

Form Over Feminism: A Walkthrough Hauser, Wirth & Schimmel's Debut Show in LA

BY SARA ROFFINO, ART+AUCTION | MARCH 13, 2016



Eva Hesse's "Aught," 1968.
(Courtesy Hauser Wirth & Schimmel)

Curators Paul Schimmel and Jenni Sorkin walk and talk with *Art+Auction*'s Sara Roffino about a few of the groundbreaking works in "Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculptures by Women, 1947-2016," the debut show at Hauser, Wirth & Schimmel in downtown Los Angeles.

As Hauser Wirth & Schimmel unveils its newly renovated, 100,000-square-foot exhibition space in the heart of downtown Los Angeles on March 13, it will reveal far more than one of the world's largest commercial art venues. Inaugurating the space is "Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women, 1947-2016," a near-comprehensive rewrite of the modern and contemporary history of sculpture and the kind of exhibition that is the signature of gallery partner Paul Schimmel, the former chief curator of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art.

Winding through seven separate buildings that previously functioned as the longest-active flour mill in Los Angeles, the exhibition roughly follows the decade-by-decade trajectory of the past 70 years of abstract sculpture. With works by heavyweights like [Louise Nevelson](#) and [Lynda Benglis](#), the long-overlooked Senga Nengudi, and the youngest artist in the show, Abigail Deville,

curators Schimmel and Jenni Sorkin challenge the forces that have prevented these artists from receiving recognition equal to that of their male counterparts while illustrating the ways in which female sculptors have written their own history with their own materials and their own lineage. A significant number of these artists chose to live outside the art world, focusing on their studios and practices rather than socializing and self-promotion, leading perhaps to less exposure but without compromise in the rigor, importance, or brilliance of their work.

Ursula von Rydingsvard

Like Abakanowicz, von Rydingsvard comes out of an Eastern European context that held a kind of deprivation. Her parents were Eastern European refugees in East Germany, where the family lived until 1950 when they emigrated to the United States before the artist's 10th birthday. *Untitled (Nine Cones)*, 1976, is a transitional work in her oeuvre because it was made around the time she discovered and started making sculpture in cedar, which is quite malleable and creates a real materiality in her work. She uses a lot of open forms, carving into the piece to make shapes. This is one of her more minimal early pieces. There's a repetition of nine forms that stand almost four feet tall; they are arranged in rows and the scale is fairly large—it's almost human scale. Following this, von Rydingsvard went on to make much larger-scale public commissions and to rub graphite into the cedar to change the color and texture of her works. —JS