Are the artworks of Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago truly distinct? A comparative analysis of Barbara Kruger's main feminist artworks and Judy Chicago's PowerPlay series, their reception, and the feminist positions of both artists

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Introduction

Two male faces with angry expressions frowning directly at the spectator. The artworks *Untitled (Hate like Us)* (Fig.1) by Barbara Kruger and *Disfigured by Power 1* (Fig.2) by Judy Chicago seem to represent the very same subject matter. However, the two artists have generally been considered markedly different. The art historian Jonathan Katz argued that the emergence of a new generation of feminist artists including Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Cindy Sherman and others had rendered Chicago's art obsolete.[1] Their art, expressing female empowerment, used irony to express political criticism in art in the 1980s. Chicago's art, meanwhile, appeared serious and declarative.[2] In the words of Katz, "[Chicago's work is] just too different; hers is a protest art, a message art, with an emphasis on communicating directly to the viewer [...]"[3] Nevertheless, I would like to argue that Kruger's *Untitled (Hate like Us)* also conveys a message and speaks directly to the spectator. This raises the question: precisely how dissimilar are the artworks of Kruger and Chicago? Art historians have not explained why Kruger and Chicago's art has seldom been studied together. This ambiguity was a primary source of motivation for this thesis.

Even though Kruger is generally considered to be a feminist artist, the existing literature rarely focuses on the feminist features of her art. Instead, art historians and critics have usually analysed capitalist, consumerist and mass media aspects of her artworks while only briefly mentioning their feminist qualities. This thesis will specifically focus on Kruger's main feminist artworks from the 1980s and 1990s. Chicago's series, entitled *PowerPla*y (1982-87), was chosen for comparison since, like Kruger's feminist artworks, it depicts human bodies and close-ups of faces. This series is, peculiarly, less well known than Chicago's other works and has not been studied in great detail. The series was deliberately chosen for its similarity to Kruger's artworks. With another series, the result would undoubtedly not be the same.

Whereas Kruger has dealt with various societal issues throughout her career, Chicago has predominantly focused on feminism. Only part of their oeuvre will thus be studied in this thesis. One might, however, argue that the selection contains most of

[1] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."
[2] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[3] Ibid.

Kruger's principal artworks and is therefore representative of her whole oeuvre. Similarly, even though *PowerPlay* is sometimes interpreted as an unusual series in Chicago's oeuvre, it will be demonstrated later in the thesis that the theme in fact logically follows her well-known *The Dinner Party* (1974-79). It should also be stressed that the thesis will remain in the canon of the western perspective – white American artists. This is intentionally chosen in order to explore why these two specific artists, whose works seem to strongly resemble each other, have been broadly distinguished.

The aim of this thesis is to answer the following question: To what extent are certain feminist artworks by Barbara Kruger criticising gender stereotypes, including *Untitled (We don't need another hero), Untitled (We have received orders not to move), We Will Not Become What We Mean to You* and others, comparable to Judy Chicago's *PowerPlay* series dealing with the construct of masculinity? This will be done with the help of three sub-questions: What are the roles of Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago as feminist artists? What are the similarities and differences between a selection of Kruger's feminist artworks and Chicago's *PowerPla*y with respect to personal experience and contemporary issues, critique of patriarchy, male and 'female' gaze, medium and technique, and place of display? And lastly, how have Kruger's artworks and Chicago's series been received by both the art world and the public?

The thesis also aims to prove the relevance of the theme and issues to contemporary feminist art and, due to the subject matter of the discussed artworks, to society in general. Even though both artists represent the Western canon, their internationally known art might still be, in my view, considered relevant to a global perspective since their artworks have been exhibited outside the Euro-American world. Moreover, since these two artists have not often been studied together, I believe that the analysis could bring a new perspective on feminist art.

The first chapter will examine American feminist art of the period in which Kruger and Chicago started to be artistically active and distinguish it from contemporary feminisms in the United States. In addition, Kruger's and Chicago's positions as feminist artists will be evaluated. The second chapter will explore the connections between the analysed artworks in relation to their subject matter: the source of inspiration for the topics, the critique of patriarchal structures and the use of gaze will be closely scrutinised. Subsequently, this chapter will delve further into the mediums and techniques of the selected artworks and

where they have been displayed. The last chapter will focus on the reception of Kruger and Chicago's works and investigate whether one artist has been more popular with the public and the art world than the other, and if so, why.

The analysis will be based on formal analyses of the selected artworks and an examination of primary and secondary sources. More specifically, autobiographies and books by the artists will be studied as primary sources, while interviews, exhibition reviews, books and articles related to the topic will be used as secondary sources. The literature will be studied from a feminist perspective, which will function as another method for answering the research question, to better understand the intentions of the artists, the subject matter of their artworks and the meaning behind them. The main literature examined for Barbara Kruger's sections throughout the thesis will be the books *Barbara Kruger* (1999) by Barbara Kruger, Ann Goldstein and Rosalyn Deutsche; *Barbara Kruger* (2010) by Alexander Alberro and Barbara Kruger; and the book about Kruger's current exhibition, *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*. (2021) by Peter Eleey and others. The following sources will be used to study the chapters on Judy Chicago: Edward Lucie-Smith's monograph *Judy Chicago: An American Vision* (2000); Jonathan Katz's articles 'Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity' (2012); and 'What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity' (2018).

Chapter 1: Barbara Kruger, Judy Chicago and feminist art

The art historian and critic Cassandra Langer argued in her article that numerous postmodern critics, both male and female, have blindly acknowledged Barbara Kruger's work as ironic and, as a consequence, automatically feminist.[4] Therefore, this statement raises several questions: Are Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago indeed feminist artists? Does it make female artists less appreciated if they are not seen as feminists? What did feminist art look like when Kruger and Chicago started to be artistically active? And lastly, how has feminism been perceived throughout the decades? This chapter will focus on some of these aspects. Feminist criticism has attempted to change the male-dominated art world for decades.[5] Nevertheless, it is essential to emphasise that feminisms nowadays differ considerably from the feminisms of the 1960s-1970s, the period when Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago began to be artistically active.[6]

1.1 Feminist art

As the professor of art history Jayne Wark asserted in her book: "The practical and theoretical models for political change established within the early women's movement would come to constitute the basis for the feminist art practices that began to emerge in the late 1960s."[7] This produced new relations between art and politics since feminist art became exceptionally responsive to political reality as well as an agent of change in and beyond the art world. Furthermore, new artistic practices, such as performance art, that had been previously absent, marginalized, suppressed or defamed were established.[8] Multiple female artists hoped that by producing authentic art, they might "undo the prevailing visual regime" in the art world.[9] However, they were mistaken. Even though feminist artists could be, to some extent, successful, they had to create artworks within the conventions constructed by men. In other words, women could only be professionally involved in the art world when they did not threaten or challenge the pathways and

[4] Langer, "Feminist Art Criticism," 26.
[5] Ibid., 25.
[6] Strong, "Painting a Revolution," 314.
[7] Wark, *Radical Gestures,* 26.
[8] Ibid., 23, 26, 28-29.
[9] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning," 103.

traditions of the male-dominated field. On the contrary, if female artists attempted to integrate works according to their own terms, they were met with difficulties and criticism.[10] Moreover, "since Modernist judgements about art were ostensibly neutral and disinterested", it was believed that when female artists achieved less success than their male colleagues, they were automatically less competent as artists.[11] The prejudicial aspects of the art world not allowing women to work in a comparable way to men were thus not taken into account.[12]

As a result of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, the American art historian Linda Nochlin asked the renowned question, "why have there been no great women artists?" in her essay.[13] One might say that this, at first glance, simple question has changed the definition of art history as an academic discipline.[14] As the art historians Victoria Horne and Lara Perry stated: "The decades that followed Nochlin's intervention have seen some of the most fertile, and febrile, episodes in the investigation of the importance of sex and gender to art and art history in the English-speaking world."[15]

Performance art has also played a crucial role in the development of feminist art. As the professor Erin Striff argued: "When a woman appears on stage, her body too often speaks for itself."[16] The aim of feminist performance artists has been to challenge the common cultural notions of the female body. The popular artistic medium in the 1960s and 1970s created many possibilities for female artists to express their individual feelings and beliefs.[17] One of the best-known feminist performance artists was, without a doubt, Carolee Schneemann, who created performances celebrating visceral and sensual aspects of the female body.[18] Her performance *Interior Scroll* in 1975, during which she pulled a scroll from her vagina, belongs to Schneemann's most important works.[19] Other significant female performance artists are, among many others, Ana Mendieta, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramovic as well as Judy Chicago. As the professor of visual arts Jacqueline Millner and the art

[10] Wark, *Radical Gestures*, 28.
[11] Ibid., 27.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?."
[14] Horne and Perry, *Feminism and Art History Now*, 3.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Striff, "Bodies of Evidence: Feminist Performance Art," 1.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Wark, *Radical Gestures*, 28.
[19] Warr, *The Artist's Body*, 33.

historian Catriona Moore argued in their book, this period was renowned for performances related to menstruation, bathrooms, tampons, and nappies.[20]

The artist Judy Chicago was directly involved in shaping feminism in the early 1970s.[21] In the interview with Chicago in 2002, the author and editor Lester Strong asserted that Chicago was "one of the founders of the feminist art movement."[22] According to Chicago, the feminist art of this era had three characteristics: Firstly, it was not defined by a certain style of art, but it was rather woman-centred art based on their own experience as opposed to the traditional methods developed predominantly for and by men. However, feminist art also had to be, in Chicago's view, accessible to a broad audience in order to fulfil its educational and empowering ambitions. And lastly, feminist art had to be diverse and show aspects of multiplicity since, as Chicago aptly argued, women, in the same way as men, have numerous points of view influenced by culture, race, sexual orientation, religion and other aspects.[23]

In the early 1980s, a new approach was introduced by artists such as Jenny Holzer, Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger. Their critique of the construct of masculinity was lightened by using irony. This enabled the artists to address the issues without directly naming them.[24] Comparably, the anonymous group of feminists - Guerrilla Girls, formed in 1985 in New York, has attempted to underline the inclusion of female artists and a potential for more commensurate representation by including apt, sardonic humour in their artworks. For instance, their telling poster *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist* (Fig.3) from 1988 illustrates a list of all too familiar 'benefits' of being a female artist.[25] The usage of posters, texts and irony seem to be comparable to Barbara Kruger's approach, which is, as was argued, also often based on these attributes. As the art historian Anna C. Chave argued: "Indeed, some wondered whether Kruger had a hand in the Guerrilla Girls' posters, which at times appeared somewhat Kruger-esque."[26] However, the available evidence now

[20] Millner and Moore, *Contemporary Art and Feminism.*
[21] Strong, "Painting a Revolution," 314.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[25] Chave, "The Guerrilla Girls' Reckoning," 103-105.
[26] Ibid., 106.

demonstrates that a founding member of the group was predominantly responsible for the graphics of the artworks.[27]

The late 1980s are simultaneously a period, in which the *PowerPlay* series by Chicago, examined in this thesis, was made. The artworks by Kruger, which will be analysed in the subsequent chapters, were created in both the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1990s, feminist art recognised the need for the inclusion of contemporary issues and interests by diverse female artists. In this period, the queer theory emerged, and several concepts of sexuality, race and class were addressed. Consequently, this led to the necessity of multiple feminisms.[28]

In a similar way to other political movements and theories, feminisms have changed over the decades because of their own development and an ever-changing world. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the changes between the feminist art of the last century and feminist art nowadays. The present feminisms have become an inseparable part of art, art history, media and academia.[29] However, Horne and Perry emphasised that in the twenty-first century, feminisms, particularly in mainstream media, had been irreversibly diminished to "an individualised, classed model of personal female achievement."[30] According to them, the predominant focus on Eurocentric art is still problematic for the entire discipline of art history.[31] As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis will also remain in the canon of the Western perspective with the intention to specifically analyse artists with equivalent characteristics in regard to gender, race, nationality and age.

Millner and Moore argued in their book from 2021 that feminisms nowadays had been "encouraging us to always situate ourselves within specific historical, cultural and economic contexts, and hence to generate knowledge from gendered, concrete, daily experiences."[32] In their view, many feminist artists have been visualising their imagination of a feminist world. This has led to works of art beyond the gallery setting, aiming to make

[27] Ibid.
[28] Fields, "Frontiers in Feminist Art History," 8.
[29] Horne and Perry, *Feminism and Art History Now*, 1.
[30] Ibid., 12.
[31] Ibid., 4.
[32] Millner and Moore, *Contemporary Art and Feminism.*

the works accessible to a broader audience. Naturally, the public has had very contentious views on these works.[33] As they argued: "'Public' feminist art practices work towards creating safe places for expressing what is often repressed, offering licence to laugh, enjoy and lampoon in 'public', and seeking to upend commonly understood 'truths'."[34] In addition, art has functioned as a tool for representing societal changes.[35]

However, it is essential to realise that gender inequality in the art world is still present. For instance, the article "Diversity of artists in major U.S. museums" published in 2019 revealed that women constitute only 12.6% of the permanent collections of 18 major American museums (75.7% of all the artists are white men).[36] As the curator, writer and art consultant Maura Reilly aptly pointed out, "despite decades of postcolonial, feminist, anti-racist, and queer activism and theorizing, the majority [of artists] continues to be defined as white, Euro-American, heterosexual, privileged, and, above all, male".[37] On the other hand, one can gradually see more 'feminist exhibitions' throughout the world, such as the Gallery of Honour at Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam,[38] and the online exhibition "HerStory" by Manhattan Arts International.[39] Nevertheless, this raises the following question: By creating feminist exhibitions, do we, in fact, include feminist artists in the art world, or do we designate them as 'the other' by putting them in a separate box? Subsequently, one might wonder whether the feminist label is truly beneficial.[40]

1.2 Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago as feminist artists

As already mentioned, the role of Barbara Kruger as a feminist artist is somewhat ambiguous.[41] Born in 1945 in Newark, New Jersey, Kruger has been making art since the late

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Topaz et al., "Diversity of artists in major U.S. museums,"8.
[37] Horne and Perry, *Feminism and Art History Now*, 4.
[38] "Rijksmuseum Presents Women Artists in the Gallery of Honour for the First Time," Rijksmuseum, accessed March 10, 2022, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/press/press-releases/rijksmuseum-presents-women-artists-in-the-gallery-of-honour-for-the-first-time.
[39] "'HerStory' 2022 Exhibition of Art by Women Artists," Manhattan Arts International, March 8, 2022, https://manhattanarts.com/herstory-2022-exhibition-of-art-by-women-artists/.
[40] For more information about feminist art, see Millner and Moore, *Contemporary Art and Feminism*; Horne and Perry, *Feminism and Art History Now*.
[41] For more information about Barbara Kruger's biography, see Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 27; O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 6.

1960s. However, she started to create her signature artworks in the late 1970s. During this decade, she clipped numerous pictures depicting various parts of the body (particularly faces and hands), expressions and gestures out of magazines and books that she had found in second-hand shops and flea markets. She subsequently cropped the pictures, added texts in the Futura Bold font, re-photographed them and enlarged them into black-and-white works (more recently, she has also been using the colour red).[42] Before becoming an artist, she had worked as a graphic designer at *Mademoiselle*, the Condé Nast women's fashion magazine.[43] There she was taught how to select and examine pictures, evaluate their "rhetorical potential," and edit them.[44] She asserted that this experience of 'playing' with pictures and words influenced her work the most.[45] As she clarified: "So, in a sort of circular fashion, my 'job' as a designer became, with a few adjustments, my 'work' as an artist."[46]

She has created artworks of various scales, from small matchbook covers to huge billboards, and of diverse media, "from simple photomontages to complex screen-and-audio installations."[47] Kruger tries to continually find new methods of reaching a broad public and drawing political issues into art and the other way around.[48] As she stated: "I'm interested in how identities are constructed, how stereotypes are formed, how narratives sort of congeal and become history."[49] Kruger is thus interested in a wide range of topics. Some artworks of her oeuvre are, however, indeed feminist. As the writer and curator Carol Squiers asserted: "A committed feminist, she takes as her subjects the skewed social relations created by the inequalities of gender, class, and race."[50] The professor of modern and contemporary art, history and photography Alexander Alberro also believes that Kruger is justifiably acknowledged as a key figure of feminist art, appropriation art, as well as the 'Pictures Generation,' and postmodern art.[51] Due to Kruger's interest in (also) feminist topics and the arguments by writers, curators, and professors, it is evident that the artist

[42] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 27,195.
[43] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 6.
[44] Kosut, *Encyclopedia of Gender in Media,* 190.
[45] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 26.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 17.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 189.
[50] Squiers, "Barbara Kruger," 58.
[51] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 90.

Barbara Kruger can be considered a feminist artist, even though she has focused on this issue only to some extent.

Contrary to Barbara Kruger, Judy Chicago's role as a feminist artist is abundantly clear. Widely known for her monumental ceramics- and textile-based installation *The Dinner Party* from 1974-79,[52] Chicago is one of the most controversial artists in the United States.[53] She was born Judy Cohen in 1939 in Chicago, Illinois. In contrast to Kruger, Chicago started to draw when she was a little girl and had had the ambition to become an artist since then.[54] Feminism has been an inherent aspect of her artworks since the 1970s.[55] She argued that she wanted "to force viewers to see the work in relation to the fact that it was made by a woman artist."[56] One of the most significant achievements in her career was the first Feminist Art Program which Chicago set up together with Miriam Schapiro in 1971 at the California Institute of the Arts. Their exhibition "Womanhouse" – a series of installations based on oppressions and fantasies of women's experience – was a remarkable project since it was a collective work, and it challenged the notion that domesticity did not belong to art.[57]

Chicago's other explicitly feminist series include the already mentioned *The Dinner Party* (1974-79), which has caused heated controversy;[58] *Birth Project* (1980-85), which she created because the subject of birth had been absent in Western art;[59] *PowerPlay* (1982-85), which will be analysed in depth in the following chapters; and others.[60] Nowadays, Chicago, in her eighties, is still artistically active, and as Bob Dickinson argued in his article, the artist is "as much a key figure in the history of feminist art as she is a historian in her own right."[61] Because of the abovementioned arguments, there is no doubt that Chicago has played a crucial role in shaping feminist art in the United States, and her position as a feminist artist is thus abundantly clear.

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[52] For more information about *The Dinner Party,* see Chicago, *The Dinner Party*.
[53] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago*, 7.
[54] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 1.
[55] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago*, 8.
[56] Wark, *Radical Gestures*, 52.
[57] Crichton, "Feminism and art in the United States," 1.
[58] Strong, "Painting a Revolution," 309.
[59] Judy Chicago. Accessed November 22, 2021. https://www.judychicago.com/.
[60] For more information about Judy Chicago's artworks, see Chicago, *Through the Flower* and Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*.
[61] Dickinson, "Judy Chicago," 32.

Based on this chapter, I propose that feminisms, and more specifically feminist art of the period when Kruger and Chicago began to be artistically active, differs considerably from contemporary feminisms. Whereas feminist artists had significantly less freedom in the 1960s and 1970s, feminist art nowadays has become more prevalent in the art world. The artists are no longer compelled to follow the pathways of male artists. Gender inequality has, however, remained present throughout the whole time. Even though the development of feminist art in this chapter was mostly analysed from a white-American perspective, it is important to understand there have been a lot of feminist artists outside of this perspective significant for shaping feminism. Nevertheless, the thesis focuses on two white American feminist artists.

As analysed in the second sub-chapter, Barbara Kruger's feminist role is, due to her interest in addressing various contemporary issues, not immediately obvious. However, as will be clarified in the following chapter, numerous artworks of her oeuvre are, in my view, indeed feminist. Charles Molesworth aptly clarified her position by stating that Kruger's "feminist sentiment comes out only at an askew angle, but is nevertheless acute."[62] Moreover, I suggest that due to her, at that time, unusual technique, transparency of her art, wide recognition and other aspects, as will be analysed later in the thesis, the artist can be undoubtedly considered a significant figure, shaping not only feminist art and graphic design but visual arts in general.

Judy Chicago's feminist role is, on the other hand, quite apparent since a great majority of her artworks deal with feminist topics. Moreover, her set-up of the first Feminist Art Program with Miriam Schapiro, in my view, reinforced further her position in feminist art. As will be clarified in the last chapter of the thesis, Chicago has repeatedly pushed the boundaries of feminist art by creating series for which, during the time of their exhibition, there was no art-historical context. Due to this reason, Chicago can be, in my opinion, considered a significant artist continually shaping the field of feminist art history in the United States.

The following chapter will analyse further feminist aspects of Kruger's and Chicago's art and compare several visible characteristics of the main feminist artworks by Kruger and the specific *PowerPlay* series by Chicago.

[62] Molesworth, "Art and Values: What is Possible?," 158.

Chapter 2: Close analysis of the selected artworks

2.1 Source of inspiration

A significant difference between Barbara Kruger's feminist artworks and Judy Chicago's *PowerPlay* is that whereas Chicago included autobiographical elements in her series,[63] personal history and biography have not been deliberately present in Kruger's practice.[64] Instead, Kruger has attempted to demonstrate the role of political hegemony, capitalism and consumerism in constructing our desires and identities.[65] The curator and writer Mary Kosut argued that Kruger comprehended the seductive and, above all, manipulative possibilities pictures have had on viewers and applied the knowledge to her own artworks.[66] Her work is thus about critical, feminist and humane consciousness,[67] confronting the clichés and stereotypes of representation, sexuality, gender and power.[68]

Since she was interested in social relations in the ordinary world, Kruger started to investigate "the global etiquette of power".[69] She discovered that the source of cultural and social power is not centralised but rather unidentified.[70] As Kosut stated: "Power exists less as a singular body than as a network of relations working to unify social apparatuses and institutions".[71] In Kruger's view, power is represented through stereotypes.[72] Therefore, she intends to "expose the violence of stereotypes" through her artworks and force thus the audience to acknowledge and reflect on the issue.[73] Consequently, this puts Kruger in a paradoxical position: On the one hand, she is deemed too political since her feminist and anti-capitalist positions are evident, and her artworks depict more than her own point of view. On the other hand, she is also seen as not political enough due to the influence of her early career as a graphic designer. As a result, her work is, according to some viewers, by no means feminist and anti-capitalist.[74] In Kruger's view, "All art contains a politic, as does

[63] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 142.
[64] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 3.
[65] Kennicott, "Decades Later, Barbara Kruger Is Still Right About Everything," 2.
[66] Kosut 2012, 190.
[67] Loughery, "Love for Sale," 56.
[68] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*,, 36.
[69] Kosut, *Encyclopedia of Gender in Media*, 190.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 753.
[74] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 17.

every conversation we have, every deal we make, and every face we kiss."[75] As she continues: "I see my work as a series of attempts to ruin certain representations, to displace the subject and to welcome a female spectator into the audience of men."[76]

By using the pronouns 'I,' 'you,' 'we,' and 'they,' Kruger directly addresses her work to the viewers.[77] Some might indeed find her work intimidating; however, Kruger emphasises that her artworks are not a threat, but instead they indicate a threat.[78] The Japanese author Masako Kamimura argued that due to this method, which Kruger calls "direct address," her works are not only explicit and clear, but they also stimulate female spectatorship. In contrast, the art critic Hal Foster does not agree with this statement. According to him, the pronouns are rather ambiguous. He claims that, for instance, in Kruger's *Untitled* (*Your comfort is my silence)* (Fig.4) from 1981, the place of 'Your' and 'my' is unsure.[79] He wonders: "What comfort, what silence – and whose?"[80] In Kamimura's view, if "Foster had understood the gender-address, he would have known that Kruger's address is not ambiguous, but unquestionably feminist."[81] Kruger herself insisted that she speaks for female viewers, her colleagues who are spectators and viewers of colour.[82]

Moreover, as Barbara Kruger, Ann Goldstein, and Rosalyn Deutsche argued, Kruger's art emphasises and disrupts the visual reality in which masculine fantasies of domination are reinforced by the objectification of women.[83] As Kruger asserted: "My work is about a female voice, it's expected that the male voice would try to silence a female voice when it becomes vocal and it becomes seen picture."[84] For instance, in her *Untitled (We have received orders not to move)* (Fig.5), the oppressed female voice is clearly present. A silhouette of a woman pinned with tacks to her body with a large text represents a completely objectified subject - women ordered by men not to move.[85] As the curator Peter Eleey and others elaborate, the female subjects and spectators of Kruger's art are obviously

[75] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 40.
[76]Ibid.
[77] Kosut, *Encyclopedia of Gender in Media*, 191.
[78] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 755.
[79] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 41.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 73.
[83] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 83.
[84] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 41.
[85] Ibid.

aware of this objectifying mechanics.[86] Alberro argued that both *Untitled* (*Your comfort is my silence)* and *Untitled (We have received orders not to move)* not only produce new viewpoints but also include the voices and lives of women in public discourse.[87]

The artwork that explicitly deals with the feminist subject matter is *Untitled (Your Body Is a Battleground)* (Fig. 6) from 1989. One of Kruger's best-known works portrays a female face, which is bisected vertically into positive and negative.[88] Kruger initially created the artwork as a public poster to promote the Women's March on Washington in support of abortion rights, birth control and women's rights.[89] According to the art critic Megan O'Grady, the march was spurred by anti-abortion laws undermining the rights established at the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court in 1973.[90] By using the text "Your body is a battleground," Kruger addresses the issue of women's reproductive freedom and disputes the way female identity is presented by accepted sources of power, such as the mass media.[91] Even though the pronoun 'your' involves viewers regardless of their gender, the artwork, as Alberro argued, might be 'understood' by male viewers only if they "put themselves in the position of women" and consider thus the artwork from a female perspective.[92] Therefore, one might say that the face represents those whose human rights have been challenged.[93] Moreover, as Kosut playfully stated, the artwork suggests that female bodies have been "incorporated rather than corporeal."[94] Kruger's artwork is thereby art and a protest at the same time.[95]

Originally, Kruger and her students from the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program hung the posters throughout whole New York City in the middle of the night.[96] Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University in Columbus commissioned a billboard-size version of the artwork in 1990. A billboard with an eight-

[86] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 75.
[87] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 197.
[88] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 2.
[89] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 42.
[90] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 2.
[91] Britannica Academic, s.v. "Barbara Kruger," accessed February 16, 2022, https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Barbara-Kruger/124995.
[92] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 198.
[93] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 42.
[94] Kosut, *Encyclopedia of Gender in Media*, 191.
[95] "Untitled (Your Body Is a Battleground) – Barbara Kruger: The Broad," The Broad, accessed December 9, 2021, https://www.thebroad.org/art/barbara-kruger/untitled-your-body-battleground.
[96] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 2.

week-old fetus image by the anti-abortion group hung within several hours next to Kruger's billboard.[97] Additionally, Kruger's artwork was used for a silk-screen-on-vinyl work in 1989 (2,74 m x 2,74 m), which is now in the collection of the Broad Museum in Los Angeles; for posters in Warsaw, Poland in 1990; and for a subway poster in Berlin also in 1990. Nowadays, the well-known artwork keeps multiplying across social media and on T-shirts, sweatshirts, etc., all over the world. Furthermore, on the occasion of her ongoing exhibition (2022) "Barbara Kruger: Thinking of ~~You~~. I Mean ~~Me~~. I Mean You.," the artist recreated the artwork for the present-day context. Enriched by the LED technology, the image was displayed in the same dimensions as the vinyl version. However, in this variation, the text of the iconic picture of protest shifts through ten expressions, such as: "Your Humility Is Bullshit," "Your Will Is Bought And Sold," "Your Skin Is Sliced," "My Beliefs Are Short And Sweet," "Your Neck Is Squeezed," and "My Body Is Money."[98] Therefore, it can be said that even though the artwork was initially tied to a specific event, the power of its declaration is nevertheless timeless.[99]

Another significant, but, less known, feminist artwork by Kruger is, without a doubt, one of her largest public art projects - the series of posters *Untitled (Help)* (Fig.7) created in 1991 for bus shelters in Strasbourg, France. It consists of depictions of a young boy about to graduate from secondary school, a father worried about his mortgage payments and a grown-up construction worker concerned about his high blood pressure. At first glance, the text in the photographs seems to indicate the inner voice of the male subjects portrayed on posters. However, after careful consideration, one becomes aware of the disconnection between the words and the person depicted. These various posters have thus one common feature: they all represent an invisible pregnant woman dubious about her future as a mother. Consequently, despite their absence, Kruger effectively expressed the presence of female subjects.[100]

Moreover, Kruger emphasised the significance of pregnant female bodies both biologically and physically and insisted on acknowledging their realness and political aspects

[97] Ibid.
[98] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You,* 42-43.
[99] "Untitled (Your Body Is a Battleground) – Barbara Kruger: The Broad," The Broad, accessed December 9, 2021, https://www.thebroad.org/art/barbara-kruger/untitled-your-body-battleground.
[99] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 42-43.
[100] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 92-93.

as opposed to routine sexualised and idealised depictions of female bodies in the realm of advertising and mass media.[101] The series unavoidably "conjures up many issues related to reproductive rights and abortion."[102] An indirect connection of the series to the already analysed *Untitled (Your Body Is a Battleground)* is thus particularly evident. Similarly, also in this series, the artist aimed to make viewers imagine being in other people's situation.[103] According to Alberro "through the voicing of seemingly banal and stereotypical everyday concerns that, even if not identical to one's own, register nonetheless as basic, familiar, and real, Kruger encourages the possibility of seeing another as a subject (like me) rather than an object among other objects."[104] Her *Untitled (Help)* series for bus shelters has fought against a superior position of groups such as patriarchy, xenophobia or totality.[105] As is argued in *Barbara Kruger*, the message Kruger intended to send is very simple: "Empathy can change the world."[106]

In contrast to Barbara Kruger's feminist artworks, Judy Chicago's *PowerPlay* series is closely related to Chicago's own life. She created the series of paintings, drawings, cast paper and bronze relief in 1982-1987 while still working on her series *Birth Project,* exploring aspects of the birth process.[107] However, the *PowerPlay s*eries could not differ more. As a matter of fact, perhaps the only common feature of the two series is their subject matter which, in both cases, deals with issues, at that time, seldom represented in Western art.[108] With *PowerPlay*, Chicago aimed to examine the construct of masculinity and highlight the misconduct and consequences "that can occur when men wield the power and privileges afforded them."[109] Like the artist examined women's history and the construct of femininity for her series *The Dinner Party* before women's studies programs, she comparably found the construct of masculinity intriguing before the emerging masculinity studies, gender studies and queer theory. She argued that when she attempted to

[101] Alberro and Kruger, 92.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 93.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid., 93-94.
[106] Ibid., 94.
[107] "PowerPlay: A Prediction," Salon 94, accessed February 6, 2022, https://salon94.com/exhibitions/powerplay-a-prediction.
[108] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 101.
[109] Christian, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94 Bowery," 104.

investigate the term gender, the only result that came up was women.[110] According to the artist, there was not enough material, and even the existing sources were far from perceptive. Therefore, she was forced to work from her own experience and observation and depend on her own beliefs and opinions.[111]

Chicago was not only interested in how masculinity has affected society in general but also men themselves.[112] She created artworks that do not depict individual men but rather symbolic male bodies caught, as Katz asserted, "between aggressive self-assertion, and the abject fear and vulnerability that underlies and propels their manifest entitlement."[113] Contrary to Kruger, who believes that all art is political, Chicago rejects this notion altogether.[114] In the interview with Strong, she argued that political art was, in her view, generally dated and that she had attempted to make works that last. In other words, whereas political art, according to Chicago, addresses specific political events, she has invariably tried to avoid that.[115] As she continued: "I think people have used the word 'political' [in regard to my art] where they should be using the word 'moral.' I think my work has always sprung from a strong moral base."[116] Chicago thus gainsays the idea of her art being political.[117] Instead, the *PowerPlay* series might be seen as closely related to her own life. The artist initially became interested in the way women, herself included, perceived men since she had listened to numerous stories of women sharing their frustration, rage and fear due to the superior male behaviour both in public and private spheres. Not only wished Chicago to comprehend the reasons for male violence, but she also wondered what emotions the male body might express.[118]

In 1982, she visited Rome, Ravenna, Venice, Naples and Florence, where she studied significant artworks.[119] As she claimed in her autobiography from 1997, Chicago was "greatly influenced by actually seeing the major Renaissance paintings."[120] The Italian trip

[110] Chicago et al., *Judy Chicago: New Views*, 25.
[111] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 150.
[112] "PowerPlay: A Prediction," Salon 94, accessed February 6, 2022, https://salon94.com/exhibitions/judy-chicago-powerplay-a-prediction-2018.
[113] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."
[114] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 40.
[115] Strong, "Painting a Revolution," 321.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 142.
[119] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[120] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 143.

was fundamental to creating the *PowerPlay* series since the Italian Renaissance represents, in Chicago's view, the origin of the contemporary concept of masculinity. The artist found working with a male model captivating and entirely different from drawing a female figure. She clarified that there had rarely been male models in her figure-drawing classes. When they modelled, they were invariably required to be clothed due to the fact that they allegedly might have got erections if they had been naked.[121]

While working on *PowerPlay*, Chicago scrutinised the distinction between individual men, such as friends, partners and friends, showing love and kindness and the patriarchal structure as a universal set of values benefiting all men, including those who do not support these values. In other words, she was interested in exploring the connection between masculinity and male violence.[122] Chicago "was convinced that one reason men could act so destructively is that in 'becoming men,' they are required to disconnect from their feelings of vulnerability, a process that begins in childhood when little boys are taught that it is 'unmanly' to cry."[123] She reflected on the emotional consequences of this suppressing process. Furthermore, she wondered whether there is a relation between rejection of emotions and men's capability to rape. The study of masculinity frightened Chicago and made her worried that she would have been awfully punished if she had openly expressed her beliefs and thoughts.[124]

The first artwork of the P*owerPlay* series *Crippled by the Need to Control* (Fig.8) terrified Chicago and triggered a recurring nightmare that had lasted throughout the years of making the series. One night she woke up convinced that someone was in her house and was going to viciously attack or kill her. Chicago interpreted the unpleasant experience as the result of creating artworks depicting men. She pointed out that female artists had scarcely depicted men in an uncomplimentary light.[125] On the contrary, according to Chicago, women have been more comfortable with portraying "themselves as victims than men as perpetrators."[126]

[121] Ibid., 144.
[122] Ibid., 144-145.
[123] Ibid., 145.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 146, 151.
[126] Ibid., 151.

The following artwork of the series was the sprayed acrylic and oil painting *In the Shadow of the Handgun* (Fig.9), depicting a male figure shooting a gun. She argued that the subject matter was directly connected to her revulsion at an infinite number of portrayals of men with guns in films, on television and billboards.[127] As she continued: "I perceived these almost as a form of terrorism, in that their almost-constant presence caused women to become frightened of men while giving men a fake sense of themselves as overly powerful, an illusion I saw as destructive to both genders."[128] Chicago struggled with overcoming her dread of an incredibly powerful painting which left her completely exhausted after every day working on it.[129]

According to the artist, her recurring nightmare was followed by several incidents with a man who repeatedly masturbated at Chicago's window. She stated that she had been advised to acquire a gun and had bars put on her windows to feel more protected. During this period, she began working on the large triptych *Rainbow Man* (Fig.10). In the same way as the previous artworks, this painting was also directly related to Chicago's life. She attempted to express her own experience with numerous men – more specifically, their apparent aversion to intimacy. The first painting of the triptych portrays a man luring a woman with the beauty of the rainbow in his hands. In the second picture, the same male figure draws away, terrified of the closeness he had provided in the first painting. In the third image, the man becomes violent as if he threatened to cause harm if pushed for a close emotional connection. At that time, the 'visits' of the man at Chicago's windows became, according to her, more intense and frequent. Once, he even managed to enter her house when she was away. The artist decided that it was time to learn how to use a gun.[130] Subsequently, when the perpetrator appeared and started to masturbate in the alley in front of her house, according to Chicago, she pulled out a gun, pointed it at the man and screamed at the top of her lungs that she "would blow his cock off if he didn't leave."[131] Unsurprisingly, the harasser never returned to Chicago's area. She stated that her fear

[127] Ibid., 146.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., 154.
[130] Ibid., 154-161.
[131] Ibid., 163.

regarding the *PowerPlay* series had gradually subsided, and the artworks had started to turn into less angry and slightly more understanding toward men.[132]

The painting *Driving the World to Destruction* (Fig.11) depicts a male figure firmly holding a steering wheel. Chicago described that "Propelled into madness by the overwhelming 'burden of power,' he seems incapable of releasing his grip, even though his action foredooms the planet to destruction."[133] The artwork is both angry and compassionate since it represents that no one, male or female, could stay sane while wielding unrestricted power. She gradually started to believe that the power that has been attributed to men is only sort of a façade. The artist was convinced that men, in fact, often feel rather powerless and that they also acknowledge that, regarding gender roles, the world is both cruel and unfair. She asserted that even though the violent behaviour of men is far from acceptable, she had achieved a greater level of understanding of their violence, especially toward females. She presumed that the behaviour is a direct consequence of a general notion of masculinity that disapproves of tears and showing emotions.[134]

While the artist was working on sketches of her husband Donald Woodman, in which she attempted to capture his strong and soft sides, he suggested that Chicago could try to make an artwork depicting a male figure in the way women wish men to be. The result was a large bronze relief *Woe/Man* (Fig.12), in which a head of a male figure is lifted and a neck exposed.[135] This gesture is intended to represent vulnerability since a male animal, such as a dog or wolf, offers its throat as a sign of submission when it "submits to a superior member of the pack".[136] Due to the fact that Woodman not only posed for this relief but had also inspired the artist to make the artwork, there is a direct link to Chicago's personal life.[137]

In my view, the subject matter of Barbara Kruger's artworks differs from Judy Chicago's subject matter mainly in the source of inspiration. Whereas Kruger has created art related to contemporary (often political) issues, Chicago's art has been influenced by her personal life. Another different aspect is, in my opinion, the fact that while Chicago often

[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 170.
[134] Ibid., 150, 170.
[135] Ibid., 191.
[136] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision* 113, 116.
[137] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 191.

elucidates the meaning of her artworks, Kruger disapproves of this approach. As Kruger clarified in the interview with the art historian William J.T. Mitchell:

> "it's hard for me to talk about specific meanings in specific works because it creates a kind of closure that I'm really wary of. I like people to sort of generate their own meanings, too, and if I start naming, 'Well this is what I meant here and this is ...,' it's too tied to the conventions of a closed reading."[138]

However, the subject matter of the art by both artists also has a mutual feature, which, in my view, deserves special attention. As will be analysed in the following chapter, both Kruger and Chicago expressed criticism of patriarchy in their artworks.

2.2 Patriarchy

This sub-chapter will examine Kruger's and Chicago's critique of patriarchal structures, which seems to be a common aspect of the subject matter of their art. Even though this does not come as a surprise due to their feminist aspirations, it is still a significant feature to analyse. In Kruger's artworks, there is a big distinction between the words spoken and the act of speaking; in other words, between the one who speaks and the one who is represented by words.[139] According to the art historian Mignon Nixon, Kruger's art exposes and disrupts culturally constructed gender stereotypes.[140] The art historian Ana Balona de Oliveira believes that the female stereotype is "one of the strongest, most concealed and silently accepted forms of stereotypical subjugation, which may lead to other forms of violence."[141] Kruger implies that denigrating women's voices is not a natural necessity that has had the same meaning throughout centuries and across cultures, but it is indeed socially constructed, having a psychical impact on both men and women.[142] Even though her artworks are often gender-specific, femininity and masculinity, for Kruger, do not have fixed positions.[143] Rather, as the American art critic Craig Owens argued, the artist uses neutral

[138] Mitchell, "An Interview with Barbara Kruger," 439.
[139] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 198.
[140] Nixon, "You Thrive on Mistaken Identity," 65.
[141] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 756.
[142] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 197.
[143] Owens, *Beyond Recognition*, 184.

pronouns 'I' or 'you' to illustrate that "masculine and feminine themselves are not stable identities, but subject to exchange."[144] Whereas other artists, according to Owens, usually consider the stereotype as something fairly simple to depose, Kruger treats it as an essential element of social processes of inclusion, exclusion, rule and domination; and, therefore, as "an instrument of power."[145]

The lack of subjectivity in regard to women is especially a frequent topic in Kruger's art. For instance, the artwork *I am your almost nothing* from 1983 depicts a close-up of a woman's hands moving through light – most likely blond – hair. According to the art historian Masako Kamimura, the hair seemingly imprisoning the hands of a female figure and the hardly visible text represent fragile femininity. In addition, it emphasises the relatively marginal and obscure position of women, as well as the ostensible absence of real women at the time. Another depiction of female hands in a close-up view *I am your immaculate conception* (Fig.13) from the same year (1983) criticising patriarchy involves humorous sarcasm. The artist mocks the objectification of femininity through the image of soapy hands cleaning nail polish with a nail brush.[146] However, one of the most well-known artworks by Kruger criticising patriarchy is, without a doubt, *Untitled (We don't need another hero)* (Fig.14) from 1988. In this picture, a little girl obligingly touches the arm of a boy flexing his growing muscles.[147] As the art critic Philip Kennicott argued in his article: "The image underscores the innocence that precedes masculine bravado, and then deflates the very idea of heroism itself, a daring idea in a society that uses the word reflexively and often indiscriminately to valorize state power."[148] As will be analysed in more detail later in the thesis, one should recognise that the masculine position is not reserved for men only.

Kruger belongs among the first American artists who attempted to "deconstruct the patriarchal underpinnings of conventional representation."[149] One of the crucial issues for the feminist artists working in the 1970s and 1980s was the development of new terminologies. In other words, through new types of imagery in the visual field, they sought to find ways to counteract the regnant patriarchal linguistic structures and representations.

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[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., 191.
[146] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 41.
[147] Loughery, "Love for Sale," 56.
[148] Kennicott, "Decades Later, Barbara Kruger Is Still Right About Everything," 1.
[149] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 196-197.

This issue of being able to transcend the patriarchal culture has been the theme of numerous Kruger's artworks throughout her career.[150] The artist has underlined and called on her viewers to comprehend that, in some circumstances, certain subjects "have more power to speak than others."[151] Kruger asserted that, in her artworks, she had been involved in the differentiation between who speaks and who is silent – who is visible and who is not.[152]

One of the most well-known artworks highlighting the difference is the image *Untitled (You make history when you do business)* (Fig.15), created in 1981. In contrast to the headless businessmen in leather oxford shoes dominating the picture, the foot of a female figure at the bottom left edge of the artwork is barely visible. The artist effectively addressed the infamous situations familiar from the patriarchal culture.[153] According to Kruger, pictures and words have the ability "to define who we are and who we aren't", and the artwork represents precisely that.[154] Women (and people of colour) have been forced through the years to experience objectification, prejudicial assessments and involuntary submission applied across society by (mainly) patriarchal white culture. Eleey and others argued that Kruger's art has largely contributed to discussions of these issues.[155] Through the artworks *We Will Not Become What We Mean to You* (Fig.16) from 1983 and *We refuse to be your favorite embarrassments* (Fig.17) from the same year, Kruger proclaimed her outright refusal to become the "other". In the former work, we see part of a female figure expressing that women will not become what they mean to men. In another version of this artwork, Kruger used an image of a woman's face overlapping with a picture of fur.[156] In Kamimura's view, this version emphasises "the notion of ideal beauty in fashion's fictionalizing".[157] The artwork *We refuse to be your favorite embarrassments* depicts a close-up of a female figure's head of which only hair, an ear and a neck are visible.[158] Kruger

[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid., 197.
[152] Ibid., 193.
[153] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You,* 72.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid., 81.
[156] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 41.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.

criticises, according to Kamimura, the notion of women being diminished to "men's favourite embarrassments."[159]

Another artwork produced in 1983 condemning patriarchy is Kruger's less known *Untitled (Your fictions become history)* (Fig.18). De Oliveira stated that historical knowledge – especially by claiming completeness and distancing from failure – plays an important role in legitimising the subordination and exclusion of women. According to her, Kruger's artwork portraying a broken ancient statue illustrates precisely the inadequate patriarchal history writing.[160] The exclusion of women is also visible in the image *You construct intricate rituals which allow you to touch the skin of other men* (Fig.19), referring to male bonding as part of the patriarchal construction. Kruger argues that whereas women are not permitted to touch other women, social codes give men this privilege. Put differently, the bonding between women is, according to Kruger, denied by patriarchy. In addition, the artist believes that the relationships of men with women are deemed less significant compared to men's relationships with other men.[161] In Kamimura's view, this artwork belongs to "one of Kruger's most brilliant and most effective criticisms of patriarchy under capitalism."[162] For the work *Untitled (Man's best friend)* for the *Yale Law Journal* - and the later version *Untitled (White man's best friend)* (Fig.20) - Kruger used an image of The Supreme Court Building in Washington, DC, accompanied by the text.[163] The artwork not only criticises the racial hierarchy enforced by the American law, but it also "calls out the Court's sloganed façade, casting its proclamation of Equal Justice Under Law as just another deflated cliché whose idealism is tuned to mask its inherent contradictions."[164] Due to this reason, the image (especially the first version) might be related to Kruger's criticism of patriarchy.

Despite openly criticising the exclusion and subordination of women, Kruger somewhat optimistically clarified that she felt that the obstacles for female artists of her generation started to be less severe. She stressed that it was the period when several (white) women began to be able to enter the art world.[165] As she continued, "It doesn't

[159] Ibid.
[160] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death,"759.
[161] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 42.
[162]Ibid.
[163] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 77.
[164] Ibid.
[165] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 6-7.

mean we made any money for our artwork, but we did enter. That was very pivotal."[166] Moreover, it should be emphasised that Kruger, like most feminist artists, does not blame individual men but rather the patriarchal system itself. In addition, she considers some women as accomplices to the subjugation enforced by the construct of patriarchy.[167] A telling example of this cultural subjection is Kruger's 1992 cover for *Newsweek* magazine, *Whose justice? Whose morality? Whose community? Whose family? Whose values?* (Fig.21), which depicts a close-up of an angry male face covered in text. Even though the person is evidently male, the artist uses, as in many of her other works, a gender-neutral pronoun.[168] As Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche argued, the figure does not represent "a male person but a masculinist position, one that men may have historically occupied but with which women, as well as men, can identify – where the masculine is understood as an orientation toward the ideals of unity, completion, and mastery."[169] Moreover, the artwork implies that morality is related to the masculine subject and therefore functions as a rhetorical device upon which this masculine person relies rather than a set of irreproachable, universal truths.[170] Accordingly, it could be argued that this artwork, although criticising a masculinist position instead of a male figure, is still indirectly relatable to the concept of patriarchy.

Kruger's criticism of patriarchal structures is evident from her messages that have been "directed at the repressiveness of male authority and the apologetic tendencies of self-doubting women, especially those afflicted by domestic violence".[171] The subject matter of the artworks analysed in this section of the thesis has indeed been shown to address the criticism of patriarchy. However, it should be emphasised that only a selection was analysed: it is possible thqt more of Kruger's artworks can be connected to this topic.

As well as Barbara Kruger, Judy Chicago also openly criticised patriarchy in her *PowerPlay* series. In fact, the art historian Re'al Christian stated in his article that the entrenchment of patriarchal structures in Western society is the main subject of the series.[172] More specifically, Chicago aimed to fully understand the relation between "the

[166] Ibid.
[167] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 756.
[168] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 81.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 172.
[172] Christian, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94 Bowery," 104, 105.

social script that animates male performance and the men who embody that discourse or, alternatively, are cast aside for refusing to do so".[173] She scrutinised the consequences and psychology of male supremacy and thus laid bare the male vices in a transparent world that she envisioned.[174] The result was a series of artworks representing, on the one hand, odious and wretched male figures, and on the other hand, men who crumble due to their attempts "to command forces beyond their control."[175] As already mentioned, Chicago began the series after her trip to Italy, where she perceived the origin of the omnipresent male hero in modern society.[176] The frequently nude male body was traditionally recognised as the instrument of expressing emotions.[177] As Chicago clarified in her second autobiography: "Looking at their monumental scale and clarity led me to decide to cast my examination of masculinity in the classical tradition of the heroic nude".[178] However, in the *PowerPlay* series, she revealed the dark male side rather than depicting men as heroes.[179] Additionally, she portrayed what she claims to be performative masculinity. Comparable with Kruger, Chicago also believes that masculinity is constructed.[180]

One of the artworks that directly represents male domination and power is undoubtedly the painting *Pissing on Nature* (Fig.22) from 1984. A large-scale painting depicts a nude, muscled, faceless man urinating on a landscape.[181] The art critic, writer and curator Edward Lucie-Smith stressed that Chicago's usage of pictorial symbolism was oddly direct and frequently brutal. He continued: "The act of male urination can surely never before have been presented on such a heroic scale."[182] Moreover, "the fantasy transposition of her [Chicago's] urinating god is," as the American writer Johanna Fateman stated, "in keeping with her legacy."[183] The male figure seems to remain unrepentant about his indecency or so self-absorbed that he cannot acknowledge it.[184]

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[173] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."
[174] Christian, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94 Bowery," 105.
[175] Ibid.
[176] "PowerPlay: A Prediction," Salon 94, accessed February 6, 2022, https://salon94.com/exhibitions/powerplay-a-prediction.
[177] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 102.
[178] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 143-144.
[179] "PowerPlay: A Prediction," Salon 94, accessed February 6, 2022, https://salon94.com/exhibitions/powerplay-a-prediction.
[180] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[181] Christian, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94 Bowery," 105.
[182] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 110.
[183] Fateman, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94," 229.
[184] Christian, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94 Bowery," 105.

According to Lucie-Smith, in symbolic terms the artwork resembles the campaign slogan 'Make America Great Again' – "a call to action for those who wish to return to a world in which, among other things, man can mark whatever territory he wishes as his own".[185] Moreover, the painting might also be interpreted, in his view, as a kind of satirical adaptation of Genesis. In this version, man creates the world through his urine.[186] Furthermore, as with Kruger's artwork *Whose Values,* this painting, even though firmly depicting a man, represents a masculinist position rather than a male figure. As Chicago with others explained, the work implied that actions instead of biology define the masculine position. They argued that this interpretation is supported by the chest of the figure, which has obvious male pectoral muscles on one side and a shape resembling a female breast on the other side.[187]

The painting *Crippled by the Need to Control/Blind Individuality* (Fig.8), already discussed in the previous chapter, was displayed at the exhibition "PowerPlay: A Prediction" in 2018 on the wall opposite *Pissing on Nature*.[188] The large-scale artwork portrays a blindfolded male riding a female, pulling her hair like reins.[189] In this instance, not the flow of urine but the flow of golden fluid shoots from the breast of the female figure who is on her hands and knees.[190] Even though the picture undeniably appears to represent male control and subsequent female outrage, it is, in fact, more ambiguous than it seems.[191] Upon closer examination, the viewer will notice that the woman's profile is identical to that of the man, although he is portrayed as missing half of his face.[192] Therefore, Katz speculated: "Is she, in short, a distinct and autonomous figure he's riding, or is she an aspect of the male, even his very eyes, and one, which he desperately seeks to master?"[193]

Furthermore, the two figures are complete antitheses of each other. While the female is depicted almost horizontally with an open mouth, the male is vertical, close-mouthed and constrained.[194] According to Katz, the scene can thus also be read as a

[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Chicago et al., *Judy Chicago: New Views*, 157-158.
[188] Fateman, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94," 229.
[189] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 146.
[190] Fateman, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94," 229.
[191] Chicago et al., *Judy Chicago: New Views*, 157.
[192] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[193] Ibid.
[194] Chicago et al., *Judy Chicago: New Views,* 157.

depiction of self-division.[195] Chicago supports this interpretation: this artwork "implies that the price men pay for their need to dominate women is that they become blind both to women's suffering and to their own crippled state."[196] In Katz's view, the man's bloodied leg amplifies this explanation, indicating that his attempts at male mastery and self-control are self-mutilating.[197] Moreover, the artwork emphasises how the male's individuality is constructed based on the suppression of his fundamental identification with 'feminine' qualities.[198] The painting thus criticises patriarchy which is destructive not only for women but also for men themselves.

The artwork *In the Shadow of the Handgun* (Fig.9), also mentioned in the previous chapter, is another huge painting of the series criticising male dominance. According to Lucie-Smith, this image might have, at least subconsciously, been inspired by one of the most famous artworks – *Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo (1475-1564). Chicago's persistent antipathy towards the scene, which she believes explicitly eliminates the female role from the creation of humankind, is embodied in the painting *In the Shadow of the Handgun,* functioning as her revenge on Michelangelo. The iconic gesture of God pointing with his forefinger to meet Adam's languidly raised forefinger is turned, in this case, into a destructive handgun.[199] Katz corroborated Lucie-Smith's interpretation and added that, as for the previous two paintings, the gender of the figure in this picture is also rather ambiguous.[200] He argued that "the shadow of the arm betrays, beneath the figure's armpit, yet another elbow/breast—and one of the pectoral muscles hangs slack and feminine—thereby reintroducing at least the shadow of the female into the scene."[201] I propose that Chicago uses the artwork to criticise the exclusion of women, which is directly related to the concept of patriarchy.

With the sub-series *Maleheads,* the artist intended to illustrate several ways in which men have become disfigured by their superior position in society.[202] As opposed to the allegorical compositions analysed in this section, the sub-series consists of male faces in

[195] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[196] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 146.
[197] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[198] Chicago et al., *Judy Chicago: New Views*, 157.
[199] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 112.
[200] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[201] Ibid.
[202] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 149-150.

a close-up view.[203] The artist created portrayals of men mentally and physically harmed by the dominant positions they have occupied.[204] In other words, the grotesque or sad faces reflected Chicago's "impressions of the ways in which men's humanity becomes stunted as a result of carrying the burden of power, which must sometimes become onerous."[205] The link to patriarchy is thus, in this instance, apparent.

As was noted in the previous chapter in regard to the *Woe/Man* sculpture (Fig. 12) inspired by the suggestion of Chicago's husband, the artist did not only depict angry faces and men dominating women, but also looked beyond the surface of male violent, destructive behaviour and represented the vulnerability that men do not want to or cannot allow themselves to express.[206] Chicago acknowledged that the refusal to openly express emotions, especially the feelings of vulnerability expressed in tears, induces countless personality distortions. Other aspects that frequently lead to a harmful level of pressure include the expectations to act 'manly', be successful and provide for other people through money-making. As Katz argued, an excessive number of men comply with these expectations instead of challenging them. Perhaps the justification for doing this is, in Katz's view, related to the rewards that have been offered to them.[207]

This aspect of patriarchy destructive to men is aptly represented in another artwork of the *PowerPla*y series: *Lavender Double Head/Hold Me #5* (Fig 23) created in 1986. A male figure is, on the one hand, depicted with one eye staring at the viewers with a domineering expression and, on the other hand, weeping. Furthermore, the words 'hold me' are situated in the men's mouth.[208] In my view, the combination of a face in a close-up accompanied by text strongly resembles Kruger's artworks. As Katz continues, the colour lavender has been long associated with femininity and consequently categorised as gay. Therefore, it is scarcely surprising that Chicago used this colour predominantly for the crying side of the image as well as the outline of the man's face.[209] As Katz argued:

[203] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 113.
[204] Christian, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94 Bowery," 105.
[205] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 149-150.
[206] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 113.
[207] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."
[208] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[209] Ibid.

> "[Chicago] echoing the terms of what would be a subsequent queer theory, thereby implicates sexuality in any account of gender, such that fear of gayness becomes the border patrol on the gender divide, quick to police and prevent any crossing of that putative border through the merest insinuation that to do so would be read as gay."[210]

The outcome of the painting is, according to Katz, the complete pathos of a male subliminal plea. There is again a direct relation to the criticism of the patriarchal system since *Lavender Double Head/Hold Me #5* conveys that patriarchy is destructive not only for women but also for men themselves. Put differently, Chicago's male figures in the *PowerPlay* series exemplify the ironic reality that the threatening other against whom men have defended themselves is, in fact, themselves.[211] As Katz concluded his analysis of this painting, men are "caught in the act of freezing out one part of themselves as an act of self-preservation, only to find the process leaves them cold."[212]

One should be able to see that the criticism of patriarchy is one of the most obvious mutual aspects of Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago's subject matter. In the analysed artworks, the artists do not only criticise men for their superior position. Kruger's gender-neutral pronouns and Chicago's occasionally ambiguous figures, in my view, also emphasise that masculinity is constructed and that both men and women can identify with this position. However, whereas Kruger mainly focuses on criticising a masculinist position rather than a male person, Chicago also examines how patriarchy has been destroying men themselves. As Katz summarised, the *PowerPlay* series "was, in essence, about the ugly contortions patriarchy demands of men in order to kill off their more female-coded virtues of equality, compassion, understanding, and communality."[213] Another distinctive element of their work is, in my opinion, the choice of gender conveying their message. As will be analysed in the following chapter, while Chicago depicted male figures to express her feminist ideas, Kruger mainly used images of female figures for the very same intention.

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[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."

2.3 Male vs 'female' gaze

As the professor of classics and humanities Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell argued, a gaze has been a significant aspect of feminist practices for more than fifty years.[214] Similarly, the gaze seems to be important in the work of both Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago. Whereas Kruger primarily appears to criticise the traditional male gaze in an ironic way, Chicago's series seems to embody a female gaze. The feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey published the pioneering article 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in 1975, in which she used the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan in order to examine "the erotic pleasure of viewing in film."[215] Her analysis, concerning the issue of the ways women were perceived in films, has proved to be all-important, not only for film studies but also for visual studies in general.[216] Moreover, she analysed how important role gender and power had played in the gaze.[217] The professor of art history and visual culture Alisia Chase stated that artists had praised those with the most power as well as money throughout the centuries by creating artworks with desirable topics. These have, for most of Western history, been depictions of white heteropatriarchy in power. Therefore, it is not surprising that the vast majority of the works created for and by men are of attractive women.[218]

Mulvey, referring to Freud's essay on sexuality, argued that pleasure in looking had been divided into an active role represented by masculinity and a passive one related to femininity. The male gaze is thus directed at female figures that are depicted accordingly.[219] As she continued: "In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness."[220] Moreover, Mulvey stressed that one should realise that this division implies a power imbalance.[221] While a woman is considered a sexual object, an object to be looked at, a man is a bearer of the look. In addition, not only is a female figure an erotic object for the characters in a plot of a film, but she is also

[214] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 6.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Sassatelli, "Gender, Gaze and Technology in Film Culture," 2.
[217] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 6.
[218] Chase, "The Female Gaze, Part Two: Women Look at Men," 34.
[219] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 346.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Sassatelli, "Gender, Gaze and Technology in Film Culture," 8.

eroticised for the spectators.[222] For this reason, Salzman-Mitchell argued, women become "a spectacle controlled by the power of the male gaze."[223]

However, this is by no means a new concept since women have been represented in countless artworks throughout history as a result of masculine fantasies of dominance over females. For instance, they have been depicted as sirens, maidens, vamps, Madonnas, witches, etc. The artworks have portrayed women as fleshy nudes or in mythological and religious settings.[224] Chicago underlined how:

> "Unfortunately, these works, which reflect and perpetuate masculine attitudes toward women, are too often assumed to be universal images, and few art historians feel the need to point out that these paintings are in fact not universal but, rather, represent the way one half of the population views the other."[225]

Chase emphasised that even though this notion of women being looked at and men doing the looking was not unfamiliar, it was ultimately uncovered as a social construct.[226] Rather than being considered as a subject, women have been depicted as the 'other,' embodying the male subconscious. According to the professor of sociology Roberta Sassatelli, Mulvey understands that visual representations are significant for the development of gender identities. Moreover, Mulvey believes that the consequences of the imbalanced depictions have remained onerous for women. As Sassatelli continues, the male gaze inevitably also becomes the female gaze since women are forced to look at themselves through the very same male gaze.[227] She added that "there is no other position from which to look" at the representations and, therefore, women cannot act on the gaze.[228] In the interview from 2011, Mulvey supported her argument by stating that one cannot escape the male gaze since it is considered 'the gaze.'[229] Chase aptly underlined that females had been

[222] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 6.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Chicago, *Through the Flower*, 156.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Chase, "The Female Gaze, Part Two: Women Look at Men," 34.
[227] Sassatelli, "Gender, Gaze and Technology in Film Culture," 2.
[228] Ibid., 5-6.
[229] Ibid.

represented in a significantly different way than males due to the fact that the ideal viewer is intended to be male rather than because women differ from men.[230]

According to the art critic Megan O'Grady, Kruger made a direct reference to Mulvey's essay in one of her most well-known artworks *Untitled (Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face)* (Fig.24), created in 1981.[231] The image depicts a marble bust of a female face photographed in profile, accompanied by black-and-white text on the left side of the artwork. The power of the male gaze is directly evident since the woman is represented, in Kamimura's view, as completely powerless and vulnerable.[232] Kruger criticises the masculine objectification of women, control as well as the representation of females as the 'other'.[233] This is highlighted by the fact that the subject of this image is already an object – a marble bust. The artwork is thus a successful attack on patriarchal culture, which commonly considers females as sexual objects. Moreover, Kamimura argues that through this image, Kruger also condemns both voyeurism and fetishism in the Freudian sense.[234] Eleey and others supported her argument by stating that "In a culture obsessed with the act of looking and being looked at, Kruger poignantly and humorously questions our contemporary collision of narcissism and voyeurism."[235] Since the artwork depicts a marble bust as if the subject of the image were "rendered immobile by being seen," the relation of this artwork to Mulvey's essay and the male gaze in general is thus very clear.[236]

Kruger believes that the arbitrary imposition of these stereotypes generates obedient and submissive subjects.[237] Mignon Nixon, a professor of History of Modern and Contemporary Art, argues that Kruger's artworks are unequivocally gendered, emphasising the sadistic masculine gaze and passive female figures. In her view, Kruger's gendering of sadomasochism is directly related to the feminist theory attempting to reconsider the term through fantasy as a psychoanalytic model.[238] As she continues, several authors have stated that sadism, which is connected to masculine dominant features and masochism, associated with feminine passive and submissive qualities, "misconceives the psychic purpose of

[230] Chase, "The Female Gaze, Part Two: Women Look at Men," 34.
[231] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 3.
[232] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 41.
[233] Owens, *Beyond Recognition*, 183-184.
[234] Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 41.
[235] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 50.
[236] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 3.
[237] Kosut, *Encyclopedia of Gender in Media*, 190-191.
[238] Nixon, "You Thrive on Mistaken Identity," 58-60,67.

fantasy as a decentering of subjectivity."[239] Due to Kruger's use of gender-neutral pronouns such as 'I,' 'you,' 'we,' and 'they,' the interpretation of this concept of sadomasochism in some of her artworks mainly depends on the gender position of the spectator. A good example is, according to Nixon, the artwork *Untitled (We are your circumstantial evidence)* (Fig.25) created in 1984. The image depicts a female face, which is, together with the background, broken into multiple fragments. Nixon asserted that if the viewer adopted a male sadistic position, the voyeuristic scene would change into a picture of anxiety.[240] However, if the spectator takes a female masochistic position, "then this reversal – in which the sadistic gaze is not pleasured by the passive perfection of its object but tormented by the object's self-shattering – can be read as a fantasy of revenge."[241]

The author Walter Kalaidjian also argued that Kruger's artworks expressed diverse gender positions – patriarchal authority and privileges on the one hand and female passivity on the other. In his view, Kruger repudiates and undermines sexist patriarchy, and her use of personal pronouns amplifies sexual friction. This antagonism is, according to Kalaidjian, clearly visible in the artwork *We won't play nature to your culture* (Fig.26) from 1983.[242] Kruger portrayed a face of a woman who was rendered blind by the leaves covering her eyes. For this reason, even though she is exposed to the spectator's gaze, she cannot return the gaze.[243] Moreover, as is written by the art historian Keith Moxey: "Her inability to reciprocate objectifies her and suggests that she can be manipulated and subjected to the will of others."[244] In other words, she is portrayed as the passive 'other'.[245] The author Skylar Harris argued that with this artwork, Kruger condemned prevalent social constructs associating masculinity with culture and femininity with nature. This notion reinforces the omission of women from the spheres of influence and power. Furthermore, it turns females into passive objects that are looked at but are prevented from looking back.[246] Therefore, one can argue that there is a direct link between this artwork and the male gaze.

[239] Ibid., 58-60.
[240] Ibid., 61.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Kalaidjian, "Mainlining Postmodernism," 17.
[243] Moxey, *The Practice of Theory,* 94.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Kalaidjian, "Mainlining Postmodernism," 17.
[246] Harris, "Mind over Matter," 440-441.

Another image related to the criticism of the male gaze is, without a doubt, *Untitled (Memory is your image of perfection)* (Fig.27), made in 1982. The artwork depicts an x-ray of a female body. The fact that the skeleton indeed belongs to a woman is only apparent due to the jewellery and high heels visible on the x-ray. Therefore, the image symbolises that femininity is not something internal but is rather constructed by external objects such as clothes and accessories.[247] With this image, Kruger attempted to undermine the objectification of women through the male gaze.[248] The pronoun 'your,' in this case, implies a male spectator to whom the artwork is addressed.[249] In the image *Untitled (Memory is your image of perfection)*, "the masculine subject encounters what it fears, a fear activated by the knowledge that there is difference in the world and against which it constructs a memory that erases difference."[250]

Since the early 1980s, the artist has repeatedly made artworks emphasising the gendering of masochism and sadistic violence against passive female figures.[251] The acts of "masochistic enslavement - being framed, pinned, or frozen in ritual poses, being or making themselves objects, especially of the gaze, fusing with or being absorbed by powerful others" and the scenes of "shattering, slicing, stripping, piercing, biting, stabbing, choking, smothering" embody resistance and accusation.[252] The resistance is represented in several ways: as exaggeration, for instance in *Untitled (I am your almost nothing)*; denial, as in *Untitled (We are unsuitable for framing)*; satirically, for example in *Untitled (I am your slice of life)* or *Untitled (Use only as directed)*; and as self-shattering, such as in *Untitled (We are your circumstantial evidence)* or *Untitled (You are not yourself)* (Fig.28).[253] This artwork from 1982, resembling a broken mirror, depicts a face of a woman shattered into multiple pieces. According to De Oliveira, the image both disrupts and underlines women's involvement in patriarchal subjection.[254]

The ironic phrase in *Untitled (Are we having fun yet?)*, created in 1987, also denounces female subjugation. The artwork portrays a woman covering her face with her

[247] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 83-84.
[248] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 756-757.
[249] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 83-84.
[250] Ibid., 84.
[251] Nixon, "You Thrive on Mistaken Identity," 58,62.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Ibid., 62.
[254] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 757-758.

hands.[255] In Nixon's view, her painted nails directly parody "the cinematic rendering of the pleasure-in-pain perversion."[256] Since female suffering in films personifies not only male sadistic imaginations but also masochistic ones, women do the suffering for both.[257] The notion that the violence of perfection is commonly associated with a masculinist position is, according to De Oliveira, directly related to "Sigmund Freud's theory of fetishism and the male fear of castration, which is connected to the gaze and a desire for visual plenitude, as well as Lacan's writings on the phallus as the privileged signifier of the symbolic order and the problem this poses to female subjectivity."[258] As Nixon pointed out, by creating representations of domination and submission, Kruger undermines and manipulates the rules of sadomasochistic reading. Moreover, her artworks illustrate, according to Nixon, that we identify with the roles patriarchal structure sets out even when we might refuse them. Therefore, Kruger not only criticises the gendering of masochism and the male gaze, but she also problematises the terms and their devaluating effects by creating stereotypical images accompanied by often ironic phrases.[259]

Chicago took a different approach to criticise the male gaze. Instead of depicting female figures, as Kruger has done in most of her artworks, Chicago portrayed only male figures in her *PowerPlay* series, creating thus a sort of a female gaze. The artist believes that the male gaze expresses far more than an innocent observation. More specifically, it repeatedly points to some activity and has possessive characteristics. Comparable with Kruger, she also argues that females are only exposed to spectators but cannot return and actively respond to the gaze.[260] In her series, she reversed the notorious male gaze that had been used throughout the history of art.[261] As she stated:

> "I knew that I didn't want to keep perpetuating the use of the female body as the repository of so many emotions; it seemed as if everything – love, dread, longing,

[255] Nixon, "You Thrive on Mistaken Identity," 63.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.
[258] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 756.
[259] Nixon, "You Thrive on Mistaken Identity," 61-66.
[260] Poulin and Lanteigne, "Translation/Traduction," 31.
[261] "PowerPlay: A Prediction," Salon 94, accessed February 6, 2022, https://salon94.com/exhibitions/powerplay-a-prediction.

> loathing, desire, and terror – was projected onto the female by both male and female artists, albeit with often differing perspectives. I wondered what feelings the male body might be made to express."[262]

Chicago asserted that female artists had not been permitted to reveal their individual perceptions of men due to social taboo. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that art has changed, and women have been portraying male figures more frequently. This has allowed men, according to Chicago, to look at themselves from another perspective.[263]

By analysing men's and women's representations independently, she realised that female artists had depicted themselves in a somewhat distinct way than men had represented them. Therefore, in her *PowerPlay* series, the artist attempted to examine what the artworks of men made by women may reflect.[264] She stated in her autobiography that depicting a male body had been distinctively dissimilar from a female body and that the experience had given her an unusual sense of strength to represent the figure in any way she liked. Initially, this was, in Chicago's view, quite frightening; however, she then acknowledged that men had had the same power to depict female figures according to their inclinations for centuries.[265] Therefore, as she stated: "If they could handle this, I saw no reason that I could not learn to do the same."[266] By doing so, Chicago flipped the tradition of depicting female bodies on its head, which has caused some criticism of her series, as will be discussed in chapter three.[267]

One might, however, ask whether Chicago created a genuine female gaze or simply adopted the masculine position and represented thus a masculine gaze that is owned by both women and men. Likewise, Salzman-Mitchell wondered: "Can we envisage a female dominant position that would differ qualitatively from the male form of dominance?"[268] Or, does the female gaze, as it seems to apply to several artworks of the *PowerPlay* series, simply include artworks in which female artists objectify men? Eva-Maria Jacobsson went further still, wondering whether there was a contemporary film in which male figures

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[262] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 142.
[263] Chicago, *Through the Flower*, 128.
[264] Ibid., 156.
[265] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 144.
[266] Ibid.
[267] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[268] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 9.

function as objects of women's pleasures and desires, challenging thus Mulvey's well-known theory. According to Jacobsson, the film *Fatal Attraction* exemplifies the female sexual objectification of men. In other words, a female character is, in this case, a bearer of the gaze in contrast to a male character, which is considered an object of desire.[269]

The films like *Fatal Attraction* and other artworks embodying the female gaze affect both male and female spectators.[270] Mulvey asserted that men had been loath to look at their exhibitionist representations since they could not endure the burden of male sexual objectification.[271] Moreover, the female gaze, together with men's movements, has raised the question of how men should be defined in the post-feminist era. According to the professor of cultural studies Kevin Goddard, whereas the focus on the link between masculinity and feminism has been prevalent in the literature on masculinism, only a handful of writers have examined the role of the female gaze in male identity. As he continued, the gaze is not solely male anymore, but its female equivalent has become more prevalent.[272] However, one might argue that both female and male gazes result in one mutual masculine gaze.

Based on this sub-chapter, I suggest that Barbara Kruger, as well as Judy Chicago, criticise the traditional male gaze that has been present in the history of art for centuries. Whereas Kruger's criticism is embodied in ironic and exaggerating artworks, Chicago decided to reverse the male gaze for her *PowerPlay* series. Even though each of the artists took a different approach, the result is rather similar, namely representing a masculine gaze. What is, on the other hand, fundamentally distinct is their technique and medium of the artworks.

2.4 Mediums and techniques

Already at first glance, the styles of the artworks of Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago appear clearly dissimilar. While Kruger combined photography with text for her black-and-white (also red in more recent works) images, Chicago created the bright, colourful artworks of

[269] Jacobsson, "A Female Gaze?," 8,13.
[270] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*,8.
[271] Jacobsson, "A Female Gaze?," 13.
[272] Goddard, "'Looks Maketh the Man'" 23-24.

her *PowerPlay* series mostly in sprayed acryl and oil.[273] Kruger developed her distinctive style in the late 1970s.[274] She argued that her job as a magazine designer significantly influenced her work as an artist.[275] She recalls asking herself: "I worked with someone else's photos; I cropped them in whatever way I wanted and put words on top of them […] I knew how to do it with my eyes closed. Why couldn't that be my art?"[276] She clarified that she stopped photographing for two reasons: first, she was not passionate about being a photographer, and secondly, she believed the use of existing images was invincible.[277]

She retrieved the anonymous cultural pictures from popular newspapers and magazines, instruction manuals and photographic magazines.[278] In her view, their unintentional humour, contemporary vigour, powerful frivolity and sharp improbability express features of American culture that Kruger have aimed to criticise. Since the images are ready-made, as Kruger clarified, there would have been no purpose in recreating them.[279] Instead, she generally crops and enlarges them. Subsequently, the artist superimposes words on the commonly black-and-white pictures.[280] The text is renowned for being in the Futura Bold Oblique and Helvetica Ultra Condensed fonts.[281] As De Oliveira argued, Kruger has attempted to demonstrate "how signs and cultural representations may be active at the source of cultural subjection and ideological control by political and economic power, not only of the individual, but of the entire social body."[282] The juxtaposition of words and found pictures often result in surprising combinations.[283] She has indeed proved numerous times that even seemingly stupid images could be made to express a deeper meaning.[284] The relationship between the images and text is rather ambiguous. In some instances, the image is more significant, in others, it is the text which has a predominant role. However, as Alberro argued, it is more important that the

[273] Chicago et al., *Judy Chicago: New Views,* 15.
[274] Britannica Academic, s.v. "Barbara Kruger," accessed February 16, 2022, https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Barbara-Kruger/124995.
[275] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 147.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid., 147-148.
[278] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 751.
[279] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 147-148.
[280] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 751.
[281] Chicago et al., *Judy Chicago: New Views,* 15.
[282] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 751.
[283] Britannica Academic, s.v. "Barbara Kruger," accessed February 16, 2022, https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/levels/collegiate/article/Barbara-Kruger/124995.
[284] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 147-148.

combination of the two conveys a powerful message and problematises "preconceived notions" than which one has more power.[285]

Moreover, Kruger's work seems to reverse the early feminists' claim that the personal is political by conveying that the political is personal.[286] Therefore, one might say that her artworks diminish both craftsmanship and authorship and rather concentrate on the subject matter.[287] Kruger's oeuvre, however, does not solely consist of images. She has continually widened the scope of media and added new art forms.[288] Among others, she has included video installations, films, satiric sculptures, and gallery shows involving wrapping the entire space in wallpaper. Even though the forms and medium have changed throughout her career, Kruger's technique of directly addressing the spectator and the topics have remained invariable.[289] The artist had used the aspects of commercial art to address criticism of notorious stereotypes frequently represented in mass media and other issues in society. Graphic design is thus, for Kruger, not simply a tool but a crucial element of her work. [290] However, as De Oliveira argued, Kruger has been using the target as a weapon and, therefore, one might wonder whether her strategy of appropriation is well chosen. Kruger's constant use of the images from mass media may jeopardise the critical aspects of her works.[291] Nevertheless, despite this fact and as a consequence of her then-innovative methods, the artist's contribution has been highly significant to the art world. After all, "thanks in large part to her accomplishment, the definition of what art is has changed during past twenty years to include virtually any imaginable medium."[292]

Judy Chicago is a feminist artist who is willing to explore various artistic media and forms to express her message as appropriately as possible.[293] Therefore, I propose that similar to Kruger, Chicago's deliberately chosen art forms play an essential role in her artworks. The *PowerPlay* series consists of a mixture of drawings, such as *Maleheads*; cast-

[285] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 196.
[286] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 147-148.
[287] Alberro and Kruger, *Barbara Kruger*, 195.
[288] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 116.
[289] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 2.
[290] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 110-111.
[291] De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 759.
[292] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 111.
[293] Press Release – Judy Chicago 'ReViewing PowerPlay,'" David Richard Gallery, June 2012, accessed February 04, 2022, https://www.davidrichardgallery.com/News-Detail.cfm?NewsID=494.

paper reliefs, for instance, *Doublehead/Save Me*; both small and monumental paintings like *Rainbow Man;* and the bronze relief *Woe/Man*.[294] The bronze relief was a technique with which Chicago had not had any experience before. However, she recalls that she considered working in this technique absolutely captivating, especially her attempts to accomplish unique coloured patinas.[295] In fact, the whole P*owerPlay* series was carefully prepared. Lucie-Smith clarified that for some artworks, Chicago had used photographs of an actor who had assumed the required expressions and poses.[296] The paintings of a heroic scale - bigger than life-size were based on Italian Renaissance tradition not merely because of their focus on the male nude but also due to their scale and medium.[297]

As Chicago stated in the interview with the curator and writer Olivia Gauthier, the main reason why she had been using different mediums and forms is that she had invariably attempted to select the most appropriate ones according to the content of her work. Therefore, it had been logical to create the series in oil, which was commonly used for the Italian Renaissance heroic paintings.[298] She emphasised in her autobiography that when she had worked with oil paint in college, she had, for some inexplicable reason, strongly disliked the texture of oil paint as well as the smell of turpentine.[299] As she stated: "I was determined, nevertheless, to overcome my aversion, because I was convinced that this was the right medium for such images."[300]

However, it should be clarified that the first layer of the works is airbrushed acrylic, and only the final one is in oil. According to Lucie-Smith, the oil covering highlighted the threatening and powerful aspects of the figures.[301] Moreover, the art historian Ann-Sophie Lehmann argued that oil paintings had been generally related to male attributes.[302] Therefore, one might say that oil was indeed a very suitable material for the series criticising violent male power. For instance, the painting *In the Shadow of the Handgun* is, according to Katz, a striking example of how the mechanical airbrushed surface is intermingled with the

[294] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 113.
[295] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 146.
[296] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 116.
[297] Press Release – Judy Chicago 'ReViewing PowerPlay,'" David Richard Gallery, June 2012, accessed February 04, 2022, https://www.davidrichardgallery.com/News-Detail.cfm?NewsID=494.
[298] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[299] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 144.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 106.
[302] Lehmann, "How materials make meaning," 19.

expressive hand brush one.[303] The typically long process of oil painting was, according to Chicago, even prolonged due to her constant reworkings of the same areas. As she argued: "If I let my brush freely express what I felt, I became scared of what I painted, thinking it ugly and obscuring it, only to paint exactly the same thing all over again."[304]

Furthermore, Chicago created most of the artworks on Belgian linen. She clarified that she had been attempting to imitate how Renaissance paintings were created although taking a contemporary approach.[305] Instead of using the ordinary white gesso surface for a traditional canvas, the artist sought to create a transparent coating that would highlight the natural beige colour of the linen while still providing a sealed surface crucial for oil paintings.[306] She argued that comparably to her most famous series *The Dinner Party,* with which she had attempted to undermine needlework, notably ecclesiastical needlework - customarily associated with a magnification of male religious power - also with this series, she aimed to subvert the medium used by major Renaissance artists. If we considered this period as the beginning of modern society, it would simultaneously be the beginning of the general distorted notion of the heroic male figure. In Chicago's view, subversion is a fundamental part of her work.[307]

Another aspect of the *PowerPlay* series distinct from Kruger's artworks is, without a doubt, colour. Gauthier pointed out in her interview that colour had been considerably important and integral to Chicago's work. In the case of this series, the vivid rainbow colours appear to be nearly ironic. Chicago clarified that the rainbow was closely related to utopia. Therefore, her use of colours is, according to her, an inclination to subvert the common notion of masculinity. Gauthier supports Chicago's statement and adds that the colours indeed grab the attention of the viewer due to their misleading impression: one is at first attracted to the bright, colourful images and subsequently wonders what the colours imply in this context. The artist confirms the observation by stating that, for instance, in the artwork *Rainbow Man*, the rainbow does not signify beauty and hope as it usually would.[308]

[303] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[304] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 106.
[305] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[306] Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision*, 106.
[307] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[308] Ibid.

Even though the distinction between the materials that Barbara Kruger has used for her feminist artworks and Judy Chicago used for her *PowerPlay* series seems to be noticeable, some aspects are, in my view, not visible at first glance. More specifically, in order to fully comprehend their artworks, it is essential to realise that art mediums and forms have played a crucial role in both Kruger's and Chicago's work. The two artists have attempted to incorporate specific materials into the subject matter of the artworks. While Kruger has mainly been using found images from magazines and newspapers to criticise stereotypes in society in an ironic way, Chicago ironically used oil paint to challenge conventional representations of male figures that date back to the Renaissance period. As a consequence, even though the art mediums used for the analysed artworks differ to a considerable extent, the intentions of both artists are, in my opinion, rather similar. They both have attempted to support the meaning of their art by using, according to them, the most suitable materials and art forms. According to Chicago: "I firmly believe that various techniques are most appropriate to specific intentions."[309] The mediums of the artworks and, above all, the art forms seem to be directly related to the place of display, which will be analysed in the following sub-chapter.

2.5 Place of display

In a comparable manner to the mediums, the places at which the artworks by Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago have been displayed differ considerably at first glance. This aspect is indubitably closely related to the art forms and mediums since, for instance, the oil paintings of the *PowerPlay* series would be hardly appropriate outside of the gallery setting due to the sensitive characteristics of oil paint. In Eleey and others' view, the place of exhibitions is also connected to the subject matter of the artworks. The process of looking and being looked at functions differently in various settings. Kruger has, according to them, always used every space to its maximum potential.[310] In fact, she has placed importance on the recognisability and visibility of her work. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that she has mainly exhibited her artworks in the public realm. Her artworks can be found, among others, on billboards, advertisements, bus shelters, postcards, architecture, shopping bags,

[309] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 36-37.
[310] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 75.

matchbooks.[311] The aim is thus "to address the spectator on a number of fronts."[312] Consequently, her artworks are more frequently accessible outdoors than in a gallery space. According to Loughery, this strategy perfectly correlates with the subject matter of her work.[313]

However, it should be noted that Kruger has not completely avoided the gallery setting. Especially in the last twenty years, Kruger has also included huge gallery shows, for which she had covered the entire space with wallpaper.[314] Furthermore, Kruger's ongoing touring exhibition "Barbara Kruger: Thinking of ~~You~~. I Mean ~~Me~~. I Mean You." started at the Art Institute of Chicago in September 2021, is now at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art until July 2022 and will end at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in January 2023. This engaging and extensive show is Kruger's largest solo exhibition since 2000.[315] Even though the show may be defined as a retrospective, it denies being statically chronological. Rather, it calls for a critical re-evaluation of Kruger's artworks.[316] Kennicott asserted that when encountering the exhibition for the first time, younger generations would consider her work as thrillingly relevant as when their parents and grandparents had experienced the same artworks for the first time decades earlier.[317] However, it should be emphasised that more than half of the works are completely new, comprising updated iconic pieces, site-specific works, etc. Therefore, since the artist had used different digital mediums for the new series of artworks, the ongoing show does not solely include paste-ups.[318] Nevertheless, the aim of the exhibition is "not so much critiquing new technology as commenting on how we as humans craft cultural engines to shape or anesthetize ourselves."[319]

In contrast to Kruger, Judy Chicago has only exhibited the *PowerPlay* series in a gallery setting. In fact, most of her artworks, with a distinct exception of her site-specific 'smoke sculptures,' have been exhibited at museums and galleries.[320] The analysed series

[311] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 31,110-111.
[312] Ibid., 31.
[313] Loughery, "Love for Sale," 56.
[314] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 2.
[315] Kennicott, "Decades Later, Barbara Kruger Is Still Right About Everything," 1.
[316] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 18.
[317] Kennicott, "Decades Later, Barbara Kruger Is Still Right About Everything," 1.
[318] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 18.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Judy Chicago. Accessed November 22, 2021. https://www.judychicago.com/.

was originally exhibited at New York's ACA gallery in 1986.[321] The second time the artworks were on display was more than twenty years later. The exhibition entitled "ReViewing PowerPlay" in 2012 at David Richard Gallery in New York aimed to introduce the works within the framework of contemporary times.[322] Lastly, the *PowerPlay* series was presented at Salon 94 in New York in 2018. For this exhibition with the title "PowerPlay: A Prediction", only a selection of the works was used. As should be clear from the name, the show served as evidence of Chicago's abilities to address issues long before they became commonly acknowledged.[323] In other words, as Katz argued in his article in regard to this exhibition, "Chicago's art from decades past has never looked so current."[324]

Whereas Kruger has exhibited her feminist artworks both inside and outside of the gallery setting, Chicago's *PowerPlay* series has been on display solely at art galleries in New York. However, one must not forget to take into account the various art forms the two artists have used for their art. Since Kruger's works include enormous billboards, posters for underground or bus shelters, it is hardly surprising that they have been exhibited outside of museums and galleries. Similarly, considering the fact that oil paintings would be easily damaged by weather conditions, it is natural that they have only been displayed indoors. Therefore, comparably to the previous sub-chapter, despite the fact that their approach appears to differ to a considerable extent, the artworks of both artists have been on display at places most suitable for specific art forms and mediums. Furthermore, in my view, the places at which the artworks by Kruger and Chicago have been exhibited might be directly related to a very distinct perception of their art. As will be analysed in the following chapter, Kruger's work seems to be more accessible to a broad public, which could subsequently influence the diverse ways their art has been perceived.

[321] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[322] "Press Release – Judy Chicago 'ReViewing PowerPlay,'" David Richard Gallery, June 2012, accessed February 04, 2022, https://www.davidrichardgallery.com/News-Detail.cfm?NewsID=494.
[323] "PowerPlay: A Prediction," Salon 94, accessed February 6, 2022, https://salon94.com/exhibitions/powerplay-a-prediction.
[324] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."

Chapter 3: Reception of the analysed artworks

Chapter 2 focused on the comparison of the visible characteristics of the feminist artworks by Barbara Kruger and the specific series *PowerPlay* by Judy Chicago. I would like to argue that the analysed features were all generally related to the subject matter of their works. Even though some elements seemed to be, at first glance, vastly different, such as the representations of the male and female gaze or the distinct mediums, in each case, some mutual features were feasible to find. The following chapter will, however, revolve around aspects that are not readable from the artworks themselves. More specifically, the following chapter will aim to analyse the reasons why the feminist artworks by Kruger have been perceived in a considerably dissimilar way to Chicago's *PowerPlay* series. This section represents, in my view, the biggest distinction between the analysed series of artworks.

Even though feminisms have anticipated the end of gender differentiation and reappraisal of femininity for over a century, the notion of feminism has been often distorted. However, it is necessary to recognise that the demand for equivalent rights to the male population is unquestionably not in contradiction to celebrating femininity.[325] In my view, one should be aware of this fact in order to be able to comprehend correctly Barbara Kruger's feminist artworks as well as, to a lesser extent, Chicago's *PowerPlay* series.

3.1 Reception of Barbara Kruger's feminist artworks

When Kruger began to create her renowned text-and-image artworks in the early 1980s, nobody could have foreseen the great impact she would make on not only visual arts but other fields as well.[326] One of the secrets of her success seems to be the transparency of her art.[327] According to Eleey and others, Kruger is one of few artists whose works truly speak for themselves. The message of her art has been addressed in a direct and - thanks to the consistent use of fonts functioning as Kruger's signature - legible way.[328] By taking this approach, the artist has enabled spectators to readily access her ideas. Her style, which might be described, in Goldstein's view, as a rational method of unifying her ideas, was

[325] Boris, "The Subversive Stitch," 119.
[326] Squiers, "Barbara Kruger," 58.
[327] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger*, 9.
[328] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 82.

instantly more entrancing than the ordinary self-conscious commercial fashions and styles from that time. Therefore, it can be argued that Kruger did not simply adapt traditional advertising methods with the intention of parodying mass media, but rather, she has aptly used its techniques to attract the attention of the spectator.[329]

As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, one of the ways how Kruger has captured the attention of viewers is by exhibiting her artworks in various places. As a result, the artist has ensured that her art would be accessible also to people who might otherwise not enter a gallery or museum space.[330] This is, in my view, a crucial point and a major difference between the reception of Kruger's works and Chicago's *PowerPlay* series. Since Kruger's images can perfectly function at almost any place, as she argued in the interview with Mitchell, she had indeed attempted "to occupy as many of them as possible."[331] In fact, most of her earlier works started as street posters. She used to print a huge number of them at a commercial printer in New York and subsequently plastered the posters on bulletin boards and construction sites across the city. Later in her career, she used to hire professional people who would hang Kruger's posters all over the city overnight. O'Grady emphasised that before being established, her works had had evanescent characteristics since an advertisement would be pasted over them within a short time.[332] Therefore, what, according to O'Grady, "began as necessity quickly became a strategy, a way to maximize her message outside traditional methods of displaying art."[333] Even though the artist does not consider the gallery setting and outdoor setting as separate places, she is aware of the fact that they, indeed, have different qualities and can contribute to creating various meanings. However, she added that while some of the pieces have had satisfactory results, others have proved completely ineffective.[334]

According to Eleey and others, Kruger's artworks appear to be most powerful when she dissolves some of their authority and lets them be influenced by the natural circumstances of their context.[335] The diminishment of authorship thus seems to be another factor affecting the success of her works. As O'Grady observed, only a handful of artists

[329] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 112-113.
[330] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 1.
[331] Mitchell, "An Interview with Barbara Kruger," 438.
[332] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 5.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Mitchell, "An Interview with Barbara Kruger," 438-439.
[335] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 75.

throughout history have been as repeatedly copied as Kruger.[336] The artist expressed that she appreciated the fact that her art maintained its identity irrespective of medium and size.[337] As she added: "Of course this means it also lends itself to easy reuse by other people, but I'm fine with that."[338] In 2011, Kruger created the artwork *Untitled (That's the Way We Do It)*, which is a collage constructed of around five hundred images that the artist had found online. In other words, the pictures contained certain aspects of Kruger's work, but none of them was made by the artist herself. Kruger found it amusing since, for this artwork, she used the images created by people who had used her style for their works.[339]

The streetwear brand Supreme and the South Korean band Mamamoo are among the best-known instances demonstrating how widely Kruger's style has been adopted.[340] Paradoxically, Supreme, the logo of which derives directly from Kruger's style, sued the streetwear brand Married to the Mob in 2013 for the appropriation of a T-shirt design. When Kruger was asked to comment on this issue, she expressed that she had been making her work specifically about these kinds of unwise situations. She added that she was expecting them to also sue her for plagiarism. Moreover, she created her yet only performance *Untitled (The Drop)* for the 2017 Performa Biennial in New York, which was a pop-up shop selling limited-edition of clothes and skateboards, including slogans such as 'Want it, buy it, forget it' or 'Don't be a jerk'. The performance is believed to be parodying the Supreme's actions.[341]

The Supreme incident is, in my view, related to another aspect influencing Kruger's accomplishments. One might argue that her artworks have received broad recognition. Due to merging graphic design with art, Kruger's art has become more populist, which has enabled a wider audience to encounter her artworks.[342] The fact that her images have also appeared on T-shirts, mugs, matchbooks, sunglasses, tote bags, etc., strengthens further a wide-ranging audience.[343] Kruger's works have thus entered not only the world of art but also the commercial sphere. Moreover, she has also influenced the field of graphic design

[336] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 4.
[337] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 47.
[338] Ibid.
[339] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 4.
[340] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 47.
[341] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 4-5.
[342] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 114.
[343] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 47.

itself. It is possible that precisely due to her blurring boundaries between art and graphic design, she has contributed to present advertising and graphic design to a larger extent than numerous chief innovative designers. As she established her reputation, various editorial art companies asked her to enrich texts related to the issues of her interest. Consequently, her art has been part of the covers of such as *Newsweek, The New York Times, Ms., Esquire* and others.[344]

Additionally, Kruger has gained further recognition not only because of her successful work in New York and Los Angeles but also through her inclusion in Documenta VII in 1982, the Venice Biennale in 1982 and the Whitney Biennale in 1983. Her works might have been seen in cities such as London, Siena, Stockholm, Berlin and Warsaw. Furthermore, she has also exhibited her work outside the United States and Europe, for instance, at the Amorepacific Museum of Art in Seoul.[345] Kruger was allegedly also part of the Incheon Women Artists' Biennale in Seoul; however, interestingly enough, there seems to be only little evidence supporting her presence. Nevertheless, in my view, it is significant to realise that due to these international exhibitions, the meaning of Kruger's artworks has been slightly shifted based on the context in which they have been exhibited.

Kruger has not always been successful but has also experienced some criticism about her work. The artist's major concerns in her practice have been the ways the spectators experience pictures and how those images have been shaping our society.[346] As she argued in the interview with Mitchell: "What the media have done today is make a thing meaningless through its accessibility. And what I'm interested in is taking that accessibility and making meaning."[347] However, for some viewers, it was initially arduous to approve of the open usage of graphic design in art. Even though the Guerrilla Girls were also creating works in a similar style at the same time, they were considered as advertisements by artists rather than actual pieces of art.[348] In my view, their artworks do not differ to a considerable extent from those by Kruger, especially since, as was mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, there have been some speculations that Kruger was part of Guerrilla Girls at some point.

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[344] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 32-33, 111, 115.
[345] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 7.
[346] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 43.
[347] Mitchell, "An Interview with Barbara Kruger," 448.
[348] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 113.

Moreover, Loughery stated rather harshly that Kruger's artworks were frequently "banal or party-line predictable."[349] According to him, her art loses pungency as soon as it is viewed at prominent galleries or in opulent art books.[350] A comparable statement is made by Eleey and others, who argued that since Kruger's medium and target are substantially the same, the artist had been merely reproducing what she had claimed to be criticising. In addition, they believed that Kruger was struggling with defining who had authority. Her image *Untitled (The future belongs to those who can see it)* (Fig.29) from 1977 is, in their view, a clear example. The artwork depicts a female figure and two hands, one of which is administrating eyedrops in her mascaraed eyes and the other one holding her eye down. After careful consideration, one might see that both hands might belong to the woman. Therefore, they were wondering whether the drops signified clarification of her vision or aimed to blind her to the future.[351]

The artist herself expressed that she had experienced several unpleasant incidents in the male-dominated world, the hostility of which, as she argued, repeatedly demonstrated the issues she had attempted to disclose. The review of Kruger's shows from 1997 in the *New York Times* by the art critic Michael Kimmelman was one of the occurrences. He blatantly attacked her whole show by using rather defensive and angry language, completely ignoring the innovative features of her work.[352] She recalls that when she began her career, there was not a large number of women exhibiting their work at galleries. Therefore, she could hear all kinds of reactions such as "How can you sell out and be in a gallery when you're working in the street?"[353] Nevertheless, Kruger added that male art critics and historians have generally been supportive of her work. The issues of gender, race, sexuality, and class are still present in the art world, but they have, according to Kruger, undoubtedly changed for the better.[354] Moreover, she believed that "now the most visible work by women is celebrated not because it's by women, but because it's just so good, it simply rules, regardless of the gender of its producer."[355]

[349] Loughery, "Love for Sale," 56.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 73-74.
[352] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 171.
[353] O'Grady, "Barbara Kruger," 5-6.
[354] Kruger, Goldstein and Deutsche, *Barbara Kruger,* 171,192.
[355] Ibid., 192.

Even though one still has to wait for the exhibition reviews of the ongoing "Barbara Kruger: Thinking of ~~You~~. I Mean ~~Me~~. I Mean You.," to determine how the exhibition has been perceived, it can be argued that Kruger's recognition is well deserved. Besides gender stereotypes, her artworks deal with other monumental subjects such as race, class, economy, voyeurism, and others.[356] Moreover, Kennicott argued that although her art might be intended for young spectators, older generations will never age out of her artworks.[357] Kruger's art is thus appropriate for various kinds of viewers, since as he continued: "The forces arrayed against humanity are more powerful than ever, and the beneficiaries of this onslaught have never been richer or more powerful."[358]

3.2 Reception of Judy Chicago's PowerPlay series

Compared to Kruger's feminist artworks, Chicago's *PowerPlay* series has been more inaccessible. Art galleries have been the only space in which the spectators could temporarily encounter the monumental series. When the artworks were exhibited in 1986 for the first time, there was almost total silence in the context of sales, exhibition reviews and articles.[359] This was, for Chicago, an entirely new experience since her exhibitions up until then had repeatedly grabbed the attention of the press, art critics and visitors.[360] The silence was thus a foreign territory for her, and she did not know what to think about it.[361] Fateman was also perplexed by the silence around the *PowerPlay* series and argued that it was indeed "puzzling that this fearless work, produced in the wake of her immense and highly publicized magnum opus, received little attention at the time of its first exhibition".[362] Gauthier asserted that scant attention is also a strategy for expressing criticism. She also added that since the subject of the series is specifically related to men, *PowerPlay* differs to a large extent from her other works. However, Chicago disapproves of this notion by arguing that considering the fact that she had been examining the construct of femininity for her

[356] Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger*: *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 43.
[357] Kennicott, "Decades Later, Barbara Kruger Is Still Right About Everything," 2.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 198.
[360] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."
[361] Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 198.
[362] Fateman, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94," 229.

The Dinner Party, the *PowerPlay* series dealing with the construct of masculinity fits perfectly into the artist's oeuvre.[363]

It is argued that the *PowerPlay* series is one of Chicago's least known and perhaps most misunderstood works.[364] Katz stated that the reason for its unpopularity might be that the spectators considered the angry faces of male figures too straightforward and shocking for a period in which irony was the main tool to express criticism.[365] Moreover, according to Mulvey, men are, in general, unwilling to look at their exhibitionist selves.[366] As she argued, based on "the principles of the ruling ideology and the psychical structures that back it up, the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification."[367] In Fateman's view, another reason that might explain the silence around the series is Chicago's assertive style which the spectators generally either love or hate and in this instance, the latter seemed to be the case.[368] Chicago asserted that she had repeatedly been misunderstood throughout her career. Moreover, she argued that the art world had invariably attempted to dismiss, ignore, or reject her art and influence.[369] In Strong's view, the art establishment has not simply seemed to be interested in Chicago's blunt criticism, which has caused a lot of hostility towards her work.[370]

However, according to Katz, the *PowerPlay* series was misunderstood particularly as a consequence of its timing.[371] Chicago agreed with Katz and admitted that this was, in fact, not the first time she had had lousy timing with her works. For instance, her *The Dinner Party* emerged, in the artist's view, before there was any art historical or critical context for it. The same applies, according to Chicago and Katz, to the *PowerPlay* series.[372] As Katz continued, due to contextualising the series within the framework at the time of its first exhibition, one can gain a better understanding of why the seemingly powerful series did not have the desired effect.[373] Moreover, as was briefly mentioned, in the 1980s, the art

[363] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[364] "Press Release – Judy Chicago 'ReViewing PowerPlay,'" David Richard Gallery, June 2012, accessed February 04, 2022, https://www.davidrichardgallery.com/News-Detail.cfm?NewsID=494.
[365] Katz, "What Judy Chicago's Work Reveals about Toxic Masculinity."
[366] Jacobsson, "A Female Gaze?," 13.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Fateman, "Judy Chicago: Salon 94," 229.
[369] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[370] Strong, "Painting a Revolution," 309-310.
[371] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[372] Gauthier, "Toxic Masculinity and Rainbows."
[373] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."

changed from raising social awareness and provoking change to expressing contemporary issues in an ironic way.[374] Therefore, the *PowerPlay* series was, in Katz's opinion, presumably too self-assertive, earnest and accusatory. Furthermore, he directly mentioned Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman, who expressed, in the early 1980s, in contrast to Chicago, male-dominant aspects in an ironic manner. Even though only six years older than Kruger, Chicago might be, according to Katz, considered to be of another generation than the other three artists since there does not seem to be anything ironic about her art.[375]

Comparably to Kruger, Chicago has also exhibited her art outside of the Euro-American perspective, such as in Japan, China and New Zealand.[376] However, it should be emphasised that the *PowerPlay* series has only been exhibited in the United States. She argued that the perception of her artworks in other countries had been more or less the same as in the United States. Namely, she has experienced open hostility from the art world but significantly more positive responses from the public. Nevertheless, she added that in some parts of the world, she had been completely unfamiliar for the art establishment or had encountered immense hatred of her work. She admitted that the unquestionably mixed reactions to her art have been confusing. However, as Strong stated in his article, notwithstanding whether one loves or hates Chicago's artworks, they have a function of unsettling one's mind and not fading away.[377]

Based on this chapter, it should be clear that the perception of the works by Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago differs exceedingly. Whereas Kruger has been generally supported by a wide-range audience, Chicago's art has been mainly considered controversial. In my view, one of the main reasons for this contrast might be the space of exhibitions. Kruger has exhibited her artworks both inside and outside of the gallery setting, assuring thus that her art would be widely accessible. On the contrary, Chicago's *PowerPlay* series has been on display in a gallery space alone, in which only a limited audience could encounter the artworks. Moreover, Kruger's art has been extensively copied, which has, in my opinion, contributed to its broad recognition. However, I think that even though Kruger's artworks

[374] Press Release – Judy Chicago 'ReViewing PowerPlay,'" David Richard Gallery, June 2012, accessed February 04, 2022, https://www.davidrichardgallery.com/News-Detail.cfm?NewsID=494.
[375] Katz, "Judy Chicago's PowerPlay and the Irony of Masculinity."
[376] Judy Chicago. Accessed November 22, 2021. https://www.judychicago.com/.
[377] Strong, "Painting a Revolution," 312,316.

have been, compared to Chicago, warmly received, it does not imply that Chicago's *PowerPlay* series is less powerful. As is written on the website of Salon 94, Chicago's artworks depicting male figures "in various states of acting out in unscrupulous ways could not be more relevant to our contemporary dialogue on the abuses of power that we are experiencing and witnessing first hand."[378]

[378] "PowerPlay: A Prediction," Salon 94, accessed February 6, 2022, https://salon94.com/exhibitions/powerplay-a-prediction.

Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that the analysed feminist artworks by Barbara Kruger criticising gender stereotypes are comparable only to a certain extent with Judy Chicago's *PowerPlay* series tackling the construct of masculinity. As examined in the first chapter, both Kruger and Chicago can be considered feminist artists. However, while Chicago's feminist role is clear since the majority of the artworks in her oeuvre address feminist topics, Kruger's role is less evident because she has focused on a variety of topics and issues throughout her career.

The diverse aspects analysed in the second chapter brought varied results. As was clarified in the first sub-chapter, the artworks of the artists differed considerably in their sources of inspiration. Whereas Kruger has addressed contemporary issues which are often political, Chicago was inspired by her personal life for the *PowerPlay* series. Moreover, while Chicago has openly talked about the meaning of her series, Kruger has been quite reluctant to share the meaning of her artworks, leaving it open to interpretation by spectators. On the other hand, both artists express criticism of patriarchy. As argued in the second sub-chapter, the artists have not only criticised the dominant position of men but also asserted that masculinity is constructed and that both men and women can identify with the masculine position. The third sub-chapter regarding the male and female gaze confirmed that even though Kruger has mainly used depictions of female figures and Chicago depicted only males for her series, both artists aimed to criticise the traditional male gaze. Likewise, the sub-chapter on mediums and techniques supported the existence of a mutual feature despite the distinctive use of materials: both Kruger and Chicago have chosen mediums that, in my view, emphasise their criticism ironically. More specifically, Kruger has created her artworks out of images she found which depicted American culture to criticise the stereotypes of this culture. Comparably, Chicago used oil in her series for criticism of patriarchy since, in her view, the heroic male figure has its origins in Renaissance oil paintings. The last sub-chapter analysing places of exhibitions demonstrated that while Kruger's feminist artworks have been on display both inside and outside the gallery setting, the *PowerPlay* series has only been exhibited at galleries in New York.

The last chapter made clear that the reception of the artworks by Kruger and Chicago is one of the areas in which they are most distinct. Whereas Kruger has generally

won the support of the art world and public, Chicago has received mixed reactions to her art and scarcely any reactions to the *PowerPlay* series.

Furthermore, the topics and issues discussed throughout the thesis have demonstrated its relevance to contemporary feminist art. Numerous artworks by Kruger analysed in the second chapter have been on display at the ongoing touring exhibition "Barbara Kruger: Thinking of ~~You~~. I Mean ~~Me~~. I Mean You." Therefore, I suggest that although she created the artworks in the 1980s and 1990s, they are still relevant to present-day art. Correspondingly, although Chicago made the *PowerPlay* series in the 1980s, the criticism of patriarchal structures has been a popular theme in feminist art of the current era. In addition, the thesis has proved that, despite the fact that both artists represent the Western canon, their art can be considered partially global. The analysed artworks have been exhibited outside the Euro-American world in countries such as Japan, China, South Korea and New Zealand, which has contributed to the artworks' international reputation.

To conclude, based on the thesis, I would like to argue that the selected feminist works by Kruger only partly mirror the *PowerPlay* series by Chicago. The works strongly resemble each other in their criticism of gender inequality and the male gaze. Additionally, both artists emphasised that the masculine position is not reserved for men only. However, I propose that Kruger's reluctance to share the meaning of her artworks conflicts with Chicago's approach to directly address her intentions to viewers. Their source of inspiration and the place of the display also vary to a certain extent. Above all, the reception of their artworks differed considerably. Having said this, further research into public reception in particular would be beneficial. For instance, interviews with the viewers could bring interesting insights. Moreover, the position of feminist artists in general could be analysed to expand the field of research. More specifically, further examination of the following questions could enrich feminist art history: What does it mean to be a feminist artist? Is this classification useful or not? Are female artists less appreciated if they are not seen as feminists? Nevertheless, I would like to argue that the research conducted for this thesis has brought a new perspective on feminist art by Kruger and Chicago and challenged the traditional juxtaposition of their art since the selected artworks partly mirror one another.

Even though the artworks by Barbara Kruger and Judy Chicago proved to have several distinct aspects, I would like to argue that their aims are closely related: to address societal issues, in this case, patriarchy, which is relevant to every one of us. Therefore, the

subject matter of their art is significant not only for the art world but also for society. After all, as Chicago stated in her interview with Strong: “The problem now, globally, is that patriarchal societies are destructive, not only to women, but to the globe, to the earth.”[379]

[379] Strong, “Painting a Revolution,” 318.

Illustrations

Fig. 1 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Hate like Us),* 1994, photographic silkscreen on Plexiglas, 139.7 x 139.7 cm, (New York, Courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, inv. nr.-F-KRUG-1F94.10)

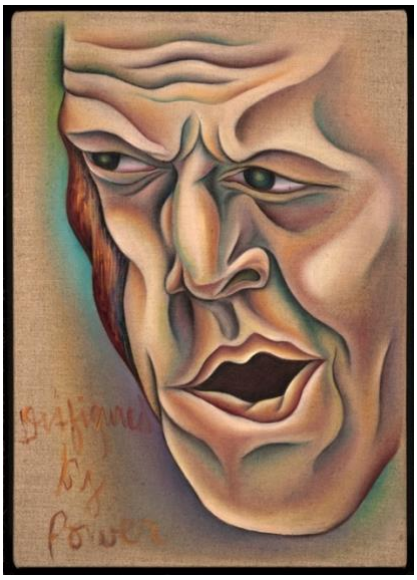

Fig. 2 Judy Chicago, *Disfigured by Power 1,* 1984, sprayed acrylic and oil on Belgian Linen, 35.6 x 25.4 cm, (New York, Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society)

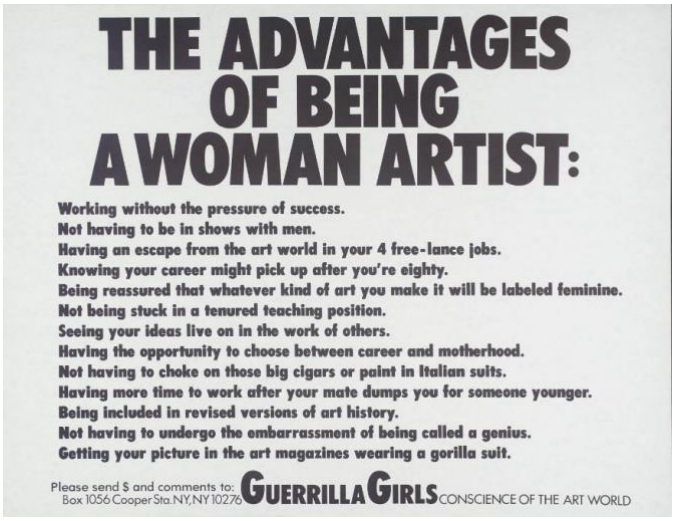

Fig. 3 Guerrilla Girls, *The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist,* 1988, screenprint on paper, 43 x 56 cm, (London, Tate Modern, inv. nr. P78796)

Fig. 4 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your comfort is my silence)*, 1981, gelatin silver print, 152 x 107 x 7 cm, (Maryland, Glenston Museum)

Fig. 5 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (We have received orders not to move),* 1982, photographic collage, 117.2 x 120.7 cm, (New York, Mary Boone Gallery)

Fig. 6 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Body Is a Battleground),* 1989, photographic silkscreen on vinyl, 284.5 x 284.5 cm, (Los Angeles, The Broad, inv. nr. F-KRUG-1F89.17)

Fig. 7 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Help),* Feb 1, 1991 - Apr 30, 1991, Bus Shelter Posters, Strasbourg, France.

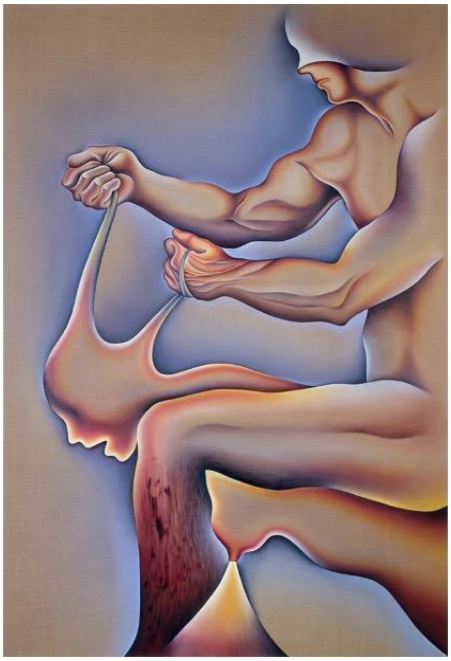

Fig. 8 Judy Chicago, *Crippled by the Need to Control,* 1983, sprayed acrylic and oil on Belgian Linen, 274.3 x 182.9 cm, (private collection)

Fig. 9 Judy Chicago, *In the Shadow of the Handgun,* 1983, sprayed acrylic and oil on Belgian Linen, 274.3 x 365.8 cm, (private collection)

Fig. 10 Judy Chicago, *Rainbow Man,* 1984, sprayed acrylic and oil on Belgian Linen, 274.3 x 640.1 cm, (collection of Ecaterina Vlad)

Fig. 11 Judy Chicago, *Driving the World to Destruction,* 1985, sprayed acrylic and oil on Belgian Linen, 274.3 x 426.7 cm, (collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation)

Fig. 12 Judy Chicago, *Woe/Man,* 1986, lost wax cast bronze bas-relief with multi-colored patinas, 121.9 x 91.4 x 12.7 cm, (New York, Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society)

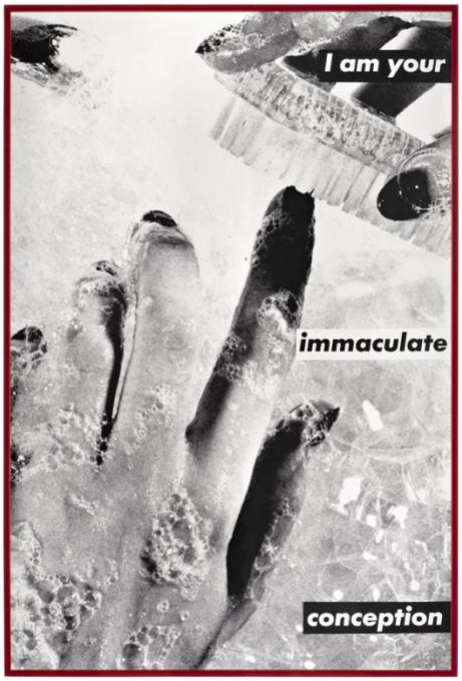

Fig. 13 Barbara Kruger, *I am your immaculate conception,* 1982, photographic montage, 185.4 x 123.4 cm, (Stockholm, Modern Art Museum, inv. nr. MOM/2009/71)

Fig. 14 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (We don't need another hero),* 1987, screenprint on vinyl, 276.5 x 531.3 x 6.4 cm, (New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, inv. nr. 2012.180)

Fig. 15 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (You make history when you do business),* 1981, gelatin silver print, 174.2 x 121.6 cm

Fig. 16 Barbara Kruger, *We Will Not Become What We Mean to You*, 1983, Gelatin silver print, 184 × 121 × 5 cm, (Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, inv. nr. 2004.758)

Fig. 17 Barbara Kruger, *We refuse to be your favorite embarrassment,* 1983, photograph, 121.92 x 243.84 cm

Fig. 18 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your fictions become history*), 1983, photograph, 66 × 199 cm, (New York, Mary Boone Gallery)

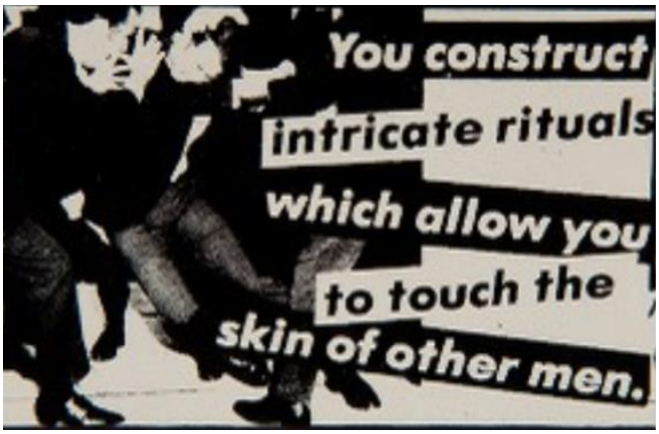

Fig. 19 Barbara Kruger, *You construct intricate rituals which allow you to touch the skin of other men,* c. 1980-c. 1989, photomechanical print, 3.5 x 5.4 cm, (North America)

Fig. 20 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (White man's best friend),* 1987, gelatin silver print, 17.8 x 20.3 cm

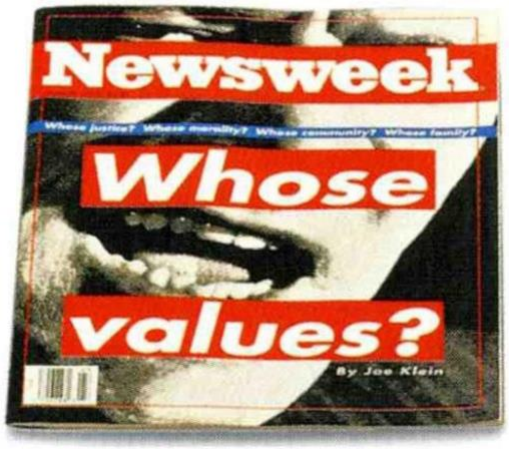

Fig. 21 Barbara Kruger, *Whose justice? Whose morality? Whose community? Whose family? Whose values?,* 1992*,* cover for Newsweek Magazine

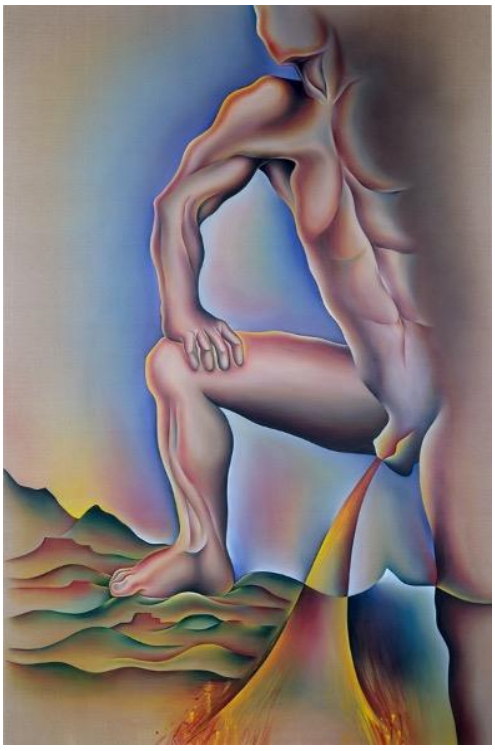

Fig. 22 Judy Chicago, *Pissing on Nature,* 1984, sprayed acrylic and oil on Belgian Linen, 274.3 x 182.9 cm, (private collection)

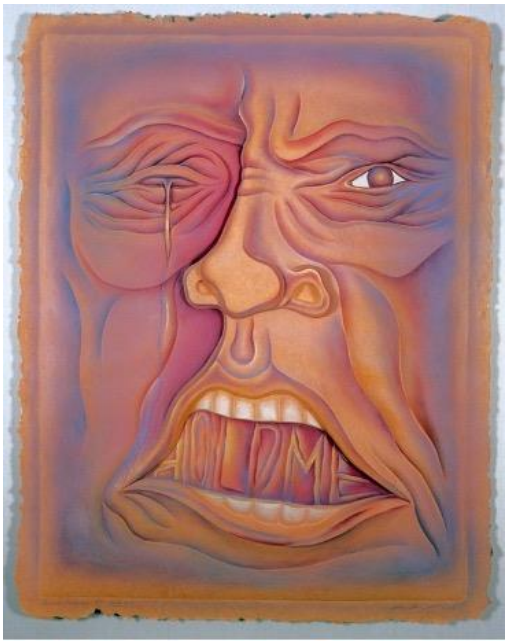

Fig. 23 Judy Chicago, *Lavender Doublehead/Hold Me #5*, 1986, sprayed acrylic and oil on hand cast paper, 130 x 100,3 x 7,62 cm, (New York, Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society)

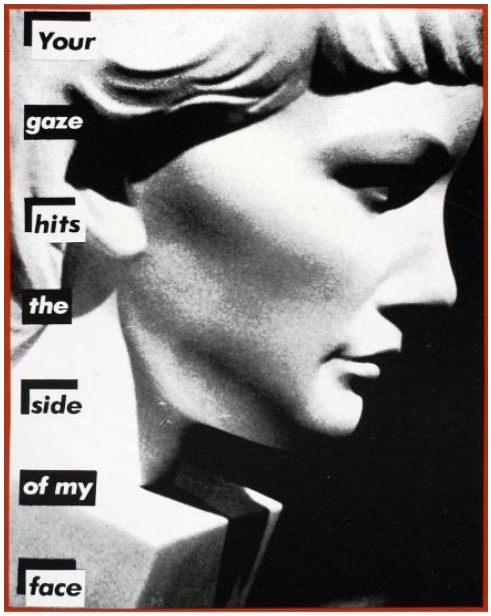

Fig. 24 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face),* 1981, photograph and type on paperboard, 47.9 x 39.1 x 4.4 cm, (Washington, National Gallery of Art)

Fig. 25 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (We are your circumstantial evidence),* 1983, gelatin silver print, 373.4 x 739.1 x 5.1 cm, (Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. nr. 1985-36-1a–c)

Fig. 26 Barbara Kruger, *We won't play nature to your culture,* 1983, photograph, 182.88 x 121.92 cm

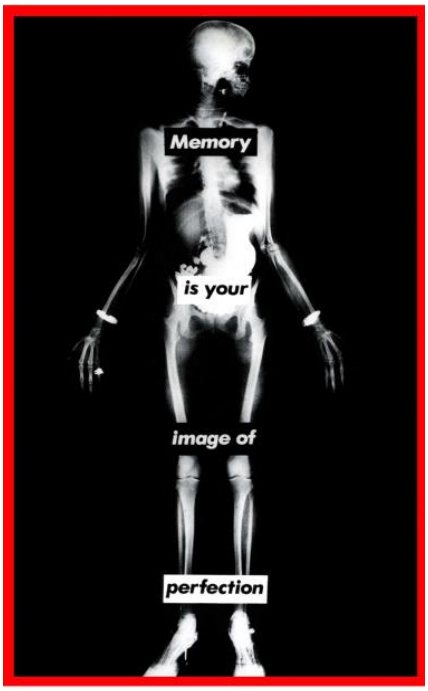

Fig. 27 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Memory is your image of perfection),* 1982, photograph, 155 × 86 cm, (New York, Mary Boone Gallery)

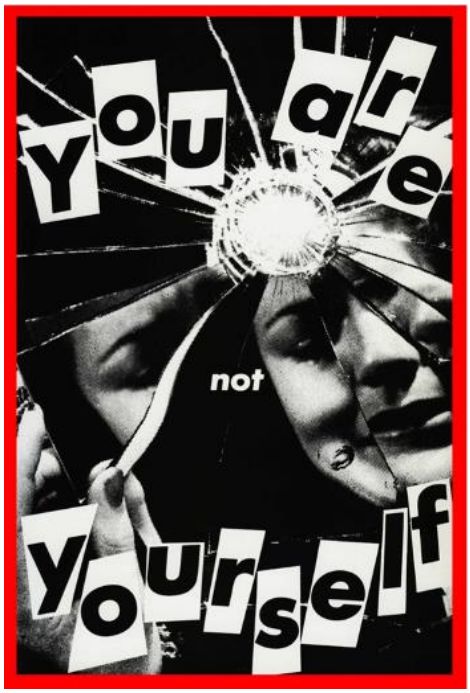

Fig. 28 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (You are not yourself),* Untitled (You are not yourself), 1982, photograph, 183 × 122 cm, (New York, Mary Boone Gallery)

Fig. 29 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (The future belongs to those who can see it),* 1997, silkscreen on vinyl, 215.9 x 152.4 cm, (Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art)

Credits illustrations

Fig. 1 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://www.thebroad.org/art/barbara-kruger/untitled-hate-us

Fig. 2 Downloaded 25 April 2022. *https://www.judychicago.com/gallery/powerplay/pp-artwork/*

Fig. 3 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/guerrilla-girls-the-advantages-of-being-a-woman-artist-p78796

Fig. 4 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://www.glenstone.org/artist/barbara-kruger/

Fig. 5 Blocker, *What the Body Cost: Desire, History, and Performance*, 66.

Fig. 6 Downloaded 25 April 2022. *https://www.thebroad.org/art/barbara-kruger/untitled-your-body-battleground*

Fig. 7 Squiers, "Barbara Kruger," 67.

Fig. 8 Downloaded 25 April 2022. *https://www.judychicago.com/gallery/powerplay/pp-artwork/*

Fig. 9 Downloaded 25 April 2022. *https://www.judychicago.com/gallery/powerplay/pp-artwork/*

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Fig. 14 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://whitney.org/collection/works/34103

Fig. 15 Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger: Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 72.

Fig. 16 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://www.artic.edu/

Fig. 17 Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation,"44.

Fig. 18 De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 761.

Fig. 19 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/286927?position=0

Fig. 20 Eleey et al., *Barbara Kruger: Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 78.

Fig. 21 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://www.moma.org/collection/works/73575

Fig. 22 Downloaded 25 April 2022. *https://www.judychicago.com/gallery/powerplay/pp-artwork/*

Fig. 23 Downloaded 25 April 2022. *https://www.judychicago.com/gallery/powerplay/pp-artwork/*

Fig. 24 Downloaded 25 April 2022. https://smarthistory.org/barbara-kruger-untitled-your-gaze-hits-side-face/

Fig. 25 Nixon, "You Thrive on Mistaken Identity," 59.

Fig. 26 Kamimura, "Barbara Kruger: Art of Representation," 44.

Fig. 27 De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 757.

Fig. 28 De Oliveira, "Jam Life into Death," 758.

Fig. 29 Eleey et al., B*arbara Kruger: Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*, 74.

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