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### The Spirit of Female Modernity

Yuan Yuan

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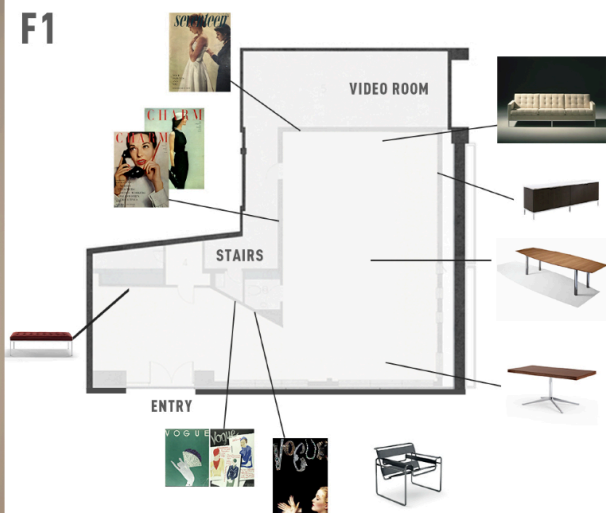
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# The Spirit of Female Modernity



Curatorial Proposal  
Yuan Yuan



Sotheby's Institute of Art  
MA Art Business

May 10, 2024

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## Introduction to the exhibition

"The Spirit of Female Modernity" rejoices in the empowering synergy of women and art modernist aesthetics. It focuses mainly on the work of female artists, designers, musicians, and fashion brands that break several epochs and media. The goal is to motivate by illustrating how women in diverse artistic and design fields embraced and, in some cases, reinterpreted the language of modernist art to reflect their period's concept of modernity.

This carefully curated exhibition highlights the new and thought-through role that women artists embarked on in helping to shape the history of art through the modernism lens of feminist practice. It provides an engaging exploration of how such figures infused freedom, independence, and invention into their artistic creation and hence opens a provocative new perspective on modernist aesthetics.

The exhibition will feature a collaborative display of six female artists. The artworks on display at the archives include architect and furniture designer Florence Knoll Bassett's works, product designer Marianne Brandt, graphic designer Cipe Pineles, musician and composer Ruth Crawford Seeger, contemporary painter Chen Ke, and fashion from the Chinese fashion designer Yang Lin from Yearly Plan brand. Despite the disparity of fields and forms through which these six women expressed themselves as artists, their pioneering contributions to a female modernist aesthetic in their respective times foster a sort of commonality that carries with it a sense of community and purpose.

The exhibition space is set in classic modernism-inspired architecture in Shanghai is an interactive experience architecture designed by Yearly Plan brand. The place is designed as an exhibition area but is integrated with retail and a designer showroom by using interactive elements in its space. It invigorates dialogue of the works displayed with their context, therefore inviting the public to a dynamic and interactive acquaintance with the idea of female modernity.

Sponsored by Yearly Plan, the exhibition features displays of Florence Knoll Bassett furniture supplied by Knoll Design, Marianne Brandt product designs from Maison Wave Gallery, and Cipe Pineles graphic designs printed by the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. The main exhibition area will replicate the modernism style of 20th Century's interior decoration, the space will be created using those designers' 20th Century artworks.

The exhibition also features the oil paintings "Bauhaus Gal" series by Chen Ke. This portrait collection is from the spirit of pioneering female artists at the Bauhaus. The series is brought by the Perrotin Gallery and Star Gallery. "Bauhaus Gal" inspired by zeitgeist-charged archive book 'Bauhaus Girls.' Viewers are assured they will get a feel for the much-changing force of Bauhaus women across the decades. Chen Ke's series stands out for its vibrant colors, dynamic compositions, and ability to convey these women's strength and resilience in the face of societal challenges. Each piece is a visual

testimony to the undefeatable spirit of these pioneering women, making it a must-see highlight of the exhibition.

The fashion and design section introduces the ready-to-wear collection of Yearly Plan, revealing both the elegance of modern minimalism and the practicable beauty that corresponds to modern women's freedom. So, in this part of the exhibition, the viewer will be humbly asked to postulate his or her own reflections about the connections between modernism aesthetics and the practice of sustainable fashion design today. The Exhibition will feature the music of the 20th Century musician Ruth Crawford Seeger. enriched with her musical works as the theme music for the exhibition space, offering an immersive view into the world of female modernist aesthetics, therefore providing a comprehensive view of how women contributed to modernist movements of the 20th Century.

## Exhibition Overview

The exhibition will happen on March 8, which is International Women's Day—a day to celebrate the power of femininity. The venue for the exhibition is the "Yearly Plan Shanghai Space," located at 888 Changle Road, Changning District, Shanghai; there are two interconnected buildings on this site. These constructions, designed by Dongqi Design in 2021, are located in one of the historically richest areas of Shanghai and share an architecture that is minimalist, rationalist, and utilitarian, perfect for the display of modernist art.

The event will take place in a three-storey Building No. 2, located within the walled courtyard for that truly private feeling. The exhibition of the furniture, graphic designs, and cinematographic works will take place on the ground floor. On the other hand, Chen Ke's oil paintings will be on display on the second floor, where he displays his works on very simple walls that let in a lot of natural light. This is the perfect environment for showing art.

The fashion designs from Yearly Plan will be on the third floor of the building, thus utilizing architectural space to reflect the principles of rationalism and functional aesthetics. In this respect, the layout will make the visit pretty immersive for the public, actually in contact with modernism arts by female artists from different periods.

Also taking place on the opening day is a kick-off discussion in the outdoor space facing the entrance to the building. This is a conversation around feminist points of view and modernist aesthetics. The exhibition opens up from there into five separate sections, beautifully installed throughout the whole space, without temporary walls, keeping the minimalist and natural feel of the space, underlining its architectural functionality.

The first section is an introduction based on the architecture of the "Yearly Plan Shanghai Space," used to lay out a thematic baseline. On entering, the second section introduces modernist art along with the biographies of six female designers and artists, interweaving interpretations in a foundational way with the architectural narrative of the exhibit.

Then, the guests are then treated to an interior inspired by the modernism of the 20th century that highlights the influential designs of furniture and products by Florence Knoll Bassett, Marianne Brandt, and graphic designs by Cipe Pineles, where a space that is shared through the usage of purposeful, useful, and non-ornamental objects creates an 20th office environment. This part of the exhibition forms a detailed discussion on how Bauhaus influenced these designs and, subsequently, through the thematic, discusses these designers' shared vision of modernism at that time. Then, through a side entrance, one goes up the staircase opposite the entrance. In the third section, on the second floor, the modern works of Chen Ke are exhibited. The works expressed her modernist vision of female modernity through the interpretation of female characters from Bauhaus in 20th century. The last exhibition on the third floor is that of the avant-garde works of the



Chinese label Yearly Plan. Taking the female designers of the Bauhaus as inspiration, the collection for Fall/Winter 2023 showcases modernist styles characteristic of the brand.

The exhibition unfolds an overview of the development of modernist designs and modernist trends from the 20th century into the 21st century, showcasing the plural contributions made by women within these fields. The event sheds special light on their influential roles and the unending impacts that these have left on modern design and aesthetics. The exhibition will be held from March 8 to June 2.

## Venue

Nestled within the colorful and historical Shanghai streets, the place Yearly Plan Shanghai Space is composed of two buildings interconnected to one another that represent a minimalist and practical look of architecture and interior. The two buildings are in simple Cubist form, with straight lines and overall cleanliness of the appearance, dominantly in white and neutrals. It has strong functionalist principles with the inclusion of large floor-to-ceiling windows that simply exhibit a modern, plain, and rational Cubist style, creating therefore an ideal place for exhibitions addressed to modernist art.

In the pursuit of the Bauhaus principle of the "total work of art," the dongqi Design architectural firm took great pains in every detail of the inside of the building to match the outside, innovatively updating the old structure of the building and thus making it relevant and practical.

The three-story main exhibition space fronts the street: the height of the front is implicit in the use of the building. Its only vertical structures are the concrete walls supporting the flanks of the central oak staircase. The roof, however, is most ingenious, with 40mm thick triangular steel plates laid onto the concrete to carry the load without compromise, maximizing the flexible use of space and movement.

Building No. 2 extends horizontally and, with Building No. 1, forms a cross-shaped layout, displaying modern design aesthetics. It contains and embodies a modern conceptual, functional apartment and showroom designed not only for exhibitions but

also for curation. The bright, column-free space is expressed through freely placed windows that bring the urban surroundings easily inside, which would be quite different from that of neighboring, traditional Shanghai houses. Before that, Yearly Plan Shanghai Space collaborated with Maison Wave Gallery on an exhibition contextualized around the Le Corbusier modernist architectural ideas of utilitarian residential aesthetics. Themed "Living Machines: Le Corbusier and Classic 20th-century Design," a special exhibition that encompasses the rare originals from Bernard Albin Gras, Charlotte Perriand, Jean Prouvé, to George Candilis—all embracing Le Corbusier's concept of "Machine à habiter" while assisting this event to be the narrators telling the dialogue of the modernist design language and aesthetics.

The style of modernity for the Yearly Plan women's brand is all about simplicity and practical design, and the introduction of the space placed more importance on the exploration of styles. An attendance of over 20,000 persons is estimated at the exhibition: modernist lovers, fashion lovers of the Yearly Plan brand, and thousands of Shanghainese. Such a number will be a powerful indication of the thought-out choice of location for the exhibition—in the most culturally and popularly lively area of Shanghai. It concludes the choice of venue aligns well with the architectural theme and has the potential to engage a diverse and extensive public audience.

## Checklist of Works

There will be about 30 pieces in the next exhibition, and they are going to represent all sorts of artistic work. The main exhibits will include sofas, chairs, stools, and tables in the category of furniture; tabletop items, desk lamps, pendant lights, and floor lamps in the category of product design; printed graphic design items; and paintings. It includes the design of fashion items and cinematic visual works. This has been made possible through loan agreements that have been obtained from different galleries, museums, and learning institutions, apart from studios in different design companies. A list below of institutions who have supported this show, we have been in contact with nearly all of them and they have helped by providing works for the exhibition.

Knoll Design shall lend the objects from its collection, including any available archival documents and photographs, to the borrower in furtherance of sharing, educating, and promoting the brand's substantial and historical interest.

Most of the exhibits are supplied in collaboration with the flagship store of Herman Miller & Knoll in Shanghai, the first dual-brand store in the world. Since the dual-brand flagship store is located not far from Shanghai, both transportation costs and the safety of the products are also controlled effectively.

Graphic prints, such as those by Cipe Pineles, are most likely in the holdings of the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. Institutional prohibitions or guidelines,

inherent in the possibility that the works could leave the institution, the institution willing to give the digital rights may be obtained for the graphic design, presented in the form of printed posters, with no cost for the loan.

Maison Wave Gallery Shanghai, a specialist in 20th-century design, is going to lend all the product design exhibits by Marianne Brandt. Maison Wave Gallery, after working for the sponsor brand Yearly Plan in its exhibitions in the past, will lend its exhibits at no fee other than insurance and transportation costs.

Perrotin Gallery and Star Gallery will be lending Chen Ke's artworks for a joint exhibition. We are required to bear the costs of transportation and insurance.

Some of the styles from the brand Yearly Plan ready-to-wear clothing for the sponsored exhibits tend to conflict at first with the dates that are booked for shooting for magazines or celebrity rentals. However, upon verification with the brand, it is confirmed that the garments to be loaned are part of the Fall/Winter collection for 2023, which are not the latest designs. Therefore, the styles chosen for the exhibit will not be lent further for other purposes.

#01



Florence Knoll Bassett  
Florence Knoll Bench - Relax,  
1954

Heavy gauge steel.  
Upholstered seat  
3 Seat Bench 144cm W x  
48cm D x 42cm seat height



#02

Florence Knoll Bassett  
Florence Knoll Lounge  
Seating, 1954

Heavy gauge tubular steel.  
Density foam and button  
3 Seat Sofa: 230cm W x 82cm  
D x 80cm H with seat height  
of 43cm



#03

Florence Knoll Bassett  
Florence Knoll Executive Desk,  
1961

Heavy gauge welded steel and  
veneer  
Rectangular 200cm W x 100cm  
D x 74cm H



#04

Florence Knoll Bassett  
Florence Knoll Credenza,  
1961  
square steel tube in satin  
chrome  
210 W x 52cm D x 64cm H



#05

Florence Knoll Bassett  
Florence Knoll Conference  
Tables, 1961  
Tubular steel legs in polished  
or satin chrome finish  
244cm W x 101cm D x 71 cm  
H



#06

Marcel Breuer, 1925  
Wassily® Chair Bauhaus 100th  
Anniversary – Limited Edition  
Seamless tubular steel with a  
polished chrome finish  
79cm W x 69cm D x 73cm H,  
with a seat height of 42cm



#07

Marianne Brandt  
Kandem table lamp, 1928  
Enameled steel  
9 3/4 × 5 × 8 1/4 in | 24.8 ×  
12.7 × 21 cm



#08

Marianne Brandt  
Ceiling Lamp, 1925  
Spun aluminum and milk glass  
shade  
41 1/2 x 15" (105.4 x 38.1 cm)



#09

Marianne Brandt  
Three Bauhaus pieces: coaster  
set, napkin and letter holders,  
1930s  
Enameled metal  
Coaster: 2.75" x 4" dia.,  
napkin: 4.25" x 7.75" x 1.5",  
letter: 3" x 5.5" x 3.5"





#10

Marianne Brandt

Notepad holder, c. 1935

Enameled steel, chrome-plated brass

1 3/4 × 8 1/2 × 6 1/2 in

4.4 × 21.6 × 16.5 cm



#11

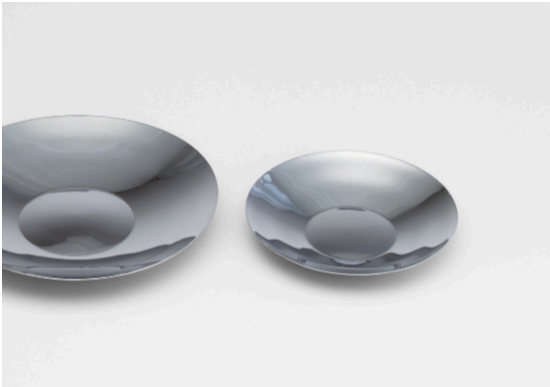
Marianne Brandt, Ruppelwerk, Gotha

Table Clock, c. 1930

Enameled steel, steel

5 1/2 × 6 3/4 × 2 3/4 in

14 × 17.1 × 7 cm



#12

Marianne Brandt Fruit Bowl and Fruit Dish 1929

Chrome-plated brass

1 (bowl): 1 1/4 x 11 1/4" (3.1 x 28.6 cm)

2 (dish): 15/16 x 8 3/8" (2.4 x 21.2 cm)



#13

Marianne Brandt

Procel box, Bauhaus, 1926

Metal Painted Red Nickel-Plated

8.7 × 4.7 × 3.9 inch



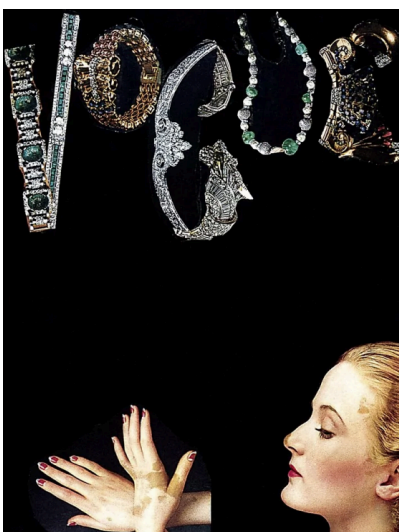
#14

Cipe Pineles  
 Cover Design, 1951  
 Electronic version  
 Charm Magazine



#15

Cipe Pineles  
 Cover Design 07, 1951  
 Electronic version  
 Charm Magazine



#16

Cipe Pineles  
 Graphic Design, 1940  
 Electronic version  
 Vogue Magazine



#17

Cipe Pineles  
 Cover Design, 1932  
 Electronic version  
 Vogue Magazine



#18

Cipe Pineles  
 Art director Cover  
 Design, 1948  
 Electronic version  
 Seventeen Magazine



#19

CHEN KE

BAUHAUS Gal No.23, 2023

Oil on canvas

120 x 100 cm | 47 1/4 x 39 3/8 inch

Unique

Perrotin



#20

CHEN KE

BAUHAUS GAL NO.6, 2021

Oil on canvas

80 x 60 cm | 31 1/2 x 23 5/8 inch

Unique

Perrotin



#21

CHEN KE

BAUHAUS GAL NO.12, 2021

Oil on canvas

200 x 250 cm | 78 3/4 x 98 7/16 inch

Unique

Perrotin



#22

CHEN KE  
BAUHAUS GAL NO.25, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
145 x 200 cm | 57 1/16 x 78 3/4 inch  
Unique  
Perrotin



#23

CHEN KE  
BAUHAUS GAL NO.26, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
80 x 120 cm | 31 1/2 x 47 1/4 inch  
Unique  
Perrotin



#24

#25

#26

#27

#28

Yearly Plan Collection  
Women Fall 2023  
Ready to Wear

# Curatorial Plan

## Artist Bios

### Florence Knoll Bassett

Florence Knoll Bassett (1917–2019) was an American architect and furniture designer who was integral to defining the aesthetics and functionality of post-war corporate office spaces. Her works maintained the hallmark of clarity of form and an exquisite sense of space, inspired by Modernism and the Bauhaus movement.<sup>1</sup>

The course of her education changed dramatically at Cranbrook Academy of Art, where she was mentored by Eiel Saarinen. Through that particular mentorship, she was introduced to an approach toward design and craft that would later influence her own work. Out of school, Florence furthered her education directly under some of the most influential modernists of the time. She enrolled in the architecture program at the Armour Institute, now Illinois Institute of Technology, with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as her professor. It was under the tutelage of Mies that rigor began to be instilled in her approach, which would serve to define her both philosophically and visually as a reductionist. She also did a short stint at Harvard Graduate School of Design, working under leaders like Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer. These experiences developed her

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<sup>1</sup> Florence Knoll Bassett (1917–2019) was integral to defining the aesthetics and functionality of post-war corporate office spaces. Her works maintained the hallmark of "clarity of form and an exquisite sense of space," inspired by Modernism and the Bauhaus movement. She "introduced the idea of 'total design,' treating interior spaces as part of the holistic environment in which everything, from furniture and textiles to configuration, was in conceptual harmony." "Florence Knoll Bassett," *Pioneering Women of American Architecture*, accessed Apr 8, 2024, <https://pioneeringwomen.bwaf.org/florence-knoll-bassett/>.

understanding of functional design and sharpened her ability to turn modernist concepts into commercial and residential interiors.

Florence Knoll joined Hans Knoll's furniture company in 1941. Under her lead design, and then as a co-founder, Knoll Inc. became synonymous with modern furniture design at the highest standards.

Her design philosophy went well beyond the shape and aesthetics of one-offs into embracing the larger field of space planning. The office "open plan" concept that she popularized was a dramatic divergence from the usual, enclosed, powerfully imbued office environments. This not only made space work better but also fostered a more transparent and participatory work culture. Florence's training and work in design came to represent fastidious care over detail. This she brought to her design work at Knoll. She introduced the idea of "total design," treating interior spaces as part of the holistic environment in which everything, from furniture and textiles to configuration, was in conceptual harmony.

Her iconic pieces, like the Florence Knoll Sofa and Table Desk, offer functionality that is never at the price of form and elegance.

Of worth mentioning is that Florence's commitment to designing for function goes back to the inception of the Knoll Planning Unit. It was a unit within Knoll that specialized in space planning and interior design services. It ensured that all the company's projects

were beautiful and useful in space. Florence worked with precise research; on many occasions, she went ahead to interview employees to ensure that space was adequate at that time.

The legacy of Bassett is also very lasting. It went past her iconic designs and deep inside the philosophy of office design today. It seems she was not designing furniture but an environment in which the effect of human togetherness would be better and productive because of design. Her work exemplifies the power of design as a transformative tool for space, making her one of the central figures in the story of 20th-century architecture and design.

## Marianne Brandt

Marianne Brandt (1893–1983) is now hailed as an icon of the Bauhaus, celebrated for the groundbreaking creativity she applied to metal design in overcoming the division between artistic experiment and industrial use. Marianne Brandt's time in the Bauhaus was a high moment of intense creativity and achievement in design, especially in the conception of metal household objects such as teapots, lamps, and ashtrays, which since then have become icons of modern industrial art.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Marianne Brandt (1893–1983) "is now hailed as an icon of the Bauhaus, celebrated for the groundbreaking creativity she applied to metal design in overcoming the division between artistic experiment and industrial use." Brandt's time in the Bauhaus was "a high moment of intense creativity and achievement in design," particularly in creating "metal household objects such as teapots, lamps, and ashtrays, which since then have become icons of modern industrial art." Smarthistory, "Bauhaus: Marianne Brandt," accessed Apr 8, 2024, <https://smarthistory.org/bauhaus-marianne-brandt/>.



Artistically trained in Weimar, at the Saxon Grand Ducal Art School, she first enrolled in the Department of Painting and Sculpture. But what she would take as her course would be determined by the reading of the Bauhaus manifesto, which impressed the public with the idea of a total work of art that combined crafts and fine arts.

She was later enrolled in the Bauhaus School in 1923, where she first arrived at the wood sculpture workshop and later found her passion and unique ability in the metal workshop.

It was under László Moholy-Nagy that Brandt was to first experiment with the relationships between the artistic form and the industrial technique that were to inform her career. The influence of Moholy-Nagy of course was great; he awoke in her an attraction to metal as an expressive material and respect for the exactness of the industrial processes. Her training under him was able to provide her with a rich theoretical and practical framework that was readily employed toward challenging and redefining the conventions of product design.

That was the revolutionary part of Brandt's design: working with the essence of Bauhaus, embracing functionality and simplicity with the very personal aesthetic of an individual, which was modern and playful. Take, for example, her teapots; within their geometric neatness and ergonomic flare, they are something special. These objects created their own contribution to a Bauhaus ethos that now intruded on daily life.

Anecdotally, one such example of Brandt's meticulous detail and commitment to functionality in design came with a teapot design that is now considered iconic. She is noted to have fiddled around with a number of prototypes while staying intent on the positioning and balance of the handle and spout to achieve maximal functionality. This all paid off, and the result was a beautiful design, in addition to being ergonomic in nature.

Brandt was one of the few women to serve in such a top position in the Bauhaus movement and was director of the metal workshop in 1928.<sup>3</sup> During her directorship, she brought forth quite several techniques and approaches whose influence proved to be significantly important in metalwork within and beyond the Bauhaus. Her leadership and vision at the head of the workshop added to its growing stature as a center of innovation and quality.

Despite the difficult political and economic environments at the time, Brandt went on as an independent designer until she fully accepted the act of graphic designing and painting. In all her work lives, she managed to uphold the Bauhaus ideal of merging art with industry, as shown in her work above.

How Marianne Brandt's work influenced design heritage in the 20th Century is that one has come to think of and treat the ordinary things that one touches in everyday life. Her

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<sup>3</sup> "Brandt was one of the few women to serve in such a top position in the Bauhaus movement and was director of the metal workshop in 1928." Despite the challenging circumstances of the time, she "managed to uphold the Bauhaus ideal of merging art with industry." MoMA, "Marianne Brandt," <https://www.moma.org/artists/741>.

works are testimonies of the force brought together in creation and function, making her the imperative factor in modern industrial design.

## Cipe Pineles

Cipe Pineles is the unacknowledged leader of American graphic design-world-renowned for massive contributions to magazine publishing in the mid-century. As the first woman to head up art at Condé Nast, Pineles broke down gender barriers and set new standards for visual culture within the pages of Vogue, Glamour, and Seventeen. The use of vibrant color palettes and sophisticated typography in her design work seemed to blend the often conflicting worlds of fine art and commercial design, transforming the land of magazine aesthetics.

A native of Vienna, Austria, Pineles arrived in the United States as an adolescent and began, in early youth, to achieve her lifelong goal of an artistic career first, through preparatory studies at the Pratt Institute in New York City and, then, at the Art Students League, also in New York City.

An academic background rich in artistic tradition and rigorous preparation set a foundation for the development of professional ethos. It was her strong belief in the educational power of design that shaped her visionary approach to art direction.

Pineles' career would turn on a dime at the entrance to Condé Nast of the 1930s. She was an art director not just in organizing page layouts, but a visionary working towards

bringing the same sense of editorial excitement to the pages of Vogue that once was the province of Vogue's photographers and writers. Her time at Condé Nast was heady and epochal.

Most importantly, maybe, she is responsible for the fact that it was she who brought the fine arts into commercial publication and fought all through her life to include the works of contemporary artists, which would be in tandem with and raise the level of the visual storytelling of the magazines over which she presided.

One illustrative anecdote of this innovation was while she was working at Seventeen magazine. She paid good artists to produce illustrations for a series of cookbooks intended for teenagers. The project was successful both in commercial terms and in the critical appreciation of the artwork because the pine trees were able to reach commercial objectives while maintaining artistic excellence.

Pineles's influence is not merely from her editorial accomplishments. She was very active in the teaching field, teaching design at Parsons School of Design, and later at Yale University School of Art. She brought to her teaching the notion that design is a powerful language and, therefore, the subject of the same sort of strenuous inquiry that one puts into the fine arts. Her work in teaching inspired a whole generation of young designers to think a little harder about the aesthetic, functional, and ethical challenges of graphic design. She would leave an indelible mark on the design world. Pineles emerged as an innovator, opening doors for other women in a traditionally male-dominated field:

graphic design—nothing less than re-envisioning possibility within the visual dimensions of magazine publishing. Pineles' design work is still acclaimed for the visionary fusion of color, form, and typographic harmony, and contemporary design practices can still trace the influence she has implanted in them.

With an overview of Pineles' career, one can say that she had reached a level of functioning above the career of a magazine designer and had moved to a level where she contributed to the discourse on American visual culture. She had proven that design can function just as well to sell a commercial product and concurrently be art. Her contribution to graphic design remains powerful and indicative of her position as a pioneer and innovator in the field, the legacy of which continues to inspire and affect.

### Ruth Crawford Seeger

Ruth Crawford Seeger was one of those multi-talented characters in the American musical scene, who made a remarkable contribution in the field of modernist composition and in the preservation of American folk music. With atonal structures and timbral effects, she was able to bring a completely innovative approach to her music, making her quite the pioneer of American avant-garde music.

Among her works was the emblematic *String Quartet 1931*, which mirrors an intellectual and emotionally expressed attitude towards musicality for its inspiration by the social and cultural turmoil of the time.

Crawford Seeger's affinity with the larger artistic trends of the period found expression in the "Suite for Wind Quintet," characterized by complex rhythms and forward-looking employment of dissonance. This work seems to bear witness to her participation in intellectual circles to which poets, artists, and activists belonged.

Her marriage to the distinguished musicologist and composer Charles Seeger led her to collect, arrange, and teach the rich repertoire of American folk music. She made careful arrangements to ensure that the traditional songs she worked with remained woven into the colorful quilt of the American folk tradition. For music educators, her collections, like *American Folk Songs for Children*, have become indispensable resources, valued for their authenticity and ease of access. Indeed, one of the clearest and most current examples of the sustained influence of her work is that of the arrangement of the folk classic "Simple Gifts," a piece that is continually performed within the American folk music tradition. Her influence also extended into the folk revivals of the 1950s and 1960s, as artists turned towards making a connection to the roots of American music. Ultimately, that is the legacy of Ruth Crawford Seeger, which testifies to supreme versatility and importance in American music. bridged the disparate worlds of music—yet the avant-garde and the traditional, in furthering spirit, were enriching to both. Her pioneering compositions and work in folk music preservation set the resonance into the future: inspiration and an example of the power of music in both art and heritage.

## Chen Ke

Born in 1978 in Tongjiang, Sichuan, China, Chen Ke is a contemporary artist well-received by the art world. She has found her way through deep self-reflection in her works, which bear strong cultural affirmation. After graduating from the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts, he became an artist after getting a B.A. in 2002 and an M.F.A. in 2005 in oil painting, able to cross the highly personal with the utterly universal.

At the beginning of her career, she portrayed a very fragile girl who could evoke almost dreamy backgrounds, giving her work a surreal touch and presenting deep themes of vulnerability and nostalgia.

Around 2012, Chen went through a rapid transformation in her artistic style and thematic focus. She put her attention more on realist depictions of icons, including Frida Kahlo and Marilyn Monroe. It was through such art, by which she incorporated the use of these public figures, that Chen was able to show a very articulate discourse on women's place in society and the intricacies of personal feelings versus the public mask. This latter phase of her career has underlined with what strength she has the capacity to wind major cultural commentaries into her powerful works. Statements on gender and identity through the lens of familiar faces.

A turning point in her career was marked by a 2018 series that went deep into personal narratives, mostly by an examination of the relationship with her father. It would be a series that turned into a solo show in Shanghai, called "*The Real Deal is Talking with*

*Dad*," and in which her collection would utilize mixed media and installations to communicate her feelings and reflections on evolution.

The exhibition was merely an exposition of art; it was an intimate rapprochement with her life; it was very well in tune with the larger cultural and temporal discourses. With this series, she manifested an ability to work with mixed media in making the emotional gravity of her pieces even stronger, inviting viewers to a more immersive involvement in her personal story.

Chen Ke's artistic journey tells of the contemporary artist who has strong roots in her heritage but is concerned with the issues of the world. It is a fragile play of personal history in the general tapestry of changes in the world, acting as a conduit between an artist's interior world and perceptions of the exterior world.

This is especially obvious in her later work, in which the personal and the iconic come together, opening up insights into her psyche and beyond that into the cultural underpinnings of public and private identities.

Her ever-probing engagement with the personal and cultural realms underlines the investment in a narrative that keeps being open to and responsive to the new dynamics within her life and the world around her.



This is the relentless process of discovery already applied in the artistry of Chen Ke; it is an invitation for viewers to rediscover themselves and to tread upon larger historical and social undercurrents that make up who they are. Through this evolution, she makes her contribution to contemporary art, questioning and stretching the ways we understand the role of personal narratives in artistic expression.

## Yearly Plan

Yearly Plan is a visionary fashion brand that reflects modern minimalist styles, founded by Chinese designer Yanglin. The conceptual idea of design is an annual plan of the wardrobe, calling for attention and practical realization of the value of sustainable clothes in fashion. Quite close, in some way, to the Bauhaus idea of combining art with practical design, it is—design begins with inspiration, and from this, simplicity and functionality follow. This means, Yearly Plan adores the Bauhaus movement.

It is for Yanglin a way of constructing a storyline of modernist art combined with real needs and sensibilities. Each of the women's clothing line pieces is designed in order to be versatile and durable, hence not mandating frequent purchases. This sustainability commitment underlies and informs the very ethos of the brand, hence the environmental standpoint that is being promoted. The influence of Bauhaus on modern clothing is not just about the aesthetic features of the clean lines and discreet use of color; it is down to the function of the design. The design of its every wear is functionally made for the basic daily needs of the wearer, giving ease and comfort without sacrificing style. This harmonization between form and function truly reflected the Bauhaus spirit of seeking

reconciliation between the opposition of art and industrial mass production. Besides, the Yearly Plan brand itself is designed to actively promote gender equality. The strong, clear lines that are the focus and the fact it decorates as little as possible allow its clothing to have a kind of aesthetic egalitarianism, almost an antidote to the more ornate designs that have colored many aspects of women's fashion. The wearer is empowered not only because this approach is a challenge in itself but also for its pure attention to personal style and comfort, which has nothing to do with conforming to gender norms. Yearly Plan has taken big strides toward making a difference in the social conscience of the fashion world. Through "annual wardrobe planning," Yanglin thrusts consumers into critical thinking regarding their consumption of fashion. This would inculcate a culture in which quality outweighs quantity. That philosophy does not only challenge the fast-fashion model, but it aligns with the increasing consumer consciousness toward the environmental costs of making clothes. This only goes to demonstrate that the brand has impacts far beyond the bounds of its immediate consumer base. Yearly Plan has emerged as one of the living symbols of how fashion can exist at the confluence of modernist ideas in making timeless, sustainable, and ethically conscious clothing. In a world that is learning to care more for the environmental and social impacts made within the fashion industry, Yearly Plan stands as the harbinger of responsibility and innovation. Yearly Plan itself is not just a fashion brand; it is a cultural innovator that resolves contemporary challenges through designs inspired by Bauhaus. It's about a brand that redefines what the word 'fashion' itself means in the contemporary world and is a testament to the fact that the future of the overall fashion sector is going to look like. As the company continues to

grow, so too does the reach of Yearly Plan, pushing the industry in the right direction for a future that is more sustainable and just.

## Installation

The interior design of the exhibition respects the style of the interior and fits well with the original construction layout of the exhibition space itself. Appropriate partition walls have been mounted on the first and second floors for supporting the display of graphic design and paintings.

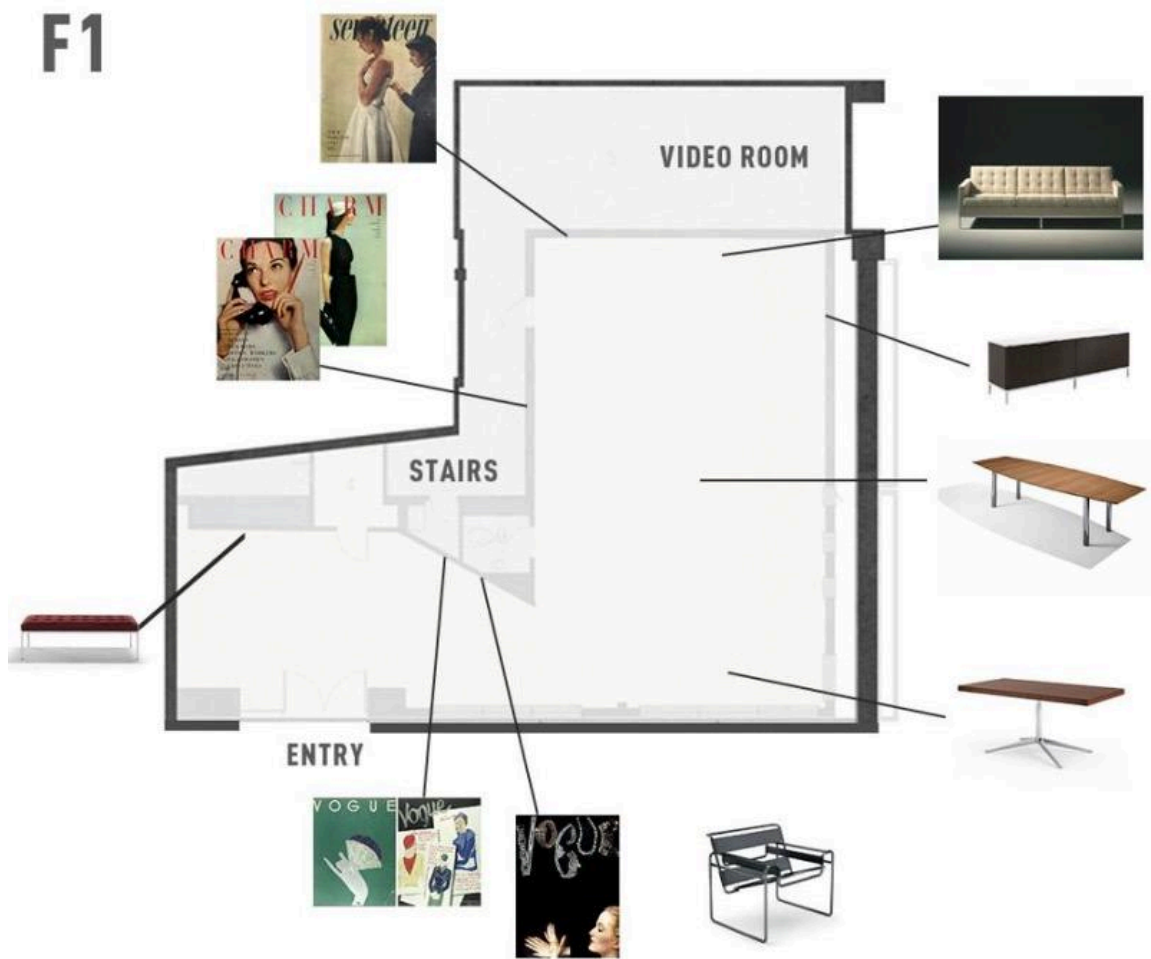
The first floor will represent a 20th-century modernist office interior, with a consistency of the layout of interior space supported by furniture design and desk accessories. Glass display tables will have graphic design prints hung as posters on the wall.

At the first floor, the items have been duly arranged to practically relate to a scene inside the modernist office in the 20th century. This floor will be shown with famous works from Florence Knoll, Marianne Brandt, and Cipe Pineles, who truly express the spirit of the modernist interior design. All items of that period will be shown in this option to improve the exhibition and provide the full experience to the visitor in furniture and decoration.

At the second floor, the paintings were carefully selected based on quality and their importance in creating the aesthetics of modernist style. Ruth Crawford Seeger's musical works will be played in the exhibition space where the 20th century music has a great communication with the Paintings from the 21th century. These artworks are integrated into the internal designing of the second floor in a modernist manner that gives a glimpse of the modernism culture.

The third floor, which is intended to be the showcase for the most current modernist-style ready-to-wear series under Yearly Plan. The five mannequin platforms, one floor below, will continue to be laid out in the exhibition style of a showroom to show five outstanding garment designs. The modernist simplicity and elegance of these garments offer a contemporary twist to the 20th-century aesthetic explored on the lower floors. The installation of the exhibition is altogether perfect, as the chosen works identify the most authentic mood of the 20th century, presented through different forms of artwork. The installation is intelligently mixed with graphic design, paintings, and ready-to-wear, set in a space whose interior design is kept authentic. This gives a full and absorbing account of modernist aesthetics in its different media and over its chronological span.

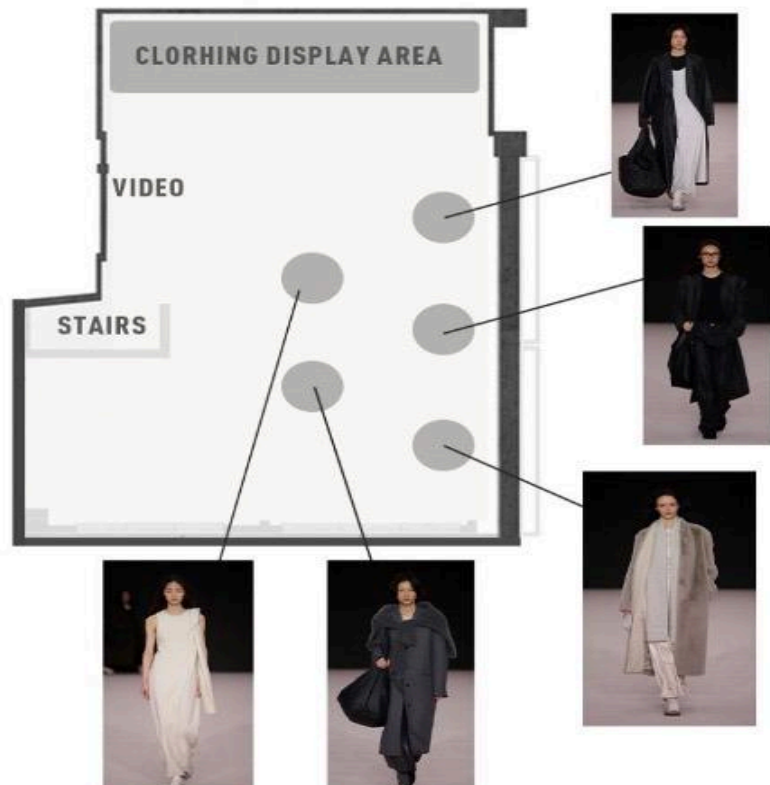
# Exhibition Floor Plan



**F2**



**F3**

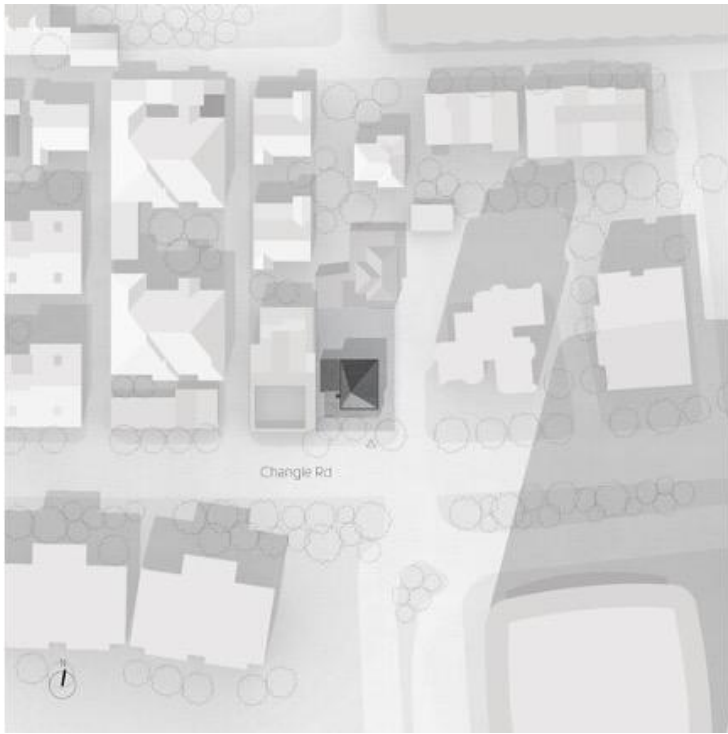


## Narrative

Visitors can pre-book the exhibition through the WeChat mini-program "Yearly Plan" or the official website. They can scan the QR code directly at the entrance of the first floor of Space for Yearly Plan Shanghai in Building 2 to make an appointment. For this, the exhibition is set to have QR codes on the walls of the room available for anyone who wishes to scan and know more about certain themes of different sections at a particular period. Information is to include introductions to six artist designers and their works that are on display, modernist design, and the Bauhaus school, female designers from Bauhaus, and basic information about the Yearly Plan Shanghai space. The objective is to present this content in a comprehensive manner and thus further foster reflection on the relevance of the exhibition. Digital interactive resources would be added to enhance the immersive experience and create visual interest within the exhibition, assuring richness in high-quality educational resources.

## Section 1

The first part of the exhibition is the Yearly Plan Shanghai space building itself. Visitors can directly enter the atrium of the Yearly Plan Shanghai space from Changle Road or, first, begin their visit in Building 1 to browse and buy Yearly Plan brand clothing, then directly see Building 2. The theme of the exhibition reflects the cubic contour of the building and the simple straight lines of the facade. These form the first part of the exhibition.







## Section 2

### *Room 1*

Entering the exhibit hall, a display board on the left wall reveals the name of the exhibit, the central theme, and a roster of designers participating. Inside the entrance, to the right, an office sofa designed by Florence Knoll Bassett; to the right of that, two of the earliest graphic design prints by Cipe Pineles, from her days at VOGUE, along with text describing her work. This encompasses her earliest works, her forays into graphic experimentation, and her stories that represent the female perspective. These cover designs for VOGUE are all the earliest of the works featured in the exhibit, so it is only fitting that they line the walls near the entrance into the gallery.

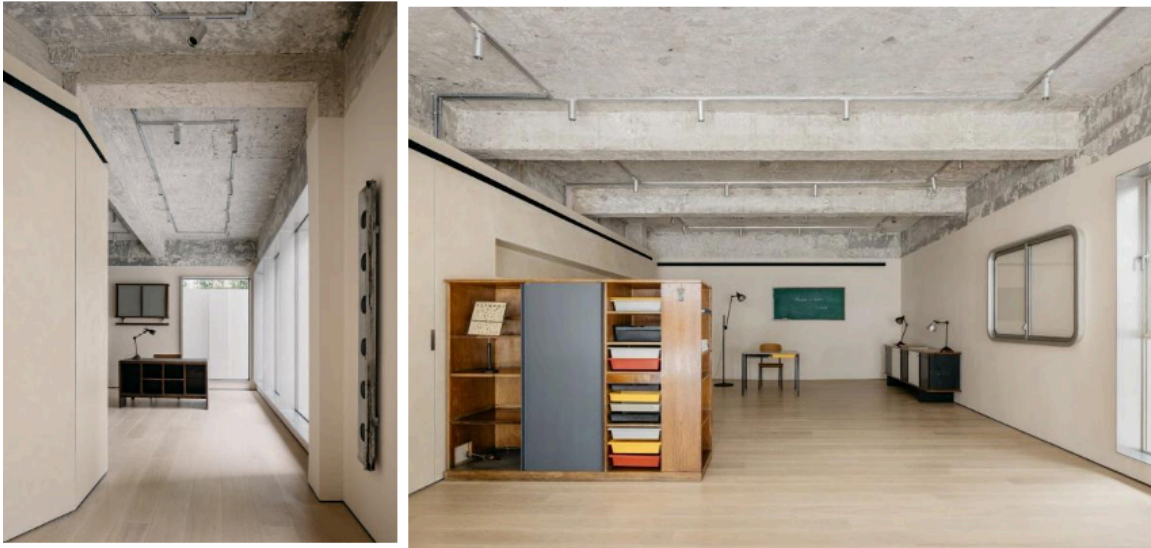


### *Room 2*

Here, visitors are taken through a narrow, sloping wall to an integrated highlight of the exhibition: office space from the 20th-century modernist.

This gallery includes office furnishings by Florence Knoll Bassett and product designs by Marianne Brandt and her associates at the Bauhaus. The installation utilizes these furnishings as display objects in a setting that allows visitors to walk around and view the

objects on view from all sides. The ambience of stepping into a 20th-century office is enhanced by the emanation of background modernist music by Ruth Crawford Seeger. The label on the right side of the entrance wall offers more information about Florence Knoll Bassett and her work as a designer.



Each furniture, product, and exhibit has a label in the room to let the audience know the designer, date, materials, and manufacturer for the object. In the same room, three other graphic designs by Cipe Pineles were mounted on the wall. They are presented in the same way an interior decoration is mounted, thereby staging a 20th-century office life.

### *Room 3*

This leads through to a smaller door on the left, opening onto an intimate room set up for video screening at the back. This room forms the last room in section 2. The video is a cross-temporal dialogue that comprises six artists and designers. It is headlined by the

workspaces and life backgrounds of four 20th-century female artists and designers, artist Chen Ke, and Yearly Plan designers in their studios.

### Section 3

#### *Room 4*

The five oil on canvas paintings done by Chen Ke from 2021 to 2023 all belong to her "Bauhaus Girls" series, and are displayed on the second floor. Upon entering, the visitor may learn something about the artist herself, the story of her artistic life and achievements, displayed on the right wall of the stairwell entrance. First off, you will see the Wassily® Chair Bauhaus 100th Anniversary – Limited Edition, which is conspicuously placed beside Chen Ke's Bauhaus Gal No.25, 2023.

### Section 4

Finally, on the last floor, there is a view of the women's collection for the Yearly Plan brand for the Autumn/Winter 2023 season, which already had a preview at the Shanghai Fashion Week for Autumn/Winter and stirred major attention. These timetables, from the 20th century to contemporary expressions in art and design, summarize the influence and expression of modernism by contemporary designers with special reference to the significant and lasting impact on the expression of women in diverse artistic media up to today.



## Marketing Plan

The marketing for the exhibition is event-based and advertisement-based in offline traditional advertising and online spaces for advertisement. These are the engagements of an artist and an influencer in the promotion of the exhibition in and outside of social media. The themes of the exhibition are Modernism, furniture, interior decor, painting, graphic design, and fashion which are promoted through the media involved in each of these areas. The marketing portrays the venue as a "life check-in space" and International Women's Day as a celebration of the rise of feminist aesthetic power.

The first day will be initiated with a VIP preview forum supported by the legendary Rod PR in Shanghai, including pre-event planning, venue setup, approvals, guest invitations, and media promotion. The conference is expected to have participants from scholars, auctioneers, museum curators, gallery owners, fashion professionals, and various government and art and fashion media representatives, including almost all the most influential content creators to further popularize the exhibition.

On the opening day, the chefs and waiters of the Yearly Plan Café will prepare a reception. During the commentary about the artistic context of the show with Chen Ke's artist, two honorees will be speaking: one on modernist art and the female creator, and the other will comment on the creator of the brand on Yearly Plan. The audience will involve the director of East One Art Museum, the secretary-general of Shanghai Fashion Week, and the guests from Knoll Design with whom to have discussions about the exhibition.

The promotional activities will be carried out with the usual advertising resources that Yearly Plan Shanghai uses: digital screens, posters, and banners throughout Shanghai, from the old town to the central business district, and online, on websites and social media. The ads will be inserted one month before the opening in various magazines and online newsletters, such as Vogue, GQ, ELLE, InStyle, Conde Nast Traveler, whose readers are the ones that will go to the exhibition. The same commitment will be reproduced with the messages on social media, focusing on the designers and the spaces portrayed in the exhibition.

## Financials

The major economic costs of the exhibition include the transportation, insurance, and leasing of the exhibits. The manufacturer of the designs, Knoll Design, being a professional and sound organization, is helping the exhibition by lending them the exhibits free of cost with the objective of distributing, educate and promote the design and historical importance of the furniture. However, there is quite a significant amount of transport and insurance costs, the figures of which are based on estimated agreements with Knoll Design and Maison Wave Gallery.

The Perrotin Gallery and Star Gallery will exempt the exhibition fees for Chen Ke's artworks. However, the transportation of the artist's works, which necessitates insurance and secure protection, will be underwritten by sponsors Yearly Plan.

Costs do vary but can include fees for leasing, handling, preparation, and condition reporting. Insurance is possibly the biggest cost, but this is calculated on the period of display and the market value at the time, which is generally lower in the art market for furniture. Maybe the fees that may be charged are the transportation and insurance, while it is unlikely that the rental fee will be charged because of the exhibition's partiality to Knoll; while its headquarters are in Pittsburgh, some of the pieces that are designed by Florence Knoll Bassett will lease through the Herman Miller & Knoll flagship store in central Shanghai, which greatly reduces the cost. Transport and insurance are the only



costs allowed for these items, which are taken care of by professional art transporter ROKBOX, insured by ANDA Insurance.

The other big expenditure is the marketing plan. Opening forum and other consecutive promoting events are very much within the normal budget limit based on the previous quotations, so this is viable. The entire exhibition will be sponsored and hosted by the fashion brand Yearly Plan.

Already existing sponsors at the Yearly Plan Shanghai space, most of these potential sponsors – among them The Shanghai International Arts Festival Committee, Shanghai Fashion Designers Association, and Conde Nast – have put a good deal of corporate support behind this curatorial effort.

## Estimated Expenses

*These expenses are not theoretical, but are all based upon the actual cost accrued by the end of the show.*

	<b>No. of items</b>	<b>Total cost</b>
<b>Loan and preparation fees</b>		
Shipping and transportation	18	\$3237.56
WallPlay Security Deposit	1	\$1200
Certificates of Insurance	18	\$1380.87

Temporary Liquor License	1	\$320
Printing	5	\$400
Installation supplies (Hardware, tools, paint, etc.)	1	\$920
<b>Opening event</b>		
PR(Ruder Finn Marketing and Communications)	1	\$8071.75
Miscellaneous items for opening dialogue and beyond (cups, napkins, toilet paper, trash bags, etc.)	1	\$444.2
Beverages for opening dialogue	50	\$800
Thanks you gifts	30	\$280

# Curatorial Essay

## Introduction

Women, since the past, have contributed incredibly to the world of art and design, which usually remains unacknowledged and is not given the due attention. A really good exhibition design is this one, well-labeled as "The Spirit of Female Modernity," in order to try to shed some light on works otherwise ignored and to show the effects they have brought to modernism. It is often seen as a great tribute to the work of women artists and designers who helped shape mainstream modernism. Demonstrating the power of women, it articulates a legacy of female making that has been central to the emergence of modern art and design.

## Part 1: Female Artists Throughout Art History

### Medieval Period to Renaissance (500-1600 CE)

The Medieval period and the Renaissance can be counted as the precursor eras in the gradual upward trend of women artists, though history has shown that women found it difficult to enter the fields of arts, especially in the Middle Ages. An exception was Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), who pioneered religious arts. Her Scivias manuscripts, complete with illuminations and visionary pictures, were epoch-making submissions to the time. There is also the possibility that the English noblewomen of the time created the enormous magnified account known as the *Bayeux Tapestry*.

The coming of female portraitists was marked in the Renaissance era, and Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625) was thus noted by art historians. Her court paintings for *Philip II of Spain* were hailed as able to record the personality and character of the subject, just like her 1555 painting *Portrait of the Artist's Sisters Playing Chess*. This work revealed a sensitive subtleness to domestic interaction and marked a move away from the formalized portraitist tradition at the time.

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1653) was yet another critical stride for women in the arts of the Renaissance. Examples include *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, 1614-1620; they had all the dramatic realism one would expect from an able Baroque painter, with Gentileschi having been a good student of Caravaggio's chiaroscuro technique. In most of her works, Gentileschi often depicted women as strong and heroic, probably a reaction to her experiences with gender bias and violence.

The women broke from the role of gender expected of them at the time, setting an example for future generations. Contributions made by Hildegard, Anguissola, and Gentileschi helped in paving the way for many female artists who followed in the world of art.

### Baroque to 19th Century (1600-1900 CE)

Lavinia Fontana and Judith Leyster were also two of the major Baroque artists, with very distinct styles. Fontana's works, such as *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King*

Solomon, 1600, are remarkable for the manner in which classical and Mannerist conventions are interwoven; she was also one of the first women painters to undertake large-scale religious or mythological compositions. Leyster, by contrast, specialized in genre scenes that provided a witty and animated glimpse into daily life, as is evident in her *Merry Company* (1630).

It was a period of Rococo and Neoclassical when there came new opportunities for women and the women artists like Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun and Angelica Kauffmann received major acclaim. Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, a portraitist for Marie Antoinette, created more than 600 paintings of portraits and landscapes in her career.

Her portraits, too—for instance, *Marie Antoinette and Her Children* (1787)—were designed to counter that scandalous public image by revealing her grace and dignity in private. Kauffman, meanwhile, revealed real strength in the allegorical and historical subjects, with the virtue of motherhood being most powerfully transmitted in paintings such as *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi* (1785). Of the founding members of the Royal Academy in London, she would win much fame. Rosa Bonheur and Mary Cassatt, in the 19th century, further extended the boundary for women in art. Bonheur's fame was on realistic portrayal, especially of animals; her *The Horse Fair*, 1855, shows horses in motion and acting, with the benefit of the knowledge of anatomy from the studies. In addition, she broke conventions by the realistic style and went on to earn international fame.

Cassatt was an American painter based in Paris who successfully spent her life working with the subject matter of women and children in the domestic setting. In works such as *The Child's Bath*, perspective and color are viewed as avant-garde. Berthe Morisot, also part of the Impressionists with Cassatt, is much more actively exploring notions of domesticity in works of this kind, like *The Cradle*.

### Early 20th Century to Modernism

Female artists have added to the ages, from Medieval through Modernism, and have left an illustrious legacy of creativity, tenacity, and innovation. Many of these women, acting in active subordination to the dominance of roles that were largely male-dominated, resisted traditional gender ideals and helped to create the movements that flourished in their time.

Abstract florals and landscapes—the works of Georgia O'Keeffe were a challenge to conventional representation. In her *Black Iris III* (1926), O'Keeffe abstracts botanical forms with the intention of producing naturalist metaphor for feminine power. Her contemporary Sonia Delaunay and her husband Robert Delaunay co-founded Orphism, a movement that worked with bright colors and geometric shapes.

The notion of simultaneous contrast—that is, a juxtaposition of colors that creates a visual effect greater than the sum of its parts—also underpinned her textile and fashion designs, as well as paintings like *Prismes électriques* (1914). In transferring these

creative strategies to the design of clothing and interiors, she underscored the fluid relation between fine and applied arts.

Cipe Pineles and Chehen Ke were two pioneers who brought modern aesthetics to the new media world of graphic design and photography. Pineles was the very first female art director for magazines like *Glamour* and *Vogue*, and she touched new heights in editorial design with innovative use of illustration and typography. She had been one of the first female photographers of China, depicting the everyday life in the early 20th century, therefore recording changes and social and cultural norms visually.

Modernism was also expanding towards abstract expressionism and surrealism. Lee Krasner co-founded abstract expressionism with her husband, Jackson Pollock. Some of her works, such as *Gaea* (1966), show her dominance of color and form in the contribution of the legacy of the movement. The most important surrealist to stand out was Frida Kahlo with her self-portraits. She represented her pain and resilience as *The Two Fridas* (1939), which dealt with issues of identity, disability, and being a woman. Florence Knoll was one of the most famous modernist interior designers. She created highly functional, elegant furniture representing the principles of this style. Her modular designs, for example, the timeless Knoll sofa, brought a new feel to offices and home spaces while having a spirit of modernist minimalism.

Collectively, these women represent the modernist outlook in which historicism and superfluous decoration were eschewed to forge frontiers in expression. Their work

includes a variety of different disciplines: painting, graphic design, photography, and interior design.

Still, in the same sense, female artists have been able to contribute so much from the Middle Ages to Modernism, which reflects a legacy of great creativity, resilience, and innovation. Be it Hildegard of Bingen, Sofonisba Anguissola, Rosa Bonheur, Georgia O'Keeffe, or Florence Knoll, social conventions that kept them from being named women of innovation in no way limited female defiance of traditional roles in shaping the artistic movements of their time. Their vigor and creativity made ways for generations to come and hence formed what one might call the spirit of female modernity. Female artists from the Middle Ages to the Modernist period have contributed to a legacy of creativity, resilience, and innovation. Women, such as Hildegard of Bingen, Sofonisba Anguissola, Rosa Bonheur, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Florence Knoll, come out as key figures in an argument that stakes high the ground they stood upon in challenging traditional gender expectations and largely contributed to the shape of the artistic movements in their times. Their legacy is one of resilience and creativity, which gives proof of the undying spirit of female modernity.

## Part 2: Female Artists of the Bauhaus School

### Introduction to Bauhaus and Gender Issues

The Bauhaus School was founded in 19th century Germany by Walter Gropius and is popular because of its "exclusive tutorship to art and design." Although Bauhaus is exclusive in its unique principles of equality at that certain time, "women at the Bauhaus



had to deal with a lot of things since they were "restrained by the preoccupations with society". Gropius promised, "any person, regardless of gender or age, can enroll if conditions permit."<sup>4</sup> However, the division of labor still remained to be gender-based as usual, and women were often sent to the weaving workshop at the time. It was, however, a step forward since there was already a quarter of women attending Bauhaus.

The school has been holding unconventional spirits as appearing in gender division of labor and machine aesthetics. From a long-term stereotypical view, the traditional art and design fields have impressed the public by stark inequalities such that they became a male preserve. Initially, women were relegated to textile design, but eventually, they developed in architecture, product design, and other areas. This enabled them to break from traditional gender norms and pursue innovation. Also, the Bauhaus embraced the machine and sought to industrialize the production of beautiful and functional designs. It was on this that production shifted from the conventional handicrafts to modern industrial design; rationalization and scientific thinking became the keywords of Bauhaus.

The enduring innovation of women artists who formed part of the Bauhaus is seen in works of art by six women whose works exemplify this same ethos through varying eras and geographies. Working in disparate areas of practice, the exhibitions demonstrate the evidence of a consistent aesthetic that celebrates the tenets of modernism.

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Gropius, quoted in Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus, 1919-1933* (Berlin: Taschen, 2002), 12.

## Key Female Bauhaus Figures in diverse fields

### *Field 1: Weaving Workshop*

Anni Albers was another leading pioneer in modern textile design, a student of Gunta Stölzl at the Bauhaus, and she experimented with new weaving techniques and materials. Most of Albers's works are characterized by geometric abstraction. Works such as *Wall Hanging* were produced. Not only are her fabrics striking and functional, but they are practical principles of Bauhaus. And there is no need to introduce Albers, who with her far-reaching teaching work at Black Mountain College and the book *On Weaving of 1965*, built the textual fundament for all further practice of textile art and design. Another not-so-distant strong character is Gunta Stölzl. She was the only woman master at the Bauhaus, though leading the workshop of weaving. Her abstract patterns and innovative techniques managed to put functionality into bright, practical textiles. Her work, *5 Chöre* (1928), is the evidence of technical skill on her part, showing how she incorporated modernist abstraction into textile form. Stölzl was in a constant battle against the stereotype of painting being a man's job and was able to convert the workshop into one of the most successful and commercially viable departments at the Bauhaus.

### *Field 2: Photography and Graphic Design*

The key figures in the history of the Bauhaus who documented it, among them, was Lucia Moholy, leaving the record of the experimental character of the school. Her photographs related to Bauhaus architecture and design remain themselves almost a visual heritage, which would practically determine the aesthetics of the school.

Photography and his experiments led to a collaboration of László Moholy-Nagy with his wife, in which Moholy produced such impressive compositions as, for example, *Untitled (Bauhaus Dessau Building, View from Southwest)*, 1926. But then, she was also often overshadowed by her husband and other men despite her huge contributions, thus indicating the prevalent gender bias that happened even among progressive circles. Finally, Marianne Brandt was a designer in the metal workshop and contributed streamlined and functional designs for lamps, teapots, and ashtrays that embodied the Bauhaus approach to industrial design.

*The MT 49 Teapot* (1924) exemplifies her modern style in functionalism. It is made up of geometric forms and metallic surfaces representing the aesthetics of the machine. Brandt was the first lady admitted to the metal workshop, which she later on headed, her legacy is still around up to the present, in contemporary industrial design.

### *Field 3: Architecture and Interior Design*

Furniture and exhibition designer Lilly Reich is claimed to have created some of the legendary pieces, the *Barcelona Chair* (1929), to name one, with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, that had managed to survive the test of time and still is a flagship of modernism. She designed exhibitions, for example, *Die Wohnung* (1927). This is just another proof of her talent to stage up the environments that are harmonious and functional. Though, individual achievements of Lilly Reich have got blurred and displaced by cooperation with Mies van der Rohe, whose co-authorship she shared on many famous projects.

The design of modern kitchens was redefined in the early 20th century by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky with her *Frankfurt Kitchen* of 1926-1927. Such characteristics had to have a rational design in the quest for the lessening of movement and the betterment of workflow in making domestic work the most efficient it could be. This compact and modular kitchen also influenced the idea of functional living spaces and is considered to be a precursor of modern fitted kitchens.

#### *Field 4: Music and Composition*

Ruth Crawford Seeger, a pioneering modernist composer in America, combined American folk music with avant-garde composition techniques into a style both uniquely hers and very influential. This *String Quartet 1931* is, on the other hand, such a piece of pioneering techniques developed by her, and it demonstrates her dissonant counterpoint and rhythmic experimentation. Even though she had no direct relations with the Bauhaus, sensibility by Crawford and its innovative musical compositions do go hand in hand with the interdisciplinary nature of the school.

### Legacy and Influence

The continuous influence can be unfolded into aspects such as functional art and design philosophy, and industrial production; an alteration in gender norms; and its derivative influence on contemporary counterparts.

This functional art and design philosophy at the Bauhaus had a great influence on the mid-century modern movement, which held the values of simplicity and rationalism high, together with the denunciation of any excess of decoration. Female Bauhaus artists were to shape modern industrial design, be it in furniture, textiles, or household products. More importantly, Bauhaus women accepted the aesthetics of the machine to enable them to focus on what this industrial production might offer. Anni Albers and Gunta Stölzl modernized the art of weaving by materials and techniques for mass production. Metal designs by Marianne Brandt showed geometrical precision and machine aesthetics, while photography by Lucia Moholy showed the smooth minimal spirit of Bauhaus architecture.

Although the gender roles were quite confining in the beginning, women in Bauhaus broke the norms for convention in the quest to seek innovation across various fields. Stölzl, Albers, and Brandt turned traditionally "feminine" crafts into avant-garde art forms. Lilly Reich and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky furthered architecture and interior design, and Ruth Crawford Seeger combined modernist composition with folk music. The achievements of these women manifest the persistent urge to rise above the expectations of society and redefine the possibilities for artistic creativity. The spirit of Bauhaus creativity seeps into contemporary art and design. Material study and geometric abstraction in the hands of Anni Albers became a new standard for textile art. From industrial design, the sleek designs of Marianne Brandt have prevailed. Recent shows, such as Anni Albers: Touching Vision at Tate Modern in 2018 and Marianne Brandt: Bauhaus, Modernism, Design in 2013, have rediscovered the work of both of them.

The Bauhaus, because of Lucia Moholy's photographs, and Ruth Crawford Seeger's avant-garde compositions, have had very substantial influences on the contemporary classical music that came to dominate in the 20th century.

Works by these six women cross over the fields they represent in a unified concept that pays homage to Bauhaus's own interdisciplinary spirit. Showing their art together, too, created a visual unity—perhaps best outlining their contributions to modernism and making palpable the legacy of female creativity at the Bauhaus. Their stories underline quite vividly the need to continue recognizing the work and valuing that work through a woman's lens in art and design.

### Part 3: Feminism and Female Modernity in Art and Design

Women have been denied entry and representation throughout art history. In fact, feminist art has stood as a reaction to such inequalities, as well as a criticism to the male-centered narrative found in art history. The second wave of feminism (from the 1960s to 1980s) came to be one of the greatest impacts on art history. Judy Chicago broke the barrier with *The Dinner Party*, when she created a major installation that honored women in history. It had a triangular table with 39 historical women's place settings from different periods and 999 more names written on the floor in the form of tiles. It spread the message of systemic discrimination against women and established Chicago as a global center of feminist art education. The other group that criticized systemic discrimination against women and minority is the Guerrilla Girls. An art group that established itself in 1985 and communicated through works of a wide variety of outrageous and funny activist art.

Their posters, such as *Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?* (1989), showed that although fewer than 5% of the artists in the Met's Modern Art section were women, 85% of the nudes were female.

It was also in this period that feminist art exhibitions and institutions began to blossom, offering a new level of opportunity to female artists. *Womanhouse* (1972) was a collaborative work of installation performance and visual art to critique traditional notions of gender and domesticity, created by Chicago and Miriam Schapiro in a dilapidated old house in Hollywood. The Women's Art Movement and dedicated exhibition spaces also allowed female artists to speak out against male dominion in the art world. Another significant impact of this movement on art and design is that feminist artists reclaimed women's work within crafts such as quilting and embroidery. As Ringgold (1990) points out, *Tar Beach*, published in 1988, brings quilting into combination with painting and storytelling to talk about the experience of African-American women. Ringgold and several others challenged the notion of domestic crafts as high art, and subsequently inverted the traditionally-assigned gender roles in art.

The turn towards postmodernism in the 1990's brings in identity politics and new methods of addressing the issues of gender, race, and sexuality. As in the use of the female figures in the *Untitled Film Stills* of Cindy Sherman, 1977-80, parody is achieved of pre-existing female stereotypes in classical Hollywood cinema, and the viewer's attention is drawn to the manner in which mass media manipulates the viewer's personal

identity Sherman 1990. In her book *Gone: An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred Between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart* 1994, Kara Walker uses the technique of cut-paper silhouettes in the critique of such characters from the Antebellum South Walker. Contemporary feminist art and design are more and more globalized and intersectional. In fact, Iranian calligraphy and Islamic symbols are placed in creating the traditional and modern representation of Muslim women side by side in *Women of Allah*, 1993-1997, by Shirin Neshat.

This is seen through the embrace of global perspectives and intersectionality in feminist art and design, which speaks for voices that are further marginalized. No matter how progressive an agenda is, women still face a struggle for representation, funding, and critical recognition. The National Museum of Women in the Arts says, "although women are 51% of visual artists, they represent just 11% of the acquisitions in major museums and 14% of the exhibitions".<sup>5</sup> While female artistic input has been improved, gender equity has not been achieved in art institutions.

This exhibits both similarities and differences to the treatment of female artists and the underlying philosophies of the Bauhaus and Modernism. Both the movements emphasized simplification and functionalism of design, rejecting historicism and the excess decorative details. The Bauhaus School's aim was to abolish the boundaries existing between fine and applied arts. The school believed in the social role of art and design to improve daily life through functional aesthetics. Modernism picked up some

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<sup>5</sup> National Museum of Women in the Arts, "Get the Facts," National Museum of Women in the Arts, 2019, <https://nmwa.org/advocate/get-facts>.



similar principles, that of functionalism and a social agenda to create a better society. Some role models for female designers who put all these into practice include Florence Knoll and Cipe Pineles. While Bauhaus opened the possibility of a holistic, interdisciplinary kind of education with the promise of inventive practice for women, Modernism often promoted a view of specialization and individuality. Female Bauhaus artists, such as Anni Albers and Marianne Brandt, were fortunate to belong to interdisciplinary workshops promoting the idea of collective work and practice. Modernist artists, on the other hand, such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Lee Krasner, simply worked separately, as though dealing with the problem of a solitary existence in a man's world where creative expressiveness was the only solution. The two movements, by their differences in approach, were always embroiled with a problem of according full recognition to the contribution of women, which to some extent is still a problem in this century.

## Conclusion

The "The Spirit of Female Modernity" exhibition was successful in showing the way in which women have traveled through the domains of art and design and was replete with a very compelling narrative communicating more than just historical, cultural, and disciplinary territories. The juxtaposition of the pioneering work of Florence Knoll Bassett, Marianne Brandt, Cipe Pineles, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Chen Ke, and the fashion brand Yearly Plan underscores the unbroken flow of female creativity and its indispensable role in the making of modern aesthetics. It is conclusions such as these that gather the multifaceted threads of research interest developed in the course of the exhibition and the curatorial essay: the importance of women's contributions to modern art movements and their resilience in the face of challenges that society presented them.

Right at the onset, the exhibition introduces one to the hitches that women went through to be recognized and get a head start working in masculine artistic fields.

Artists such as Sofonisba Anguissola, Artemisia Gentileschi, and Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun became exemplary in the participation of women in this field, thereby setting a guideline and opening the way for the breach of the conventions of the time. The legacy continued with artists such as Lavinia Fontana, Judith Leyster, Rosa Bonheur, and Mary Cassatt in the Baroque and 19th centuries, finding ways to claim a voice in a patriarchal world of art.

Women in the early 20th Century moved a little further toward the total edge of expressive possibilities. Georgia O'Keeffe and Sonia Delaunay, for example, took modernist aesthetics a step beyond by giving them a distinctly female sensibility. Thus, work dealing with abstract florals is seen in the work of O'Keeffe and with geometric abstraction in the work of Delaunay in textiles and fashion, which reflects diverse aspects of female modernity that were further expanded with Lee Krasner's abstract expressionism and Frida Kahlo's surrealist self-portraits.

Yet the Bauhaus, as an important school that epitomized this kind of interdisciplinary creativity, provided a unique platform for female artists to rise above traditional gender-based roles. Notwithstanding its foundational relegation of women to the textile workshop, figures such as Anni Albers, Gunta Stölzl, Marianne Brandt, and Lucia Moholy held major positions in the Bauhaus. Their work in weaving, metalwork, photography, and graphic design pushed at pre-existing norms and imprinted modernist aesthetics.

What Albers and Stölzl did was revolutionize textile design, blending geometric abstraction with functional artistry; Brandt's metallic designs embodied the Bauhaus philosophy of streamlined industrial aesthetics. Lucia Moholy, meanwhile, visualized the heritage of the Bauhaus through her photography—the architectural innovations and the interdisciplinary spirit that characterized so much of its activities. All of this work speaks to viewers of the importance of women at the Bauhaus in breaking down the barriers between art and design.

Florence Knoll Bassett and Cipe Pineles are two characters that epitomize female modernity in their respective fields. Knoll's design of modular furniture and pioneering interior layout has been changing the face of the corporate office world. Herein lies the ideal union of function and form: modernist minimalism. But of course, total design is not only a commitment to functional elegance but also a kind of holistic changing of the environment in the workplace.

She broke more barriers as the first female art director at Condé Nast, introducing contemporary art into commercial publishing and bringing a transformation in editorial design. Her stunning typography and illustration innovations for Vogue and Glamour set new standards for visual storytelling and blended fine art with commercial design. Her efforts for the betterment of women in the arts and as a mentor surely will put her among the names known for blazing a trail in graphic design.

The "Bauhaus Gal" series by Chen Ke flows meanwhile, between the expressions of female modernity either in history or in contemporary life. This suite is alive, even surreal, in some of the paintings, inspired by the stories of the pioneering women of Bauhaus in their resilience and creativity. Within the historical themes, she naturally develops personal narratives, and the viewer will think about the junction of personal identity and artistic heritage.

It seems that the fashion brand Yearly Plan, through its design, modernistically states ideas of simplicity, functionality, and sustainability. Its readymade line supports Bauhaus ideas in the way that it supports very timeless, genderless clothes that stand against the ecological damage fast fashion brings. Yearly Plan promotes this not just through yearly wardrobe planning for its consumers but as an imperative statement about the future of fashion.

This also reflected how the feminist art movements of the late 1960s to the 1980s tried to change the general exclusion of women from key mainstream art areas. Artists such as Judy Chicago and the Guerrilla Girls were particularly vocal critics of major art institutions that were biased on gender considerations and underrepresented women. Their activism pushed feminist art into the limelight and redefined crafts like quilting and embroidery as high art.

A lot has been gained, but the march toward recognition and equality rages on. The serious work of women artists is left out from the central body of important collections, and the women artists whose works are included are generally underrated. Exhibitions like "The Spirit of Female Modernity" reiterate the importance of recognizing and celebrating the contributions that women make towards art history.

The exhibition "The Spirit of Female Modernity" celebrates the great achievements of women in Modern art and design, proving their strong and consistent value for contemporary aesthetics. The interdisciplinarity of the exhibition unveils women of

different periods and fields and how they are woven into one single story of resilience, creativity, and innovation. Their legacies keep giving inspiration to the new generation, which is to challenge conventions and redefine the mode of artistic expression. The more global and cross-intersectional the art world becomes, the more important these kinds of exhibitions are for giving a platform to where the voices of a female perspective and the diversity of perspectives may be put forth. Through dialogue and reflection, it calls us to imagine a future in which women's creativity is made known and celebrated in any form. It is this very vivid reminder that the spirit of female modernity is not a thing of the past but rather a stream continuing on, changing with time through the world of art and design.

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