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# ARTnews

## From the Pompidou to Frieze, Curator Camille Morineau Is Bringing Forgotten Female Artists to Light

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Camille Morineau.

PHOTO VALERIE ARCHENO

While Frieze Masters is typically dominated by canonized male artists, this year its stars will be little-known female artists born between 1900 and 1951. These artists will appear in the London fair's Spotlight section, which is being overseen by [Camille Morineau](#), the founder of the Archives of Women Artists, Research, and Exhibitions (AWARE).

“The keyword is ‘discovery,’” said Camille Morineau, whom Nathan Clements-Gillespie, the director of Frieze Masters, put in charge of the display. She soon put out a call for applications, and out of some 150 galleries, 26 were selected. Each of them will present a booth dedicated to one artist.

The Spotlight section is divided into three parts, each of which is introduced by a different ambassador. The face of “The Abstract,” for instance, is Turkish artist Fahrelnissa Zeid, whose work is being brought to the fair by Istanbul's Dirimart gallery. Usually associated with large-scale abstract paintings with kaleidoscopic patterns, Zeid was recently featured in the 2021 “Women in Abstraction” exhibition at the Centre Pompidou.

Zeid's work will share space with pieces by Hungarian designer Margit Szilvitzky, who became a leading figure of textile art. Mary Corse, whose work is being brought by Pace Gallery, will be represented here not by her paintings, which radiate from within, but by a never-seen-before installation that the Californian artist made in 1968.

The chapter titled “The Fighters” pays tribute to political activists, starting with Sister Gertrude Morgan (The Gallery of Everything), who is acclaimed for her folk art. Also featured here will be London-based sculptor and performer Anne Bean (England & Co) and Mexico-born Susana Rodríguez (Henrique Faria & Herlitzka), whose close-ups of intimate body parts can easily pass for abstract compositions.

Morineau said she was determined to present new sides of artists who are well-known. By way of example, she mentioned Orlan, whose work is being brought to the fair by Ceysson & Bénétière. “We won't be presenting recent works, but only self-portraits from the 1990's,” said Morineau.



Fahrelnissa Zeid, *Loch Lomond*, 1948.

COURTESY DIRIMART

Last but not least, there's "The Irreducible," which is anchored by French painter and writer Leonor Fini (Loeve&Co), who ended up pulling away from Surrealism. "I did not want to name it 'The Unclassifiable' because as a historian, I cannot help classifying, although this task sometimes proves to be impossible," Morineau said. "The artists who fall under that category rejected labels. It's now up to us to respect their wishes."

Also in that section are the Florence-born Lucia Marcucci (Apalazzogallery & Frittelli Arte Contemporanea), who is considered a Pop artist but did not explicitly claim herself to be one; Wook-kyung Choi (Kukje), who defined her paintings as "collaged bits of time from [her] past and present experiences"; and Sylvia Snowden (Franklin Parrasch), who combined a wide range of media to give her works as much texture as possible. "This project was also an opportunity for me to learn and grow," Morineau said because those artists were new to her/ discoveries to her.

Morineau's attention to gender equality dates back to her college days. She entered the *École normale supérieure de la rue d'Ulm*, a higher education institution in France, in 1987. "It was the first year of co-ed schooling," she recalled. "Girls were then perceived as barely bearable creatures."



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Susana Rodríguez, *Escritura Nro. 10*, 1979. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HENRIQUE FARIA

At Williams College, Massachusetts, she discovered gender studies and Linda Nochlin's essay ["Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"](#) (1971), which made her question France's views on the matter. "France is a universalist country, where equality seems to be taken for granted, though like anything else, it

needs some work,” she said. “It is a conservative country which has had its revolutionary moments. And lucky for me, ‘elles@centrepompidou’ was one of them.”

The show she mentioned took place at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2009. It was the very first 100 percent female display staged in a French museum. A rehang of the Pompidou’s collections, it drew 2.5 million visitors over its year-and-a-half-long run.

President Barack Obama and his family came to Paris only to see it. Morineau remembers vividly her flying back from the Venice Biennale at the Centre Pompidou’s request “for a special guest.” She returned to Paris, only to find herself giving Obama a private tour of her display the following day. “I will never forget this moment,” Morineau said. “We talked about the works on view of course but also about the fact that he wanted to bring female and African American artists to the White House, which he did shortly after.”

In 2014, Morineau created AWARE to canonize lesser-known or forgotten women from throughout art history. Since that foundation’s formation and “elles@centrepompidou,” Morineau noticed real changes in France.

The Louvre-Lens regularly offers conferences, workshops, and guided tours with a focus on female artists/ “women behind the scenes.” To celebrate its 30-year anniversary the MAMAC in Nice chose to devote an ambitious exhibition to female Pop artists. The inaugural display at the Bourse du Commerce, François Pinault’s new Paris museum, showed evidence of gender parity.

Every year since 2013, the Ministry of Culture has published “The Observatory of Inequalities,” a report on the number of women working in the public sector, for institutions and cultural companies. “According to recent statistics, for example, three times as many women represented in public collections of contemporary art now as there were in 2013. France is actually ahead in that department,” Morineau said.



Sylvia Snowden, *Miss Leslie Mae*, 1982.

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND FRANKLIN PARRASCH

The association recently moved into Marie Vassilieff’s former studio, where fellow painters Henri Matisse and Amedeo Modigliani, as well as composers such as Chaïm Soutine and Erik Satie, would meet. “Marie Vassilieff was admirably generous. Our research center is open to all (on appointment), the same way her community canteen used to be,” Morineau said.

The AWARE team is currently working with the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, on “The Origin of Others: Rewriting Art History in the Americas (19th Century–Today),” a three-year program that will focus on Black and Indigenous women from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United

States. This three-year program, the title of which references a series of essays by Toni Morrison, will lead to various publications as well as to an international symposium scheduled in 2023.

Already, many have taken note of AWARE's work—Chanel is one of the companies that helps fund the work AWARE does. But, Morineau said, “If an institution were to swallow, embrace, host us, it would be even better.”