

# LEILA HELLER.



LEONOR FINI *Armoire anthropomorphe (Anthropomorphic Wardrobe)*  
1939 Oil on wood 86 1/2 x 57 x 12 1/2 inches

Frieze New York  
Randall's Island Park  
Booth S27

Following her recent success of her retrospective at the Museum of Sex, titled *Theatre of Desire, 1930-1990*, and a renewed interest in works, Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to present a solo installation featuring works by Leonor Fini (1907-1996), one of the most significant female artists of the twentieth century.

Brought up in Italy, Fini examined Renaissance and Mannerist paintings and took an interest in morbid subject matter, often depicting cadavers at the local morgue. Without formal artistic training, her studies inspired the elongated limbs and forms of her figures. Her resulting works, culled from fantasy and mythological images, i.e. the sphinx, reflect her idea of beauty through a dominant feminine gaze by presenting women as subjects with, not of, desire and male nudes featuring androgynous characteristics. A phenomenon much like what we see today in the art world, where traditional/social conventions are rejected — the exploration of identity and artistic expression remain unaltered.

Fini produced in the Surrealist style as one of the few women exhibiting alongside Salvador Dalí and Max Ernst. For all intents and purposes, Fini was very much so a woman ahead of her time challenging conventions in a male-dominated field, capturing the dichotomy between the masculine and the feminine. Upon first glance of her works, there is a flirtatious humor about them commonly found across the Surrealism genre; however, a deeper understanding unearths darker contextual meaning.

Working during a time when women wielded less freedoms than they do today, Fini translated the dialogue surrounding unequal standards of gender — that between the roles men and women play in positions of power — into the

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vocabulary of art. In doing so, her commentary explores this larger issue through the lens of eroticism, investigating notions of dominance, inducement, submission, and compliance.

Fini's past paints a picture of a bonafide revolutionary in her own rite: a self-taught artist with an obsessive interest in the macabre, the suggestive, and the taboo. With an innate ability to deconstruct and repurpose all that she sees firsthand, Fini appropriates, stylistically, the rich palette of the PreRaphaelites and the flatness of Flemish art for her uses.

## ABOUT LEONOR FINI

Leonor Fini (1907-1996) was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and raised in Trieste, Italy. Fini's fledging attempts at painting in Trieste led her to Milan, where she participated in her first group exhibition in 1929, and then to Paris in 1931. Her first major exhibition was in 1936 in New York at Julian Levy's Gallery. Fini was associated with the likes of Picasso, Henri-Cartier Besson, and Giorgio de Chirico who inspired much of her work.

## ABOUT LEILA HELLER GALLERY

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practice of established artists.

[www.leilahellergallery.com](http://www.leilahellergallery.com) | [@leilahellergallery](https://www.instagram.com/leilahellergallery)

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## Hours

Tuesday – Saturday: 10am – 6pm

Monday: By Appointment

## Press Contact

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