



## *Interview of the Month*

# MARIE BAGI

*Interview with Marie Bagi*  
*Contemporary Art History and Philosophy, Ph.D.*

INTERVIEWED BY VIBEKE THOMSEN, SHECANHECAN

1) Marie, you are about to launch Espace Artistes Femmes, the first center dedicated to Women artists, giving them a space to work, showcase their art and meet with the public. Can you tell us more about this project?

Yes, absolutely. First of all, thank you for the interview and giving me the opportunity to talk about my project. The project was born almost three years ago. Until this year, I never presented it to the public: only the Women artists I was working with, knew about it. This year, I was able to present it and I was really impressed by the interest it generated and still does. The idea is to promote the work of Women artists and to contribute to their recognition in the Art world by means of intimacy, their intimacy. Because their work and their life are always intertwined.

First, I present them and their works on social media after meeting them and getting to know their path. Then, next year, the artists will expose at Espace Artistes Femmes and present themselves by hosting guide tours of their art piece. In this way, they can let the public enter their intimacy, inside their artistic process which is the project's purpose. A workshop or a conference competes their activities at Espace Artistes Femmes in order to let them enter deeply in their artistic process. This way, art can be at everyone's reach. The project became an Association in September 2020. It's a pioneer and brand new concept of exposing and reaching art in between the art gallery (becoming obsolete) and the museum. I can't wait to share it "physically" next year!



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the recognition of Women  
artists' work.*



**2) You are specialised in Women in the arts and more specifically Louise Bourgeois and Camille Claudel. Could you tell us more about the experiences of these two women in an art world dominated by men?**

Camille Claudel and Louise Bourgeois were both sculptors but lived in two different periods. I chose to work on them during my Ph.D because they were both discovered in 1982 - and this date was the beginning of everything. Camille Claudel had a first biography by Anne Delbée and Louise Bourgeois had a first retrospective inside the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Why were these two recognized so late - Camille Claudel almost 40 years after her death and Louise Bourgeois at 71 years old? The reason is because we are living in a world dominated by the patriarch, especially during the time they lived. Camille Claudel, although Auguste Rodin supported her, was looking for recognition during her artistic life. She made great pieces of art with details and precisions but everyone was giving praises to Auguste Rodin. She was only seen as the pupil. At the end of the 19th Century, even if some Art Academies were open to Women artists, it was difficult to find a place in the Art world. Camille Claudel was intensely devoted to her art and few people were able to understand her. Her family was sure she was mad - only her father believed in her - and the only solution they found was to put her in a psychiatric institution. Because of that, Camille Claudel stopped her creation: the worse thing that could happen to her. Her story, after 1982, "attracted" the public and gave her a late recognition to the point that in 2017 a museum with her name opened in Nogent-sur-Seine (one of the places she lived when she was a girl). It's important to know the story/life of the artist to understand her work. It's that I want to spread with Espace Artistes Femmes.

To understand Louise Bourgeois' work, it's the same. Her life is constantly linked to her works. The dramatic events of her life while she was a little girl gave her the impulsion of creation. Even though she started creating in the forties, she had to wait 40 more years to be understood and her work qualified as genius and remarkable. In 1971, she was convinced that women were in the art world to satisfy men's power. During the same year, Linda Nochlin, art historian, was asking the question: "Why have there been no great women artists?". It really meant that Women's invisibility in art was a problem. During the seventies, the artistic movement Feminism started. 50 years later, we are still discussing Women's place in art. It has to change and Espace Artistes Femmes was created to replace what is fair. We don't need to fight. We just need to challenge the status-quo to give Women artists the opportunity to be listened to.

**3) Works of art by men are still overrepresented in galleries and museums throughout the world, concretely what can and should museum directors, curators and gallerists do to change this balance?**

Equality has to be applied. In fact, regarding the number of Women artists inside the institutions, we can't say that half of the artists exposed are women - even if women are museum or gallery directors. Lot of treasures can be discovered inside Women artists' works, too. We can't become an artist, we are born as an artist - as I always say. If this argument is valuable for men artists, it's the same for women. I would say that it's even more valuable for women because they are born with the creation's gift: procreation. Something more sensible can be understood. Women have no fear of jumping the art's limits. In fact, Marina Abramovic, for example, with Rhythm 0 (1974), or others performances, has no fear to die; she put herself at the art's service and I didn't see this kind of courage in a man's work, yet. So we need to put equality inside the institutions by putting the same number of Women artists and Men artists presenting their respective works.



*We don't need to fight. We need to create what is fair.*

**4) What do you say to people who argue that men have traditionally been more productive artistically and 'deserve' the current representation they have in the art world?**

I would ask them why they think that way and what's justifying these arguments. In fact, as Linda Nochlin said, women were not visible on the artistic scene because they didn't have the chance to. It's the reason why the impression that men are more active and productive makes sense. But it's not. That's why it's important to replace them in the Art world, giving them a space where they can express themselves freely and bringing equality - I want to invite, from time to time, a man to expose or perform at Espace Artistes Femmes - importance of equality.

**5) What do you hope that Espace Artistes Femmes will achieve, not only in Switzerland but beyond?**

I really hope that Espace Artistes Femmes can make the difference among the cultural institutions proposing the new concept that I explained and can spread a great message of equality. Bringing together all international Women artists who want to join the project/association is one of the goals. Lausanne, with its position and its cultural interests, is the perfect place to start. I hope that it will last forever and can change the contemporary art's world vision.

*About Marie Bagi*

*Passionate about art since she's four years old, she possesses a Contemporary art history and Philosophy, PhD. She wrote her PhD.'s thesis which was published - L'Art au féminin, volumes I et II. The intimacy inside Women artist's art and their latest recognition inside the world's art are the two axes of the discourse. The goal is to give a brand new impetus at the Contemporary art in which the process becomes the most important key for reading art. With Espace Artistes Femmes, she created a new and pioneering concept in which all that can be real and express. Marie is Swiss and she's currently living in Lausanne, Switzerland.*

**Find out more:**

[https://www.instagram.com/espace\\_artistes\\_femmes/](https://www.instagram.com/espace_artistes_femmes/)



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