



Science, Technology, and Utopias: Women Artists and Cold War America (Science and the Arts since 1750)

Christine Filippone

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The rise of big science, the space race, proxy wars, and cybernetics during the Cold War marked science and technology as critical sites of social and political power. Women artists, historically excluded from these domains, responded with critique and with its inverse: a redeployment of industrial materials, electronic or digital technologies into works that promoted ideals of progress and alternative concepts of human community. In this book, Christine Filippone examines the work of artists Alice Aycock, Agnes Denes, Martha Rolser and Carolee Schneemann, created between the late 1960s and the mid-1980s, which incorporate science and technology as subject and media. Motivated by the contemporary American women's movement, science and technology offered these artists new modes of artmaking that transgressed modernist, heroic, painterly styles as well as new methods of art distribution that subverted the traditional economic structures of the gallery, the museum and the dealer. Filippone argues that these artists used science and technology to mount a critique on Cold War American society as they saw it-conservative and constricting. At the same time, the artists also embraced these domains of knowledge and practice as expressions of hope for a better future. The epilogue offers a focused examination of reclamation and eco-art works by Nancy Holt, Betsy Damon and Agnes Denes. Augmenting her assertion that the theory of open systems informed feminist practice, she argues that open systems of the late 1960s had a formative influence on women artists' practice of reclamation and ecological art.

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