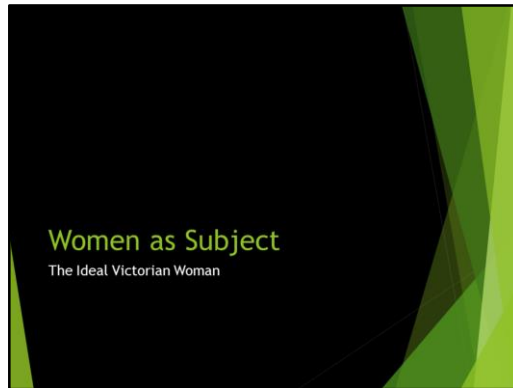
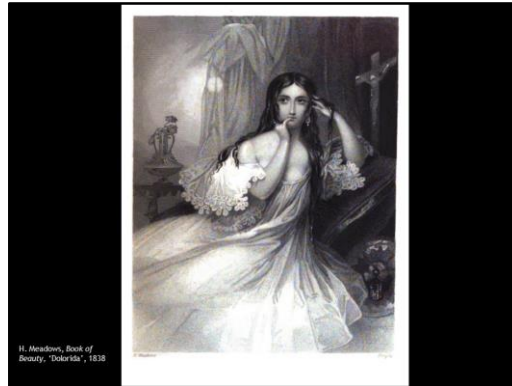




- I will start by talking about what was regarded as
  - the ideal Victorian woman,
  - then the ideal of classical beauty,
  - the fallen woman
  - and women artists



For the Victorians there were two forms of ideal womanhood, the ideal Victorian woman at home as wife and mother and the classical ideal of beauty.



H. Meadows, *Book of Beauty*, 'Dolorida', 1838

### **Books of Beauty and the Keepsake**

- The **annual** (also called **books of beauty**) was a fad from **1823 to 1857** and became so popular they were published up to 17 times a year. They were like today's **fashion magazines** and contained etchings of beautiful women. Mass produced using steel plate etchings (actually etching was mostly used). Used as colouring books. New photo techniques such as photogravure (uses gelatin and a mezzotint screen or aquatint rosin covering) ended the job of the etcher.
- Early in the Victorian period there were **annuals** produced containing **poetry and engravings** of what were intended to be **ideal forms of feminine beauty**. These were called *Books of Beauty* and were purchased by woman as role models. The most famous was **Heath's Book of Beauty**. *The Keepsake* was another book of beauty and the term **keepsake** is sometimes used to refer to a Victorian ideal of beauty.
- However, they were regarded with **cynicism** even in Victorian times. **William Makepeace Thackeray** (1811-1863) wrote in *Fraser's Magazine* (1837):  
*'There is not one of these beauties, with her great eyes, and slim waist, that looks as if it had been painted from a human figure. It is but a slovenly, rickety, wooden imitation of it, tricked out in some tawdry feathers and frippery, and no more like a real woman than the verses which, accompany the plate are like real poetry.'*
- The same might be said about **today's airbrushed, size 0 (30-22-32)** models.
- He added that Meadows's *Dolorida* was one of the **three worst plates** in the book as it depicted another of his '*fatties in a chemise*', which the reviewer thought would be acceptable if it were a '*good honest fat woman*'.



Franz Xaver **Winterhalter** (1805–1873), *Family of Queen Victoria*, 1846, Royal Collection

### Queen Victoria as Role Model

- The other **role model** for Victorian women was **Queen Victoria**.
- She is seen here as **wife and mother**, surrounded by her **happy family** with her hand on the successor she has supplied and with her **husband** shown **above** her and **nearer** the viewer so in a **dominant** role but subject to her will as monarch.
- He looks away and his hands signify that he is at a loss about what he should do. His right hand tentatively moves towards hers which is firmly resting on the chair.
- Winterhalter **died within months** of Landseer and together they promoted a **public image** of unsullied **domestic bliss, moral propriety** and idealised the young couple and endorsed a strict morality that underpinned the Victorian period.

Another **conversation piece**, a group portrait showing from **left to right**:

- **Alfred** (1844-1900, aged 2), Duke of Edinburgh later Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, not yet 'breeched'
- **Albert Edward** (1841-1910, aged 5), The future **Edward VII**
- **Queen Victoria** (24 May 1819-1901, aged 27) and **Albert, Prince Consort** (26 August 1819-1861, aged 27)
- **Princess Alice** (1843-1878, aged 3), married Louis IV, Grand Duke of Hesse and by Rhine, **mother of Alexandra, last Empress of Russia** (Rasputin)
- **Princess Helena** (1846-1923, aged 1), married Christian of Sonderburg-Augustenburg, lived in England
- **Victoria** (1840-1901, aged 6, **the eldest**), Princess Royal later German Empress and **Queen of Prussia**

Her other children were:

- Princess Louise (1848-1939), later Duchess of Argyll

- Prince Arthur (1850-1942), later Duke of Connaught and Strathearn
- Prince Leopold (1853-1884), later Duke of Albany
- Princess Beatrice (1857-1944), married Prince Henry of Battenburg, daughter Victoria Eugenie became Queen of Spain



Franz Xaver **Winterhalter** (1805-1873), *Queen Victoria* (aged 24), 1843, Royal Collection

Photograph of Queen Victoria 1854 (11 years later) by Roger Fenton (1819-1869), Royal Collection. Fenton took 350 photographs of the Crimean War 1854-55, urged by Prince Albert. Gave up photography in 1863 (to become a barrister) as it had lost its status as an art form and had become a business.

- The other representation of Queen Victoria is more **personal and intimate**. It was commissioned by Queen Victoria for £105 and presented to Prince Albert on his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday 26 August 1843. The following is taken from *Victoria and Albert: Art & Love* by Jonathan Marsden (London, 2010):

‘While the Royal couple chose Winterhalter to paint their official portraits, they also entrusted him with more **private images**. Here Queen Victoria is seen in an **intimate and alluring** pose, leaning against a red cushion with her **hair half unravelled** from its fashionable knot. In her Journal (13 July 1843), the Queen recorded the progress of this, ‘**the secret picture**’ – prepared as a **surprise** for her **husband’s twenty-fourth birthday**. The plot was successful, as the Queen wrote: ‘**he thought it so like, & so beautifully painted. I felt so happy & proud to have found something that gave him so much pleasure**’ (Journal, 26 August, 1843). The painting was hung in Prince Albert’s Writing Room at Windsor. Several copies were made in miniature – a particularly suitable format for such an intimate image. The Queen later referred to it as ‘**my darling Albert’s favourite picture**’ (Journal, 2 January, 1873).

In many of his portraits Winterhalter delights in depicting costume with veracity and exuberance. Here, however, the focus is not on fashion and the white flounced gown is minimally painted. The only detail of ornament is the purple ribbon and the jewellery – a pair of simple drop earrings and a heart-shaped pendant on a gold chain. This **pendant** may be the glass **heart-shaped**

**locket** containing a **lock of Prince Albert's hair** which the Queen **wore 'day and night'** before her marriage (Journal, 12 November, 1839). Such a jewel would have been a touching symbol of the Queen's devotion to her husband in a picture meant purely for his eyes.'



John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Mrs Coventry Patmore*, 1851, Fitzwilliam Museum  
 Julia Margaret Cameron, *The Angel in the House*, 1873. Depicts Emily Peacock. Emily Peacock was either a visitor of the Cameron's or an Isle of Wight local. She posed frequently for Cameron.

### **The Angel in the House**

- Mr **Coventry Patmore**, the **poet**, wrote ***The Angel in the House*** (1854-1862, about 200 pages in 4 parts) over eight years. **Millais** painted **Emily Augusta Patmore** three years before the poem appeared and **Julia Margaret Cameron** did a fictional portrait entitled '*The Angel in the House*' in 1871 by which time **the title of the poem had become a catch phrase**.
- The poem is about Coventry Kersey Dighton Patmore's (1823-1896) **courtship** of his wife Emily who he believed was **the perfect woman**. The term 'Angel in the House' came to be used as a reference to women who embodied the **Victorian feminine ideal**. A **wife and mother** who was **selflessly devoted** to her children and **submissive to her husband**.
- **Virginia Woolf** satirized the angel in the house, writing that '***She [the perfect wife] was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed daily. If there was a chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it ... Above all, she was pure.***' (Woolf, 1966) She added that she '*bothered me and wasted my time and so tormented me that at last I killed her*'.
- Nel Noddings (b. 1929), American feminist and philosopher views her as '*infantile, weak and mindless*' (1989).
- As long ago as **1891**, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935), American feminist and novelist, wrote a short essay entitled ***The Extinct Angel*** in which she described the angel in the house as being as **dead as the dodo**. Gilman believed the domestic



environment **oppressed women** through the patriarchal beliefs upheld by society. She embraced the theory of 'reform Darwinism' and argued that **Darwin's theories** of evolution presented **only the male** as the given in the process of human evolution, thus **overlooking the origins of the female brain** in society that **rationaly chose the best suited mate** that they could find. Gilman argued that **male aggressiveness** and **maternal roles for women** were **artificial** and **no longer necessary** for survival in **post-prehistoric times**. She wrote, '*There is no female mind. The brain is not an organ of sex. Might as well speak of a female liver.*' from *Women and Economics* (Boston, MA: Small, Maynard & Co., 1898).

### Excerpts

*Man must be pleased; but him to please  
Is woman's pleasure;*

- Daughter to her mother:  
*Mother, it's such a weary strain  
The way he has of treating me  
As if 'twas something fine to be  
A woman; and appearing not  
To notice any faults I've got!*



William Powell Frith (1819-1909), *Many Happy Returns of the Day*, 1856, Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate

### Masculinity

- As the Scottish philosopher **Thomas Carlyle** wrote in 'Characteristics', *The Edinburgh Review*, **1831**:  
*"The old ideal of Manhood has grown obsolete, and the new is still invisible to us, and we grope after it in darkness, one clutching this phantom, another that; Werterism, Byronism, even Brummelism, each has its day."* (*The Sorrows of Young Werter* was a loosely autobiographical novel by Goethe, he falls in love with a girl who marries another and Werter shoots himself to resolve the love triangle). ' **Mother Church has, to the most, become a superannuated Step-mother, whose lessons go disregarded**'
- **John Tosh** (British historian), *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (1999) argues that of the masculine father's options of being an **absent father, tyrannical father, distant or intimate**, the most common was **distant** because of the **pressures** men faced to be **breadwinner** and **protect the family** from the **harsh realities of a corrupt world** meant the need to create **manly sons**. This meant **strict discipline** and to avoid the personal distress this would cause upper middle class fathers sent boys away to **public school** be **bullied and beaten** with no mother to turn to, in order to **harden them** into men who could also fulfil this function and show no sign of emotion.
- In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century **manliness shifted** because of **Darwin's Origin** (1859) and Friedrich Nietzsche saying 'God is dead!' (1882) from the **spiritual to a commitment to muscle** and '**Muscular Christianity**' was created. The education of the mind was thought to require the education of the body. A **fascination with health** led to sports and game playing mania. The **athlete** was the **new hero** of society. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the **British Empire** was seen to be in danger and athletic public school boys were needed to save the Empire.

**Manliness** became defined by **imperialism** and became **military** as well as **hunters, adventurers** and pioneers. **Self-sufficiency**, independence and scientific knowledge were important. Hardiness and endurance required dark clothes, straight cuts and stiff materials.

- **Samuel Smiles**'s (1812-1904) **Self-Help** (1857) sold 250,000 copies and argued for character, thrift, perseverance, civility, independence and individuality.
- Men were active in the public sphere unlike women. **Work was crucial** to achieve **full masculine status**, particularly for the middle-class.
- **Home and work** were **separate spheres** that never mixed and so men that worked at home, such as artists, feared their masculine status was threatened.
- **Masculinity** was changing in a different way from 'The Angel in the House'. That is, while **men redefined manliness** to become **more heroic and masculine**, **women** redefined femininity to fundamentally change the **male-dominated society**. The '**New Woman**' was a **feminist ideal** that emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which **rejected** all forms of **domination by men**. It was popularized by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and Henry James. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century suffragette movement was one aspect of the New Woman. Education and employment opportunities increased for women. Women won the right to attend university and to become lawyers, doctors and professors. New divorce laws meant a woman could survive a divorce.
- The concept of **masculinity changed** over the Victorian period from **Christian duty to hardiness**. Victorians saw manliness as good as it controlled **maleness** which was **brutish**. Men increasingly formed **secret societies** to reinforce their manliness by bonding with other men. Manliness was associated with Christian belief. He was **paterfamilias**, head of the household but had a duty to rule and protect those he regarded as weak, his wife and children.
- The **paterfamilias** was the head of the **Roman family**. The oldest living male in the household. Had complete control of all family members. The powers weakened in the late Roman period and the power over life and death abolished. Women often remained part of her birth family and could take legal action on her own behalf.

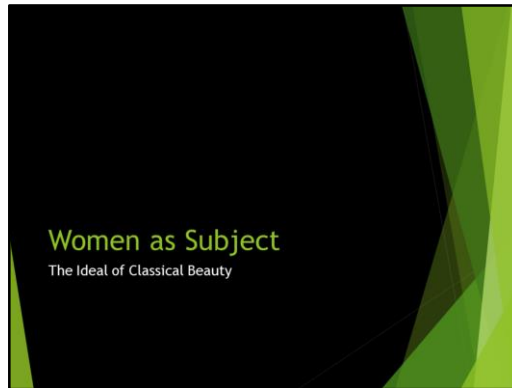
### **Many Happy Returns of the Day**

- Frith led an **unusual domestic life** – he was **married to Isabelle** and had **12 children** while a mile down the road he had a **mistress** called **Mary Alford** who had **another 7** of his children. In marked **contrast** to the **upright** Victorian family shown in this scene.
- Frith is an artist best known for his large painting such as *Ramsgate Sands* (1851-4) and *Derby Day* (1858). *Many Happy Returns of the Day* is typical of his domestic interiors.

- Like the Pre-Raphaelites he always painted from actual people including his friends and family. In this painting in the place of honour sits the **little girl**, whose health is being drunk, with a large wreath fixed vertically to the back of her chair. The child 'Alice' in the painting is **Frith's daughter, later Lady Hastings**, celebrating her sixth birthday. Her **father** is a **portrait of the artist**, and the **grandmother** is a portrait of **Mrs Frith Senior**, who kept the Dragon Hotel in Harrogate, from 1826 to 1838.
- His **popularity faded** in the 1880s and he **blamed** the new Impressionists and the **Pre-Raphaelites**.
- So how did they **differ**...

### Notes

- He grew up in Harrogate and entered the Royal Academy School when he was 19.
- Frith was a **member of the Clique** which included **Richard Dadd** and John Phillip.
- His principal influence was David Wilkie and his domestic interiors. He had already been successful with **Ramsgate Sands** in **1854**. **Derby Day** followed in **1858**. He hired a photographer to take pictures at Epsom Races to assist with the composition. He was very popular, and **Derby Day** was the first painting at the Royal Academy that needed to be protected by a rail. It sold for £1,500.
- When Frith's monumental canvas, **The Railway Station** went on show, at a gallery in the Haymarket, London, in April **1862**, The Times reported that the artist had been paid the astonishing sum of £8,750 for it, while the Athenaeum put the total at 8,000 guineas, or £9,187 10s. He also used a photographer for this painting (Samuel Fry).
- This painting was acquired in 1951 by the Art Fund for £300 (total £400)



- I would like to look at the subject of **beauty** as it was important to art and in the 1860s an **art movement** developed solely dedicated to the pursuit of beauty.
- We have seen one type of fashionable beauty in the popular books of beauty but many artists turned to the classical ideas of beauty as the epitome of **ideal beauty**.
- This ideal beauty was represented by the **classical nude**.



*Venus de Medici*, 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE marble copy of a bronze Greek original, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, first example of unrivalled beauty  
*Alexander of Milos*, *Venus de Milo*, 130-100 BCE, Louvre, right, found by French, became prime example of beauty. Formerly thought to be by Praxiteles.

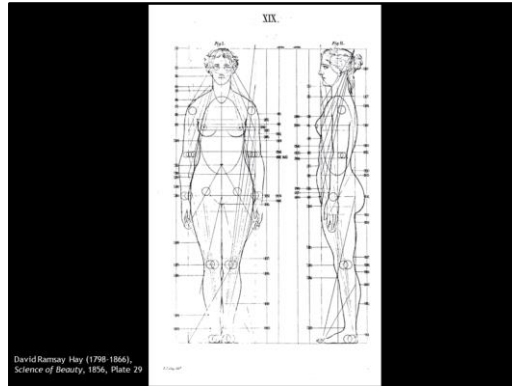
- In the first half of the nineteenth century the **Venus de Medici** was regarded as the ideal classical beauty. The **arms were added** by Ercole Ferrata (1610-1686) in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and have **long tapering Mannerist fingers**. The inscription ('Cleomenes Son of Apollodorus of Athens') is forged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to increase its value but it was then doubted to associate it with the more valuable Praxiteles, Phidias or Scopas. It is a marble copy probably made by a Greek under Roman rule of a bronze original following the type of **Aphrodite of Cnidos** (pronounced nigh-dus'). We have a coin from Cnidos showing **Aphrodite by Praxiteles** and allegedly modelled by **Phryne** (a nickname meaning 'toad' given to courtesans). Its discovery is unknown but it was **known in 1559** and first **documented in 1638**. It was the highpoint of the Grand Tour and was in the Uffizi in Florence until Napoleon sent it to Paris in 1803. It was returned in 1815.
- It was widely copied and was measured to determine the ideal proportions of the most beautiful female figure.
- The ***Venus de Milo*** was not discovered until **1820** and from then on was promoted by the **French authorities** as the greater treasure. They had been made to **return** the *Venus de Medici* to the Italians in 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars. The statue was dutifully praised by many artists and critics as the epitome of graceful female beauty although Pierre-Auguste **Renoir** (1841-1919) described it as a '**big gendarme**'.
- The **propaganda** from the **Louvre** included **losing the original plinth**. We know from two surviving engravings that the plinth included the inscription '...(Alex)andros son of Menides, citizen of Antioch on the Maeander made this (statue)...'. The museum had been **promoting** the statue as by the much more

famous **Praxiteles** from the Classical period (5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE) but the inscription would make it later (as Antioch did not exist when Praxiteles lived) and move it into the Hellenistic period (323-31BCE). At the time the **Hellenistic** period was considered as a period of **decline** and **so the evidence was destroyed by the Louvre**.

Key point: Victorian ideas of beauty were derived from classical sculptures.

### Notes

- There have been many attempts to add the arms to the Venus de Milo. In many of these she is holding an apple as a hand holding an apple was found with the buried statue. It was found by a French naval officer and another officer arranged for the French ambassador to purchase it from Turkey as Milos in the Aegean was part of the Ottoman Empire.
- The fame attached to the Venus de Milo in the 19thC is largely due to French propaganda efforts.
- The **golden apple** was awarded by **Paris**, a Trojan mortal, to resolve a dispute between **Hera, Athena and Aphrodite** about which was the most fair (**Eris**, who was not invited to a party of the gods, got annoyed and threw a golden apple into the party inscribed 'for the fairest one'). Hera tried to bribe Paris by making him king of Europe and Asia, Athena offered wisdom and skill in war and Aphrodite offered the love of the world's most beautiful women **Helen of Troy**, wife of Greek king **Menelaus** leading to the **Trojan Wars**. Troy was defeated by the ruse of the Trojan Horse and **Aeneas**, a Trojan survivor after falling in love with **Dido of Carthage** founded **Rome**.



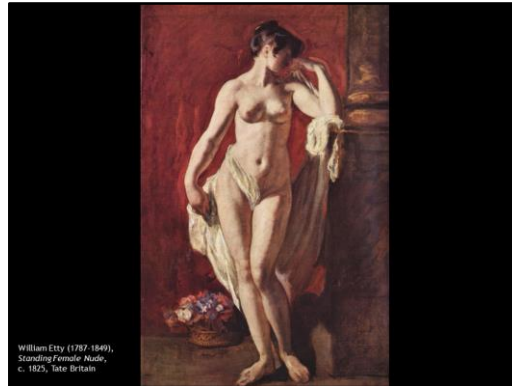
David Ramsay Hay (1798-1866), *Science of Beauty* (1856), Plate 29

### David Ramsay Hay

- **Beauty** was studied **scientifically** in the nineteenth century like all other subjects.
- Hay was a Scottish artist who studied the subject of beauty and believed that certain ratios were known to and used by the ancient Greeks.
- He carried out many measurements and he believed he had recreated this lost theory of beautiful forms. His theory was based on the ratio between angles and he related these ratios to the musical scales and harmonies.
- Many books were published in the 1850s and 60s attempting to describe or explain beauty.
- It was thought that beauty proved that Darwin's theory of natural selection in *On the **Origin of Species** by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859) was false.
- In 1871 Darwin published *The **Descent of Man**, and Selection in Relation to Sex* in which he described his theory of **sexual selection** that explains beauty.
- He **measured the ratios** of famous **classical nudes** such as the *Venus de Medici* and the *Venus de Milo*. See 'The Natural Principles of Beauty', p. 30, working with Prof. of Anatomy John Goodsir and Rev. P. Kelland, Prof. Mathematics every week from June to October 1851. He made a machine with a vertical column of 1" wood rods that were pushed against a cast of the ***Venus de Medici*** ('one of the finest specimens of ancient Greek art in existence', p.36). He then clamped the rods and removed the cast and found a model that fitted into the pushed rods. The model then stood upright and they measured the ratios. This was repeated for the front of the cast and model. The model was 1" shorter but this only caused a change of an eighth of an inch and so was ignored. They also took measurements from a cast of the *Venus de Milo* in a public museum using a step ladder.

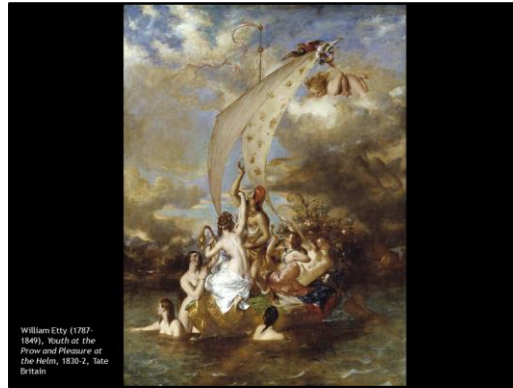


- Hay was Scottish artist, interior decorator and colour theorist who, in 1850, decorated Holyrood house for Queen Victoria.
- Hay wrote a number of books concerning beauty which were based on his theory that the beauty of all forms is based on certain ratios related to the musical scale. He believed this had been discovered by the ancient Greeks but lost. His work attempts to recreate the lost ratios by careful measurement of classical temples and classical nudes. He relates the physical ratios of the forms to musical ratios and is even able to write musical chords that represent certain buildings, such as the Parthenon.
- This plate shows some of the measurements he made of the angles he found in female forms we find beautiful. He measured angles rather than ratios of length and breadth as he found that stayed constant for larger and smaller bodies. He found the same angular ratios in beautiful male bodies as in beautiful female bodies even though other ratios changed.



William Etty (1787-1849), *Standing Female Nude*, c. 1825, Tate Britain

- Etty was the only painter of the female nude.
- Etty **divided opinion** more deeply than any other artist of the period except perhaps turner.
- "**No decent family can hang such sights on their walls,**" said the *London Examiner*, lamenting "another indulgence of what we had hoped was a classical, but are now convinced is a lascivious mind".
- The *Morning Chronicle* in 1833 demanded that the distinguished Royal Academy should choose "a purer channel, and not persist, with an unhallowed fancy, to pursue Nature to her holy recesses".
- Etty wrote 'the simple undisguised naked figure is innocent' and coined the phrase "**To the pure in heart, all things are pure.**" (*Autobiography in Art Journal*, vol.11, February 1849, p.40)
- In 1828 he was elected an Academician.
- He was a modest man which helped to give him strength in the face of the criticism.
- He was criticized, even by his fellow Academicians, The Professor of Painting Charles Leslie, denounced a naked Pandora as "an objectionable painting which his exquisite pencil should never have attempted".
- Etty retired to York where his family's gingerbread and confectionery business was thriving and became a major benefactor of the city. He was one of the most important figures in preventing York city walls from being demolished. He also got life drawing classes started in York.



William Etty (1787-1849), *Youth at the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm*, 1830-2, Tate Britain

- Described by his friend John Constable as a '**bumboat**'.
- Many of his paintings had a moral message. This shows that the pleasures of life are transient and all around us are storms and death.



William Dyce (1806-1864), *Neptune Resigning To Britannia The Empire Of the Sea*, **1847**

Raphael Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520, died aged 37), *The Triumph of Galatea* (c. 1514), fresco, Villa Farnesina, Rome

## • 1847 – Queen Victoria

### Renaissance Beauty

- The female nude as a subject in painting was virtually unknown in 1847 apart from the work of William Etty. Etty painted from life but these nudes are idealised and based on Raphael's *The Triumph of Galatea*.
- The other type of ideal beauty came from the **Renaissance**, and, for example, the work of Raphael.
- **Queen Victoria** commissioned Scottish painter **William Dyce** to create *Neptune Resigning to Britannia the Empire of the Sea*. This fresco was for the staircase of their new **Osborne House** on the Isle of Wight. This was part of a project she was engaged with Prince Albert to sponsor artists to revive this prestigious mode of Renaissance painting. It **recalls Raphael's** (1483-1520, died aged 37) ***The Triumph of Galatea*** (c. 1514, Villa Farnesina in Trastevere, Rome).
- At the time, Dyce wrote that Prince Albert '**thought it rather nude**' but the **Queen had no issue** with it although nurserymaids and French governesses were said to be scandalized.

### Notes

- Raphael shows the apotheosis of Galatea (i.e. being raised to a god). He said it was not based on one **beautiful model** but based on a 'certain idea' he had formed in his mind.
- In Greek mythology, the beautiful **Nereid Galatea** had fallen in love with the peasant **shepherd Acis**. Her **consort**, one-eyed giant **Polyphemus**, after chancing

upon the two lovers together, lobbed an enormous pillar and **killed Acis**.

- Nereids were 50 sister sea nymphs who were distinct from the sirens. Nereids were friendly and helpful to sailors.
- On another occasion, a male nude study by the Irish painter William Mulready was specifically picked out and enthusiastically purchased by the Queen in a London gallery that had sought to conceal a set of such pictures from her presumed sensibilities. Victoria is said to have found it inconvenient that her love life was continually interrupted by pregnancies. In their 21 years she had nine children and she found babies universally unappealing. Sadly, Prince Albert (1819-1861) died of typhoid fever aged only 42.
- This fresco is full of idealised mythological figures that were typical of the Victorian history painting.
- William Dyce studied in Rome (1825) and met the Nazarene painter Friedrich Overbeck. Settled in Edinburgh and painted portraits and religious subjects. He was given charge of the Edinburgh School of Design and invited to London to head the new Government School of Design (Royal College of Art). He visited France and Germany to study how they taught design. His ideas became the 'South Kensington' system which was the basis of English art education for the rest of the century. He was selected to execute a series of murals at the Palace of Westminster. He chose the Arthurian legends in 1847 but this was years before they became popular and so it was regarded as an obscure subject. It became a problem as it is about an unfaithful queen that causes a kingdom to fall. He collapsed working on the frescos and died in Streatham and is buried at St. Leonards Church.



Frederick Leighton, *Venus Disrobing for the Bath*, 1867

- **William Etty** (1787-1849, RA 1828) was a very early and enthusiastic painter of the nude but apart from Etty (and his student William Edward Frost) the **nude** was not shown in the **RA** until the **1860s**. Some think this is because Jean-Auguste-Dominique **Ingres (1780-1867)** *La Source* (1862, based on a torso painted in 1823) was exhibited at the **1862 International Exhibition in London**. Although it caused a stir it did start to change views of what was acceptable in art.
- One of the first was in **1867** when **Frederic Leighton** caused a sensation at the Royal Academy with *Venus Disrobing for the Bath*.
- The *Art Journal* 1867 said a life-size undressed Venus is '**a little startling now-a-days ... His picture is eminently chaste ... the colour ... is absolutely naturalistic ... more to commend than censure**'.
- the critic of *The London Review* described the painting as '**positively sickly**' and wrote, '**the smirk of the goddess is intolerable...while the flesh tints of the figure are idealized after a fashion which perverts instead of representing or even suggesting the colour of nature.**' The accusation here appears to be that the flesh is not accurate enough and the painting therefore a perversion of nature. The terms 'pervert' and 'perversion' were often used to describe Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic works that failed to represent nature.
- In 1872 it was sold for the relatively low sum of 175 guineas.



Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Sculptor's Model*, 1877, private collection

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence\\_Alma-Tadema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Alma-Tadema)

- This is a nude from the 1870s when it was still shocking but much more common at the RA exhibition.

### The Woman's Gaze

- **Men were allowed to look at the female nude** but only if the painting or sculpture was **classical or biblical** and therefore **pure and ennobling**. Purity was key. Although we might think anything goes, any sign of **impurity or sensuality** was **strictly forbidden**. However, almost any reference to the classical made the nude acceptable. Men were concerned about the affect on their wives and particularly their daughters.
- This painting was commissioned by John Collier's father as an attempt to recreate the posture of the **Esquiline Venus** that had been excavated in **1874** from the Esquiline Hill and seen by the artist on a visit to Rome the following year. (The statue is hidden behind the palm frond.) However, it went too far for many people. When Alma Tadema's *A Sculptor's Model* was exhibited in Liverpool the **Bishop of Carlisle** wrote '*My mind has been considerably exercised this season by the exhibition of Alma-Tadema's nude Venus ... for a living artist to exhibit a life-size, life-like, almost photographic representation of a beautiful naked woman strikes my inartistic mind as somewhat, if not very, mischievous.*'
- The **woman's view**: in **Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*** (1853), **Lucy Snowe** visits an art gallery in Brussels but her male companion thinks a painting of a black semi-nude **Cleopatra** not suitable. Lucy's view is "*she had no business to lounge away the day on a sofa...strong enough to do the work of two plain cooks*". For men she was the epitome of sensuality. Lucy was made to sit in a corner looking at

improving modest women. She saw women looking at Cleopatra but was told they were married women which was permitted.

### **Lawrence Alma-Tadema**

- Born in Dronrijp, the Netherlands, and trained at the Royal Academy of Antwerp, Belgium, he settled in England in 1870 and spent the rest of his life there. A classical-subject painter, he became famous for his depictions of the luxury and decadence of the Roman Empire, with languorous figures set in fabulous marbled interiors or against a backdrop of dazzling blue Mediterranean Sea and sky. Though admired during his lifetime for his draftsmanship and depictions of Classical antiquity, his work fell into disrepute after his death, and only since the 1960s has it been re-evaluated for its importance within nineteenth-century English art.

### **Waist-to-Hip**

- The proportions of the *Esquiline Venus* were possibly modelled on a real person as the head to height is 1:7 rather than the more elegant 1:8. Kenneth Clerk describes it as ‘*a stocky little peasant such as might be found still in any Mediterranean village*’.
- We know the left arm was raised and the left hand was on her head as a fragment of her left little finger remains on the back of the head.
- Opinions are divided but one school of thought is that this was a sculpture of **Cleopatra**.
- Ideal 70%, painting 75%, statue 75% (72% as the backside is large)





- The final subject was an **obsession of the Victorians**. The virtue and purity of a woman was of paramount importance and so any fall from perfection was total. There were no half-perfect women although Holman Hunt does present the possibility of redemption.
- People were much happier with domestic interiors as the hearth and home were regarded as safe and embodying common national ideals and Christian values. However, the home could be rent apart by shame and dishonour...



Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), *The Outcast*, 1851, Royal Academy  
 Diploma work given by Redgrave to the RA  
 See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Redgrave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Redgrave)

Key point: the 'fallen women' was based on a strict Victorian code

### The Outcast

- We have already seen *The Sempstress* (1846, sketch 1844, based on Thomas Hood, *The Song of the Shirt*, 1843), the image not of a fallen woman but the lengths a woman would go to retain her purity in the face of all odds.
- This is ***The Outcast*** by Richard Redgrave. The **head of the household** forces his **daughter** out of the family home with her **illegitimate baby**. In the foreground on the floor is what may be an **incriminating letter**, possibly naming the father of the child. The scene is made more pathetic by the snowy wastes outside the door and the innocent child's hand raised in echo of the hand of the pleading sister.
- On the floor is a purse and an incriminating letter. On the wall is a **biblical scene of Abraham** casting out **Hagar** and her **illegitimate child Ishmael** into Wilderness of Beersheba (Genesis 21:10). God shows Hagar a well and save Ishmael's life and his descendants become the Arabic nations.
- She is a fallen woman and so **no forgiveness** is possible. She has brought **shame** on the household and so must fend for herself. This means becoming a sempstress or **working in a factory**. If these are not possible the only options left are **prostitution or suicide**.
- Originally **Redgrave** produced works of **historical** and literary subjects but from the **1840's** he painted themes which exposed the **cruelty of Victorian society, especially to women**, with works such as *The Governess* (1844, Victoria & Albert Museum) and *The Sempstress* (1846, private collection). In 1850 in the *Art Journal* he wrote that **'my best efforts in art have aimed at calling attention to the trials**

***and struggles of the poor and oppressed.'***

**The Sempstress**

- Thomas Hood (1799-1845) a British humourist and poet, son of a well-known playwright Tom Hood. He was not a political radical and loved playing practical jokes on his family (wife and the story of the plaice with red spots) and he loved puns.
- Based on a real case of Mrs Biddell a seamstress who pawned the clothes she had been given to sew to feed her children and thus incurred a debt she could not repay. She was sent to a workhouse and her fate is unknown. The poem was published anonymously in *Punch* Christmas edition 1843 and quickly became a phenomenon.



James Tissot (1836-1902), *The Thames*, 1876  
 See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Tissot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Tissot)

### James Tissot

- **James Jacques Joseph Tissot** (1836–1902) was a **French painter** and illustrator. He was a successful painter of Paris society before moving to London in **1871** (aged 35).
- Tissot **fought** in the **Franco-Prussian War** as part of the improvised defence of Paris, joining two companies of the Garde Nationale and later as part Paris Commune. Either because of the political associations caused by the latter (which he was believed to have joined to protect his own belongings), or simply because of better opportunities, he **left Paris for London** in 1871. Having **already** worked as a caricaturist for Thomas Gibson Bowles, the owner of the magazine *Vanity Fair*, as well as **exhibited** at the **Royal Academy**, Tissot arrived with **established social and artistic connections** in London. Bowles gave Tissot both a place to stay as well as a cartooning job for *Vanity Fair*.
- He quickly developed his **reputation** as a painter of **elegantly dressed women** shown in scenes of **fashionable life**. By 1872, Tissot was able to purchase his own home in **St John's Wood**, an area of London very **popular with artists** at the time. According to The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists, 'in 1874 Edmond de Goncourt wrote sarcastically that he had 'a studio with a waiting room where, at all times, there is iced champagne at the disposal of visitors'.
- James Tissot **shocked many critics** when he exhibited **this painting** at the Royal Academy in **1876**. The **morals** of the characters were **questionable** which was made **worse** by the lavish supply of **alcohol** and the **questionable location** with its **filthy chimneys** and **polluted waters**.



James Tissot (1836-1902), *Portsmouth Dockyard*, Tissot, 1877, Tate Britain

- The following year Tissot exhibited this **revised and perfectly acceptable** painting of a traditional story of a man trying to choose between two women. It looks as if the man has just made his **choice** as he turns to speak to the woman with a **look of victory** on her face. The other woman has a **sullen look** and her parasol isolates her. It is a **respectable** location, Portsmouth Docks and some **healthy sailors** are just rowing into view.
- I think this shows the **sensitivity** with which **social nuances** were treated in the Victorian period. There was a very clear feeling for what was right and wrong and our responsibilities as running the biggest empire that world had seen. This started to be eroded in the last decades of the nineteenth century when fears and uncertainties arose from scientific findings and a general foreboding that the good times could not last forever.



I will be talking about women artists as well as women as the subject of art starting with the Royal Academy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), *The Portraits of the Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-72, Royal Collection

George Romney (1734-1802), *Mary Moser*, 1770-71, National Portrait Gallery

Angelica **Kauffman** (1741-**1807**), *self-portrait*, 1770-1775, National Portrait gallery. One of 25 self-portraits as a mentally alert creative artist with pencil, paintbrush or harp. She gazes out forthrightly.

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Zoffany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Zoffany)

**Problem of being a woman artist:** could not attend the RA School or attend life drawing or become Academicians

This is the **Zoffany** painting showing the portraits of the Academicians of the Royal Academy. It was painted in **1771**, **three years** after the Academy was founded and it shows the two female founders of the Academy as portraits **on the wall**. One is **Mary Moser** (1744-1819) was one of the most celebrated artists of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Britain and the other is **Angelica Kauffman** (1741-1807) who was a Swiss-born Austrian Neoclassical painter with a successful career in London and Rome.

- The **RA excluded women** until **1860** even though two of the founding members were women.
- **Slade** took women from its founding in 1871.
- **Laura Herford's** (1831-1870) in **1860** was accepted for the RA School based on a painting using her initial 'L. Herford'. This was at the suggestion of the **President** Sir Charles Eastlake. **Thirteen** other women were accepted over the next few years. Women were only allowed to draw from casts and the **draped model**. Women were excluded from the life class although there was some provision made in 1893. In **1863** the Council decided its **constitution** did not allow women painters (in the Instrument of Foundation, Academicians ... shall all of them be ... Men of fair moral Characters'). In **1903** women were allowed to study living nudes in

separate classes.

- **The Society of Female Artists** was founded in **1856**, it became the Society of Lady Artists in 1872 and the Society of Women Artists in 1899.
- 1870s and 80s women **petitioned RA** in vain to attend life classes.
- There were private art schools 1880s and 90s like French atelier
- **Rich women** attended classes in **Paris**, Munich, Dusseldorf and Antwerp
- **Lady Butler** was **nominated** three times to the RA 1879-81 and turned down.
- **Annie Laura Swynnerton** and **Laura Knight** (1877-1970, née Johnson, attended Nottingham School of Art 1890-4, aged 13) were made **ARA** in the **1920s** and **Laura Knight** a RA in **1936**.

### Note

- **Kauffman** on left, **Mary Moser (1744-1819)** on right.
- Moser's father **George Moser** putting on the noose.
- **Richard Cosway** (1742-1821, RA 1770), Moser's lover bottom-right with cane (the canvas was extended to include him). Cosway was separated from his wife **Maria**. **Maria** ('Mariah') **Cosway** (1760-1838, born Hadfield) was a gifted artist who gave up her career on the **command of her husband**. He did possibly to protect her reputation and in time she started to paint again. She was an Italian-English artist who had an affair with **Thomas Jefferson**, American Founding Father, principal author of the Declaration of Independence 1776 and third President of the US. They corresponded for the rest of their lives. She was a devout catholic all her life. It was thought to be a marriage of convenience as he was 20 years her senior and a libertine. Cosway was once a **more famous artist than Gainsborough** and his portraits were the rage in Regency London. He became Principal Painter to the Prince of Wales.
- In October 1793, Mary Moser **married** Hugh Lloyd and **retired from painting**, only exhibiting as an amateur. Shortly after the marriage, in 1793, **Cosway and Mary Moser** had an **open affair** that lasted 6 months during which they travelled around Europe. Mary Moser was 50 and his ex-wife Maria 33 yet he described her as 'more sexually responsive' in bed.
- Angelica Kauffman was Swiss born Austrian who was **taught by her father**. She acquired several languages and was a skilled musician. It is not known how she learnt to paint the male nude as her speciality was history painting. He **first marriage** was a disaster but in 1781 he died (she had been separated) and she **married Antonio Zucchi** a Venetian artist and retired to Rome where she met Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Zucchi died in 1795 and she continued to contribute to the RA her last exhibit was 1797 and she died in 1807. She was honoured at her funeral in the same way Raphael had been honoured.





Henry Singleton, *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly*, 1795, Royal Academy of Arts

Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser are shown on the right hand of the President Benjamin West

Joshua Reynolds is dead but his portrait is top right

Sir William Chambers is central seated but had died

John Singleton Copley is standing facing Joseph Farrington

William Hodges is far left facing Sir Thomas Lawrence and behind them are the three architect members

One the far right are the three sculptor members and above them the Apollo Belvedere and Laocoon



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers*, c. 1792-7, Royal Collection  
 Painted for Queen Charlotte  
 See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Moser](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Moser)

### Mary Moser

- Mary Moser who was **born** in **London**, was trained by her **father** George Moser, a Swiss-born **artist**. She was talented at an early age and won her **first medal** from the **Society of Arts** when she was **14**. She regularly exhibited flower paintings and **occasionally history paintings**. She became frustrated by her lack of recognition and joined with 35 other artists in **founding** the **Royal Academy** and she took an active role. Women were **not allowed** into **life drawing** classes with a **male or female nude** and so it was difficult for them to learn the skills needed to paint history paintings.
- She was commissioned by **Queen Charlotte** in the 1790s to complete a **floral** decoration for Frogmore House in **Windsor** for which she was paid **£900**. One room, the South Pavilion, was entirely decorated with flower paintings some on canvas, some painted directly on the wall. This canvas formed part of the '**Mary Moser Room**' where it remains today. Among her other duties Moser **taught** the **daughters** of **George III** and Queen Charlotte to draw, probably at Frogmore House.
- Moser **married Captain Hugh Lloyd**, a widower, in 1793 and **retired** but continued to exhibit as an **amateur painter**. She had an **open affair** with **Richard Cosway** who had separated from his wife (Maria Cosway, Italian-English, an artist who exhibited at the RA, had a romantic friendship with Thomas Jefferson) and they took a **six-month sketching tour** in 1793. Richard Cosway was also an artist who was elected a full member of the **Academy** in 1770 and was a late addition to the composition, he was painted onto an extra strip of canvas attached to the right-hand side of the painting. He was '*well known as a libertine and commonly described as resembling a monkey*' and in later life spent time in various mental institutions. After Moser's

death in 1836 no women were elected to the Royal Academy as full members until Dame Laura Knight in 1936, 168 years later.



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *El juicio de Paris (Judgment of Paris)*, c. 1781, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelica\\_Kauffman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelica_Kauffman)

### Angelica Kauffman

- Angelica Kaufman (born Kauffmann) was a **Swiss-born Austrian** Neoclassical painter who had a successful career in London and Rome. Her father was poor but a skilled artist who taught her to paint. She learnt several languages, read incessantly and was a **talented musician**. By the age of **12** she was **painting** bishops and the **nobility**. She went to Milan and the Rome where, because she spoke English, she **met British visitors** to Rome and painted their portraits. She was persuaded by Lady Wentworth to **come back to London** with her where she painted David Garrick. Lady Wentworth introduced her to high society including the **royal family** where she was well received.
- She became a great **friend** of Sir **Joshua Reynolds** who called her Miss Angelica or **Miss Angel** and in 1766 they painted portraits of each other. She was a founder of the Royal Academy and exhibited **four history paintings** in the first year. She **exhibited annually** at the Academy generally history paintings or allegorical subjects. She **married twice**, the first was unfortunate and the second was to Antonio Zucchi, a Venetian artist living in London. She was a history painter and **disappointed** by the **English** preference for **portraits and landscapes** and she eventually **returned to the Continent**.
- Kaufman became a **friend** of Johann Wolfgang von **Goethe**, who said she worked harder and accomplished more than any artist he knew. On the Continent her reputation continued to grow and at her death the **entire Academy of St. Luke** (founded 1577, Rome) followed her **coffin** carrying two of her best pictures as they had **done** for **Raphael**.

### Judgement of Paris

- **Eris**, who was not invited to a party of the gods, got annoyed and threw a golden apple into the party inscribed 'for the fairest one'. An argument ensued and to avoid getting into the argument **Zeus** decided **Paris**, a **Trojan** mortal, should judge because he had just judged against his own prize bull in a competition against the gods. The **golden apple** was awarded by **Paris** to resolve a dispute between **Hera, Athena and Aphrodite** about which was the most fair, **Hera** (Roman Juno, wife of Zeus and goddess of women and marriage) tried to bribe Paris by making him king of **Europe and Asia**, **Athena** (Roman Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, law, arts, warfare, etc.) offered **wisdom and skill in war** and **Aphrodite** (Roman Venus, goddess of love) offered the **love** of the world's most beautiful women **Helen of Troy**, wife of Greek king **Menelaus**. **Paris** chose **Aphrodite** and his love of **Helen** led to the **Trojan Wars**. Troy was defeated by the ruse of the Trojan Horse and **Aeneas**, a Trojan survivor after falling in love with **Dido of Carthage** founded **Rome**.

# Some Nineteenth-Century Women Artists

Angelica Kauffman	1741 1807	Henrietta Ward	1832 1924
Mary Moser	1744 1819	Edith Maud Rawdon-Hastings	1833 1874
Maria Eck	1755 1825	Suzette de Stelger	1836 1927
Ellen Sharples	1769 1849	Jane Bowdell	1837 1891
Lady Gordon	1775 1867	Mary Ellen Edwards	1838 1934
Lady Whistleduff	1776 1853	Kate Perugini	1839 1929
Lady Susan Elizabeth Percy	1782 1847	Georgina Macdonald	1840 1920
Mary Beale	? 1806	Russell Anne Causton	1840 1879
Harriet Goldsmith	1787 1863	Emma Sandys	1843 1877
Mary Heaton	1788 1875	Lucy Maclaughlin	1843 1894
Radcliffe Sharples	1793 1838	Lucy Jopling	1843 1916
Margaret Sarah Carpenter	1793 1872	Marie Spartali Stillman	1844 1927
Anne Brownell Johnson	1794 1866	Annie Louise Sopperton	1844 1933
Ann Charlotte Bartholomew	? 1862	Anna Lea Merritt	1844 1930
Mary Martha Pearson	1799 1871	Kate Greenaway	1846 1901
Anna Adkins	1799 1871	Elizabeth Butler	1846 1933
Elizabeth Rigby	1809 1893	Kate Greenaway	1846 1901
Julia Emily Gordon	1810 1896	Helen Abrahams	1848 1926
Lady Waterford	1811 1891	Eva Gonzales	1849 1883
Fanny Corbass	1812 1883	Maria J. Neale	1850 1950
Elizabeth Emma Soyer	1813 1842	Laura Alma Tadema	1852 1909
Julia Margaret Cameron	1815 1879	Rosa Cordé	1853 1893
Anna Dean	1817 1901	Evangelin Morgan	1853 1919
Rosa Bonheur	1822 1899	Kate Elizabeth Dunce	1856 1927
Sophie Gengembre Anderson	1823 1903	Elizabeth Akela Forbes	1859 1913
Anna Mary Howitt	1824 1884	Henrietta Rae	1859 1928
Maria Denny Austin	1824 1885	Edith Taylor	1860 1948
Elleanor Vere Boyle	1825 1918	Dame Ethel Walker	1861 1931
Barbara Bodichon	1827 1891	Margaret MacDonald	1864 1933
Emily Mary Osborn	1828 1925	Maud East	1864 1943
Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal	1829 1862	Beatrice Brand	1864 1931
Jane Burham May	1829 ?	Larry Lee Robbins	1865 1943
Rosa Brett	1829 1882	Beatrice Potter	1866 1943
Nathaniel North	1830 1884	Larry Kemp Welch	1869 1958
Joanna Boyce	1831 1861	Mabel Nicholson	1871 1918
Ann Mary Newton	1832 1886	Elleanor Fortescue-Brickdale	1871 1945
Rebecca Solomon	1832 1886	Hedley Oliver	1874 1924
Louisa Rayner	1833 1924	Green John	1876 1939



**Problem of being a woman artist:** successful but not made an Academician

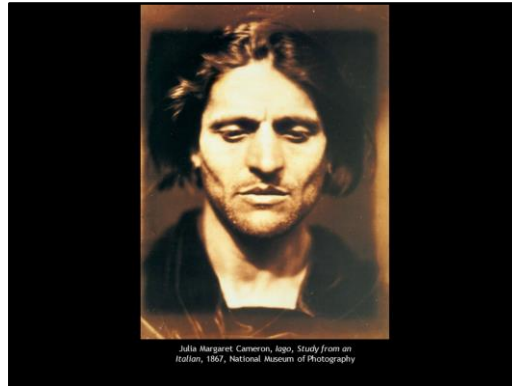
**Mary Martha Pearson** (née Dutton) (1798 –1871), *William Taylor Copeland*, 1835

- Daughter of a bookseller in the City of London. She had a drawing master called Lewis and **copied old masters** in the British Institution and in 1815 was awarded a **gold medal** for a copy of a Claude. In **1817** she **married** Charles Pearson, a **solicitor** who became an **MP**. She exhibited 31 works at the Royal Academy nearly all portraits.
- She many several Lord Mayors and of this one *The Times* wrote, '*the least the Corporation of London could do, would be to present the fair delineator of their well-fed countenances with the freedom of the city, emblazoned on a rosewood palette*'. Her **sister** was a **miniature painter** who exhibited at the Royal Academy. Wikipedia lists 17 major portraits including six Lord Mayors.

Not used:

Lady Susan Elizabeth Percy, *Orvieto*, 1838, Tate Britain

Some landscapes and mostly clothed figure studies at the Tate.



Julia Margaret Cameron, *Iago, Study from an Italian*, 1867, National Museum of Photography  
Pronounced ee-ah-go

**One of the few examples of a woman artist representing individual male beauty** (not a portrait or a scene that includes men, such as Elizabeth Butler)

Also see Eleanor Fortesque-Brickdale *The Idylls of the King* with a single medieval knight

Also Florence Caxton, illustrator, 'The Dance Domestic-The Gyration Archaic Post-Prandial'

Identified by Colin Ford as **Angelo Colarossi**, studio assistant to the sculptor **Alfred Gilbert** whose son, also called Angelo, modelled for **Anteros** (god of requited love, i.e. love returned, the mirror image of the lover's feelings, son of Ares and Aphrodite, brother Eros, plumed butterfly wings, symbolises the selfless philanthropic love of Salisbury for the poor) on the **Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain** in **Piccadilly Circus** at the age of 15. Very recent research suggest it is his uncle **Alessandro di Marco** who modelled earlier in Rome for Leighton. His original trade was organ grinder. This is thought to be the **only paid model** Cameron ever used. The National Museum of Photography has the only known print.

Not used:

Julia Emily Gordon (1810-1896), *Palace at Nanteuil*, date not known, Tate Britain  
Tate Britain: 'Julia Emily Gordon was an industrious, ambitious and talented amateur artist, like her **mother Lady Gordon** (née Julia Bennet). Julia Gordon is chiefly remembered as the daughter of Sir James Willoughby Gordon, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars and, when a child, as one of several claimants to the honour of sitting on the Duke of Wellington's knee at Brussels on the eve of the battle of Waterloo.'

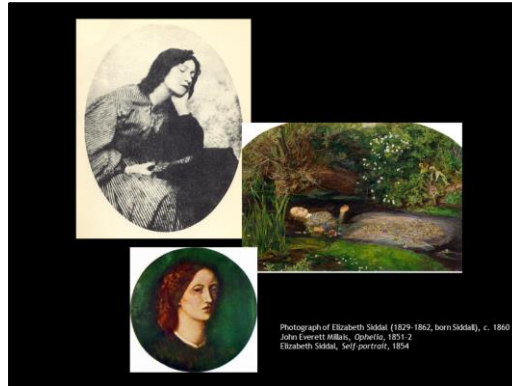




**Problem of being a woman artist:** not a suitable occupation, childbirth – early death aged 29, and the time required

**Joanna Mary Boyce** (1831-1861), *Elgiva*, 1855, private collection

- Joanna Mary Boyce also known by her married name Joanna Mary Wells, English painter of portraits, genre pictures and occasional landscapes. **Sister** of pre-Raphaelite painter **George Price Boyce**. **Died aged 29** during childbirth, described in her obituary as a '**genius**'. *Elgiva* was her first painting to be exhibited at the RA. Ford Madox Brown described it as '*the best head in the room*'. Elgiva was an **Anglo-Saxon queen** and compared to Rossetti female head and shoulders it is **stark, quiet and serene**.
- **John Ruskin** wrote about *Elgiva* in his 1855 'Academy Notes':  
*"The expression in this head is so subtle, and so tenderly wrought, that at first the picture might easily be passed as hard or cold; but it could only so be passed, as Elgiva herself might have been sometimes seen, –by a stranger– without penetration of her sorrow. As we watch the face for a little time, the slight arch of the lip seems to begin to quiver, and the eyes fill with ineffable sadness and a look of despair. The dignity of all the treatment---- the beautiful imagination of faint but pure color, place this picture, to my mind, among those of the very highest power and promise."*
- Elgiva (924-944), also St. Elgiva, is regarded as queen and married Edward I although no document confirming this exists and the only document describes her as 'concubine'. She gave birth to two future kings (Eadwig and Edgar). Later she became a Benedictine nun. She redeemed condemned men, gave away previous garments to the poor and endured prolonged physical suffering. Is it 'ell-geeva' or does it rhyme with Godiva?



Photograph of Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862, born Siddall), c. 1860

John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-2

Elizabeth Siddal, *Self-portrait*, 1854

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth\\_Siddal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Siddal)

**Problem of being a woman artist:** her occupation as a model made it difficult to be recognised

### Elizabeth Siddal

- **Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal** (born Siddall, 1829-1862, died aged **33**) had **respectable** working-class parents and although she had **no formal education** her deportment was said to be 'like a queen'. In 1850 she was noticed by the artist **Walter Deverell** who asked her to model for him and his friends, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. She sat for **Deverell**, William **Holman Hunt** and for John Everett **Millais** as ***Ophelia***. She then sat for Dante Gabriel **Rossetti** and her features appeared in nearly all his works until her early death 12 years later. After 10 years they married in 1860 after she returned from Paris and Nice where she went for her health.
- She died from a laudanum overdose in early 1862. She had gone with Rossetti to join Swinburne at Sablonniere hotel restaurant in **Leicester Square**. He took her home and attended his usual teaching job at the Working Men's Club. On his return she was unconscious and could not be revived and Rossetti called a doctor then three doctors. She had a stomach pump but died the next morning in their home (which is now under what is Blackfriars Station). There are rumours of a suicide note destroyed by Rossetti but these can be traced to a imaginative account of her life by Violet Hunt (*The Wife of Rossetti*). He buried her with the original of some of his poems. In 1869, seven years later, when he was chronically addicted to drugs and alcohol he retrieved the poems.
- The pen and pencil studies he made of her fragile beauty are unique in European art with her strange beauty and languor, a figure of ***melancholia***. She was called

**Guggum** or **Sid** and **dropped the final 'I'** I her name to please Rossetti.

- In 1855, art critic **John Ruskin** began to subsidize her career and paid **£150** per year in exchange for all the drawings and paintings she produced. She produced many sketches but only a single painting.
- William Gaunt in *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream* wrote, '*Her verses were as simple and moving as ancient ballads; her drawings were as genuine in their medieval spirit as much more highly finished and competent works of Pre-Raphaelite art.*'
- Modelled for Walter Deverell (who found her in 1849 working in a milliner's shop), William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais (including his notable 1852 painting *Ophelia*) and her husband, Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
- Her poor health has been attributed to anorexia, laudanum addiction and arsenic poisoning from drinking too much Fowler's Solution.



**Elizabeth Siddal** (1829-1862, born Siddall), *Lady of Shalott*, 1853, pen and ink on paper, Jeremy Maas Gallery

- Siddal **worked hard at drawing** and **attended an art school** in Sheffield. Her early drawings show some proficiency but her later watercolours are not first rank. However, John Ruskin praised her watercolours and wished to settle money on her in exchange for any work her health permitted.
- This shows her drawing of *The Lady of Shalott*, one of **Tennyson's** most well-known poems, which inspired a number of Pre-Raphaelite artists.
- Siddal's **health deteriorated** and she became saddened by Rossetti's unwillingness to marry and his affairs. She turned to ever increasing doses of laudanum (opium) and finally in 1860 she married Rossetti in Hastings. A year later she gave birth to a **stillborn daughter** and she **committed suicide in 1862** with an overdose of **laudanum**. Rossetti's feelings of **remorse and guilt** fluctuated over the years and in **1869** he **opened her coffin** to retrieve the book of poems he had laid beside her at death. Rossetti had been **encouraged** to open her grave by **Charles Augustus Howell**, an **unscrupulous villain** who sold fake copies of Rossetti's work, **embezzled** funds from Ruskin and **manipulated** Edward Burne Jones and his wife. Thanks to Sir Arthur **Conan Doyle**, **Howell** will forever be known as the **inspiration** behind *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton*, an **evil blackmailer** who tortured his prey unrelentingly.
- Rossetti wrote 'she has real genius-none of your make-believe', she needs 'precision in carry-out' which needs health and strength to maintain. She will then 'paint such pictures as no woman has painted yet'.

Innumerable Victorian women were prescribed laudanum for relief of menstrual cramps and vague aches. Nurses also spoon-fed laudanum to infants. The Victorian era was marked by the **widespread use of laudanum** in Europe and the United States. Mary Todd Lincoln, for example, the wife of the USA president Abraham

Lincoln, was a laudanum addict, as was the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Tennyson, *The Lady of Shalott*, two versions of the poem 1833 and 1842 loosely based on a 13thC Italian novella. A lady isolated in a tower has a mysterious curse that means she must weave images on her loom without ever looking at the outside world except through a mirror. The mirror reflects a busy road and the people of Camelot. The reflected images are shadows of the world like Plato's Cave. Sir Lancelot rides by and is seen by the Lady who looks out of the window, the mirror cracks, the loom breaks and she leaves the tower, finds a boat and drifts towards Camelot. She dies before arriving. Lancelot sees her and thinks she is lovely. Some critics see it as representing the dilemma faced by artists, whether to represent the world or face the world directly.

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892), *The Lady of Shalott*, 1842 version, Part III

*She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.*



**Emily Mary Osborn** or Osborne (1828-1925), *Nameless and Friendless*, 1857  
See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily\\_Mary\\_Osborn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Mary_Osborn)

**Problem of being a woman artist:** selling their work, Emily Osborn was successful but was never made an Academician but helped establish the **Society of Female Artists in 1857**

- The *Art Journal* on Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless' 1857:  
*A poor girl has painted a picture, which she offers for sale to a dealer, who, from the speaking expression of his features, is disposed to depreciate the work. It is a wet, dismal day, and she has walked far to dispose of it; and now awaits in trembling the decision of a man who is to become rich by the labours of others.'*

### Emily Mary Osborn

- Osborn began showing her work at the **Royal Academy** when she was **just 17** and continued to do so over a period of **40 years**. She was the eldest of nine and grew up in Tilbury, whose surroundings 'were not such as to develop artistic proclivities' but when she was 14 the family moved to London and she attended the Dickinson Academy and studied under Mr. Mogford and then Mr. Leigh at Maddox Street and then his gallery at Newman Street. He trained her without charge for a year. She sold a portrait at the Royal Academy for 200 guineas when she was 17 and sold another to the Queen. A counterpart to *Nameless and Friendless* called *The Governess* was bought by the Queen and it shows a governess badly treated by her vulgar-looking over-dressed lady of the house. 'The practice of treating educated women as if they were menial servants is but too common.' (*The Art Journal*, 1864, p. 262)
- Osborn **never married** and died **aged 97** in 1925.
- She, with Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon helped set up the Society of Female

Artists.

- This is her **most famous work** which has been called '*The most ingenious of Victorian widow pictures.*' A **recently bereaved woman** is attempting to make a living as an artist by offering a picture to a dealer while **two 'swells'** on the left stare at her distracted from the **bare legged ballet dancer** they have been previously **ogling**. She nervously pulls on a loop of string while the dealer disdainfully judges her work.
- It has been suggested that this painting relates to **Mary Brunton's novel *Self-Control*** published in 1810 but **republished in 1850**. This describes the **struggles** of a self-motivated **female artist** to **sell her pictures** in order to help save her father from **financial ruin**.
- **Mary Brunton** (1778-1818), Scottish novelist. She was taught languages and music by her parents (Colonel Balfour) and eloped to marry a Scottish minister. They did not have children until she became pregnant at 40 and died after giving birth to a stillborn son. She wrote *Self-Control Discipline* and *Emmeline*. Popular at the time for their strong moral and religious stance combined with sexuality (what Jane Austen called 'vulgarity').
- **Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon** (1827-1891), leading artist, educationalist, feminist and activist for women's rights. Extra marital child of a milliner and Whig politician Leigh Smith. Met at Langham Place North Regent Street (next to the BBC). Her summary of the laws concerning women (1854) helped with the passing of the Married Women's Property Act in 1882. In 1857 (aged 30) she married an eminent French physician (Bodichon) and from then on wintered in Algiers. She set up the *English Women's Journal* (1858). In 1866 she helped set up a scheme for giving women university education, first at Hitchin and this developed into Girton College, Cambridge. She studied painting under William Holman Hunt and exhibited at the Royal Academy and showed originality and talent and was admired by Corot and Daubigny. She was George Eliot's most intimate friend.

### Society of Female Artists

- The **difficulties** experienced by women in exhibiting and selling their works led to the **formation** of the **Society of Female Artists** in **1857**, the year *Nameless and Friendless* was first exhibited at the Royal Academy. Emily Mary Osborn was a member of this group and one of the artists associated with Barbara Bodichon's Langham Place circle and campaign for women's rights.
- Osborn was a member of the Society and a member of **Barbara Bodichon's** Langham Place circle that campaigned for **women's rights**. Despite the problems faced by women artists Osborn went on to develop a successful career.

### **Reviews of Exhibitions of the Society of Female Artists:**

***The Illustrated London News*, 6 Jun 1857:**

*Strength of will and power of creation belonging rather to the other sex, we do not of course look for the more daring efforts in an exhibition of female artists: but observation, taste, or the art of selection, and various other qualities adapted to the arts, are to be found in this Oxford-Street display.*

**The Art Journal, 1 May 1858:**

*...that which we see at the Egyptian Hall is the result of assiduous self-tuition, for we have no school for the instruction of **ladies** in painting from the **living model**. Labouring under such **disadvantages** as the female student does, we are not disappointed to see here so many **drawings of flowers**, fruit, and still-life objects – we are only surprised into exultation to see so much excellence in the higher departments of art...*





**Marie Spartali Stillman** (1844-1927), *Love's Messenger*, c. 1885, Delaware Art Museum

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *A Vision of Fiammetta*, 1878, collection of Andrew Lloyd Webber

Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879), *Marie Spartali Stillman*, 1868

Marie Spartali as *Mnemosyne*, the goddess of memory and mother of the nine Muses by Julia Margaret Cameron, c. 1866

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie\\_Spartali\\_Stillman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Spartali_Stillman)

**Problem of being a woman artist:** beautiful woman in a male-dominated world, so considered a subject for painting, i.e. an object. She had to paint to supplement her husband's erratic income.

### **Marie Spartali Stillman**

- **Marie Euphrosyne Spartali, later Stillman** (1844–1927), was a British **Pre-Raphaelite** painter of Greek descent, arguably **the greatest female artist of that movement**.
- During a **sixty-year career** she produced over one hundred works, contributing regularly to exhibitions in Great Britain and the United States.
- It was in the house of the Greek businessman A.C. Ionides (1810–1890) at Tulse Hill, in south London, that Marie and her sister Christine (1846–1884) met Whistler and Swinburne for the first time. Algernon Charles **Swinburne** (1837-1909, English poet, playwright, novelist and critic) was so overcome that he said of Spartali: '***She is so beautiful that I want to sit down and cry***'.
- Marie was an imposing figure, **around 6 foot 3 inches** (1.9 meters) tall and, in her later years, dressed in long flowing black garments with a lace hood, attracting much attention throughout her life.
- Spartali **studied under Ford Madox Brown** for several years from 1864, with his

children Lucy, Catherine and Oliver. Rossetti, on hearing that she was to become a pupil to Madox Brown, wrote to him, *'I just hear Miss Spartali is to be your pupil. I hear too that she is one and the same with a marvellous beauty of whom I have heard much talk. So box her up and don't let fellows see her, as I mean to have first shy at her in the way of sitting.'*

- ***"Of all the women who elicited Gabriel's (Rossetti) admiration, Marie Spartali was probably the most gifted intellectually. Of an ancient and noble race, austere, virtuous and fearless, she was not lacking in a caustic wit and a sharp tongue."*** William Michael Rossetti speaking of Marie Spartali Stillman
- In **1871**, against her parents' wishes, she **married** American journalist and painter **William J. Stillman**. She was his second wife, his **first** having **committed suicide** two years before. **She continued working to supplement her husband's erratic income**. The couple had posed for Rossetti in his famous Dante pictures, though it is not certain if that is how they first met. He first worked for the American Art Magazine, *The Crayon*. His later job was a foreign correspondent for *The Times*. His job as a foreign correspondent resulted in the couple dividing their time between London and Florence from 1878 to 1883, and then Rome from 1889 to 1896. She also travelled to America, and was the only Britain-based Pre-Raphaelite artist to work in the United States.
- She first sat for him in 1867. He wrote to Jane Morris, *'I find her head the most difficult I ever drew. It depends not so much on real form as on a subtle charm of life which one cannot recreate.'*
- Rossetti used her as a model for *A Vision of Fiammetta*, *Dante's Dream* and *The Bower Meadow*. She was the most **intellectual** of his models. She also modelled for: Ford Madox Brown; Burne-Jones; Julia Margaret Cameron and Spencer Stanhope.
- She and her cousins Maria Zambaco and Aglaia Coronio were known collectively among friends as **"the Three Graces"**, after the Charities of Greek mythology (Aglaia, 'Agg-la-eea', goddess of beauty, **Euphrosyne**, 'You-fro-zenee', goddess of joy, and Thalia, 'Thea-lee-a', goddess of good cheer), as all three were noted beauties of Greek heritage.
- *A Rose from Armida's Garden* (1894) by Marie Spartali Stillman.
- She had three children. Marie Spartali died in March 1927 in Ashburn Place in (South Kensington). Marie was cremated at Brookwood Cemetery, near Woking, Surrey, and is interred there with her husband. The grave is marked by a simple lawn headstone.
- Her last will and testament contains a letter where Marie wrote, *"It seems rather absurd to make a will when one has neither possessions nor money to leave"*. She left £155 and various personal items, including some mementos from her life as an artist. Her **body of work** is **valued** today at over **\$690 million** (is this correct? Her

work has sold for \$10-100K and she produced 100 works so this is a maximum of **\$10m**).

- She spoke perfect English though her parents spoke Greek at home and French, German and Italian. She learned to sing under one of the greatest nineteenth century tenors, Manuel Garcia.
- She developed a lifelong friendship for G. F. Watts and Julia Margaret Cameron when visiting their family friends Toby and Sara Prinsep at Little Holland House.
- She was obsessed with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's painting but he was too busy to take her on as a pupil and recommended Luke Ionides who recommended Ford Madox Brown.
- She fell in love with Lord Ranelagh but his reputation as a womanizer caused her father to call off the marriage. She married Stillman against her parents wishes as she felt pity for him. Lord Ranelagh was, for example, a friend of Annie Miller (Hunt's fiancé) and she married his cousin Captain Thompson in 1863.
- When she died in 1927 she was the last surviving link to the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

### **Charles Algernon Swinburne**

- Swinburne was an alcoholic and algolagniac (masochist). His health suffered and aged 42 he was taken into care by his friend and lost his youthful rebelliousness. Watts said it saved the man and killed the poet. Oscar Wilde stated that Swinburne was "a braggart in matters of vice, who had done everything he could to convince his fellow citizens of his homosexuality and bestiality without being in the slightest degree a homosexual or a bestialiser." He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature every year from 1903 to 1907 and 1909.



**Elizabeth Butler** (1846-1933, née **Thompson**), *Scotland Forever!*, 1881, Leeds Art Gallery

**Problem of being a woman artist:** had to travel, manage her husband's affairs and raise six children

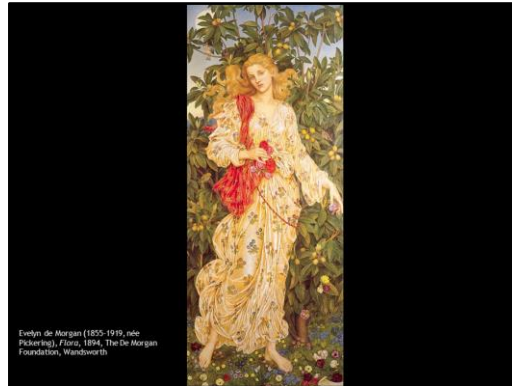
### **Elizabeth Butler**

- Wikipedia: **Elizabeth Southerden Thompson, Lady Butler** (1846–1933) was a British painter, one of the **few female painters to achieve fame for history paintings**, especially **military** battle scenes, at the end of that tradition. She was married to **Lieutenant General Sir William Butler in 1877**, and is still often referred to as Lady Butler. Some of her most famous military scenes come from the Napoleonic Wars, but she covered most major 19th-century wars and painted several works showing the First World War.
- She was born in Switzerland and received her art training in **Italy** and then **South Kensington**, London and she entered the **Female School of Art**. She initially concentrated on religious subjects and later switched to war paintings.
- She was very popular as she painted scenes of battle at a time when Victorian pride and nationalism for the growing British Empire was at its height. She said, '***I never painted for the glory of war, but to portray its pathos and heroism***'.
- On her husband's retirement they moved to Ireland.
- **The Government School of Design** was founded in 1837 and in 1853 became the **National Art Training School** with the **Female School of Art** in a separate building. In 1896 it became the **Royal College of Art**. During the 19thC it was often referred to as the **South Kensington Schools**.
- **Female School of Art**. In 1866 students were allowed to draw the clothed figure for the first time. Also known as School of Design for Females/Female School of Design/Gower Street School/Metropolitan School of Art for Females/Royal Female

School of Art/Queen Square School of Art/Royal Female School of Art/Government School of Art for Ladies. Originally (1842) in Somerset House, then Gower Street (1852) then Queen Square (1861). It became part of the Central School of Arts and Crafts whose successor institution is Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design. If the pupils at the Female School of Art in Queen Square were good enough, they were sent for examination at South Kensington, hence the confusion in some biographical sources, which mistakenly locate the school itself in South Kensington.

Scotland Forever! (from Wikipedia)

*"Scotland Forever! is an 1881 oil painting by Lady Butler depicting the start of the charge of the **Royal Scots Greys**, a British cavalry regiment that charged alongside the British heavy cavalry at the **Battle of Waterloo in 1815**. In actuality, it appears that Scots Greys **never started the charge at a gallop**, due to the broken ground, and instead advanced at a quick walk. The horses which dominate the picture are the heavy grey mounts used by the regiment throughout its history until mechanization. **Two hundred men and 224 horses** of the Greys **were killed or wounded** during the charge portrayed. Butler was inspired to paint the charge as a response to the aesthetic paintings that she saw - and intensely disliked - on a visit to the Grosvenor Gallery. She had developed a reputation for her military pictures after the favourable reception of her earlier painting **The Roll Call** of 1874, on a subject from the **Crimean War** and her 1879 painting **Remnants of an Army**, on the **1842 retreat from Kabul**. The painting takes its name from the battle cry: "Scotland for ever!" The painting was exhibited at the **Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly in 1881**. It is now housed at the Leeds Art Gallery, having been one of its earliest acquisitions, a gift from Colonel Thomas Walter Harding (1843–1927) in 1888. It was also an inspiration for the depiction of the same charge in the film *Waterloo*."*



Evelyn de Morgan (1855-1919, née Pickering), *Flora*, 1894, The De Morgan Foundation, Wandsworth

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evelyn\\_de\\_Morgan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evelyn_de_Morgan)

**Problem of being a woman artist:** overshadowed by her husband's art (a ceramicist who designed tiles and stained glass for Morris & Co. He has **17 times more Google references**)

### Evelyn de Morgan

- Evelyn de Morgan (born **Pickering**) was an **English Pre-Raphaelite painter** born to upper middle-class parents. Her **mother** was the **sister** of the artist John Roddam **Spencer Stanhope** and a descendent of the Earl of Leicester.
- She was **educated at home** and started drawing at the age of 15. When she was 17 she wrote in her diart 'Art is eternal, but life is short ... I have not a moment to lose.' and she persuaded her parents to let her go to the **Slade School of Art**.
- She was influenced and taught by her **uncle, John Roddam Spencer Stanhope** (1829-1908), and was particularly fond of the work of Sandro Botticelli (c. 1445-1510). In 1887 she married the ceramicist **William de Morgan** and they lived together until his death in 1917. Her work is on permanent exhibition a the **De Morgan Centre in Wandsworth (closed since 28 June 2014)**. Augustus de Morgan (his father) was a brilliant mathematician, appointed the first professor of Mathematics at UCL in 1828 aged 21, the year after he graduated. He resigned twice on principle.

### Note

- **John Roddam Spencer Stanhope** is an English artist associated with Edward Burne-Jones and George Frederic Watts and often regarded as a second-wave pre-Raphaelite. His work is also studied within the context of Aestheticism and British Symbolism. As a painter, Stanhope worked in oil, watercolour, fresco, and mixed

media. His subject matter was mythological, allegorical, biblical, and contemporary. While a student at Oxford, he sought out Watts as a teacher and was Watts' assistant for some of his architectural paintings. Spencer-Stanhope travelled with Watts to Italy in 1853 and to Asia Minor in 1856–57. Upon his return, he was invited by Dante Gabriel Rossetti to participate in the Oxford murals project. Spencer-Stanhope's house Sandroyd (now called Benfleet Hall), near Cobham in Surrey, was commissioned from the architect Philip Webb. Finished by 1861 it was Webb's second house, the first was The Red House, designed for William Morris.

- **Slade School of Art**, the art school of UCL established in 1871 from a endowment by the lawyer Felix Slade. It taught men and women from the beginning, seven years before UCL allowed women. Classes were co-educational except for life drawing classes. Women draw clothed or half-draped models. Evelyn de Morgan was one of the first students and won a scholarship in 1873. It also taught Kate Greenaway and Gwen and Augustus John. Roger Fry taught at the Slade.
- **William de Morgan** designer, potter, inventor (glazes and a duplex bicycle gear) and novelist was a lifelong friend of William Morris. His pottery was supported by cash injections from his wife. In 1907 he wrote '*All my life I have been trying to make beautiful things, and now that I can make them nobody wants them.*' He took up writing novels and Joseph Vance (1906) became a best seller in the US and UK, followed by three other novels.



Gwen John (1876-1939), *self-portrait*, 1902, Tate Britain

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwen\\_John](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwen_John)

Augustus John (1878-1961), *self-portrait*, c. 1901, private collection

**Problem of being a woman artist:** an art world dominated by men (and a famous brother)

### Gwen John

- Gwen John was a Welsh artist who worked in France most of her life. She trained at the **Slade School of Art** where her younger brother, **Augustus John**, had already begun his studies. They lived together on fruit and nuts and even as students her **brother's personal glamour** made him a celebrity. Gwen was quieter and her reputation has **steadily grown** since her death. She **neglected her health** throughout her life and in 1900-01 she lived as a **squatter** in a derelict building.
- She and was taught in the traditional manner, which involved **copying Old Master paintings**. This training shows in the naturalism and carefully controlled colour range of this picture. As a woman in a career still largely **dominated by men**, including her successful brother Augustus, Gwen had to **struggle for recognition**. The **self-scrutinising intensity** of this image, and the **isolation** of the figure, registers some **sense of this struggle**.
- From **1910 to 1924** nearly all her work was purchased by her patron **John Quinn** an American art collector and this **freed her from having to work as a model**, mostly for women artists. The majority of her work is **portraits, mainly of female sitters** and her oeuvre is small, consisting of **only 158 oil paintings**. She drew thousands of drawings and thought a painting should be finished in one or two sittings and '*For that one must paint a lot of canvases probably and waste them*'. Her **meticulous preparation** shows the **influence** of **James McNeill Whistler** who she **trained under in Paris** at the Académie Carmen. Augustus John posed nude for Whistler. In her dairies she wrote of many occasions when she felt harassed or abused by both men and women artists (e.g. the woman artist was kissing a man



all afternoon and then told her not to tell anyone if she wanted a job, treating her as a child, discussing her as if she was not there). She modelled for **Auguste Rodin** and became his lover. She developed fierce attachments to both men and women that worried some people.

- Gwen John's **quiet art** with its **subtle colour** relationships, stands in contrast to her brother's far more assertive work. She was **once overshadowed** by his work but critical opinion now tends to **view her as the more talented**. Augustus predicted this reversal, saying '*In 50 years' time I will be known as the brother of Gwen John.*'



Laura Knight (1877-1970), *Self-Portrait with Nude*, 1913, National Portrait Gallery

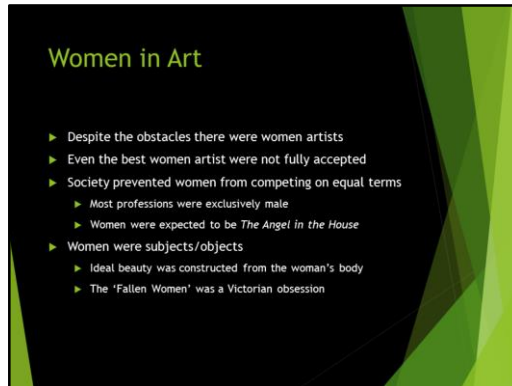
**Problem of being a woman artist:** cannot learn to draw and paint figures at art school until the twentieth century

- **Returning** to the **Royal Academy** and looking at the first woman to become an **Academician** since its foundation.
- **Laura Knight** (born Johnson) was an artist who worked in the figurative, realist tradition and was an English Impressionist. She was created a Dame in 1929 (aged 52) and was elected a Royal Academician in 1936, the first since 1868. Her large retrospective at the RA in 1965 was the first for a woman.
- Her father died shortly after she was born and her mother struggled financially but managed to send her France to study in a Paris atelier. She returned and her mother managed to enrol her at the Nottingham School of Art aged 13. She started teaching art when she was 15 and her mother fell ill and won a scholarship and gold medal from the South Kensington Museum (which became the V&A in 1899). She met Harold Knight when she was 17 and they married in 1903 when she was 26.
- She became a central figure in the **Newlyn** artists colony with Alfred Munnings.
- In 1913 she painted a first for a woman, *Self Portrait with Nude* showing her painting the artist **Ella Naper**. Using mirrors she painted herself and the model as seen from the point of view of someone entering the studio. As an art student she was not permitted to paint nude models, only casts, which she deeply resented. It was first shown in Newlyn and was well received but rejected by the RA. The *Daily Telegraph* art critic called it '**vulgar**' and suggested it '*might quite appropriately have stayed in the artist's studio.*' She continued to exhibit it throughout her career and it continued to receive criticism but it was purchased by the NPG after her death and **is now considered both a key work in the story of female self-portraiture and as symbolic of wider female emancipation.**

- She painted the world of theatre and ballet and was a war artist during WWII. She was also interested in marginal groups, such as gypsies and circus performers.
- A woman artist painting a nude was very difficult during the nineteenth century as few art schools allowed women students to attend life classes. One of the first was the Slade towards the end of the century. It was one thing to paint a working class model another for a middle-class Slade woman student to pose naked. Women students painted themselves in the mirror and other women students but did not acknowledge this.

- **Edward Poynter, first principal at the Slade, in his inaugural address in October 1871:**

*'There is unfortunately a difficulty which has always stood in the way of female students acquiring that thorough knowledge of the figure which is essential to the production of work of a high class; and that is, of course, that they are debarred from the same complete study of the model that is open to the male students...But I have always been anxious to institute a class where the half-draped model might be studied, to give those ladies who are desirous of obtaining sound instruction in drawing the figure, an opportunity of gaining the necessary knowledge...It is my desire that in all the classes, except of course those for the study of the nude model, the male and female students should work together.'*



- Anna Lea Merritt (1844-1930), American painter who lived and worked in England for most of her life. Her most famous work is *Love Locked Out* (1877). In 1900, Merritt wrote that she felt she had not faced much if any discrimination because of her gender, but noted the social pressures which could inhibit a female artist's career, concluding,

***"The chief obstacle to a woman's success is that she can never have a wife. Just reflect what a wife does for an artist: Darns the stockings; keeps his house; writes his letters; visits for his benefit; wards off intruders; is personally suggestive of beautiful pictures; always an encouraging and partial critic. It is exceedingly difficult to be an artist without this time-saving help. A husband would be quite useless."***

#### **Reviews of exhibitions of the Society of Female Artists:**

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Dispelling the Myths Surrounding Nineteenth-Century British Art  
by Laurence Shafe  
Women in Art - Slide List

1. H. Meadows, *Book of Beauty*, 'Doloride', 1838
2. Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805-1873), *Family of Queen Victoria*, 1846, Royal Collection
3. Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805-1873), *Queen Victoria (aged 24)*, 1843, Royal Collection
4. John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Mrs Country Palmer*, 1851, Fitzwilliam Museum
5. David Ramsay Hay (1798-1866), *Science of Beauty*, Plate 29
6. *Venus de Medici*, 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, marble copy of a bronze Greek original, Uffizi Gallery, Florence
7. *Alexander of Moles*, *Venus de Milo*, 130-100 BCE, Louvre
8. William Dyce (1806-1864), *Neptune Resigning To Britannia The Empire Of the Sea*, 1847
9. Raphael Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520, died aged 37) *The Triumph of Galatea* (c. 1514), fresco, Villa Farnesina, Rome
10. Oscar Gustave Rejlander (1813-1879), *Two Wives of Life*, 1857, Royal Collection
11. Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Sculptor's Model*, 1877, private collection
12. Anna, *Capitaine Yvain*, c.20, white marble, Capoline Museum, Rome
13. Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), *The Outcast*, 1851, Royal Academy
14. James Tissot (1836-1902), *The Thames*, 1876
15. James Tissot (1836-1902), *Portsmouth Dockyard*, Tissot, 1877, Tate Britain
16. Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), *The Portraits of the Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-72, Royal Collection
17. George Romney (1734-1802), *Mary Anson*, 1798-71, National Portrait Gallery
18. Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *self-portrait*, 1770-1775, National Portrait gallery
19. Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A View of Fowey*, c. 1792-7, Royal Collection
20. Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *El Juicio de Paris (Judgment of Paris)*, c. 1781, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico
21. Photograph of Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862, born Siddals), c. 1860
22. John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-2
23. Elizabeth Siddal, *Self-portrait*, 1854
24. Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862, born Siddals), *Lady of Shalott*, 1853, pen and ink on paper, Jeremy Maas Gallery
25. Emily Mary Osborn or Osborne (1828-1929), *Nameless and Friendless*, 1857
26. Marie Spartoili-Schloman (1844-1922), *Love's Messenger*, c. 1885, Delaware Art Museum
27. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *A Vision of Flammatio*, 1878, collection of Andrew Lloyd Webber
28. Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879), *Maria Spartoili Schloman*, 1868
29. Elizabeth Butler (1846-1933, nee Thompson), *Scottish Firework*, 1881
30. Evelyn de Morgan (1855-1919, nee Pickering), *Flora*, 1894, The De Morgan Foundation, Wandsworth
31. Green John (1828-1909), *self-portrait*, 1902
32. Laura Knight, *Self-portrait with Nude*, 1913, National Portrait Gallery