

Medium  
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Web  
11.04.2024  
<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-10-women-artists-capturing-beauty-nature-abstraction>

Publication  
Author  
Artsy  
Maxwell Rabb



Art

## 10 Women Artists Capturing the Beauty of Nature through Abstraction

Maxwell Rabb

Apr 11, 2024 4:20PM



**A**rt and nature are often so closely intertwined that distinguishing them is impossible. While this might seem obvious when it comes to landscapes, this is equally true of abstract art. "I don't paint nature, I am nature," said Jackson Pollock in response to Hans Hofmann's critical jab that Pollock should paint scenes based on the natural world.

Many dismissed Abstract Expressionist works like Pollock's as merely avant-garde explosions of color, and yet these artists also found inspiration in the flora and fauna of the world around them, though this was only recognized after the movement's peak. In 1958, the exhibition "Nature in Abstraction" at the Whitney Museum of American Art challenged the limited view of abstract art, arguing that nature's influence was fundamental to Abstract Expressionism.

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Nonetheless, that exhibition was limited in its own way, ignoring women artists from the movement, such as Joan Mitchell, Lee Krasner, and Grace Hartigan, who were conspicuously absent. Today, a new version of this narrative is being planted at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila in the Philippines, where “Wild: Women Abstractionists on Nature,” on view through June 22nd, spotlights 34 women artists working to capture the beauty of nature in abstract form.

“Women have long been associated with nature and the environment, and with ‘Wild,’ I wanted to highlight the lasting impact of nature as inspiration through abstract works by these women artists,” said Kathy Huang, the show’s curator. “The difference now is that it has become increasingly more common to be someone of the diaspora, fusing visual references from a collection of places one might consider home.”

As contemporary women artists continue to build on the legacy of nature-inspired abstraction, for our increasingly international world, we explore the work of 10 women artists whose abstract work explores the beauty of the earth.

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# Marina Rheingantz

B. 1983, Araraquara, Brazil. Lives and works in São Paulo.



Marina Rheingantz  
*Fffffff*, 2018  
Zeno X Gallery  
Sold

Marina Rheingantz draws on her memory of her Brazilian homeland to create semi-abstract paintings, picturing the vast terrains of oceanside cliffs, forestscapes, mountain ranges, and desert wastelands.

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Raised in Araraquara, in the heart of Brazil's countryside, Rheingantz has retained a connection to the environment and, through her textural and expansive works, attempts to reconstruct their ephemeral qualities. *Fffffff* (2018), for example, portrays a gray, mountainous terrain accented with vivid splashes of orange and yellow, encapsulating nature in a state of flux.

Educated in fine arts at Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado in São Paulo, Rheingantz is represented by White Cube and Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel. Residing and working in São Paulo, Rheingantz experienced a meteoric rise in 2023, with her solo show debut "Maré" at White Cube and record-breaking auction sales last March.

Maxwell Rabb  
Maxwell Rabb is Artsy's Staff Writer.

*Thumbnail and header: Lilian Thomas Burwell, "Enfolded," 1973. Courtesy of the artist and Berry Campbell Gallery*

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