

BUST

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**!WOMEN ART REVOLUTION****Directed by Lynn Hershman Leeson***(Zeitgeist Films)*

In the early '70s, Lynn Hershman Leeson began videotaping her friends' reflections on fusing the personal and the political in art. That these friends happened to be groundbreaking artists like Judy Chicago and New Museum founding director Marcia Tucker is a huge part of what makes *!Women Art Revolution* the most comprehensive documentary ever made on the feminist art movement. The film features 40 years' worth of interviews with artists and curators, cultural history, and rarely documented performance- and video-art pieces, all under the direction of a woman who had the foresight to capture the revolution in process.

Driven by a vibrant feminist ethos, the film

introduces viewers to a community of radical heroines. As a member of the community herself, Leeson elicits interviews that are candid, passionate, and inspiring. The late Marcia Tucker's story about her job interview at the Whitney is a jaw-dropping look at the institutionalized sexism aspiring curators faced (questions about age, baby plans, and boy-friends!). And though the quality of the early videos is sometimes poor, the dynamism of content like this makes up for occasional forays into public-access style filmmaking.

The movie also highlights the Guerrilla Girls, whose witty media attacks on the macho art world remain blisteringly astute and tremendously funny. And the culture wars that targeted art like Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" (referred to as "ceramic 3-D pornography" by one congressman) are an important reminder that challenging, political, and just plain female art is constantly under attack.

Though her film celebrates feminist pioneers, Leeson avoids dry history. Carrie Brownstein's original score, an all-star lady soundtrack (featuring Gossip and Erase Errata), profiles of younger artists like Miranda July, and an accompanying graphic novel and interactive Web database all give the project a cross-generational appeal. [JESSICA ROAKE]