

CALIFORNIA ARTISTS
Projects for Kids

Miriam Schapiro

Miriam Schapiro (b.1923) lived & worked in Southern California during the critical years of the women's feminist art movement. Though not a long-term resident of California, she left a lasting mark on its art world. Noticing that women's art was barely represented in museums, she pressed for change. In her art & teaching she combined women's art traditions & perspectives allowing them to be valued, exhibited & preserved. While living in California, Miriam Schapiro brought women's art to the forefront.

The Doll House

Miriam Schapiro & Judy Chicago were leaders in the feminist art movement of the 1970's. While teaching at California Institute of the Arts, they & their students converted an old house into the art piece *Womanhouse*, a series of creative rooms exploring women's roles as artists, mothers & working women. In her room, Miriam helped make a dollhouse that showed a female artist's many "selves" living under the same roof. She later used similar house shapes in her fabric collages.

- ◆ Make a miniature room for one of your "selves" such as student, athlete or friend.
- ◆ Collect tubes, spools, fabric, cardboard & wooden pieces. Cut two sides off a box. Paint inside walls with colors.
- ◆ In the box, arrange & glue pieces into furniture, rugs, lamps & decorations.



The Cloud Room by Vaheeshta M, grade 4



Student artwork, grade 5



Miriam Schapiro, *Gensets*, 2005, Acrylic, Digital Images and Fabric on Canvas, 48"x40"
© Miriam Schapiro, Courtesy of Flomenhaft Gallery LLC, New York

Dolls

Miriam collects dolls which she photographs for her artwork. Vintage dolls & those from other countries fascinate her. Use descriptive lines & colors to draw a doll or special toy.

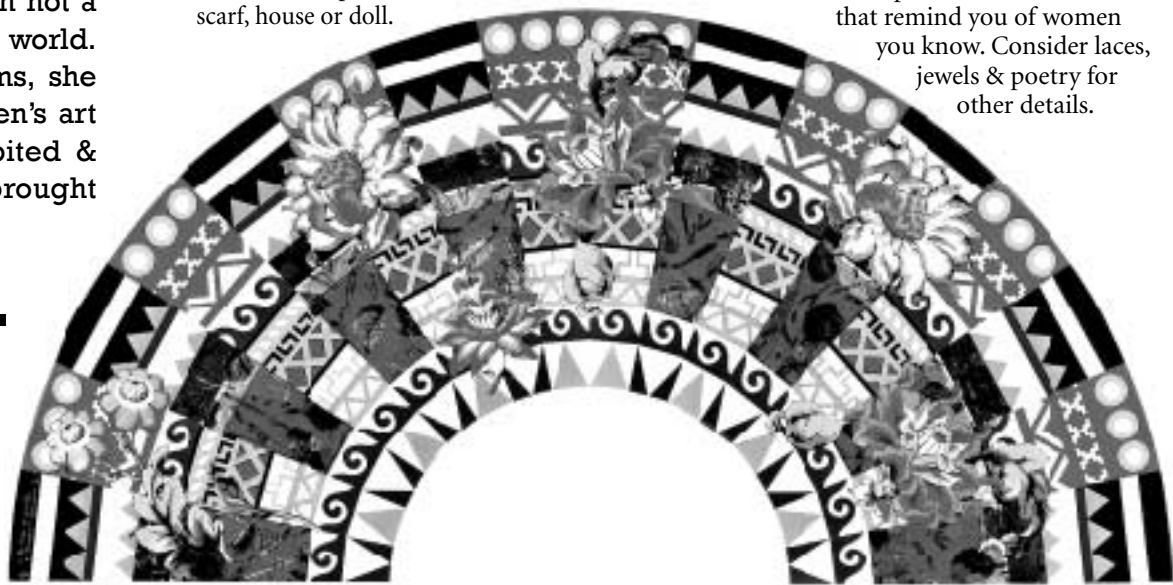
Look in the Mercury News

- ◆ Search the newspaper for images of women in their many roles. Cut & paste to make a collage about women.
- ◆ Look for articles about people's search for equality & fairness.

"Femmege"

Miriam Schapiro valued women's quilting, needlework & embroidery. She put pieces of these together into large art pieces she named "femmeages" (female + collage). Shapes from women's lives, such as fans, hearts, houses & robes, were filled with patterns & decorations erasing the line between women's crafts & fine art.

- ◆ Research quilting, embroidery or lacemaking. Why have these become women's arts?
- ◆ Cut a base shape of a heart, fan, scarf, house or doll.
- ◆ Fill it with patterns & decorations that remind you of women you know. Consider laces, jewels & poetry for other details.



Miriam Schapiro, *In the Heat of Winter*, 1995, Silkscreen & Fabric, Monoprint 1/1, 33"x62", © Miriam Schapiro
Courtesy of Flomenhaft Gallery LLC, New York.

Learning from Others

During the 1990's Miriam Schapiro looked to artists' lives & struggles to learn about her own. Using paper, fabric & bits from their paintings, she made artworks that combined their ideas & her own. These artworks helped her connect to female artists like Frida Khalo, who have tried to make art in a world where women artists were not accepted.

- ◆ Make a collage of a person who has inspired you. What lessons can you learn for living your life?
- ◆ Collect copies of photos, textured papers & colored fabrics.
- ◆ Cut, arrange & glue large shapes first. Add figures & details to tell more of the visual story.
- ◆ See more of Schapiro's artworks at: www.flomenhaftgallery.com/artists/artists.htm



Student artwork by Jane K, grade 3



Miriam Schapiro, *Against All Odds*, 2004, Screen Print with Mixed Media - Edition, 15"x11" - unframed, 18.5"x14.5" - framed. © Miriam Schapiro, Courtesy of Flomenhaft Gallery LLC, New York.