MASTER Gerard the illuminator has a daughter, about eighteen years old called Susanna. She made an illumination of the saviour, for which I paid one guilder. It is a great miracle that a female should do so well.

Albrecht Durer, journal entry 1521.
Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?

Origins of Feminist Art Theory

1972 - Linda Nochlin wrote an essay entitled *Why Have There Been No Great Woman Artists?*

Nochlin: argued that the “white, Western, male viewpoint” has been “accepted as the viewpoint of the art historian.” Since there is no feminist art history, one has to be constructed complete with theoretical basis and methodology.
Reasons given (traditionally) for no great women artists:

• The suggestion that greatness stems from innate qualities or ‘genius’ which is absent from women.

• Biological differences
  (or in truth, the biological differences cause the social and institutional restrictions.)
Masculine vs Feminine

What are the traditional (stereotypical) notions of art production and gender?

For example:

Feminine art is graceful, delicate, intimate

Masculine art is big, public, powerful
Male or Female?
Lavinia Fontana  (Bologna 1552-1614)

Judith and Holofernes

Tintoretto 1579
Susannah and the Elders
Northern Italian late 16th – early 17th century

Tintoretto c. 1555-62

Artemisia Gentileschi 1610
Neo-classical

Jacques Louis David

Andromache Mourning Hector
1783

Hector Calling Paris into Battle
1775
Angelica Kauffmann

Neo-classical
Judith Leyster (1609-1660)
Boy Playing a Flute 1630-35

Frans Hals, The Flute Player 1625

Dutch 17th century
17th century flower painters

Rachel Ruysch (1664-1750)

Willem Van Aelst,
Still Life with Watch, 1663
Rocococo portraiture

Rosalba Carriera (1673-1757)
Louis XIV

Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88)
Johann Christian Bach

Rococco portraiture
18th century still life

Chardin (1699-1757)
The Silver Goblet

Anna Vallayer-Coster (1744-1818)
Still Life with Round Bottle c.1770
Impressionism

Berthe Morisot, 
In the Garden at Maurecourt, 1884

Monet, Woman with a Parasol, 1875
19th century Salon

Adolphe William Bouguereau
Chansons des Printemps 1889

Elizabeth Jane Gardener Bouguereau,
Daphnis and Chloe
“Autumn in Bavaria” 1906-1908

Gabrielle Munter

Wassily Kandinsky
Do women have to be naked to get into U.S. museums?

Less than 3% of the artists in the Met. Museum are women, but 83% of the nudes are female.

Guerrilla Girls
1989
“As part of our large scale installation at the [Venice Biennale](https://www.venicebiennale.org) a few years ago, we researched the historical museums of Venice. We discovered that every museum in Venice, except one, owned art by women, but almost all of it was kept in the basements, in storage, not hanging in the galleries. After the Biennale we looked at other museums in Europe and the US, and found the same situation. Most museums have only a paltry number of women artists and artists of colour on exhibit -- even contemporary museums. The more we thought about it, we couldn't resist creating this image of great women artists from history locked in a dungeon, out of sight. So here are Vigée-Le Brun, Berthe Morisot, Yayoi Kusama, Sonia Delaunay, Edmonia Lewis, Ana Mendieta, Pan Yuliang, Alice Neel and others peering out from behind the prison of art history.”

Guerrilla Girls 2011
The education of women in the Arts

“Art is Alien to the mind of women, and these things cannot be accomplished without a great deal of talent, which in women is usually very scarce.”

Boccaccio, “On Concerning Famous Women.”
Properzia de’Rossi
(c.1490-1530)

The first professional female marble sculptor of the Italian 16th c., she received training at the University of Bologna, and with master engraver Marc Antonio Raimondi. Although pitted against male competitors, de Rossi was the winner of a commission for the west façade of San Petronio, also in Bologna. Part of the commission included a marble panel depicting the Biblical story of *Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife*, a biblical tale.

Joseph and Potiphar’s wife
c 1520 (marble)
VASARI and PROPERZIA DE ROSSI

In the first edition, Vasari writes about Properzia de Rossi (c.1490-1530) who practiced sculpture and who began her career by carving elaborate scenes on peach stones for the nobility in Bologna where she lived.

Grassi Family Crest
(first half of 16th century)
Silver filigree and carved peach and plum stones
(39x22cm)
Whilst on the one hand Vasari describes her as “prodigious, great miracle of nature, unique, marvelous” (prodigo, grandissimo miracolo della natura, singolare, meraviglioso) he also does not conceal his disapproval of her choice of medium, especially the thought of the juxtaposition of “tender and very white hands” with mechanical instruments, rough marble, and harsh iron.

However, not only does he praise her artistic ability (father was not an artist) but also grants her high marks for her excellence in household matters, as well as her beauty, and ability to play instruments and sing (all very important qualities in a female painter).
His comment on her major work, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, is somewhat of an understatement: "A lovely picture, sculpted with womanly grace and more than admirable."

In his mention of de'Rossi, however, Vasari cautions that women artists should not be too diligent in their work, nor appear to be too creative or inventive: artistic greatness and mastery was reserved for men.

Women were to retain their sense of virtue and proper behavior according to the Christian norms of the time. Properzia seemed to have flaunted many of these feminine ideals as she was charged with disorderly conduct in 1520-21 and again in 1525 for throwing paint in the face of another artist.

(She died in a hospital for the needy c.1530)
Diana Mantovana (Diana Scultori Ghisi)

"...also engraves so well that it is a thing to marvel at; and I who saw her, a very gentle and gracious girls, and her works, which are most beautiful, was struck with amazement."

Vasari

Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery, 1575 (after Guilio Romano) Engraving

The Holy Family, Engraving
16\textsuperscript{th} & 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries

- Training through apprenticeship with an artist. Apprentice generally went to live with the master for a number of years.
- Sons or daughters of artists received training in the family business
- Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) daughter of Prospero Fontana
- Marietta Robusti (1560-1590) daughter of Tintoretto
- Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1652) daughter of Orazio Gentileschi
- Elisabetta Sirani (Bologna 1638-1665) daughter of Giovanni Andrea Sirani, one of Guido Reni’s pupils
Not all though – Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625)

She was born into a noble family in Cremona, in the north of Italy, the eldest of six daughters and 1 son. A huge dilemma for the poor father one would expect, having to marry off not one but six girls.

Her father, Amilcare, however was a shrewd man. Faced with the financial burden of providing a dowry for six daughters he sought to cultivate their talents and all six sisters received training in painting and music.

Sisters: Sofonisba (1532-1625)
Elena (c.1535-after 1584) Nun
Lucia (c.1536/38-1565)
Minerva (c. 1539/41-?)
Europa (c.1542/44-) married 1568
Anna Maria (c.1545/46-) married 1570s
Asdrubale (1551-1623)
Self-portrait with servant

c.1542 (aged 12?)

(old woman studying the alphabet and being mocked by a young girl)
30.1 x 34.5cm Uffizi
Self-portrait

C.1548 (aged 16?)

Chalk 35.1 x 26.4cm Uffizi
Bernardino Campi
Painting
Sophonisba Anguissola

c.1550
Oil on Canvas
(111x110cm), Siena
Caravaggio
Boy bitten by a Lizard
(1593-94)

Boy bitten by a crab c. 1554
(33.3 x 38.5 cm) Naples
Caterina van Hemessen,
1548

Late 1550’s
“A portrait of Signora Sofonisba, a woman artist, drawn from life in Palermo on July 12, 1624 when she was 96 years old, still possessed of a good memory, a fresh spirit and a friendly manner.”
Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) daughter of Prospero Fontana (Italian mannerist painter)

Head of a Youth, 1606 (tempera and watercolour on paper 47.5x35.5cm) Acquired by Cardinal Scipione Borghese c.1613
In 1578 she was requested by a collector, the Spanish Dominican humanist Alfonso Ciaconio in Rome (1578)

“to send me a tiny little portrait.... To enable a panel from life to be made, to accompany the [self-portrait] which I have from Sofonisba, so that you can be seen, and contemplated and recognized by everyone, and I will also [place] it among the 500 illustrious men and women which will be engraved, at the expense of the most serene archduke Ferdinand of Austria.. I think of celebrating and propagating you for centuries.”

She depicts herself seated, not in a workshop but like a scholar at a desk in well appointed studiolo, surrounded by an extensive collection of antique marble and bronze fragments.

She is sumptuously garbed with a blank piece of paper before her (may be in the act of thinking up a composition (conceptually important part of drawing) or of writing poetry or a treatise. She presents herself as an intellectual with a knowledge of classical art. (only 15cm in diameter – suggests modesty)
Influenced Lavinia Fontana’s Self-Portrait at Clavichord (1577)

Sofonisba Anguissola, Self-portrait (1561) o/c 83 x 65 cm Earl Spencer Collection, Althorp
Minerva Dressing, c.1612-13
(possibly an earlier version of painting on right) – rediscovered in 2002

Minerva dressing herself, 1613
(painted for Cardinal Scipione)
St Jerome in the Desert, c.1581
Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith and Holofernes, 1611-12

Fede Galizia, Judith with the Head of Holofernes, 1596
Portrait of a Hairy faced Girl, daughter of Pedro Gonzalez, c.1594-95 94x76mm

Portrait of Antonietta Gonsalus (bambina pelosa)c.1595 57x46cm
Bronze medallion, Casoni, 1611
Marietta Robusti (1560-1590)
daughter of Tintoretto

Portrait of an Old Man and a Boy.
c.1585  103x83.5cm
Marietta Robusti (Tintoretto) Self-portrait at a Keyboard c.1580 (Uffizi)

Worked within Tintoretto’s studio as did her brother. Ridolfi, a Venetian writer states that she turned down an invitation from Philip II of Spain because her father could not do without her company.
Fede Galizia (c.1574-c.1630)
daughter of an illuminator – the “talented and esteemed Nunzio”
Artemisia Gentileschi
(1593-1654)

Woman Playing a Lute, (St Cecilia) c.1612

St Catherine of Alexandria. c.1614-17
Artemisia Gentileschi,

Self-portrait as the Allegory of Art

1630’s
Self-portrait as a Lute Player
c.1615-17
Curtis Galleries
Minneapolis
Judith and Holofernes (earlier) c.1612-13
158.8 x 125.5

Judith and Holofernes (c.1615-20)
Elisabetta Sirani
(Bologna 1638-1665)

Study 1663

Virgin and Child, 1663
Portrait of Beatrice Cenci c.1662
(after Guido Reni)
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome

Sp 1658, Pushkin Museum Moscow
“There have also been many experienced women in the field of painting who are still renowned in our time, and who could compete with men.

Among them, one excels exceptionally, Judith Leyster, called the true “leading star” in art…”

Theodore Shrevel, Haarlem historian 1648

Judith Leyster (Haarlem 1609-1660 Heemstede)
Self-portrait 1635
The Proposition 1631
The Hague, Mauritshuis

Van Honthorst, The Procuress 1625

Barburen, The Procuress 1622
Caterina van Hemessen
Still Life with a vase of Flowers, Goblets and Shells (1612)
18th century

- Academies:
  - Academie Royal de Peinture et de Sculpture (France) 1620 (?)
  - Royal Academy (Britain) 1768

French Academy
Rosalba Carriera (1720)

Anna Vallayer-Coster (1770 – aged 26)

Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun (1783 - at the insistence of Marie Antoinette)

Adelaide Labille-Guiard (1783)

British Academy
Angelika Kauffman and Mary Moser founding members of the British Academy (only women to be admitted for about a century)
Rosalba Carriera (Venetian 1675-1757)

Taught by her father, Andrea Carriera, Rosalba produced miniature pastels and oils on ivory early in her career. However, she soon became a pioneer of large pastel portraits and her reputation granted her admittance to the Academy of St. Luke at Rome in 1705.

In addition to portraits, she also painted genre scenes about the lives of women and classic mythological scenes. After being accepted to the Academie Royale in Paris, Carriera spent the rest of her career in the European courts painting royal portraits.
Self-portrait with portrait of her sister c. 1709/1715
Anna Vallayer-Coster (1744-1818)

Acclaimed by critics, admired by her peers, and enjoying the patronage of the queen Marie Antoinette, herself, Vallayer-Coster was one of only four women accepted at the prestigious Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture before the French Revolution.

The origin of her talent perhaps lies in her childhood years when she lived on the grounds of the Gobelins Manufacturing complex, where her father was an apprentice goldsmith. Her mother was a somewhat accomplished painter of miniatures, and Vallayer-Coster herself very likely studied under Claude-Joseph Vernet, the great landscape painter, as well as Chardin.
Attributes of Music 1770
Elizabeth Vigee-Lebrun (1755-1842)

The daughter of a portraitist and fan painter, Louis Vigée.

On 31 May 1783, Vigée Le Brun was accepted as a member of France's Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. She submitted numerous portraits along with an allegorical history painting: La Paix qui ramene l'Abundance, *(Peace Bringing back Abundance).*

Self-portrait 1782
The admission of Vigée-Le Brun was opposed on the grounds that her husband was an art dealer, but it was eventually overruled by an order from Louis XVI because Marie-Antoinette put considerable pressure on her husband on behalf of her painter.

After the arrest of the royal family during the French revolution, Vigée-Le Brun fled France with her young daughter Julie. She lived and worked for some years in Italy, Austria and Russia where her experience in dealing with an aristocratic *clientèle* was still useful.
Marie Antoinette and her Children 1787
Adelaide Labille-Guiard (1749-1803)

Adelaide Labille-Guiard was admitted to the academy on the same day as Elisabeth Vigee Le Brun. Regulations allowed for only four women at any one time to be elected.

In 1795 she obtained artist’s lodging at the Louvre and a new pension of 2,000 livres.
Gabrielle Capet 1785

Mlles Gabrielle Capet & Carreaux de Rosemond. 1785
Impressionism
(the other half)

Berthe Morisot (1841-1895)
Eva Gonzales (1894-1883)
Mary Cassatt (1844-1926)
Issues to consider

• The position of women in the 19th century
• The spectator / the gaze
• Painters of modern life
• Spaces of modernity
restrictions

• At the beginning of the 19th century the Royal French Academy was closed to women

• They were not permitted to attend until the end of the century. In 1896 the Ecole des Beaux Arts finally officially admitted women.

(this was only after 7 years of sustained political pressure from the Union des Femmes Peintres at Sculpteurs - 1st professional organisation of women in artists in France)

• Women sought out private training and smaller “art” schools”
• In USA, Thomas Eakins forced to resign his teaching post at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art for allowing a nude male model into a life drawing class into which women were admitted (1886).

• Royal academy in London re-admitted women in 1861 (life drawing 1893)

• Despite these restrictions, by the end of 19th century more and more women became practicing artists.

• French Salon 1801: 28 women exhibited
• French Salon 1878: 762 women exhibited
Spaces of modernity

• Public sphere (male) vs Private sphere (female)

• Exterior vs interior

• Bars, parks, dances, brothels, demi-monde vs domestic, bourgeois life, home, interiors, well-regulated excursions, social occasions
Spaces of modernity

In particular cultural circumstances certain paintings could only have been produced by a man.

Griselda Pollock (Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity. 1988) points out that paintings such as Manet’s could only have been produced by a man.

Why?

“Would a woman of Manet’s class have a familiarity with either of these spaces and its exchanges? Could Berthe Morisot have gone to such a location to canvass the subject? Would it enter her head as a site of modernity as she experienced it?”

(Pollock. 1988, 53-54)

Paintings such as these imply a male viewer/consumer.
Monet, Garden of the Princess

View from the Balcony 1871
Being a female member of the French *Haute Bourgeoisie*, Berthe Morisot was greatly restricted as to the places where she could go and therefore what she might paint. Unlike her male colleagues, she was unable to frequent the fashionable cafes and night clubs of Paris. It was impossible for her to join the intellectual discussions hosted by Edouard Manet at the Cafe Guerbois. Rarely, was she able to go into Paris and then only in a suitable carriage with a proper chaperone.
BERTHE MORISOT

• A member of the haute bourgeoisie (Manet, Degas)

• Initially influenced by Corot and the Barbizon school

• Had work accepted into 4 Salon exhibitions between 1864-1870

• In 1868 met Manet whilst painting in the Louvre (copying old masters: usual art training of the day)

• Six years later married his brother Eugene Manet

• Exhibited in all but one Impressionist shows (birth of her daughter Julie)
Morisot, Lady at her Toilette (c.1875)
Hide and Seek
Young Girl at Window, 1878
Mary Cassatt

- Born in Pennsylvania to an upper-middle class family
- Overrode her family’s initial resistance to her training as an artist
- Attended Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1861
- Travelled to Europe in late 1860’s, settling permanently in Paris in 1874
- A woman of independent means she remained unmarried
- Degas “discovered” her painting in the Louvre and invited her to participate in the Impressionist exhibitions in late 1870’s
Renoir, La Loge (a Box at the theatre des Italiens)

Cassatt, At the Opera (1880)
Eva Gonzales, *Une Loge Aux Theatre des Italiens* (c.1874)

98x130cm. Musée d'Orsay
Manet, *Eva Gonzalès et Leon Leenhoff dans la Loge aux Théâtre Italiens* (1873)
Pastel. 60 × 73 cm. Private Collection

Eva Gonzales,
*Une Loge Aux Theatre des Italiens* (c.1874)
Cassatt, *Woman with a Pearl Necklace in a Loge* (Lydia) 1879
81.3 x 59.7 cm. Oil.
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Cassatt, *Lydia* – pastel sketch

Cassatt, *Woman with a Pearl Necklace in a Loge* (Lydia) 1879
81.3 x 59.7 cm. Oil.
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Morisot,
*At the Ball* (1875)
Musee Marmottan Monet
oil on canvas
Paula Modersohn Becker
SP with a Camelia c1906

1906 SP on her 6th Wedding Anniversary

Paula Modersohn Becker

Photo with husband c.1904
Toulouse Lautrec, The Hangover 1888
(Suzanne Valadon)
Suzanne Valadon The Two Bathers 1923

Nude with a Striped Coverlet 1922
The Blue Room 1923
(Self-portrait)

The Future Unveiled
(or The Fortune Teller)
1912
Joan Semmel (NY 1932-), *Me without a Mirror* 1974
Joan Semmel
Knees together
2003

Body and Sole
Jenny Saville
Branded 1992

Prop 1992

Propped 1992
Julie Rrap
Camouflage 2 – Racquel
2000

Overstepping 2001
In many ways, Cahun's life was marked by a sense of role reversal, and her public identity became a commentary upon not only her own, but the public's notions of sexuality, gender, beauty, and logic. Her adoption of a sexually ambiguous name, and her androgynous self-portraits display a revolutionary way of thinking and creating, experimenting with her audience's understanding of photography as a documentation of reality.
“In my portraits I have tried to capture their spirit and likeness, but only “at a moment’s glance”. It is almost like the moment when you see a famous person in a restaurant. Everyone is craning their necks to get a glimpse, only to end up with a fleeting view of the back of the celebrity as they exit into the VIP room.” TM 2005
Cindy Sherman

Sherman has described the photographs as showing ‘very ordinary, older women - the type you’d spot in a supermarket.’

They suggest the pretensions and delusions of the characters depicted and lead the viewer to consider the narrative behind the character - this woman could be an ageing socialite or a once-glamorous film star.

Untitled #408, 2002  Cindy Sherman
(character-types from suburban American life)  Woman in Sundress  2003