fields, “Frontiers in Feminist Art History,” 3.

¹⁰³ National Register of Historic Places, The Women’s Building, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California, National Register #SG100002359.

¹⁰⁴ Brodsky, “Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces,” 106.

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open to the public. The Women's Interart Center appears to have closed in 2016 after a multi-year legal dispute with New York City, which owned the building occupied by the Center.¹⁰⁵

Washington, D.C.—The Washington Women's Art Center was established in 1975 as a multi-art, nonprofit organization founded to provide professional support and opportunities for women artists. The Center housed a gallery, library, and poetry center, it held an array of art workshops, and it produced a monthly newsletter and literary publication. It sponsored special events for nationally renowned women artists like Judy Chicago, and its exhibitions traveled to other feminist galleries and museums across the country. The Center also served as the headquarters of the semi-autonomous organization, the Printmakers Group. The Women's Art Center was rebranded as the New Art Center in 1986 in an effort to attract a broader membership, including men. It closed due to financial issues in 1988.¹⁰⁶

New York—The New York Feminist Art Institute (NYFAI) was established in 1979 by women artists Miriam Schapiro, Nancy Azara, Irene Peslikis, Carol Stronghilos, Lucille Lessane, and Selena Whitefeather after they had recognized the need for an art school on the East Coast that approached art from a feminist perspective. The NYFAI's "West Coast approach to feminist art/processes," made it comparable to earlier feminist programs in California; its "approach to getting women into galleries" was more characteristic of the East Coast.¹⁰⁷ Women came from all over the United States to study at the Institute. The NYFAI ceased operation in 1990.

Minnesota—The Arts Core Program for Women was launched in 1975 at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. Modeled after the techniques and philosophy of the Feminist Studio Workshop in the Los Angeles Woman's Building, the program was organized by faculty in the Visual Arts Department as an alternative program for sophomore art majors. Students attended consciousness-raising sessions and "were encouraged to experiment with a range of materials, techniques, and media, and to take risks to confront feminist concerns relating to sexuality, religion, politics, and economics."¹⁰⁸ The program had a broad impact on the feminist art community through its sponsorship of workshops, public lectures, exhibits, and residency programs by prominent feminist artists. Despite its overwhelming success and popularity, the Arts Core Program only lasted one year due to internal tensions within the Visual Arts Department.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Chiarmonte, "Women Artists: A Resource and Research Guide," A1, A3-A20; Nathan Tempey, "Urban Removal: How A Utopian Vision For Hell's Kitchen Burned Out," *Gothamist*, September 20, 2016, accessed November 2020, <https://gothamist.com/news/urban-removal-how-a-utopian-vision-for-hells-kitchen-burned-out>.

¹⁰⁶ "Finding Aid to Washington Women's Art Center Collection, 1972-2002, Archives of Women Artists," prepared by Emily Moore, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., March 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Katie Cercone, "The New York Feminist Art Institute, 1979-1990," in *Entering the Picture: Judy Chicago, the Fresno Feminist Art Program, and Collective Visions of Women Artists*, ed. Jill Fields (New York: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁰⁸ Ingot, *WARM*, 19-20.

¹⁰⁹ Ingot, *WARM*, 20.

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Criterion C—Architecture

Beaux Arts Architecture

The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Beaux Arts architectural style and is a relatively rare example of the style applied to an industrial building in Los Angeles. Beaux Arts architecture was introduced in the United States in the 1880s after Americans who studied at France's Ecole des Beaux-Arts returned home to practice. Principles of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts were further popularized through the World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Beaux Arts planning influenced America's City Beautiful movement, which was prevalent in the design of residential suburbs in the eastern United States at the turn of the twentieth century.¹¹⁰

The lavish and heavily embellished Beaux Arts style combines classical elements of Greek and Roman architecture with principles of Renaissance design. Beaux Arts buildings are characterized by their symmetry, strong sense of order, and classical ornamentation. Primarily applied to grandiose residences, institutional properties, and large-scale commercial buildings, examples of the style in Los Angeles are typically isolated. Beaux Arts architecture declined in popularity in the 1930s as buildings with a more modern, stripped aesthetic came into favor.

Character-defining features of the Beaux Arts style include the following:¹¹¹

- Symmetrical design
- Axial floor plans
- Advancing and receding wall planes
- Cast concrete, stone, or brick sheathing (typically light in color)
- Monumental entrance, often with multiple runs of steps
- Arched or linteled openings
- Ornamental sculpture, often figure sculpture in round or in relief
- Paired columns or pilasters
- Elaborate cornice

Myron Hunt, Architect

The building at 1727 N. Spring Street was designed by renowned Southern California architect Myron Hunt. Born in 1868 in Sunderland, Massachusetts, Hunt studied at Northwestern University before receiving his bachelor's degree in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After a few years of studying Renaissance architecture in Europe, Hunt returned to

¹¹⁰ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 380.

¹¹¹ City of Los Angeles, "SurveyLA Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: Architecture and Engineering, Theme: Beaux Arts Classicism, Neoclassical, and Italian Renaissance Revival Architecture, 1895-1940," prepared by GPA Consulting for the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources (2018), 21.

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the United States and worked as a draftsman for the architecture firm of Hartwell & Richardson in Boston; in 1896, he moved to Chicago to work with Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge. By the time Hunt moved to California in 1903, he had established himself as a reputable architect, designing dozens of buildings in the Chicago area and serving as vice president of the Chicago Architectural Club and founding member of the Arts and Crafts Society of Chicago.¹¹²

The Hunt family moved to Pasadena in 1903 with the hope that Mrs. Hunt would recover from tuberculosis. Upon moving, Hunt organized his own architecture practice with an office in downtown Los Angeles. As noted by historian Alson Clark in his essay "Myron Hunt in Southern California," Hunt's choice of establishing an office downtown as opposed to Pasadena "seemed to announce that he intended to play a major role in the development of all of southern California."¹¹³ In 1904, he formed a partnership with Elmer Grey, a talented architect who also had roots in Chicago. In addition to a number of grand residences, including the Beaux Arts residence of Henry Huntington (later part of the Huntington Library), the Hunt-Grey partnership was responsible for the Pasadena Valley Hunt Club, an early campus plan and buildings at the Throop Polytechnic Institute (later the California Institute of Technology), and buildings at Pomona and Occidental Colleges.¹¹⁴

After Hunt and Grey parted ways in 1911, Hunt set up his own practice in Pasadena. In the years leading up to World War I, he received several major commissions for public and institutional buildings. In 1912, he was hired to design First Congregational Church in Riverside, California.¹¹⁵ Complete with a three-tiered bell tower, tiled roof, arcade, and Churriguesque-inspired entrance, the church represents Hunt's first major foray into the Spanish Colonial Revival style and served as a forerunner for the development of Southern California's most emblematic architectural idiom.¹¹⁶ Hunt also designed multiple buildings for Pomona College and was responsible for the design of all buildings at Occidental College leading up to his retirement after World War II.

In 1914, Standard Oil Company of California commissioned Hunt to design a new sales department office at its Los Angeles branch storage facility on San Fernando Street (later N. Spring Street). Though relatively modest compared to most of his other work, the building sits conspicuously amongst a block of largely unremarkable early 1900s industrial buildings. Hunt

¹¹² "Myron Hubbard Hunt (Architect)," *Pacific Coast Architecture Database*, accessed November 2020, <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/197/>; "Myron Hunt Papers: Finding Aid," *Online Archive of California*, accessed November 2020, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf596nb0s6/?query=myron+hunt>.

¹¹³ Alson Clark, "Myron Hunt in Southern California," in *California Architecture and Architects: Myron Hunt, 1868-1952: The Search for a Regional Architecture*, vol. 4, ed. David Gebhard (Santa Monica: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1984), 23.

¹¹⁴ "Hunt and Grey, Architects (Partnership)," *Pacific Coast Architecture Database*, accessed November 2020, <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/firm/83/>.

¹¹⁵ Hunt and Grey had won a competition to design the church; after their partnership dissolved, Hunt inherited the commission.

¹¹⁶ Clark, "Myron Hunt in Southern California," 37.

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designed the Standard Oil building in the Beaux Arts style, a rather ornate architectural idiom for such a modest, industrial use.

Conclusion

The Woman's Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with the Standard Oil Company and the company's central role in the early development of the California oil industry. Under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture, the building is eligible as an excellent example of Beaux Arts industrial architecture designed by master architect Myron Hunt. Under Criterion A at the national level of significance in the area of Social History: Women's History, the Woman's Building is eligible as a prominent feminist art collective that greatly influenced the development and evolution of the feminist art movement in Los Angeles and nationwide. In comparison to the aforementioned other feminist art spaces, the Woman's Building is unique in terms of the diverse range of professional and educational resources it provided. From its inception, the goals of the Woman's Building were "to raise consciousness, to create dialogue, and to transform culture."¹¹⁷ In the pursuit of these goals, the building embodied multiple facets of the broader feminist art movement. It acted as an educational institution, as well as a feminist information and referral center, a gallery space, a bookstore, a slide repository, and a graphic center. During its eighteen years of operation, the building was home to artists, businesses, and activist groups who were united by their commitment to feminism.¹¹⁸ Because it was home to a variety of feminist art entities, several of which were highly influential in their own respect, the Woman's Building permeated feminist art and culture in a way that has largely been unparalleled. The Woman's Building meets Criteria Consideration G for its exceptional significance related to its contributions to second wave feminism and the national feminist art movement.

¹¹⁷ Meyer, "The Woman's Building and Los Angeles' Leading Role in the Feminist Art Movement," 110.

¹¹⁸ *How did the Los Angeles Woman's Building Keep Feminism Alive, 1970-1991?*, documents selected and interpreted by Michelle Moravec.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Otis College of Art and Design, Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institute, Getty Research Institute

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

Woman's Building
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.070066 Longitude: -118.226550

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, Unnumbered Lot, Tract No. 36. 75.40 feet along N. Spring Street (south), 110.40 feet along Aurora Street (east), 44.88 feet along north property line, 92.37 feet along west property line.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property lines are the legally recorded boundary lines.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Evanne St. Charles/Senior Associate
organization: Architectural Resources Group
street & number: 360 E. 2nd Street, Suite 225
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90012
e-mail: e.stcharles@argcreate.com
telephone: (626) 583-1401 x125
date: December 2024; Revised January 2025, March 2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Woman's Building
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Photo Log

Name of Property: Woman's Building
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles
County: Los Angeles
State: California
Photographer: Evanne St. Charles
Date Photographed: December 27, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Interior access to the building was not provided, and thus no interior photographs are available to include in this nomination.

- 1 of 5 View northwest of the south (primary) façade.
- 2 of 5 View northwest of the south (primary) entrance.
- 3 of 5 View west of the south and east elevations.
- 4 of 5 View northeast of the south and west elevations.
- 5 of 5 View south of the north and east elevations.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Location Map



Woman's Building
 Name of Property

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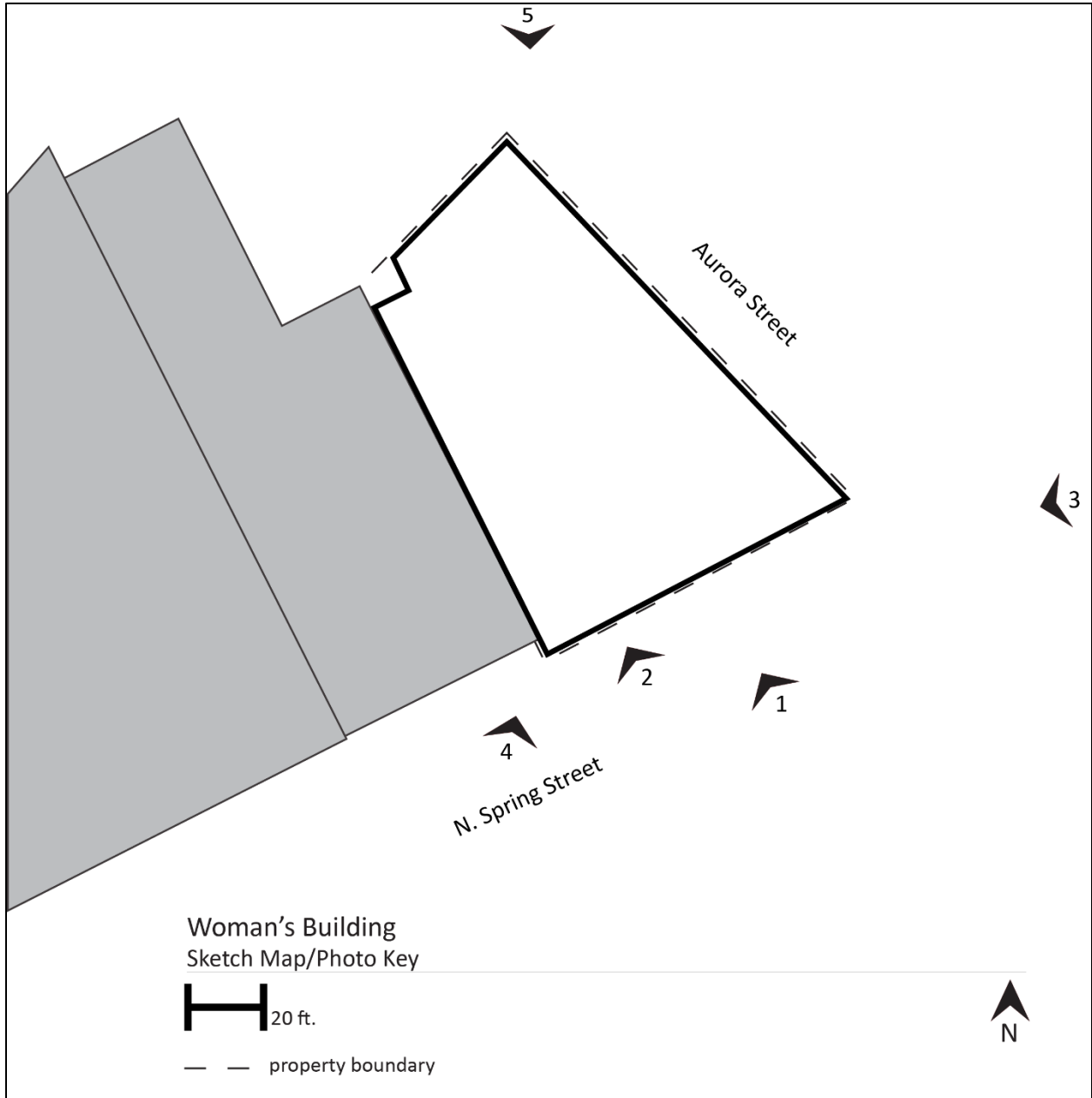
Site Map



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Sketch Map/Photo Key

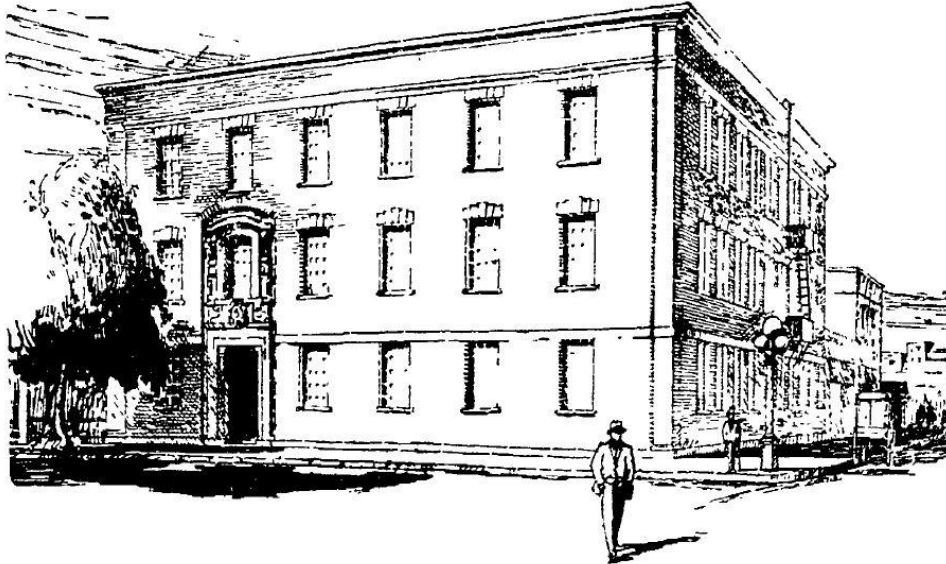


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Figure 1 "Standard Oil Will Build Unique Block," *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1914.

Projected by Big Corporation in North End.



Standard Oil office building, Myron Hunt, architect.

Figure 2 Women painting the ceiling on the 3rd floor of the Spring Street building, circa 1975, photo by Maria Karra, Woman's Building Ephemera, Otis College of Art and Design.



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Figure 3. Great Lady Rising event as part of the 5th Anniversary Celebration, Kate Millett's sculpture installed, 1978, Woman's Building Slide Archive, Otis College of Art and Design.



Figure 4 Staff of the Woman's Building and WGC Typesetting, n.d., photo by J. Lausten, Woman's Building Ephemera, Otis College of Art and Design.



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Figure 5 Linda Vallejo performing at the Opening of Madre Tierra Press Publication Party, 1982, Woman's Building Slide Archive, Otis College of Art and Design.



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Photo 1 View northwest of the south (primary) façade.



Photo 2 View northwest of the south (primary) entrance.



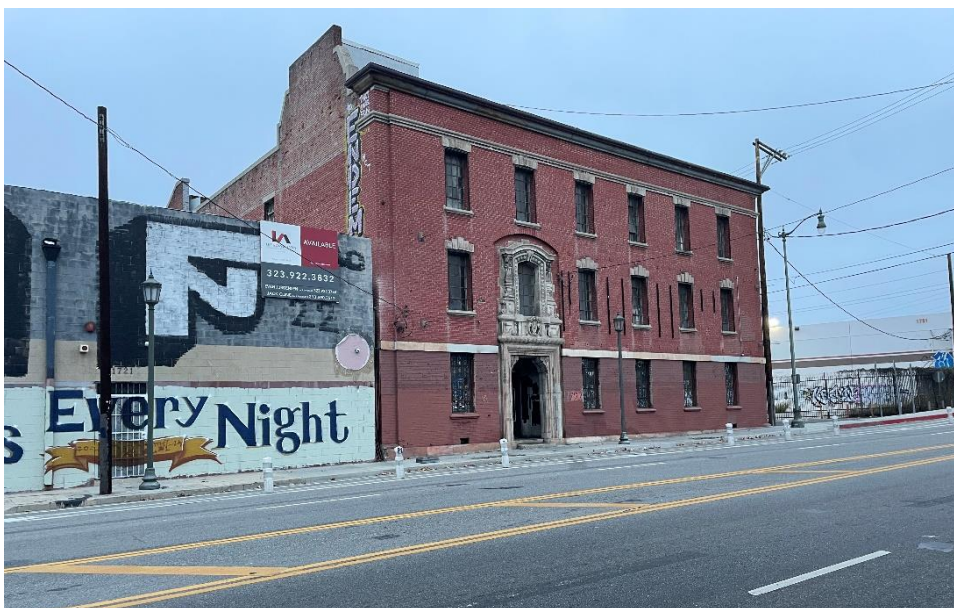
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Photo 3 View west of the south and east elevations.



Photo 4 View northeast of the south and west elevations.



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Photo 5 View south of the north and east elevations.

