



"Feminist artist Judy Chicago explores themes of extinction at de Young exhibit"

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Judy Chicago interview with ABC7 News, 2021.

Feminist artist Judy Chicago has a new exhibit at the de Young museum – and it's challenging human responsibility in our planet's future.

SAN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- As an artist and feminist icon, Judy Chicago is famous for taking a match to social norms, challenging what she sees as the destructive force of an aggressive, often male-dominated, culture. Now, a new exhibit of her work at San Francisco's de Young museum is suggesting the fallout could threaten our entire planet.

"The mandate, that man is intended to dominate the landscape and be in charge of all living creatures," explains Chicago.

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As visitors enter, they're met with a series of works entitled: The End: A meditation on Death and Extinction. Walls are filled with haunting images of animals formed on glass, including sharks destroyed for their fins, and other species hunted or abused to the verge of extinction. The new series sits just a short distance from Chicago's earlier works like Power Play, and The Holocaust Project, where she explores the toxic quest for power that's brought so much suffering to the world. And she believes there's a link.

"Is destroying 100 million sharks a year not a form of genocide? And what can we expect from people who are expected to act so brutally?" she asks.

Viewers are left to find their own connections. But curator Claudia Schmuckli says it's also an opportunity to appreciate broad themes that run through Chicago's work.

"So social justice has been a driving force for Judy from the outset. But social justice always intertwined with environmental concerns," Schmuckli points out.

Chicago began the series on Death and Extinction with works confronting her own personal mortality. In the end, however, she says that exercise turned out to be less difficult than stepping back, and contemplating the potential death of a species.

"It was not as tough as the extinction section that took me two years. Because I came face to face with what we're doing to other creatures on the planet," she says.

And the eventual price our planet might pay.

The [Judy Chicago exhibit](#) runs through the first beginning of January.