

WOMEN IN ART FAIR RETURNS WITH A CHALLENGING PROGRAMME FOR LONDON FRIEZE WEEK

By [Mark Westall](#) • 16 September 2024

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Women in Art Fair returns to the Mall Galleries this year to provide a prominent platform for women artists, gallerists and curators during Frieze Week.



Elpida Hadzi Vasileva, Golden Jaw rabbit jaws, gold leaf

This is not about excluding men, It's about disrupting the established model which isn't serving us, as it's failing half of the artistic community: women.

We need radical innovation to addresses the glaring gender imbalance in the industry. We stand for diversity and inclusion in the arts and we're here not just to encourage dialogue around gender and culture, but fundamentally to change the way art is exhibited.

fair founder Jacqueline Harvey

Making women's work visible is where Women in Art Fair's annual event succeeds. Launched in 2023 with 20 galleries and 200 independent artists showing work, WIAF had over 2000 submissions via an Open Call for inclusion in this year's Fair, all responding to the theme of the creative process: the challenges and setbacks experienced during the journey to produce a final work of art.

Cynthia Valianti Corbett, a member of the Fair selection committee, is a longstanding supporter of women artists through her eponymous gallery (celebrating 20 years this year), Young Masters Art Prize, incorporating Emerging Women Award and her

curatorial platform, *Focus on the Female*.

She says,

It has been encouraging to see women artists beginning to get more recognition in recent times, building their confidence and bringing more wonderful work to the fore – as has been witnessed by the exceptional quality of work submitted for our Open Call this year. Women in Art Fair is both a powerful initiative – in terms of profile-raising for our exhibitors – and an important moment to celebrate all that women contribute to the art ecosystem.

Women in Art Fair is clear that collaboration with like-minded organisations is needed to help shift the needle on representation of women in the arts. This year they are teaming up with Rise and Repaint (previously known as *ArtGirlRising* and *Repaint History*), a social enterprise that has spent the last six years supporting and advocating for women and non-binary artists globally. Working with established museums, galleries and art organizations to help solve the gender gap in the art world, they say:

Female artists remain drastically underrepresented and our surveys prove that exhibition opportunities are still severely lacking. Despite an increased awareness online,

we need real opportunities – like exhibition space for women artists. We are therefore delighted to partner with WIAF to help women artists rise to their rightful position in the art world.



Pandora Vaughan, *Internal Flow Cleansing Mechanism with Optional Bad Dream Filter*, 86x128cm

Isabel Bardawil, a Specialist and Associate Director in Post-War and Contemporary Art at Christie's, London, agrees that art by women needs more room to be seen. Her auction statistics do show signs of hope:

We have observed a substantial rise in the number of works by living artists, particularly women, at auction.

Since 2023, there has been an 18% increase in the percentage of lots by living women artists offered at Christie's. In our most recent 20th/21st Century Evening Sale in London in March, 40% of the lots by living artists were by women.

It seems that the tide is turning.

Women in Art Fair 9th-12th October 2024

The WIAF Team

WIAF is directed by author, educator, journalist, broadcaster and award-winning businesswoman, **Jacqueline Harvey**. A graduate of Goldsmiths, University of London, with a degree in Philosophy and Sociology, Jacqueline's extensive career includes working for nine years as Managing Director of Art Strategics, a Mayfair gallery which championed inclusivity and diversity through a successful exhibition, education and international fair programme. She has worked at many art fairs, including START, London Art Fair, Masterpiece, Art Basel and Art Bahrain. In addition to her career in the arts, Jacqueline has written books on health and wellbeing and is regularly interviewed on the BBC and in the national press. She has her own weekly programme on Women's Radio.

Committee: Co-founder of iconic gallery Riflemaker, **Virginia Damtsa** is a well-known art dealer, gallerist, curator and artists' agent. **Cynthia Valianti Corbett** is Director of The Cynthia Corbett Gallery and Founder of The Young Master's Art Prize. Philanthropist and entrepreneur **Theresa Roberts**, has a leading collection of contemporary Jamaican art and was appointed Jamaica Ambassador/Special Investment Envoy for Culture and Arts in 2023.