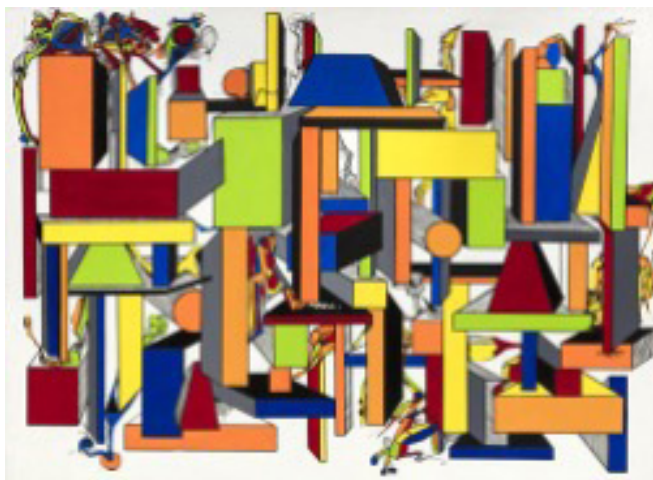


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© Lilly Fenichel, *Sandia Samba*, 1991



© Lilly Fenichel, *Untitled E*, 1967

Lilly Fenichel *Against the Grain*

Preview: 23 January, 6 – 8 PM (GMT)

Exhibition: 24 January – 15 March, 2025

In January, Gazelli Art House will open their 2025 programme with Lilly Fenichel's first UK solo exhibition, titled, *Against the Grain*. Lilly Fenichel's work is imbued with her own powerful rebel persona and defiance, a career defined by resistance to the art market's pressures and an unwavering commitment to her own vision. Her expressive canvases, haunting drawings, and layered sculptures stand as a tribute to an artist who didn't follow trends but set her own creative path, embodying the spirit of independence that fueled mid-century abstraction.

Lilly Fenichel's work is refreshingly varied, revealing her relentless curiosity and the range of her creative expression. Her diverse body of work speaks to an artist unafraid to explore different media, forms, and techniques. *Untitled E* (1967), for example, is from a series of geometric abstract works that echo architectural forms. The energy, vibrancy, and bustling colours express an urban scene teeming with life.

In *Arioso* (1988), Fenichel showcases her mastery of three-dimensional, sculptural work, as she skillfully creates robust, but fluid forms. And *Untitled #23* (2008), one of Lily Fenichel's final series of paintings, demonstrates her restless energy and innovation in relation to the materiality and process of her work.

The variation in her practice doesn't dilute her vision; rather, it amplifies it, offering a multi-faceted view into her creative mind. Each piece feels distinct yet connected, collectively expressing a dynamic, evolving artistry that resists confinement to a single style or interpretation.

Susan Landauer, in the catalogue essay for Denver Art Museum's eponymous exhibition *Women of Abstract*

GAZELLI ART HOUSE

Expressionism (2016), wrote “Among the few women admitted into the male-dominated abstract expressionist movement, Lilly Fenichel produced formidable paintings with a range of compositional strategies and a gritty elegance all their own.”

Reflecting on her career, Juri Koll, Director of the Venice Institute of Contemporary Art, remarks, “She is one of the true rebels and is an extremely important, if somewhat under-recognized artist in art history.” In a landscape where artists often bent to the demands of galleries and markets, Fenichel was steadfast, and her legacy is now seen as one of quiet but unyielding impact.

As an artist, Fenichel moved in circles with notable peers like Richard Diebenkorn, Hassel Smith and Frank Lobdell, yet she chose a path uniquely her own. Her creative journey was marked by resistance to external pressures, and each piece carries an unmistakable sense of liberation. Lilly Fenichel’s work is a timeless reminder of what art can achieve when it is true to itself, uncompromising, and passionately free.

About the Artist

Lilly Fenichel (1927–2016) was born in Vienna, Austria, to a Jewish family. She fled the Nazi invasion in 1939 and eventually settled in Hollywood, where she studied at the Chouinard Art Institute and the California School of Fine Arts under Hassel Smith, Edward Corbett, David Park and Elmer Bischoff. In 1952, Fenichel moved to New York, shared a studio with Harland Jackson and taught art classes at the Museum of Modern Art. Her contemporaries included Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and Franz Kline.

She returned to California and spent many years in Los Angeles, notably showing at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in 1968. Following a move to New Mexico, she became a member of the Taos Moderns. She was the recipient of three Pollock Krasner grants.

Lilly Fenichel’s work is in prominent public collections, including the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Albuquerque Museum and Harwood Museum in New Mexico. Fenichel was most recently included in *Action, Gesture, Paint: Women Artists and Global Abstraction 1940-70* at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, which toured several important museums in Europe.

About the Gallery

Founded in 2010 by Mila Askarova, Gazelli Art House, London champions international artists at the height of their practice through exhibitions, events, and art fairs. Along with its sister site in Baku, Gazelli Art House specialises in promoting art from Azerbaijan and its neighbours to introduce a greater understanding of the rich linguistic, religious and historical ties that connect these areas to international audiences. In 2015, the gallery further expanded to support artists working in digital art through online platform GAZELL.iO, comprising: an online Residency programme, NFT drops and collaborations, a dedicated Project Space holding monthly exhibitions, and a library of VR works.

For further information, please contact: press@gazelliarthouse.com.