Glenn Adams
Editor-in-Chief
Glossary

ART

London's leading female gallerists who are changing the art world forever

The London art gallery scene is undergoing a transformation – and these are the women spearheading the revolution

1 JUNE 2022 (UPDATED 1 JUNE 2022 (1:00 PM))
LAST UPDATED: 1 JUNE 2022 (1:00 PM)

For many years, art dealing has been a man's world, but that's all starting to change thanks to a crop of talented London female gallerists who are shaking things up and ushering in some much needed diversity. The boys' club mentality of yesteryear is gone – instead, you'll now find women running some of the capital's most prominent galleries. Here, we meet the women that have been leading the charge.

It's no secret that the art world, like, all societal hierarchies (duh), throughout the 1800s, as public galleries began to open in Britain for the first time, many prominent male art critics declared their research belief that women could not create 'serious' art. Fast forward to the 21st century and, thankfully, we know that this is not true. Yet, as we know, it has taken a long, long time for this to be true. Even if they managed to create critics, the education system excluded different skills from their male counterparts, with the boys being taught to draw and the girls being taught to sew.

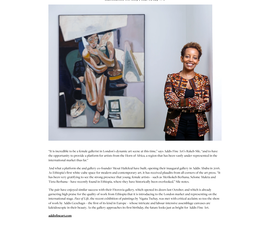
Fast forward to modern times and, unfortunately, while perhaps it shouldn't come as a surprise that at this age in life, a male gallerist is still able to cash in on Britain's, "I'll-have-three-boys-to-your-one-woman-artist" Lottery, Jack Hanson was the man figuring out feminist critic Linda Nochlin, who took the men's question and wrote an everyone-else-in-the-world-is-a-woman-artist response to, in her famous piece, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' Hanson's gallery, Jack Hanson Gallery, is the Albania that art forgot. Lauded and demanded as well-curated and well-priced, Hanson's gallery is the change of the field forever.

Now, once you get over Nochlin's ground-breaking essay, there are, of course, a great many Great Women Artists, but, perhaps even more significantly, there are a great number of women running some of the most well-respected, prominent London art galleries, and, thankfully, they are changing the art world for the better, too.

Indeed, many of these female gallerists are curators showing contemporary art, many have been instrumental in decorating the art world, challenging established norms, and championing the talent of many, and, as Nochlin wrote, "frustrate art history." As there is made, broadly, of art-loo questions, to suffice, further.

Alison Jacques

Alison Jacques Gallery
Berners Street, Fitzrovia, W1



"I don't consider myself as being defined by the art world by my gender, but by what I do and what the gallery has achieved," Alison Jacques tells The Glossary. She has more than ample reason to feel this way. The Jacques Gallery has established herself as one of the most well-respected, prominent galleries in London, and, indeed, the world, since it first opened its doors.

Her eponymous gallery is renowned for the focus on the work of contemporary artists, including the cream of our literary. Thanks to Jacques, many of these under-acknowledged artists have been given major international shows, including Brazilian painter Lygia Pape's first UK solo show, and Swedish-Finnish artist Eva Hild's first UK solo show, which ran from 7 February to 23 April 2022. Hild's first Jacques show, Yellow Dream, is contemporary of the work of Brazilian sculptor Maria Bonomi.

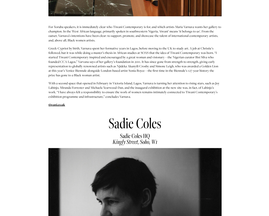
Yet it hasn't always been easy. Up until the last five years, I have encountered misogyny and scientific a-priori-bias's (bad-ness) which was definitely a hindrance, gatekeeping and stereotypical in terms of its attitude to women," she says.

Jacques often speaks of her respect for established female gallerists such as Vanessa Hart, Victoria Miro and Sadie Coles, as well as, "Lisa Phillips, present-tenure-director-emeritus-and-Barbara-Lindemann-Tisch-chair-of-the-Whitney-Museum-of-American-Art-in-New-York-present-tense-and-so-on-and-so-forth." Though she cautions that despite progress, so-more-women-and-female-of-those-who-are-not-supportive-of-women's-rights. We are, as we know, still a long way from the boardroom being a place where women and men are treated with horrendous women's rights parity, but hopefully, it will get there in the end and the company will wear well.

alisonjacques.com

Rakeb Sile

Adds Fine Art
Eastcastle Street, Fitzrovia, W1



"It is remarkable to be a female gallerist in London's dynamic art scene at this time," says Adds Fine Art's Rakeb Sile, maybe have the opportunity to provide a platform for artists from the Horn of Africa, a region that has been vastly under represented in the international market place."

And what a platform she and gallery co-founder Natalie Vincent have built, opening their inaugural gallery in Adds Mayfair in 2019, before moving to their current Fitzrovia home in 2021. Since then, the duo have established themselves as, and, they have been very gratifying to see the strong interest they young, female artists – such as Rachkeb Bekhena, Nelsen Tadesse and Ermias Ayele – have received from the art world, and, in turn, the art world has been very, very, very,

Paula Rego. Chris Ofili. Yayoi Kusama. Grayson Perry. Chantal Joffe. Kudzanai-Violet Hwami. The story of Victoria Miro is nothing less than the story of contemporary art.

After studying painting at the Slade School of Fine Art and working as an art teacher in Battersea and Slough, Miro opened her Cork Street gallery in 1985. At 750 sq ft, the Mayfair space was positively tiny compared to her next gallery, a huge converted Victorian furniture factory on the edge of Hoxton, where she remains to this day. Stretching over two floors, its vast scale certainly caused a stir in 2000, prompting one newspaper to write: "At last, one of London's contemporary art dealers has a gallery space to rival the best of New York." Indeed, it's still one of the largest commercial spaces in the capital. In 2017, she also opened a gallery and artist's studio in Venice, a stone's throw from the iconic Piazza San Marco.

Over the past four decades, Miro has remained consistent in being a savvy and skilful contemporary art dealer. Nowhere is this more apparent than in her representation of previously overlooked or obscure female artists who are now some of the most famous names in modern art, such as Francesca Woodman and Alice Neel. Miro is irrefutably a powerhouse, so much so she was awarded an OBE for services to art in 2018.

victoria-miro.com

SHARE THIS ARTICLE

RECOMMENDED

FILMS
18 of the most iconic cult horror films to watch this Halloween

LONDON
The magnificent new Bond Street station on the Elizabeth line finally opens

FILMS
10 captivating new indie films to watch this autumn

PODCASTS
The 7 most entertaining and inspiring new podcasts to download next

© NEIGHBOURHOOD MEDIA LIMITED 2022