PUNCH POURIN' AND PLATE PASSIN': THE CHANGING DOMESTIC ROLES OF AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN

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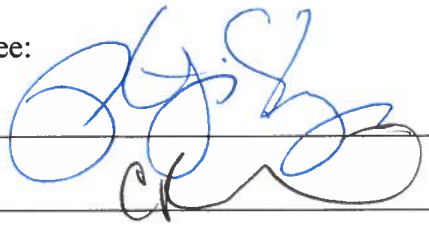

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Corcoran College of Art and Design

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Corcoran College of Art + Design

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my loving mother and grandmother, Nancy “Beth” Albin-Knabel and Nancy Layne-Albin, whom inspired this project and encouraged my research and design.

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ABSTRACT

PUNCH POURIN' AND PLATE PASSIN': THE CHANGING DOMESTIC ROLES OF AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN

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Corcoran College of Art + Design, 2013

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This thesis research document is one of two documents used to describe a conceptual exhibition design. This exhibit at The National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. shows women at the vanguard of the changing domestic environment; creatively contributing to the rapid domestic transformations occurring in the 20th century. This exhibit will show women and use the home as a lenses to both observe and document greater social change. Included are historic and contemporary objects, which represent products used in a domestic setting. Separate didactic and immersive spaces will be created to teach and show visitors a range from the banalities to the urgent actualities of domestic life in the last half of the 20th century.

CHAPTER 1: TITLE CHOICE RATIONAL

Punch Pourin' and Plate Passin': The Changing Domestic Roles of American Middle Class Women was selected as a title to allude at the evolution of domestic training over time. The phrase, "Punch Pourin' and Plate Passin'" has a personal connection to my life. Being from the South, an expressed value is placed on the "proper" social etiquette and domestic skills. While understanding my upbringing as a social convention of location, I also acknowledge a change in the perceived value of certain skills and women's domestic roles over time.

CHAPTER 2: MISSION STATEMENT

Punch Pourin' and Plate Passin': The Changing Domestic Roles of American Middle Class Women illustrates the evolution of women's roles in domestic life from World War II to the present. By examining the marketing of domestic technology in contrast with contemporary domestic actualities a greater sociocultural context can be understood. By viewing the ongoing seminal changes to women's domestic lives intergenerational understanding and respect can be achieved.

CHAPTER 3: TEACHING POINTS AND TAKE-AWAY

TEACHING POINTS

- The visitor will learn about the post World War II redefinition of American middle class families and how this affected women and domestic life.
- By looking deeper into popular culture, the evolution of feminist ideas will be shown in context and application.
- By investigating how women viewed their own role in the home, accepted generational values will be explored.
- Visitors will learn about changes in women's education, social expectation, and domestic realities effecting home and community life.

AUDIENCE TAKE-AWAY

- The visitor will understand that domestic traditions, values, and education continue to change.
- That women, irrespective of generation, deal with issues regarding domestic change and family values.
- Pop-culture both influences and documents change in domestic expectations. While understanding that popular culture shaped the expectations of women in the domestic environment.

CHAPTER 4: EXHIBIT AUDIENCE

- The primary audience will be women, ages 18 to 80, because these women are members of the generations explored in this exhibition. By reaching out to intergenerational groups and those interested in women's and domestic issues, a broad based audience can be established and cultivated to ensure the exhibit's relevance and success.
- The exhibit's secondary audience will be the museum-going public The familiarity and approachability of the subject matter will allow for broad appeal. With the understanding that domestic roles continue to change, the visitor will experience this subject matter through the lens of American middle class women and understand a trend for the wider U.S. population

CHAPTER 5: EXHIBIT VENUE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

"The National Museum of Women in the Arts brings recognition to the achievements of women artists of all periods and nationalities by exhibiting, preserving, acquiring, and researching art by women and by teaching the public about their accomplishments."[1]

VENUE LOCATION

The exhibit, *Punch Pourin' and Plate Passin': The Changing Domestic Roles of American Middle Class Women,* will be located at The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) in the second floor temporary exhibition galleries. The NMWA desires to directly address gender imbalance in the presentation of art in the United States and abroad. This exhibit will take on issues of gender imbalance in the domestic sphere as well as demonstrate domestic change. This exhibit will speak to the evolution of domestic expectations and question the need for specific domestic skills. The exhibit's subject connects to this museum through its discussion and recognition of women's creative and enduring contribution to the domestic environment. While this exhibit does not specifically mention women as artists, its subject matter aligns with common themes in many of the featured works in the NMWA's permanent collection.

[1] National Museum of Women and the Arts, Date Accessed September 10, 2012. http://www.nmwa.org/about

VENUE DESCRIPTION

This NMWA is located in downtown Washington, D.C., at 1250 New York Avenue N.W. The NMWA occupies a palatial Renaissance Revival building that was formerly a Masonic Temple. Open from 10 am to 5pm Monday through Saturday and 12pm to 5pm on Sunday, everyday except for Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, the Museum has a small admission fee that can be waived. The NMWA was founded in 1981 as a private, non-profit museum. The current location on the corner of New York Avenue and 13th Street N.W. was purchased in 1983 the building was refurbished in accordance with the highest design, museum, and security standards. This location opened to the public in 1987 and won numerous architectural awards for its redesign. In total, this space is more than 78,000 square feet made up of permanent and temporary exhibition galleries, research and rental space, as well as storage, staff offices, and a public café. The second floor galleries are designed to be transformable space acting as a "black box" for design; often disconnecting exhibition content with the formal public space within the museum.[2]

[2] The second floor temporary exhibit galleries make up a total of 4,900 square feet of exhibit space with a maximum 11' ceiling height. The Far East galleries have a 10'-0" maximum ceiling height.

CHAPTER 6: EXHIBIT RESOURCES

The exhibit resources selected will be used to represent domestic norms and attitudes that personified the generations of the last half of the 20th century. Most of the objects are personal or household object and ephemera, including posters and advertisements. All objects will represent the specific generation's access and exposure to the marketing of domestic technology, goods and services. *Images* will be shown to the visitor in the form of original photographs, advertisements for domestic products, and wall graphics. The exhibit will feature *objects* in the form of period artifacts, such as new domestic tools, and *multi-media experiences* will show period and archival footage to illustrate each generation. A large portion of the collateral will be pulled from contemporary periodicals, magazines, and journal articles, citing the articles as content and theory, and the advertisements as consumer instruction. Interactives, infographics, and thematic spaces will be used in each section to compare and visually reinforce common themes of the domestic experience. In total the exhibit will have three sections, one for each of the three highlighted generations.

EXHIBIT SECTIONS:

Generation 1: The Greatest Generation
Born during 1925-1942, Getting married and starting families 1946-1964
Generation 2: The Baby Boomers
Born during 1946-1964, Getting married and starting families 1979- 1999
Generation 3: Gen Y
Born during 1983- 1999, Getting married and starting families 2003- present

CHAPTER 7: VISITOR EXPERIENCE NARRATIVE

The visitors of *Punch Pourin' and Plate Passin': The Changing Domestic Roles of American Middle Class Women* will enter a historic building in downtown D.C, upon entering the building they would need to go to the second floor gallery, which is accessible from the passenger elevator or the grand marble staircase. Once on the second floor, the visitor will encounter a domestic looking entry treatment. The visitor will pass through the 'front door' of a home; either through modern home entrance or a 1950s home, both entry treatment will be similar with only small details of color and home accessories being different at each entry. A large graphic three-dimensional title graphic will be on the perpendicular wall and a framed graphic will be on the entry table just inside the exhibition space. The exhibit will be divided into three main sections that represent specific generations of women; "the Greatest Generation", "the Baby Boomers", and "Gen Y". Each section will show examples of popular culture, through artifact collections, multi-media experiences, and graphic displays that speak the accepted norms of each of the three generations. By going through this exhibit the visitor will see the same types of objects repeated creating visual continuity and illustrating change, many of the objects will remain constant with the slight visual alterations that have occurred over time. The artifacts used will hopefully evoke a sense of nostalgia and personal memories connecting the visitors to the content of the exhibit through the sense

of familiarity. As the visitor transitions between generations they will be able to see the evolution of domestic images over time. In each generation the visitor will have an immersive space that will allow them the freedom to sit, talk, and create moments of intergenerational connection that can lead to understanding and respect.

CHAPTER 8: CONTENT INTRODUCTION

This exhibit will survey the changing domestic roles of women since the end of World War II. By surveying the domestic environment and chronicling how the female domestic persona has evolved intergenerational understanding and respect can be achieved. As June Cleaver in *Leave it to Beaver* represented the embodiment of a 1950s housewife, symbolizing a lifestyle to strive for in the postwar era.[3] *Modern Family* attempts to do the same by depicting contemporary domestic interactions that reflect a modern experiences and presents another version of "normalcy" encouraging acceptance of evolving domestic roles.[4] By using the marketing of domestic technology as documentation of the domestic experience women's roles within the home can be reassessed. The exhibit poses the questions: "How have women's domestic roles changed and why?" and "Are there some skills that are not being passed from generation to generation because they are considered obsolete or unimportant?"

DEFINING THE DOMESTIC

The term "domestic" and "home" will be used interchangeably. Focusing on the domestic environment as a common thread for education and reinforcement for society's values. By referring to the "domestic" or the "home", I refer to a greater emotional

[3] Billingsley, Barbara. *Leave it to Beaver*. TV sitcom. Created by Joe Connelly and Bob Mosher. 1957. CBS(1957)/ABC(1958-1963).
[4] Ed O'Neill. *Modern Family*. TV sitcom, mockumentary. Created by Lloyd, Christopher and Steven Levitan. 2009. ABC.

experience that is more then the walls that make up any physical building. I am concerned with the experience that happens away from the public domain.

Historically women have been seen as owners of the domestic environment because of their "presumed expertise in homemaking and child rearing."[5] Historian Many Beth Norton claims that the domestic is a "sphere that was wholly feminine."[6] By labeling the domestic environment as wholly feminine and women the keepers of this space, this created a social obligation in the West for women to be the primary caretakers of the home and the children establishing a social convention that would go unquestioned for centuries. Only recently did women question this Western social convention. Media and advertising in the 20th century have had an increasingly important role in reinforcing the legitimacy of women's choices as they claim additional responsibilities outside of the domestic sphere. This exhibit will isolate women to their duties within the home, but connect how women's activities outside the home effect what women are doing within the domestic environment.

FEMINISM AND GENDER ROLES

Sex and the Single Girl, Helen Gurley Brown's 1962 book and Betty Friedan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, called to the forefront of American middle-class women's consciousness the pressure to conform to traditional domestic roles. These books, in very different ways, called women to push back against the traditional gender roles that cast women as homemakers. While Brown wrote from personal experience, Friedan examined media and marketing of domestic products, calling into question the

[5] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979. Page 273
[6] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979. Page 273

rampant depiction of women in traditional sex roles. She argued that current media nurtured a narrow and servile image of women. These seminal texts ushered in the second wave of feminism, serving as the ethos for subsequent generations view of domesticity. Prior to these texts, the Victorian Cult of Domesticity codified women's roles by calling them to acts of piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness.

Until the 1960s, women had been excluded from many of the traditionally male jobs, including politics and economic development. Many feminist historians argue that the ridged social structure has loosened and begun to dissolve allowing women to obtain roles of power.[7] Through the last half of the 20th century we see the dissolution of ridged gender roles; first in literature and pop culture and then slowly adopted by society and individual family units. Post consumer adoptions, politics and the law begins to make policies in favor of generally accepted norms.[8] Women as active participants in 20th century history influenced both social reform and women's issues specifically, initially as grass roots members of the women's movement to pro-feminist ideas and legislation. Feminism and womanhood is woven into the complex fabric of class, religion, region, economic status, and race that defines the 20th century and the women examined as part of this exhibition.[9]

[7] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979. Page 142
[8] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979. Page 275
[9] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979.

CHAPTER 9: GENERATION 1 "THE GREATEST GENERATION"

This generation came of age around World War II (1939- 1945) experiencing the economic difficulties of the Great Depression and the loss of human life in the war's aftermath. Following these transformative events, America entered a time of economic prosperity, which included expanding technological advancement, and a significant revaluation of family values and domestic life. Tom Brokaw, in his book, *The Greatest Generation*, cites the men and women of this time as being members of "the greatest generation that any society has ever produced".[10] Brokaw praises these individuals specifically for being members of a generation that had "towering achievements and a modest demeanor, which was part of their formative years and modest upbringing."[11] Brokaw also cites this generation as being responsible for overseeing the American economy as it expanded to become the largest in the world with many of its members living through the turbulent 1960s when the Civil Rights movement and the controversy surrounding the Vietnam War tested the country's ability to adapt.[12] Additionally, many of this generation's members lived their final years in an age of rapidly advancing technology where personal computers and the Internet drastically changed how Americans communicated and generated commerce.[13]

[10] Brokaw, Tom. *The Greatest Generation*. New York: Random House, 2004.
[11] Brokaw, Tom. *The Greatest Generation*. New York: Random House, 2004.
[12] Brokaw, Tom. *The Greatest Generation*. New York: Random House, 2004.
[13] Brokaw, Tom. *The Greatest Generation*. New York: Random House, 2004.

Post World War II, America experienced a rise in marriage rates - men and women married young, got divorced less, and had more children. These trends led to tremendous growth in the domestic economy, promoting consumerist tendencies where new families filled their homes with new appliances and available consumer goods. Gender roles for this generation are termed as neo-Victorian by many historians because of the domestic fortification that occurred in reaction to the loss of human life during World War II and the perceived external threats of the Cold War (1947-1991), this made the idea of a husband at work and a wife at home with the children, extremely attractive.[14] The Victorian ideals about gender roles reinforced the 19th century construct, underscoring a Cult of Domesticity that was present until the eruption of counter culture by the Baby Boomers.[15] While scholarship points to these "neo-Victorian" ideas surrounding family values, it does not express marital diversity or domestic satisfaction; it simply points to a trend of family and self-preservation. For many white middle class women of this generation there was an expectation of marriage and family, pride and self-worth was to be derived from conformity to social norms and the cultivation of virtuous children.

Post World War II, the American economy grew exponentially, unemployment was down, consumer confidence was up, and the population was growing, much of this is

[14]Neo-Victorian values refer to the trend of domestic fortification practiced after World War II. Men and women often established individual nuclear families, removing themselves from the tradition of many generations living under one roof. After World War II the desired to protect the nuclear family unit because of the devastating effects of World War II and the perceived threat of The United States Cold War with Russia and Cuba threating nuclear disaster provided incentive for many to build both physical and emotional barriers.

[15] Ferguson, Marjorie. Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity. London: Heinemann, 1983.

credited to the 1944 G.I. Bill.[16] In response to the growing economy, American editorial advertisements "exhibited rampant stereotyping and gender bias throughout the 1950s, and the idea that a woman should live for her husband and family became a dominant image."[17] At the end of World War II, American retailers and advertisers began controlling the depiction of the home and the roles of women by molding advertisements to represent traditional Victorian like values. The early 1950s Advertisements often-targeted women, depicting them in the kitchen are conversing with children, serving dinner, cleaning, and otherwise promoting the joy of a clean home or the latest kitchen appliance.[18] Images with women as domestic consumers reinforced the traditional gender roles by assuring women via image that their domestic work was noble and worthwhile. By controlling the domestic environment, Americans advertisers were able to effectively suppress concern about Cold War threats on American soil.[19]

After the threats of the post war era were nullified and society moved on to focus on other cultural issues, the traditional, Victorian-like values, were slowly abandoned and replaced with some of the more progressing feminist values. Betty Freidan's work as author of *The Feminine Mystique* published in 1963 proposed the idea that magazines and

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[16] The G.I. Bill. (The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944) This Bill was commonly known as the G.I. Bill that provided a range of benefits to returning World War II veterans. Many of the G.I.'s were entitled to low cost mortgages, low interest federal loans for business, cash payment for tuition and living expenses to attend college, as well as unemployment benefits. To qualify for the benefits, you had to be on active duty for at least 90 days and not have been dishonorably discharged. By the end of the program in 1956, 2.2 million veterans used the G.I. Bills education benefits and an additional 6.6 million used at least one of the other benefits of the program. This was a large government benefits program that is generally credited as politically successful and also growing the domestic economy. [Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *The GI Bill: a new deal for veterans* (2009) p 118]

[17] Ellis, Kristina. Bodies of Thought, Sites of Anxiety: The Representation of the Female Body in Cosmopolitan Magazine During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Kansas City: University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2008.

[18] Scanlon, Jennifer. The Gender and the Consumer Culture. New York: NYU (New York University) Press, 2000.

[19] Ellis, Kristina. Bodies of Thought, Sites of Anxiety: The Representation of the Female Body in Cosmopolitan Magazine During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Kansas City: University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2008.

other media types most often depict women in traditional sex roles such as homemakers or models of domestic attractiveness and by doing this they cultivate and reinforce a narrow and servile image of women.[20] This passive, conforming, self-subordinate image of women inhibited the progress of the feminist agenda and the advancement of women's liberation.[21] Freidan's work punctuates the beginning of radical and progressive change for women and the domestic environment that have impacted the way subsequent generational groups relate to one another.

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES AND PERIODICALS

Articles and periodicals of the time point to the idea that women were passive and servile there was great pride and importance in the work they did on behalf of their families. Images of the 1950s and '60s showed servile women, however they pointed to the idea of domestic control utilizing the commonly held understanding that women were solely responsible for the home and the people within it.[22]

By the peak of the baby boom, magazines' reliance on credentials and professional knowledge had only increased, reflecting both the continued professionalization of the role of the homemaker and the nations rising faith and dependence on scientific and technology advancement in the domestic environment.[23] Until the middle of the 1960s women expected to devote their chief energies to housekeeping and the care of their children, just as men were expected to support them financially. While early on household tasks were not easily accomplished, but with

[20] Demarest, Jack, and Jeanette Garner. "The Representation of Women's Roles in Women's Magazines Over the Past 30 Years." *The Journal of Psychology* 126, no. 4 (1992): 357-369.
[21] Demarest, Jack, and Jeanette Garner. "The Representation of Women's Roles in Women's Magazines Over the Past 30 Years." *The Journal of Psychology* 126, no. 4 (1992): 357-369.
[22] Meyerowitz, Joanne. Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
[23] Walker, Nancy A. Shaping Our Mothers' World: American Women's Magazines. Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi, 2000.

technology the physical burden was gradually alleviated, however the nature of the tasks did not change. In theory domestic technology would allowed women to be more efficient and increasingly engage with leisure or things beyond the scope of the domestic environment.

In the 1950s *Ladies Home Journal* published on average 200 or more pagesin every monthly issue, however, by the middle of the 1960s the magazine had become progressively thinner showing physical effects of feminist theory. As a domestic advice magazine in the 1950s it hosted intellectual articles and technology segments engaging with the idea of efficient domestic technology and running the home as a business. During the 1960s the scholarly articles were replaced with a smattering of articles on fashion, cooking, dieting, and home-crafts. By the end of the 1960s *Ladies Home Journal* became as fad magazine that showed the latest trend, this was no longer a source for domestic advice and support. The transition from domestic advice magazine to fad magazine reflects the trend toward an increased consumer driven market and a de-emphasis on specific domestic skills driven by the second wave of feminism.

To argue in favor or domestic professionalization, Adlai Stevenson in 1956, spoke to Smith College graduates at their commencement ceremony, urging women to:

> Take up the banner of domesticity with pride. Once you wrote essays and poetry, Now it's the laundry list. Once you discussed art and philosophy until late in the night. Now you will be so tiered you will fall asleep as soon as the dishes are finished. But you can, as a woman, have an

> important political influence as a consumer and housewife influencing all of those under your direction.[24]

This idea represents not only pride in domestic work of the 1950s but also the concept of economic influence that women desired to claim. While women of this generation were not represented at high levels in the work force they were nonetheless controlling the direction of their individual homes economic power, acting as the primary contact for commerce related to domestic goods and services.

FEMINISM

At the end of the post war baby boom, feminist writers began to publish and disseminate crucial second wave feminist books. Seminal feminists Helen Gurley Brown (February 18, 1922 – August 13, 2012) and Betty Friedan (February 4, 1921 – February 4, 2006) published their initial works in the early 1960s, 1962 and 1963 respectively.[25] Brown's thesis in *Sex and the Single Girl* and Friedan's ideas in *The Feminine Mystique* sparked the beginning of the second wave of feminism. The popularity of these feminist titles among many women speaks to the interest in reassessing gender roles in the middle of the 1960s. As members of the Greatest Generation continued to leave college and get married many accepted their role as wife and mother attempted to mirror a June Cleaver persona in any number of ways. While members of the Greatest Generation passively absorbed the principals of the second wave, many younger Baby Boomer women actively applied principals of the second wave to their domestic life. After a decade of the

[24] May, Elaine Tyler, Pushing the Limits: American Women: 1940-1961. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Page 65.

[25] Helen Gurley Brown (February 18, 1922 – August 13, 2012) was an American author, publisher, and businesswoman. She was the editor-in-chief of *Cosmopolitan* magazine for 32 years. Betty Friedan (February 4, 1921 – February 4, 2006) was an American writer and feminist activist. These women are often cited as beginning the second wave of feminism.

undisturbed "Happy Homemaker" image women began to articulate new ways of evaluating self worth and family contribution.

In the wake of the second wave, media and advertising continued to bombard their audiences with an ideal of womanhood and what a "successful women" should strive to be, while the image began to receive a minor revamp, the underlying message of the images remained the same. In part feminist text of the '60s acknowledge television as a new medium and question the general message that is being disseminated. Betty Freidan, Author of *The Feminine Mystique*, states that: "Television, radio, and magazines bombarded their viewers with the assurance that the kitchen was their realm and their family was the way to fulfillment."[26] In her text, Freidan continually questions this norm. Later historian, Susan Douglas asserts that, television as a medium perhaps made it easiest to transmit the housewife stereotype across the nation. Rather than simply suggesting characteristics of a housewife like in print advertisements, commercials showed the viewing public a housewife in action.[27] This made the spread of ideas quicker and added layers of complexity to the idea of the domestic as singularly feminine. While the American public negotiated a place for feminist idea and imagery in its popular culture, the dominant "Happy Homemaker" continued to be used.

In response to the more radical feminist ideas of the mid 1960s, other women like Catherine Beecher countered with ideas on "domestic feminism" in her book *American Women's Home,* a comprehensive book on household advice.[28] In her writing, Beecher speaks about the special role of women in American society based on their domestic

[26] Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963.
[27] Douglas, Susan. Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female with the Mass Media. New York: Random House, 1994.
[28] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979.

identity.[29] Instead of arguing that women should seek out and defy traditional gender roles, she stressed that women should develop their own inherent capacities and abilities and affect change within their already defined feminine space.[30]

While the leadership of the 1960s feminist movement was divided and uncertain about what feminism even meant and where it fit in society; women's domestic patterns marched on, with media and advertising targeting the female domestic experience '50s and '60s receiving only minor alterations during that time. After only a few years, feminism could not be defined in any satisfactory way causing the louder more radical interpretations to brand the movement. While most feminist were pointing out that older 19th century ideals conflicted with modern family and economic structures, calling for the reassessment of gender roles encouraging women to take action and advocate for their own well being, weather social, political, or economic. Some of the new structures and models that were suggested by feminist thinkers, were not generally accepted by the Greatest Generation as a mark of their education and formative training, however, members of the Baby Boomers were happy to accept and apply some of the more radical models proposed. The Greatest Generation did not readily accept many of the feminist thinkers ideas because they lacked economic solutions for an already established white middle class.

As women of this generation began questioning the "happy homemaker" stereotype – women subtly took on roles in groups like the PTA, Girl Scouts, Junior League, Women's Clubs, and Church Organizations; these types of community

[29] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979.
[30] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979.

involvement were considered acceptable activities for women because they did not disrupt power relationships within the home and fit the desired and praised attributes of 'proper' women.

While this generation was generally aware of feminist ideas with most acting as passive adaptor to new social norms, accepting and applying new principals but distancing themselves for straightforward activism. Even with major feminist text being published in the 1960s and the subsequent sexual revolution no substantial rise in the amount of women in the workforce occurred until the middle of the 1970s; the percentage or women in the workforce fluctuating between 21% - 24% for much of the '60s and early '70s.[31] This activism leads to women's reassessment of marriage and family indicating the trend toward shared domestic responsibilities punctuating the transition between the Greatest Generation and The Baby Boomers.[32]

[31] The Sexual Revolution is sited as a social movement that challenged traditional codes of behavior related to sexuality. Sexual Liberation generally occurring in the United Stated during 1960- 1980s; this movement included increased acceptance of sex outside of traditional heterosexual, monogamous relationships (primarily marriage), the use of contraception, the pill and the normalization of alternative forms of sexuality were more publicized. The legalization of Abortion in Roe vs. Wade is often counted as the seminal court decision in the sexual liberation and the empowerment of women to take control of their bodies.

[32] Berkin, Carol Ruth, and Mary Beth Norton. *Women of America: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979.

CHAPTER 10: GENERATION 2 "THE BABY BOOMERS

For approximately 15 years following World War II, the United States population grew at a staggering rate; seventy-six million American children were born between 1945 and 1964, defining the United States Baby Boom. The Baby Boomers generally are associated with a rejection or redefinition of traditional values.[33] Characteristically, the Baby Boomers grew up and genuinely expecting the world to improve.[34] Many members of this generation viewed their social and political actions as an integral part of the forward momentum in the social improvement and equality they desired.[35] In comparison to prior generations, the Baby Boomers received better education, and earned more college and graduate degrees than any generation before. While being privileged to earn high levels of education, many members also achieved unprecedented levels of income; therefore they could reap the benefits of abundant levels of consumer goods and social programs engaging the ideas and values of a consumerist economy even further.

The Baby Boomers furthered American consumerism, growing up where they were empowered consumers. The generation prior, their parents, the Greatest Generation, passively observed and documented some of the greatest social changes of the 20th

[33] Owram, Doug, *Born at the Right Time*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, page x, 1997.
[34] Jones, Landon, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation*, New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan. 1980.
[35] Owram, Doug, *Born at the Right Time*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, page. x. 1997.

Century.[36] The Baby Boomers were active participants in many social and political movements.[37] By taking on and challenging the status quo the Baby Boomers redefined accepted social norms by empowering women and daring them to impact the country outside of the domestic environment.

After World War II, approximately one in five American women worked outside of the home and by 1980, it grew to three in five.[38] These material changes in many women's lives along with the attitude changes in society are evidence of the women's liberation movement and the transformation of the traditional female consumer. During the 1960s, the pervading social dialogue encouraged women to challenge the "Happy Homemaker" image and moved from an individual centered view with strict gender roles to a "team work" approach to domestic tasks.

As the social trend argued for women to use their education outside the domestic environment, the prevalence of programs that supported women as they learned domestic skills and prepared themselves for marriage and family life did not decrease in a significant way. The badge of honor that many Baby Boomer women took on was to be well-educated women that engaged both the professional and domestic spheres

[36] The Baby Boomers were both participant and beneficiaries of landmark legislation. Title IX Legislation (1972), ensuring that women received equal access and funding to all education and sports programs offered in schools. This landmark case was subsequently argued and confirmed in six court cases across the United States Title IX: (Ensures that young women and girls have equal access and funding to all academic and athletic programs. Title IX is a portion of the Education Amendments of 1972, Public Law No. 92-318, 86 Stat. 235 (June 23, 1972), codified at 20 Unites States. sections 1681 through 1688, United States. Title IX Court Cases (1972): Cannon vs. University of Chicago, Grove City College vs. Bell, Franklin vs. Gwinnett County Public Schools, Gebser vs. Lago Vista Independent School District, Davis vs. Monroe County Board of Education, Jackson vs. Birmingham Board of Education.

[37] In 1973, Roe vs. Wade was the supreme courts landmark decision, ruling on the legality of abortion. The court ruled in the favor of women's right to choose, giving legal credence to many of the principals' put forth by feminist a decade earlier.

[38] McCracken, Ellen. *Decoding Women's Magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

simultaneously. As the Baby Boomers came of age they refused this notion that their personal value was secondary to that of their male counterparts. As part of an increasing dominate counterculture women began to challenge school curriculum and methodology in an attempt to improve vocational training to level the job playing field between the sexes.[39]

Beginning in the 1980s, magazines addressing women as principally homemakers receded in popularity.[40] As women's presence in the work force increased, these women began to create a new market for consumer goods, and the need for professional and special interest periodicals spiked.[41] Many of the traditional domestic advice magazines added professional advice sections, and the creation of new professional periodicals were born. Media and especially women's magazines picked up on this new market and began targeting what had traditionally been male dominated purchases such as cars, liquors, insurance, travel, and financial services to women.[42]

In contrast to the depiction of women of the previous generation, the Greatest Generation, the Baby Boomers slowly moved away for the docile domestic image of women. A review of television media from 1953-1978 reveals that women were most often cast in roles of mother, homemaker, and nurturer of men. Until the mid 1970s television and film repeatedly cast female characters in a stereotypical way defining them by their marital status. Newspapers and magazines have been more reflective of the changing images of women, this is not to say that television does not show women as

[39] May, Elaine Tyler, Pushing the Limits: American Women: 1940-1961. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
[40] McCracken, Ellen. *Decoding Women's Magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
[41] McCracken, Ellen. *Decoding Women's Magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
[42] McCracken, Ellen. *Decoding Women's Magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

active members outside of the domestic environment, but newspapers and magazines are the first to show women in assertive position reflecting the transition from the valued housewife to the more complex empowered "I Can Do It All" Baby Boomer. Scholars Jack, Demarest and Jeanette Garner surveyed *The New York Times* and the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* finding that there was an increase in pro-feminist stories and content that directly engaged with issued of women's careers since 1977.[43] This further demonstrates that women of the Baby Boomer generation were simultaneously engaging both the professional and domestic spheres.

Women's magazines and literature showed a more dramatic change after the mid 1960s; reflecting both women's personal interests and national attitudes. This places women's magazines at the vanguard of domestic change.

From 1954 to 1962 the theme of marriage and family and the efficient homemaker accounted for 70% of the articles in *Ladies Home Journal* and 66% of the articles in *Good Housekeeping*.[44] Between 1964 – 1972 the amount of homemaker imagery dropped 61% in both magazines and from 1974 -1982 only 58% of the articles and images in these magazines reflected the happy homemaker theme.[45] While the content in women's magazines about marriage and family dropped 12% over a 28 year period political and social awareness themes increased from 3% of *Ladies Home Journal*

[43] Demarest, Jack, and Jeanette Garner. "The Representation of Women's Roles in Women's Magazines Over the Past 30 Years." *The Journal of Phycology* 126, no. 4 (1992): 357-369. (Page 359)
[44] Demarest, Jack, and Jeanette Garner. "The Representation of Women's Roles in Women's Magazines Over the Past 30 Years." *The Journal of Phycology* 126, no. 4 (1992): 357-369. (Page 360)
[45] Demarest, Jack, and Jeanette Garner. "The Representation of Women's Roles in Women's Magazines Over the Past 30 Years." *The Journal of Phycology* 126, no. 4 (1992): 357-369. (page 361)

in 1954 to 10% in 1972 and to 18% to the total coverage between 1974 -1982.[46] *Good Housekeeping* mirrored this trend increasing from 2% to 10.5% during this same period. These facts address a substantial shift in the relationship between women and the domestic environment and conversely their relationship to the greater culture. These facts reveal a slow but steady increase in feminist themes and a decline in traditional themes of showing women as mother and homemaker.[47] These facts suggests that women's magazines in general have served to mirror societal change rather than cause it, however, feminist thinkers and news stories have served to advance the position and strength of the women's movement that actively engaged many members of the Baby Boomer generation.

Nancy A. Walker's analysis of a wide range of magazines from the mid 20th century reveals their depiction of a broader, fuller image of womanhood that reflects contemporary concerns.[48] In her book *Shaping Our Mothers World* she examines *Good Housekeeping*, *Vogue, Mademoiselle, Redbook*, and notes a reflection of complex debates about the nature of domestic life, she perceives editorial policies that mixed the banalities with urgent actualities. Rather than making isolated decisions about content, editors interacted with advertising agencies, with manufacturers of products, with experts in such fields as nutrition, medicine, technology, and childcare, and with the preferences and values of their readers.[49] Even as contemporary magazine ads continued to promoted a

[46] Demarest, Jack, and Jeanette Garner. "The Representation of Women's Roles in Women's Magazines Over the Past 30 Years." *The Journal of Phycology* 126, no. 4 (1992): 357-369. (page 361)
[47] Demarest, Jack, and Jeanette Garner. "The Representation of Women's Roles in Women's Magazines Over the Past 30 Years." *The Journal of Phycology* 126, no. 4 (1992): 357-369. (page 363)
[48] Walker, Nancy A. Shaping Our Mothers' World: American Women's Magazines. Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi, 2000.
[49] Walker, Nancy A. Shaping Our Mothers' World: American Women's Magazines. Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi, 2000.

white, suburban, middle-class ideal, they increasingly began to revealed a society that was economically and ethnically diverse. Walker argues persuasively that contradictory messages were a reflection of complex cultural values and the on going debate in the midst of rapid social change.[50]

The Baby Boomers applied the principals of feminism and aggressively perused professional responsibilities however they have been disproportionally able to negotiate for a change in the domestic identity and responsibility. The Baby Boomers paved the way for women to take on professional roles, this tested the stable domestic unit reinforced by the prior generation and encouraged many Americans to consider the trend of shared domestic responsibility that reflected the individuals that resided in the home.

[50] Walker, Nancy A. Shaping Our Mothers' World: American Women's Magazines. Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi, 2000.

CHAPTER 11: GENERATION 3 "GEN Y"

From 1983 until 2000, the millennia's, better known as Gen Y were born to the prosperous Baby Boomers and Gen X'ers. Again the United States saw a tremendous growth in population; approximately seventy-five million American children were born between 1983 and 2000, currently Gen Y'ers making up about 30% of the domestic consumer market. Gen Y is generally associated with a move toward individual expression, the rejection of social convention, and a general democratic view of the world. William A. Draves and Julie Coates, authors of *Nine Shift: Work, Life and Education in the 21st Century*, write that: "Gen Y have a distinctly different behaviors from prior generations, values and attitudes."[51] Gen Y's behaviors are largely in response to the social gains of their parents generations and in the increasingly rapid spread of news and information through the internet.

The women of Gen Y today proudly bake meals based on recipes that their mothers and grandmothers used, but they are doing it in a unique way. Gen Y's have created homes that reflects them as an individual. The desire for the uniformity of the Greatest Generation has fallen away and the obsession with "Having it All" proved futile for the Baby Boomers, the women of Gen Y endeavored to create a place that reflects their personal desires and redefines what it means to "Have it All". Some women today

[51] Draves, William A., and Julie Coates. *Nine Shift: Work, Life and Education in the 21st Century*. River Falls, WI: LERN, 2004.

admire the things that "the traditional housewife" did for her family. Still others want the "total" package. The Baby Boomers spent the 80's and 90's trying to "Do it All". Now Gen Y reaps the benefits of the prior generations efforts and seeks a new definition of the ideal domestic lifestyle.

Categorically "Gen Y" wants to define their home lives as individuals and have the home reflect who they are a people. The prior generations had conquered the so-called domestic challenges; the battle against women being confined to the home was perceived to be over. While the battle for legal equality was mitigated, the struggle for work/life balance continues. With seemingly endless options to define the domestic as your own, "Gen Y" is faced with the challenge of choice, making it evermore crucial for members of "Gen Y" to be an informed consumer. As member of "Gen Y" establish their own homes, domestic prowess and specific domestic skills are categorically less essential, economic marketability and domestic contribution are considered of the utmost importance. As of 2010, 47 percent of the total United States labor force was female. Of the 66 million women employed in the United States 73 percent worked full-time, while 27 percent worked on a part-time basis.[52]

As Gen Y as gained economic buying power they demanded that the media represent their interests. As a result we see a dramatic increase in special interest publication and the creation of new television networks that reflect their niche audience and speak the Gen Y's desire for individuality. As an established precedent, books and other print media are the first to promote the more radical popular culture ideas, however

[52] United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, January, 2010 Annual Averages, Web site http://www.bls.gov/opub/ee/empearn201101.pdf and the *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2009, Web site http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/11/art3full.pdf.

Gen Y's use of the Internet and social media has drastically altered how news is shared and how perceptions of the domestic are created. The rapid rate of change and personal influence that dominates the dialogue of Gen Y shapes the domestic expectations and drives the rhetoric surrounding the direction of women and their role in the home.

Allison Pearson's, 2003, feminist novel, *I Don't Know How She Does It,* dramatizes the dilemma of working motherhood.[53] The novel and subsequent film, starring Sarah Jessica Parker presents this issue as a comedy about the domestic and the turmoil of parenthood in the 21st century. The main character, Kate Reddy, a hedge-fund manager and mother of two juggles the demands of her career with the difficulties of also balancing time with her husband and children. The 2003 novel and 2011 film captures the guilty secret lives of working women while attempting to reconcile the two passions, work and motherhood, that divide the contemporary lives of so many American middle class women. The combination of novel and film underscore the idea that a work life balance is something that is constantly present for Gen Y'ers and assess that each person endeavors to create their own version of the domestic ideal.

In Judith Warner's, 2006 book, *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety* she argues that the gains of 1960s and '70s feminism are no match for the frenzied perfectionism of contemporary American parenting.[54] "In the absence of any meaningful family policies, that support child- care, or educational provisions, martyrdom appears to be to only feasible model for successful maternity – with

[53] Pearson, Allison. *I Don't Know How She Does It: The Life of Kate Ready, Working Mother*. New York: Random House Publishing, 2003.
[54] Warner, Judith. *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2006.

destructive consequences for both mothers and children."[55] In the book, Warner compares her current lifestyle with her situation and experience of raising her two children in France. Warner finds American "Hyper-Parenting" absurd but deeply engrained within the culture.[56] She argues that this method of parenting places enormous responsibilities on middle class families and neglects the arena of public policy. She is less concerned with sexual politics and feminism, but urges American families to make a case for a more socially integrated system of parenthood that would support working families and mothers.[57]

In the introduction to Warner's book she writes "…I tell my girls this (in so many words) all the time…I hope [they] will never say that I lied to them: 'I hope they, too, will grow up believing in that most American of dreams. And that society will come together to make it a reality.'"[58] This idea presents a direct connecting to the ideas and values of the Baby Boomer generation and she as a mother is perpetuating this idea with her children. While the idea that society will continually getting better with each generation, has all but collapsed in modern dialogue, the idea is still espoused and perpetuated by members of the generation that created it. While "Gen Y" and the subsequent "millennial" are far more skeptical than the Baby Boomers

The cover story for the July/August 2012 issue of *The Atlantic,* "Why Women Still Can't Have It All," the author, Anne-Marie Slaughter, writes from personal

[55] Book Review by *The New Yorker* on Judith Warner's. *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2006.
[56] Book Review by *The New Yorker* on Judith Warner's. *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2006.
[57] Book Review by *The New Yorker* on Judith Warner's. *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2006.
[58] Warner, Judith. *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2006.

experience about the reasons women struggle with juggle both the demands of a high-powered job and being fully present as a parent. Slaughter, a tenured professor at Princeton, accepted an appointment as the Director of Policy Planning at the State Department under Hillary Rodham Clinton from 2009 to 2011. While serving her appointment she realized that the flexibility offered in academia was indispensible to her ability to balance work and family demands. Slaughter asserts that it is most beneficial for employers to offer flexibility to staff to attract and retain talent with the workforce. Her story addresses the struggles that middle class women face every day when trying to balance work and home life. She cites the America's economy and society as generally unsupportive of a middle class lifestyle that seeks to meet the demands of both a work and home life. After two years in Washington D.C. doing work she loved, she returned to academia at Princeton University, not because she didn't want to stay in public service, but because "juggling high-level government work with the needs of two teenage boys was not possible."[59] Slaughter acknowledges that while she has a great and willing partner at home in her husband, her desire to be their for her children could not be over taken by her desire to embody the values of second and third wave feminism. This type of story is typical of many Gen Y women, they want to excel as active participants in the work force but they also desire to participate in the domestic. Often the profession that women of Gen Y choose dictates how they engage with the domestic sphere.

On June 25, 2012 National Public Radio's (NPR) daily talk show host Diane Rehm interviewed four different women who work in different organization to advocate

[59] Dell'antonia, KJ. "Talking About Why Women Can't Have It All." *The New York Times*, June 21, 2012.

for family and women's issues.[60] These women all approached the issue of "balancing career and family" from different perspectives, working for different organizations and being at different life stages, but all came to the same conclusion; that issues that primarily effected just women 20 to 30 years ago is now a family issue that has reverberating impacts throughout the greater American society.[61]

Guest, Judith Warner, author of *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety* argues that this problem applies to a whole generation (Gen Y); they are looking at their lives and really thinking they have hit a wall, and they are wondering what is wrong with them. Women of Gen Y are blaming themselves for their inability to successful balance their lives. Warner's argument rests on the idea that men and women's lives are converging, men and women are becoming more and more alike and now as the expectation of shared domestic duties is so prevalent women believe that this should not be an issues that they should have to constantly grapple with. She points out that historically women were at the vanguard of domestic and family issues, because they were the ones that controlled the domestic. As we move forward this is a whole society question that needs to address families and not only women.

The second guest Ellen Galinsky, Director of the Family and Work Institute and author of *The New Male Mystique*, agrees with Warner, but adds that men have been pulled into this very traditional argument and have not been socialized as to how to deal with the domestic pull. As an example she cites that 26% of women earn 10% or more

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[60] Rehm, Diane. *The Ongoing Struggle to Balance Career and Family*. June 25, 2012 Podcast. Commentary given by Judith Warner, Ellen Galinsky, Linda Pealman-Gordon, and Wendy Chunghoun. 2012. Washington D.C.: WAMU, American University, National Public Radio.

[61] Rehm, Diane. *The Ongoing Struggle to Balance Career and Family*. June 25, 2012 Podcast. Commentary given by Judith Warner, Ellen Galinsky, Linda Pealman-Gordon, and Wendy Chunghoun. 2012. Washington D.C.: WAMU, American University, National Public Radio.

than that of their male partners, for most men this is a new phonon.[62] In 2012, 10% of women earn more money than they partner. Education and income accompany workplace flexibility, which is what many modern women's rights advocate for.

The third guest, Linda Gordon, added to the conversation by asking the question "What does it mean to 'Have it All' today?". She argues that Gen Y women are looking at their life and asking the question if they are happy and satisfied women with their career and family then why are they blindsided by how hard it is to pull of balancing work and family.[63] She argues that the lynch pin of maintaining domestic happiness depended on flexible jobs and partners that are willing to help. For example she argues that: "middle class families are making rational choices about how they divide up paid leave and sick time, but if both partners do not have the same benefits one partner is force to bear the burden of child care, disproportionally effecting work performance.

The fourth guest, Wendy Calhoun, of Family Values at Work, cites that:

> there are very few choices, 2/3 of all mom's are either primary or co bread winners for their households. This is vastly different than even a generation ago, women are half of the workforce today. From working moms and dads what we hear everyday is that they are struggling to be a good parent and a good employee. That is not a good choice that is not a fair choice.[64]

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[62] Aumann, Kerstin, Ellen Galinsky, and Kenneth Matos. "The New Male Mystique: National Study of the Changing Workforce." *Families and Work Institute* (2011).

[63] Rehm, Diane. *The Ongoing Struggle to Balance Career and Family*. June 25, 2012 Podcast. Commentary given by Judith Warner, Ellen Galinsky, Linda Pealman-Gordon, and Wendy Chunghoun. 2012. Washington D.C.: WAMU, American University, National Public Radio.

[64] Rehm, Diane. *The Ongoing Struggle to Balance Career and Family*. June 25, 2012 Podcast. Commentary given by Judith Warner, Ellen Galinsky, Linda Pealman-Gordon, and Wendy Chunghoun. 2012. Washington D.C.: WAMU, American University, National Public Radio.

Arguing work and family issues are not about commitment and ambition but public policy. Saying the fear of having it all is driven by the fear of "Can I Loose it All?" Both women and men continue to be pulled when spending time with family or putting in long hours with you work. She says that: "You have to give yourself permission to spend time with you family and let yourself have it all in different ways at different times[65]

The domestic challenges that women of Gen Y face are not new, the Baby Boomers began the quest to simultaneously engage both the professional and the domestic sphere simultaneously. Gen Y'ers grew up seeing their mothers actively participating in the professional world reinforcing the idea that economic viability was essential to the support of the domestic environment. The Baby Boomers generally were interested in female quality and its shift in the domestic, countering the Happy Homemaker image of the Greatest Generation. As choice was given to define Gen Y, they reaps the benefits of the prior generations efforts to equalize the professional sphere and still left to grape with the struggles of the domestic. Gen Y engage various forms of media and advertising to present versions of domestic normalcy but the varied consumer market does allow for commonalities to be observed like generations before.

[65] Rehm, Diane. *The Ongoing Struggle to Balance Career and Family*. June 25, 2012 Podcast. Commentary given by Judith Warner, Ellen Galinski, Linda Pealman-Gordon, and Wendy Chunghoun. 2012. Washington D.C.: WAMU, American University, National Public Radio.

Chapter 12: Conclusion

Since World War II the image of women and domesticity has changed showing the evolution of women from the Happy Homemaker of the 1950 to the empowered feminist leading both the home and the professional field. The second wave of feminism and the creation of targeted media and periodicals of the 1970s encouraged this transition making way for Gen Y to define the current home by picking and choosing domestic traditions in order to create an experience that represented them as individuals. Since World War II the actions and attitudes of domesticity have evolved due to idea present in popular culture, available technology. As the case studies represent examples of the given generations they can illustrate accepted norms and acknowledge the changing common experience between generations.

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APPENDIX

Thesis Defense Presentation Talk; May 5, 2013, Corcoran College of Art + Design

Slide 1:

Hello All,

My Name is Lauren Knabel, this afternoon I will be talking with you about my thesis exhibition, entitled PUNCH POURIN' AND PLATE PASSIN': THE CHANGING DOMESTIC ROLES OF AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN. This exhibition design exercise is the culmination of 11 months of research and analysis; thinking, and communicating - about at topic that has become near and dear to my heart.

Do any of you do things that would make you mother cringe, yeah, me neither. I mean I always have my nails done and dishes washed, when I leave the house. NOT. To MY mother these things are essential to running a home, personally, I can't even fold a fitted sheet much less keep up with my endless dished or the other mundane domestic tasks that seem to plague my life. However, my mother's hang-up about leaving the house with my nails painted has seeped in.

Slide 2:

The desire to peruse this topic for my thesis exhibition comes from my love of my family and how that has shaped who I am today. PUNCH POURIN' AND PLATE PASSIN': is an expression that mother says, to me this recalls her southern sensibilities, sense of femininity and womanhood, her perceived duty to home, and her connection with her own upbringing. This exhibition examines women and family, visual culture and the home, and attempts to create spaces where generations of women are free to talk about their personal domestic experience. This exhibit draws on both visual culture to express the domestic environment and scholarly accounts of domestic actualities effecting women and the domestic environment after the conclusion of WWII

Slide 3:

My aims for this exhibition are for the visitors to learn about the dramatic shifts in domestic life in the last half of the 20th century and into the present, presenting opportunities for the visitor to understand the banalities and urgent actualities that arose in the dynamic nuclease that we call the home. Material and popular culture elements will be used to illustrate these points. My hope is that the visitors take away a sense of understanding that domestic values, traditions continue to change, all the while engaging with the same elements that have be present in the home since the beginning. By understanding both the consistency of the home and its dramatic shifts I hope to *cultivate intergenerational understanding and respect*.

Slide 4:

My primary audience will be women, ages 18-80, these are the very women who will be shown in the artifacts used in the exhibition. My venue already has a large established base of female visitors.

My secondary audience is the museum going public – I want this exhibit to appeal to everyone, this exhibit has something that everyone can relate to

Slide 5:

The venue that I have selected is The National Museum of Women in the Arts, I have selected this location for is central DC location, its existing broad base of female visitors, and its public programming possibilities.

Slide 6:

Shown here is my concept relationship diagram. This shows how I have chosen to divide up my exhibit content. Through my research emerged 3 distinct generational groups with more or less similar characteristics. Gender roles/feminism/and duty to home vacillated in and between these generations, but the home and its duties remained constant. I found the GREATEST GENERATIONS emerged in the wake of WW2, these men and women were the parents to the BABY BOOMERS. The BABY BOOMERS begat the GEN X'S AND Y'S. I have grouped my content in this way based on time and generation that it was intended to affect. Generally speaking, each generation has an icon: a symbol for the domestic arena for the greatest generation this was the HAPPY HOMEMAKER or THE MS. AMERICA image. For the baby boomers, this was the I CAN DO IT ALL MOM/THE SOCCER MOM. For Gen X and Y, it lacks such a clear singular image to define the generations, but this lack of ideals and specific images created what I am terming as THE INDIVIDUAL, someone that is making choices about their home and sharing the domestic responsibilities with their partner.

Slide 7:

Shown here are some of my initial and exploratory digital sketches of my exhibit content fitting with into the NMWA space.

Slide 8:

I ended up selected concept #3, utilizing the dual entry gallery to my advantage while accommodating for ADA.

Slide 9:

Shown in the next 3 slides is the visitors route to my exhibition space on the 2nd floor temporary exhibition space. The visitor will enter from the main entry on NY Ave and either proceeds up the mezzanine steps or take the elevator to the 2nd floor.

Slide 10:

If the visitor takes the steps, they will first reach the mezzanine level, here on this level are highlights from the permanent collection and the museum café. The café will utilized for exhibit programming.

Slide 11:

Once on the second floor the visitor will get the change to go to my exhibition. If the visitor takes the elevator, they can enter through the west entry and proceed through they exhibit; if the visitor comes via the grand stair way, I recommend this, it really is beautiful, the visitor will enter via the east entry way.

Slide 12:

Here on screen is more information about my conceptions of space and visitor experience utilizing my dual entry space. Irrespective of entry point the visitor will be meet with a basic introduction of the generation they are entering into and a visual understanding of domestic space. From there text panels will tell the visitor about keep hallmarks of the generation and show an immersive space that the visitor will be encouraged to interact with and start those discussions about intergenerational understanding and respect.

Slide 13:

Shown here is a flattened elevation of the west entry treatment that is accessible first via the elevator. (this is ADA compliant.) My design intention here is that many older audience members may need to utilize the ADA entrance, this will have them experience the exhibit via reverse chronology.

Slide 14:

Shown here is a rendering of this entry.

Slide 15:

Shown here is a flattened elevation of the east entry treatment. This is accessible via the grad stair way. My design intention here is for younger able bodies people to enter this way and experience the exhibit in a chronological order starting with the home at the conclusion of WW2.

Slide 16:

Shown here is a rendering of this entry

Slide 17:

Shown here is the first didactic wall in the Greatest Generation gallery. Here is the first major section text panel and large graphic image of the iconic Rosie the riveter vs. the Ms. American Image that rose in popularity after the conclusion of WWII and skyrockets in popularity during the COLD WAR.

Slide 18:

Shown here are 3 iconic dress styles that were seen as appropriate and idea for women of the time. Fashion and style of the cold war era was not as of today, you were not accessed on originality, fashion and style was more a social convention and the correct application of clothing was considered part of being a “proper” women and wife.

Slide 19:

Shown here is a rendering of this initial discussion of about the home and domestic fashions.

Slide 20:

As shown in the last rendering there is a center dividing wall in the first gallery, the front and back of this wall utilizes didactic media and period/archival footage to show visitors the HAPPY HOMEMAKER image and period TV ads about all the new home gadgets that were flooding the consumer market in the post war economy.

Slide 21:

Shown here is a section of the space if the visitor is standing outside of the didactic space and getting vistas into the immersive home and domestic spaces that the exhibition features so prominently.

Slide 22:

Shown here is an elevation of the far east wall of my exhibition. This wall features an exhibition case that features house hold objects that will hopefully spark nostalgic moments with visitors and here they will have space to sit and think, reflect, and share stories.

Slide 23:

Shown here is a detailed elevation of the immersive kitchen space, this is typical for all generations. In this section all lower cabinets are operable and will have prop period specific objects in them that the visitors can touch, hold and play with, again, I am going for the nostalgia hot spot.
Slide 24:

Show here is a detail elevation of the west wall of gallery 1, this again shows props on the counters for the visitors to experience as well as bits of didactic information showcased on the fridge giving information about family life during this time.
After generation 1, the visitor can walk into gallery 2; this gallery highlights the prolific baby boomers and the effects of feminism.

Slide25:

Shown here is the first didactic wall, adjacent to the baby boomers home. This wall entitled WRITING FOR CHANGE highlights feminist writers and thinkers of the early 1960s. Perhaps what I was most struck by in my research was how radical these women were thought to be. Currently many of the ideas they initially put forward in these books have been adopted, many times in a much less radical way, but text such as “Sex and the Single Girl” by Helen Gurley Brown, and “The Feminine Mystique” by Betty Friedan we radical pieces of literature for their time, however, they have become seminal cornerstone for the later women’s movement.

Slide 26:

Shown here is another didactic wall in the baby boomer gallery, this wall highlights the strides of the women’s movement, women’s education, and workforce development. This didactic information why physically running adjacent to my created domestic space, in actuality, it ran adjacent to commonly held ideas of the time. Only by small strides, activist women, and supporting popular culture were women able to deconstruct the image of the happy homemaker and remake a modern women that represented their new more modern ideals.

Slide 27:

Shown here is a rendering of this didactic corner.

Slide 28:

As shown in the last rendering, small patrician walls divide the space, on this and my subsequent slide I have detailed those patrician walls. These walls highlight the changing face of one of American's most popular women's magazine, Cosmopolitan. The right elevation, is 1970s covers. The left is 1980s covers.

Slide 29:

Shown on the reverse of these patricians is description and information about legislation that reinforced the aims of the women's movement.

Slide 30:

Shown here are the front and reverse of another patrician wall, this wall's front, highlights the new icon of the BABY BOOMERS, *the woman than can do it all*. On the reverse is more domestic products and advertisements that were said to make the lives of the new working mother easier.

Slide 31:

Shown here is a section view of gallery 2; this shows the physical adjacency of the didactic space talking about feminist writers and thinks with the actual domestic environment. Again here visitors will be encouraged to sit, talk, and share experiences. Generally, the experience is the same for the rest of the exhibit, teaching about strives of feminism and the home – gallery 3 is devoted to the Gen Xs and Ys who experience the advent of the home office. This space is shown in detail in my model.

Slide 32:

Shown here are my title typography choices, I choose these for their connection with a retro and vintage feel and yet their connection with modern design and aesthetic.

Slide 33:

Shown here are my 3 main section labels. These feature a large graphic title and continuous body copy. The title I want to be you "road" maker, and the body copy to offer background information.

Slide 34:
Shown here are several examples of sub section panels that will offer more in-depth information to visitors about the objects and time period that they are experiencing.

Slide 35:

Throughout the exhibit I will use strong graphic icons to make the artifacts

Slide 36:

Shown here is potential idea for exterior signage - I hope that it will be an attention grabber for those that are traveling of 13th street.

Slide 37:

I could spend all day on this slide, telling you the in's and out of programming and educational opportunities that I have thought about for this exhibition, however, I have tried to distill and organize my thoughts for you in the form of a programming matrix. This shows the potential programming for this exhibit, the possible location for the program and the possibility for the incorporation of digital media.

Slide 38:

Shown here are the museums known digital media outlets, This exhibition has the mission to engage intergenerational groups, by using the existing outlets and employing other available outlets a connection amongst generations is possible.

Slide 39:

I would like to end with a quote.

Slide 40 and 41: Thank you!