

Judy Chicago

LewAllen Contemporary
Santa Fe

Although best known for the pioneering 1979 feminist installation *The Dinner Party*, Judy Chicago, whose career began 50 years ago with a master's degree in painting and sculpture from UCLA, is steeped in Minimalism. This excellent show, "Judy Chicago: Minimalism, 1965–1973," featured the artist's pre-*Dinner Party* efforts in drawings, paintings, and sculpture, as well as video and still photographs of environmental works that she created throughout California.

Reviews: National

Chicago focused intently on color during this period. Her numerous geometric studies, executed with a mathematical approach recalling the Bauhaus, also explored the illusions that can be produced with dense and spare applications of color and the juxtaposition of closely related hues.

Some of the most compelling works here were the sprayed acrylic-on-acrylic paintings showing softly graduated colors contrasted with slick, white backdrops. As they slowly fluctuate from dark to light, the symmetrically placed squares in *Silver Blue Fan*, from the "Fresno Fan" series (1971), seemed almost three-dimensional. Likewise, the subtle variations of tint in her color-pencil drawings gave the appearance of circular and lateral movement. *Trinity*, a 1965 sculpture in which each plane of the three progressively larger triangles is painted in a related shade of orange, generates optical



Judy Chicago, *Rainbow Pickett*, 1965,
latex paint on canvas-covered plywood, 10'6" x 10'6".
LewAllen Contemporary.

illusions that arise from the interplay between parallel bars of positive and negative space.

Exhibition curator Jenni Sorkin ably demonstrated how Chicago's later iconography, particularly the genitally inspired symbols used on the plates in *The Dinner Party*, directly evolved from these organic, open-centered, and constantly changing forms. —Dottie Indyke