

# Bonhams

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

## SHINING A LIGHT ON ALTERNATIVE MEDIA - BONHAMS PRESENTS THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

An exhibition of Contemporary Art by Women Artists during New York's  
Armory Week, Available for Private Sale



*Untitled (Shaped Inner Band)* by Mary Corse (b. 1945), *Untitled* by Ruth Asawa (1926-2013), and *Green Gage I* 1959 by Lynne Drexler (1928-1999).

[View All Works in the Exhibition](#)

**New York** – Bonhams will present *The Medium is the Message: Women Artists in Contemporary Art*, a special exhibition in New York timed to Armory Week from **August 29 – September 9**. The selling exhibition will feature the work of **Ruth Asawa**, **Louise Nevelson** and **Sheila Hicks** all working in alternative media, such as textiles, wood, found objects and wire, as well as work by women artists long overlooked in the cannon of Western Art, such as **Helen Frankenthaler**, **Lynne Drexler**, and **Grace Hartigan**.



*Volcano Magic I* by Louise Nevelson (1899-1988), *Predestined Color Wave I*, 2015 by Shelia Hicks (b. 1934), and *Untitled*, 1997 by Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010).

Using materials such as metal wire, found wood, textiles and gold leaf, artists such as **Magdalena Abakanowicz**, **Carol Rama** and **Louise Bourgeois** created not only objects of beauty, but reclassified an entire genre of art making. Previously, artwork in these mediums had been denigrated and considered “less than” traditional painting on canvas. **Louise Nevelson (1899-1988)** whole-heartedly embraced these unconventional materials as is showcased in the three works included in the exhibit – *Volcano Magic I*, *Volcano Magic XXV*, and *Untitled*, 1959. A leading 20th century sculptor known for her monochromatic wood sculptures, Nevelson utilizes wood, paper, and metal in the sculptural collages on view.

Two works in the exhibition by **Shelia Hicks (b. 1934)** - *Predestined Color Wave I*, 2015 and *Wanderlust - Wonder Wear*, 2017 – were crafted with linen on a wood panel. Hicks was known for creating colorful sculptural textile art and her experimental weavings. An iconic five-lobed hanging work, *Untitled (S.408)* by **Ruth Asawa (1926-2013)**, is showcased for the first time after being sold at Bonhams in 2020 for **\$2,180,075**.

Bonhams will also shine a light on lesser-known female artists who were pioneers in the Abstract Expressionist movement like **Bernice Bing**, **Natalia Dumitresco**, and **Vicci Sperry**. Included in the exhibition is *Visions*, 1966-67 by **Bing (1936-1998)**, a queer Chinese American artist who was a well-respected figure in the San Francisco art scene during the 1960s and was largely influenced by Zen calligraphy, Taoism and Buddhist philosophy. A painting of Bing’s from the same period, *Big Sur*, 1967, achieved an auction world record at Bonhams in 2020. Also often overlooked, **Sperry (1900-1995)** will have three paintings and a work on paper included in the exhibition all coming directly from the artist’s estate. A student of Hans Hofmann, Vicci was integral member of the Greenwich Village art scene, and this will be the first time in over fifty years that her work is publicly exhibited in New York.



*Clarissa's World, 1974* by Grace Hartigan (1922-2008), *Untitled, 1958-1961* by Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011) and *Blue Green Garden* by Vicci Sperry (1900-1995).

In addition, the exhibition will feature female Abstract Expressionists **Grace Hartigan**, **Helen Frankenthaler**, and **Lynne Drexler**. Two of the most influential contributors to the second wave of the movement were **Hartigan (1922-2008)**, who married gestural abstraction with imagery from art history and pop culture as is seen in the exhibited work *Clarissa's World, 1974*, and **Frankenthaler (1928-2011)**, who was known for staining pigment into raw canvas and whose work *Untitled, 1958-1961* will be on preview before it heads to auction in London this October. We are featuring several works, both on paper and canvas by **Lynne Drexler (1928 – 1999)** whose work had been forgotten to Art History until her work came to the auction market in 2021.

This exhibition also features the work of female artists who defy a genre, such as **Mary Corse (b. 1945)**, whose incorporation of microspheres used in highway signs has created a unique reflective quality. Her *Untitled (Inner Shaped Band), 2006*, is a rare trapezoid shaped canvas featured in our exhibition.

“This exhibition brings together works by pioneering female artists who proved they could paint or sculpt as well (or better) than their male contemporaries as well as women artists who elevated craft materials into high art,” said **Amelia Manderscheid, Vice President and Senior Director for Post-War & Contemporary Art in San Francisco**. “Showcasing these works together will demonstrate a broad spectrum of female artistic achievement over the past fifty years. It is the first time many of these artists will be shown together and it gives us a rare opportunity showcase their groundbreaking achievements in unison.”

In tandem with the exhibition, *Solid Rock Congregation* by **Ernie Barnes (1938-2009)** will be on preview before it is offered in a single lot live auction on **September 9** in **New York**. A masterpiece by Barnes that depicts a lively Sunday church service and has never been seen by the public, it is estimated at **\$500,000 - 700,000**.

-ENDS-

<b>Sale: <a href="#">The Medium is the Message: Women Artists in Contemporary Art</a></b>
Location: New York
Date: August 29 – September 9

Enquiries

For further information, email [press@bonhams.com](mailto:press@bonhams.com)

To download images, please click on this link here:

<https://bonhams.box.com/s/m0d13wxrd46ck7g3y0fsgwhe6abf6jrb>

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

**Bonhams**, founded in 1793, is one of the world's largest and most renowned auctioneers, offering fine art and collectables, motor cars and a luxury division, including jewellery, watches, wine and whisky. The main salerooms are in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris and Hong Kong, with auctions also held in Knightsbridge, Edinburgh, and Sydney. With a worldwide network of offices and regional representatives in 22 countries, Bonhams offers advice and valuation services in 53 specialist areas. For a full list of forthcoming auctions, plus details of Bonhams specialist departments, please visit [bonhams.com](http://bonhams.com)