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ABSTRACT: Digital mapping has become an essential tool in my research assessing the historical legacies of the Chicago-based women artists’ collectives ARC Gallery (1973-to the present) and Artemisia Gallery (1973-2003), which were founded to promote greater visibility of female artists at a moment when mainstream institutions ignored their contributions. When first writing about each gallery’s history ten years ago, I argued that each organization participated in a national feminist art network. My maps undermined this premise by revealing that the historical narrative is in fact a Midwestern one. This corrective is important, yet may have the unintended consequence of diminishing ARC and Artemisia’s importance in a discipline where artistic circles at national and global levels hold greater weight than the regional and local.
and summer of 1979. These events initially suggested that the membership of both spaces was part of a larger national conversation regarding feminist art. My recent maps undermined this premise by revealing that both galleries primarily participated in a Midwestern network, particularly the vibrant alternative arts scene that emerged in Chicago during the early 1970s. When ARC and Artemisia opened in September 1973, they both occupied the third floor of 226 East Ontario Street directly above fellow alternative space N.A.M.E. Gallery. This location also placed both cooperatives nearly next door to commercial galleries Phyllis Kind and Marianne Deson as well as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Gerda Meyer Bernstein, a founding member of ARC, explains that the group held their exhibition openings on the same evenings as the Museum of Contemporary Art as a way to engender conversations between the museum community and ARC. Joy Poe, a founding member of Artemisia, explains that Artemisia members actively recruited gallerists, museum curators, art collectors, art educators, critics, and art administrators working in the new arts district, as well as their peers from ARC and N.A.M.E., to participate on panels or workshops, fostering renewed dialogues regarding contemporary art in Chicago.

My maps demonstrate that ARC and Artemisia mostly served Midwestern artists and possess stronger connections to alternatives spaces in Chicago than to other women artists’ cooperatives across the United States. This corrective is important because it removes both galleries from being compared solely to other feminist spaces located in other parts of the United States, where ARC and Artemisia lose their local context. By restoring ARC and Artemisia’s history within Chicago and Midwestern art networks reveals their importance in providing solo exhibitions to local and regional artists at a time when there were a limited number of commercial galleries to promote contemporary art. It also counters mainstream art historical narratives that
insist on elevating national and global networks over local ones. As Jenni Sorkin argues, local does not necessarily signify provincial, and feminist organizations and exhibition practices “constitute pockets and spurts of women wielding true cultural power over a prolonged period of both chronological and geographic spaces.”

A brief history of ARC and Artemisia galleries

While the founding of ARC and Artemisia reflected a nationwide trend of female separatist spaces giving greater visibility to female artists, the missions of both galleries were committed to bringing opportunities to women in the Chicago area who were frequently marginalized by area arts institutions. Poe argues that women outnumbered men in graduate school in Chicago, but women often did not pursue their artwork after graduation because of the discrimination they faced when seeking representation by commercial galleries. Statistics support Poe’s assertion. In 1971, 75 percent of students in U.S. art schools were women and 25 percent men. In 1970, 16 percent of major commercial galleries in Chicago held shows devoted to women artists. This number jumped to 29 percent in 1973 when ARC and Artemisia first opened. This increase of women showing in commercial galleries may be due in part to the considerable media attention given to ARC and Artemisia prior and subsequent to their opening within one week of each other in September 1973. Articles announcing the opening of both spaces address women’s invisibility in the art world, but also stress that ARC and Artemisia were located in the same neighborhood as some of Chicago’s most notable commercial galleries. As arts writer Virginia Holbert observed in 1984, ARC and Artemisia’s “brash invasion of Ontario Street was well thought out. The whole point was to make women’s art valid and visible.” Recognizing the media’s support of ARC and Artemisia, and having increased access to works by women artists, may have encouraged gallerists to diversify their rosters. Marianne Deson and Phyllis Kind galleries, for example, were two out of nine of the spaces considered in the statistics cited above.

A.I.R. Gallery in New York (1972-present) was one of the first feminist collectives established in the United States and was instrumental to the founding of both ARC and Artemisia, due to the Midwestern connections of A.I.R. members. ARC’s history begins with Bernstein, a close friend of founding A.I.R. member Nancy Spero and her husband Leon Golub. Spero and Golub encouraged Bernstein to start a women’s collective in order to support younger women artists in Chicago. Bernstein enlisted the help of her friend Frances Schoenwetter, and between them they solicited slides from the best women artists in the Chicago area. Eventually Johnnie Johnson and Kay Rosen joined them, and working as a committee, they selected an additional thirteen members based in Chicago: Dalia Alekna, Jan Arnow, Judy Lerner Brice, Ellen Ferar, Imfriede Hogan Lagerkvist, Maxine Lowe, Mary Min, Civia Rosenberg, Regina Rosenblum, Laurel Ross, Sara Skolnik Rosenbluth, Myra Toth, and Monika Wulfers. (Figure 3.) Johnson notes that ARC chose to “concentrate principally on more pragmatic concerns, technical workshops and the ‘business of being an artist.’” In addition, ARC stands for “Artists, Residents, Chicago” and by starting with the letter “A” as Bernstein observes, the name ensures a top listing in any gallery guide. More important to this project, by stressing Chicago in the group’s title implies the central role of promoting the city in their mission and activities.

The decision to establish Artemisia was stimulated by the work of the West-East Bag (WEB), an international network of women artists that included the first slide registry for women artists in the United States. Poe explains that at the First Annual Midwest Conference of Women Artists organized by the WEB, she watched a presentation by the artist Harmony Hammond who showed a video about A.I.R. Gallery that formed a year earlier. Then a graduate student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Poe visited A.I.R. that May and decided that the cooperative model could be replicated in Chicago. That summer a series of meetings were held to discuss the
formation of a women artists’ cooperative in Chicago. A final meeting comprised of forty female artists is where the first five members of Artemisia were chosen: Joy Poe, Barbara Grad, Margaret Harper Wharton, Emily Pinkowski, and Phyllis MacDonald. Subsequently, these five artists chose fifteen more members from Chicago: Phyllis Bramson, Shirley Federow, Sandra Gierke, Carol Harmel, Vera Klement, Linda Kramer, Susan Michod, Sandra Perlow, Claire Prussian, Nancy Redmond, Christine Rojek, Heidi Seidelhuber, Alice Shaddle, Mary Stoppert, and Carol Turchan.21

Taking their name from the seventeenth century Italian Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi (1597-c.1651), “whose best work had been credited to her father,” the founding members were determined to create a forum for their art in Chicago with ambitions to garner local, national, and international recognition.22

Artemisia and ARC shared similar governance structures. Each member was responsible for paying monthly dues and was required to contribute a set number of hours of labor for the gallery from exhibition installation to cleaning toilets. (Figure 4.) In return, members were guaranteed regular exhibitions. The style of artwork the galleries showed ranged from overtly political and conceptual to very traditional and representational. Artemisia member Susan Michod comments in 1973, “Since we don’t have to worry about a profit to stay open, we don’t have to worry about salability. That’s an incentive to experiment.”23 At the same time, being freed from sales meant that female artists who resisted avant-garde strategies and preferred traditional modes of art also found a safe and encouraging space in which to work.
Like many feminist organizations of the early 1970s ARC and Artemisia rejected the hierarchical structure of patriarchal governance and distributed authority among all the members, implemented a rotating leadership, made all decisions a participatory process, conceptualized power as empowerment, rather than domination, and argued that the process was as valuable as the outcome. ARC and Artemisia’s insistence on female separatism was critical to the success of this mode of governance because it allowed women to meet without the presence of male interference and ensured that their concerns and needs would finally be heard and addressed in a nurturing environment. Although ARC and Artemisia shared governance structures, my mapping project reveals distinctions between them, particularly how guest solo artists’ exhibitions and programming were funded and the artistic training of the artists who participated.

Why Digital Maps?

In her 1983 essay, “Feminist Space: Reclaiming Territory,” Lippard explores how feminist artists collectively establish participatory environments that foster personal transformation for women. She concludes that the collaborative work of feminist artists would not be possible without being “rooted in networking.” Artists and academics are now turning to mapping as a way to distill the historical importance of these networks for women whether artists, arts administrators, dealers, collectors, and institutions. For example, in 2012 artist Andrea Geyer started the project Revolt, They Said, a hand drawn map illustrating networks of women artists, patrons and historical figures inspired by the three female founders of New York’s Museum of Modern Art: Lillie P. Bliss, Abby A. Rockefeller and Mary Q. Sullivan. Geyer envisions the map as a “blueprint of how social and cultural change has and can be realized” by women. The Atlanta Studies Project, Art and Activism in 1970s Atlanta, maps the locations of alternative arts organizations across the city, and each point on the map links to a video interview with a specific female artist or administrator who provides an oral history of each space. With women identified as the caretakers of this
history, *Art and Activism in 1970s Atlanta* solidifies their crucial role in the development of the alternative arts scene in this city. Most recently, Rebecca Solnit’s chapter “The City of Women” in her book *Nonstop Metropolis, A New York City Atlas*, features a reinvented New York City subway map where every station is named after a historically significant woman, including art world luminaries. Traveling Solnit’s subway lines in SoHo, riders encounter Lippard and Hammond on the Q line and close friend and A.I.R. Gallery member Ana Mendieta on the 4,5,6 lines. By naming these stops after a noted feminist critic and two feminist artists actively working in SoHo during the 1970s and 1980s, Solnit not only recovers their histories but also nods to their artistic network. While these examples are important models for reclaiming women’s historical contributions and artistic networks, my turn to digital mapping was to help me answer a question that these examples and conventional art history frameworks could not. More specifically, I sought to investigate how maps could more precisely distill ARC and Artemisia’s outreach to local, regional, and national communities over their shared thirty years of history through space and time.

Women artists’ cooperatives fall under the category of what Gregory Sholette defines as *creative dark matter*, “makeshift, amateur, informal, unofficial, autonomous, activist, non-institutional, self-organized practices,” which all operate in the shadows of the formal art world and remain unacknowledged by the cultural elite. Yet, artists who operate within “dark matter” are central to supporting the art economy by purchasing art supplies, studying with professional artists, and attending museum exhibits to see what more successful artists do. Here Sholette borrows a metaphor from physics, specifically a forming invisible mass predicted by the big bang theory, but only indirectly perceived. Unlike astrophysicists who are keen to identify dark matter, critics, collectors, dealers, museums, curators and art administrators have long ignored the creative practices of artists who become involved in alternative or feminist spaces. This absence is further fostered by the discipline of art history, which traditionally focuses on individual artists’ production, rather than collective endeavors intended to promote social change. As a result, there were few historical models for me to consult when I started research on ARC and Artemisia ten years ago. Judith Brodksy’s 1994 book chapter “Exhibitions, Galleries, and Alternative Spaces” was one of the earliest texts to document the range of women artists’ collectives across the United States, but it was not until the early 2000s, after many of the galleries closed and the few that remained were celebrating thirty years of operation, that books devoted to the histories of specific women artists’ cooperatives were published. For example, Maria Ochoa authored *Creative Collectives, Chicano painters working in community* (2003), which examines the northern California based Chicana collectives Mujeres Muralistas and Co-Madres Artistas. Joanna Inglot curated the exhibition and wrote the accompanying catalog *WARM, A Feminist Art Collective in Minnesota* (2007) historicizing the Women’s Artists’ Registry of Minnesota based in Minneapolis. These models were essential in framing strategies to document the history of members of ARC and Artemisia, but their narratives do not focus on measuring each cooperative’s impact on their surrounding communities. Instead both authors focus on the members who established each collective, as well as how their ideologies contributed to the development of their missions and programming.

Sorkin and Warren’s historical assessments both seek to understand the influence of feminist collectives and alternative spaces on the lives of female artists and prompted my interest in using mapping to measure the influence of ARC and Artemisia’s on the art world. In “The Feminist Nomad; The All-Women Group Show,” Sorkin proposes mapping the artistic endeavors of feminist groups and exhibitions from the early 1970s onward so that historians could tease out the unintended history of resistance. However, Sorkin does not offer specific criteria for what defines resistance. Given the wide range of exhibitions, organizations and publications she
assesses in her essay, it is difficult to define what resistance meant to each entity. The degree to which each feminist collective, exhibition or organization succeeded in supporting women artists and resisted their marginalization can be considered a type of influence to be quantified. Warren’s now canonical 1984 exhibition catalog Alternative Spaces: A History in Chicago includes a diagram, which attempts to measure the influence of alternative spaces and independent art groups in existence from 1893 to 1984.\textsuperscript{(36)} (Figure 5.) For instance, the scale of the circle denotes the founding of a particular space in the diagram and also suggests its impact. ARC and Artemisia, along with their peers N.A.M.E., Randolph Street, and West Hubbard Gallery, are given great weight and viewed as significant contributors to Chicago’s alternative art scene. It is not clear from Warren’s essay how the impact of each space was determined, but as a visualization it illustrates the possibilities of mapping data to compare the influences of feminist art collectives. Warren also tackled the problem of evaluating the success of a women artist’s cooperative in a 1993 essay for ARC Gallery’s twentieth anniversary, asking, “by what means do we measure it?” Is success measured by the sheer number of artists serviced by the collective, the number of internationally famous artists produced or the number of reviews resulting from exhibitions?\textsuperscript{(37)} Warren does not offer a solution, but her specific questions begin to hint at information that could be collected and form a database, such as the number of artists who showed at ARC and how many reviews were published in response to each exhibition.

American Studies scholar T.V. Reed, who has written extensively on the history of protest movements in the United States, offers useful criteria to historicize activists groups that also can be applied to assessments of women artists’ cooperatives. Reed argues that any kind of noteworthy art activism finds space to “encourage, empower, harmonize, inform internally and externally, historicize, provide transforming tactics, critique movement ideology and make room for pleasure.”\textsuperscript{(38)} As a historian of feminist collectives, I am interested not just in how individual members’ lives were transformed by belonging to ARC and Artemisia but also how individuals who engaged with the galleries, whether visitors or guest solo artists, benefitted from each gallery’s programming. Measuring ARC and Artemisia’s internal impact is much easier to ascertain, as the archival material of both spaces is comprised of papers of individual members, such as curriculum vitae and documentation of solo exhibitions. Drawing on these resources, it is possible to conclude whether a member’s participation in the collective led to greater visibility and notoriety in the larger art world. In contrast, ARC and Artemisia’s influence on communities beyond their immediate membership is more difficult to determine. For instance, in my first article devoted to the history of Artemisia’s outreach programs, published in Social Justice, reviewers of the journal questioned how I determined the impact of each sponsored event.\textsuperscript{(39)} Artemisia’s archives include correspondence from guest exhibitors or comments in gallery logs, but there was never any sustained or systematic method of obtaining feedback from individuals interacting with ARC and Artemisia.

The call for proposals for the Kress Digital Mapping and Art History Institute in spring 2014 provided me with the first opportunity to conceive a possible digital mapping project. Seeking art historians who already identified a spatial problem in their research, the call prompted me to return to the gallery records of ARC and Artemisia to establish suitable data to map. ARC and Artemisia’s guest solo exhibition files constituted the most consistent set of data for the galleries’ programming. While both cooperatives were founded to promote the work of their female members, by 1977 each space began to advertise for artists female or male to apply for guest solo exhibitions. At ARC guest solo artists exhibited in Raw Space, a basement gallery that featured installation art, often temporary in nature and not salable.\textsuperscript{(40)} Artemisia devoted several small galleries to guest exhibitions and artists submitted proposals to exhibit.\textsuperscript{(41)} The membership
of both galleries vetted proposals from guest artists and then scheduled exhibition dates if accepted. Raw Space exhibitions were funded by external grants, but Artemisia guest solo artists generally paid a guest fee for use of the gallery, as well as other incidental costs, such as mailing invitations. ARC and Artemisia’s archives include documentation of these exhibitions, providing the information needed to structure my data set for analyzing guest solo exhibitions in each space, including the artist’s name, title of the exhibition, exhibition dates, home address, gender, undergraduate degree and location, graduate degree and location, other feminist or alternative space networks connected to the artists and funding sources if awarded to them. Unfortunately, the archives for 1977-1980 for ARC and Artemisia are incomplete due to missing information regarding the artists who participated and the exhibitions that took place. Therefore, I began this project by focusing on the years 1980-1985 where the data was much more consistent.

Establishing Methods

During the first week of the institute, historical geographer Anne Kelly Knowles explained how Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be instrumental in visualizing geographic patterns embedded in historical evidence, examining documentation at different scales, and integrating material from textual, tabular, cartographic and visual sources, provided they share a common geographic location. Embracing Knowles’ methods, I quickly realized that I had previously overestimated the national importance of both collectives after seeing the data arranged in an Excel spreadsheet with 71 percent of ARC artists and 62 percent of Artemisia artists living in the Midwest when they exhibited. Therefore, the process of building a database was an important step in helping me recognize the contributions of these important feminist collectives without exaggerating their actual engagement beyond the city of Chicago and the region of the Midwest. These lessons, particularly being accountable to archival data from ARC and Artemisia, provide important methods for any scholar historicizing collective art practices, even if it means discovering that a particular group is not part of a national or global art network.

As a feminist art historian, I now realize that I fell into the trap of what Griselda Pollock describes as compensatory art history whereby reclamation of a feminist or female artist—or in this case two feminist art organizations—is just an attempt to add them to the canon of art history without critical discourse. Unfortunately, this approach often leads to historical misunderstandings and obfuscation of the conditions that originally rendered these artists or groups invisible. My inclination to elevate both groups was further influenced by the reality that women are frequently overlooked in art history, in particular female artists working outside mainstream museums and commercial galleries. Headlines such as “A very small sampling of the female artists now in their 70s, 80s, and 90s we should have known about decades ago,” which led an article in the New York Times Style Magazine in 2015, reinforce how simply naming or recognizing female artists remains a systemic problem in the art world. Gender aside, writing contemporary artist history often involves writers and artists engaged in active and ongoing dialogues, which prompted Julia Bryan-Wilson to describe the practice as an intimate act that may suggest that scholars are metaphorically “in bed” with their subjects. Building my first database made clear that Gallon’s “technology of recovery” does not mean reclaiming a specific group without critique, but demands a systematic and careful assessment of available historical materials. In addition to resisting the canonization of a particular group, it also is critical not to essentialize the lives of the persons involved. Kwan warns against using GIS in feminist geographic research to discover universal truths or law-like generalizations. Rather, she urges scholars “to understand the gendered experience of individuals across multiple axes of difference.”
In addition to being introduced to theories and methods of digital mapping and historical geography, the institute also provided time to work with GIS specialist William Hegman and his teaching team to refine our data sets. At the end of the first week Hegman asked fellows to test our datasets by uploading them into BatchGeo’s open mapping platform.49 (Figures 6 and 7.) My initial BatchGeo maps visualize the geographic range of home addresses of guest solo artists and illustrate that thirty-nine out of the seventy-one guest solo artists showing at Artemisia from 1980-1985 lived in Chicago at the time of the exhibition, but only seventeen out of the forty-five for ARC lived in the city.50 The digital mapping tool also breaks down the five years of data into intervals of eighteen months to two years, revealing patterns of change or stasis over time. My first two BatchGeo maps indicate that Artemisia’s guest artists were more likely to be drawn from the Chicago area than ARC guest artists.

There are two factors worth considering here when comparing these cooperatives to each other. First, ARC members consistently wrote and were awarded Illinois Arts Council and National Endowment for the Arts grants to support all forty-five RAW Space exhibitions held between 1980 and 1985. These grants also included modest honoraria for exhibiting artists, ranging from $200-$400 during these years, particularly appealing to individuals living outside of the Midwest who wanted to gain exposure in a major arts community but who wished to avoid incurring exorbitant travel and insurance costs to gain exposure in a major arts community.51 At Artemisia, the funding was less consistent. My data set reveals that grants were most often secured by Artemisia when a well-known artist from outside Chicago displayed new work but was at times also connected to educational programming, whether gallery talks or workshops.52 In 1980, for example, Artemisia members successfully applied for grants from National Endowment for the Arts and Illinois Arts Council to support an exhibition of new work by the sculptor Alice Aycock. The grants not only helped fund the transportation of Aycock’s artworks but also provided an honorarium for her to travel to Chicago where ARC member Chris Millon interviewed her in a public forum.53 Further, when artists applied for a guest solo exhibition at Artemisia they could choose from several galleries of varying size. Once accepted, a guest artists’ exhibition fee then depended on the scale of the space.

Because Artemisia did not offer honoraria for most guest solo artists it may have appealed more to artists within reasonable driving distance to take advantage of this opportunity more than artists who lived outside of the Midwest since they could deliver their artworks for an exhibition by car, rather than by more costly shipping. In fact, seventy out of the eighty-three guest solo artists over five years paid the guest artist fee with only fourteen receiving support from the Illinois Arts Council and two from the National Endowment for the Arts over this five-year period. It appears that most of the grants awarded to Artemisia were applied for by the guest solo artist, rather than the gallery membership, which also accounts for the low percentage of funding. This pattern affirms the premise that individuals living in Chicago or the Midwest were more likely to apply to Artemisia for a guest solo exhibition since they could stage a show with limited funds and were less inclined to submit a grant proposal, which involved completing a lengthy application that took away time from art making. The iterative nature of mapmaking not only answered my first question regarding the geographic range of guest solo artists exhibiting at ARC and Artemisia from 1980-1985, but it also offered new perspectives on the distinctions between funding sources for each gallery.

Turning to GIS

BatchGeo maps raise important questions, but they did not allow me to see two data sets in comparison to each other, so I turned to GIS mapping tools. First, I examined where guest solo artists at both galleries completed their undergraduate degrees. (Figure 8.) There is significant
overlap in terms of geographic location, disclosing a concentration of artists studying in the Midwest, Northeastern states, and California. Yet, artists linked to ARC and Artemisia share only four undergraduate institutions in common: Ohio State University, School of the Art Institute, Chicago, University of Cincinnati, and University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Only three out of forty-four ARC guest solo artists attended schools in California, while nine out of eighty-four artists showing at Artemisia received their undergraduate degrees from schools in Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Minnesota.
Figure 8. ARC and Artemisia Guest Solo Artists Undergraduate Locations, 1980-1985. ArcGIS map created by Joanna Gardner-Huggett.

One reason for this distinction may be the difference in language each space used in its advertising. Both galleries sought potential guest solo artists through classified advertisements, particularly in the New Art Examiner. This contemporary arts journal (1973-2002) was central to providing a comprehensive view of contemporary U.S. art during the 1980s and read widely by Midwestern artists for its articles as well as the classifieds section listing exhibition and fellowship opportunities. Artemisia’s regular call simply stated, “Artemisia Gallery is reviewing slides for guest shows. Send 15 slides and SASE to: Search Committee/Membership,” while ARC listed “ARC, a cooperative, not for profit gallery, is offering RAW Space to Artists for 1983-1984 exhibition season: mixed media installation, video performance, experimental theatre, etc. Juried.” Artists drawn to experimental installation practices may have been more interested in ARC and come from specific undergraduate fine arts programs cultivating this type of artwork than they were in Artemisia, which did not stipulate interest in specific modes of art. Taking these results into account suggests possible next steps for my research. In the future, I will establish where members of ARC and Artemisia were educated at the undergraduate and graduate level to see if there were specific personal relationships between these institutions and cooperative members that lead to varied geographic reach.

Another interesting feature of the guest solo artist undergraduate location map is that most of the western United States and the South do not feature at all as sites where ARC and Artemisia guest solo artists studied. This result reflects national trends. For example, a similar outcome is
found in the geographic range of contributors to the exhibition What is Feminist Art? sponsored by the Center for Feminist Art Historical Studies at the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles in 1977.  

(Figure 9.) Only five responses out of 155 came from the Southern and Northwestern regions of the United States after curators cast a national call in many journals and newsletters, asking for artists to define the phrase “What is Feminist Art?” Returning to ARC and Artemisia, the guest solo undergraduate location map prompts additional questions for future research. Were artists in these regions less likely to read the New Art Examiner? Did the galleries fail to reach out to people in these areas? Even though their advertisements did not use feminist language, did the feminist and separatist philosophy of both spaces fail to resonate with artists in these regions?

Testing Lippard’s assertion that feminist organizations were rooted in networking, I then considered whether ARC and Artemisia guest solo exhibitors actually were associated with other feminist collectives and alternative spaces and publications. (Figures 10 and 11.) My maps demonstrate that very few guest solo artists were members of or exhibited at fellow feminist institutions. Feminist spaces represented in blue are clearly outnumbered by alternatives spaces and publications shown in green. Although A.I.R. Gallery served as inspiration for the founding of ARC and Artemisia, only two guest solo artists from Artemisia exhibited there and one artist from ARC exhibited at that gallery between 1980 and 1985. This finding connects to a visualization of feminist networks of American women artists and organizations from 1969-1980 created by Meredith Brown for her doctoral dissertation examining the history of A.I.R. Gallery. Brown’s visualization suggests a conversation between feminists in New York and Los Angeles.  

Other important feminist spaces, such as Galerie Powerhouse in Montreal, the Women Artists’ Registry of Minnesota (WARM) in Minneapolis or the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles, barely registered with guest solo artists with only four participants from Artemisia and one from ARC. Thirteen guest solo artists at Artemisia also exhibited with ARC, but there is no evidence that their interest in showing in both spaces was motivated by each gallery’s feminist mission more than local opportunity.

What is surprising is that so few female guest solo artists exhibited with WARM given the collective’s close proximity to Chicago and connections to ARC and Artemisia. Inglot explains that founding members of WARM attended panels on women artists’ cooperatives at the Midwest Women Artists’ Conference held at the Summer School of Painting in Saugatuck, Michigan, in 1975. These sessions included members of ARC and Artemisia, as well as A.I.R. Gallery and SoHo 20 from New York City, and helped the artists who started WARM conceptualize their organizational framework. ARC also staged a member exchange exhibition with WARM in January and February of 1979. (Figure 12.) WARM regularly advertised its exhibitions in the New Art Examiner and posted calls for its invitational exhibitions in the New Art Examiner from 1980-1985. Funded by the Jerome Foundation, WARM’s Invitational exhibitions supported eight exhibits of under-recognized female artists from the Midwest or New York City who never held a show in a major commercial or museum space. Since 42 percent of ARC’s guest solo artists and 76 percent of Artemisia’s from 1980-1985 were female and fit this profile, I assumed that there would be a stronger link between members and exhibitors in these spaces. At this stage of my research, the ability to use GIS to query the number of women engaged in feminist networks, in addition to visualizing data, became instrumental in establishing the next set of questions for my project.
Judith Brodsky argues that some of the women artists’ cooperatives that remained open in the 1980s abandoned feminist principles on which they were founded and instead focused on serving as support centers for emerging artists. ARC and Artemisia did not reject their feminist roots in the 1980s in terms of exhibition programming. For instance, in 1982 ARC featured a performance of Karen Finley, who would become known as one of the “NEA Four,” along with John Fleck, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller, after her 1990 grant to the National Endowment for the Arts was rejected on grounds of obscenity. Finley confronted audiences with graphic depictions of sexual violence through nudity and profanity-laden monologues, which meant any venue hosting her work must have been comfortable with the overt feminist content. Joyce Fernandes, a Chicago-based artist and writer who advocated for feminist causes, showed at Raw Space in 1984. Artemisia’s invitational exhibits Looking at Women in 1983 and Looking at Men in 1985 explored how contemporary artists approached representations of women and men after the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, raising the question of guest solo artists’ interaction with the membership of Artemisia and ARC. Was the guest solo exhibit merely a business relationship that did not result in strengthening or expanding artistic networks? Additional direct interviews with members and guest solo artists in the future will help me better understand these conditions.

What does emerge as a network for guest solo artists is primarily local and comprised of alternative spaces in Chicago that were neither feminist nor separatist, for instance, N.A.M.E., Randolph Street and Filmmakers Gallery. Querying maps in GIS indicate that 29 percent of ARC
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Figure 10. ARC Guest Solo Artists, Alternative and Feminist Arts Spaces, 1980-1985. ArcGIS map created by Emily Speelman.

exhibitors and 42 percent of Artemisia exhibitors between 1980 and 1985 showed their art in other alternative galleries. (Figures 10 and 11.) ARC and Artemisia frequently collaborated with other alternative spaces on juried exhibitions and events, such as the annual Juried Exhibition of Illinois Artists coordinated by ARC, Artemisia, Chicago Filmmakers, Randolph Street, Contemporary Art Workshop and N.A.M.E. galleries. This alliance was strengthened when Artemisia and ARC relocated to Hubbard Street in 1976 and 1977 respectively.67 A founding member of ARC described the shared interests of these non-profits to Chicago Tribune critic Alan G. Artner. She said, “We were-are interested in variety. Artists should be allowed to exhibit whether their work sells or not.”68

Historians of feminist collective practice, myself included here, tend to evaluate women artists’ cooperatives by comparing them solely to their feminist peers. Because ARC and Artemisia shared governance models with other feminist spaces, such as its inspiration A.I.R., and were
distinct from the management structures of their fellow Chicago alternatives spaces, I overlooked the importance of these local exchanges in earlier publications. Feminist ideology clearly was important to the members who ran ARC and Artemisia, but my maps complicate my previous understanding of the audiences for both spaces. The maps suggest that the ideology was not necessarily a compelling reason for guest solo artists to show there. Email correspondence with guest solo artists support this conclusion. While preparing my initial data set, I contacted artists individually if particular information was missing in ARC or Artemisia’s files. Tracking down contact information gave me the chance to ask guest solo artists whether feminism influenced their choice of showing at each gallery. Susan Zurcher who showed at Artemisia in 1983 explained to me that she participated in consciousness-raising groups in the 1970s, but feminist ideology did not translate into the content of or approaches to her artwork, and 1985 ARC guest artist Bob Pulley states succinctly in his email, “my relationship to ARC was not based on feminism, but on opportunity.”

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**Figure 11.** Artemisia Guest Solo Artists, Alternative and Feminist Art Spaces, 1980-1985. ArcGIS map created by Emily Speelman.

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**Artemisia Guest Solo Artists Network Locations 1980 - 1985**

**Alternative Spaces and Publications**

- N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago (4)
- Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago (3)
- C.A.G.E., Cincinnati (2)
- P.S. 1, Long Island City (2)
- Beacon Street, Chicago (1)
- Contemporary Art
  - Workshop, Chicago (1)
- 55 Mercer, New York City (1)
- Chicago Society of Artists (1)
- Cold House, Chicago (1)
- Franklin Furnace, New York City (1)
- Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh (1)
- New Art Examiner, Chicago (1)
- Oxbow, Saugatuck (1)
- PADD, New York City (1)
- Printed Matter, New York City (1)
- Public Art Group, Chicago (1)
- Spaces Gallery, Cleveland (1)

**Feminist Spaces and Collectives**

- ARC Gallery, Chicago (13)
- Women’s Building, Los Angeles (3)
- WARM Gallery, Minneapolis (2)
- A.I.R. Gallery, New York City (2)
- Galerie Powerhouse, Montreal (2)
- Sisters of Survival, Los Angeles (2)
- Feminist Studio Workshop, Los Angeles (1)
- MUSE Gallery, Philadelphia (1)
- Woman Made Gallery, Chicago (1)
- Womanspace, Los Angeles (1)

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Created by E Speelman, DePaul University
Source: TIGER; Artemisia Gallery Records, Ryerson & Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago July 2017

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Warren explains that opportunities to stage one- and two-person exhibitions are central to the development of any artist’s career and ARC and Artemisia fulfilled that need, especially from 1980-1985 when there were few commercial galleries operating in Chicago. Based in Ohio and Indiana respectively at the time of their showing at Artemisia and ARC, Zurcher and Pulley’s guest solo shows diversified their exhibition history, which demonstrates both galleries’ role as a regional hub. While my project aims to counter histories that privilege national and global narratives in art history, it should be acknowledged that historically scholars regard artists showing in Chicago as less prestigious than artists showing in New York City. Once art critics and gallerists in New York City alike championed Abstract Expressionism after World War II, the city became designated as both a national and global location for the arts. In contrast, A.J. Liebling cast Chicago as a culturally depleted “second city” in a series of articles for the New Yorker magazine in 1952, reinforcing the perception that establishing a national or global reputation in the art world was not possible in Chicago. Twenty years later, Franz Schulze commented on the frequent exodus of Chicago-based artists for New York. He writes, “Younger artists who might have grown powerful enough to launch a clear-cut Chicago-related movement have never stayed here long enough, or in sufficient numbers, or with adequate promotional machinery to do so.” Further, Warren declares that by “by the go-go ’80s, artists were expected to be international stars; and ARC (as well as Artemisia and N.A.M.E.) were producing none.” My maps reaffirm ARC and Artemisia’s limited connections to New York and their regional and local status. Here
the geographic literature on scale and regions will be useful as I expand this project. Anssi Paasi addresses, for instance, how geographic spatial units are often organized as nested and ladder-like hierarchies, which effectively describes the local, regional, national and global components of the contemporary art market. The process of establishing spatial units is defined by Paasi as a "technology of bounding," where the division of space is rendered by cultural and political markers. Therefore, the consideration of artists’ individual reasons for showing at ARC and Artemisia needs to be contextualized within the social, economic, and political frameworks that shape the art world and influences both galleries’ status within its hierarchy. Understanding these geographic dynamics provides additional methods to evaluate exhibition opportunities in the larger art market.

Because a significant percentage of professional artists in the United States obtain a Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) as a terminal degree, it was important to map the graduate locations of guest solo artists as well. (Figure 13.) Here the Midwestern and the Northeastern states and California remain the focus, but the number and geographic range of schools contracts. ARC reveals a few more graduates completing programs in California, but 63 percent of the MFAs were awarded by Northern Illinois, Ohio State University, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, University of Wisconsin, Madison and Washington University in St. Louis. Midwestern graduate programs also dominated Artemisia with 80 percent granted by a wider range of institutions: Cranbrook Academy of Art in Cranbrook, Michigan, Indiana University, Bloomington, Northern Illinois, Ohio State University, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Southern Illinois University, University of Iowa, University of Chicago, University of Cincinnati, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, University of Minnesota, Washington University, and Western Michigan State University. While there are differences in geographic reach between the two spaces, one centralizing node becomes clear, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago or (SAIC). (Figure 14.) Twelve of the thirty-one exhibitors with MFAs from ARC and sixteen of the forty-four from Artemisia earned their MFA from SAIC.

Warren observes that Artemisia’s members often were current SAIC students or alumnae, but she does not address how this affiliation may have encouraged their peers to exhibit in the gallery. It is not easy to trace this information in archival material. When artists applied to ARC and Artemisia, they submitted slides of their artwork, as well as a curriculum vita listing their academic history, but this documentation does not make evident the connections between an applicant and members of each group. Feminist geography prompts scholars to ask how these network connections developed between individuals and institutions. For instance, Kwan reminds us that feminist geography offers the possibility of exploring how the “geometry of women’s life paths and processes of identity formation and women’s experiences of places are mutually constitutive.” Therefore, this concentration of SAIC students and graduates, and presumed personal connections, suggests that more research regarding the relationships between faculty teaching at SAIC and the membership of ARC and Artemisia needs to be done. Did faculty refer students and graduates to ARC and Artemisia as a good way to be featured in a solo show outside of their degree granting institution? Moreover, could this geographic pattern also reflect that the type of subject matter or genre being made by these artists was resonating with ARC and Artemisia members’ means of art making and stylistic tastes?

The exhibition Something in Common, The Women Faculty of the Painting and Drawing Department of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago organized by Pala Jacqueline Townsend and held at Artemisia Gallery in 1994 affirms the need to undertake social network analysis of SAIC’s role as a pipeline for guest solo artists for ARC and Artemisia. The accompanying exhibition catalog documents how female faculty in the Department of Painting and Drawing at SAIC...
Contributors to the exhibition catalog explain the long history of women teaching at SAIC, going back to the turn of the twentieth century with Laura van Pappelendam who spent fifty-five years at the school to a major expansion of female faculty in 1982 from five to twenty-three faculty members due to the resurgence of painting in the 1980s art market. Mary Jane Jacob argues in her essay that faculty in the Department of Painting and Drawing affected the greatest number of students since undergraduates at SAIC were required to take six hours in this department as a foundation course and 25 percent of graduate students selected this area as their focus of study. Therefore, these faculty were critical to nurturing the next generation of artists. Included in the exhibition were long time adjunct assistant professors Judith Geichman and Olivia Petrides, who were also members of Artemisia. L.J. Douglas a Visiting Artist at SAIC and Adjunct Associate Professor Elizabeth Ockwell were members of ARC. Susanna Coffey and Mary Lou Zelazny both exhibited at ARC in the 1980s.
Figure 14. School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Alternative Spaces in Chicago, 1984. ArcGIS map created by Joanna Gardner-Huggett.
Social network analysis examines the structure of relations between members of a system, such as artists and galleries. All members of a system are analyzed, but they do not necessarily have relations with each other. In this instance, the system could be structured with all faculty who taught at SAIC and artists who graduated from the school. When there are connections, such as a faculty member at SAIC who also belonged to ARC and Artemisia is considered a tie. That tie may have direction or strength. With direction, the link is sent from one node to another. Geichman and Petrides serving as both faculty and members of Artemisia, for example, are ties that exhibit strength as a point of exchange between two institutions. It is fair to suggest that both women recommended Artemisia’s exhibition opportunities to their students. This preliminary examination of relationships between painting faculty and ARC and Artemisia through the exhibition *Something in Common* recommends development of a new data set in order to fully explore the range of connections between SAIC faculty and its students who went on to belong and exhibit at ARC and Artemisia.

Discovering SAIC as a centralized node compelled me to examine at what point in their career artists exhibited at ARC and Artemisia. (Figures 15 and 16.) A preliminary accounting signals that most guest solo artists showed their work at ARC and Artemisia within ten years of obtaining their undergraduate degree and this finding dovetails with existing art historical literature, which frequently asserts that most individuals exhibiting in alternative spaces and women artists’ cooperatives were current students or recent graduates. Lynn Warren, for instance, argues that ARC provided women artists the first opportunity to exhibit outside of student exhibitions where they received their training. Former Artemisia member Mi Sook Ahn observed that the gallery was “a very good stepping stone to have a show to start a career.” Susan Bloch, another Artemisia, states, “I don’t think Artemisia changes art in Chicago, I think they give opportunity to artists in Chicago.” Most of these claims, however, are not backed by any real evaluation of statistical data and are merely anecdotal. Here I encounter the same problem I faced in my early work evaluating ARC and Artemisia’s educational programming. Both galleries did not require guest solo artists to complete exit surveys so it is difficult to ascertain whether guest solo artists’ reasons for exhibiting and resulting experiences matched the conclusions offered by members above. As discussed earlier, surveying guest solo artists would provide additional evidence of when and why they chose to exhibit at ARC and Artemisia and contribute to understanding degrees of opportunity in the art world.

**Moving Forward**

Examining feminist art networks is not new, as demonstrated in the scholarship of Lippard, Sorkin and Warren, but embracing what Kwan defines as feminist GIS has allowed me to answer a question that the other scholars’ methods could not fully accomplish: how do we measure the impact and influence of ARC and Artemisia’s guest solo artist programs on artistic communities, whether local, regional, national or global? The iterative nature of the digital mapping process meant that exploring one question led to many more questions for future consideration. Returning to ARC and Artemisia’s archives, building databases, and creating maps helped me understand when my conclusions were supported by evidence and instances when new investigations were needed. As I started to recognize unexpected and also familiar patterns embedded in the maps, I realized that in my first readings of key sources on Chicago’s art world, such as Warren’s histories of Chicago’s alternatives spaces and ARC, I missed crucial signals of ARC and Artemisia’s local role due to my interest in situating both spaces solely within the larger network of feminist collectives across the United States. As a result, earlier assumptions about ARC and Artemisia’s participation in a national feminist art network were undermined, and I now understand both galleries as functioning within a Midwestern art network of alternative spaces and strongly connected to the School of the Art Institute, which served as a feeder for guest solo artists to both
Figure 15. ARC Gallery, Undergraduate Graduation to First Exhibition, 1980-1985. ArcGIS map created by Joanna Gardner-Huggett.

My maps also clarified that guest solo artists did not necessarily embrace the feminist ideology of ARC and Artemisia’s membership, and there may be a significant gap between guest solo artists and members. As I move forward with this project, I plan to develop a survey for guest solo artists and members that will flesh out my preliminary evidence needed to fully evaluate these questions.

Digital mapping does not eclipse contemporary art historians’ conventional modes of research, such as consulting archives, conducting oral histories, and surveying relevant literature, rather it complements these practices and makes the art historian more accountable to historical sources. This study demonstrates the value of my initial database, and I am currently expanding it to encompass thirty years of data rather than just five years of data to see if the geographic patterns described above remain consistent or change over time and to explore other historical questions. For instance, I am interested in examining equivalent data from other women artists’
cooperatives, such as A.I.R. Gallery, SoHo 20, and WARM, to see if their networks also were local. In addition to guest solo artist exhibitions opportunities found at other feminist galleries, another data set to consider is one that accounts for affiliate members. Most women artists’ cooperatives, including ARC and Artemisia, offered affiliate memberships as a way to expand participation in their organizations beyond their home locations. Affiliates were given access to exhibition opportunities less often than full members, but they did not have to participate in the significant labor of maintaining the gallery required of regular members. I am interested to learn whether affiliate members increase ARC and Artemisia’s ties with other feminist spaces or merely reinforce the Midwestern network already established for guest solo artists. This data will add another important layer to understanding the social networks of all women artists’ cooperatives, which traditional art history has not been able to answer. Although I conclude this article by raising additional questions for investigation, rather than resolve my original research query, the diagnostic quality Knowles ascribes to historical geography provides a powerful platform to illuminate a history of feminist collective practice that would otherwise remain lost or speculative at best.
Acknowledgements

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NOTES


9. Laura Green, “Tired of being ignored by galleries, women artists are cutting out the middleman,” Chicago Sun-Times, August 30, 1973, 51.


17. Pieszak and MacLeod, 3.


19. Pieszak and Mac Leod, 3.


23. Green, 51.


27. See “Revolt, They Said, a project by Andrea Geyer. 2012-ongoing,” accessed on 10 November 2015 at http://andreageyer.info/revolttheysaid/about.html


35. Sorkin, 461.


38. T.V. Reed, The Art of Protest Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 299. Italics are my emphasis.


40. ARC published an annual catalog of Raw Space exhibitions through the early 1990s available in ARC Gallery Records, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago. Individual exhibition files are also available, which include contracts, exhibition proposals, curriculum vitae, and correspondence. ARC also started a guest solo artist program similar to Artemisia’s in the 1980s, but there is limited documentation so any comparisons are difficult at this time. More research is needed.

41. Artemisia Gallery Records held at the Ryerson and Burnham Archives contain exhibition files, as well as anniversary catalogs, which were used to build the database.

42. The acceptance rates for ARC’s Raw Space program and Artemisia’s guest solo exhibitions are not documented in their respective archives.


44. See for example, Joanna Gardner-Huggett, “Artemisia Challenges the Elders: Creating a


46. Phoebe Hoban, “A very small sampling of the female artists now in their 70s, 80s, and 90s we should have known about decades ago,” *New York Times Style Magazine*, 15 May 2015.


49. The BatchGeo maps included here were created in spring 2017 after updating the data set originally made in 2014.

50. Currently I am still trying to resolve twelve missing home locations out of the eighty-four records for Artemisia Gallery.

51. See ARC Gallery Records, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago, for Raw Space exhibition files and applications to the Illinois Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts to support this programming.

52. On occasion, ARC also staged exhibits of well-known and established women artists, but these events would not be part of Raw Space.

53. Alice Aycock’s interview with Chris Millon on January 30, 1980 was recorded on reel-to-reel video, which is now held in the Artemisia Gallery Records, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.


56. The call for submissions to “What is Feminist Art?” was advertised in *Artforum, Artweek, Women’s Building Newsletter* and *Working Craftsman* and likely other journals not recorded in the exhibition archive. There is very little scholarship on the exhibition *What is Feminist Art?* sponsored by the Center for Feminist Art Historical Studies and held at the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles in February 1977. All of the submissions, however, are archived in the Woman’s Building Gallery Records, AAA.

57. After reviewing the submissions to “What is Feminist Art?,” I found that 155 of 194 submissions included a home address and DePaul Geography students Cassandra Allen, Alexis Stein, and Emilie Winter mapped the geographic locations on a national map and state by state in Nandhini Gulasingam’s Community GIS course in winter 2016. This material is not yet published.

58. See Brown, Fig. 5.1., “A History of A.I.R. Gallery: Feminism and the American Art Institution,” 214. In endnote 29, 214 Brown acknowledges a bias toward New York City and Los Angeles in the data sets, however, the lack of any names of individuals and organizations in Chicago is telling in this context.

59. Inglot, 17.


63. What can be argued is that ARC and Artemisia’s feminist ideologies did not evolve. In the 1980s each gallery faced significant criticism for being grounded in cultural feminism, rather than embracing intersectional models. This accusation is supported by a primarily white membership and the lack of racial diversity found among members, guest solo artists, and programming overall since their inception in 1973. More on this issue is discussed in Gardner-Huggett, “Artemisia Challenges the Elders,” but merits further research.
65. Pramaiggiore, 270.
68. The name of the artist is not identified in the article. Artner, “Where art addresses itself.” A1.
75. See Anssi Passi, “Place and region: looking through the prism of scale,” Progress in Human Geography 28,4 (2004): 537-38. Also see the anthology edited by Martin Jones and Anssi Paasi, Regional Worlds, Advancing the Geography of Regions (New York: Routledge, 2015).
76. There were a few artists at ARC and Artemisia who earned a master’s in studio art and master’s degrees in other subject areas, but the MFA dominated, so I only counted that degree for each space.
77. Warren, Alternative Spaces, 17.
78. Kwan, 653.
79. See the exhibition catalog: Jean Fulton, ed. Something in Common, The Women Faculty of the Painting and Drawing Department of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago: School of the Art Institute, 1994).
81. Jacob, 8.
84. Interview with Mi Sook Ahn, 25 August 1988, Artemisia Gallery Records, Ryerson and Burnham Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.