

Women in the Visual Arts

A Tribute to Aline Dallier

(1927 - 2020)

Curator: Diana Quinby



Aline Dallier-Popper in 1978, Photograph by Françoise Janicot
Courtesy Nathalie and Emmanuelle Heidsieck

from March 3 to April 2, 2022

**Opening Thursday March 3rd
from 6 to 9 pm.**

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« I don't "defend" women artists », declared Aline Dallier-Popper in her long interview with Claudine Roméo in 2009. « **They defend themselves quite well. My job is to give them critical attention and to situate their work within the framework of contemporary art history.** » Aline Dallier Popper was the first, and for a long time the only French art historian and critic devoted to the in-depth study of women's art. Inspired by the American *Feminist Art Movement* that she encountered when visiting New York in 1973, she began doing research on the relationship between feminism and women's artistic practices. In 1974, she started publishing her first articles, namely in the French art magazine *Opus International*, and curating shows of women artists at a time when French cultural institutions had no interest whatsoever in feminism. In 1976, she created the Textile Art section for *Féminie-Dialogue*, an annual exhibition held at the U.N.E.S.C.O. in Paris, and that same year she organized *Combative Acts, Profiles and Voices*, a show of women artists from France at the A.I.R. Gallery in New York, a gallery that had been created by women artists for exhibiting work by women.

« The extent to which the word "women" and even more so the word "feminism" generated fear in France can't be overstated », said Aline Dallier-Popper to Claudine Roméo. « Not a single museum in France in the 1970's or 1980's was prepared to organize a show, small or large, that would have dealt with the presence (and absence) of women in either recent or ancient art history. » Hence the audacity and the originality of her research. In 1980, she completed her Doctoral thesis on Textile Art – the first in France to be devoted to women artists – at the University of Paris-VIII. She chose to specialize in what she called "soft art" because she felt that by reappropriating and subverting the use of traditional textile techniques (sewing, knitting, embroidery, etc.), women were in fact making a feminist statement about their status as both women and artists. « The new textile arts revive the memory of domestic practices and bring together the fundamental elements of women's counter-knowledge », she states in the introduction of her thesis.

Her study of works of art from a sociological perspective, grounded in close observation and description, led her, as she said, « to identify some important characteristics, not of what might be called “feminine” in the absolute, if that even exists, but instead of the fact of being female or the feminine condition. » Throughout her career, Aline Dallier-Popper remained highly receptive to the multiple forms of expression in contemporary art and paid close critical attention to what she called “theoretical eclecticism”. In the early 1980’s, she observed that it was women artists of the previous decade who had « largely contributed to the breaking-up of dominant avant-garde movements, ushering in greater freedom and a diversification of artistic practices. »

Aline Dallier-Popper passed away in February 2020. The Arnaud Lefebvre Gallery, one of the few Parisian galleries to exhibit mostly women artists, and the curator Diana Quinby, also an artist and art historian, have decided to pay tribute to her by bringing together a selection of works by nearly thirty artists, several of whom were her friends, and about whom she wrote in her thesis or in her many articles. Among the works exhibited there are of course textile pieces, but also paintings, drawings, collages, photographs and filmed performances, all of which represent the multiple directions that contemporary art has taken, from conceptual art to the exploration of the “materiality” of painting.

The exhibitors are :

**Thérèse Ampe-Jonas, Claude Bauret Allard,
Danièle Blanchelande, Bernadette Bour, Charlotte Calmis,
Liliane Camier, Christiane de Casteras, Colette Deblé,
Françoise Eliet, Esther Ferrer, Monique Frydman, Aline Gagnaire,
Hessie, Sara Holt, Françoise Janicot, Monique Kissel,
Maria Klonaris et Katerina Thomadaki, Marie-Rose Lortet,
Léa Lublin, Milvia Maglione, Cristina Martinez, Vera Molnar,
ORLAN, Aline Ribière, Dorothée Selz, Nancy Wilson-Pajic,
Nil Yalter.**

A catalog will accompany the exhibit, with texts by art historians and critics, all of whom knew or worked with Aline Dallier-Popper: **Dominique Berthet, Marie-Jo Bonnet, Christine de Buzon, Daniel Danétis, Fabienne Dumont, Mathilde Ferrer, Jean-Clarence Lambert, Gilbert Lascault, Gloria Orenstein, Françoise Py.** Art historians of a younger generation, for whom Aline Dallier's research has been important, have also contributed texts : **Zélia Bajaj, Anouk Chambard, Vincent Enjalbert, Franny Tachon**). The catalog will include an interview by **Diana Quinby** with Aline Dallier from 2009, as well as a recent interview with the artist **Tania Mouraud** who talks about her long friendship with Aline Dallier dating back to the beginning of their respective careers.

In France today, there's undeniably a renewed awareness of the very real inequalities that women still face not only in society at large but more specifically in the art world. Over the past ten to fifteen years, French cultural institutions have given greater visibility to women artists. It's therefore the right moment to call attention to Aline Dallier-Popper's important art historical contribution and her unwavering support of women artists. By bringing together a selection of works from both the 1970's and today, this historical exhibit showcases the continuity of women's artistic practices and the ongoing research on women's place in art history over the past forty years.

Unless otherwise indicated, all of Aline Dallier's quotes come from her interview with Claudine Roméo in *Art, féminisme, post-féminisme : Un parcours de critique d'art*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2009. Translations by Diana Quinby.

Diana Quinby

CATALOG

edited by Diana Quinby

published by Galerie Arnaud Lefebvre, Paris,

in association with the exhibition

"DES FEMMES DANS L'ART - Hommage à Aline Dallier"

/// Biography

Aline Dallier-Popper was born in Paris in 1927. She was an opera singer and employee at *Reader's Digest* when she first met the young art critic Pierre Restany in 1954. They were married in 1955, and with Restany she was introduced to modern art, abstract painting and the practice of writing about art. In 1960, she divorced Restany and met Frank Popper, also an art historian, specialist of Kinetic Art and one of the founders of the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Paris-VIII Vincennes. They were married in 1973.

In 1970, Aline Dallier enrolled as a student at the University of Paris-VIII, earning degrees in Visual Arts and Sociology. For her Masters thesis she studied "the impact of feminism on women's art in the United States." In 1974, she began publishing her first articles on women's art, mostly in the French art magazine *Opus International* and the Belgian feminist journal *Les Cahiers du GRIF*. She also began organizing exhibits of women artists, namely at the Germain Gallery and the Pilzer Gallery in Paris, and at the U.N.E.S.C.O. in Paris. In 1980, she completed her Doctoral Thesis at the University of Paris-VIII : *Activités et réalisations de femmes dans l'art contemporain. Un premier exemple: les oeuvres dérivées des techniques textiles traditionnelles* (The activities and creations of women in contemporary art. A first example: works derived from traditional textile techniques).

From 1980 until 1992, she taught Art History at the University of Paris-VIII; from 1980 until 1984, she gave a course on women in art history. From 1985 onwards, she stopped writing exclusively about women artists and pursued her growing interest in Outsider Art and psychoanalysis. In 2009, she published a collection of her writings accompanied by a long interview with Claudine Roméo in which she discusses her career and her research: *Art, féminisme, post-féminisme: Un parcours de critique d'art*, L'Harmattan, Paris (Art, feminism, post-feminism: the career of an art critic). Up until 2018 she continued publishing articles in the university art journal *Recherches en Esthétique*. She died in Paris in 2020 at the age of 92. Her husband Frank Popper passed away shortly afterwards that same year at the age of 102.

/// A Selection of Available Works in the Exhibition

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Bernadette Bour
Untitled, painting on paper, 1980

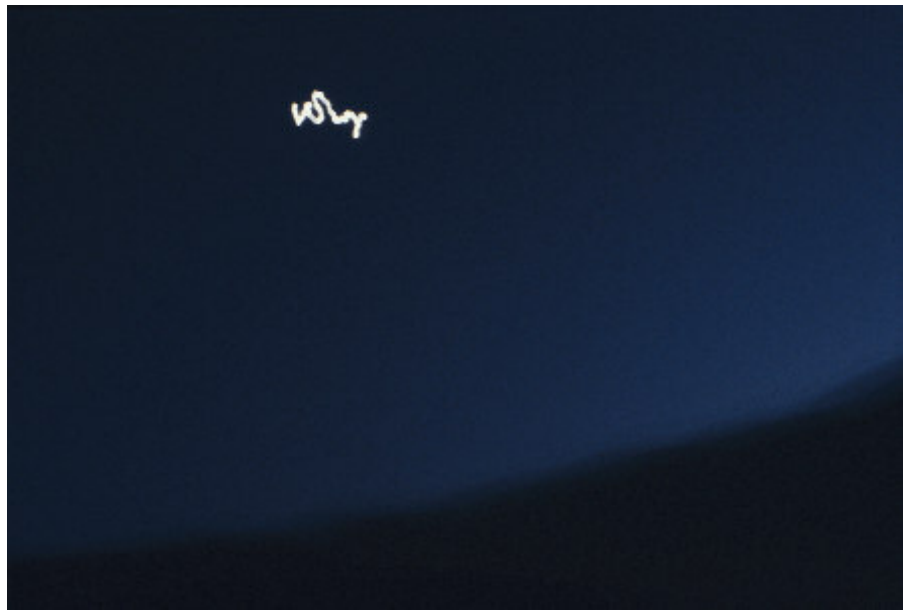


Christiane de Casteras
La Grand'mère
Soft sculpture, 1977



Esther Ferrer
Mains féministes
Collage, 2019

Sara Holt
Why
Photograph, 1981



Monique Frydman
Untitled, pastel on paper, 1976



Aline Gagnaire
Solitude
Plaster on board, 1982



Aline Ribière
Robe
Polyester muslin, 2017



Klonaris et Thomadaki
Photographs from their film
L'enfant qui a pissé des paillettes
1977
© Klonaris/Thomadaki, TDR



Marie-Rose Lortet
Ce temps des méduses
Embroidery and knitting,
2012



Léa Lublin
Dissolution dans l'eau
Performance, 1978



Dorothée Selz
Mimétisme relatif. Femme panthère
Photograph and colored cement
1973

CATALOG

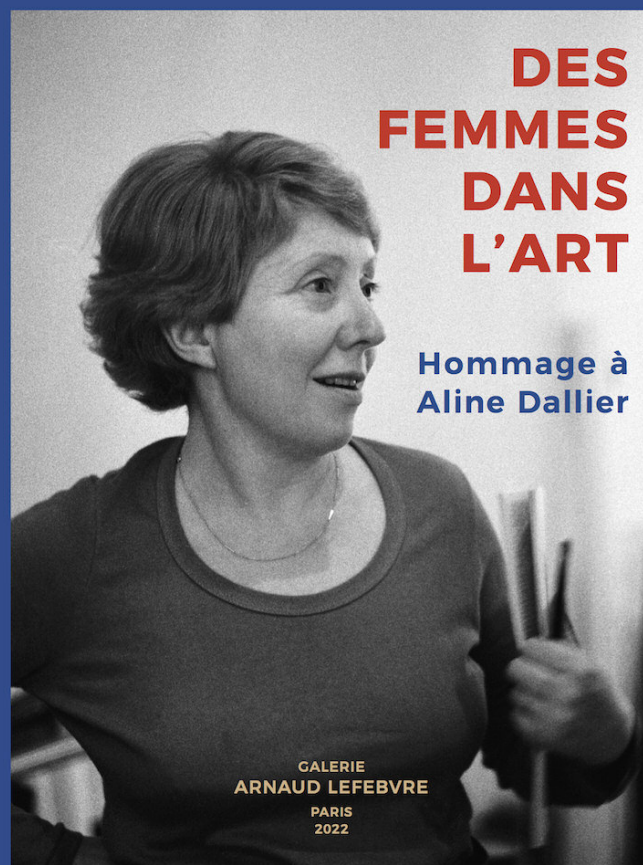


DES FEMMES DANS L'ART Hommage à Aline Dallier

Galerie Arnaud Lefebvre



Prix public : 25 euros



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Aline Dallier

GALERIE
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