

Celebrating Women Artists in London!



My dear fairgoers,

I just got back from a whirlwind two-day trip to London, where I had the chance to explore four incredibly diverse art fairs: Frieze London, Frieze Masters, 1-54, and the WIAF – Women In Art Fair. I decided to focus on female artists, or artists identifying as women, because let's face it, the art world hasn't given them the spotlight they deserve. It's high time we change that!



Emilye Kam Ngwarray (circa 1910 – 1966), *Muna – Everything*, 1991. Synthetic polymer paint on linen. 121.5 x 214 cm. Courtesy D'LAN Contemporary, Melbourne.

I kicked off my journey at Frieze London, which was celebrating its 20th anniversary. The place was buzzing! So much so that it was a bit overwhelming. But the dealers seemed thrilled with the turnout, and many told me their sales were through the roof on day one.

Through the lens of women artists, several booths caught my eye. Hauser & Wirth had a spacious booth featuring a solo show by Barbara Chase-Riboux, an acclaimed Paris-based American artist who joined their roster just before summer. I was absolutely captivated by her black bronze statues titled 'Standing Black Woman of Venice,' which were strategically placed at each corner of the booth, adding an incredible rhythm to the space.



Another solo show that really struck me was by Ugandan artist Leilah Babirye, featured at the Stephen Friedman Gallery. A proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, Babirye's art is both committed and diverse, featuring large-scale ceramics, wooden sculptures, African masks, as well as drawings and paintings. The booth was painted in a vibrant red, making the artworks pop even more.



Alissa Friedman, the Senior Partner at the gallery, showcased a series of drawings in one of my '1 minute in the booth' video ([here](#)).

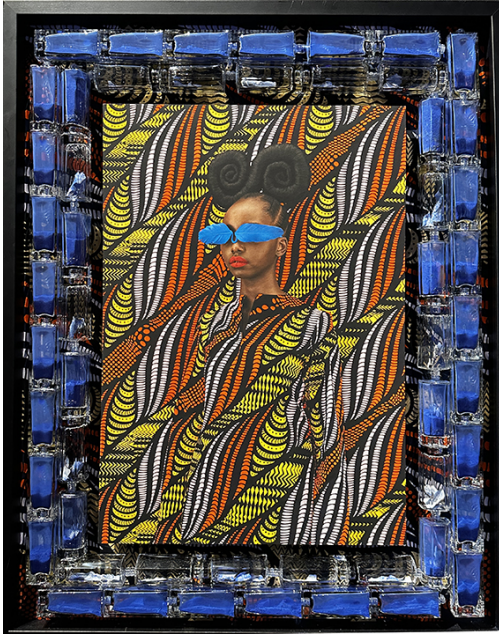
Three hours later, I took a leisurely stroll through Regent's Park to get to Frieze Masters. A different fair, a different vibe. The atmosphere was much more subdued and intimate. I had the opportunity to highlight the 'Modern Women' section curated by Camille Morineau, founder of AWARE, whom I had interviewed just the week before ([video here](#)).

The section aimed to break the mold of a male-dominated modern art scene with 10 solo presentations. I was particularly drawn to the works of French painter Emilie Charmy at Galerie Bernard Bouche, the intimate and quirky photographs by Lisetta Carmi at Ciaccia Levi, and the delicate abstract paintings by Anna-Eva Bergman at Perrotin. You can see the full review [here](#). I also discovered the work of Australian contemporary artist Emily Kam Ngwarray at D'LAN CONTEMPORARY, whose art beautifully blends pointillism with Aboriginal art. This year's Frieze Masters was truly exceptional, thanks to various initiatives by its talented director, Nathan Clements-Gillespie.



Nnorom, *Recuperating Scape*, 2023. African wax print fabric. 230 x 420 x 20cm. Primo Marella Gallery.

The next morning, under classic London rain, I arrived at the preview of 1-54, a fair dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. My sense of direction is a bit hit-or-miss, and I admit I got a bit frustrated navigating the labyrinthine corridors of Somerset House. But aside from that, the fair was fantastic. The dealers were friendly, and some artists were even there to discuss their work. Like at Frieze, I focused my '1 minute' videos on women artists and was disappointed to see that many booths didn't feature any. However, I was thrilled to see the pop and quirky portraits by Kenyan photographer Thandiwe Muriu, whom I had interviewed a few months ago. Her works were displayed by Infiniment Coty Gallery in a room painted navy blue with dramatic lighting. The effect was simply stunning!



Thandiwe Muriu, *Noir Encens 2023 & Coma 34, 2022*. Ink jet print on Rag Matt 310g mounted on dibond. Courtesy Infiniment Cotty, Paris.

With just three hours left before my train, I hopped into a taxi to the Mall Galleries in Westminster to visit the Women In Art Fair. This new fair aims to redress the gender imbalance in the art industry and consisted of three distinct sections. The West Gallery housed a 21-booth art fair, the East Gallery featured a curated exhibition titled 'Unnatural Women,' and the North Gallery showcased works selected via an Open Call. I had to rush through the fair and left feeling a bit frustrated, wishing I had more time to explore. Nonetheless, I did catch glimpses of beautiful works by Paula Rego and Marcelle Hanselaar. The fair seemed to be a hit, and I commend its founder, Jacqueline Harvey, for her initiative.

That wraps up my London adventure! This week, it's all happening in Paris with events like Paris+ by Art Basel, AKAA, Design Miami/Paris, ASIA NOW, and so many gallery exhibitions. Can't wait to share more art escapades with you soon!

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