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## Artist Judy Chicago Sends the Design District Up in Smoke

COLIN DANIELS | FEBRUARY 19, 2019 | 8:00AM

Feminist artist Judy Chicago is known for her mixed-media installations. This week, she's taking things to another level with an extension of her current exhibition on view at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami. Chicago will debut a new, site-specific smoke piece titled *A Purple Poem for Miami* in the heart of the Miami Design District.

Chicago started her work in pyrotechnics in the late 1960s to feminize the atmosphere at a time when the Southern California art scene was made up mostly of men. From 1968 to 1974, Chicago created a series of fireworks pieces that involved site-specific performances around California. Some pieces, like one named *Atmospheres*, were designed to reconstruct and lighten the landscape by inserting a feminine voice into the environment.

"Judy Chicago's revolutionary approach is inspirational for the values and drive we seek to espouse at ICA Miami," said Alex Gartenfeld, ICA Miami's artistic director. "She is constantly inventing and overcoming boundaries in order to deepen her explorations, and to offer distinct contributions to art history and society."

Chicago will debut *A Purple Poem for Miami* in Jungle Plaza at Miami's Design District February 23. Conceived as a critique of monumental architecture and what she perceives as the macho tendency of male land artists to destroy nature, Chicago's smoke pieces alter, emphasize, and feminize natural landscapes.

Chicago doesn't believe in destroying the Earth to make art, or in imposing her art on anyone or anything. She describes herself as a contrast to artists who bulldoze and gouge the land to create their work. Chicago recalls a 1969 show by artist Richard Serra at the Pasadena Art Museum that had a pile of sawed trees. Chicago was upset by it and took action against the exhibition.

"I'm not shaping the site to the piece; I'm shaping my piece to the site," explains Chicago.

Chicago made trips to Miami throughout the process of designing the piece. Being onsite showed her where the wind would blow and the best time to send up fireworks and smoke to blend the colors perfectly.

"It's a gift," Chicago says, "because you can't buy it. You can't have it. You can just experience it."

A Purple Poem for Miami. 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Saturday, February 23, at Jungle Plaza, 3801 NE First Ave., Miami; [icamiami.org](http://icamiami.org). Tickets cost \$5 and are free to ICA members. The performance will also be streamed live on YouTube.