

All In a Day's Work | Abstract Art By Women
June 9 – July 7, 2020

Female artists have had a smaller footprint in abstraction, than in many other spheres of visual art. From Hilma af Klint to Agnes Martin, there have been notable female abstractionists, but they have been few and far between. This holds true not only in western art, but equally in South Asia. Female abstractionists like Zarina are the exception, while figurative artists from Amrita Shergill define the norm - if we can call it that, of art created by women.

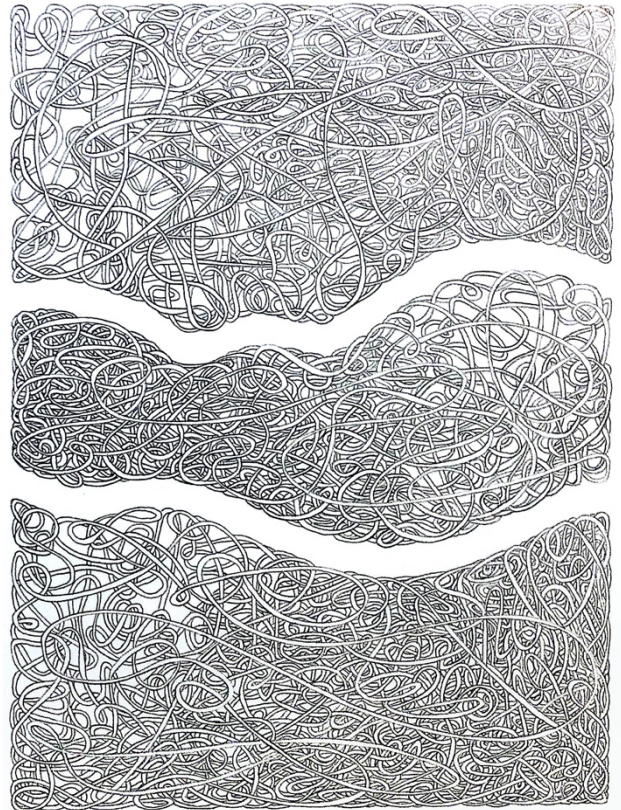
The five artists in All In a Day's Work, buck this gender skew and create wonderful abstract art. While Shobha Broota and Sathi Guin gravitated toward abstraction from realistic art, Marcy Chevali, Dhara Mehrotra, and Grace Beck have been moored in abstraction from the earliest days of their art practice. The art of five is tied together by the idea of network. The idea that the art, and indeed the artist, is a momentary snapshot of a continuum, in which much has come before and much will come after; like Stephen Hawkins' characterization of humans being equidistant from stars and atoms.

This idea of network is an empowering one for this group of five female abstractionists; because it allows them to leave and return to their work, sometimes in the course of the day, at other times, months or years later. It allows the artists to be grandmothers, mothers, partners, educators, activists, writers, even as they are artists. Their art practice strives to be human, not heroic.

As the mother of young children, Grace Beck's art practice is interstitial. It weaves in and out of life, and occupies gaps in the day. Her parenting informs her art, but equally her art informs her parenting, as her children grow up watching Beck's intimate relationship with her work.

Shobha Broota's oeuvre is evocative, earthy, sensual, sincere, and it is abundant in emotional depth. It is an intriguing concord of stormy passions: betrayal, loss, renewal and freedom. Her art resonates with concerns of love, liberation and enchantment. Broota conveys an almost unprecedented view of desire as she excavates and resurrects it from its stereotypical identity. It is a veneration of human experience and the significance of sexuality in the human psyche.

Marcy Chevali says that her sculptures, installations, and works on paper create references to her emotional states that she experiences. Themes of patience, desire, restriction, fluidity, stillness, and hope are central to her practice. She uses domestic, everyday materials such as thread, rice, dryer lint, yarn, sugar, and masking tape. These simple and readily available materials and the handmade quality of the work convey a sense of urgency in the need to express, rather than perfection of expression.



Grace Beck, The Movement Never Stops, 2018, Graphite on rag paper, 10 x 8 in.

The art critic Bansie Vasvani likens Sathi Guin's painting to a Rorschach ink blot with ingenious protrusions and convoluted twists. Guin's abstract water color paintings, Vasvani writes, feature bright tangerine blobs that seep across the page. On closer inspection thin diaphanous lines made with the exquisiteness of miniature painting cover kidney shaped protrusions. The viewer couldn't help but be reminded of delicate veins and arteries replenishing organs in the human body. Pulsating hearts and throbbing female uteri attached to thick blood vessels and capillaries seem to fill the page. Rich with life, these organs epitomize the idea of continuity and spirit—and of the constant ebb and flow intrinsic to existence—in which the swell of energy is followed by moments of separateness and space.

Dhara Mehrotra characterizes her art as a reflection upon the idea of self-organized communication in plant world through fungal networks, also called 'Mycelia'. Mycelia networks are mass of branching thread like structures, spreading over great lengths underground, as wood-wide-web, connecting the roots of all vegetation, cycling life energy through them.

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Marcy Chevali, Nida, 2019, Flame worked glass, 15.50 x 26 x 7 in

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