

For Immediate Release

## **NYU's Grey Art Museum Celebrates the First Art Dealer to Focus Solely on Emerging Artists**

***Make Way for Berthe Weill: Art Dealer of the Parisian Avant-Garde***

October 1, 2024–March 1, 2025

The second exhibition at 18 Cooper Square explores the contributions of Berthe Weill, a woman gallerist who nurtured key figures of French modernism.



Raoul Dufy, *30 ans ou la vie en rose*, 1931. Oil on canvas, 38 5/8 x 50 3/8 in. Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris © 2024 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: CC0 Paris Musées / Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris

(NEW YORK, NY, August 2, 2024)—New York University's Grey Art Museum presents *Make Way for Berthe Weill: Art Dealer of the Parisian Avant-Garde*, featuring works by modern artists championed by a dealer who remains relatively unknown. Weill (pronounced “vay”) was the first dealer to purchase works by Pablo Picasso in 1901, and she promoted Henri Matisse and Amedeo Modigliani, among many others. Yet her role in early 20th century modernism has been omitted from most historical accounts. This landmark exhibition sets the record straight. On view from October 1, 2024 to March 1, 2025, the groundbreaking show is the second at the museum’s new and expanded galleries at 18 Cooper Square.

More than 120 paintings, drawings, prints, and sculpture by modern giants such as Picasso, Matisse, Aristide Maillol, Fernand Léger, and Raoul Dufy are featured alongside works by less well-known artists. Together they create a compelling portrait of Weill (1865–1951), who operated her gallery for four decades in four different Parisian locations and was the first to promote work created exclusively by emerging artists. The exhibition highlights Weill’s influence

and examines the sexism, antisemitism, and economic struggles she faced as she advocated for cutting-edge contemporary art in a competitive Parisian art market.

Organized by NYU's Grey Art Museum, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, *Make Way for Berthe Weill* also features paintings by Suzanne Valadon, Émilie Charmy, and Alice Halicka, to name a few among the many female artists Weill promoted. Also included are works by Marc Chagall, André Derain, and Diego Rivera, whose first solo show took place at the Galerie B. Weill.

"This exhibition spotlights the remarkable story of an indomitable woman who maintained a gallery in Paris, the art capital of the world, from 1901 to 1941," says Lynn Gumpert, director of the Grey Art Museum and one of the curators of the exhibition. "Weill sought out unproven artists, some of whom became household names and some of whom didn't. But all benefited from her creativity, ingenuity, and passion."

Weill was born in 1865 in Paris to an Alsatian Jewish family of very modest means. In her teens, she began an apprenticeship with Salvator Mayer, a colorful print and antiques dealer whose shop was located in the heart of the Parisian gallery district and which attracted Impressionist artists such as Edgar Degas and collectors such as Isaac de Camondo. At age 36, after learning the trade for two decades, she opened the Galerie B. Weill just a few streets away. Her business card read "Place aux Jeunes," which roughly translates to "make way for the young." In addition to presenting exhibitions, Weill sold books, prints, and antiques to earn enough to stay open. Fearless and determined, she organized Modigliani's only solo exhibition during his lifetime. The show was shut down by police on the opening night, as they judged the nudes to be "indecent." Consequently, no works were sold; the impoverished artist died three years later.

Weill stood apart from her male counterparts, such as Ambroise Vollard, Paul Durand-Ruel, the Bernheim-Jeune brothers, and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, not only in her class and gender, but in her willingness to gamble on unknown talent and in her disdain for contracts. Art lovers of her time recognized Weill's achievements. In October 1931 a journal reported that she was writing her autobiography: "Mlle B. Weill, that extraordinary picture dealer . . . has a long memory and doesn't suffer fools gladly. So gossip about the memoir by 'the great and small' Mlle Weill is buzzing from Saint-Tropez to Sanary by way of the *terrasse* of the Dôme, and some people are feeling nervous." Weill's memoir, *Pan! dans l'oeil!*, was published in 1933. Translated in 2022 as *Pow! Right in the Eye!*, it appears to be the first autobiography by an art dealer, followed by Vollard's *Recollections of a Picture Dealer* in 1936.



Émilie Charmy, *Portrait de Berthe Weill*, 1910–14. Oil on canvas, 35 3/8 x 24 in. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts © Alberto Ricci. Photo: MMFA, Julie Ciot



Henri Matisse, *Liseuse en robe violette*, 1898. Oil on canvas, 14 7/8 x 18 1/8 in. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims, France © 2024 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Christian Devleeschauwer

The exhibition includes archival documents—such as letters, exhibition catalogues, photographs, and journals—that reveal her deep relationships with a range of artists. A keen observer of contemporary art trends, she supported Matisse and showed the Fauves before they gained their moniker at the Salon d’Automne in 1905. She began promoting Cubism, noting in *Pow!* how difficult it was to convince the public of its importance. In the late 1910s and ’20s, she featured figurative paintings by School of Paris artists, before focusing on abstraction in the 1930s with shows by Otto Freundlich and Alfred Reth. In 1941, she was forced to close her Left Bank gallery on rue Saint-Dominique due to the “Aryanization” measures enacted under the Nazi occupation. Somehow avoiding deportation, Weill emerged impoverished and in

poor health after the war. In December, 1946, artists and rival galleries donated artworks for a public auction, the proceeds of which went to Weill in recognition of her crucial early support.

The exhibition’s international curatorial team includes Gumpert, Marianne Le Morvan, founder of the Berthe Weill Archives in Paris, Anne Grace, curator of modern art at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and Sophie Eloy, collections administrator and coordinator of the *Contrepoints Contemporains* installations at the Musée de l’Orangerie.

An illustrated publication, *Berthe Weill: Art Dealer of the Parisian Avant-Garde*, accompanies the exhibition. Published by Flammarion, it illuminates the rich artistic period by spotlighting recently rediscovered artists and offering new insights into the era’s central figures. It includes an introductory essay by Le Morvan, a discussion of portraits of Weill by Grace, an essay on antisemitism in late 19th-century France by historian Charles Dellheim, an overview of collectors who frequented the Galerie B. Weill by researcher Robert McD. Parker, and entries on works by Eloy. It also features a chronology and selected bibliography.

Also available is Weill’s recently translated 1933 memoir, [\*Pow! Right in the Eye! Thirty Years Behind the Scenes of Modern French Painting\*](#), edited by Gumpert and translated by William Rodarmor (University of Chicago Press).

The Grey Art Museum is open Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 11:00 am–6:00 pm, Wednesday, 11:00 am–8:00 pm, and Saturday, 11:00 am–5:00 pm. Admission is free for NYU students, faculty and staff, and a \$5 suggested donation for all others.

The exhibition will tour to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts May 10–September 7, 2025, and the Musée de l’Orangerie in Paris October 8, 2025–January 25, 2026.

*Make Way for Berthe Weill: Art Dealer of the Parisian Avant-Garde* is organized by the Grey Art Museum, New York University, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and the Musée de

l’Orangerie in Paris. The presentation at the Grey is made possible in part by generous support from the David Berg Foundation; the Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation; the Helena Charitable Foundation; Mark Sena and Linda Saul-Sena; the Evelyn Toll Family Foundation; Mildred Weissman and the Malka Fund; the Estate of Julie Saul; Joyce Pomeroy Schwartz; halley k harrisburg; Patti Askwith Kenner; Jane Wesman and Don Savelson; the Grey Art Museum’s Director’s Circle, Inter/National Council, and Friends; and the Abby Weed Grey Trust.

High-resolution images are available upon request.

### **About the Grey Art Museum**

After nearly a half century on Washington Square, the Grey Art Gallery is now the Grey Art Museum, New York University. The Grey’s new facility occupies the ground floor of a brick and iron building in the NoHo Historic District, its open store front façade facing out onto a busy pedestrian thoroughfare. The new location accommodates three galleries—expanding exhibition space by 40 percent—and, on the lower level, the Cottrell-Lovett Study Center, which will enable more direct access to the collection for students, faculty, and researchers

In 2025, the Grey Art Museum celebrates its 50th anniversary. Over the last five decades the institution has organized exhibitions that have encompassed all the visual arts: painting, sculpture, drawing and printmaking, photography, architecture and decorative arts, video, film, and performance. In addition to producing its own exhibitions, which often travel to other venues in the United States and abroad, the museum hosts traveling shows that might otherwise not be seen in New York and produces scholarly publications that are distributed worldwide.

### **General Information**

Grey Art Museum, New York University  
18 Cooper Square, New York, NY 10003

(Mailing address: 20 Cooper Square, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10003)

Tel: 212-998-6780, Fax: 212-995-4024

E-mail: [greyartmuseum@nyu.edu](mailto:greyartmuseum@nyu.edu) Website: [greyartmuseum.nyu.edu](http://greyartmuseum.nyu.edu)

### **Hours**

Tuesday: 11 am–6 pm

Wednesday: 11 am–8 pm

Thursday: 11 am–6 pm

Friday: 11 am–6 pm

Saturday: 11 am–5 pm

Closed Sunday, Monday, and major holidays

### **Admission**

Suggested donation: \$5; free of charge to NYU students, faculty, and staff

### **Press Contacts**

Peggy McGlone | [mam10274@nyu.edu](mailto:mam10274@nyu.edu) | 212-998-6829

Sofoia Eddy | [sofoia.eddy@nyu.edu](mailto:sofoia.eddy@nyu.edu) | 212-998-6782