

# The Dinner Party Curriculum Project

## What Keeps You in Your Place?

**Grade Levels:** High School (adaptable for Upper Elementary and Middle School)



Dolores Eaton

Art teacher Dolores Eaton created a high school lesson, “What Keeps You in Your Place?” with a worksheet for mapping gender identity. This lesson is part of a larger unit entitled *Silence and Voice*. As preparation for student creation of content-based artwork, she created eight areas—family, recreational activities, media, aesthetic choices, school, religion/spiritual path, age, and traditions/ceremonial events—and asked students to reflect upon their place in these areas in relationship to their gender. Eaton’s worksheet states, “These reflections can be celebrations or frustrations, realizations or questions.” After students complete the spaces in the worksheet, they are to use the center space to write an overall perception of themselves in relation to their gender.

### Enduring Ideas:

1. Throughout history women have been silenced by the constructs of patriarchy.
2. Through art women have found a voice.

### Lesson One: What Keeps You in Your Place?

Class: AP Studio Art

Time Allotment: 4 weeks

#### Overview:

##### Lesson Summary:

This lesson is designed to give students a chance to look at their place in the world in relation to their gender and how societal constraints affect their perceptions of themselves and what they are capable of achieving. Students will further explore *The Dinner Party* as well as gain understanding of Judy Chicago’s teaching pedagogy for content-based art making.





#### Artworks, Artists, and Artifacts:

##### ► Artwork:

1. *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago with a focus on the second wing, “Christianity through the Reformation.”

##### ► Artist:

1. Judy Chicago

##### Resources:

1. Chicago, J. (2007). *The Dinner Party: From Creation to Preservation*. New York: Merrell Publishers Limited.

2. Hogeland, L. M. (1994). “Fear of feminism: Why young women get the willies.” *Ms. Magazine*.

3. Keifer-Boyd, K. (2007). “From Content to Form: Judy Chicago’s Pedagogy with Reflections by Judy Chicago.” *Studies in Art Education*, 48(2), 134-154.

4. Rosenberg, M., & Thurber, F. (2007). *Gender Matters in Art Education*. Worcester, MA: Davis Publication, Inc.

#### Key Concepts Addressed in Lesson One:

1. Judy Chicago created *The Dinner Party* in large part “to break the cycle of repetition that has consistently erased the achievements of women.” (Judy Chicago)

2. There is a wealth of information now available about the history of women, but, even today what is deemed as “real knowledge” is predominantly that of white upper class males. (Maher & Tetreault)

3. When describing the achievements of a woman, society tends to qualify those achievements with her gender.

4. “Most representations of women, whether in high or popular culture, put the focus on appearance rather than activity or achievement.” (Rosenberg & Thurber)

5. Taking into consideration the pedagogical style of Judy Chicago, this unit will encourage young women to explore their own experiences as potential content for art making. (Keifer-Boyd, 2007)

6. Judy Chicago is one female artist who found a voice in art.

#### Essential Questions Addressed in Lesson One:

1. What is patriarchy?

2. What is egalitarianism?

3. How are women and men valued in society?

4. How is the female image utilized in visual culture? How is the male image utilized in visual culture?

5. How are ideas about gender developed and promoted in society?

6. Why practice content-based art making?

#### PA Standards:

► 9.1.12.F. Delineate a unifying theme through the production of a work of art that reflects skills in media processes and techniques.

► 9.3.12.B. Determine and apply criteria to a person’s work and works of others in the arts.

► 9.4.12.A. Evaluate an individual’s philosophical statement on a work in the arts and its relationship to one’s life based

on knowledge and experience.

▶ 9.4.12.B Describe and analyze the effects that works in the arts have on groups, individuals, and the culture.



#### *Interdisciplinary Connections:*

1. Health and Wellness: Analyze mass media and cultural images of women's and men's bodies and their accepted roles in society to develop connections with a healthy body image.

2. Social Studies: Raise questions in the social studies classroom dealing with the Feminist movement and patriarchy so as to discuss these topics in multiple contexts.

3. History 8.4.12.C: Evaluate how continuity and change throughout history has impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation, and roles of women since 1450.

#### *Lesson Objectives:*

Students will:

1. Develop an awareness of their place in society in relation to their gender.
2. Understand that patriarchy still resides in, and, for the most part, controls our culture, especially visual culture.
3. Recognize that constant exposure to notions of females as passive objects of desire valued for their appearances alone has a powerful impact on males and females.
4. Understand that *The Dinner Party* is a visual metaphor for the concept that throughout history women have been "kept in their place."
5. Create content-based art, which will include:
  - ▶ Defining the audience for their visual expression.
  - ▶ Discussing with the group individual choices of work mode, media and format.
  - ▶ Carrying out a project that depicts obstacles they face in relationship to their gender.

#### *Assessment:*

▶ Formative assessment:

1. Completion of collections of images students encounter on a daily basis.
2. Completion of Gender Identity Map
3. Active participation in discussions.

▶ Summative assessment:

1. Students will be asked to identify how their image met their art-making goals
2. Audience members will be asked to communicate what they feel the student's work is expressing.

### Sequence of Action:

#### *Instructional Strategies/Activities:*

1. Students will be instructed to create a folder (electronic or paper) and collect images they are confronted with daily concerning the value of women.
2. Teacher and students will discuss the images collected through a circle process. The images will be sorted according to societal roles of women (positive and negative) and how the image is valued.
3. *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago will be reviewed.

4. Students will complete a Gender Identity Map. (See *Gender Identity* worksheet below.)
5. The following quotes by Judy Chicago will be brought to the group for discussion:
  - “Just because there is a widely held idea, it does not make it true.” —JC
  - “The art world is a tough place and in my opinion, it does no good to coddle students and to support their fantasies that process should trump product—in the real world Product Rules. By this I mean that in the end, it is the art that counts if you are going to be an artist.” —JC
6. Students will determine their art-making goals and the intended audience for their visual expression.
7. Students will determine how to navigate the constraints of time, space, and resources.
8. Students will create an open media work of art that deals with what “holds you in your place.”
9. Students will exhibit their work.
10. For final assessment, members of each student’s intended audience will critique the visual expression.

*Preparation:*

▶ Teacher Research and Preparation:

- I. Become familiar with all resources listed in the “Artworks, Artists, and Artifacts” listed above.

▶ Instructional Resources:

- I. Rosenberg, M., & Thurber, F. (2007). *Gender Matters in Art Education*. Worcester, MA: Davis Publication, Inc.

▶ Student Supplies:

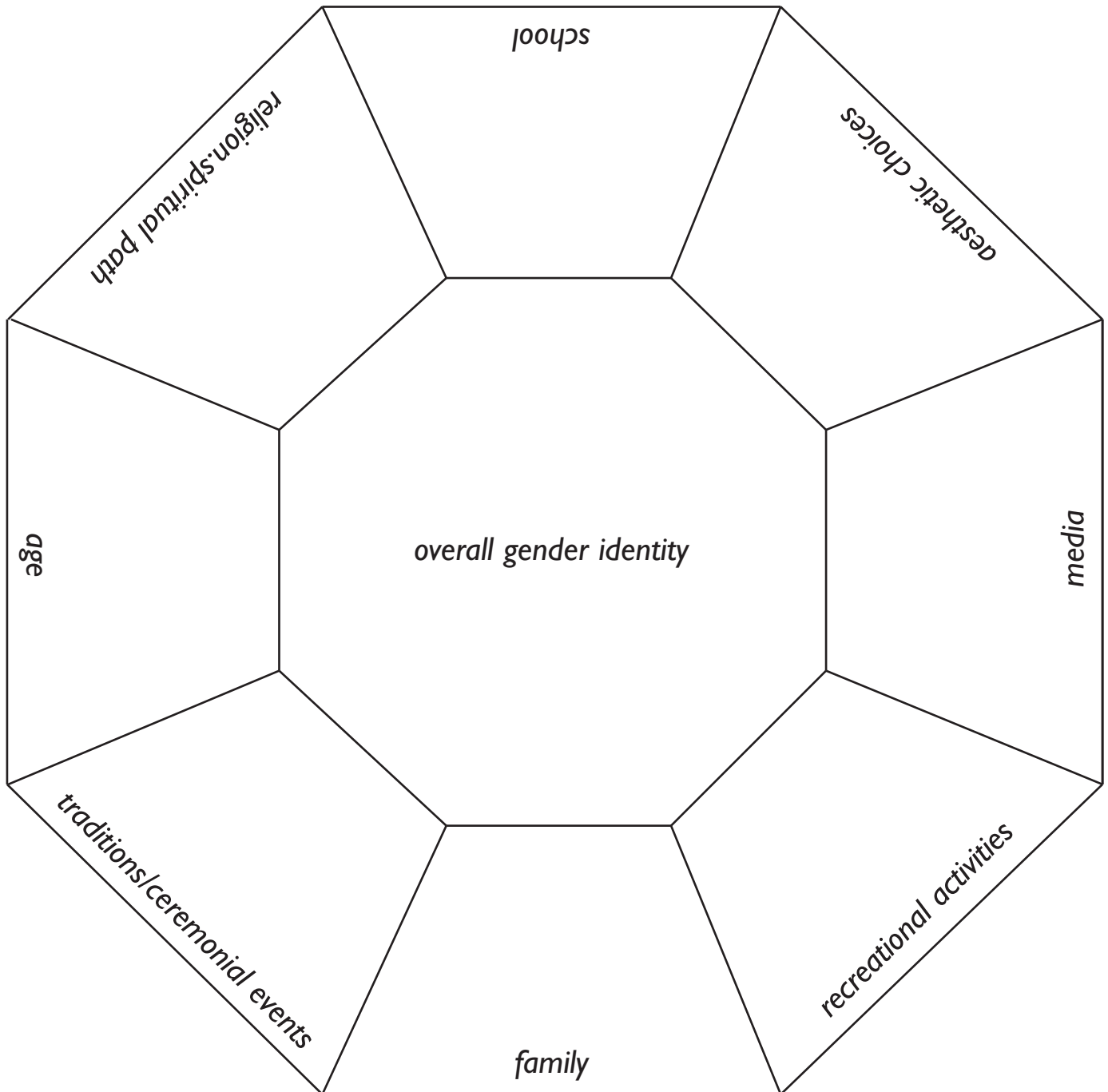
- I. Teachers need to be prepared to accommodate individual student solutions.



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Mapping My Gender Identity in Relation to:

By Dolores Eaton



In the sections provided above reflect upon your place in the given area in relationship to your gender. These reflections can be celebrations or frustrations, realizations or questions. After completing the eight trapezoid shaped areas use the octagon in the center to write and overall perception of yourself in relation to your gender. This exercise will serve as preparation for a content-based artwork.