

THE ART STUDENTS LEAGUE PRESENTS

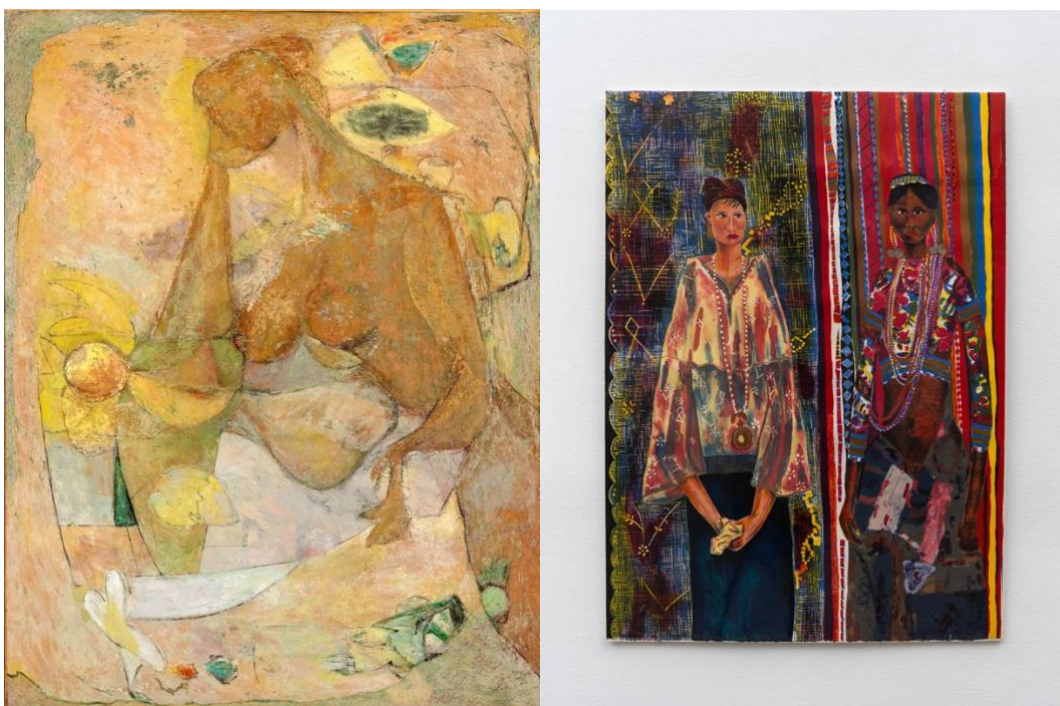
## A League of Nations

*An exhibition exploring the Art Students League as a creative nexus for artists from around the world since 1875.*

Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery

October 26 – November 30, 2023

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, October 26, 6pm – 8pm



Left: Arshile Gorky, *Mother and Child*, 1937. Oil on canvas 47 x 36 inch. Private Collection, Courtesy Collisart LLC, New York.  
Right: Pacita Abad, *Filipina: A Racial Identity Crisis*, 1992. Lithograph with pulp-painted chine-collé and metallic powder on Rives BFK paper, 42 x 30 inch. Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Art Estate and Tina Kim Gallery.

**New York, NY:** The Art Students League of New York is proud to present *A League of Nations*, a group show exploring the League as a creative nexus for artists from around the world since 1875. This thematic presentation features over **25 artists born outside of the United States** who found themselves at the League as either students or instructors during some portion of their career. Whether it was decades of study or a single month-long class, their engagement with the League has impacted their artistic practice. In turn, they are part of the richly diverse fabric that makes up the League to this day.

Founded by and for artists, the League has been instrumental in shaping America's legacy of visual art, with some of the most influential artists in American history studying and teaching at the League throughout their careers. These careers span beyond the geography of the United States; *A League of Nations* brings together a roster of artists that exemplifies how for nearly 150 years the

League has offered affordable and accessible classes and workshops to train succeeding generations of artists from around the world. In doing so, the Art Students League has been an instrumental force in the art histories of many regions across the globe.

**Ksenia Nouril, PhD, Gallery Director and Curator of the Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery**, shares: “The League is elated to host this seminal exhibition honoring an international cohort of League artists. Born abroad, these artists made their way to New York City and the League as instructors or students – or sometimes both! The League became an intrinsic part of their lives and careers, shaping their understanding of the United States and American art. We are thrilled to bring these important works together, so many of them made during the artist’s time at the League, for our audiences to appreciate.”

“My work has always been influenced by my travels... My work reflects the spirit in each place I visit and tries to incorporate local materials...” said the Philippines-born artist **Pacita Abad**. Embodying her experiences as an immigrant and international artist, Abad’s time at the League and in America can be witnessed in *Filipina: A Racial Identity Crisis* (1993), a lithograph based on an original trapunto or a large-scale hand-woven cloth-based work now in a private collection. The bifurcated composition mirrors the bifurcated identity of many artists who, either by choice or by force, live and work outside their home nations. **Mariano Del Rosario**, who taught at the League for nearly two decades before his passing in 2023, also addresses his Filipino identity in his mixed-media works. *Anong Oras Na? (What Time Is It?)* (1998) makes direct references to the various cities, topographies, and time zones inhabited by him and his loved ones at the time of its making.

As a center of education, the Arts Students League not only represents a place of learning but also a location to form community; students find the League as an important place to form social bonds in a city foreign to many. In 1981, **Ai Weiwei** left China for the United States, where he studied at Parsons School of Design and, from 1983 to 1986, at the Art Students League. Reflecting on his time at the League, Ai has said, “The Art Students League is important as a part of [the art education] tradition, a strong part of New York, and also as a part of me.” The League is proud to exhibit one of Ai’s early paintings *Untitled G3* from his time in New York City. While temporarily living and working in New York City in the 1960s, South African artist **Sue Williamson** studied on-and-off at the League from 1965 to 1969 with several instructors, including Will Barnet and **Seong Moy**, the latter of whom is also in the exhibition. Her studies specifically in printmaking continue to deeply impact her practice, as seen in photo-based works like *Truth Games: Linda Biehl - understand the context - Mongezi Manqina* (1998). Her work, though international in scope, continuously refers back to the local politics and challenges presented to a multicultural South Africa.

While some of the works in the exhibition are political in nature, others address aspects of the international artist experience through self-portraiture, narrative scenes, still lifes, and abstraction. Historical highlights include **Arshile Gorky’s** *Mother and Child* (1937), **John Graham’s** *Self-Portrait* (1923, which was made during the time he was at the League), and **Marisol’s** large-scale sculptural portrait of Willem de Kooning from 1980. Included are also several more recent works by artists whose careers span the post-war to contemporary periods, such as **Louise Bourgeois**, **Knox Martin**, and **Kazuko Miyamoto**.

This exhibition is curated by Ksenia Nouril, PhD, Gallery Director and Curator with Esther Moerdler, Curatorial Assistant.

### **Artists On View:**

Pacita Abad, Ai Weiwei, Louise Bourgeois, Jose de Creeft, Mariano Del Rosario, Billy Gerard Frank, Arshile Gorky, John Graham, Chaim Gross, George Grosz, Carmen Herrera, Zhang Hongtu, Serge Hollerbach, Morris Kantor, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Louis Lozowick, Marisol, Knox Martin, Jan Matulka, Kazuko Miyamoto, Seong Moy, Krishna Reddy, Kikuo Saito, Raphael Soyer, Joseph Stella, Val Telberg, Solange Umutoni, Vaclav Vytlačil, and Sue Williamson

### **Related Programming:**

#### **[LEAGUE TALK: A League of Nations](#)**

This panel discussion will feature artists and thinkers associated with the exhibition, including South-African artist and league alumna Sue Williamson.

Thursday, November 16 at 6pm

#### **[CURATORIAL WALKTHROUGH: A League of Nations](#)**

This tour will be hosted by the League's Gallery Director and Curator Ksenia Nouril, PhD. It will honor the league as a crossroads for artists from around the world by highlighting the myriad of artistic journeys that have led artists to and through the League.

Tuesday, November 28 at 12pm

Registration is encouraged at <http://www.artstudentsleague.org/>

All programs will be held within the exhibition in the Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery, 215 W 57 Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, which is elevator accessible.

### **Acknowledgements:**

The Art Students League of New York would like to thank all the artists in and lenders to this exhibition.

Programs at the Art Students League are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

Special thanks to the **Art Students League Board of Control**.

### **About the curator:**

Ksenia Nouril has been the Gallery Director and Curator of Exhibitions and Programs at the Art Students League of New York since September 2022. Previously, Nouril was the Jensen Bryan Curator at The Print Center (Philadelphia, PA). She also has worked at the Bruce Museum (Greenwich, CT); Lower East Side Printshop (New York, NY); Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); and Zimmerli Art Museum (New Brunswick, New Jersey). Nouril is co-editor of and contributor to *Carmen Winant: A Brand New End* (The Print Center, 2022); editor of and contributor to *Ilya Kabakov and Viktor Pivovarov: Stories About Ourselves* (Rutgers University Press, 2019); and co-editor of and contributor to *Art and Theory of Post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe: A Critical Anthology* (MoMA, 2018). Her research has been published in numerous exhibition catalogues and magazines worldwide. Nouril received her BA in Art History from New York University and her MA and PhD in Art History from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick.



**The Art Students League of New York** was founded in 1875 by a group of art students who had the revolutionary idea that a fine art education should be accessible to all. In the nearly one hundred and fifty years since, the League has built a legacy as a school where a diverse community of artists are inspired to produce work that reflects their full potential. Hundreds of history-making artists studied or taught at the League, including Georgia O'Keeffe, Norman Rockwell, Hans Hoffman, Charles White, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Al Hirschfeld, Barnett Newman, Norman Lewis, David Smith, Mavis Pusey, Roy Lichtenstein, Romare Bearden, James Rosenquist, Adrian Piper, Louise Nevelson, Louise Bourgeois, Robert Rauschenberg, Pacita Abad, Lee Bontecou, Ai Weiwei, and more.

**Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery**

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