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Carrie Johnson Francine Tint Joan Grubin Mary Sue Carol Bruns
Nicole Peyrafitte Sumayyah Samaha Anki King Claire Seidl
Sandi Slone Jo Ann Rothschild Carol Barsha Judith Henry
Claudia Doring-Baez Mary Flinn Liz Atlas Christine Heindl
Elisa Jensen April Vollmer Fran Shalom Petey Brown Susan Bee
Susan Mastrangelo Fran O'Neill Claire McConaughy Betsy Weis
Judith Braun Cair Crawford Phillis Ideal Carol Diamond Joy Nagy
Fredericka Foster Laurel Marx Debra Pearlman Esther Podemski
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100 WOMEN OF SPIRIT

100 Women of Spirit

This catalogue is published to accompany the
100 Women of Spirit exhibition (June 25 - July 18, 2024)
that celebrates the conclusion of 9 editions of
Salon Zürcher, 11 Women of Spirit

This exhibition is dedicated to Joan Mitchell

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Women of Spirit

an essay in celebration of 100 Women of Spirit a salon created by Gwenolee Zürcher

by: Véronique Chagnon-Burke

Since 2020, the Salon Zürcher has been reborn. Focusing on women artists, *11 Women of Spirit*, the tradition of the salon as an intimate place to encounter art, where one can spend serious time looking, is again very much alive. Every May and September, the Zürcher gallery presents 11 women artists, in a mini art fair which runs parallel to Frieze and the Armory Show. With this exhibition, *11 Women of Spirit Part 9*, their number has reached nearly one hundred. This is not only the occasion to celebrate the nine prior editions of *11 Women of Spirit* but also the opportunity to look to the future, to a new salon in September 2024, the first edition of *100 Women of Spirit+*.

The word salon conjures many meanings. As a domestic space, it has a long history, from the literary salon of the French elite women in the 17th and 18th century to the salon of the transnational avant-garde of the likes of Gertrude Stein in Paris and Florine Stettheimer in New York. For the 'women of spirit' of preceding centuries, culture was emancipatory, hosting poets, artists, musicians, and writers gave them an agency that they did not have in the public sphere. The French expression, 'femmes d'esprit', implies cultured and sophisticated conversations, witty exchanges but also something more spiritual, something signals that these women wanted to be considered more than just a passive subject, obedient and submissive. The agency carried by the word in French is even stronger in English as the word also possessed the implication of energy which it does not really have in its French version.

From the beginning, the historical character of the 'Femme d'esprit' was central in shaping the idea for the nine exhibitions. *11 Women of Spirit* is part of a long empowering history, with a strong legacy. Today, the artistic and cultural spheres are no longer the only places where women can have an impact, *11 Women of Spirit* is an homage to all the women of the far and more recent pasts who embraced art. Through art, either as makers or as supporters, as artists, patrons, gallerists, and collectors, they found ways to assert their own voice and left inspiring marks on history.

For many years, the Zürcher Gallery has been committed to show historical women artists who have been forgotten, giving them again the visibility they deserved. Thanks to a series of important exhibitions of the works of Regina Bogat, Merrill Wagner, Alice Adams, June Leaf, Lynn Umlauf, Alix Le Méléder and Kazuko Miyamoto, we realized, not only the art historical importance of their oeuvre, but that these artists had long and productive careers. While most of these artists are now in their 80s and 90s, they have opened the door for the next generation. *11 Women of Spirit* was born from the desire of the gallery to answer the legitimate demand for visibility from the next generation of women artists. With *11 Women of Spirit*, Gwenolee Zürcher is creating a wider context for the historical artists she has been supporting. Each artist who has taken part in the nine editions of *11 Women of Spirit* gives more relevance to her original project, creating a lineage between the generations.

11 Women of Spirit comes together in an organic way, there is no theme. Each edition is shaped by an informal network of connections. Edition after edition, *11 Women of Spirit* has become a community, the artists, once selected by Gwenolee Zürcher, participate in one show, coming together as a group at the openings of each edition. This sense of community extends beyond the walls of the gallery, some of the women of spirit meet informally, they have grown their own network, and exhibition opportunities supporting each other. The diversity of each *11 Women of Spirit* demonstrates clearly that this organic system of recommendation works. While the format may be reminiscent of cooperative galleries such as A.I.R Gallery, founded in 1972, which showed the works of some of the gallery's artists like Kazuko Miyamoto, the atmosphere of *11 Women of Spirit* is different.

As decades have gone by since the early breakthrough of the feminist artists, some of Women of Spirit commented on how the mood has changed since the 1960s, the debates and the issues have shifted, leaving more space for the art. Ultimately what all these artists have in common, beyond style, beyond media, is confidence in their practice. Through the years, they have gained a certain distance, a certain wiseness and maturity.

Gwenolee Zürcher's long term vision for her gallery allows for an insightful formula to work, while she is listening to and learning from the artists, she sees the 11 Women of Spirit as part of a larger endeavor. Her vision is informed by art history, her love of the modern art tradition, her interest in process and for the idiosyncrasy of the different artistic mediums. The artists stand on solid ground and make ambitious works, that pay attention to process and to the integrity of their medium.

Since 2020, nine editions of 11 Women of Spirit have brought visibility to the work of nearly one hundred artists, in an acknowledgment that art making is a life-long commitment. What these exhibitions have accomplished is creating a community across generations, by allowing for a strong network of support to develop, these exhibitions have become a springboard for many women artists. 100 Women of Spirit is the celebration of the coherence between a gallerist, her vision, and the artists she chooses to support. It is only fair that this exhibition be dedicated to Joan Mitchell, a woman of spirit 'par excellence' who supported other women artists and who is such a central presence in the Zürcher gallery. As we look to the future to *100 Women of Spirit+*, we acknowledge the longevity of women's art practice, their dedication to their art and their resilience.

Véronique Chagnon-Burke, Ph.D. is an art historian,
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22nd edition of a mini art fair
during the Armory Show in New York

SALON ZÜRCHER

11 WOMEN OF SPIRIT

Part 1

March 2 - March 8, 2020

Hours: Tuesday: 12 - 8 pm
Wednesday: 12 - 6 pm
Thursday - Saturday: 12 - 8 pm
Sunday: 12 - 7 pm

OPENING Reception: **MONDAY, MARCH 2: 6 - 8 PM**
CLOSING Reception: **SUNDAY, MARCH 8: 5 - 7 PM**

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