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B A Z A A R

Harper's

ART

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WOMEN IN ART

YAYOI KUSAMA

*The Moving Moment When I Went
To The Universe*

for HARPER'S BAZAAR ART

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BENTLEY

Left: Kate Bryan photographed at Soho House 40 Greek Street. Below: 'Suzanne Valadon 2' by Annie Kevans, also at 40 Greek Street

CLUB
CURATOR



Far and wide

As the head of Soho House's ever-growing art collection, Kate Bryan strives to showcase emerging female talent

BY HELENA LEE

It might come as a surprise to learn that one of the best careers in art is actually in hospitality – but then, the role in question is at Soho House. The group owns an international collection encompassing at least 4,500 contemporary artworks. 'I love my job because I have real buying power, pulling power and communication power,' says Kate Bryan, its head of collections, who made her mark last year at the Ned, the brand's newly opened hotel and members' club. Inverting the FTSE 100 CEO gender ratio, she created an exhibition of 93 pieces by female artists and seven by men.

Bryan has always been a trailblazer. The first in her family to go to university, she developed her passion for making art accessible at the British Museum, where she worked with curatorial greats such as Neil MacGregor. 'He has an extraordinary mind,' she says, 'and is an unbelievably gifted speaker in the way he ties ideas together to make you think differently.' After teaching art history in Italy, she ran a gallery in Hong Kong from 2007 for four years, where she staged Peter Blake's first show in Asia. She came back to London in 2011, overseeing the recently launched Art15 fair, and then became the youngest director of the Fine Art Society at the age of 29, but the pace of the institution eventually frustrated her.

When the painter Jonathan Yeo, who originated the idea of Soho House's collection, told her that the brand's founder Nick Jones was looking for someone to take its curation over full-time, she went for the job.

Since starting, Bryan has acquired more than 3,500 artworks for 18 sites in two years, applying her expansive world-view and keen artistic eye to site-specific displays in each establishment. For the refurbishment of 40 Greek Street, she commissioned artists including Tracey Emin, Tacita Dean and Yinka Shonibare to create a continuous line drawing in homage to Paul Klee, who famously said 'a line is a dot that went for a walk'. She also founded the exhibition platform '40, 40, 40', whereby 40 artists under 40 show work in the bar.

How does Bryan reconcile the exclusive nature of a members' club with her democratic outlook? With such creative freedom, she sees the set-up as a way to support the younger generation, particularly women. 'But we've also plenty of works by the best museum-level artists – Edward Ruscha, Damien Hirst – so everyone is in really good company.' Meanwhile, she's planning to feature the

works in a new book, to start a digital platform for non-members and to arrange viewings by appointment.

For now, Bryan is concentrating on forthcoming club openings in Mumbai, Hong Kong, LA and Paris. Soho House Amsterdam refers to the country's artistic heritage. At the latest addition to the group, Little Beach House Barcelona, guests can enjoy tapestry and ceramics akin to those made in Spain in the early part of the 20th century, while Jean Cocteau's poetry and painting will influence Soho House Paris. 'The artists give us so much and are so generous,' says Bryan. 'The houses just wouldn't be the same without the art.'

Kate Bryan will host a panel of artists as part of Bazaar Art Week on Friday 5 October (www.bazaarartweek.co.uk).

THE REAL DEAL

Lessons in artistic authenticity

London Art Studies, the digital platform created by Kate Gordon (the co-founder of the Association of Women in the Arts), is set to begin a new series about the art market this autumn. The overview will equip students with the ability to spot fakes and forgeries, and learn about insider trading and the new tastemakers. HL
To subscribe, visit www.londonartstudies.com.

BAZAAR ART WEEK



GET DRAWN IN...

From Tracey Emin to Yoko Ono, many of today's leading contemporary female artists have contributed to *Bazaar Art* since its launch in 2013. For the first time, we are bringing the magazine to life with a week-long festival celebrating women in art. Yana Peel will discuss the intrinsic link between art and fashion at the Serpentine Galleries; the V&A will house a bespoke exhibition of images by *Bazaar* photographers including Lillian Bassman and Diane Arbus; and Soho House's head of collections Kate Bryan hosts a breakfast with the artists Annie Kevans, Susan Hiller and Sarah Maple. Supported by Ballymore and Ruinart, *Bazaar Art Week* runs until 7 October. Buy tickets at www.bazaarartweek.co.uk and read exclusive content at www.harpersbazaar.com/uk.

*Yana Peel at
the Serpentine
Sackler Gallery*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
WWW.BAZAARARTWEEK.CO.UK

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