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Mayfield Students Learn Modern Art History from Two Pioneers

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The Mayfield Senior School's Student Arts Council hosted the inaugural event in their new Speaker Series, featuring artists Maria Karras and Ann Gauldin, who were pioneers of the feminist art movement in Southern California, in February.

Karras (mother of Zoe Demos '12) and Gauldin addressed a group of Conservatory students, Women's History students and members of the Diversity Committee about the feminist art movement of the 1970s, which, Karras says, "set off an explosion of art-making and analysis of what art is about that still reverberates in the art world today."

The presentation focused on the groundbreaking work of the feminist artists and art cooperatives that were centered in and around the Woman's Building in the 1970s and 1980s, through the eyes of two of the artists who were there at the beginning.

Karras, a photographer and author, and Gauldin discussed their early collaborations with other female artists during the height of the feminist movement and also highlighted the importance of the Woman's Building to the development of the Los Angeles art scene.

As described in Karras's book "The Woman's Building and Feminist Art Education 1973-1991: A Pictorial Herstory," the community featured artists, writers, scholars, and musicians including Judy Chicago, Rita Mae Brown, Angela Davis, Phranc, Kate Millet, Faith Wilding, Lily Tomlin, Lucy Lippard, Arlene Raven, and Sheila de Bretteville.

According to Karras, "The vision and leadership of these women provided the centrifugal force for the Woman's Building to become one of the major American centers for the activity of feminist art, music, writing, and graphics."

The topic was recently the subject of a dedicated exhibition at the Otis College of Art and Design, which was part of the "Pacific Standard Time" regional arts program currently being sponsored by the Getty (see below). Learn more about the exhibit, which ran from October

2011 through February 2012, at Otis College's Ben Maltz Gallery website or at the Pacific Standard Time website.

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