

COLNAGHI

PRESS RELEASE

LEONOR FINI: A PRACTICE OF TRANSFORMATION

Colnaghi New York – May 13, 2026 – June 26, 2026

Colnaghi New York is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition, which brings together works by Leonor Fini in dialogue with Greco-Roman, Egyptian, and African ritual objects. Continuing the gallery's commitment to placing artworks into direct trans-historical and cross-cultural conversation, the exhibition foregrounds a shared language of metamorphosis, spiritual agency, and the body as a site of transformation.

'The Sphinx is the guardian of the threshold. She represents the marriage of the cerebral and the instinctive, the human and the animal. She is the 'in-between' state where all transformations are possible.'

– Leonor Fini, *Le Livre de Leonor Fini: Peintures, dessins, écrits* (Lausanne: Edita S.A., 1975)

This exhibition situates thirty graphic works by Leonor Fini within a trans-temporal dialogue with Greco-Roman, Egyptian, and African ritual objects, foregrounding a shared language of metamorphosis and spiritual agency. Fini's world of sphinxes, feline priestesses, and androgynous seers intersects with African masks, reliquaries, and ancestral effigies inviting a reading of the body as conduit, an instrument of transformation between visible and invisible realms.

At the centre of the exhibition lies the continuum between mask and gaze, where concealment functions as revelation and identity assumes a ritual dimension. In this context, Fini's personal mythology is brought into dialogue with the operative power of African figures and the enduring symbolic charge of antiquity, emphasising the image as a talismanic and active presence. In both Fini's practice and the ritual use of masks and figures across these cultures, the act of appearance is inherently performative: a form of theatre in which identity is assumed, enacted, and transformed.

Furthermore, the exhibition delves into sacred eroticism as a vital force. Fini's dominant female figures and priestesshoods, asserting eroticism as command, resonate with the fertility and ancestral forces embedded in African forms, where sexuality is integrated with protection and continuity. This convergence highlights the body as a ritual site of power.

This curatorial framework reveals a shared totemic feminine, a personal pantheon of protective presences and ancestral sovereignty across cultures and centuries.

Exhibition Information

Title: *Leonor Fini: A Practice of Transformation*

Dates: May 13, 2026 – June 26, 2026

Location: Colnaghi New York, 23 East 67th Street, New York, NY 10065

Opening Reception: Wednesday 13th May, from 6-8pm.

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 10am–6pm

Enquiries: press@colnaghi.com

Website: <https://www.colnaghi.com/>



Leonor Fini (Buenos Aires 1907 – Paris 1996), *Self-portrait with a Dragonfly*, signed lower right “Leonor”; pen and ink on paper, 15.5 × 20.5 cm (6 1/8 × 8 1/8 in.).



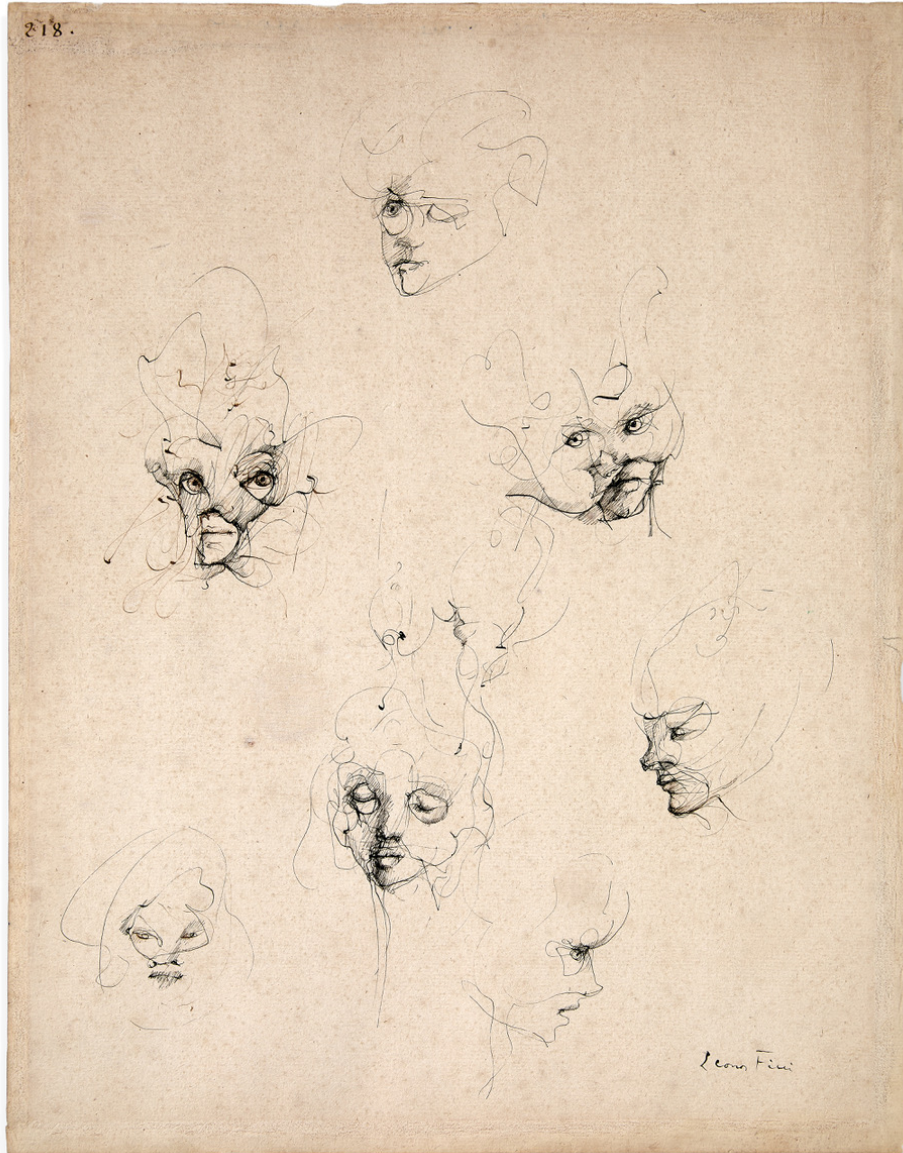
Bust of a Goddess, Phrygian, ca. 5th-4th century B.C; terracotta, height 25.5 cm (10 in.).



Leonor Fini (1907–1996), *Set Design for “La Mégère Apprivoisée”*, 1957, signed lower right ‘L. Fini’; collage, pencil and watercolour on paper, 32 × 53 cm (12 5/8 × 20 7/8 in.).



Yaka artist, *Mask (ndemba)*, Democratic Republic of the Congo, late 19th–early 20th century; wood, fibre, and pigments.



Leonor Fini (Buenos Aires 1907 – Paris 1996), *Sketches for Mask Designs*, signed lower right “Leonor Fini” and numbered upper left “218”; pen and ink on laid paper, highlighted with colour, 36.5 × 27.5 cm (14 3/8 × 10 7/8 in.).