

Women in abstraction. Another History of abstraction in the 20th century



This symposium is organised in the frame of a partnership between the Musée National d'Art Moderne and the Département Culture et Création – Centre Pompidou and the association AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions. It is part of the programming in parallel to the exhibition *Women in Abstraction. Another History of Abstraction in the 20th Century*, which will take place from 5 May to 6 September 2021 (dates to be confirmed) at the Centre Pompidou, then at the Guggenheim Bilbao from 8 October 2021 to 30 January 2022.

With a few notable exceptions, such as the exhibition *Karo-Dame* –

Konstruktive, Konkrete und Radikale Kunst von Frauen von 1914 bis heute presented at the Aargauer Kunsthaus in 1995, the fundamental role that women played in the development of abstract art has long been underestimated. While the Centre Pompidou has been helping to redress the balance since the thematic hanging of its collections under the title *elles@centrepompidou* in 2009, the latest historiographical advances illustrated by numerous recent publications, monographs and thematic exhibitions make it possible to reassess the importance of the contribution of women artists to the different currents of abstraction, while at the same time questioning the historical patterns of the past.

Curated by Christine Macel, with Karolina Lewandowska in charge of photography, this exhibition aims to highlight the contributions of a hundred or so women artists to abstraction up to the 1980s, with a few unprecedented forays into the 19th century. By focusing on the careers of artists, sometimes unjustly eclipsed, the exhibition proposes to question the established canons and write another history of abstraction. It highlights the decisive turning points that marked this evolution, evoking both the research undertaken by artists, individually or in groups, and exhibitions that contributed to the recognition of women abstract artists.

This symposium aims to bring together researchers from diverse backgrounds to collectively reflect on rewriting the history of abstraction by re-evaluating women artists' contributions to the various abstract art movements. Firstly, it will make it possible to question the history of art conceived as a succession of pioneering practices. By examining the meaning of the term "abstraction" according to the various periods, geographies and media employed, the symposium will seek to demonstrate its complexity. Finally, it will be an opportunity to study the circulation of abstract practices in the world in order to open the debate on the canons established by Western modernity.

Papers may take the form of case studies problematized by artistic movements, individuals, groups or geographical area, as well as historiographical and multidisciplinary analyses of female or female-identifying artists from the end of the 19th century to the 1980s.

Presentations will last 20 minutes and will be illustrated with slide presentations. They will be filmed and recorded, and some of them may eventually be published as articles in a publication dedicated to the event or on the websites of the organizing institutions.

Practical information

The Symposium will take place online on May 19, 20 and 21.

It will be directly translated in French and English.

The schedule is indicated in Paris time (UTC+2).

Registration is free and can be done via the following links – caution, each day has its own link:

[May 19 – Session I – 10:00 AM to 12:15 PM](#)

[May 19 – Session II – 02:00 PM to 05:00 PM](#)

[May 20 – Session III – 10:00 AM to 11:45 AM](#)

[May 20 – Session IV – 02:00 PM to 06:15 PM](#)

[May 21 – Session V – 02:00 PM to 03:45 PM](#)

[May 21 – Session VI – 04:30 PM to 07:15 PM](#)