

Now that the children are going back to school, women not already peopling America's professions may be wondering if they should seriously consider a career.

What we have collected here are a number of stories about women who have made, and continue to make, the transition to "professional" — in addition to being "wife" or "mother" or "person." Our examples of women achieving are in allied arts fields not long ago limited almost entirely to men. These fields, like any of the other professions, are changing as society is changing. Women who enter them are often amazed that they *can* do a good job — having been told by psychologists' studies that they have an inbred avoidance of success, for fear of being thought unfeminine by insecure people of either sex.

And women as well as men are realizing that men do not have a corner on such things as listening carefully and acting surely (anyone who has repaired a child's cut knee or listened to a neighbor's marital problems learns those things) or carrying out the sometimes mundane detail work inherent in nearly every job (not surprising for people trained as girls to keep things tidy).

The many women we have talked with about their professions expressed pleasure at the joy of contributing to society — and a certain amount of surprise, as well, at things they have found. After working in an office, for instance, many can better understand why the men in their lives have called the workaday world a rat race. Dedicated people, they have learned, are in just as short supply in a profession as they are in the P.T.A. or a women's auxiliary. And pride in good work, they now realize, is sometimes rare among people who take their jobs for granted. (For some of these reasons, several of the women you will read about have begun their own businesses.)

We present Joanne Koch's guide to a number of Chicago's groups for professional women. It is often in such groups that a woman can find like-minded people who can help her, as she may help them, by sharing experiences. Because there are more such groups than we can list, we offer further resources for you to explore. We also include stories about two all-woman events, firsts in Chicago, that demonstrate that women are indeed adding a new dimension to the city.

The Magazine, and many other sections of The Tribune, will continue to profile the new woman—and man—in life's varied roles. What we extend today is an invitation to learn about the experiences of certain women who have decided to become professionals, whether for personal fulfillment or out of economic necessity, or both.

Susan Nelson

Susan Nelson, a staff writer and articles editor, coordinates the Magazine's art coverage.

The new

Women as artists: Like other professionals, they are learning that a career makes a whole new set of demands, and it only makes sense to get together.

By Joanne Koch

They are doctors, lawyers, owners of the needlepoint store down the block. They are housewives who went back to school for their degrees in social work or psychology or education. They are women without degrees who used to be amateur potters, photographers, painters, or quiltmakers but now are artists and artisans with full-time careers. They are the new professionals.

Around 40 per cent of the professional and technical jobs in this country are held by women, and thousands of other women are moving toward professional status. How does a woman become a professional? What price does she pay? How many of the obstacles she encounters have to do with her sex?

The 40 women who run two cooperative art galleries at 226 E. Ontario St. are a diversified group—married, single, divorced, with and without children—ranging in age from 24 to 60 and in economic standing from wealthy to barely-making-it.

The artists of A.R.C. and Artemisia do have two things in common. They demand of themselves the same commitment in time and energy as their male counterparts. And they demand of the public that their efforts be taken seriously, to be panned or praised, but at least to be recognized.

Their progress—from the openings of their two galleries last fall thru several two-woman shows, group meetings, and consciousness-raising sessions—suggests that they have much to tell us.

If there are rules that can help a woman who has worked sporadically and in isolation to become a professional, Rule No. 1 would be: Respect your work and develop the ability to criticize it. Being an amateur is having your relatives praise your work and the critics ignore it. If you don't like being measured against tough competitive standards, think twice about tossing your glove into the arena.

Johnnie Johnson, 31, is a printmaker, painter, photographer, and one of the founders of A.R.C. (Artists, Residents of Chicago). She is part of a new breed of "sabra" women who know from the beginning what they want and are prepared to bloom even in the desert.

"I'm not going to wait until I'm old or dead to be discovered," said Johnnie. "You have to know how to sell your work; it's taken me five years to learn

Joanne Koch is a free-lance writer. With her husband, Lew, she is at work on a book about marriage counseling.



Margaret Harper gets help on an in-progress sculpture of window screen from Darby Jane, 4, front, and Gregory, 7, in her studio at home.

how to hustle. I keep a detailed inventory of my work, and I always expect more of myself than the individual I'm showing it to expects. I've even destroyed a major piece of art before the amazed eyes of the prospective buyer because I discovered a defect in it."

In the same building where the signs "A.R.C." and "Artemisia" jut out like oversize index tabs is the Phyllis Kind Gallery, one of the most successful in Chicago and one of the few exhibiting women and Chicago artists—another often-neglected group. Phyllis Kind agrees that the professional must internalize high standards. She sees the difference between talent and genius in the artist's ability to criticize her own work.

Developing powers of self-criticism is particularly difficult when you've been isolated. A million subtle cultural pressures create a double isolation: physical separation from like-minded professionals and emotional isolation, sometimes dating back to childhood, from incentives that reward achievement.

Artemisia artist Emily Pinkowski, for example, studied commercial art because she was advised that she would have a better chance than in the fine arts—as a woman. But then nobody would hire her because, she was told, she would probably become pregnant and leave.

Emily was part of Artemisia's selection committee, which visited more than 100 women artists in

professionals

their "studios" to select its 20 members. "We found many women alone," she said. "We saw studios that were set up on the kitchen table and had to be dismantled before dinner."

No one is saying that Van Gogh, Gauguin, or Modigliani had an easy time of it. But the male artist, art critic June Wayne points out, at least is surrounded by a romantic mythology. The female artist is stuck with the banal attributes of the feminine mystique.

"She is an instant Mrs. So-and-So living in a tract house with hubby and the babies," Wayne says. "She is thought to dabble in oils in the family den, which only she refers to seriously as her studio. Her art is assumed to be a matter of tight little landscapes and flower arrangements or decorative, derivative abstractions displayed over the couch in an all-too-dreary and domestic living room. To be a wife, a mother, and 40 is to suffer a fatal syndrome. No matter how large the talent or accomplishment, she is only a woman trying to 'pass' as an artist."

Of course some women have not been taken seriously simply because they don't devote sufficient time and energy to their work. There are many distractions. As Artemisia founder Joy Poe puts it: "I didn't do any art work for 10 years because I kept saying, 'As soon as I get my housework done. . . .'"

This brings us to Rule No. 2: Realize that your commitment to your profession is serious and

strenuous. It may conflict with other demands, particularly if you have a family.

Joy Poe waited until her daughters were grown before she completed her graduate work. Mary Jane Minn finished her art training at the University of Illinois before her daughter was grown, but to ease her burden, she started a day-care cooperative that eventually became the university-funded Circle Children's Center. (Mary Jane's husband, Stephen, an equal-opportunity spouse, takes their daughter to the center each morning before his own architecture classes begin.)

To juggle a family, a full-time teaching job, and studio work, sculptor Sara Skolnik simply does without sleep. Sara, who has sold more than \$2,000 worth of steel sculpture since the A.R.C. opening and has received commissions for a like amount, gets up at 5, works for a few hours in her suburban studio (part of her home), drives to Latin School, where she teaches art until 3 p.m., returns home to make dinner for her family, and then sculpts again.

One problem of having a studio at home, says energetic Artemisia member Phyllis Bramson, is getting your husband to realize you're actually doing something, even tho the dishes aren't done and the beds aren't made. "Sometimes when my husband comes home, he'll say, 'What did you do all day?' I'll

answer, 'I wasn't really here. I was working.'"

Gallery owner Phyllis Kind is the mother of four and represents six women artists. She claims she's never been swayed by the gender of an artist, but she sees the many demands on women as a source of serious conflict:

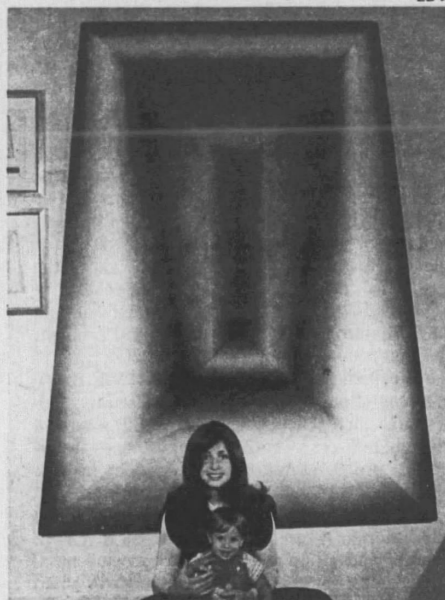
"The pulls of motherhood and homemaking can dissipate the energy of the artist," and she likens the feeling to a mother nursing a dozen children at once.

Sonja Zaks, who carries the work of seven women artists at the Deson-Zaks gallery (also at 226 E. Ontario) believes the need for total commitment has been the main problem. On the unrelenting demands of one's profession, she cites Artur Rubenstein: "When I don't practice one day, I notice it. When I don't practice two days, the public notices it."

Things would be much easier for the female artist if she could have the kind of helpmate, described by June Wayne, that most productive male artists have found:

"An artist's wife, whether an artist herself or not, holds the outside salaried job that pays the studio rent. She also assists within the studio, looks after the framing and shipping of his work, writes the letters, and does the phoning. She may even verbalize 'his' aesthetics while he maintains the posture of not knowing what he is doing when creating in the studio. She plans the cocktail parties to which collectors and curators and critics are

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Above: Rachel Rosenberg, seven months, sits on the lap of her painter-mother, Regina Rosenberg; behind them is *Space Study #4*, oil three-dimensional, shaped canvas.

Three of Artemisia Gallery's members work to set up a group show. In the foreground, painter Susan Michod. In the background, painter Phyllis MacDonald (left) and photocolagist Carol Turchan.