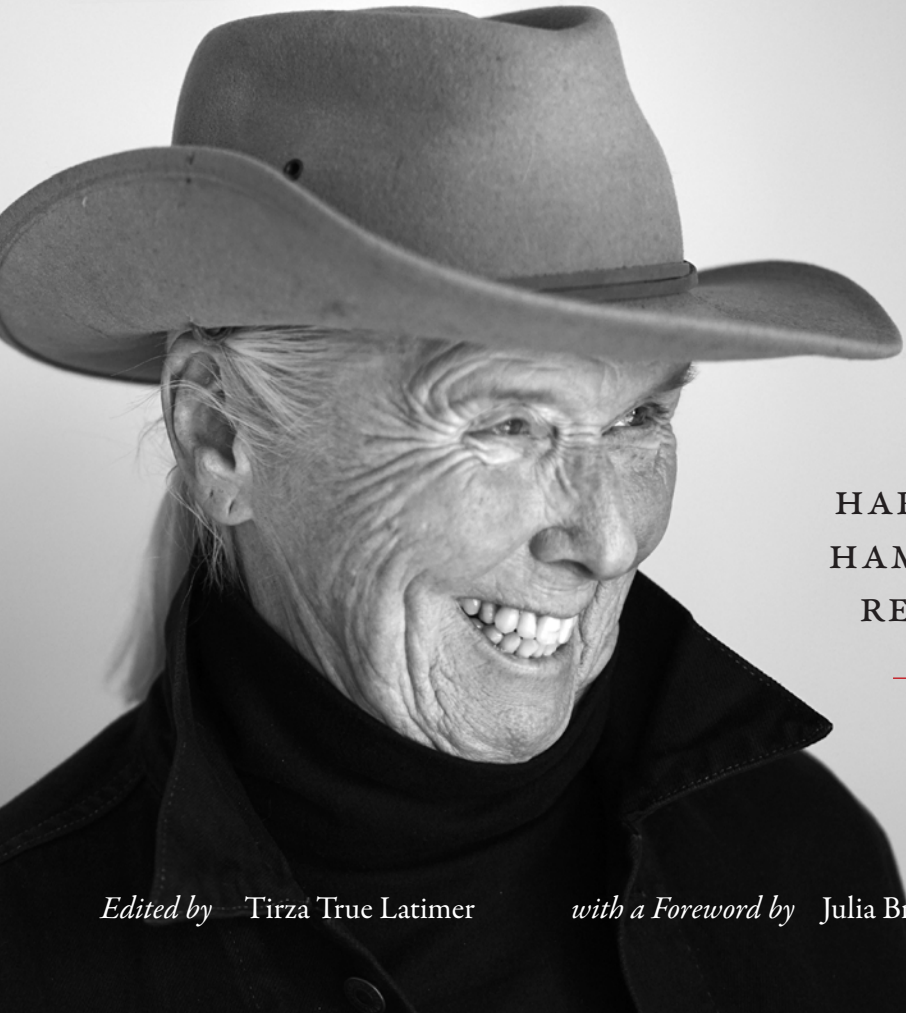
HARMONY HAMMOND

STILL DANGEROUS!



The HARMONY HAMMOND READER

Edited by Tirza True Latimer *with a Foreword by* Julia Bryan-Wilson

STILL
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Contents

2. 1980s

3. 1990s

4. 2000s

5. 2010s

6. 2020–2023

Captions to Color Plates

PLATE 1 *Hair Bags*, 1972–73. Mixed media. *Top, L to R: Jenny Snider*, 8 × 8.5 in. (20.32 × 21.59 cm); *Harmony Hammond*, 3 × 7 in. (7.62 × 17.78 cm). *Middle, L to R: Sarah Draney*, 6 × 8.5 in. (15.24 × 21.59 cm); *Elizabeth Weatherford*, 5 × 10 in. (12.70 × 25.40 cm). *Bottom, L to R: Louise Fishman*, 7 × 9 in. (17.78 × 22.86 cm); *Patsy Norvell*, 7.5 × 7 in. (19.05 × 17.78 cm). Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2016.M.3). Photo: James Gott and John Kiffe.

PLATE 2 *Presences*, 1972. Mixed media. Dimensions variable. Installation *Harmony Hammond: Material Witness, Five Decades of Art*, Sarasota Art Museum of Ringling College of Art and Design (2020). Photo: Ryan Gamma. Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 3 *Presence VI*, 1972. Mixed media. 80 × 33 in. (203.2 × 83.82 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 4 *Floorpieces*, 1973. Acrylic and cloth. Dimensions variable. Installation *Harmony Hammond: Material Witness, Five Decades of Art*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut (2019). Photo: Jason Mandella. Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 5 *Rosetta*, 1977. Oil and Dorland's Wax on canvas. 14 × 45.5 in. (35.56 × 115.57 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 6 *Rosetta* (detail), 1977.

PLATE 7 *Collection of Fragments*, 1974–75. Mixed media. Dimensions variable. Installation, *Becoming/Unbecoming Monochrome*, RedLine Contemporary Art Center, Denver, Colorado (2014). Tia Collection.

PLATE 8 *Collection of Fragments*, 1974–75. Installation shot (close up), RedLine Contemporary Art Center, Denver, Colorado (2014). Tia Collection.

PLATE 9 *Swaddles* (detail), 1979.

PLATE 10 *Swaddles*, 1979. Cloth, gesso, Rhoplex, wood, foam rubber, and latex. 80 × 90 in. (203.20 × 228.60 cm). Denver Art Museum. Gift of Chris Connal and Kathy Hardigan (1982.246).

PLATE 11 *Hunkertime*, 1979–80. Cloth, gesso, acrylic, Rhoplex, wood, metal, and latex rubber. 81 × 192 in. (205.7 × 487.7 cm). Brooklyn Museum. Gift of Elizabeth A. Sackler in honor of Catherine Morris, Sackler Senior Curator of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art (2019.23a-i).

PLATE 12 *Farm Ghosts*, 1990. Mixed-media installational painting. 97 × 189 in. (246.38 × 480.06 cm).

PLATE 13 *Untitled (buckets)*, 1995. Oil on canvas with metal. 96 × 96 in. (243.84 × 243.84 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 14 *Untitled*, 1995. Mixed media on canvas. In two parts: 74 × 41 in. (187.96 × 104.14 cm) each, 74 × 82 in. (187.96 × 208.28 cm) overall.

PLATE 15 *Chicken Lady*, 1989. Mixed media. 96 × 127.5 in. (243.84 × 323.85 cm). Minneapolis Institute of Art. Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky (2022.98.19A-C).

PLATE 16 *Inappropriate Longings*, 1992. Mixed-media installational painting with metal water trough and dried leaves. Left panel: 92 × 73.25 in. (233.68 × 185.42 cm). Center panel: 92h × 73 in. (233.68 × 18.78 cm). Right panel: 93 × 74.5 in. (236.22 × 187.96 cm). Tia Collection.

PLATE 17 *Suture*, 2002. Oil on canvas with metal. 90 × 149 in. (228.60 × 378.46 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 18 *Rupture*, 2002/2016. Oil on canvas with metal. 93 × 149.5 in. (236.22 × 379.73 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 19 *Muffle*, 2009. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 98.125 × 79.5 in. (249.24 × 201.93 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 20 *Red Bed*, 2011. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 80.5 × 50.5 in. (204.47 × 128.27 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 21 *Rib*, 2013. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 90.25 × 72.25 in. (229.2 × 184.2 cm). Harmony Hammond Core Collection.

PLATE 22 *Bandaged Quilt #1* (detail), 2018–19. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 72.125 × 63.375 in. (183.04 × 163.35 cm). Private collection.

PLATE 23 *Bandaged Grid #1*, 2015. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 44.125 × 76.5 in. (112.39 × 194.31 cm). Collection of Diana Bowes.

PLATE 24 *Black Cross II*, 2020–21. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 90.375 × 72.25 in. (229.6 × 183.5 cm). Collection of Catherine Montgomery.

PLATE 25 *Red Cross*, 2019–20. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 92.75 × 76.5 in. (235.6 × 194.3 cm). Tia Collection.

PLATE 26 *Patched*, 2022. Acrylic, oil, and mixed media on canvas. 84.5 × 78.25 in. (214.6 × 198.8 cm).

PLATE 27 *Chenille #7*, 2018. Oil and mixed media on canvas. 58.25 × 118.25 in. (148 × 300.4 cm). Private collection.

PLATE 28 *Chenille #7* (detail), 2018.

Editor's Note

I first became aware of Harmony's work in the 1970s, when I was a student at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. Gravitating to New York City, to the Village, I sought out lesbian-friendly sites of sociability, artistic experimentation, and political activism (like La MaMa Theatre, Judson Poets' Theater, Daughters Inc., and more than a few lesbian bars). I met people who knew people who knew Harmony, or at least knew who she was. She was already a bit of a legend within New York's lesbian feminist milieu. In the 1980s, in Berkeley, California, I bought a signed copy of her book *Wrappings* at Mama Bears, a women's bookstore up the street from where I lived. The book helped me see how lesbian feminist activism and artistic practice, including art history and criticism, could work powerfully together. In the 1990s, as a middle-aged graduate student in art history, this lesson served me well. In 2000, I taught my first real class, Lesbian Art and Theory, at the invitation of Moira Roth, then chair of the art history department at Mills College. Moira recommended Harmony's book *Lesbian Art in America* as the textbook. Around 2010 I finally met Harmony in person, and we had our first impassioned conversation about lesbian art at Kim Anno's dinner table. We haven't really stopped talking since. This anthology of Harmony's writings brings her conversations with figures across the spectrum of cultural production back to mind and back to life. Which is where they belong. Thank you, Harmony, for your writings and for the profound love of women radiating from these pages.

—TIRZA TRUE LATIMER

Foreword

Reading Harmony Hammond

JULIA BRYAN-WILSON

How do you read a legendary artist like Harmony Hammond? There are many answers to this question. In the first place: You savor the way that her artworks propose multiple meanings across the false binary of abstraction and figuration. You grapple with them as visual texts in which materiality and process hold great significance. In Hammond's capable hands, her paintings, prints, and sculptures generate an abundance of signification as she wields texture, surface incident, color, thread, grommets, braiding, fabric, scale, and pigment, just to name a few of the tools in her ample artistic toolbox. You read them as all-over propositions, in which relations are painstakingly built within a single canvas, where a tear in cloth here catalyzes your reaction to a drip of paint there.

You can also read her as a crafter of words, for Hammond is a prolific, witty, and intelligent writer whose influential exhibition catalogue texts, essays, reviews, and interviews have been at the forefront of queer feminist theory for the last five decades. Hammond's name is frequently invoked alongside the phrase "the first"—she curated the first show dedicated to lesbian art in 1978; she was an originating member of A.I.R., the first major women's cooperative gallery raised by the tide of second-wave feminism in 1972; and she wrote the first history of contemporary lesbian art in America, published in 2000, to name but a few of her firsts. Along the way, she has been a barrier-breaking advocate for trans and nonbinary folks and for those who live outside the centers of the art world, insisting on a capacious understanding of queerness that thrives everywhere, as in exhibitions such as *¿Y QUÉ? Queer Art Made in Texas* (1999). In her writing from the 1970s and '80s, she grappled with issues such as motherhood, women's form, and lesbian sexuality in alternative publications (including *Heresies*, which she helped found) and was bravely ahead of her time in terms of thinking about the intersections of class, sexuality, region, and gender. In fact, her essay "Class

Notes" (1977), in which she articulates a pointed analysis of the way privilege functions in the art world and how it compounds straight and masculinist bias, is now considered a fundamental text in queer theory.

One of her earliest pieces, "My Daughter Is Finally Napping. . . . ," appeared in 1972 in the defiantly noncommercial feminist homesteading newsletter *Country Women* alongside other texts about the importance of women's health and self-care, the joys of raising sheep, and hand-drawn diagrams about spinning.[1] In Hammond's cri de coeur, she narrates snatching a moment to theorize her own artistic practice while her child sleeps. The essay is short but full of fiery feminist anger, invoking her desire to "breakdown the distinctions between art and 'women's work,' between painting and sculpture, between art and craft." In retrospect, it functions like a road map for the artist Hammond was already in the process of becoming. She also writes that she is "not interested in art history, for its relationship to me never becomes clear." Indeed: Art history in 1972 centered Western white male artists. Why would she imagine there would ever be a place for an artist like her, a poor dyke who scavenged rags? It is only because of Hammond's activism, alongside that of her feminist colleagues, that this has changed.

Attempting to create a more expansive art history that did not yet exist for her, Hammond wrote well-researched, historically inflected essays that span topics from architecture to petroglyphs to women's tin-smithing traditions. Her art criticism, much of which was published in local publications in her chosen home of New Mexico, celebrated artists of color and Indigenous artists long before they were embraced by more mainstream venues. Bridging her status as a maker and an astute witness to others' artistic practices, she is most fascinated by the haptic and the pleasurable, penning essays on women's touch and paying close attention to material choices in her criticism and curation. She has also emphasized the damages wrought by what she identifies as cultural amnesia witnessed in her long engagement with erasure, marginalization, vandalism, and censorship.

Last, you can read Hammond; that is, you can approach her words queerly, as a "read," to use the parlance familiar to drag communities and their aficionados. Reading, which originated with queens of color, is a practice of creative critique in which cutting remarks are exchanged, with the recipient usually in on the joke. To read Hammond's early writings in this way might be to critically situate them as products of their own time, with some of the blind spots that entails. You can break down her texts in order to reevaluate them, for they hold up under scrutiny. Her prose is tough and uncompromising, yet always generous and often infused with a sly sense of humor. She herself keeps expanding her vision of the

art world she wants to change, keeps revising her words, keeps making art that broadens our understanding of what and how matter means. *Still Dangerous!* is finally bringing together her world-changing writings so that we can read them, learn from them, and keep building on them.

NOTE

1. Harmony Hammond, "My Daughter Is Finally Napping. . . . ," *Country Women/ Women and Art* 1, no. 3 (1972): 10.

Introduction

Dangerous

TIRZA TRUE LATIMER

Harmony Hammond found a pink postcard in her loft mailbox in January 1976. It read:

> If you consider yourself a feminist, would
> you respond by using one 8½ × 11″ page
> to share your ideas about what feminist art
> is or could be. . . .
>
> In sisterhood,
> Ruth Iskin, Lucy Lippard, Arlene Raven[1]

Hammond dashed off her response across a sheet of graph paper.[2] The text reads like a draft of a manifesto, or notes from a workshop:

> There is no one feminist art—it can be any material, color, form, size,
> subject, or technique—it's a matter of consciousness
> Feminist art is by women, for women—not just about women's
> experience—that is sensibility that comes through in spite of—
> Feminism implies consciousness and feminist art implies a political
> awareness and intent expressed in the work.
> Feminist art is the form
> becoming real
> *Dangerous*[3]

This was not Hammond's first attempt to address the question. Nor would it be her last. Her interrogation reverberates within a studio practice of over fifty years and unfolds apace in writings, curatorial initiatives, interviews, and talks.

The texts by Harmony Hammond (b. 1944) selected for this volume—organized, for the most part, chronologically—enable us to appreciate how grappling with "what feminist art is or could be" remains urgent within shifting political contexts. This and related questions—such as, "What is lesbian art?" "What is queer art?" "How can abstraction carry political content?"—provide a framework for analyzing and revalorizing diverse forms of cultural expression that have been marginalized, censored, erased, or deformed by appropriation.

For feminists responding to the 1976 survey, feminist art, like feminism, meant many different things. Ruth Iskin, who directed the gallery at the Women's Building in Los Angeles, organized an exhibition of the two-hundred-some-odd responses. These included collages, prints, drawings, poems, manifestos, statements, and everything in between. "All we can know of feminist consciousness," Martha Rosler responded, "is that it is a product of one's time and place and particular position in the socioeconomically defined world."[4] According to Arlene Raven, "What feminist art is or could be is a question which remains open as long as the women's movement lives, and permits women's experience to unfold in the public arena."[5] Both Rosler and Raven took the long view and evoked feminism's evolution within changing sociopolitical conditions. This volume provides access, through Hammond's writings, to that evolution. Because the artistic, social, political, and economic environment is constantly changing, layers of meaning accrue to Hammond's writings as well as to her artworks over the decades.

Certain underlying values, the grounds of feminism, hold fast. Feminism refuses to be silenced. It challenges the values and hierarchies imposed by and perpetuating patriarchy: the subjugation of women, the denial of women's agency as producers of culture, the negation of women's sovereignty as autonomous bodies and social subjects. Women's oppression (male supremacy) rehearses all hierarchizing discourses of dominance. Speaking out against subjugation is, indeed, *Dangerous*. Dangerous for patriarchy. And dangerous for women, too, as campaigns for dominance, played out in domestic settings or on a global scale, effectively demonstrate. Feminism is a calculated—and an essential—risk. Forty-five years after receiving that pink postcard signed by three high-profile feminist art activists, and forty-four years after the display of responses at the Women's Building, Hammond received a follow-up query. Mary Savig, then curator of manuscripts at the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art (where the Women's Building papers are conserved), was restaging the 1976 pink postcard exhibition. She invited the survey's original respondents, along with some new voices, to address the same question—what is or could be feminist art?—in 2019. This time around, Hammond responded with just two words, written in bold letters, diagonally across the page: STILL DANGEROUS.[6]

Hence the title of this volume: *Still Dangerous! The Harmony Hammond Reader*. The other component of the title appears, at first, self-evident. A reader presents a selection of texts—texts, in this case, by the artist and writer Harmony Hammond. The word *reader*, though, has another denotation: It may refer to a person who reads. Or has read. Or will read.

Who reads Harmony Hammond? These texts speak to, and speak of, members of historical activist communities and their allies in the arts. Feminists. Lesbians. Queers. Artists. Critics. Curators. Because the writings are *Still Dangerous!*, they interpolate new readers (activists, teachers, students . . .). The texts contest linear master narratives of art history—and history, for that matter. They reject myths of universality and monolithic aesthetic discourse. They resist co-optation, domestication, appropriation, and relegation to the past. They resist. Period. They gesture toward readers of the future—and will do so not only "as long as the women's movement lives" but as long as "women" remain a class defined by patriarchy.

Harmony Hammond has always had multiple practices. In a conversation organized by the art historian Richard Meyer under the rubric of "Double Duty," Hammond quipped, "'Double Duty' sounds like a vacation!"[7] She is, at the very least, an artist; writer; professor emerita, University of Arizona; fifth-degree black belt in the martial art of aikido; volunteer firefighter for ten years (now retired); and a seasoned curator.[8] In each and every context, she is an activist. The writings published here attest to her centrality to both feminist art and queer art's histories.[9]

A native of suburban Chicago, Illinois, Hammond got her BFA at the University of Minnesota in 1967 and was active in the Minneapolis art scene until migrating to New York City in 1969. She became an influential figure in the nascent feminist art movement as one of the cofounders of A.I.R. (Artists in Residence), which, in 1972, broke new ground to become the first women's cooperative art gallery in New York City of the women's liberation movement era (see fig. 1.1).[10] She came out as a lesbian in 1973 and walked from Christopher Street to Central Park with her three-year-old daughter on her shoulders in the Gay Pride March of June 1974.

Already a recognized artist and activist, Hammond first tried her hand as a writer in 1975 at Sagaris—an institute for radical feminist thought that convened for two five-week sessions that summer on a mountainside in Lyndonville, Vermont. At Sagaris, "a faculty of well-known lesbian, radical, cultural, and socialist feminist leaders" came together with a diverse "student body of grassroots activists and organizers from across the United States" to brainstorm about leadership, power, and feminist organizing strategies.[11] Hammond was invited to teach T'ai-chi Ch'uan during the very first session and, in exchange, could participate in all the classes. "We were given problems to solve about community organizing

and leadership issues," she recalls. "I came back from that summer politicized and with organizing skills."[12] At Sagaris, Hammond also began writing "some horrible poetry" and letters to editors of art magazines.[13]

Back in New York, she brought both her newly acquired organizing skills and her evolving writing skills to the table as a cofounder, in 1976, of *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics* (see fig. 1.3). Her first article appeared in the inaugural issue. "It was about content in feminist abstract art, an aspect of feminist art that until recently few historians or curators have addressed."[14] Throughout the journal's first decade, Hammond regularly contributed essays "about feminist art in and from the voice of an artist activist."[15] She served as office manager for a year and coedited issues 1, 3, and 9. The third issue, "Lesbian Art and Artists" (1977, see figs. 1.4 and 1.5), stood out as a milestone in the literature of lesbian culture.

The relationships Hammond formed during this decade included a deepening friendship with the writer and independent curator Lucy Lippard. She vividly recalls their first meeting in 1970: "Word was out that there was this art historian/critic named Lucy Lippard who was going up and down stairs in loft buildings, making studio visits. She was the only one who was looking at art made by women. She eventually came to my studio."[16] And she purchased *Bag IX* (1971). This was Hammond's first sale in New York.

Hammond's artwork exemplified a category that Lippard had recently invented to describe work that deviated irreverently from the formalist rigors of minimalism.[17] What Lippard called "eccentric abstraction" was, she wrote in 1966, "allied to the nonformal tradition devoted to opening up new areas of materials, shape, color, and sensuous experience" and adhered closely to the "nature of materials and physical phenomena."[18]

The formulation perfectly describes Hammond's practice. After moving to New York, she began to explore what she calls "a third, or queer space" between painting and sculpture.[19] Her encounters with the arts of non-European cultures in the late 1960s and early 1970s opened this space. She responded on a deep level to the materials, forms, and patterns of the objects she saw displayed in European museum collections, on travels to North Africa, and in the Museum of the American Indian on Manhattan's Upper West Side. She turned away from the geometric hard-edge abstraction of the "big boys in NY," her references as an art student in the 1960s, and took painting "out of the rectangle and off the wall."[20] In the early 1970s, she began to lay the foundations for a feminist art practice that carried political content into the field of abstract painting. This practice emerged through a deep engagement with materials to participate in the narrative of modernist painting while "at the same time interrupting and revising that narrative to include voices of difference—those on the fringes, those who

have been marginalized or silenced, to make work about agency."[21] Voices of difference resound not only in Hammond's studio but also in her writing, curating, and other sites of cultural activism.

Making work out of whatever materials came to hand, "making something out of nothing," Hammond built aesthetic forms through additive and repetitive processes—layering, wrapping, twining, weaving, crocheting, knitting, braiding, plaiting, needlework, all manner of traditional handiwork.[22] Renouncing the immaculate surfaces of minimalism, which bear no trace of the maker's hand, she adopted materials historically associated with women's work: repurposed scraps of fabric; curtains, blankets, bedspreads, quilts, and other domestic linens; human hair; natural fibers; and clay, referencing women's traditional creative practices such as sewing, weaving, crocheting, quilting, basket weaving, and pottery making. She initiated, in this way, the "survivor aesthetic" that continues to inform her work to this day.[23] At the same time, she began to theorize her aesthetic choices and to theorize feminist art in her writings.

In the statement written for her first solo exhibition in New York, at A.I.R. Gallery in 1973, Hammond acknowledged the stakes of her woman-centered engagement studio practice. Unlike the legendary formal leaps made by male modernists in the interests of imbuing their artworks with the potency of non-Western objects, Hammond's debt to ethnological collections was based on identification rather than usurpation:

> It is the connection to my female ancestors that provides an ethnographic content to my work, but extending this, it is also a desire to break down the distinctions between painting and sculpture, between art and "women's work," and between art in craft and craft in art. It is like trying to find a place for myself. I want to move freely between them all as if they are one, just as I want to grasp my total whole. To give form to my female feelings to give form to myself, it seems necessary to work with women's materials—cloth, thread, hair, etc.—trying to combine a sort of figurative representation with abstraction.[24]

Looking back on this period from the vantage point of the early 2000s, she reflected on the implications of the work in the historical context of its production and on how its meanings unfold over time. She identified the evolving installation piece *Collection of Fragments*, first presented at Carlo Lamagna Gallery in New York City in 1976, as a touchstone of her practice, "central to all my work."[25] The installation *Collection of Fragments* (1976; figs. I.1 and I.2; see plate 7) incorporated a vitrine, simulating those used by ethnographic museums, containing baskets and sandals woven by Hammond, clay shards Hammond made and

FIGURE 1.1. Harmony Hammond, *Collection of Fragments*, 1975/2014. Dimensions variable. Original installation at Carlo Lamagna Gallery solo exhibition, 1976. Tia Collection.

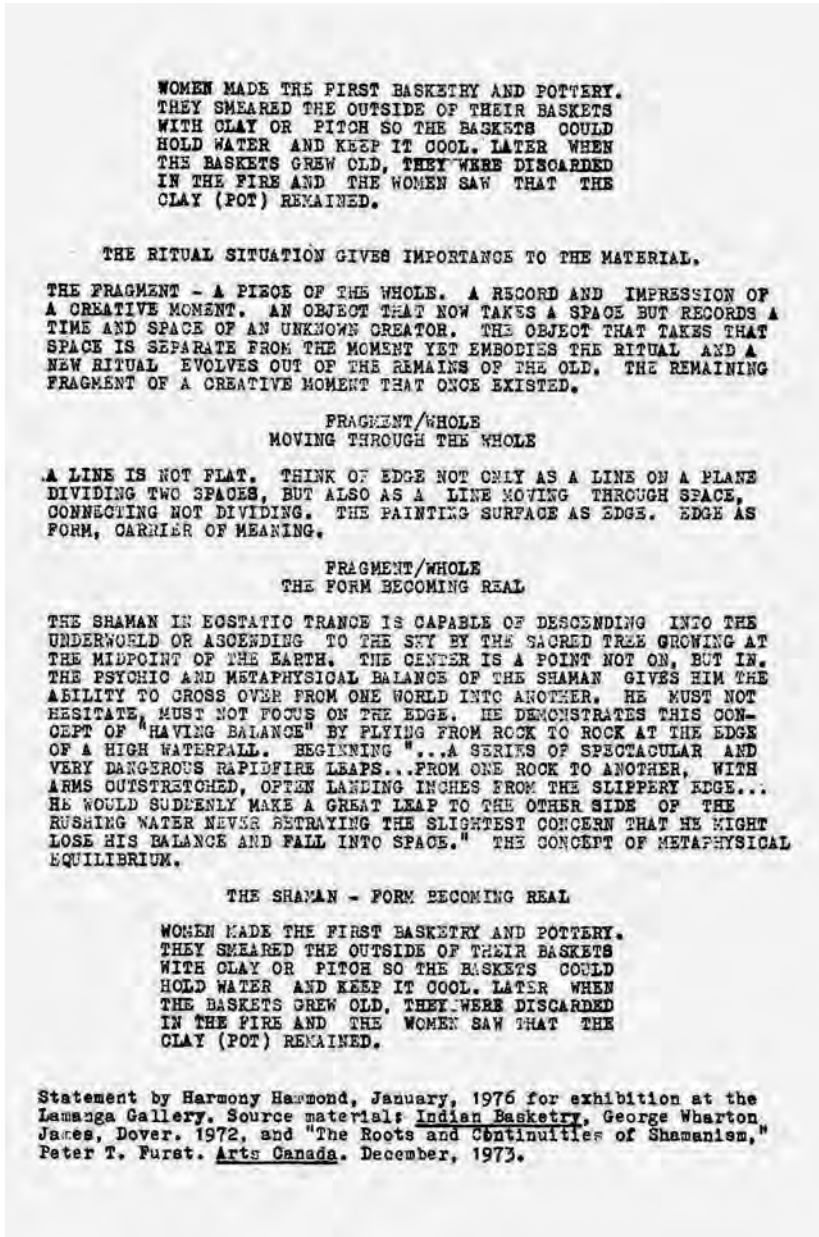
FIGURE 1.2. Harmony Hammond, *Collection of Fragments* (detail), 1975.

imprinted with basket and sandal weaves, and a captioned postcard (ca. 1910) picturing a "Moki woman making pottery." Museum-style labels identifying the artist as the maker accompanied these "fragments" along with a text: "Baskets are the Indian Woman's poems, the shaping of them her sculpture. They wove into them the story of their life and love."[26] Nearby, Hammond placed a few of her thickly textured *Weave Paintings* (see plates 5 and 7) in dialogue with the installation. Over time, these paintings from the 1970s became part of the installation, not displayed-along-with but integral to it. The paintings merge formal abstraction with political content arising out of marginalized creative histories.[27]

The Lamagna Gallery artist's statement (fig. I.3), an amalgam of citations and affirmations, reads like a poem itself. Or a belief statement. It speaks to and about the "fragments" on display. It is an ode to the fragment, "A piece of a whole. A record and impression of a creative moment" and the process by which one innovation leads to another, work builds out of work, and a generative core survives.[28] The statement opens and closes with this epigraph: "Women made the first basketry and pottery. They smeared the outside of their baskets with clay or pitch so the baskets would hold water and keep it cool. Later when the baskets grew old, they were discarded in the fire and the women saw that the clay (pot) remained."[29] Hammond's statement—indeed, her writing generally—is as recursive as weaving, basketmaking, and pot making. It affirms both transformation and an indestructible core.

Collection of Fragments pieces together a narrative of women's creative practices and positions Hammond's work within that narrative. At the same time, with the conceit of ethnographic museum display, Hammond crossed fine arts and craft divides to interrogate the museum's implication—through its collection, labeling, documentation, and display conventions—in the creation and validation of dominant cultural histories and artistic hierarchies. In multiple ways, this installation serves as a metaphor for Hammond's practice; its material and written components concurrently participate in, and engage critically with, her cultural heritage. All of it.

In 1978, Hammond organized *A Lesbian Show* (see figs. 1.6–1.9), the first exhibition in New York City devoted exclusively to art by artists courageous enough to show their work under the heading "Lesbian." If they experienced threats and professional backlash, they also reaped significant rewards (building solidarity and community, breaching isolation and silence, affirming and celebrating). For a few weeks, the show transformed 112 Greene Street, an alternative art space in SoHo, into a lesbian cultural epicenter. *A Lesbian Show* included performances, poetry readings, film, video, and discussions on lesbian art and politics. Events included an evening open house for *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics* and an open slideshow of work by lesbian artists in the



WOMEN MADE THE FIRST BASKETRY AND POTTERY.
THEY SMEARED THE OUTSIDE OF THEIR BASKETS
WITH CLAY OR PITCH SO THE BASKETS COULD
HOLD WATER AND KEEP IT COOL. LATER WHEN
THE BASKETS GREW OLD, THEY WERE DISCARDED
IN THE FIRE AND THE WOMEN SAW THAT THE
CLAY (POT) REMAINED.

THE RITUAL SITUATION GIVES IMPORTANCE TO THE MATERIAL.

THE FRAGMENT - A PIECE OF THE WHOLE. A RECORD AND IMPRESSION OF A CREATIVE MOMENT. AN OBJECT THAT NOW TAKES A SPACE BUT RECORDS A TIME AND SPACE OF AN UNKNOWN CREATOR. THE OBJECT THAT TAKES THAT SPACE IS SEPARATE FROM THE MOMENT YET EMBODIES THE RITUAL AND A NEW RITUAL EVOLVES OUT OF THE REMAINS OF THE OLD. THE REMAINING FRAGMENT OF A CREATIVE MOMENT THAT ONCE EXISTED.

FRAGMENT/WHOLE
MOVING THROUGH THE WHOLE

A LINE IS NOT FLAT. THINK OF EDGE NOT ONLY AS A LINE ON A PLANE DIVIDING TWO SPACES, BUT ALSO AS A LINE MOVING THROUGH SPACE, CONNECTING NOT DIVIDING. THE PAINTING SURFACE AS EDGE. EDGE AS FORM, CARRIER OF MEANING.

FRAGMENT/WHOLE
THE FORM BECOMING REAL

THE SHAMAN IN ECSTATIC TRANCE IS CAPABLE OF DESCENDING INTO THE UNDERWORLD OR ASCENDING TO THE SKY BY THE SACRED TREE GROWING AT THE MIDPOINT OF THE EARTH. THE CENTER IS A POINT NOT ON, BUT IN. THE PSYCHIC AND METAPHYSICAL BALANCE OF THE SHAMAN GIVES HIM THE ABILITY TO CROSS OVER FROM ONE WORLD INTO ANOTHER. HE MUST NOT HESITATE, MUST NOT FOCUS ON THE EDGE. HE DEMONSTRATES THIS CONCEPT OF "HAVING BALANCE" BY FLYING FROM ROCK TO ROCK AT THE EDGE OF A HIGH WATERFALL. BEGINNING "...A SERIES OF SPECTACULAR AND VERY DANGEROUS RAPIDFIRE LEAPS...FROM ONE ROCK TO ANOTHER, WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED, OFTEN LANDING INCHES FROM THE SLIPPERY EDGE... HE WOULD SUDDENLY MAKE A GREAT LEAP TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RUSHING WATER NEVER BETRAYING THE SLIGHTEST CONCERN THAT HE MIGHT LOSE HIS BALANCE AND FALL INTO SPACE." THE CONCEPT OF METAPHYSICAL EQUILIBRIUM.

THE SHAMAN - FORM BECOMING REAL

WOMEN MADE THE FIRST BASKETRY AND POTTERY.
THEY SMEARED THE OUTSIDE OF THEIR BASKETS
WITH CLAY OR PITCH SO THE BASKETS COULD
HOLD WATER AND KEEP IT COOL. LATER WHEN
THE BASKETS GREW OLD, THEY WERE DISCARDED
IN THE FIRE AND THE WOMEN SAW THAT THE
CLAY (POT) REMAINED.

Statement by Harmony Hammond, January, 1976 for exhibition at the Lamanga Gallery. Source material: Indian Basketry, George Wharton James, Dover. 1972, and "The Roots and Continuities of Shamanism," Peter T. Furst. Arts Canada. December, 1973.

FIGURE 1.3. Harmony Hammond, statement for solo exhibition at Carlo Lamagna Gallery, New York, 1976.

interest of constructing a lesbian art archive. Hammond's press release made the show's ambitions clear: "In order to validate lesbian experiences, it is important that lesbian artists become visible to each other as well as to the women's community, the art world, and people outside the art world. Until we have visibility, we cannot begin to explore [. . .] the role and implications of lesbian culture in a larger social and political context."[30]

Hammond's book *Wrappings: Essays on Feminism, Art and the Martial Arts* (see fig. 2.2), published by Time and Space Limited (TSL) in 1984, furthered this mission. A collection of texts by Hammond on feminist art, *Wrappings* presents unpublished essays, pieces previously published in *Heresies*, select artist's statements, examples of her earliest exhibition and book reviews, drawings, and photographs of artworks (hers as well as those of other artists).[31] *Wrappings* became a foundational reference, and many of its essays have been repeatedly anthologized. With its ever-expanding web of connections to other publications and other readerships, *Wrappings* established Hammond as a writer.

The year 1984 proved pivotal for another reason as well: Hammond left the New York scene for northern New Mexico. "I liked the landscape, the wide-open space. I like the cultural mix. I like the toughness and the outlaw sensibility."[32] Although she originally intended to stay for a year, she has now lived in New Mexico for over four decades: "There's something about this big space that gives everybody room to be who they think they are. Historically that's been true for women. If they didn't fit into the social structures on the East Coast, and they didn't have money to go to Europe, they went west. So there's this history of women, especially writers, anthropologists, and photographers who came west. They could smoke cigarettes. They could wear pants. They could swear. They could do whatever. Many were bisexual or lesbian. The West—it's outlaw territory. I'm just assuming that's one reason I feel quite comfortable."[33]

The juxtaposition of different creative traditions, long generative for Hammond as an artist, characterizes the Southwest, crossroads of Native, Hispanic, and Euro-American peoples. Intercultural dynamics animate her critical writings and curation as well as her art making at this time.[34] In the studio, she staged "uneasy juxtapositions" that increasingly questioned "artistic appropriation and cultural gentrification, my part in it as well as others" and opened spaces for dialogue and negotiation.[35]

In 1989, Hammond settled in the Galisteo Basin, territory east of Santa Fe that still bears traces of its Tano/Tewa heritage and Spanish colonial occupation.[36] She made her home in an old stone barn used by generations of sheep ranchers for the storage of wool. She constructed a studio on the land where she could make large-scale paintings, store artworks, and stock materials. The character of the materials

she scavenged and incorporated in her paintings changed with the surroundings and with the increased storage capacity her home, studio, and acreage provided. Mexican and New Mexican tin lighting fixtures, candlesticks, and frames lined up on her mantel and windowsills. Rescued corrugated metal roofing, buckets, gutters, and bits of rusted farm equipment accumulated outside the studio awaiting transformation. Hammond's hallmark "near-monochromes" owe much to the Southwestern environment as well. They are as monochromatic as the desert—that is to say, not at all. The longer you look, the more color, texture, and life you see.

In Galisteo, Hammond began conducting research for *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (see fig. 4.1).[37] She described it as "the book that was missing," a book about lesbians, lesbian artists, and their history, which "wasn't written down anywhere."[38] The first version began with a chapter devoted to the long history of women loving women in the arts, but Hammond ultimately chose to focus on contemporary artists, post-Stonewall, who embraced the term *lesbian* and addressed sexual politics in their work. Drawing on her personal archives and networks expanded in the course of curatorial initiatives, artist talks, workshops, residencies, conferences, and her tenure as cochair of the College Art Association's Queer Caucus for Art in the mid-1990s, she visited the studios of at least a hundred self-identified lesbian artists over a ten-year period. *Lesbian Art in America* earned a Lambda Literary Award the year it was published and remains a primary text on the subject.

Lesbian Art in America and other writings from the 1990s and early 2000s elaborate a number of recurrent themes, all highly political: identity politics in relation to cultural production; visual and material strategies for imbuing artworks with historical and political content; forms of resistance to censorship and silencing; the political agency of art (whether abstract or figurative—or some combination of both).

At the turn of the new millennium, Hammond responded vigorously to the censorship campaigns that characterized the culture wars (orchestrated right-wing fundamentalist attacks on federal funding for the arts that inspired acts of violence against feminist artists, queer artists, border artists, artists of color, and their works). She produced overtly political work such as *Speaking Braids* (2001–2; see figs. 4.4 and 4.5) and *A Queer Reader* (2003; see fig. 5.7) that intentionally dealt with queer and feminist issues such as voice/voicelessness, censorship, and historical erasure. At the same time, she strove to redress the prevailing "cultural amnesia" (within queer communities as well as the mainstream) about feminism's generative legacy.[39]

As she approached the age of seventy, in the 2010s, a new preoccupation came to the fore in Hammond's writings and public presentations: archival preservation. She urged women artists to take responsibility for indexing and archiving

their work and for writing their histories.[40] Her own experience as a lesbian feminist cultural historian made her keenly aware of the challenges of conducting research on marginalized subjects when no secondary sources exist and primary materials are not conserved in public archives. She became a persuasive advocate for archiving and preserving one's life work and actively participating in the creation of historical memory.

Over decades rife with feminist struggles for visibility and cultural recognition, Hammond has consistently affirmed her commitment to making art "that is FOR something and not a reaction against" and to "creating a continuous female presence" in the arts and in the world.[41] The same is true of her writing.

While each text in this volume has its own impact and historical resonance, the cumulative effect reveals the trajectory of ideas forming, evolving, and contributing, over time, to cultural change. The complex interrelationships among Hammond's multiple practices come into focus. We see how her writing practice lays the ethical and theoretical foundations for her studio practice, creates the conditions of possibility for her work's reception, and opens pathways for the future of feminism. Her studio work, in turn, materially grounds the writings. In this back and forth, we see feminist consciousness "becoming real," as predicted by Hammond in her response to the 1976 questionnaire about what feminist art is or could become. The reader illuminates all stages of Hammond's development as an artist, writer, activist, and curator. Selected texts are presented chronologically under the decades of Hammond's output: 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000–2009, 2010–19, 2020–23 (the date we finalized the table of contents). This chronological structure renders period debates vivid while fully contextualizing Hammond's artistic production and reception during these decades. These texts, like Hammond's artworks, "participate in multiple narratives," to use a phrase oft repeated by the artist, who sees her work "as contributing to both dominant and oppositional discourses." They trace the development of career through lines: the impact of martial arts on Hammond's art and philosophy; the materialization of female bodies and histories in works of abstraction; the different forms of antipurism that shape Hammond's "survivor aesthetic"; the valorization of the cast-off, the cast out, the fugitive, the fleeting; the staging of "uneasy juxtapositions"; the affirmation of female creative practices; social abstraction in theory and practice; acts of resistance to the censorship/silencing of queer, two-spirit, nonbinary, and trans artists as well as women; the importance of "organizing and participating in local and regional queer exhibitions with emerging and upcoming artists, to occupy space, to continue being visible!"[42]

Many of these texts have not been previously published. Some are composed from drafts or notes for oral presentations, or transcripts of recorded interviews.

A number of the previously published texts have been reprinted elsewhere (some more than once); we chose in most cases to present the original, first-published version. Certain texts have been abridged or excerpted to reduce repetition across the volume, and many of these have been edited to enhance flow, clarity, and continuity.

Hammond insists that she is neither an art historian nor a theorist—despite her contributions in these areas. She identifies, rather, as "a thinking, writing, visual artist whose approach to talking about content in visual art—whose critical thinking and visual analysis—were heavily influenced by feminisms and feminist process."[43] While historical context and theory are hugely important, "it all starts with the artwork itself."

This volume "presences" Hammond's artworks by incorporating a generous insert of color plates and a range of black-and-white images reproducing page art, facsimiles of statements, documentary photographs, and photographs of artworks. In most cases, the images do not illustrate the texts but rather provide a visual thread that runs alongside, and sometimes intertwines with, the writings, decade by decade. While Hammond's visual practice and writing practice are intimately interrelated and impossible to discuss responsibly in isolation, this volume is the first since the publication of *Wrappings* in 1984 to prioritize her written and spoken words—which are *Still Dangerous!*

NOTES

1. Lucy R. Lippard, invitation to Ruth Iskin, January 23, 1976, Woman's Building records, 1970–92, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/lucy-r-lippard-invitation-to-ruth-iskin-22468.

2. "Harmony Hammond Response to 'What Is Feminist Art?,'" ca. 1976–77, Woman's Building records, 1970–92, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/harmony-hammond-response-to-what-feminist-art-12891.

3. Emphasis here and throughout the volume is that of the author.

4. Martha Rosler, quoted by Mary Savig, "What Is Feminist Art?," *Archives of American Art Journal* 60, no. 1 (2021): 64.

5. Arlene Raven, quoted by Savig, "What Is Feminist Art?," 64.

6. What Is Feminist Art? questionnaire responses, 2019, box 1, folder 19, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/what-feminist-art-questionnaire-responses-21690.

7. "Double Duty," panel presentation, roundtable organized by Richard Meyer, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 2012.

8. Hammond curated or cocurated eleven exhibitions from 1968 to 2012. She organized *Contemporary Graphics Published by Universal Limited Art Editions*, Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis, 1968; *A Lesbian Show*, 112 Greene Street Workshop, New York,

1978; *Home Work: The Domestic Environment as Reflected in the Work of Women Artists*, sponsored by the New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA) and the Women's Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls, New York, 1981; cocurated, with Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage* at the American Indian Community House Gallery, New York, 1985, Wheelwright Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and other venues; cocurated, with Catherine Lord, *Gender, Fucked: An Exhibition Made by Lesbians About Gender*, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, 1996; curated *Material Girls: Gender, Process and Abstract Art Since 1970*, Gallery 128, New York, 1997; curated *Queer Video Screening*, VOID, NYC, sponsored by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies of City University of New York and the Gay and Lesbian Caucus of the College Art Association, 1997; with the Curatorial Committee of Queer Caucus for Art, College Art Association, organized *Troubling Customs* at Ontario College of Art and the Design and School of Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1998; curated the exhibition *Out West* and *Out West Queer Video*, a program of single-channel videos that accompanied the exhibition at Plan B Evolving Arts, Santa Fe, 1999; curated *¿Y QUE? Queer Art Made in Texas*, Landmark Arts, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, 2007; cocurated the solo exhibition *Erasing Censorship*, in collaboration with three different cocurators at three different venues—the first with Christopher Reed at Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois, 2007; the second with Simon Taylor at Left Coast Books, Goleta, California, 2011; the third with Eve Fowler at Artist Curated Projects, Los Angeles, California, 2018; she also curated *Material Engagements*, RedLine Contemporary Art Center, Denver, in 2012.

9. Hammond's studio practice participates hand in glove with her writing practice in the development of these fields; her artworks were featured in groundbreaking feminist and queer exhibitions, such as *The Great American Lesbian Art Show* (Woman's Building, Los Angeles, 1980), *Extended Sensibilities: Homosexual Presence in Contemporary Art* (New Museum, New York, 1982), *In a Different Light* (University of California Berkeley Art Museum, 1995), *Sexual Politics* (Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 1996), and *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (MOCA, Los Angeles, 2007–9).

10. Gallery 15, founded in New York City in 1958, preceded A.I.R. as a cooperative art gallery featuring work by women. Harking even further back, to the first-wave feminist movement, Argent Gallery opened in New York City under the aegis of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors in 1889 and remained active in the first four decades of the twentieth century.

11. Harmony Hammond, interview by Julia Bryan-Wilson (excerpts), September 14, 2008, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Oral History Program; audio recording and full transcript, accessed May 30, 2024, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-harmony-hammond-15635.

12. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

13. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

14. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

15. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

16. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

17. *Eccentric Abstraction*, Lucy Lippard's groundbreaking 1966 exhibition of postminimalist works at the Fischbach Gallery in New York City, brought together artists who were trained as painters and then moved into three dimensions.

18. Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction" (1966), in *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: Dutton, 1971), 98–99.

19. Harmony Hammond, "Harmony Hammond's Ongoing Revolution," interview by Nancy Zastudil, *Hyperallergic*, June 9, 2024, https://hyperallergic.com/924019/harmony-hammond-ongoing-revolution/.

20. Harmony Hammond, statement for the exhibition *How American Women Artists Invented Post-Modernism*, curated by Judith Brodsky and Ferris Olin, Mason Gross School of Art Galleries, Rutgers University, December 2005–January 2006; Harmony Hammond, "Writings on the Seventies, Arrival in New York, Blankets, Bags, Presences, Floorpieces, Weave Paintings, and Fragments," unpublished statement, 2006.

21. Hammond, "Harmony Hammond's Ongoing Revolution."

22. Harmony Hammond, email message to author, March 19, 2022.

23. Hammond, "Writings on the Seventies."

24. Harmony Hammond, unpublished statement dated 1972, written for Hammond's first solo exhibition in New York, at A.I.R. gallery in 1973.

25. Harmony Hammond, email to author dated September 3, 2023. Due to a typographical error, the name *Lamagna* is misspelled in the original statement, reproduced along with *Collection of Fragments* in the volume introduction (see fig. I.3). *Collection of Fragments* (see figs. I.1 and I.2) has evolved over the years from its first presentation in 1976 at Lamagna Gallery in New York City to its display in *Becoming/UnBecoming Monochrome* at RedLine Contemporary Art Center, Denver, 2014. The configuration displayed at RedLine included weave paintings on the wall. Which weave paintings and their placement in relation to the vitrine is flexible, as is the exact selection of woven and clay fragments. The labeling, too, has varied slightly from installation to installation. The piece was recently acquired by Tia Collection in Santa Fe.

26. The Navajo School of Indian Basketry, *Indian Basket Weaving* (1903; reprint, New York: Dover, 1971), was a reference for this text, but the wording is Hammond's.

27. Hammond, "Writings on the Seventies."

28. Harmony Hammond, statement, Lamagna Gallery, New York City, 1976.

29. Hammond, statement, Lamagna Gallery. Hammond reproduced this statement in her book *Wrappings: Essays on Feminism, Art, and the Martial Arts* (New York: TSL Press, 1984).

30. Harmony Hammond, press release for *A Lesbian Show*, 1978.

31. One review reproduced, first published in 1977 in *Women Artists Newsletter*, discusses Lucy Lippard's book *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (1976).

32. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

33. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

34. In this volume, see Harmony Hammond, book review, "*The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution*, [edited] by Edwin L. Wade," *Southwest Contemporary Arts* 11, no. 2 (1987): 57–59; and Harmony Hammond, book review, "*Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* by Hayden Herrera," *13th Moon* 8, nos. 1 and 2 (1984): 218–26. In 1985, Hammond cocurated, with Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, the first national survey of contemporary Native American women artists, *Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage*, at the gallery of the American Indian Community House, New York. The exhibition traveled to eight additional venues across the country by the end of 1986.

35. Harmony Hammond, interview with Neery Melkonian, *THE Magazine*, October 1992, 12.

36. See Lucy Lippard, *Down Country: The Tano of the Galisteo Basin, 1250–1782* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2010).

37. Harmony Hammond, *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (New York: Rizzoli, 2000).

38. Hammond, interview by Bryan-Wilson.

39. See, in this volume, Harmony Hammond, "Against Cultural Amnesia," *Art Papers*, November 1994, 9–11.

40. In 2016, the Getty Research Institute announced the acquisition of Hammond's archive.

41. Harmony Hammond, "Affirming the Existence of the World of Images," in *Wrappings: Essays on Feminism, Art, and the Martial Arts* (New York: TSL Press, 1984), 109–10.

42. Hammond, "Harmony Hammond's Ongoing Revolution."

43. Harmony Hammond, email message to author, November 1, 2023.