

ARTFIX DAILY

APRIL 19, 2019

WOMEN SURREALISTS ART EXHIBITION OPENS MAY 8 AT HEATHER JAMES FINE ART NEW YORK

Piercing through the male gaze, works by leading female Surrealist artists will be on view at Heather James Fine Art, New York, from May 8 to July 31, 2019. The Female Gaze: Women Surrealists in the Americas and Europe reframes the history of the movement by focusing exclusively on the pivotal role played by female artists as independent from—rather than in relationship to—their male counterparts. Featuring paintings, sculpture, photographs, mixed media, and collages spanning from the late 1930s to today, the exhibition also seeks to examine the underlying political, social, and cultural attitudes that have influenced many of these artists' ideas about gender. An opening reception will be held on May 8, from 6 to 8 pm.

Exhibition highlights include a mystical portrait of an animal-human goddess, *Untitled*, by Leonora Carrington (1917-2011) from the late 1960s; a Mannerist-inspired painting mourning infertility, *L'envers d'une geographie*, by Leonor Fini (1907-1996) from the early 1960s; and a dreamlike nocturne, *Sulky Lion*, 1943, by Stella Snead (1910-2006).

Also on view are works by Magdalena Abakanowicz (1930-2017), Gertrude Abercrombie (1909-1977), Aube Elléouët (b. 1935), Kati Horna (1912-2000), Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), Helen Lundeborg (1908-1999), Teresa Pagowska (1926-2007), Kay Sage (1898-1963), Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012), Bridget Tichenor (1917-1990), and Manina Tischler (1918-2010), among others.

The accompanying, fully-illustrated catalogue includes essays by Gloria Orenstein, a Professor Emerita of Comparative Literature and Gender Studies at the University of Southern California; and Patryk Tomaszewski, an art historian at The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Orenstein noted, "I have been fortunate to know women Surrealists such as Leonora Carrington and Leonor Fini, and their work speaks to me on so many levels both spiritually and viscerally. I am thrilled that Heather James Fine Art, New York, is helping to re-examine their place in art history by spotlighting their multiform contributions, along with those of lesser-known colleagues working in the U.S. and abroad."

"Since opening in New York two years ago, Heather James Fine Art continues to expand its program of thought-provoking exhibitions about influential artists whose important legacies have been overlooked, or whose work deserves a closer look. We think this is the perfect time to recontextualize both Surrealism's history and impact by examining the important contributions to the movement made by remarkable women artists in many parts of

the world,” said Montana Alexander, Partner, Heather James Fine Art, New York.

While Surrealism’s revolutionary tenets called for opening both eyes and minds by unleashing the subconscious, most of its leaders continued to view the female form as an object of desire and fantasy. Embracing Sigmund Freud’s theory of “the dream-work,” the female figure became a subject often rendered disfigured, dismembered, or mythologized, as reflected in works by Max Ernst, Man Ray, René Magritte, and Salvador Dalí, among others.

Despite their cultural differences, artists in this exhibition such as Leonora Carrington and Leonor Fini rebelled against the pervasive sexism of their time. Carrington, who was also a founding member of the women’s movement in Mexico during the 1970s, once declared, “I warn you, I refuse to be an object.”

Though often critically marginalized, these uncompromising visionaries rejected prevailing societal norms and expressed the workings of their own inner psyches and desires. Over the many decades and waves of women’s movements, their striking imagery—including pointed depictions of female bodies—continues to resonate.