

DIANE DE POLIGNAC

LOÏS FREDERICK (1930-2013)

After studying Fine Arts at the University of Nebraska and then at the Kansas City Art Institute, Loïs Frederick received in 1953 the prestigious Fulbright award. In 1954, a very rare phenomenon, Loïs Frederick won this scholarship a second time. Like many American artists, she decided to go to Paris to perfect her artistic training.

The artist Loïs Frederick's journey logically finds its place in the American cultural excitement in Paris. Loïs Frederick thus remains in close contact with her culture of origin and therefore remains a fundamentally American artist.



Loïs Frederick working at the Cité Universitaire in Paris in 1955

BIOGRAPHY

An American painter, Loïs Frederick was born and grew up in Nebraska. Her works are imbued with the immensity of this part of the American Great Plains region and its contrasting climates. After studying Fine Arts at the University of Nebraska and then at the Kansas City Art Institute, Loïs Frederick arrived in Paris in 1953, having received a Fulbright Award. Unusually she won this grant twice. Living in the Cité Universitaire, she plunged into the effervescence of Post War abstraction in Paris. The art critic Marcel Brion, who followed her work, introduced her to the great artist of lyrical and gestural abstraction Gérard Schneider, who became her husband. Settled permanently in France, Loïs Frederick remained a profoundly American painter. Furthermore, in 1956, she contributed to the exhibition *Peintres Abstraits Américains de Paris* at the Galerie Arnaud. This was shown first in Paris, and then travelled around Germany. Her paintings also began to enter public collections. In 1953, the Denver Art Museum bought a painting from her and in 1954 in turn the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City acquired one of her works. In 1974, through the Gildas Fardel donation, a painting by Loïs Frederick entered the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Nantes.

Loïs Frederick also regularly participated in key art events in Paris: the Salon de la Jeune Peinture (1954-1955), the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles (1957-1959), the Salon des Surindépendants (1962), the Salon d'Automne (1970-1983), the Salon Grands et Jeunes d'aujourd'hui (1971-1974). In 1963, she was among the artists represented in the group exhibition of the *École de Paris* at the Galerie Charpentier. A woman painter, she was also included, alongside Sonia Delaunay, Joan Mitchell, Niki de Saint Phalle and others, in the group show *La part des femmes dans l'art contemporain* shown at Vitry-sur-Seine which, in the 1980s, already highlighted the work of women painters. Loïs Frederick also participated in the leading exhibition for appreciating Lyrical Abstraction: *Aspects de l'Art Abstrait des Années 1950*, a travelling group show that circulated all over France in 1988-1989, with works by Pierre Soulages, Hans Hartung, Gérard Schneider, Chu Teh-Chun, Zao Wou-Ki, Nicolas de Staël, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva...

Nothing predestined Loïs Frederick for being a painter and yet early on, she developed an intuition for colour. Influenced by Henri Matisse for his strong chromatic choices and Mark Rothko for the vibrancy of colour and search for light, her art is fully integrated into American Colorfield Painting. She worked in fact using flat areas of colour that she applied in layers, removing any depth in

the composition. From the agricultural plains of Nebraska, Loïs Frederick was a terrestrial who created in her works a solidly constructed form of abstraction, worked vertically. It is the application of the paint, laid out on the canvas in a slow and controlled process of creation, that structures her work, using the painting technique developed by Hans Hofmann of *push and pull*, in which colours applied in dense flat areas “emerge from” and “recede” on the support, creating a network of contrasts in the painting. The paintbrush also stops well before the edge of the canvas, creating a network of coloured masses that are simultaneously solidly constructed and create a floating area, suited to a meditative space. With her large coloured fields, Loïs Frederick invites the viewer to an immersive experience in the work: a direct experience with colour, with light, in a space that has no horizon line.

After using a naturalist palette, at the start of the 1970s Loïs Frederick adopted acrylic and fluorescent paint that allowed her to obtain a very daring range of colours, with great contrasts: shrill, deafening blues, greens, yellows, pinks. However, the saturated colour did not prevent light from emerging from the background.

In 1986, Loïs Frederick lost her husband Gérard Schneider. She then devoted her energy for about fifteen years to promoting his art, moving for a while from being a woman artist to being the wife of an artist. It is a visual impulse, the headlight of a car piercing fog at the start of the 2000s, that brought Loïs Frederick back to painting. Her absolute search for light pushed her to use broad paintbrushes with fluorescent, strident colours against immaculate white backgrounds. Loïs Frederick died in Paris in 2013.

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Translation: Jane MacAvock

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 Mississippi, 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



Lois Frederick in Les Audigers, in the countryside of Paris