

Fishman, Louise

(b Philadelphia, PA, Jan 14, 1939).

Anne K. Swartz

<https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T2090245>

Published online: 23 February 2011

American painter. Fishman is an abstract painter who came of age at the end of the 1960s when Abstract Expressionism was the dominant mode of painting and the Women's Movement was gaining momentum. She attended the Philadelphia College of Art, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, eventually receiving her BFA and BS degree from Tyler School of Fine Arts. There she received two senior prizes—the First Painting Prize, Student Exhibit, Tyler School of Art, and the Bertha Lowenberg Prize for the Senior Woman to Excel in Art (1963). She went on to receive her MFA from University of Illinois in Champaign (1965); that same year, she relocated to New York City. She received numerous grants and fellowships, including National Endowment for the Arts grants (1975–6; 1983–4; 1994); a Guggenheim Fellowship in Painting (1979); a fellowship to the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire (1980); a New York Foundation for the Arts, Fellowship in Painting (1986); a Adolph and Ester Gottlieb Foundation, General Support Grant (1986) and the Adolph & Clara Obrig Prize for Painting, National Academy of Design, 177th Annual Exhibition (2002). At the end of the 1960s, she focused her energies on sculpture. When she returned to painting, she combined bold, loose strokes spread over the canvas with feminist content in her famed 1973 painting series *Angry Women*, which were word paintings including text for emotions and names of women artists. Her abstract paintings were a way for her to convey her activism. A 1988 trip to Prague, Warsaw, Budapest and the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Terezin resulted in a series of works titled *Remembrance and Renewal*, where she used dirt from Auschwitz combined with beeswax and other materials to enable her to investigate her Jewish identity. Fishman has been recognized as a lesbian artist and included in exhibitions of lesbian artists. She has also been recognized for her insistence in probing the intense experiences of contemporary life, such as the impact of the events of September 11, in her painting.

See also: Gay and lesbian art.

Bibliography

Six Painters: Gregory Amenoff, Jake Berthot, Howard Buchwald, Louise Fishman, Harry Kramer, Katherine Porter (exh. cat., New York, Hudson River Mus., 1983)

Louise Fishman: Art and Identity (exh. cat., ed. W. Kendall-Hess and E. Whittemore; Akron, OH, A. Mus.; New York, Jew. Mus., 1994)

Louise Fishman: The Tenacity of Painting, Paintings from 1970 to 2005 (exh. cat., Hanover, NH, Dartmouth Coll., 2007)