

Lack, Jessica, *The best of the Venice Biennale — 'the ultimate primer in contemporary art'*, **Christies**, 29 April 2022

CHRISTIE'S



The best of the Venice Biennale — 'the ultimate primer in contemporary art'

Women artists at the Biennale

From San Marco it is a vaporetto ride to the Giardini, the park-land created by Napoleon Bonaparte and now home to the Biennale. For the first time in its 127-year history, the festival (which runs until 27 November) features more female than male artists. Curator Cecilia Alemani has borrowed the main exhibition's title, *The Milk of Dreams*, from the artist Leonora Carrington's Surrealist children's book.

Early reports suggest that this is the most successful show so far: a polymorphous universe of monstrous beasts and ambiguous transgressions, liberating in its imaginative possibilities, but with an undeniably dark undercurrent.

In the minimalist Central Pavilion, established figures such as Paula Rego, Nan Goldin and Cecilia Vicuña (winner of the Golden Lion Lifetime Achievement award) are exhibited alongside contenders Christina Quarles, Hannah Levy and Sheree Hovsepian, together with little-known Outsider artists such as Andy Warhol's discovery, Sister Gertrude Morgan. In one large, mustard-coloured room, an exhibition entitled *The Witch's Cradle* is devoted to female Surrealists, among them Carrington, Eileen Agar, Claude Cahun and Dorothea Tanning.