

Exhibit honors 12 female artist creators & pioneers of 'The Sister Chapel'

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Featuring:
The Twelve Artists

Alice Neel
May Stevens
Sylvia Sleigh
June Blum
Martha Eldheit
Maureen Connor
Elsa M. Goldsmith
Shirley Gorelick
Betty Holliday
Diana Kurz
Cynthia Mailman

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Celebrating "The Sister Chapel" and Elsa M. Goldsmith's Contribution to this Historic Women's Art Movement Collection. These 12 Female Artists were "Pioneers" before their time & made a universal statement, in a male dominated art world.

Photo courtesy of Jo Ann Goldsmith of AuthenticBrandingWithHeart

In celebration and in honor of Women's History Month, the [Rowan University Art Gallery](#) will feature The Sister Chapel Exhibit which has been unseen as a collection for almost four decades. This special exhibit opens during Women's History Month on March 28th and runs until June 30, 2016. The Sister Chapel is a historic collaborative installation featuring the work of 12 women artist "pioneers" at the height of the women's art movement and first shared in its entirety in a New York exhibit in 1978.

[Jo Ann Goldsmith](#), daughter of artist, Elsa M. Goldsmith will honor and represent her mother's contribution to the art world and the Feminist Art Movement by participating during the Gallery exhibit opening. On March 31, Rowan University Art Gallery West will host a panel discussion with five of the Sister Chapel contributing artists: Maureen Connor, Martha Edelheit, Diana Kurz, Cynthia Mailman, and Sharon Wybrants.

Art Historian, Andrew Hottle, PhD, is a not only a Professor of Art History at Rowan University, he is the author of a [book](#) about the Sister Chapel. This Gallery Exhibit could not have taken place without the tireless efforts of Andrew Hottle, the Executive Director, and the supporting staff of Rowan University Art Gallery.

The Sister Chapel feminist art collaboration was originally conceived by Ilise Greenstein and exhibited in New York in 1978 Andrew Hottle wrote the book, "The Art of the Sister Chapel: Exemplary Women, Visionary Creators and Feminist Collaboration." This book was dedicated, "For all women remembered or forgotten who have shaped the history of art." The Sister Chapel embraced the cooperative spirit of the women's art movement.

How did the name Sister Chapel come about? By using a nominal pun on Michelangelo's famous Sistine Chapel ceiling, Ilise Greenstein issued a feminist challenge to the patriarch conceptualization of history. The Sister Chapel was created as a non hierarchical, secular commemoration of female role models. This installation consisted of an eighteen foot abstract ceiling that hung above a circular arrangement of eleven monumental canvases, each depicting the standing figure of a heroic woman-the choice of the subject was left entirely to the creator of each work.

The Sister Chapel artwork created by each of these female artists included contemporary and historical women, deities and conceptual figures. The artists whose work appeared in the Sister Chapel included Elsa M Goldsmith, Alice Neel, May Stevens, Sylvia Sleigh, June Blum, Martha Eldheit, Shirley Gorelick, Betty Holliday, Diana Kurz, Cynthia Mailman, Sharon Wybrants and Maureen Connor.

Jo Ann Goldsmith, in an interview about her mother, Elsa M Goldsmith, shared, "My mother's contribution to the Sister Chapel was the monument of 'Joan of Arc.' She stands proudly at nine ft. tall and symbolized the soul-searching hopes, fears, and faith of a women radically departed from the traditional female role."

"My mother was born in 1920, and graduated from the Parsons School of Fine and Applied Art. In Elsa's career, she worked as a staff illustrator for Newsweek Magazine, and as a lead Industrial Designer for Belle Kogan Associates. Elsa's industrial designs were used for glass, crystal, ceramics, decorative figures, reproductions of Paul Revere's silver bowls and even for children's playgrounds."

Jo Ann continued to explain, "My mother was committed to Women's Rights. She was the Chairwoman of the National Association of [Women Artists](#) and on the committee for the United Nations International Women's Year. She championed for greater participation of women in the world of arts."

"Elsa M Goldsmith won many honors and awards during her lifetime including The Grand Prix Gold Metal of Honor in 1969; The Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Contribution to Women in the Arts in 1973; and during 1972-1973 her work was featured in the London Arts Museum, Ten One Artist exhibits in museums and cultural centers and four one artist shows in the New York Area. She won 22 major awards from 1972-73 in juried competition shows including seven first place awards for works in oil, etchings, drawings, and watercolors," shared her daughter, Jo Ann Goldsmith.

"My brother, Cris and I feel blessed to have honored our mother's wishes by keeping her extensive Human Landscape Art Collection of more than 700 pieces intact. Her works of art are currently located at two University Art Galleries including Rowan University Art Gallery West, and Queensboro Community College Art Gallery known as QCC Art Gallery. We are delighted this event was created to take place during Women's History Month."

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