

Liliane Lijn

SEEDS OF TOMORROW



Liliane Lijn, *My Lady of the Flowers*, 1991,
oil on canvas, 152 x 106 cm | 59 7/8 x 41 3/4 in

Sylvia Kouvali, *London*

11 October – 22 November 2025

Opening reception: 11 October 2025, 6–8pm

Sylvia Kouvali is delighted to present *Seeds of Tomorrow*, the fifth exhibition by Liliane Lijn with the gallery that runs concurrently with her major retrospective *Arise Alive* at Tate St. Ives, which has toured from Haus der Kunst, Munich, and mumok, Vienna.

The exhibition follows Lijn's recent inclusion in notable group presentations such as *Electric Dreams: Art and Technology Before the Internet* at Tate Modern and *Radical Software: Women, Art and Computing 1960–1991* at Kunsthalle Wien. Lijn's memoir *Liquid Reflections* was published in March by Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Random House.

Liliane Lijn (b. 1939, New York) is widely recognised as the first woman artist to work with kinetic text, beginning her pioneering experiments with light and movement as early as 1961. Born in the United States, she studied archaeology at the Sorbonne and Art History at the École du Louvre in Paris. Immersing herself in Parisian cultural life, she attended meetings of the Surrealist Group.

SYLVIA KOUVALI

Lijn moved to London in 1966, initially to exhibit at the radical and influential Signals Gallery, founded by Guy Brett, David Medalla, and Paul Keeler, only to find the gallery had recently closed. Undeterred, she remained in London, building a six-decade career that spans painting, poetry, performance, sculpture, jewellery and installation. Lijn is recognised for her unique fusion of art, science, technology, Eastern philosophy, and feminine mythology, experimenting with a spectrum of materials such as bronze, steel, mica, feathers, plastics, prisms, copper and blown glass.

Seeds of Tomorrow brings together for the first time five paintings from a group of seven made in 1991. From the early 1980s, Lijn began searching for “a new image of the feminine,” producing drawings of female forms she would later title *SHE*. These works became central to both her painting and three-dimensional practice.

Created during a period of intense dreaming, Lijn’s paintings reflect her exploration of mythological and archetypal imagery, marking a shift from abstract fields of colour toward a more figurative expression. In these paintings, Lijn identifies the feminine with nature. Three works narrate the drama of the creative feminine. Lijn views these as a triptych, each image presenting the transformation from a joyous symbol of the life force in *Lady of the Flowers* to her sidelining and gradual erasure in *Wrapped in Uncertainty* and *Stifling*. *She of the Mountain in the Sea* emerges as mineral, air, water, and wind, whereas *Seeds of Tomorrow* depicts the archetype as an ominous vision of the future.

Presented alongside these paintings are two historical sculptural works from 1983 titled *Lines of Power*—the tallest examples of Lijn’s important minimalist kinetic sculptures exploring light and reflection. Recently shown at Tate Modern, the title for these works was inspired by a visit in the late 1970s to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, where Lijn encountered rising serpents engraved on the columns of a reconstructed Egyptian temple. Familiar with the *Uraeus*—a rearing cobra symbolic of divine protection and the embodiment of several goddesses—Lijn interpreted the serpentine forms as symbols of cosmic energy, mirrored in the lines of light oscillating along her kinetic columns. Made from rolled perforated steel, Lijn indented these cylinders and wound them with copper wire using an experimental machine used by BICC (British Insulated Calendar Cables) and the Post Office in the development of the Waveguide project, a new and subsequently abandoned system of telecommunications to replace copper cabling in the late 1970’s.

Fusing the cosmic with mythology and technology, Lijn refers to these rotating cylindrical sculptures as “lines of light.” As reflections oscillate up the columns, light acts as code, an entirely new way of seeing form. In an email dialogue with Guy Brett in 2001, she reflected on the connection between the circular and cylindrical forms in her sculptural work and the feminine body she was exploring through painting and drawing: “I want to create the energetic body, the flowing form. The light line on the cylinders appeared to me as a dance of form. That dance is, in a sense, the link between matter and energy. The serpentine, sibylline voice is the voice of the feminine.”

Selected solo exhibitions include *Liliane Lijn. Arise Alive*, Tate St Ives, St Ives (2025), *Liliane Lijn. Arise Alive*, mumok, Vienna (2024); *Liliane Lijn. Arise Alive*, Haus der Kunst, Munich (2024); *Temenos*, Lewis Cubitt Square, King’s Cross London (2023 ongoing); *I AM SHE*, Ordet, Milan (2020); *Spotlight*, Tate Britain, London (2018); *Look A Doll!*, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2018); *Cosmic Dramas*, mima, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough (2012); *Liliane Lijn: Works 1959-80*, Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry (2005); *Poem Machines 1962-1968*, National Arts Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (1993); *Beyond Light*, Serpentine Gallery, London (1976).

SYLVIA KOUVALI

Group exhibitions include *Radical Software: Women, Art & Computing 1960–1991*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2025); *A Living Collection*, The Hepworth Wakefield, Yorkshire, UK (2025); *Electric Dreams: Art And Technology Before The Internet*, Tate Modern, London (2024); *Contemporary Collecting: David Hockney to Cornelia Parker*, The British Museum, London (2024); *Cosmogonie*, MACRO - Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, Rome (2024); *Americans in Paris: Artists Working in Post-war France, 1946-1962*, Grey Art Gallery, NYU, New York, (2024); *Making New Worlds: Li Yuan-chia & Friends*, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (2023); *LIGHT: Works from the Tate Collection*, The National Art Center, Tokyo (2023); *If Not Now, When? Generations of Women in Sculpture in Britain, 1960 - 2023*, The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield (2023); *The Miracle of all Time*, (Touring) Kunsthall Oslo, Oslo (2022); Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul (2021); *Light: Works From Tate's Collection*, ACMI - Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne (2022); *The Milk of Dreams*, 59th Venice Biennale (2022); *The Sky as Studio: Yves Klein and his Contemporaries*, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz (2021); *Still Undead: Popular Culture in Britain Beyond the Bauhaus*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2019); *Pushing Paper: Contemporary Drawing from 1970 to Now at the British Museum*, British Museum, London (2019); *Tate Britain Display: Sixty Years*, Tate Britain, London (2019); *Liquid Reflections: Works from the Anne-Marie and Victor Loeb Foundation*, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern (2017); *Beat Generation*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016); *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language*, MoMa, New York (2012); *Psychedelica*, ICA, London (2011); *60: Sixty Years of Sculpture in the Arts Council Collection*, Longside Gallery, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2006); and *Art and Science*, Venice Biennale, Venice (1986)

Lijn's work is held in prominent museum collections including: Art Institute of Chicago; Arts Council, London; British Museum, London; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris; Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern; Musée de la Ville de Paris, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate, London and Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Liliane Lijn, *Lines of Power*, 1983,
steel, copper wire and motor, 306 x 23 x 23 cm | 120 1/2 x 9 x 9 in (each)

SYLVIA KOUVALI

12a Bourdon Street
London, W1K 3PG
UK
+44 20 743 99 777
Open Tue—Sat 11am—6pm
or by appointment

41 Polydefkous
Piraeus, 18545
Greece
+30 210 4123977
Open Tue—Sat 12—8pm
or by appointment

info@sylviakouvali.com
www.sylviakouvali.com

For more information
please contact **Sylvia Kouvali** at sylvia@sylviakouvali.com
or call at +44 755 7225200
or **Hannah Robinson** at hannah@sylviakouvali.com

Thank you!

SYLVIA KOUVALI