

MIXED MEDIA

Feminism, art, and politics: Harmony Hammond

Michael Abatemarco Aug 23, 2019



Harmony Hammond, photo Clayton Porter

Trailblazing artist Harmony Hammond’s career retrospective *Harmony Hammond: Material Witness, Five Decades of Art* (on view at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut, through Sept. 15) was a long time coming. And no one makes the case for that better than Holland Cotter, the Pulitzer Prize-winning art critic for the *New York Times*, who wrote, in a recent review of Hammond’s survey exhibition, that “well into the 1970s and beyond, to be an out gay artist was to court mainstream-career suicide.” But Hammond, at a time, perhaps, when gay artists felt as much pressure as any other LGBTQ members of society to repress their gender and sexual identities, embraced hers instead, putting it front and center. “In the 1970s, in New York City, she organized the first local exhibition devoted entirely to art by gay women, and called it what it was: *A Lesbian Show*,” wrote Cotter.

The now 75-year-old Hammond, who participates in SITE Santa Fe's annual lecture series *My Life in Art* at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 24, didn't stop there. In 1972, she co-founded the Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) Gallery in New York, the city's first women's cooperative art space. In 1976, she was a founding member of the Heresies Collective, along with artist and activist May Stevens, and art critic, activist, and curator Lucy Lippard, and others. The group's magazine, *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics*, saw print from 1977 to 1993.

Since 1984, Hammond has lived and worked in Galisteo, New Mexico; from 1988 to 2006, she taught at the University of Arizona, Tucson. As a writer, teacher, and curator, as well as an artist, Hammond influenced the trajectory of feminist art, and can rightly be regarded as a pivotal figure.

Cotter joins Hammond for the discussion at SITE. Tickets are \$10 (\$5 for members and students) and are available at sitesantafe.org or at the door. SITE Santa Fe is located at 1606 Paseo de Peralta. Call 505-989-1199 for more information.