

Sylvie Fleury: *Palette of Shadows*

45 White Street, New York

June 8 – July 13, 2022



"The first time I viewed a palette painting by Sylvie Fleury in a private collection in New York, I was in love. I then bought every book and read every article to learn about her place in art history and was incredibly impressed. I am so honored to collaborate with Thaddaeus Ropac on this presentation." – Lisa Schiff

SFA Advisory is pleased to announce *Palette of Shadows*, a presentation of seven shaped canvases from the monumental makeup palettes by contemporary Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury, in collaboration with Thaddaeus Ropac gallery. Fleury's work is a call for further contemplation into the ritualistic habits and gendered stereotypes that underpin contemporary society. Her practice includes sculpture, performance, installation, and painting, at times using and repurposing mass-produced objects such as cars, neons, or makeup palettes. The everyday items are transformed by their inclusion in an artistic context, allowing viewers to see them in a new way, while questioning the value we assign to consumer goods and artworks in turn.

In her seminal makeup palette series, Fleury faithfully replicates the look of famous makeup products, enlarging them while removing all branding, to reveal their resemblance to celebrated abstract works of art. In doing so, Fleury provides a feminist counterpoint to the paradigm defined by the 1964 all-male group exhibition *The Shaped Canvas* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, which featured work by Paul Feely, Sven Lugin, Richard Smith, Frank Stella, and Neil Williams.

"I've always wanted to transform reality, to transform everyday objects. That's perhaps why I am interested in fashion. Fashion trends reflect our time, but also produce codes that I've always wanted to appropriate and play with." – Sylvie Fleury

Beginning in the early 1990s, Fleury created her first readymade series, *Shopping Bags*, a collection assembled during outings to department stores. Displacing the bags in a gallery setting, the artist transposes one context for another. Continuing to explore fashion through makeup in particular, Fleury debuted *Private Lesson* in 1992 at Postmasters, which marked her first solo show in New York where she played a VHS of a tutorial on makeup application purchased at Bloomingdales as a ready-made comment on the male-dominated paradigms through which we define skill and artistry. In Geneva in 2007, Fleury created a performance for Art & Public where she drove a lowrider through piles of cosmetic products – blush, mascara, lipstick – smashing them repeatedly with the tyres and leaving behind a beautiful mess of plastic carcasses and glittering pigments.

Fleury's performances and paintings use makeup to push at the gendered structures of power and desire attached to commodities, as well as the fleeting nature of value contemporary society. The artist holds up a mirror to internalized cultural values, prompting greater awareness of our fetishisation of brands and the implicit biases that influence our

aspirations. Hung on the wall like abstract paintings, the makeup palettes are also a critical response to mainstream art historical narratives and a commentary on the systems of recognition and legitimacy at play within the art world itself.

“Patriarchal, capitalist societies always fear women’s desire and creativity. What I was and still am interested in, is eliminating as many boundaries in as many fields as possible.” – Sylvie Fleury

Fleury’s meticulous brushwork achieves smooth lines and factory-like precision by hand, a process which mimics the ritualistic application of makeup. Emptied of any packaging or text, the works very specifically reference brands such as Chanel or Dior revealing the fashion world’s own profit-inducing appropriation of marketable formal trends in the art world. Conversely, she creates a parallel in her works between the fetishization of consumer goods and the increasing commodification of the art world. Value-making in the realm of aesthetics is most slippery and Fleury has nailed it down with great precision. Beautifully streamlined, the sleek, yet sensuous and at times glittery surfaces of the works on show engage with strategies of seduction, while leaving open the question: for what reason do we find an object attractive?

Fleury previously exhibited this series in dedicated exhibitions *Palettes of Shadows* at Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris (2018) and *Eye Shadows* at Salon 94, New York (2017).

The Swiss artist was born in 1961 in Geneva, where she lives and works. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Europe and the United States. Recent solo exhibitions include the Kunstraum Dornbirn, Austria (2019); Istituto Svizzero, Rome (2019); Villa Stuck, Munich (2016); *Eternity Now*, as part of the permanent collection at the Bass Museum, Miami (2017 and 2015); Centro de arte contemporaneo de Málaga (2011); and MAMCO Genève (2008). Her work has also been presented in group shows internationally, including at the Daimler Contemporary, Berlin (2019); Leopold Museum, Vienna (2018); Kunsthaus Zürich (2018); Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich (2016); SCHAUWERK Sindelfingen (2014); Kunstverein Hannover (2011); and Kunstverein Frankfurt (2011). In 2018 she was awarded Switzerland’s Prix Meret Oppenheim and in 2015 received the Société des Arts de Genève Prize.

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About SFA Advisory:

SFA is an art advisory specializing in modern and contemporary art. Founded by Lisa Schiff in 2002, SFA serves a select group of dedicated collectors around the world. SFA is made up of experienced art professionals able to assist in every aspect of collecting with the utmost confidentiality and discretion. SFA strategizes all aspects of building a fine art collection, from education and acquisition to installation and collections management. SFA prides itself on making the art world transparent for its clients, helping them navigate the complex web of relationships and platforms. SFA engages with artists, non-profits and museums and participates in curatorial and special projects. SFA principal, Lisa Schiff, is frequently called upon to share her expertise and provide in-depth analysis to the press. Lisa makes a point to speak regularly on panels and to engage in public discussions, covering a variety of art related topics.

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Image: Sylvie Fleury, *Pink Explosion*, 2018. Acrylic on canvas on wood, 120 x 120 x 12.2 cm (47.24 x. 27.24 x 3.8 in). Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg · Seoul © Sylvie Fleury