Abstract

In recent years, contemporary cultural institutions have begun to present more complete accounts of the past, ones that highlight the stories of artists and makers who were previously ignored due to their class, race, or gender. The bookwork/exhibition projects, Connections project/Conexus (1986-1989), organized by Josely Carvalho and Sabra Moore, and Coast to Coast: A Women of Color National Artists' Book Project (1987-1990), organized by Faith Ringgold and Clarissa Sligh, are pertinent examples of feminist collaborations from the late 1980s and early 1990s, that have not received critical attention.

Though they targeted differing geographical regions, Connections project/Conexus and Coast to Coast: A Women of Color National Artists' Book Project are related by the mutual goal of creating networks between women artists that extended across states and nations. The organizers' initiated dialogues and relationships by encouraging participants to connect with one another through far-reaching exchanges of cultural experience in the forms of artists' books, large-scale artworks, and letter-writing. These materials, which were later brought together and shown in exhibitions, responded to themes ranging from gender and the body to race and war.

Through an examination of the projects' structures, methods, and organizers, I aim to place these projects within the history of feminist art collaborations. I will compare them to better-known examples from the period such as The Dinner Party (1979) and Womanhouse (1972) in order to demonstrate the advantages of these book and mail-based methods of collaboration for women artists and women artists of color at the time.