

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

The Editors of ARTnews, “Lynda Benglis Responds,” *ART News*, 26th May 2015

The following is a response to Maura Reilly’s article “Taking the Measure of Sexism: Facts, Figures, and Fixes” about the current statistics of Women in the Art World. Our coverage begins with our Editor’s Letter.



Born in 1941, lives and works between New York City, Santa Fe, Kastellorizo, Greece, and Ahmedabad, India

I feel that whatever I do has to do with my being a person who happens to be a woman. But I think the political issue is a great issue, although I’m not involved with the economics. I’m involved with the ideas. Nevertheless, I think we, as women artists, have to make our demands. And I think I do everything for myself that I possibly can within that situation. I’m lucky enough to have always had outlets for my work. But also, I’ve assumed power. You have to carefully sift out the important things that don’t necessarily apply to your life in order to get to more important things, in order to go on, to make your own rules and not be a victim. Worrying takes a lot of energy, and it’s negative.

For my part, if I see something good being made by a woman, I’d like to buy it. I have a collection that seems to be fairly balanced. Right now, around my bedroom at Prince Street, I have three women artists whom I admire. But I do have other art.

When I was teaching at the University of Rochester, I went to San Francisco for a college art conference. Paul Brock, who was the dean of CalArts, saw me and said, “Oh, I’m at CalArts. It’s a new school. We have a new building. You know, it’s the Disney school.” He added, “We have a feminist movement.” He was married to Miriam Schapiro, and Judy Chicago was teaching there. He said, “You’re somebody who is really doing something.” I couldn’t believe he said that, as if the other women weren’t. That really

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irritated me. So I came, I gave that talk, but when I got there, I found that it was scheduled on the very day that the women artists were opening the 1972 exhibition "Womanhouse." There was only one woman at the conference.

Nothing's different today, but there are more women artists, and there are more people in the arts. I've managed to do what I pretty much wanted to do. And I encourage my students to do what they feel like doing. I advise them about life, and I feel equally about what they're doing and how to help them approach what they're faced with, whether they're a man or a woman. My women students at CalArts are very good. I'm even thinking about commissioning a work from one of them. I think women should support women, absolutely, but I support the guys, too.

My L.A. experience has been very, very good. I was also part of a situation where Dorothea Rockburne and myself and Martin Friedman were invited to the new Walker Art Center to do a commission, and I made a work that Hilton Kramer happened to like. He said, "That's the best thing since Louise Nevelson." So, you know, women are compared with other women, and that's OK, too.

Nevelson is semi-forgotten, but I think we're having a resurgence with the museums. I remember somebody said to me recently, "You're too young! We're now showing women in their 80s and 90s and almost 100." And I thought, "Well, great. Good on ya!"

I think that it's a great time, that we have a gathering new wave here. A new old wave. The water's always been there, the light source has always been there, and women really do have the light source.

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<http://www.artnews.com/2015/05/26/lynda-benglis-responds/>