

RICHARD SALTOUN

PRESS RELEASE

Unveiled Desires: Fetish & The Erotic in Surrealism, 1880 – Today
Curated by RAW (Rediscovering Art by Women)

Part 1: 13 October – 20 December 2025
Part 2: 13 January – 28 February 2026

Opening reception: Tuesday, 13 January | 6pm



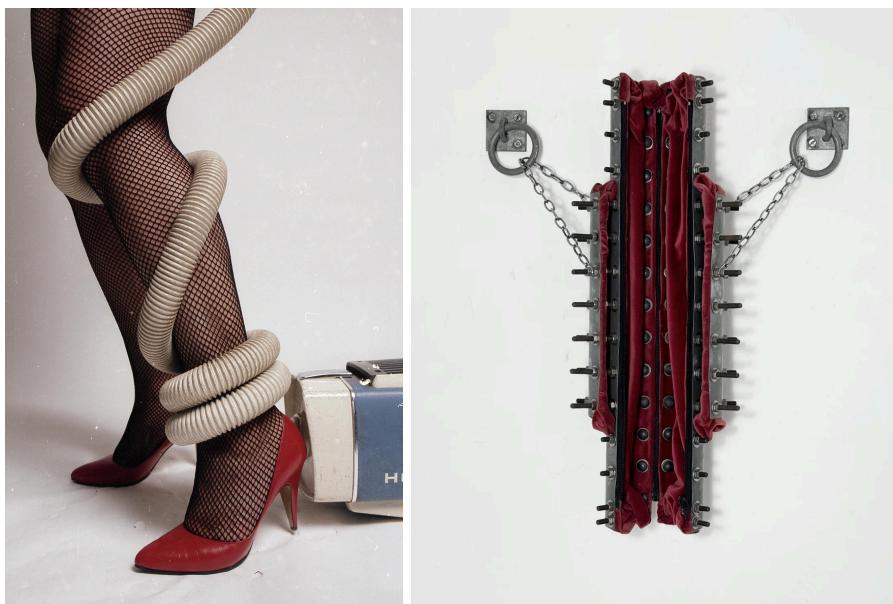
Richard Saltoun Gallery presents the second chapter of *Unveiled Desires: Fetish & The Erotic in Surrealism, 1880–Today*, a two-part exhibition curated by Maudji Mendel of RAW (Rediscovering Art by Women). Dedicated to championing overlooked women artists, the exhibition continues the gallery's wider commitment to reframing Surrealism through the practices of women and queer artists across more than a century.

From its origins in 1920s Paris, Surrealism positioned desire, subversion, and the unconscious at the heart of its radical project. Yet women and queer artists have long redefined the erotic within the movement, not as spectacle, but as a potent force for self-representation, critique, and imaginative freedom. Across painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, and textile, Part II explores how eroticism shapes identity and acts as a lens through which psychic and symbolic landscapes are revealed.

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Erotic Surrealism – Identity, Desire, and the Body opens with a juxtaposition of two pieces: a monumental photograph by Jo Spence (1934–1992), reflecting on the connection between the erotic and domestic labour, and a visceral sculpture by Cathy de Monchaux (b. 1960), combining industrial rigidity with textile softness to create a sensual and fetishistic allusion to corporeality.

Two soft sculptures by DaddyBears, conceived specifically for *Unveiled Desires*, are exhibited in the alcoves. Entitled *Fantasy Home* and *Fantasy Garden*, these silky black forms float weightlessly and evoke the pliability of dreams. Their tactile presence channels the eroticism of touch, rest, and imagination, echoing Surrealism's fascination with the charged intimacy of objects.

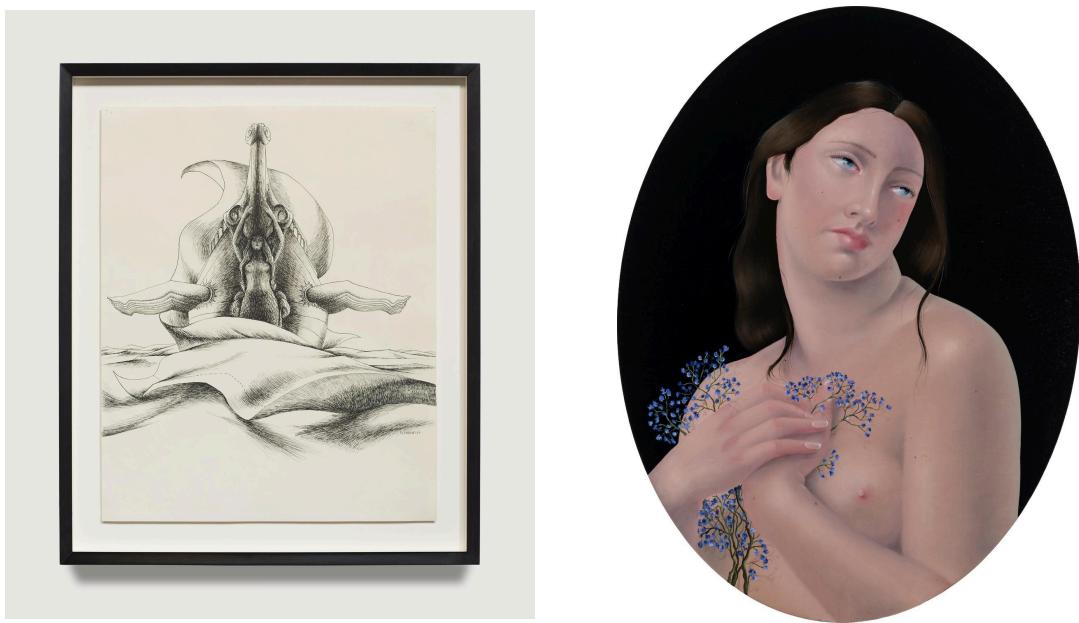


The second gallery brings together works by Natalia González Martín (b. 1995), Anna Sampson (b. 1993), Síomha Harrington (b. 1997), Marion Adnams (1898–1995), Jane Graverol (1905–1984), Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985) and Elsa Schiaparelli (1890–1973), all exploring an artistic fascination with the female body. Though differing in media and period, these artists rethink the existing archetype of conception and representation. Here, the body becomes a site of negotiation, between cultural expectation and lived experience, between desire and myth. In Adnams' composition, *Emperor Moths / Thunder On the Left*, female breasts are detached and transformed into autonomous, playful forms, floating spheres of selfhood that disrupt the objectifying gaze by refusing anatomical coherence. Graverol's figure, by contrast, is truncated at the clavicle, withholding the identity of the subject and challenging the viewer's desire for narrative closure. Together, their reimagining of the female form establishes a lineage that extends to younger contemporary artists such as Sampson, whose stark black-and-white practice employs seriality, gesture, and material presence to frame the body as an active, self-possessed landscape rather than an idealized object of the gaze. Drawing on feminist

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critiques of representation, the artists disrupt the stabilising force of archetypes by introducing ambiguity, strangeness, and agency. Their works reimagine the body not as a fixed symbol but as a mutable surface of projection, seduction, fantasy, and resistance.

The final gallery presents works by Suzanne van Damme (1901–1986), Mimi Benoît Parent (1924–2005), Mary Beth Edelson (1933–2021), Tali Lennox (b. 1993), Natalia González Martín (b. 1995), Bona de Mandiargues (1926–2000), Constanza Pulit (b. 1994), and Cossette Zeno (b. 1930). Here, dreams and eroticism coalesce to explore the freedoms, and vulnerabilities, of the body. Mary Beth Edelson's work speaks to the symbolic void and the erotic within the mythic. Drawings by the seminal Surrealist Bona de Mandiargues interrogate the rigidity of gendered forms. The obscured female figures in Tali Lennox's painting drift through an enigmatic landscape where pleasure and destruction converge. Constanza Pulit's screenprint unfolds from an intimate, psychological realm, where she instinctively generates a sense of in-betweenness, merging Latin American mythologies with personal memory to explore heritage, identity, and the erotically charged unconscious. Cossette Zeno's biomorphic *Aquatic Suspension* explores space, the human and the feminine.



Artists featured include:

Marion Adnams, DaddyBears, Suzanne van Damme, Mary Beth Edelson, Jane Graverol, Siomha Harrington, Tali Lennox, Bona de Mandiargues, Natalia González Martín, Cathy de Monchaux, Meret Oppenheim, Mimi Benoît Parent, Constanza Pulit, Anna Sampson, Elsa Schiaparelli, Jo Spence and Cossette Zeno.

Notes for Editors

Rediscovering Art by Women (RAW)

Rediscovering Art by Women (RAW) is a registered UK charity that champions women and queer artists past and present, working to correct centuries of exclusion and ensure their work is recognised, valued and celebrated.

At its heart is the growing RAW Collection, which showcases works by 20th-century women artists, built over 30 years by founder Sacha Llewellyn (winner of the Berger Art History Prize, 2017). With a strong focus on Surrealism, the collection includes artists such as Ithell Colquhoun, Jane Graverol, Winifred Knights, Françoise Gilot, Marion Adnams, Suzanne Van Damme and Rachel Baes. The RAW Collection is internationally recognised, with loans to Tate Modern and Tate St. Ives, Centre Pompidou, Musée de Montmartre, Royal Museums of Belgium, Fundación MAPFRE, Kunstmuseum Brandts, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Wolfsonian Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Toledo Museum of Art, and many more. Beyond the collection, RAW leads acclaimed research projects, contributes to major publications and exhibitions, and collaborates with museums and galleries worldwide to bring women and queer artists into the spotlight.

Richard Saltoun Gallery

Founded in 2012 in London, and with locations in Rome (2022) and New York (2024), the gallery's program focuses on rediscovering historically important artists, combined with representing a younger generation. The gallery has a yearly program of exhibitions, publications and events, and participates in art fairs worldwide. In 2019, the gallery held a year-long initiative titled '100% Women', addressing gender inequality in the art world. The gallery showed only women artists at both its gallery and at art fairs for the entire year.

In 2021, the year's programme was dedicated to the philosopher Hannah Arendt, confronting complex socio-political issues, accompanied by a series of significant talks and a scholarly publication. The gallery is seen as a leader in exhibiting women avant-garde pioneers. It represented 4 such artists at the 2024 Venice Biennale. It also preserves legacies through estate representation including Helen Chadwick, Bertina Lopes and Jo Spence amongst others.

Images:

1. Marion Adnams, *Emperor Moths / Thunder On the Left*, 1963
2. Tali Lennox, *Untitled*, 2025
3. Jo Spence, *Libido Uprising*, 1989
4. Cathy de Monchaux, *Secure*, 1988
5. Mimi Benoit Parent, *La proue surréaliste [The surrealist prowe]*, 1964
6. Natalia González Martín, *Forget Me Not*, 2023

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