



**Roots and Fruits: Exploring the History and Impact
of the Women's Art Registry of Minnesota**

Curated by Heather Carroll MLIS'18



November 3–December 15, 2018

**OPENING RECEPTION
& ORAL HISTORY BOOTH:**

November 3, 6–8 p.m.

CURATOR'S TALK:

November 15, 7 p.m.

CURATOR'S STATEMENT

Looking back to look forward.

I have felt a sense of urgency throughout this project to document and share the earliest history of the Women's Art Registry of Minnesota (WARM). *Roots and Fruits* was proposed in early 2017, just weeks after the last presidential inauguration, and now it is opening just days before one of the most important midterm elections in my lifetime. I feel a sense of urgency not only because of our current political climate, but also because the women in this exhibition, who have been community leaders for decades, have waited long enough for this story, herstory, to be shared. History is made by real people, people we likely know, people like us. These people are our teachers, our colleagues and our friends, but their history fades away if we don't make the effort to preserve it, to share it, to keep it alive, to learn from it, to propel us forward.

History is made in flyover states. Perhaps you've heard of Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, Woman's Building and A.I.R. Gallery? These women artists and feminist art collectives on the coasts gained national recognition for the ways they contributed to the development of the feminist art movement. Minnesota women artists were no less active or successful than their better-recorded counterparts. This project seeks to begin filling the gap in this documentation. As an artist, an archivist and a curator, I document and preserve this story (and hopefully others in the future) to draw some conclusions about how it has shaped present and future moments, to better understand how we fit into the continuum of history.

When I think about WARM's story and the history of future generations, I question: can we look at what was to know what may be possible again? If these women could change the course of history decades ago, could we do it again today? What can we learn from their methods and processes, failures and successes? How far have we come and how far do we have to go? Who is out there carrying this torch and passing it on? These are the questions behind the questions of my historical research. I'm not a politician, I'm not able to be a philanthropist, but this I can do. I can keep striving to answer these questions, sharing what I find.

This project started a few years ago, while I was working as a graduate assistant for the St. Kate's Fine Art Collection. Handling the artworks, cataloguing and searching the databases, I kept picking up thread after thread of the intertwining stories of WARM artists—connecting the people, places and events that make up the historical structure of the Women's Art Registry of Minnesota. While this provided the outline, it's

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the experiences and memories of the women of WARM that make the history vibrant. I think this project has been waiting for someone to be ready to take it on, waiting for someone to pick up the torch. I know this because of the enormous swell of support, enthusiasm, gratitude and guidance that has been extended to me by the members of the registry as this exhibition came together.

Although I, too, am a "fruit" of WARM, Roots and Fruits is not about me or my curatorial vision. This is an exhibition about the women of the registry and the ripple effect their actions had and continue to have four decades later. One of my goals has been to make myself as invisible as possible in the exhibition. While I provided the structure and parameters, the artists themselves chose the artworks to be exhibited; the pieces they felt represented the concepts. In the Roots side of the exhibition, whenever possible, all the names of the women involved are represented. To include the voices of even more WARM artists, we made a digital slideshow, open to any type of member past or present. Intended to be a digital registry of the registry, I hope it will continue to grow beyond this show.

I feel that I have only scratched the surface of the story of WARM, and this exhibition is just a beginning.

I would like to express my thanks to Nicole Watson, Kimberlee Roth, Ann Buchen, Jennifer Adam, the many student workers who assisted with this project and the St. Catherine University Art and Art History Department; to Dr. Kyunghye Yoon and Molly Hazelton of the MLIS Program, Dr. Jayme Yahr and the University of St. Thomas Museum Studies Program. They have shown me incredible support over the last two years.

- Heather Carroll MLIS '18, curator



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