



## THE ROOM IS SHARED

“To bring forth the sub-reality of the spirit for the humane... so that we can become responsible again, yet otherwise.”

This fragment, written by Bracha L. Ettinger, functions here as both proposition and invitation: to enter a space where relation and responsibility emerge from proximity. During the opening week of the Venice Biennale, a small room in the Hotel Metropole — where Sigmund Freud stayed and partially wrote *The Interpretation of Dreams* (published in 1900) — is transformed into a site of painting, resonance, and shared presence. If Freud’s project sought to interpret the dream through mechanisms of condensation and displacement, here the dream is neither decoded nor mastered. The room becomes a shared psychic field in which subjectivity is not isolated but co-emerges through vulnerability, care, and attention.



This is also the first installation by Ettinger: a dreamscape composed of seashells and St. Mary’s Milk thistle, extending the pictorial field into space. The shells, shaped by tides and time, and the thistle, long associated with nourishment, protection, and healing — said to have grown from drops of the Virgin Mary’s milk whilst she nursed the Infant — create a womb-like environment in which the viewer is not simply positioned before the work but held within it. The installation does not illustrate the paintings; it amplifies their condition, transforming the room into a resonant chamber of fragile co-presence. In a time saturated by noise, speed, and machinic perception, Ettinger’s paintings ask us to slow down and to feel-with rather than look-at. The works, modest in scale and intimate in format, resist immediate visibility.

THIS EXHIBITION CELEBRATES THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK BRACHA LICHTENBERG ETTINGER BY SKIRA IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRE POMPIDOU.

They require work: a slow accompaniment. Veils of mauve, deep red-purple, and milky white release trembling presences that surface and recede in the act of looking. In paintings such as *Ophelia, Medusa n. 1* (2006–2013), *Angel of Carriance n. 3* (2015–2021), *Annunciation – Birthing – Pieta n. 4* (2017–2021), *Annunciation, Birthing and a Girl* (2017–2023), *Angel of Carriance – Halala n. 3* (2017–2024), *Angel of Carriance n. 2* (2017–2021), or *Eros – Pieta n. 7* (2019), figures hover in a state of co-emergence, neither fully present nor absent.

This is not ambiguity but coexistence. Multiple figures, temporalities, and states remain distinct whilst superposed, unfolding within a pictorial field that resists fixation. Vision is thereby fragilised and displaced from its habitual mastery. One does not look at these works; one enters into a process of what Bracha calls ‘wit(h)nessing’. Such a condition radically displaces Freud’s model. The unconscious is no longer a hidden interior to be excavated, but a shared field of resonance. Ettinger’s Matrixial Theory proposes that subjectivity does not begin with separation and lack, but with co-emergence in a prenatal borderspace. Here, partial subjects — self and non-self — are linked in proximity, sharing affects, traces, and memories within a trans-subjective field. Unlike the surreal, which erupts from beneath the rational, the *subreal* is a limit-zone of perceptions reached when a subject is fragilised and attuned: an encounter with what lies at the edge of ordinary sense.

In Venice, this borderspace becomes spatial. The room itself acts as a matrixial partner, carrying layered histories of care, abandonment, music, and healing — orphanage, music school, military hospital, and now this. These histories are not narrated but sensed, forming a field of latent resonance. The paintings do not occupy the room as discrete objects; they participate in it, forming a chamber of relation in which the viewer is implicated.

The exhibition unfolds over seven days, with seven paintings, creating a quiet correspondence between duration and image, time and attention. This temporal structure resists the accelerated consumption of images that defines contemporary life. Duration becomes ethical: to remain, to attend, to allow something to emerge without forcing it into clarity. Ettinger’s practice can be understood as *carriance* — of carrying and being carried. The paintings carry traces of others: of histories, of images veiled and transformed beyond recognition. At the same time, the viewer is carried into the work, entering a space where something is transmitted without being fully revealed. Like the sonogram that translates high-frequency sound waves into visual pulses on a screen, these works

function sonogramatically: not images of what is seen, but of what is sensed — echographies of a prenatal space where vision is inseparable from sound and movement.

The accompanying video works — among the rarest instances in which Ettinger has exhibited moving image — extend this condition into a fluid temporality. *Angel Waterdreaming* (2025) becomes vibratory, operating like a membrane through which memory and sensation circulate, cinematic time becoming another medium of co-presence.

Throughout the seven days, Ettinger also works on an unfinished painting set on an easel within the room. The work is in progress: not performance, but practice in the original sense — the studio entering the exhibition, the act of painting made visible as an ongoing, living event. The room holds both the trace and the making.

In this context, the psychoanalytic chamber is radically displaced. No longer a site of interpretation and cure, it becomes a space of co-affectivity and ethical encounter. The viewer is not positioned as analyst nor patient but as participant — implicated in a fragile network of relations that includes the artist, the image, and the traces of others.



To enter this room is to accept a different contract. It is to relinquish mastery and to engage in *borderlinking*: a process in which subjectivity is continuously formed through relation. In a world increasingly defined by speed, separation, agentic violence and artificial image and ideology production, Ettinger’s work offers a counter-proposition — a return to resonance, to the subreal, and to the fragile space where something human, yet otherwise angelic, can still emerge. She proposes sonograms for humanity.

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev Venice, May 2026

## CASA KIRSCH AND THE HOTEL METROPOLE IN VENICE

The Hotel Metropole is located in an iconic building in the heart of San Marco district, home to the Antico Spedale della Pietà, built in 1346 by decree of the Venetian Senate to take in orphaned children. Created to foster and educate orphans, it is depicted in the *Veduta di Venezia* by the engraver Jacopo de’ Barbari as early as the 16th century. The orphanage, mainly for young girls, became famous in the 18th century thanks to the so-called “figlie del coro” (daughters of the choir), young musicians trained by Antonio Vivaldi in the new oratory, where he also composed *Le quattro stagioni* (The Four Seasons) in 1725. In 1760, the new church of Santa Maria della Visitazione, or della Pietà, was designed by Giorgio Massari as an addition to the main building, connected with the Pio Ospedale della Pietà. All that remains of this today, as a fragment of history, is the so-called “ruota degli innocenti” (wheel of the innocents): the revolving door through which, starting in the 19th century, orphans were entrusted to the charity of the nuns.

A further major restoration transformed the building into a hotel, which took the name Casa Kirsch in 1880: the date is still visible on the staircase of the first mezzanine. Intellectuals and writers stayed at Casa Kirsch, including, at the turn of the century, Sigmund Freud (from 1895), Marcel Proust (1900), and Thomas Mann (1901).

Freud stayed at Casa Kirsch during his frequent visits to Venice from 1895 onwards, and in particular between 1895 and 1899 when he conceived and wrote *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), as evidenced by his correspondence with his friend and colleague Wilhelm Fliess. In a letter dated April 28, 1897, Freud tells his friend: “Last night I had a dream concerning you. It was a telegraph message about your whereabouts: Via. [“(Venice) Casa Kirsch]”.<sup>1</sup>



In 1897, the hotel was renamed Hotel Metropole. In late 1944 the hotel was requisitioned by the German army to be used as a military hospital, which remained active until the end of the war in April 1945. In 1968 the management of the hotel passed on to Pierluigi and Elizabeth Beggiano, and later to their daughter Gloria.

Chiara Spangaro

<sup>1</sup> The ellipsis in the published letter reflects Freud breaking off the address, but his editors agree that this refers to the pension.

## BRACHA LICHTENBERG ETTINGER

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger is a contemporary visual artist and writer. Born in Tel Aviv (1948) and working in Paris, she is a painter, psychoanalyst, philosopher, and a groundbreaking theorist whose Matrixial Theory has impacted the fields of ethics and aesthetics, cultural studies, art theory and art history, film and literary studies, ecology, and feminism, over the last four decades. Her recent solo exhibitions include: K21 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2025); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2024); Castello di Rivoli. Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin (2021-2023); Freud Museum, London (2009). Her books, in which she developed the subjects of trans-generational and personal trauma, memory, “wit(h)nessing”, feminine and maternal Unconscious, “Copoiesis,” “fragilisation,” “carriance” and “transjectivity,” include: *The Matrixial Gaze* (1995), *The Matrixial Borderspace* (2006), and *Matrixial Subjectivity, Aesthetics, Ethics* (edited by Griselda Pollock, 2020). Volumes of her selected writings are in preparation with Routledge Publishing House.

The most recent monograph on the artist (2025) launched in Venice during the exhibition curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, is a cooperation between Skira and the Centre Pompidou that has a long history of collaborations with the artist, notably in *ELLES* (2010-2011), *Face à l’Histoire* (1996-1997), and an early solo exhibition (1987) and a recent one (2024). Bracha L. Ettinger is Chair and Professor of Art and Psychoanalysis at EGS, European Graduate School, Saas-Fee, and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at GCAS Global Center for Advanced Studies, Dublin.

## CAROLYN CHRISTOV-BAKARGIEV

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev is Honorary Guest Professor FHNW University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern, Basel, Switzerland. She was the Director of Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea in 2009 and from 2016 to 2023. From 2009 to 2012 she was the Artistic director of DOCUMENTA (13), which took place in Kassel, Germany, as well as in Afghanistan, Egypt, and Canada. She was Chief curator of the Castello di Rivoli in Italy from 2002 to 2008, following her tenure as Senior curator at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (now MoMA PS1) in New York from 1999 to 2001. Christov-Bakargiev has curated numerous exhibitions with works by the artist Bracha L. Ettinger. Among these: *La Ville, le Jardin, la Mémoire*, Villa Medici, Rome (1998-2000); the 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015); *Bracha L. Ettinger, Bracha’s Notebooks*, Castello di Rivoli (2021-2023) and *Artisti in guerra. Artists in a Time of War*, Castello di Rivoli (2023). She recently curated the 2024-25 exhibition *Arte Povera* at the Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection in Paris, which explored the roots, development, and global legacy of the Italian movement. Christov-Bakargiev is the author of many books and essays including her recent analysis of Ettinger’s work (Skira, Paris, 2025). She has lectured widely and has taught at the University of Leeds and Northwestern University. Currently she is researching angels, the topic of artistic freedom, corporeality, and transcendence in aesthetics of the digital era.

## BRACHA LICHTENBERG ETTINGER BRACHA.

A seven day exhibition of seven works by Bracha L. Ettinger in Sigmund Freud’s Room at the Hotel Metropole, Venice 4—10 May, 2026

Curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev  
Project Management and Curatorial Assistance by Chiara Spangaro  
Installation by Attitudine Forma  
Lighting Project by AFS - Service Audio Luci  
Graphic Design by Al mare. Studio  
Communication by Sarah Greenberg, Evergreen Arts, London; Simona Oliva and Valentina Carrer, Stilema, Turin  
Exhibition Assistance by Eleonora Angiolini, Sofia Prase and Sara Sgrazutti

The exhibition at the Hotel Metropole is supported by Andrew Kreps Gallery. The book launch of Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Paris: Skira, 2025, took place on 4 May 2026.

This publication was printed in an edition of 1500 copies by Grafiche Antiga, Treviso, of which 100 copies are signed and numbered by the artist.



## THE ROOM IS SHARED

**Acknowledgements**  
Sharon Arbeli  
Gloria Beggiano  
Juliette Chambon  
Laure Chauvelot  
Claire Felonis  
Giulio Ferrarella  
Alex Fitzgerald  
Andrea Furlanetto  
Anna Gilardi  
Guillaume Grandgeorge  
Alicia Knock  
Andrew Kreps  
Laura Leone  
Christine Macel  
Panagiotis Panagopoulos  
Diego Paties and the restaurant Do Forni  
Amaranta Pedrani  
Cesare Pietrousti  
Nathalie Prat-Coudau  
Leo Quartucci  
Yael Shai  
Marie Siguier  
Mattia Tomasi  
Chiara Visentin

© the artist and the authors for images and texts. No use of images and texts is authorised without prior consent.



## BRACHA LICHTENBERG ETTINGER

# BRACHA. THE ROOM IS SHARED

CURATED BY CAROLYN CHRISTOV-BAKARGIEV

A SEVEN DAY EXHIBITION OF SEVEN WORKS BY BRACHA LICHTENBERG ETTINGER, IN SIGMUND FREUD’S ROOM AT THE HOTEL METROPOLE IN VENICE.



From left to right, details from:

*Ophelia, Medusa n. 1*  
2006-2013  
Oil on paper mounted on canvas  
28 x 24,5 cm  
Courtesy Andrew Kreps

*Annunciation, Birthing and a Girl*  
2017-2023  
Oil on canvas  
50 x 43,5 cm  
Courtesy the artist

*Angel of Carriance n. 3*  
2015-2021  
Oil on canvas  
20 x 20 cm  
Courtesy the artist

*Angel of Carriance – Halala n.3*  
2017-2024  
Oil on canvas  
50 x 50 cm  
Private collection

*Eros – Pieta n. 7*  
2019  
Oil on canvas  
25 x 25 cm  
Courtesy the artist

Other exhibited works:

Set of 6 Notebooks, Berlin,  
2021-2024  
India ink, watercolour, pencil,  
and ink pen on notebook in  
embroidered fabric  
10 x 18 x 2,5 cm  
Courtesy the artist

*Annunciation – Birthing – Pieta  
n. 4*  
2017-2021  
Oil on canvas  
25 x 25 cm  
Courtesy the artist

*Angel Waterdreaming*  
2025  
animated digital video, 20'  
Courtesy the artist

*Angel of Carriance n. 2*  
2017-2021  
Oil on canvas  
25 x 25 cm  
Courtesy the artist