

DIANE DE POLIGNAC

LOÏS FREDERICK (1930-2013)

PRESS KIT



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Available pictures and biography

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Virtual visit of the exhibition *Lois Frederic: vital colour*, May 20th - June 10th, 2020.
<https://dianedepolignac.com/en/home-gb/exhibitions-en/exhibition-lois-frederick-2020/>

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LOÏS FREDERICK (1930-2013) - available pictures



1 Lois Frederick working at the Cité Universitaire in Paris in 1955.
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2 Lois Frederick in her studio in Les Audigers.
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3 Lois Frederick in her studio in Les Audigers.
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LOÏS FREDERICK (1930-2013) - available pictures



4 Loïs Frederick in her studio in Les Audigers.
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5 Loïs Frederick in her studio in Les Audigers.
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LOÏS FREDERICK (1930-2013) - available pictures



 Loïs Frederick in Les Audigers, c. 1960.
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COLLECTIONS (SELECTED)

Denver Art Museum, Denver, USA
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, USA
Musée d'arts de Nantes, Nantes, France
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Centre national d'Art contemporain, Paris, France

EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

Artists West of the Mississipi, 1953, Denver Art Museum, USA (purchase award)
Mid-America exhibition, 1954, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, USA (purchase award),
Salon de la Jeune Peinture, 1954-1955, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
Peintres abstraits américains de Paris, 1956, Galerie Arnaud, Paris, France & travelling exhibition in Germany
Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, 1957-1959, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
Salon des Surindépendants, 1962, Paris, France
École de Paris, 1963, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, France
Salon d'Automne, 1970-1983, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Salon Grands et Jeunes d'aujourd'hui, 1971-1974, Paris, France
Le Salon d'Art Sacré, October – December 1973, Musée des monuments historiques, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, France
Les Religions dans le Monde, January– March 20th 1974, Galerie de Marseille, Marseille, France
Donation Gildas Fardel, May 1974, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France
9 peintres de l'École de Paris, April 16th – May 3rd 1974, Galerie Dinastia, Lisbon, Portugal; May 13th–29th 1974, Galerie Dinastia, Porto, Portugal
30 Créateurs, May 6th 1976, Galerie Claude Bollack, Strasbourg, France
Salon de Mai, 1976-1978, Galerie de la Défense, Paris, France
Peinture et sculpture de poche, Decembre 8th – January 31st 1979, Galerie Anne Blanc, Marly-Le-Roy, France
30 Créateurs d'Aujourd'hui, April 8th – May 7th 1981, Galerie Convergence, Nantes, France
Tendances de la peinture abstraite contemporaine, January 7th – February 24th 1983, Centre culturel de la Villedieu, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France
Lois Frederick, peintures et gouaches, 1984, Le Grand-Cachot-de-Vent, Vallée de la Brévine (Neuchâtel), Switzerland

La part des femmes dans l'art contemporain, March 7th – April 1st 1984, Galerie Municipale, Vitry-sur-Seine, France

Festival d'Art contemporain, peinture et sculpture, July 22nd – August 26th 1984, hall de l'Hôtel de Ville et bibliothèque municipale, Sisteron, France

Un autre regard sur la peinture présente, July 1st – September 18th 1984, Centre régional d'Art contemporain - Château du Tremblay, Fontenoy, France

Les Années 1950, January 18th – February 20th 1985, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Dunkerque, France & travelling exhibition in France

Aspects de l'art en France de 1950 à 1980, June 28th – October 6th 1985, Musée Ingres, Montauban, France

Aspects de la peinture des années 50, April 10th – May 10th 1986, Galerie Anne Lavenier, Paris, France

Arcrea 86, Exposition d'art contemporain, March 17th – April 14th 1986, Château de la Napoule, Fondation Henry Clews, Mandelieu-La Napoule, France

Aspect de l'Art abstrait des années 50, 1988-1989, travelling exhibition in France

Lois Frederick solo show, April 15th – July 30th 2015, Galerie Diane de Polignac, Paris, France

Bleu, Jaune, Rouge, La couleur Libérée, November 28th 2015 – March 13th 2016, Musée de Tessé, Le Mans, France

Lois Frederick : la couleur vitale, May 20th – June 10th 2020, Galerie Diane de Polignac, Paris, France

BIBLIOGRAPHY (SELECTED)

Michel Faucher, *Lois Frederick*, extract *Cimaise* n°186, January - February 1987, Paris

Lois Frederick, exhibition catalog, Galerie Diane de Polignac, 2015, Paris

Alexandre Crochet, « Une américaine à Paris », *Le Quotidien de l'Art*, July 2015, Paris

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LOÏS FREDERICK: VITAL COLOUR

Mathilde Gubanski, Diane de Polignac Gallery, 2020

Loïs Frederick was born in 1930 in Hay Springs, a Nebraska village with a population of 570 in the American Great Plains region. Nothing destined her to become an artist, and yet at a very early age she developed a feeling for colour. After winning a Fulbright award (twice!), this artist spent all her life in Paris. Loïs Frederick is nevertheless a completely American artist.

Landscapes of Nebraska

The American landscapes of her childhood doubtless left a mark on Loïs Frederick's work. Between the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains and the National Forest of Nebraska, these landscapes of contrasts and huge expanses nurtured her imagination. From this, the artist would retain horizontal formats and compositions built up from a balance of masse. The palette of her early works was natural, inspired by landscapes. She brought together blues, greens, blacks and earth colours.

Vital Colour

Loïs Frederick, like a true colour magician, developed her palette over the 1950s and 1960s. She added halftones: pinks, purples, oranges, turquoises... This great colourist combined with skill primary and secondary colours, while continuing to give them structure by using black brushes. The gesture is slower, meditative. Colour took precedence over form. It became both subject and medium in Loïs Frederick's work. Jean Baudrillard described American landscapes in his book *Amérique*: "the amazement of the heat is metaphysical there. Even the colours, pastel blues, mauves, lilacs, result from a slow, timeless, geological combustion. The mineral character of the subsoil surfaces in crystalline plants. All the natural elements suffer by fire. The desert is no longer a landscape, it is the pure form that results from the abstraction of all the others."¹

Loïs Frederick & American Abstraction

In *Art and Culture*, the art critic Clement Greenberg evoked the great painters of the School of New York. His comments about Hans Hofmann can also apply to the works of Loïs Frederick: "Here colour determines form from the inside as it were; thick splotches, welts, smears and ribbons of paint dispose themselves into intelligible shapes the instant they hit the surface; out of the fullness of colour come drawing and design."² Clement Greenberg also evokes the work of Mark Rothko, which Loïs Frederick discovered in 1950 and left a huge impression on her.

At the end of the 1960s, a new medium revolutionized Loïs Frederick's painting: acrylic. It allowed her to enrich

her palette even more. The colours are bright, dazzling, and fluorescent. Colour invaded everything and Loïs Frederick joined her American compatriots of the Colour Field and All Over movements. The painting no longer had any meaning, no borders, and no centre. Clement Greenberg said about Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still: "They attempt to expel every reminiscence of sculptural illusion by creating a counter-illusion of light alone – a counter illusion which consists of the projection of an indeterminate surface of warm and luminous colour in front of the actual painted surface."³

Essential Light

On paper, Loïs Frederick brilliantly combined gouache, ink, acrylic, pastel, charcoal etc... All the techniques, finishes, all the materials, all the colours work for the light. This what Loïs Frederick sought ultimately: to recreate the effects of light. Like late Monet and like the Abstract Expressionists, Loïs Frederick plunges us into a poetic universe that is mysterious and meditative, built up on transparencies. She brings us back to these American landscapes with their unlimited horizontality, where time seems to stop: "It's a sort of suspended eternity where the year is renewed very day. With the certainty that it will be like this every day, that each evening there will be this rainbow of all the colours of the spectrum in which the light, after having reigned all day in its invisible form, is still analysed in the evening according to all the nuances of which it is comprised, before disappearing. The nuances are already those of the instantaneous rainbow that goes on fire in the wind on the ridge of Pacific waves."⁴

In 1986, Loïs Frederick lost her husband Gérard Schneider, the great pioneer of Lyrical Abstraction. She put her own art aside completely for fifteen years to concentrate on promoting the work of this great artist. In the shadows, Loïs Frederick passed from being a great woman artist to being the wife of a great artist.

At the start of the 2000's, it was a car headlight piercing the fog that brought Loïs Frederick back to her search for light. She returned to painting, pushed by a vital impetus "what haunts the American mind is that the lights are extinguished."⁵ She created sublime solar explosions, where the diluted colour illuminated a white background; and dazzling lights and shadows, where bright colours contrast with a dark background.

Loïs Frederick chose to spend her life in France. However, like her transatlantic compatriots living in Paris, she nevertheless remained an American painter. Nurtured by the memory of the landscapes of her childhood, Loïs Frederick created an authentic and personal body of work.

3. Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1971

4. Jean Baudrillard, *Amérique*, Paris, Grasset, 1995

5. *ibid*

1. - Jean Baudrillard, *Amérique*, Paris, Grasset, 1995

2. - Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1971

LOÏS FREDERICK

Michel Faucher, art critic, 1987

“Well beyond morals to be discovered, it is the immorality of space to be covered that counts... The seasons have no more meaning: morning is spring, noon is summer, and the desert nights are cold without ever being winter”. Jean Baudrillard, writing about America (Jean Baudrillard, *Amérique*, éditions Grasset, 1986). Loïs Frederick’s works are tinged with that America, fundamental and essential in order to understand the epoch. Of her native Nebraska, she has retained images of immense plains leading to Rocky Mountains. Latitude: Rome. Altitude: 2700 feet. Sun, light, whatever the season. Climate of contrasts...

In 1950, Loïs Frederick saw a painting by Rothko. “I’m not interested in color, it’s light I’m after”, he said. An important lesson. The unconscious presence of spaces, the desire to capture light, to transcribe its nuances as well as its mechanisms are the basis as much as the finality of a strong and structured work.

No ambiguity is possible. Loïs Frederick moves in this unique direction, with repetitive forms to express it. Regular masses are superposed, collide, touch, fill the canvas, absorb and reflect light.

The painting, the forms intervene like the glass of stained-glass. Light passes through matter, bounces off the white of the canvas. The texture of the work comes from this complex transit where real light plays through expressed luminosity. This combination incites dense and constant vibrations animating a rigorous and spare itinerary. “One day, it was in January, everything was gray, there was fog, a city worker was carrying one of those fluorescent red work signs. It was magical”. Fluorescence then became one of the regular components of Loïs Frederick’s work. Excepting a naturalist palette of green, brown, and gray when she arrived in Paris in 1953 – climate of the period – it is reds, yellows, and ochres that have always characterized her canvases. Acrylics and fluorescence also allow for excessive, even aggressive greens, blues, yellows, and pinks. The passage from oil to acrylic facilitates transparency, the play of light is ameliorated, the undulations accelerated.

The equilibrium of the masses, their organization leaves little room for improvisation. Loïs Frederick also practices gouache and drawing, which can serve as reflection for work of greater scale often expressed in very large formats. Reminiscence of space. Each form is a structure playing a unique and non-interchangeable role, whose sequence occurs to the rhythm of musical evolutions... The direct and almost instinctive gesture is not completely excluded. But it remains controlled. Loïs Frederick uses brushes. They increase fluidity, augment the presence of interstices, multiply the wanderings of light. This work, and it is not its smallest paradox, vibrates with a cold, abstract spirituality. Nothing solicits, no ease intervenes. These unequal strips of variable thickness, blended with

fragility or brutality, are generated from the single fact of contained and radiant light, the troubling impression of inhabited emptiness. The extreme lightness of the colours, their violence also heightens the strange idea of a palpable weightlessness. The immense and coloured areas, few in number, which occupy the space of the canvas are significant of reflection on colours unknown to light. The American painter Paul Jenkins only uses diffractory colours.

Loïs Frederick makes the phenomenon more complex in adding other derivatives. Ochres, for example. A different relationship appears. The artist attempts to manipulate the potentialities of light, those of luminosity. Her specific imagination manifests itself there. The addition of elements inhabitual in relation to the natural decomposition of light adds to the apparent distancing taken facing the subject.

Timidity or reserve, humour or fear... Light expresses life as much as it questions it. Loïs Frederick looks at these questions forcefully and lucidly. Her work, with its contained emotion, the repetition of never-neutral forms, reveals to us her own doubts.

The forces put into play are those customary to abstract creation. The particularity of the treatment, the relationship to the instantaneousness of the gesture, “a painting can take several years before being finished”, the conception of the forms, of the structure, distance Loïs Frederick from Lyrical Abstraction without placing her in the field of cold geometric painting... That is where her originality lies, her art is American first, her traveling companions – conscious or not – from the other side of the Atlantic.