

# HÉLÈNE DE BEAUVOIR: THE WOMAN DESTROYED

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE AMAR GALLERY, London

24 Jan - 30 March, 2025

Amar Gallery is proud to announce our exhibition *Hélène de Beauvoir: The Woman Destroyed*, the first ever solo exhibition of Hélène de Beauvoir's work in London. Often overshadowed by her older sister, the writer **Simone de Beauvoir**, this exhibition features paintings & works on paper from the 1950s to 1980s. Amar Gallery's founder, Amar Singh, was recently described by *The Telegraph* as a "farsighted art dealer" for consistently discovering overlooked artists and being the first gallerist to show the work of **Lynne Drexler** in London<sup>1</sup>. *The Woman Destroyed* is an exhibition which took Singh three years to put together, sourcing works from around the world, meeting patrons of de Beauvoir and discovering how important Hélène de Beauvoir was to her sister and the global feminist movement.

Editor Annalisa Tacoli notes **Picasso** was an admirer of Hélène's paintings<sup>2</sup>. Picasso became familiar with de Beauvoir's work when the artist had her first solo exhibition in Paris in 1936 at Galerie **Jacques Bonjean**, a gallery cofounded by **Christian Dior**, who began his career as an art dealer before becoming a fashion powerhouse. Galerie Bonjean also exhibited the work of **Picasso, Braque, Dali** and much like Hélène even gave **Leonor Fini** her first solo exhibition.

In *Tout compte fait* (1972), one of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiographical works, she wrote collaborating with Hélène was something she had longed wished for. In 1967 one hundred and forty three first edition copies of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Woman Destroyed* were published by Gallimard with sixteen etchings by Hélène. First editions of this book are extremely rare and one copy will be on view at Amar Gallery. This incredibly important book in feminist ideology was the first time the de Beauvoir sisters collaborated together. Publisher Gallimard was afraid that the publication of such 'feminine' literature would give it the mark of a publisher intent on overturning the social order.

The main themes covered in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Woman Destroyed* are echoed in the individual memoirs of the Beauvoir sisters, with particular regard to their mother's confined domestic life in their family home in the rue de Rennes, Paris, and Simone's later experience as the second woman in her relationship with philosopher, novelist and political activist **Jean-Paul Sartre**.

Referring to her sister, Hélène wrote, 'I was her first "reader", and I would draw', in her book *Souvenirs*, where she recalls how, in the early years, she came to choose the vocation of artist, whilst her elder sister preferred to write.

In 1964, Satre was awarded the Nobel prize in literature which he rejected as he did not wish to be “transformed” by such an award. After rejecting the award Satre tried to escape the media by hiding in the house of H el ene in Goxwiller, Alsace. Satre and Simone de Beauvoir remained close with H el ene, regularly attending her exhibitions and studio and immersing her with their electric circle including **Cocteau**, and **Lionel de Roulet**, whom H el ene married.

Claudine Monteil, the women’s rights specialist who knew both Simone and H el ene, details in her book *The Beauvoir Sisters*, that the two sisters shared a close bond and artistic influence on one another, but also about the jealousy and rivalry. Monteil also highlights how these two remarkable women came together to help launch the modern women’s movement and make a mark on the world.

#### H EL ENE DE BEAUVOIR IN SELECTED COLLECTIONS & MUSEUMS

Centre Pompidou

Uffizi Museum, Florence

Oxford University

Mus e W urth France Erstein

Museum of modern and contemporary art of the City of Strasbourg  
The royal library of the Netherlands

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