

Nature's Rallying Cry: Honoring Mira Lehr

At the C. Parker Gallery in Greenwich, CT

February 23 – April 26

Just days before **Mira Lehr** passed away on January 24, the artist had aptly titled her new exhibition *Nature's Rallying Cry*. The second part of this show's title – *Honoring Mira Lehr* – was added after her passing. When Lehr gave her final blessing in early January on which paintings would be shown at the **C. Parker Gallery** in Greenwich, she was still making new artworks every day in her studio. During recent years, Lehr created new work at an even greater pace than ever before during her six decades of artmaking. **Most of the 26 artworks in this show have never been exhibited before, and were created during the last four years of Lehr's life.** The nationally acclaimed, eco-feminist artist thrived on exhibiting her newest art, and she was looking forward to audiences seeing some of her most recent paintings at this show. Because of this, the exhibition includes one of Lehr's last works, which she completed in January of 2023.



One of Mira Lehr's last paintings, *Orion's Belt* (2023)

Nature's Rallying Cry: Honoring Mira Lehr is on view now through April 26, and coincides with both Women's History Month in March, and Earth Day on April 22. Her passing was recognized worldwide, some of the many tributes published across the U.S. and internationally include: [The New York Times](#); [The Art Newspaper](#) in London, Paris, Israel, China and Italy; on [PBS Television](#); [The Boston Globe](#); [The San Francisco Chronicle](#); on [MSN News](#) across Latin America, and many more.

“The C. Parker Gallery is thrilled to bring Mira Lehr's important artworks to the northeast for this show. Lehr was a pioneer in the arts, a leader in environmental activism, and a champion of women. Lehr's vision of a better world shines through in this exhibition,” says **Tiffany Benincasa**, the owner of C. Parker Gallery. “This collection gives tribute to both Mira Lehr and some of her final artworks. During the week of Art Basel Miami Beach, I was honored to work with Mira at her home studio, where she invited me to collaborate on selecting the works for this show. As we continued this selection process into January, I could not have imagined this would be the last time that Lehr would personally plan an exhibition.”



Progression, by Mira Lehr (2021)

Because Lehr is recognized for co-founding one of the country's first women-led artist collectives more than sixty years ago, and due to her environmental art activism, **Tiffany Benincasa** chose the dates for this exhibition to include both Women's History Month and Earth Day. The Gallery will present a special panel discussion led by the New York-based art historian/critic Eleanor Heartney about Lehr's legacy and impact upon the art world (on Saturday, April 22 at 2:00 p.m.). The [C. Parker Gallery](#) is located at 409 Greenwich Avenue.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York recently acquired three of Lehr's works for the museum's permanent collection, in September of 2022. A year before her passing, Skira Editore (one of the world's leading art book publishers), published a 400-page monograph honoring Lehr's career.

Her work can be seen in American Embassies around the world, sounding Lehr's clarion call to save the environment across Europe, Asia and Latin America.

In 1969, the visionary Buckminster Fuller selected Lehr as one of only two artists for his groundbreaking *World Game Project* to spearhead sustainability and nurture the planet – it was a year before the very first Earth Day, and was the catalyst for Lehr's inspiration to devote her art to the cause of nature. In December of 2022 during Art Basel Miami Beach, Lehr's work was selected for three concurrent exhibitions for Miami Art Week.

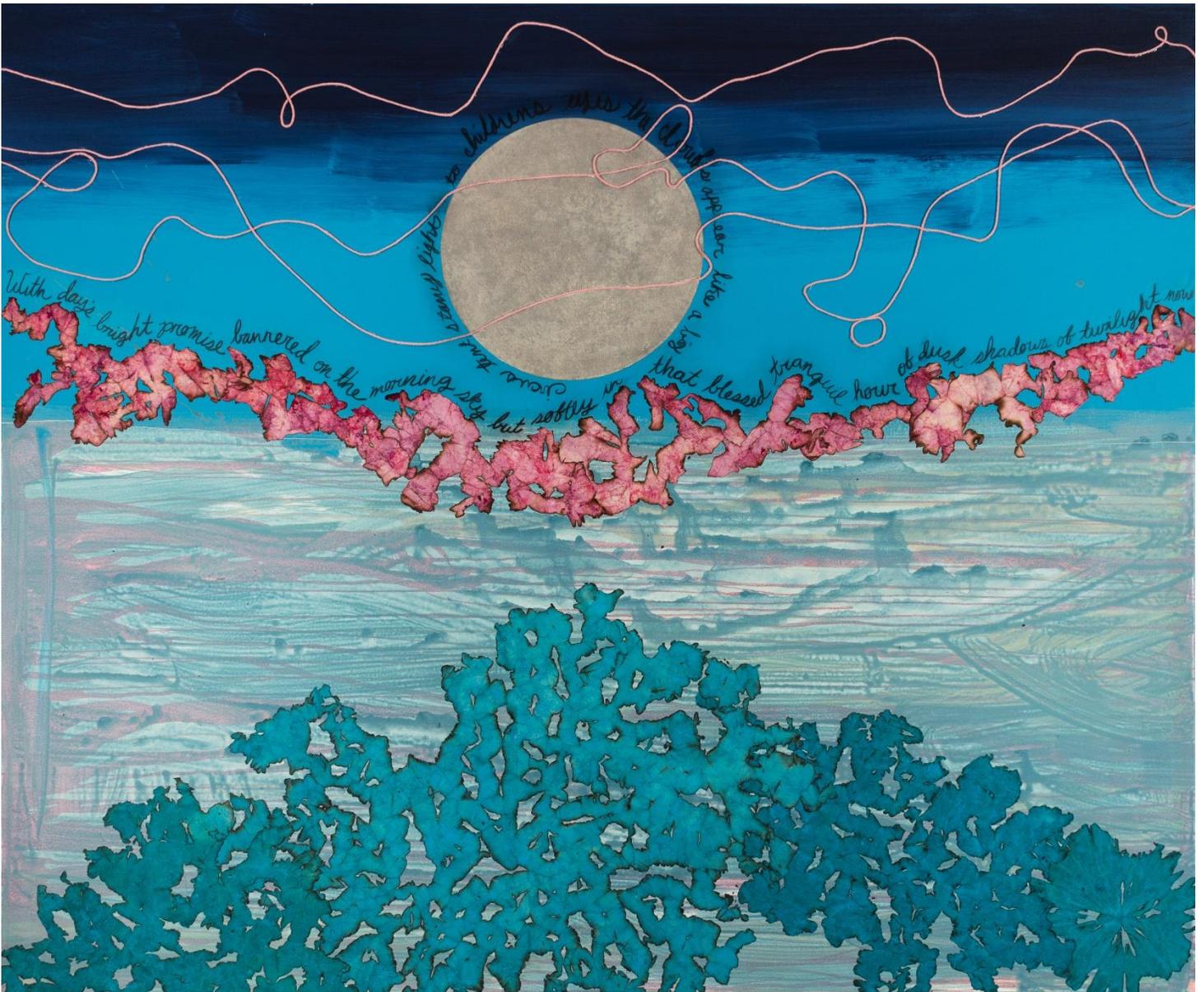


Pale Lilac, by Mira Lehr (2019)

The Mistress of Light

Working with imagery from the natural world, Lehr created layered abstract compositions with unconventional materials. The lush flora of her Miami Beach home/studio was a profound influence on Lehr's aesthetic vocabulary.

Her nature-based imagery encompassed painting, design, sculpture and video installations. Lehr's processes included non-traditional media – she ignited and exploded fuses across her canvas with gunpowder and fire. The flames burned holes and left imprints on her paintings. She layered delicate Japanese paper, applied resin, dyes and welded steel. She described her use of explosives as tying into the theme of creation versus destruction, which to Lehr is integral to the cycles and beauty of nature. The *CBS 60 Minutes* correspondent Morley Safer referred to her as “The Mistress of Light.” The art historian Irving Sandler described her use of imagery: “What makes Lehr's work different is the specificity of her references to nature. I was trying to think of any other artist working in this tradition who did it quite as explicitly as Mira does, and I couldn't come up with one.”



Departure, by Mira Lehr (2021)



Things That Change (Grids of Active Planetary Events),
by Mira Lehr (2020)

She co-founded one of the country's first co-ops for women artists who were excluded from the male-dominated art world. It was called *Continuum* and thrived for more than 30 years, shining a spotlight on Miami Beach's fledgling art scene.

Lehr convinced many of the famous masters from New York to visit Miami Beach, throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, where they led workshops for her league of women artists and helped foster the evolution of the art community in South Florida.

All of this was well before Art Basel made it to Miami, leading art critics to recognize Mira Lehr as "The Godmother of Miami's art scene."

Blazing a Path for Women Artists in the 1960s

Lehr inspired new generations of women artists as a mentor and as a collaborator.

Prior to her return from New York back to her hometown of Miami Beach in 1960, Lehr studied and worked in Manhattan as an artist.

There, in 1950s New York, she met some of America's most prominent artists during the pivotal mid-Century era of American art, including: Joan Mitchell, Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler, and Ludwig Sander. She studied with James Brooks, Ludwig Sander, Robert Motherwell, and within the Hans Hofmann circle.

Upon returning to Miami in 1960, she was shocked at the lack of an art scene, especially the plight of women artists. "Women artists felt stranded and hopeless in Miami," said Lehr. "I was determined to change that."



Sultry Night, my Mira Lehr (2022)

Full Bio: Mira Lehr (1934 – 2023)

The eco-feminist artist Mira Lehr was born in New York in 1934. Her solo and group exhibitions number more than 300. She graduated from Vassar College in 1956, where she studied under the mentorship of Linda Nochlin, the renowned feminist art historian.

In recent years, Lehr's work continued to achieve even greater acclaim, reaching new audiences as she created more new work than ever before.

Three of her works were recently acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York.

Lehr's work has been collected by major institutions, including: The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York; the Smithsonian Museum of American Art (DC); Getty Museum Research Center (L.A.); the Boca Raton Museum of Art; Perez Art Museum Miami; the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center (NY); the Margulies Collection; the Mennello Museum of American Art; MOCA North Miami; the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum-FIU; the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU; and the Orlando Museum of Art, among others.



Snow Falling Softly/Red Wave, by Mira Lehr (2019-2021)

Her work is included in the Leonard Lauder Corporate Collection NY, and in the private collections of Elie and Marion Wiesel, Jane and Morley Safer, and Judy Pfaff, among others. Thirty of her paintings were commissioned for Mount Sinai Hospital Miami Beach. Her work is in American Embassies around the world, and is permanently on view at the Sloan Kettering Memorial Center in New York. Lehr's large-scale installation "Sacred Dreams" is permanently on view in Miami Beach at the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, gifted by Dr. Robert B. Feldman.

The artist was recently selected for three concurrent exhibitions during Art Basel Miami Beach 2022/Miami Art Week, including a group show at the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU in South Beach (on view until April 2023), and a group show at the Center for Visual Communication in Wynwood (on view until April 8, 2023); and a solo exhibition at Rosenbaum Contemporary that was also on view during Art Basel. Lehr's large-scale painting "Norweky" is currently on view at the Boca Raton Museum of Art, as part of its permanent collection gallery.



Beneath the Spruce, by Mira Lehr (2020)

Throughout her more than six decades of artmaking, Lehr's nature-based work encompassed painting, sculpture, and video.

She used nontraditional media such as gunpowder, fire, fuses, Japanese paper, dyes, and welded steel. Lehr ignited and exploded fuses to create lines of fire across her paintings.

In the 1950s, Lehr studied and worked in New York where she met some of America's most prominent masters, including Joan Mitchell, Lee Krasner, and Helen Frankenthaler. She studied with James Brooks, Ludwig Sander, Robert Motherwell, and within the Hans Hofmann circle.

She was selected in 1969 by Buckminster Fuller as one of only two artists for his World Game Project on sustainability (preceding the first Earth Day). Lehr's installation, V1 V3, was exhibited at the New Museum in New York.

Lehr is recognized as "the Godmother of Miami's art scene" because upon her return to Miami in 1960 from New York, she co-founded one of the country's first co-ops for women artists. It was called *Continuum*, which thrived for more than 30 years into the mid-1990s. She is the subject of a new 400-page international monograph, published by Skira Editore (one of the world's foremost publisher of art books).

The New York public television interview featuring Mira Lehr may be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/qjXqbb43kAU>

Watch the video of **the Women's History Month** panel discussion at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qisi162al-Q&t=683s>

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