

# FRIEZE MASTERS 2022

## COLETTE BRUNSCHWIG

Booth S20 | The Regent's Park  
October 14-16, 2022



**Galerie Jocelyn Wolff**

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## COLETTE BRUNSCHWIG

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff is pleased to present Colette Brunschwig at Frieze Masters 2022, in the spotlight section dedicated to great women artists and curated by the association AWARE.

The metaphysical abstraction that Colette Brunschwig develops through her works resonates with poetry, photography and the history of painting. Collaborating with Brunschwig for more than 10 years, the gallery had already put her in the spotlight last winter, with the exhibition "Colette Brunschwig & Claude Monet in conversation" curated by Marjorie Micucci (January 9 - February 12, 2022). We also collaborated for the publication of the first monograph of the artist "Colette Brunschwig, Painting the Ultimate Space" (2021) published by Manuella editions.

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On the occasion of Frieze Masters, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff presents fifteen works by the French artist Colette Brunschwig (born in 1927): inks on paper and paintings dating back several decades, from the 1950s to the 1990s. This journey through the painter's work bears witness to the constancy of the artist, a tireless explorer of an abstraction at the crossroads of several influences. In shades of grey, white and black, with occasional bursts of fluorescent colour, Colette Brunschwig made the connection between the spirit of Chinese literati Painting and the memory of the Second World War.

In 1945, when she was around twenty years old, Brunschwig moved to Paris to study painting in the immediate Post-war period: "white years" in which society was left reeling from the shock of the recent annihilation. After a brief stint at the declining Academie Julian, she began to frequent the studio of the painter Jean Souverbie. From 1946 to 1949, she followed the teachings of André Lhote who opened her eyes to the issues of abstraction. At the time, the young woman was fascinated by the work of Claude Monet, to whom she later devoted an essay celebrating the "slow meltdown of the form,"<sup>[1]</sup> which reached its paroxysm with the *Water Lilies*. His painting, in which "the top and the bottom, the right and the left are oriented, meet and get lost,"<sup>[2]</sup> inspired Brunschwig to create works that were devoid of horizons but not of depth, pure abysses of darkness and light.

In the 1950s, she exhibited at the Colette Allendy gallery, an important source of diffusion of a multifaceted abstraction: lyrical, tachist, informal or monochrome, but also calligraphic, with an exhibition devoted to

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modern calligraphic painting in Japan in 1955. In the late 1960s, Brunschwig embraced Eastern philosophy, initiated by an article in the journal *Hermès*: "Le Vide à la Source de l'Inspiration chez les Peintres lettrés de la Chine ancienne" [The Void at the Source of Inspiration amongst the Literati Painters of Ancient China]. Through Pierre Soulages, she met the Korean painter Lee Ungno, whose abstract signs she praised as being "full of the meanings of a true language."<sup>[3]</sup> Brunschwig's ink washes and paintings can also be apprehended on the basis of these Oriental, Buddhist and Zen traditions, with an inner light like the "phosphorescence of each dust"<sup>[4]</sup> according to Tadao Takemoto (Japanese translator), contracting an intensity in which "the whole duration of the experience [is] absorbed"<sup>[5]</sup> for François Cheng (calligrapher-poet).

"For a very long time," explained Brunschwig, "Painting conveyed Meaning. Today the technique of Painting has become Meaning itself. The Necessity from which Painting draws its strength is the fact of being this counterpower to the domination of images."<sup>[6]</sup> Very often left untitled, sometimes marked with imprints or scratches, Brunschwig's paintings speak in their very matter. In the thickness of the blacks, they speak of the dense, opaque darkness which the artist witnessed as a child, fleeing Le Havre with her family when it was bombarded and set on fire in 1944. The painter worked from the void, but also from chaos and erasure. Attending seminars by the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, corresponding with the philologist Jean Bollack, illustrating the poetry of Paul Celan, Brunschwig belonged to a constellation of surviving Jewish intellectuals working to transcend what Lévinas called "a tumor in the memory"<sup>[7]</sup>, the unthinkable and the unrepresentable. In drawings integrating the third dimension, in grey modulations, coloured outcrops or "meaningless signs," she worked from the 1950s, with infinite constancy, to bear witness to a "silent glow"<sup>[8]</sup>.

Text by Héléne Meisel

1. Colette BRUNDSCHWIG, « Sur Claude Monet », Lignes, 38, Paris, Hazan, p. 128.
2. Idem, p. 129.
3. Colette BRUNDSCHWIG, « Quelques éléments autobiographique », Université de Poitiers, la Soufflerie, May 29 - June 21, 2002 n. p.
4. Tadao TAKEMOTO, untitled, « Colette Brunschwig, Lavis » exhibition, Paris, Galerie Jaquaster, 1981, n. p.
5. François CHENG, letter to Colette Brunschwig, October 2, 1996, following the tour of the exhibition at Galerie Clivages, September 12 - November 2, 1996.
6. Colette BRUNDSCHWIG, *Galerie Clivages*, September 12 - November 2, 1996, n.p.
7. Emmanuel LÉVINAS, *Les noms propres*, Saint-Clément-la-Rivière, Fata Morgana, 1976, p. 142.
8. Colette BRUNDSCHWIG, « L'ultime progression », Les Feuilles de morphèmes, 3, 1970, n. p.

# GALERIE JOCELYN WOLFF

## FRIEZE MASTER 2022\_COLETTE BRUNSCHWIG PRESS IMAGES

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**Colette Brunschwig, *Sans titre*, 1950, watercolor and colored pencil on paper, 45.5 x 37.5 cm, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, photo : François Doury**

**Colette Brunschwig, *Sans titre*, 1973, acrylic and India ink on paper, 49.5 x 64.5 cm, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, photo : François Doury**

**Colette Brunschwig, *Sans titre*, ca. 1960, oil and A on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, photo : Nicholas Locke**

**Colette Brunschwig, *Sans titre*, 1970, India ink on paper, 77 x 148 cm, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, photo : François Doury**

**Colette Brunschwig, *Sans titre*, 1950-1960, India ink and acrylic on hardboard, 33 x 41 cm, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, photo : François Doury**

**Colette Brunschwig, *Sans titre*, 1985, water colour and pastel on paper, 22 x 26.8 cm, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, photo : François Doury**

**Colette Brunschwig, *Sans titre*, 1981, oil on canvas, 91 x 76 cm, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, photo : François Doury**



**Colette Brunschwig**

*Sans titre*

1950

watercolor and colored pencil on paper

monogrammed "CB" and dated back side on the top, left, code 3002 noted back side at the bottom,

left

45.5 x 37.5 cm

CB/D 124



**Colette Brunshwig**

*Sans titre*

1973

acrylic and India ink on paper

signed and dated back side on the top left

49.5 x 64.5 cm

CB/D 61



Colette Brunschwig  
*Sans titre*  
ca. 1960  
oil and A on canvas  
monogrammed front side at the bottom left  
60 x 60 cm

CB/P 17



**Colette Brunschwig**  
*Sans titre #17*  
1970  
India ink on paper  
signed and dated at the bottom right  
77 x 148 cm

CB/D 27





**Colette Brunschwig**

*Sans titre*

1950-1960

India ink and acrylic on hardboard  
signed and dated back side on the top

33 x 41 cm

CB/P 12



**Colette Brunshwig**

*Sans titre*

1985

water colour and pastel on paper

monogrammed back side on the top left

22 x 26.8 cm

CB/D 67



**Colette Brunschwig**

*Sans titre*

1981

oil on canvas

signed and dated at the lower left and at the back

91 x 76 cm

TCB8101

CB/P 56

# COLETTE BRUNSCHWIG

## Painting the Ultimate Space

Bilingual French - English

Marjorie Micucci, Romain Mathieu, Mael Bellec, Jeffrey Librett

Manuella Editions, 2021



This first monograph is intended to be an open tool for knowledge. It thus includes a large number of reproductions of Colette Brunschwig's paintings, extracts from her personal archives, photographs of exhibitions and critical essays, all forming possible windows into the artist's painterly techniques and intellectual approaches. It also includes her correspondence with famous members of the artistic and literary scene in post-war France and writings in which she reflects upon her relationship with modern art and the technological transformations of her time.

Born in Le Havre in 1927, Colette Brunschwig exhibited her work for the first time in 1952 at the Colette Allendy gallery in Paris. Her acrylic paintings, ink drawings, gouaches, colour washes and watercolours form a body of work tirelessly inflected by grey, which is defined as a painterly intermediary for colours, an upwelling of form caught up in the challenges of the undefined abstract motif and the inexorable dissolution of the image and of representation. Colette Brunschwig is a painter of the twentieth century, and she interrogates both Western artistic modernity and the historic traumas of the Shoah and Hiroshima in a unique way. The artist, who has a strong sense of philosophical kinship with Emmanuel Levinas and was close to the philologist Jean Bollack, combined her painterly investigations linked to 1950s abstract art with the study of Talmudic exegetical traditions and, in the late 1960s, lessons learned from the Chinese literati painters of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Tracing her twofold artistic lineage back to Claude Monet and Kazimir Malevich, Colette Brunschwig has constantly explored a dynamic space across which the inner breath of expansion and compression blows a space she patiently makes available in order to continue painting when all has been annihilated and to inscribe within her work the reflexive, sensitive strata of newly living forms.

# CONTACT & INFORMATIONS

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