

# 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.

## RICHARD SALTOUN

***Erotic Surrealism – Identity, Desire, and the Body*** opens with works by Marion Adnams, Jane Graverol and Tali Lennox, establishing a cross-generational dialogue between the erotic, the fragmented body, and the Surrealist imagination. In Adnams' composition, 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 Lennox, whose obscured female figures drift through an enigmatic landscape where pleasure and destruction converge. As seminal figures, Adnams and Graverol pathed the way for younger contemporary artists to find, within Surrealism, a terrain of playful resistance, self-invention and desire.

The second gallery brings together works by Anna Sampson, Cathy de Monchaux, Mimi Benoit Parent, Meret Oppenheim and Elsa Schiapperalli. Though differing in medium and period, these artists share a concern with rethinking the archetype of the female body. Here, the body becomes a site of negotiation, between cultural expectation and lived experience, between desire and myth. Drawing on feminist critiques of representation, these 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.



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The final gallery presents works by Jo Spence, Mary Beth Edelson, Siomha Harrington, Cossette Zeno, Natalia González Martín, Bona de Mandiargues, Suzanne Van Damme and Constanza Pulit. Here, dreams and eroticism coalesce to explore the freedoms, and vulnerabilities, of the body. Drawings by the seminal Surrealist Bona de Mandiargues interrogate the rigidity of gendered forms, while other artists in the room foreground the psychic landscapes

## RICHARD SALTOUN

in which eroticism dwells. Mary Beth Edelson's works speak to the symbolic void and the erotic within the mythic; Cossette Zeno's biomorphic *Aquatic Suspension* explores space, the human and the feminine; Constanza Pulit's screenprints unfold 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.

The exhibition also features newly created soft sculptures by DaddyBears, conceived specifically for *Unveiled Desires*. These silky black forms appear to float within the alcoves, sensual, weightless objects that evoke the pliability of dreams. Their tactile presence channels the erotics of touch, rest, and imagination, echoing Surrealism's fascination with the charged intimacy of objects.



### 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, Juliana Seraphim, Jo Spence and Cossette Zeno.

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## 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.

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Images:

1. Marion Adnams, *Emperor Moths / Thunder On the Left*, 1963
2. Tali Lennox, *Untitled*, 2025
3. Suzanne van Damme, *Les fées [The fairies]*, 1950c.
4. Mimi Benoît Parent, *La proue surréaliste [The surrealist prow]*, 1964
5. Juliana Seraphim, *Untitled (Hermaphrodite Figure)*, 1968
6. Natalia González Martín, *Forget Me Not*, 2023

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