



## MARY MOSER (1744-1819)

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- Welcome, I am Laurence and I am talking about Mary Moser today. It would have been Peter Scott speaking who some of you may know. Sadly Peter passed away a few weeks ago and in September he asked me to take over these talks.
- I met Peter when I took over as Chairman of our local NADFAS as his wife was the previous chairman. We were both Tate Guides and I also give a series of sixteen art history talks every year on a wide range of topics. My master's degree was from the Courtauld Institute and my doctorate from the University of Bristol concerned the interaction between art and science in nineteenth-century British art.
- This is a two-hour session and I will take a short break in the middle. I am happy to take questions at any time and if there is a lot of discussion that will be good but I will not be able to complete all the slides as I have enough material for a two-hour talk as I wasn't sure if there would be any questions. So I am happy to either way, all talk or all discussion or any mix.
- Last week I talked about Angelica Kauffman and this week's talk is about the other female founder of the Royal Academy—Mary Moser.
- Mary Moser was the youngest ever Royal Academician, and in 1805 she was proposed as a candidate for the presidency so she was a well known and respected artist at the time but she is no longer well known. How many have heard of her before today? I hope to correct that. Unfortunately many of her paintings no longer survive.

## **PRINCIPAL WORKS**

(All exhibited at the R.A.)

1. Flower Piece, in oils, 1769
2. Flower Piece, in water colours, 1769.
3. Flower Piece. Presentation work, 1770.
4. Flower Piece, 1771.
5. Flower Piece
6. and its Companion ;
7. Hebe, 1772.
8. Flower Piece, 1773.
9. Flower Piece, 1773.
10. Piece of Flowers ;
11. The Muse Erato, 1774.
12. A Piece of Flowers, 1775.
13. Small Flower Piece ;
14. Venus and Cupid, 1776.
15. Piece of Flowers ;
16. Girl making a Garland, 1777.
17. Belphebe (Spenser's "Fairy Queen,"), 1778.
18. A Gentleman
19. A Young Gentleman ;
20. Contemplation ;
21. Flowers, 1779.
22. Flower Piece ;
23. Theseus finding his father's sword and sandals (Plutarch), 1783
24. Medora and Angelica (Ariosto ) ;
25. Portrait of a Gentleman ;
26. Aminia (Tasso), 1784.
27. Flowers, 1785.

28. Atalanta and Hippomenes (Ovid), 1788.
29. Flowers ;
30. Cymon and Iphigenia (Dryden ), 1789.
31. Proserpine gathering Flowers (Ovid), 1790.
32. A Landscape, 1792.
33. Flowers, 1797.
34. Scene from the "Mysteries of Udolpho," 1798.
35. The Priest of Bacchus stabs himself at the Altar, 1800

## **REFERENCES**

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- J. Cordy Jeaffreson, 'Female Artists and Art Schools of England', *Art, Pictorial and Industrial: An Illustrated Magazine*, 1871, pp. 25-30
- John Timbs, *English Eccentrics and Eccentricities*, 1877, p. 78
- Ellen Creathorne Clayton, *English Female Artists*, 1876, Chapter XIII
- <https://artherstory.net/angelica-kauffman-and-mary-moser/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Moser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Moser)
- <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/mary-moser-ra>
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- [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/18wa/hd\\_18wa.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/18wa/hd_18wa.htm)
- <https://www.journal18.org/issue8/mary-moser-portraitist/>

## THEMES COVERED TODAY

- ❖ The Life of Mary Moser
- ❖ The History of Art Societies
- ❖ Founding of the Royal Academy
- ❖ The Difficulties Faced by Women Artists
- ❖ The History of Flower Painting

- I will briefly introduce Mary Moser and then talk about how the Royal Academy and other art societies came into existence in the eighteenth century. I covered some of the difficulties faced by women artists last week and I will add to the theme today. Mary Moser was principally a flower painter and so I will explain the history of flower painting before returning to Moser, her life and some of her major works.

## NOTES

"MOSER, Mary (1744-1819). Painter. Daughter of George Michael Moser, an enamel painter and gold-chaser from Switzerland. He moved to England around 1726. Decorated furniture initially, but was also employed by the King to execute two enamels for a watch. Also designed the Great Seal of England for George III. George Moser remained in England and married. Mary is thought to have been his only child, born in 1744. She was a diligent student and became a flower and figure painter. In 1758 and 1759 she was awarded premiums of five guineas each from the Society of Arts for her drawings. The Society was founded in 1754, its object being to award premiums to young people under 16 who showed most promise in drawing. **Mary was 14 when she won her first premium and 15 when she won her second.** When the Royal Academy was founded in 1768, George Moser was elected Keeper, and was given apartments in Somerset House. By this stage, **Moser had been manager and treasurer of a private academy for artists in St Martin's Lane for almost 30 years.** Mary Moser supported the founding of the Royal

Academy along with her **close friend** and fellow artist, Angelica Kauffman. Both were elected Members, the only females. **Only one other flower painter besides Mary was elected (John Baker)**. Mary exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1769 and 1802, showing 36 works, including flower studies. Exhibited works included: **Venus and Cupid, Proserpine Gathering Flowers and A Landscape**. For a while, she pursued painter Henry Fuseli, but he rejected her advances.

Queen Charlotte and Princess Elizabeth were clearly fond of Mary Moser, and she was commissioned to decorate an entire room at Frogmore with flowers. It was afterwards called 'Miss Moser's Room'. She was paid a considerable £900 for the work. Mary Moser is reputed to have been difficult and troublesome, and one of her rows was recorded in Smith's Life and times of Nollekens. But she is also said to have had a good sense of humour, and her father was very fond of her. She lived with her parents for much of her career. George Moser, who probably taught his daughter much of what she knew, died in 1783. In the late 1790s Mary married Captain Hugh Lloyd. Thereafter her output diminished. This was due not to marriage but to worsening eyesight. She survived her husband by several years. Nollekens, a good friend, bequeathed her £100. When Mary died, she left painter Maria Cosway a small sum in her will. Mary was buried with her husband. Sir Joshua Reynolds praised Mary Moser's work in her lifetime. Zoffany painted a picture of the Royal Academy's early supporters in a group. In the background were portraits of Mary Moser and Angelica Kauffman, the latter from a picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Peter Pinder alludes to painters Mary Moser and Mary Benwell, mistakenly calling the latter Sarah:

Thus shall I hurt not only group composers

From Sarah Benwell's brush to Mary Moser's.

In 1905, in *Women Painters of the World* (London, Hodder & Stoughton), Walter Shaw Sparrow included an illustration of Mary Moser's Vase of Flowers. Her works can be found in the Tate Gallery. " (Sara Gray, *The Dictionary of British Women Artists*, Lutterworth Press, 2009, p. 191)



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Self-Portrait*, c. 1770-1771, 73 x 61 cm, Museum Zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen



George Romney (1734-1802), *Mary Moser* (1744-1819), 1770-71, 76.3 x 64.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery

George Romney (1734-1802), *Mary Moser*, 1770-71, 76.3 × 64.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Self-Portrait*, c. 1770-1771, 73 x 61 cm., Museum Zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen

- **This is Mary Moser** (1744-1819) and this portrait by George Romney is the best known portrait of her. She was born in England and, with Angelica Kauffman, one of the most celebrated women artists of the 18th century. Her father George was also a painter and a founding member of the Royal Academy.
- Two years after the Royal Academy was founded she sat for this **portrait by George Romney**. She is painting a still life of fruit and foliage and she has half turned, with a slightly bent head, to look at the viewer. She is in a vermilion draped garment, over grey blue, **in a form of classical dress**, and her dark hair is casually bundled. She wears no jewellery and no cosmetics and although her expression isn't solemn, it isn't smiling either. She looks like someone who has agreed to be painted by a master of the day because it will serve to advertise this new academy, but actually, being **interrupted in her work** is an inconvenience — '**I will do this,**' she seems to be saying, '**because it will help the Academy**'. When she died, in 1819, there were no further full female members of the Royal Academy until Dame Laura Knight in 1936.
- George Romney (1734-1802) was never invited to join the Royal

Academy despite his enormous success. He was asked, urged even, to exhibit there but **he did not even apply to join**. This **cost him valuable royal patronage** and support from others connected at court. He maintained that a **good artist should succeed without being a member**. He did succeed without the support of being an Academician and it was only towards the end of his life that he expressed the slightest regret for his views.

- More surprising is this little known self-portrait.
- It was "... Long in the possession of Moser's Swiss family, this painting was originally **assumed to be a copy** after her portrait by George Romney. Now dated to the same period, the canvases are nearly identical. Moser's could be a copy, but in fact it is **unclear which came first**. Perhaps because Moser has never been studied as portraitist, no scholar has yet deciphered the relationship between these two paintings. Copying paintings is a form of Academic training to which Moser would have had access; if hers is modelled after Romney's work, it is telling that she placed **less emphasis on the fruit than on herself**, that she changed the foliage, and that the **paint on her palette appears larger and messier**, more convincingly in use. Her own **features also seem slightly less polished**—and thus, perhaps, **truer to form**. Yet whether executed first or second, Moser's version reveals a precise, targeted, and culturally conscious self-fashioning that expanded her identity as a painter of floral pieces. By presenting herself at work, Moser proved herself a **competent portraitist** and limner of the human form. By showing herself in a classical painter's robes, an unusual visual choice for a woman artist at this time, Moser emphasised her professional over her gendered identity. And, while famous for her watercolours, she claimed higher artistic status by showing herself **working in oils**."
- Mary Moser is reputed to have been **difficult and troublesome**, and **one of her rows** was recorded in Smith's *Life and Times of Nollekens*, an artist we will return to later. But she is also said to have had a **good sense of humour**, and her father was very fond of her. **She lived with her parents for much of her career...**

## NOTES

- In the 1790s, Moser received a prestigious commission from Queen Charlotte to paint a floral decorative scheme for Frogmore

House in Windsor, Berkshire, for which she was paid £900. This was one of her last professional works as, following her marriage to a Mr. Hugh Lloyd in 1793, aged 49, she retired and began exhibiting as an amateur. She had an open affair with Richard Cosway, who was then separated from his wife Maria and travelled with him for six months on a sketching tour in 1793. In his notebooks he made 'lascivious statements' and 'invidious comparisons between her and Mrs Cosway', implying that she was much more sexually responsive than his wife.

## **REFERENCES**

- Paris A. Spies-Gans, 'Mary Moser: Portraitist' [<https://www.journal18.org/issue8/mary-moser-portraitist/>, accessed 16 Nov 2021]

Carl Marcus Tuscher (1705–1757),  
*George Michael Moser and His Wife  
Mary*, 1741-43, 72.5 × 73cm,  
Museum of the Home



Carl Marcus Tuscher (1705–1751), *George Michael Moser and His Wife Mary*, 1741-43, 72.5 × 73cm, Museum of the Home, Shoreditch (formerly the Geffrye Museum)

- She was the only daughter of George Michael Moser (1706-1783), Mary Moser was born on October 27, 1744. At the age of 14, she won her first medal from the Society of Arts, for her flower drawings. About ten years later, she became, at just 24 years old, the youngest Founder of the Royal Academy of Arts. She died on 2 May 1819, aged 74.
- George Moser was born in Schaffhausen, Switzerland and came to England around 1726. He became the leading gold chaser in England, settled down and married Mary Guynier, herself the daughter of an artist. Their only child Mary was born in 1744. She won her first medal for flower painting when she was 14. Her father knew **all the celebrities** of the day such as **Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith**, and was **drawing master to George III when he was Prince of Wales**. This meant that Mary grew up surrounded by the rich and famous and the intellectual elite of the day. She was a hard-working and dedicated professional. Surprisingly, she was so near sighted she had to sit with her nose an inch from the canvas and as was pointed out at the time "**it is astonishing with such an infirmity she could display such harmony**".
- She grew up at a time when painting, in fact almost any job, was

dominated by men. Although her father was a very good teacher and later taught students at the Royal Academy she had no access to life drawing classes. Just to show how extreme the prejudice, James Boswell recorded that Samuel Johnson thought portrait painting was an improper employment for a woman as "**staring at men's faces, is very indelicate in a female.**"[1] In the film "The Danish Girl" (2016) the woman artist Gerda Wegener (1886-1940), played by Alicia Vikander, is painting a portrait of a man and comments "**It's hard for a man to be looked at by a woman. Women are used to it of course, but for a man to submit to a woman's gaze .... It's unsettling.**"

## NOTES

- "This is a double portrait of Swiss-born émigré George Moser (1706-1783) and his wife [Mary Guynier], previously thought to be his daughter Mary (1744-1819), the well known flower painter. Moser came to England in 1726 becoming the leading gold chaser and enamelist of his day. He was a founder member of the Royal Academy and was its first Keeper. The couple are shown in a formal landscape with classical statuary and seating and are wearing informal fashionable clothes. Tuscher, born in Germany, was in London for just two years, becoming Court Painter to Christian VI of Denmark. Signed by the artist with the initial 'T' on the dog's collar." (Museum for the Creative Arts, website)
- Carl Marcus Tuscher (1705–1757) was born in Nuremberg to humble parents. He was apprenticed to a painter and did so well he won a scholarship to Rome. He was employed by Baron Stosch to organise his collection of art and he studied the classical languages. Stosch was a British spy and fled to Florence and after several years he visited Naples and then left for France, Holland and England. He assisted in a drawing academy run by George Moser when he painted this portrait. He went on to Copenhagen where he was made court painter and architect to Christian VI of Denmark and he died there eight years later after a long illness aged only 45.

## REFERENCES

1. [https://www.npg.org.uk/assets/migrated\\_assets/docs/learning/digital/InFocus\\_AngelicaKauffmann.pdf](https://www.npg.org.uk/assets/migrated_assets/docs/learning/digital/InFocus_AngelicaKauffmann.pdf)

2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George Michael Moser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Michael_Moser)
3. <https://vads.ac.uk/digital/collection/NIRP/id/27534>



George Michael Moser (1706–1783), *Hercules and the Hydra*, date unknown, 73 × 61.5 cm, Royal Academy of Arts

George Michael Moser (1706–1783), *Hercules and the Hydra*, date unknown, 73 × 61.5 cm, Royal Academy of Arts

- **This is one of the few oil paintings by him that remains.** It is *Hercules and the Hydra*, a copy, in reverse, of a painting by **Guido Reni in the Louvre.**
- The original painting was commissioned by the Duke of Gonzaga in 1617 as one or a series of four based on the life of Hercules. Hercules (Greek: Heracles) was given twelve labours and killing the many-headed **hydra of Lerna was the second.** When he cut off a head two grew in its place so he had his companion hold a torch against the stump to stop the new heads growing. One of the heads was immortal so Hercules cut it off and buried it by the roadside. Hercules had to perform the twelve labours as penance for killing his wife and children which he did as a result of Juno (Greek: Hera), the queen of the gods, driving him to madness.



George Moser (1706-83), A fine and rare enamel watch, 1776, diameter 48mm

George Moser (1706-83), A fine and rare enamel watch, 1776, diameter 48mm

- This is a rare example of an enamel watch designed by George Moser, it sold recently for £55,000. There are probably only about 20 surviving examples of Moser's enamelled watches. (An example housing a movement by Mudge and Dutton with a very similar scene en grisaille is in the Queen's collection, RCIN 33996, but the image quality was too poor to use in this presentation.)
- George Moser became the leading enamel painter and gold-chaser in Britain. He decorated furniture initially, but was also employed by the King to execute two enamels for a watch. He also **designed the Great Seal of England for George III**. George Moser remained in England and married Mary Guynier and Mary is thought to have been their only child, born in 1744.
- "George Moser was a member of a fashionable circle of artists who frequently met in **Slaughter's Coffee House on St Martin's Lane** (near the current Leicester Square tube station). This group would form the basis of the **St Martin's Lane Academy**, which was established by the artist **William Hogarth in 1735**. The Academy chiefly operated as an informal club offering **life-drawing classes**, for which Moser became one of the drawing masters. He also began to take on private pupils and was appointed **drawing master** to the **Prince of Wales, the future King George III**.

- During his career Moser completed a number of royal commissions, including an enamelled watch-case for **Queen Charlotte**, although few of these works survive." (RA website)

## NOTES

- **Slaughter's Coffee House** was opened in 1692 by Thomas Slaughter and so was first known as Slaughter's or The Coffee-house on the Pavement, as not all London streets were paved at that time. It was at numbers 74–75; however, around 1760, after the original landlord had died, a rival New Slaughter's opened at number 82, and the first establishment then became known as Old Slaughter's.
- It was patronised by **players of games including chess, draughts and whist**. Notable chess players included Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) and François Philidor (1726-1795). It was also popular with artists of all kinds – architects, painters, poets, sculptors, etc. This artistic community included John Dryden, Thomas Gainsborough, William Hogarth, and Henry Fielding
- Slaughter's was used as a meeting house, and the **Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**, which subsequently became the RSPCA, was founded there in 1824.

## REFERENCES

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/george-michael-moser-ra>

<https://www.antique-watch.com/product/gold-and-enamel-by-moser-2/>

George Michael Moser (1706-1783),  
Candlesticks with Apollo and Daphne,  
London, c. 1745, ormolu (gilt-bronze), Apollo  
candlestick 36.2 x 17.78 x 17.78 cm,  
Daphne candlestick 36.2x 17.78 x 17.78 cm,  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

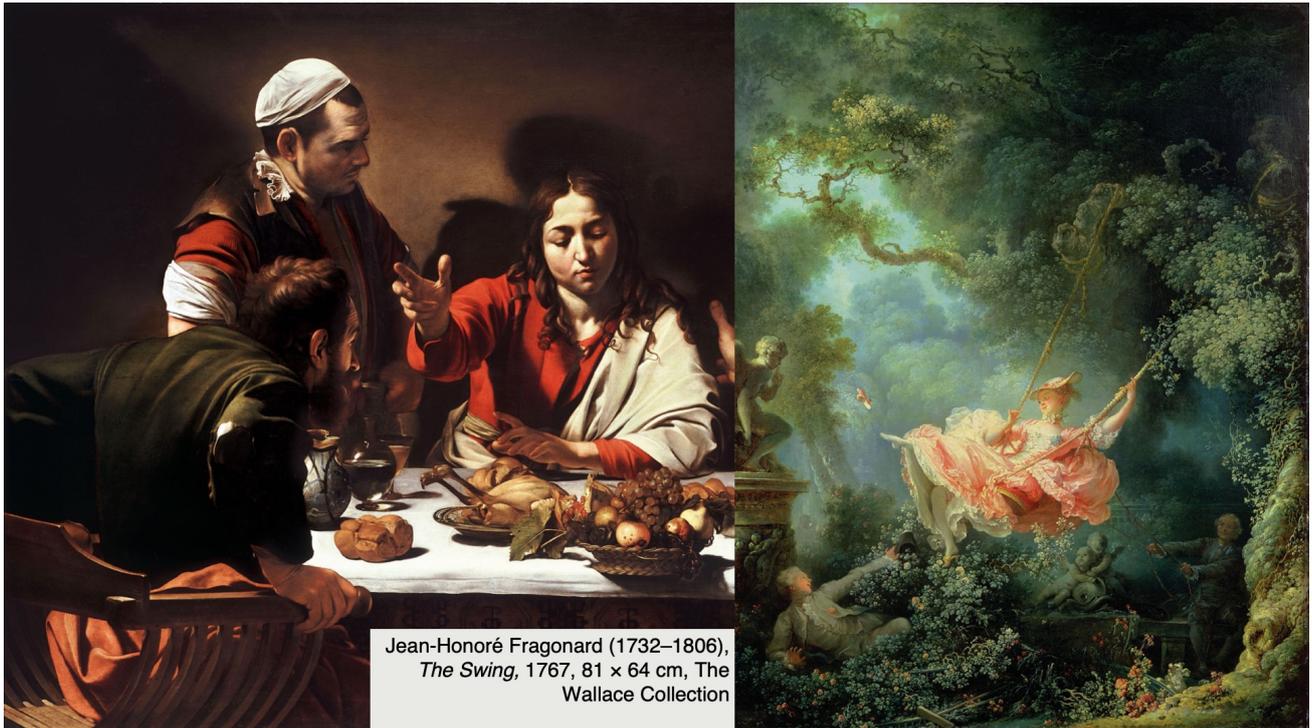


George Michael Moser (1706-1783), Candlesticks with Apollo and Daphne, London, c. 1745, ormolu (gilt-bronze), Apollo candlestick 36.2 x 17.78 x 17.78 cm, Daphne candlestick 36.2x 17.78 x 17.78 cm, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

- Together with his fellow members of the St Martin's Academy, he is credited with **introducing the rococo style to England**, as exemplified by his Apollo and Daphne candlesticks.
- The story of Apollo and Daphne is from ancient Greek mythology and tells of how Apollo, the Greek god of music, poetry, art, the sun, and a great warrior, mocked the god of love, Eros, for his use of bow and arrow, as Apollo is also patron of archery. Eros fired a golden bow at Apollo to make him fall in love with the river nymph Daphne but he fired a lead arrow into her to make her hate him. Apollo chased her and she called on her father the river god to change her form. He changed her into a laurel tree and Apollo used his power of eternal youth to render Daphne evergreen which is why the leaves of the laurel tree do not decay.

## **REFERENCES**

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/name/george-michael-moser-ra>



Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806),  
*The Swing*, 1767, 81 × 64 cm, The  
 Wallace Collection

Caravaggio (1571–1610), *Supper at Emmaus*, c. 1601, 141 × 196.2 cm, National Gallery

Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806), *The Swing*, 1767, 81 × 64 cm, The Wallace Collection

- Rococo (pronounced 're-co-co') emerged from Baroque.
- Baroque first developed in about 1600 and lasted about 150 years. Think of artists like **Caravaggio, Peter Paul Rubens Diego Velázquez, Rembrandt van Rijn and Johannes Vermeer**. Baroque was shockingly different from Renaissance art and used **chiaroscuro** to invoke a sense of drama. Baroque was driven by
- **Chiaroscuro** literally means light-dark and refers to this spotlight style of painting which was used to introduce drama. Also note the hands seeming to come out of the picture and the person half risen from their seat. Typical dramatic flourishes.
- Rococo means 'pebbles' referring to the stones and shells used to decorate Rococo grottoes. It was associated with French King Louis XV (1710-1774) and spread across Europe. Rococo paintings often show cheerful scenes of happy people at home or dancing in across grass fields. Rococo was secular and the themes were romance, sex and mythology.

**NOTES**

- **Counter-Reformation:** The period of Catholic revival beginning with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and ending at the close of the Thirty Years' War (1648); sometimes considered a response to the Protestant Reformation. The Baroque style was encouraged by the Catholic Church, which had decided at the Council of Trent that the arts should **communicate religious themes by direct emotional involvement** in response to the Protestant Reformation.
- Louis XV was called Louis the Well-Beloved (1710-1774, king from 1715-1774, called Louis le Bien-Aimé). His ineffectual rule contributed to the decline of royal authority that led to the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. Although Louis had been popular as le Bien-Aimé (the Well-Beloved) in his youth, he had gradually earned the contempt of his subjects. He spent more time with his mistresses than attending to the affairs of state.

## **REFERENCES**

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/michelangelo-merisi-da-caravaggio-the-supper-at-emmaus>

Mary Moser (1744-1819),  
*Flowers in a Basket*, 1765,  
V&A



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Flowers in a Basket*, 1765, V&A

- But let us return to Mary Moser. This is an early example of Moser's flower painting, painted when she was 21 and when she was already recognised as one of the leading flower painters in the country. Flower painting was very popular as a permanent alternative to a vase of flowers and it was also in demand for decorative designs for vases and tableware.
- This was painted only three years before the Royal Academy was founded and so before talking more about Moser's life I wanted to set the scene regarding the art world in Britain during the eighteenth century as Moser's father George Moser played an important part in organising British art and Mary grew up among the artists involved.

## **NOTES**

- Flowers in a basket, chrysanthemums, lilies, nigella, convulvulus, delphiniums.



William Hogarth (1697–1764), *Portrait of Captain Thomas Coram*, 1740, 239 x 147.5 cm, Foundling Museum

The Foundling Hospital, Holborn, London: a bird's-eye view of the courtyard, numbered for a key. Coloured engraving after L. P. Boitard, 1753

William Hogarth (1697–1764), *Portrait of Captain Thomas Coram*, 1740, 239 x 147.5 cm, Foundling Museum

- This is Thomas Coram by William Hogarth. Note that Hogarth died the year before the previous flower painting by Mary Moser. (CLICK) **Coram founded the Foundling Hospital in 1739** and it became the first public art gallery in England. So it was well established when Mary was born five years later.
- At the beginning of the eighteenth century fine art was the province of the wealthy, it could not be seen in galleries and there was no active discussion about art. The few who knew about art had been on the Grand Tour and seen works in Italy. By the end of the century there were public exhibitions, an active art market and general discussion of art in the press. **How did this come about?**
- Art societies can have a number of functions. They are a **meeting place** for artists to share ideas, they can include a **school for teaching** young artists, particularly **life drawing**, the ultimate skill. They can also **organise public exhibitions** for the work of their members and sometimes non-members. They can also **increase public awareness of art** and act as a **prestigious accolade**, particularly if they have royal backing. These activities came together

step by step.

- Thomas Coram (1668-1751) returned to London in **1704 after eleven years in America** to find the country was a **powerhouse of industry** and invention, **global trade and wealth**. However, he also found **desperate poverty** in the streets of London. Poor parents were unable to feed their children and **many abandoned them** in the streets. Coram **campaigned for seventeen years** until he received a Royal Charter from George II in **1739** which enabled him to found his Foundling Hospital to care for abandoned children.
- **William Hogarth and George Frideric Handel** helped Coram establish the Hospital and make it one of London's most fashionable venues. **Hogarth encouraged leading artists of the day to donate work, thereby establishing the UK's first public art gallery.**

## NOTES

- "When Thomas Coram (1668-1751) returned to London in 1704 after eleven years in America, it was to a city that was a **powerhouse of industry, invention, global trade and wealth**. It was also **noisy, disease-ridden, polluted and the site of desperate poverty**. The situation for **children was particularly bleak** with soaring mortality rates. Parents who were unable to care for their babies due to poverty or illegitimacy had few options, and many chose to **abandon them in the street** – it is estimated that around a **thousand babies a year** were abandoned in London. It was this clear need for practical action that spurred Coram to start his campaign.
- **After 17 years of tireless campaigning**, Thomas Coram finally received a **Royal Charter from King George II in 1739**, enabling him to establish his **Foundling Hospital** to care for and educate some of London's most vulnerable citizens. Instrumental in helping Coram realise his vision were the artist **William Hogarth and the composer George Frideric Handel**, who helped establish the Hospital as one of London's most fashionable venues. **Hogarth encouraged leading artists of the day to donate work, thereby establishing the UK's first public art gallery**. Handel donated an organ and conducted annual benefit concerts of Messiah in the Hospital's chapel. Their creative generosity set the template for the ways in which the arts can

support philanthropy.

- From 1741 when the first babies were admitted, to **1954 when the last pupil** was placed in foster care, the Foundling Hospital **cared for and educated around 25,000 children**. The Foundling Museum opened in 2004. The building at 40 Brunswick Square was constructed in the 1930s on the site of the Foundling Hospital, and incorporates many architectural features from the original eighteenth-century building."<sup>[1]</sup>

## **REFERENCES**

1. <https://foundlingmuseum.org.uk/about/our-history/>



Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723), *Self-portrait*, 1685, 75.6 × 62.9 cm, National Portrait Gallery

1711 Kneller Academy of Painting



William Hogarth (1697–1764), *Self-portrait*, c.1735, 54.6 x 50.8 cm, Yale Center for British Art

1734 St Martin's Lane Academy

Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723), *Self-portrait*, 1685, 75.6 × 62.9 cm, National Portrait Gallery

William Hogarth (1697–1764), *Self-portrait*, c.1735, 54.6 x 50.8 cm, Yale Center for British Art

- Before even the Foundling Hospital there was a school that taught young artists which was founded by **Godfrey Kneller** in 1711. His range was enormous and he painted every monarch from Charles II to George I and influenced artists including in order of their year of birth, **William Hogarth** (1697-1764), **Allan Ramsay** (1713-1784), **Joshua Reynolds** (1723-1792), **Thomas Gainsborough** (1727-1788) and **Joseph Wright of Derby** (1734-1797).
- Kneller was succeeded at the Academy by **James Thornhill** five years later and he then set up his own school and was himself succeeded on his death in 1734 by (CLICK) his son-in-law **William Hogarth** who set up perhaps the most famous teaching school **St Martin's Lane Academy**...

## NOTES

- Before the Foundling Hospital, the first British academy of art was the **Kneller Academy of Painting and Drawing** (also called the Academy of Painting) founded in 1711 by Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723) in Great Queen Street. His influence on British art is shown in

the work of **William Hogarth** (1697-1764), **Allan Ramsay** (1713-1784), **Joshua Reynolds** (1723-1792), **Thomas Gainsborough** (1727-1788) and **Joseph Wright of Derby** (1734-1797) each of whom absorbed elements of his style. His range and industry was remarkable, he painting every monarch from Charles II to George I. His teaching at the Kneller Academy had a powerful impact on succeeding generations and he is one of Britain's most prolific portraitist.

- **Sir James Thornhill** succeeded him as governor of the Academy in 1716 and then **set up his own school** at his house in Covent Garden. On his death in 1734 his student and **son-in-law William Hogarth (1697-1764)** **set up the St Martin's Lane Academy that provided life models for use of its members.** The treasurer was **George Moser for 30 years** until the founding of the Royal Academy.



Johann Zoffany, *A Life Class at St Martin's Lane Academy*, 1761-62, 50.5 x 66cm, Royal Academy

Johann Zoffany, *A Life Class at St Martin's Lane Academy*, 1761-62, 50.5 x 66cm, Royal Academy

## NOTES

- "The **St Martin's Lane Academy** was set up in 1735 under the guidance of **William Hogarth** (1697–1764) and continued to operate until 1767 when its **furnishings and materials were removed to Pall Mall** for use in the **new Royal Academy Schools**.
- About **80 fine artists** were associated with the Academy and Hogarth has told us that **30 to 40 artists enrolled for each season** which offered **life drawing classes every evening** from October to March for two guineas. It was the only drawing school in London that offered a **female model twice weekly**. Among the artists who attended were amongst them the most well-known artists of the period, including Thomas Gainsborough, Joseph Nollekens, Allan Ramsay, Richard Wilson, Johann Zoffany and Richard Cosway, who we shall see later was intimately associated with Mary Moser.
- It was the **centre of artistic training** in London until it became subsumed into the Royal Academy. In the **centre foreground is George Michael Moser** (1704–1783) who by **1760 was director of this academy**. He had been **organising life classes in London since the 1730s** and went on to be the **first Keeper of the RA Schools**.
- Other identified figures include John Malin who is shown reaching into

the cupboard, and who later became the porter and occasional model at the RA Schools. To his right is Giuseppe Marchi who travelled from Italy in 1752 to be the studio assistant of Sir Joshua Reynolds. At the back of the room are casts of antique busts and framed life drawings in chalk, both of which would have been present to act as fine exemplars for artists attending this academy." (Royal Academy website)



Joshua Reynolds, Portraits of the Society of Dilettanti, 1777-79

1732 The Society of Dilettanti



Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce

Founded 1754, building opened 1774, became Royal in 1908

## Joshua Reynolds, Portraits of the Society of Dilettanti, 1777-79

- An early society with a different aim was the **Society of Dilettanti**. It was a society of **noblemen and scholars** who sponsored the study of ancient Greek and Roman art. Established about 1732, it still meets to discuss art. Walpole said the nominal qualification was having been to Italy and the real one was being drunk. It was created as a London dining club for those who had been on the Grand Tour and its toast was, and still is, '**Seria ludo**' ('to take matters seriously in a light-hearted spirit'). The group was initially led by Sir **Francis Dashwood** and contained **several dukes**, Sir William Hamilton, the Duke of Leeds and it was later joined by **Joshua Reynolds** (from 1766), **David Garrick**, Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight (from 1781). The Society became **quite wealthy** and sponsored a student to travel to Rome and Greece. It has 60 members elected by secret ballot.
- The other society founded at this time was William Shipley's **Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce** (a long name which was abbreviated to the **Society of Arts**) was founded in 1754. **Shipley encouraged women** to become members early on. (CLICK) In 1774 the Adams brothers built the present building in John Adam Street. In 1908 the Society became the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Today it is more commonly known as the **Royal Society of Arts or**

**the RSA.**

Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Self-portrait*, c. 1748 (1747-1749), 63.5 x 74.3 cm, National Portrait Gallery

1761 Society of Artists of Great Britain



Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), *Self-portrait*, c. 1748 (1747-1749), 63.5 x 74.3 cm, National Portrait Gallery

- It now get a bit complicated but bear with me as it leads to the founding of the Royal Academy.
- First **The Society of Artists of Great Britain** was founded in 1761 as Joshua Reynolds and other artists wanted greater control over exhibitions than William Shipley's **Society of Arts** allowed. In 1765, the Society, then comprising 211 members, obtained a Royal Charter as the "**Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain**". It continued exhibiting until 1791 when it was dissolved. From 1761 to 1783 it was called the '**Free Society of Artists**'.
- **The Society of Arts** split following a leadership dispute between two leading architects, Sir William Chambers (1723-1796, Somerset House) and James Paine (1717-1789, over 90 building works including Richmond, Chertsey and Kew bridges, and the second Walton bridge of six, Canaletto painted the first Walton bridge).
  - **The Society of Arts** continued, run by Thomas Paine.
  - **The Royal Academy of Arts** was founded in December 1768 thanks to **William Chambers's** strong connections with George III. William Chambers persuaded **Joshua Reynolds** to join and he became the first **President**. The Royal Academy was also **supported by Richard Wilson, Benjamin West and Paul**

**Sandby.** It taught art, it held a Summer Exhibition and it appointed 40 Academicians.

- **George Moser** was one of the **petitioners to the King** in the formation of a Royal Academy of Arts. When the King agreed, both **George Moser and his daughter Mary Moser became Founder Members**, with George Moser taking on the **role of Keeper** of the Royal Academy Schools. In this role he oversaw the **artistic education** of Schools students for the next 15 years, teaching pupils including **William Blake**.



Henry Singleton (1766-1839), *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly, 1795*, Royal Academy of Arts

Henry Singleton (1766-1839), *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly, 1795*, Royal Academy of Arts

- This is an important **group portrait of the early Royal Academicians**. It was painted 27 years after the foundation and shows:
  - **Angelica Kauffman** and **Mary Moser** are shown on the right hand of the **President Benjamin West** sitting in the red velvet chair.
  - **Joshua Reynolds was dead** by this date 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 Laocoön.
- They are in the **Council Room of Somerset House**.
- The artist Henry Singleton (1766-1839) was born in London in 1766, part of an artistic family. He should not be confused with the American artist and Academician John Singleton Copley (1738-1815).

Henry Singleton was raised by his uncle and he was **working as a professional artist by the age of 16**. He **entered the Royal Academy Schools** in 1783 and **exhibited at the Royal Academy for 55 years from 1784 until his death**. Despite painting this important group portrait, **Singleton never became an Academician** himself. He was **twice rejected** for Associateship, in 1807 and 1811. **Singleton first rose to prominence as a history painter**. He never fulfilled his potential in this genre but **remained popular throughout his life**, particularly as a portrait painter. He lived in comfortable circumstances in London and died at the house of a friend in 1839.



Engraving of the first Royal Academy premises in Pall Mall

Giovanni Antonio Canal (Canaletto), Old Somerset House from the River, c. 1746-50

New Somerset House, designed by Sir William Chambers, Waterloo Bridge was opened in 1817 (the current bridge was completed in 1945)

Edmund Walker (1813-1814), lithographer Thomas Picken (active 1838, died 1870), Trafalgar Square, with the National Gallery, and St. Martin's Church, published 1 May 1852, colour lithograph

Burlington House, prior to Royal Academy moving in and after, Sidney Smirke RA in 1859, also Carlton Club, old reading room at British Museum, custom houses, toll house

- The first president was **Sir Joshua Reynolds** who gave 15 lectures called **Discourses** over the first 21 years. **Reynolds annual lectures** have **become famous** as the **first public lectures on the nature of art given in Britain**. Reynolds made many famous remarks including his believe that painting **'is not the industry of the hands, but of the mind'** and that a painter **'stands in need of more knowledge than is to be picked off his palette'**. This goes back to the Italian Renaissance belief that painting is not just a craft but is a humanist endeavour that requires inspiration, creativity and knowledge, particularly of the classics.
- It was originally housed in **Pall Mall** (1768-1771, 4 years), then

**Old Somerset House** (1771-1780, 9 years), then **New Somerset House** (1780-1837, 57 years, designed by William Chambers), **east wing National Gallery, Trafalgar Square** (1837-1868, 31 years, designed by another RA William Wilkins) then **Burlington House, Piccadilly** (1868-today, 148 years). Burlington House façade was designed by Colin Campbell and **extended in the 1873** by Sidney Smirke.

- **In May 1770**, when it was still in Pall Mall, **Horace Walpole** reported that **'The rage to see these exhibitions is so great, that sometimes one cannot pass through the streets were they are'**. 60,000 visitors attended the rebuilt Somerset House in 1780.
- By the 1870s the 'Exhibition of the Works of Living Artists' came to be known as the Summer Exhibition. **The RA charged a shilling to keep out 'the noxious effluvia of the vulgar herd'** (newspaper report mentioned by BBC).
- Once set up, the Royal Academy controlled fine art in England from training to exhibiting. The exhibition was so popular that in **May, 1770 Horace Walpole** reported that **'The rage to see these exhibitions is so great, that sometimes one cannot pass through the streets were they are'**. 60,000 visitors attended the rebuilt Somerset House in 1780.

## ROYAL ACADEMY

- Founders: Sir William Chambers, architect, and friend of George III, Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Angelica Kaufmann, Mary Moser, George Michael Moser (father Mary Moser and goldsmith to George III), Thomas and Paul Sandby (brothers), Benjamin West and Richard Wilson. Johann Zoffany was added later. The open Annual Exhibition started in 1769 and 136 works were shown.
- It was originally housed in Pall Mall (1768-1771, 4 years), the Old Somerset House (1771-1780, 9 years), then New Somerset House (1780-1837, 57 years, designed by William Chambers), east wing National Gallery, Trafalgar Square (1837-1868, 31 years, designed by another RA William Wilkins) then Burlington House, Piccadilly (1868-today, 148 years). Burlington House façade was designed by Colin Campbell and extended in the 1873 by Sidney Smirke.

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- By the 1870s the 'Exhibition of the Works of Living Artists' came to be known as the Summer Exhibition. **The RA charged a shilling to keep out 'the noxious effluvia of the vulgar herd'** (newspaper report mentioned by BBC). I have not been able to find this quote but Chambers's Edinburgh Journal in 1853 lists many events that cost a shilling - exhibitions, lectures, the Zoological gardens, Cremorne Gardens, a single French, German or Italian lesson, singing, violin or flute lesson, a guide through the ruins of a castle or country house, charged by a fortune teller and paid by a 'simple servant girl', popular books for the railway, journals, music sheets, opera librettos, box of paints, notepaper. It is a morally respectable amount, we wait for change from a shilling but not for sixpence, and a half crown is a major transaction.
- From 1869 to 1878 average attendance was c. 300,000 (£15,000 at 1s entrance). From 1879, the first year of Leighton's Presidency, until 1899 average attendance was 355,000. There was a huge increase in numbers of works submitted from 136 in 1769, 6,415 in 1879 to 12,408 in 1896 (and 13,000 today).
- The instrument of foundation, signed by George III on 10 December 1768, named 34 founder members and allowed for a total membership of 40. The Royal Academy was founded in 1768 by Joshua Reynolds, John Baker, George Barret, Francesco Bartolozzi, Giovanni Battista Cipriani, Augustino Carlini, Charles Catton, Mason Chamberlin, William Chambers, Francis Cotes, George Dance, Nathaniel Dance, Thomas Gainsborough, John Gwynn, Francis Hayman, Nathaniel Hone the Elder, Angelica Kauffman, Jeremiah Meyer, George Michael Moser, Francis Milner Newton, Mary Moser, Edward Penny, John Inigo Richards, Thomas Sandby, Paul Sandby, Dominic Serres, Peter Toms, William Tyler, Samuel Wale, Benjamin West, Richard Wilson, Joseph Wilton, Richard Yeo, Francesco Zuccarelli. William Hoare and Johann Zoffany were added to this list later by the King and are known as nominated members. Among the founder members were two women, a

father and daughter, and two sets of brothers.

- The Royal Academy was initially housed in cramped quarters in Pall Mall, although in 1771 it was **given temporary accommodation for its library and schools in Old Somerset House**, then a royal palace. In 1780 it was installed in **purpose-built apartments in the first completed wing of New Somerset House**, located in the Strand and designed by Chambers, the Academy's first treasurer. The Academy moved **in 1837 to Trafalgar Square**, where it occupied the east wing of the recently completed National Gallery (designed by another Academician, William Wilkins). These premises soon proved too small to house both institutions. **In 1868, 100 years after the Academy's foundation, it moved to Burlington House**, Piccadilly, where it remains. Burlington House is owned by the British Government, and used rent-free by the Royal Academy.
- In England, it took much longer for an art academy supported by Royalty to be created. It was not until 1768 that George III was convinced that a Royal Academy should be created and this was only because it was **self-financing** from the entrance fee to the annual exhibition. It was at first housed in a building in **Pall Mall on the south-side facing Market Lane** (now the Royal Opera Arcade); the site is now occupied by the **Institute of Directors**. In 1771 it move to Old Somerset House in the Strand and when the site was redeveloped in 1780 it occupied the new building designed by William Chambers. In 1837 it moved to the east wing of the newly completed National Gallery in Trafalgar Square designed by William Wilkins (1778-1839, architect, classical scholar and archaeologist). In 1868 it moved to Burlington House in Piccadilly where it is remains today.
- The original aim was to establish 40 artists known as Royal Academicians (RA) and the following year the category of Associate Royal Academician (ARA) was introduced as a stepping stone. It was also agreed to hold an **annual exhibition known as the Summer Exhibition** and to open a **School for artists who would be taught by the RAs**. Its most important founding members were **Thomas Gainsborough, Joshua Reynolds, Angelica Kaufmann, Mary Moser, Paul Sandby, Benjamin West, Richard Wilson and Johann Zoffany**.

- In his fifteen Discourses given between 1769 and 1790 (21 years) Joshua Reynolds laid down the attributes of fine art. He stressed the importance of copying the Old Masters, and of drawing from casts after the Antique and from the life model. He argued that such a training would form artists capable of creating works of high moral and artistic worth and he endorsed the categories, or genres, of painting established by the French Academy.

## SOMERSET HOUSE

- Old Somerset House was partly designed by Inigo Jones and later Christopher Wren.
- **Edward Seymour**, Protector of Edward VI **built a residence on the site in 1547**. This required churches and chapels to be demolished which led to his imprisonment in the Tower although he was quickly released. It was finished in 1551 and cost £10,000. It had a courtyard and a Strand façade. The architect is not known but may have been **John Thynne**. Edward Seymour was arrested the year his house was completed and executed for treason in 1552.
- It was then **occupied by Princess Elizabeth** until her accession in 1558 when she moved to Whitehall and St. James and used it for council meetings and to house foreign diplomats.
- It became the **residence of the queen consort** which is why it was called **Denmark House after Anne of Denmark, wife of James I**. It became the centre of English social and artistic life. **Anne rebuilt it in 1609 to Inigo Jones's design** with nine arches to the Strand. The cost was **£34,500 the most ruinously expensive** exercise of James I's reign.
- **Charles 1** came to the throne in 1625 and his wife **Henrietta Maria of France**, a Roman Catholic, **extended the house** using Inigo Jones, John Webb and Nicholas Stone. Jones built the queen's Catholic chapel. Jones died at Somerset House in 1652.
- It was used as **General Fairfax's headquarters**. The **royal collection was gathered at Denmark House** in 1649 and sold in lots; some 1,760 pictures, including works by Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Correggio, Titian, Tintoretto, Holbein and Van Dyck, amongst others.

- Cromwell died in 1658 and was laid in state at Somerset House. John Evelyn records in his diary, 'It was the joyfulest funeral I ever saw; for there were none that cried but dogs...' because it meant the end of the strict puritan rule.
- Pepys records **Charles II** climbed the wall of Somerset House to **visit Frances Teresa Stewart** the Lady of the Bedchamber to Catherine of Braganza. She took up permanent residence in 1685 as Queen Dowager following Charles II's death and ordered major renovations. William and Mary restricted her Catholic servants and in 1693 she became Regent of Portugal and left England, the last queen to reside in the building.
- In the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was used as **grace and favour apartments** and for masked balls or masquerades, both private and public by subscription. The Guardian wrote, 'The being in disguise takes away the usual checks and restraints of modesty...' and one notorious society lady 'appeared as Iphigeneia for the sacrifice, but so naked the high priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim'!
- **From 1722 the Horse and the Foot Guards** used it and it **fell into disrepair**, Vanbrugh said it was the 'most out of repair' of all the royal palaces. George III agreed to **pull the palace down and Buckingham Palace took its place** as the official house for the queen. Demolition began in 1775. The **Royal Academy** was one of the last residents of the old and became one of the first of the new.
- **Buckingham House** was a large town house built for the **Duke of Buckingham in 1703**. It was **acquired by George III in 1761** (for £21,000) for **Queen Charlotte** and was known as the '**Queen's House**'. It was **enlarged** in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by **John Nash**. It became the **official palace** of the British Monarch on the accession of Queen Victoria in **1837**.
- James Pennethorne built the West wing extension of Somerset House, facing the entrance to Waterloo bridge, in 1849-56.
- Joseph Bazalgette built the embankment in 1864-70.

## BURLINGTON HOUSE

- **Piccadilly** was originally called the 'Road to Reading' and part of it was sold to a tailor called Robert Baker in 1611 and he sold

fashionable collars called **piccadills**, hence the modern name. It was then **a country lane** and some large country houses were built on the north side in the 17<sup>th</sup> century including **Sir John Denham in 1664**, red brick hipped roof. Sold to the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Burlington in 1667. **In 1704 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl built colonnades and a Baroque interior.** In **1717-8 it was restarted in the new strict Palladian style** with the interior **by William Kent.** Lord Burlington switched his energies to Chiswick House and it was sold in 1815 for £70,000 and changes made. Burlington Arcade was built in 1819.

- In **1854** it was **sold to the Government for £140,000** to be **demolished** as a site for the University of London but the **opposition meant** that in **1857 learned societies moved in including the Royal Academy in 1867.** It employed **Sidney Smirke** (Carlton Club, Pall Mall and reading room at British Museum) to build galleries on the gardens to the north and he added a third storey. The Piccadilly **frontage was added in 1873 by Charles Barry.**
- Five learned societies now occupy the site.



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

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

- This is the Royal Academy life drawing class but **what is odd about it?**
- **First the two female Academicians Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807) and Mary Moser (1744-1819) were never allowed in the life drawing class.** There was no rule against it but it would have been **too embarrassing for all concerned.** Instead they are represented by portraits on the righthand wall. **They were not even allowed to attend dinners or committee meetings or vote** even though the petition to the King included their signatures.
- **Secondly, only one Academician had a drawing instrument** and that is a self-portrait of Johan Zoffany holding a palette. The reason they don't need drawing instruments is that **they are having an intellectual dispute** about the classical pose the model should take or some other intellectual activity. The belief that painting is **not just a craft** but is a humanist endeavour that requires inspiration, creativity and knowledge, particularly of the classics, goes back to the Renaissance and is illustrated in this painting.
- This was painted in the same year, **1771, Mary Moser sent her first figure painting called 'Hebe'** so the question arises—where did she learn her life-drawing skill and who did she use as a model?

- Students at the Royal Academy started by drawing casts and only after this had been perfected were they allowed to draw in the life class. The 'Life' was considered the most important part of training in the Academy.
- Just left of centre are the two key founders Sir **William Chambers** (1723–96), architect and treasurer of the Academy and Sir **Joshua Reynolds** (1723–92), first President.
- **George Moser** (1706–83) is here setting the model's pose and holding the sling to support his hand in comfort.
- The final person to remember is **Richard Cosway** (1742–1821), a flattering portrait painter and famous dandy, here looking the part and denigrating the antique female torso by poking it with his cane.

## NOTES

- **Zoffany was a German painter active in England** and was one of the founding members of the Royal Academy and a court painter. He lived at Strand-on-the-Green and is buried at St Anne's Church, Kew near to Thomas Gainsborough. He is best known as '**the first and last Royal Academician to have become a cannibal**' as when he was shipwrecked when **returning from Lucknow in India** the survivors held a lottery in which the loser was eaten. Zoffany depicts himself far left at the bottom, the only artist holding the tools of the trade.
- Note the **working symbols, the classical casts and the simple use of packing cases as seats**. They are discussing the nude not drawing emphasising the key importance of the **intellectual element** of drawing or '**disegno**' as first defined by Renaissance artists in Florence.
- The model in the foreground **adopts the pose of Spinario**, a famous classical statue in which a boy pulss a thorn from the sole of his foot.
- The flames of the candles show Newton's spectrum of colours emphasising the scientific and technical in art and the pre-eminence of British intellect. The students sit at the semi-circular bench and each has an individual candle and there is one central light. There are two male models and various casts of bodies and body parts including a female torso bottom right into which an

Academician thrusts his cane.

- The other **oddy** is the **person from China**, fifth from the left (can you find him?), Tan-che-qua was visiting London and was not a member. Oliver Goldsmith, the RA Professor of Poetry wrote a series of letters supposedly written by a Chinaman visiting London.

## NOTES

- The other notable inclusion are the two portraits on the right of Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807) and Mary Moser (1744-1819). (Note, Moser's father George Moser was the Keeper and is seen posing the model). They were part of the original membership as they were well known competent artists. However, from the beginning, women were excluded from holding any office within the organisation and from assuming lectureships or attending life classes. After Kauffman and Moser died, the Royal Academy discouraged women from studying art in its school and failed to invite another woman painter to join until 1922, when Annie Louisa Swynnerton (1844-1933) achieved associate Royal Academy membership. The first full member was Laura Knight (1877-190, née Johnson) in 1936 170 years later. In 1843 a Female School of Art and Design was set up and part funded by the Academy and this discouraged women from joining the academy. In 1860, Laura Anne Herford was admitted to the Antique School by judges who did not know she was a woman as she used her initials. Soon after, a few more women artists were admitted including Louisa Starr who won medals in 1865 and 1867.
- Four male models held a pose for two hours at a time aided by a staff or, as seen, a rope. A female model sat three nights a week, every other week but were regarded with suspicion being regarded as no better than prostitutes. No unmarried men under 20 were permitted to draw the female nude. Women artists were not allowed to draw any nude until 1893 when the partly draped figure was introduced into a female life class. There is a full length drawing by Mary Moser of a standing female nude suggesting she may have had the opportunity, perhaps at St. Martin's Lane Academy where her father provided models (but it may have been copied). Kauffman copied drawings by other artists, casts of Classical sculpture and heads and limbs of clothed models.

- There were women prodigies, for example, Helen Beatson exhibited a picture in 1779 at the age of 11.
- **Footnote:** In the life class today is the **crucified cast of Joseph Legg**, an 80-year old Irishman who was hanged on 2 November 1801 and then while still warm crucified to show the academicians how a real corpse would hang. It was carried out by three academicians Benjamin West, Richard Cosway and Thomas Banks.

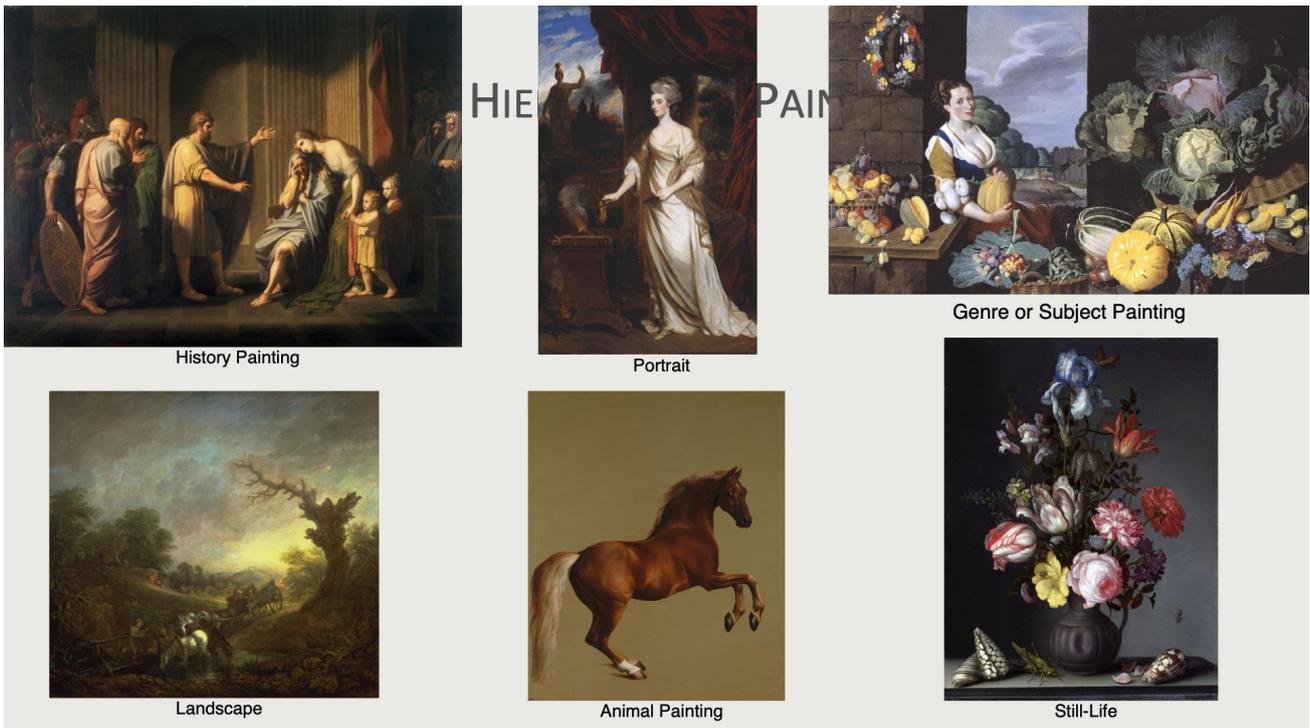
## KEY

Unless otherwise stated, artists are founder members of the Academy:

1. John Gwynn (1713–86), architect
2. Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727–85), painter
3. **Benjamin West** (1738–1820), given a posture resembling his heroic history paintings and derived from the standing figure at the left foreground of the School of Athens; given prominence as an artist favoured by the King
4. **Johan Zoffany**, as if introducing his work, made RA by royal nomination in 1769
5. Mason Chamberlin (1727–87), portrait painter
6. **Tan-che-qua**, Chinese artist visiting London
7. George Barret (1732–84), landscape painter
8. Joseph Wilton (1722–1803), sculptor
9. Jeremiah Meyer (1735–89), miniature painter
10. Dominic Serres (1719–93), marine painter
11. The brothers **Paul** (1725–1809)
12. and **Thomas** (1721–98) **Sandby**, behaving fraternally, the former wearing Windsor uniform, though the latter was Deputy Ranger of Windsor Great Park
13. William Tyler (1728 –1801), sculptor and architect
14. John Inigo Richards (1731 –1810), painter
15. Francis Hayman (1708–76), popular painter of the St Martin's Lane generation, resembling Falstaff from one of his own compositions

16. Francis Milner Newton (1720–94), painter
17. Sir **William Chambers** (1723–96), architect and treasurer of the Academy
18. Sir **Joshua Reynolds** (1723–92), first President
19. William Hunter (1718–83), famous surgeon and Professor of Anatomy at the Academy
20. Francesco Bartolozzi (1727–1815), engraver
21. Agostino Carlini (c.1718–90), sculptor and painter
22. **Richard Wilson** (1714–82), landscape painter; it was said that Zoffany painted and then removed a coat of arms of pipes and tankards to allude to Wilson's drunkenness
23. Charles Catton The Elder (1728–98), satirical painter appropriately adopting the pose of the Cynic, Diogenes, from Raphael's School of Athens
24. Richard Yeo (c.1720–79), medallist
25. Samuel Wale (1721–86), painter
26. Francesco Zuccarelli (1702–88), landscape painter given prominence as an artist favoured by the King
27. Edward Penny (1714–91), painter
28. Peter Toms (c.1728–77), painter
29. **George Michael Moser** (1706–83), enamellist and Keeper of the Academy, here setting the model's pose and holding the sling to support his hand in comfort
30. **Angelica Kauffmann** (1741–1807), history painter, represented as a portrait hanging on the wall, as it was considered improper for a woman to attend the life school
31. **Mary Moser** (1744–1819), flower painter, represented as a painting for the same reasons as the above
32. **Nathaniel Hone** (1718–84), famously arrogant portrait painter given here a suitable swagger; his shadow across a canvas perhaps alludes to the supposed origin of painting (a Corinthian maid tracing her lover's shadow)
33. Edward Burch (1730–1814), miniature painter and gem-cutter elected in 1771

34. **Joseph Nollekens** (1737–1823), sculptor elected in 1772
35. **Richard Cosway** (1742–1821), flattering portrait painter and famous dandy, here looking the part and perhaps denigrating the antique with his cane, elected in 1771
36. William Hoare (1707–92), portrait painter working in Bath



Benjamin West (1738-1820), *Cleombrotus Ordered into Banishment by Leonidas II, King of Sparta*, 1768, 138.4 × 185.4 cm, Tate

Joshua Reynolds, *Lady Talbot*, 1782, 234.3 × 146 cm, Tate Britain

Nathaniel Bacon (1585-1627), *Cookmaid with Still Life of Vegetables and Fruit*, c.1620-5, 151 × 247.5 cm, Tate Britain

Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), *Sunset: Carthorses Drinking at a Stream*, c.1760, 143.5 × 153.7 cm

George Stubbs (1724-1806), c. 1762, *Whistlejacket*, 296.1 × 248 cm, National Gallery

Balthasar van der Ast (1593/1594-1657), *Flowers in a Vase with Shells and Insects*, c. 1630, 47 × 36.8 cm, National Gallery

- Apologies to those who were here last week but this is a reminder.
- The **hierarchies of painting** sometimes called the hierarchy of genres. It was established in 16th century Italy that is during the Renaissance and it was refined by the French Academy. It **held sway for some 300 hundred years** and was formalised, reinforced and promoted by all the art academies across Europe. The hierarchy was:
  - **History painting**
  - **Portrait painting**
  - **Genre or Subject painting**
  - **Landscapes and cityscapes**
  - **Animal painting**
  - **Still life**
- All artists and connoisseurs at this time would have instantly categorised each type of painting within the strict hierarchy. The

hierarchy reflected a Platonic belief in idealism over realism. The lowest category, still life, was regarded as a 'mechanical copying of a particular appearance' whereas history painting rendered visible the universal essence of things and their most noble and uplifting spirit.

- A history painting required a detailed knowledge of anatomy which was impossible for a woman artist to learn as they were barred from life drawing classes as we shall see in the next painting. History painting also required a detailed knowledge of classical literature as the artist had to capture the exact moment and the feelings captured in the faces to express the noble thoughts that would elevate the painting beyond a mere mechanical painting of models.
- The hierarchy arose from **philosophical debates** about the relative importance of painting with respect to poetry, sculpture and architecture as intellectual activities. Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, and Giorgio Vasari were all concerned and debated the question. During the Renaissance landscape, genre scenes and still lifes hardly existed as established genres, and so the debate was with respect to history including biblical subjects compared to portraits.
- The new genres of landscape, genre painting, animal painting and still-life developed during the 17th century, with the virtual cessation of religious painting in Protestant countries, and the expansion of picture buying by the prosperous middle class. The hierarchy was extended in 1667 by André Félibien, a historiographer, architect and theoretician of French classicism and this became the classic statement of the theory for the 18th century as shown here.
- (CLICK) ***Cleombrotus Ordered into Banishment by Leonidas II, King of Sparta*** concerns an incident from ancient Greek history. Leonidas, king of Sparta, was usurped by his son-in-law, Cleombrutus. When Leonidas returns looking for revenge, his daughter pleads for her husband's life. Leonidas is moved by her tears, and commutes Cleombrutus's death sentence to banishment.
- (CLICK) Next down the hierarchy was **portrait painting**. This is by the first President of the Royal Academy. **Who was it by?** Yes, **Joshua Reynolds**. Reynolds tried to elevate portraits to a type of history painting by giving his portraits a classical setting.
- (CLICK) The third type was called **genre or subject painting**. It had to contain one or more people but it was not a portrait. The

people were there to set the scene or tell a story but it might be humorous not elevating and noble. It was painted, unusually by a nobleman, **Nathaniel Bacon** (1585–1627), and is the first subject painting in the history of English art and it is in Tate Britain.

- (CLICK) The final three categories were rarely painted during the Renaissance. There was **landscape painting** which might contain humans but only as part of the landscape. Such human additions are called staffage, merely human or animal accessories. **Who knows this painting?** It is by **Thomas Gainsborough** another contemporary of Angelica Kauffman.
- (CLICK) Fifth down the hierarchy was **animal painting**. Animals were admired for their beauty or they could represent human emotions. **Who knows this painting?** It is **Whistlejacket** by **George Stubbs**. The audacious plain background said to be the idea of the owner the Marquess of Rockingham created a stir and challenged the hierarchy of painting and the lowly place of animal painting.
- (CLICK) Finally, the type of painting Mary Moser specialised in. Still-life could be elevating as there was a type of still-life called **memento mori**, literally '**remember you have to die**'. Such painting might contain a skull or perhaps a wilting flower. This is a Dutch flower painting from the previous century by **Balthasar van der Ast**. Note the insects, more about why flower painting became popular next week.
- All artists and connoisseurs at this time would have **instantly categorised** each type of painting within the **strict hierarchy**. The hierarchy reflected a **Platonic belief in idealism over realism**. Copying something from nature realistically was regarded as a basic skill that anyone could acquire with training. The lowest category, **still life**, was regarded as a '**mechanical copying of a particular appearance**' whereas **history painting rendered visible the universal essence** of things and their most **noble and uplifting spirit**.

## NOTES

- The hierarchy arose from **philosophical debates** about the relative importance of painting with respect to poetry, sculpture and architecture as intellectual activities. **Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci, and Giorgio Vasari** were all concerned and debated the question. During the Renaissance landscape, genre scenes and still lifes hardly existed as established genres, and so

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- The new genres of landscape, genre painting, animal painting and still-life developed during the 17th century, with the virtual cessation of religious painting in Protestant countries, and the expansion of picture buying by the prosperous middle class. **The hierarchy was extended in 1667 by André Félibien, a historiographer, architect and theoretician of French classicism** and this became the classic statement of the theory for the 18th century as shown here.
- **Whistlejacket**—One of the most important British paintings of the eighteenth century, Whistlejacket is probably the most well-known portrait of a horse. It is also widely acknowledged to be George Stubb's masterpiece. The Arabian chestnut stallion had won a famous victory at York in 1759, but by 1762 had been retired from racing. He belonged to the **2nd Marquess of Rockingham**, who commissioned Stubbs to paint a commemorative life-size portrait of his prize horse on a **scale that was more appropriate for a group portrait or historical painting**.
- **Lady Talbot**—this is a full-length, life-size portrait of a contemporary female aristocrat which was originally exhibited as '**Portrait of a Lady**' but which we now know was Lady Talbot. It was commissioned by her husband the **1st Earl Talbot** as a companion to **his portrait painted by Pompeo Batoni** when he on the **Grand Tour**. The statue in the background is **Minerva the goddess of wisdom and strength** and it gives the painting a **classical dimension**. Lord Talbot had a classical sculpture known as the **Ludovisi Mars** (in the national Museum, Rome) representing martial values. Typically, the man wears **contemporary dress** while, as here, his wife wears a more **playful historicising fancy dress**.

## NON-FLOWER PAINTINGS BY MARY MOSER

1. Hebe, 1772
2. The Muse Erato, 1774
3. Venus and Cupid, 1776
4. Girl making a Garland, 1777
5. Belphaebe (Spenser's "Fairy Queen,"), 1778
6. A Gentleman
7. A Young Gentleman
8. Contemplation
9. Theseus finding his father's sword and sandals (Plutarch), 1783
10. Medora and Angelica (Ariosto)
11. Portrait of a Gentleman
12. Aminia (Tasso), 1784
13. Atalanta and Hippomenes (Ovid), 1788
14. Cymon and Iphigenia (Dryden), 1789
15. Proserpine gathering Flowers (Ovid), 1790
16. A Landscape, 1792
17. Scene from the "Mysteries of Udolpho," 1798
18. The Priest of Bacchus stabs himself

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Standing female nude*, black and white chalk on grey-green paper, 49 × 30.2cm, Fitzwilliam Gallery



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Standing female nude*, black and white chalk on grey-green paper, 49 × 30.2cm, Fitzwilliam Gallery

- We think of Mary Moser as a flower painter but she painted a number of works including the following list. The works are listed in the Royal Academy catalogues and the periodicals of the period but sadly they are nearly all lost and only one of her sketches remains. Perhaps you should look in your attic.
- So Mary Moser did paint portraits and history paintings. (CLICK) We don't know how she was trained but the speculation was that her father obtained models for her and chaperoned her while she drew. Few sketches remain.

## MARY MOSER'S NON-FLOWER PAINTINGS

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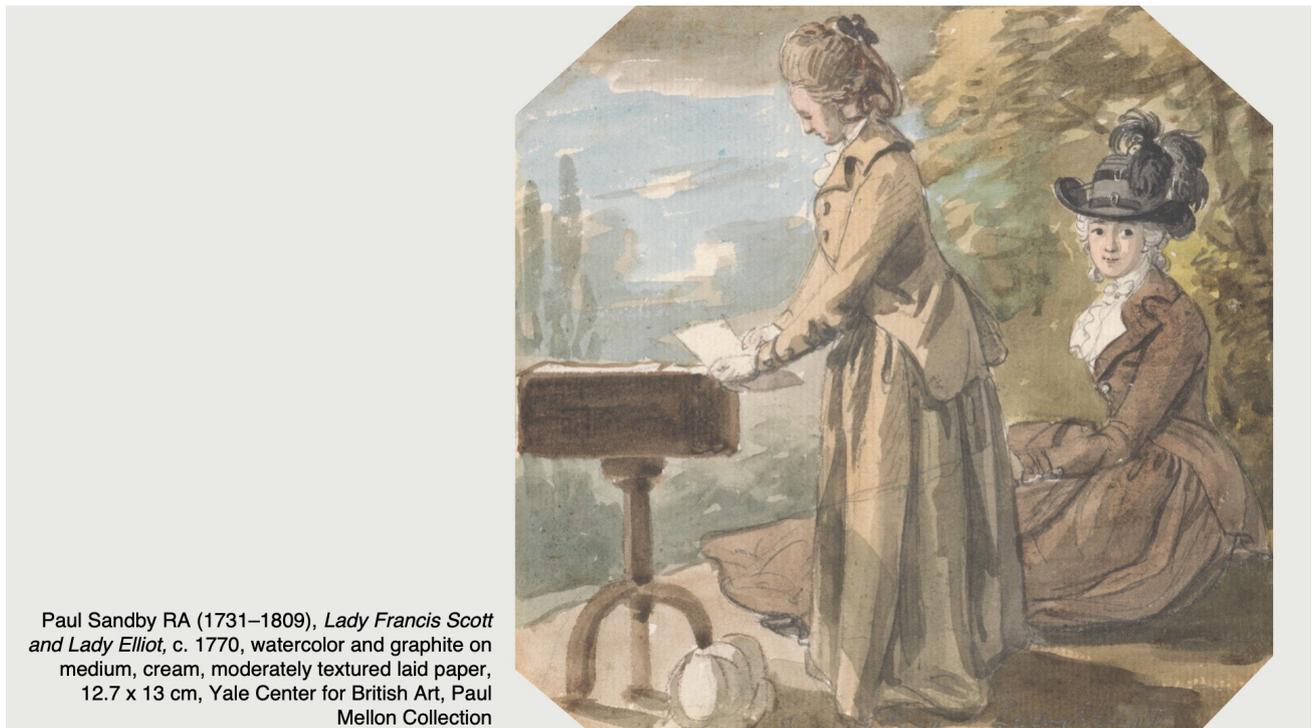
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17. Scene from the "Mysteries of Udolpho," 1798

18. The Priest of Bacchus stabs himself



Paul Sandby RA (1731–1809), *Lady Francis Scott and Lady Elliot*, c. 1770, watercolor and graphite on medium, cream, moderately textured laid paper, 12.7 x 13 cm, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Inscribed in graphite, bottom center: "Lady Scott, Lady Elliott"; inscribed in graphite, verso, lower left: "Lady Elliott"; in graphite, verso, lower right: "L[...] Francis Doylan"

- A note about the difficulties faced by women artists, which I spoke about last week. It is always assumed that prior to the late eighteenth century **women did not engage in art unless** their father was an artist and they were unusually accomplished. However, this is defining art as **professional public art** and it **ignores private art**.
- **Wealthy women were typically taught by men**, for example, **George Stubbs** painted the Wedgwood family portrait in 1779 and taught their seven children including four daughters. **Paul Sandby** (1725/31–1809) was a popular drawing master who specialised in landscapes and topography and he probably tutored Lady Frances Scott, and in about 1780 he depicted her in riding costume, sketching a scene outdoors with the help of a **camera obscura**.
- The sphere of **professional art was defined by and dominated by men**, in fact dominate is too weak a word, **men totally owned** professional art. Women could not attend the few art schools that existed and that meant they could not develop their skill in life

drawing, the basis of what was regarded as the 'higher' forms of art. Women were not expected to work at all but to look after the home and life drawing, which involved intensively observing the nude, typically male, figure which was completely forbidden by the rules of social decorum. As we saw last week **Angelica Kauffman** was an exception and amazingly she became one of the most famous artists in Europe for history painting, the highest genre. History painting required a classical education which women were **thought to be unable to master** and such studies were not included in their education. 'High' art was seen as an intellectual activity that was beyond the capability of a woman and so such education was seen as pointless.

- If a woman did acquire artistic skill that enabled her to sell her work then **once she married** she would have to **stop selling** her work as it was regarded as an insult to her husband. **Mary Beale is another interesting exception** to this but the occasional exception was accepted by society as a freak occurrence.
- However, **from the 1670s** (the Restoration period) to the 1820s **elite women and even some women of the middling-sort were expected to be able to sketch, draw and paint** to the extent that they would feel deprived if prevented. Mary Fox-Strangeways Talbot ([1], p. 329) was given a complete watercolour and body colour painting set as a wedding present and she would later grind pigments and make paint with her children. **Almost every document on women's lives between 1670 and 1820 describes the pride educated women felt in their ability to draw and in particular to paint well.** What they painted was often portraits, sometimes copied and sometimes from life.
- We **might regard amateur art as a lesser form of art but this is a mistake** if the artist is prevented from painting. A significant proportion of such women artists would have been **highly skilled** yet their work was not treated as such except in private correspondence and most of their work is **now lost**.

## WOMEN ARTIST WHO WORKED IN ENGLAND PRIOR TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

**Susannah Hornebolt** (1503-1554), taught by Flemish father, first known woman artist in England

**Levina Teerlinc** (née Bening, Flemish, 1510s-1576), father taught her, miniaturist to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I

**Joan Carlisle** (née Palmer, English, 1606-79), self-taught, first British-born woman professional portrait painter

**Mary Beale** (née Cradock, English, 1633-1699), father was an amateur painter and may have taught her

**Susan Penelope Rosse** (née Gibson, English, 1652-1700), learnt from father, portrait miniatures

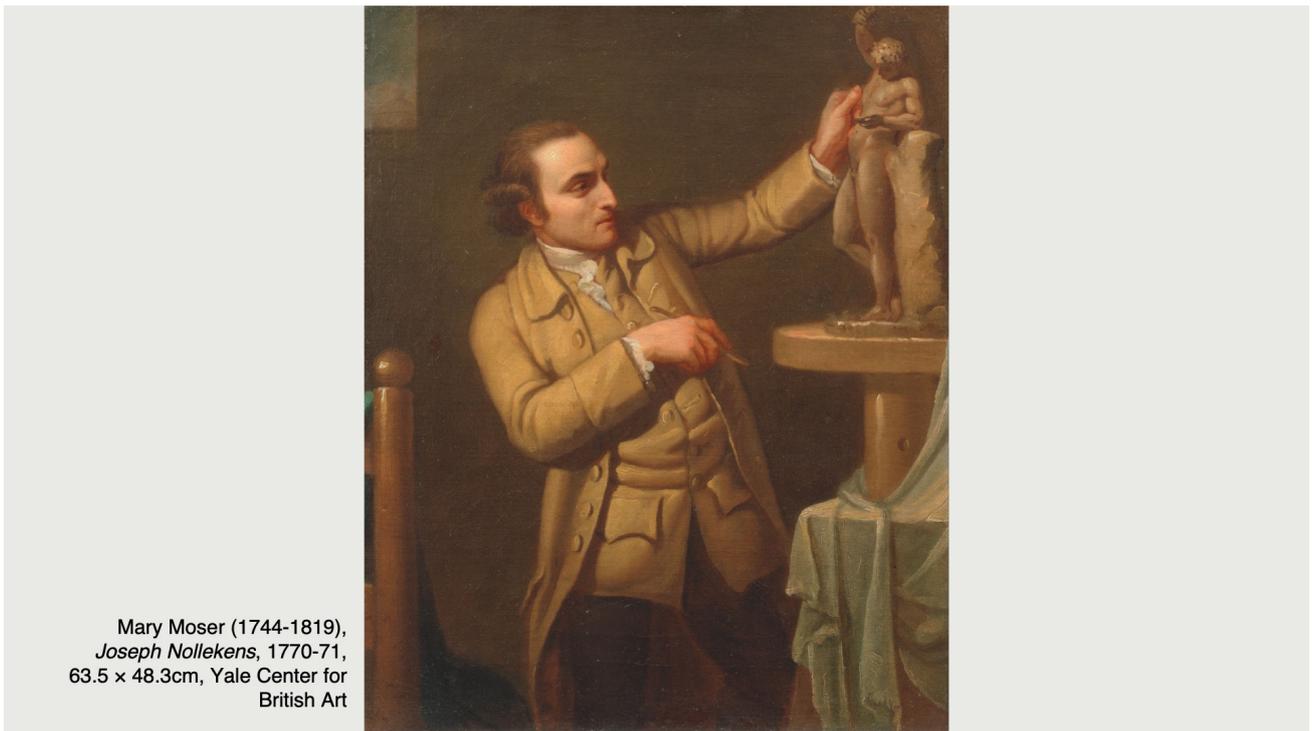
**Anne Killigrew** (English, 1660-1685), "A Grace for beauty, and a Muse for wit.", died smallpox aged 25

**Angelica Kauffman** (1741-1807), worked in England for 14 years

**Mary Moser** (English, 1744-1819), taught by father George Moser

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Mary Moser (1744-1819),  
*Joseph Nollekens*, 1770-71,  
63.5 × 48.3cm, Yale Center for  
British Art

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Joseph Nollekens*, 1770-71, 63.5 × 48.3cm, Yale Center for British Art

- This is **one of the few Mary Moser non-flower paintings** that remains. **Joseph Nollekens** (1737-1823) was considered to be the **finest British sculptor** of the late 18th century. He was born in Soho, London, the son of a Flemish painter. He studied first in London and then in Rome. When he returned in 1770 he set up as a maker of busts in Mortimer Street where he built up a large practice. He produced **busts of George III, William Pitt the Younger, Charles James Fox** and many other famous figures. He became an Associate Academician in 1771 and a **full Academician** the following year. He **made a fortune** and left around £200,000 in his will. His biography describes him as a 'grotesque miser'.

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Mary Moser, aged 14, Decorative flower painting, 1759

Mary Moser, aged 14, Decorative flower painting, 1759

- I have been emphasising a little known aspect of Mary Moser's talent, her portraits and history painting. However, she is **best known now and then as a flower painter**.
- She painted this flower study 11 years before the Royal Academy was founded **when she was 14**. It shows her skill but I first want to explain why flower painting was so popular.
- Flower painting originated as a branch of still-life in the Netherlands during the early seventeenth century. The advantage for women artists was that it was generally small size and it required no knowledge of anatomy. Flowers were also considered more appropriate for women to paint rather than half-naked gods.
- Flower painting as carried out by Mary Moser arose out of the **symbolic associations of flowers**, such as a lily to represent the Virgin Mary or in a **vanitas painting to refer to the brevity of life**. Flower paintings were painted for a **cultivated audience** initially in the Northern and Spanish Netherlands reflecting an aspect of the home and everyday life. Flowers from different countries were combined as a reference to the **spread of Dutch trade around the globe**. (Painters such as Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder, Balthasar van der Ast, Roelandt Savery, and Jacob Vosmaer often referred to

herbals and other botanical texts when composing “bouquets”.) For wealthy clients the flowers were a **reference to their private gardens** and their **rare specimens from around the world**. Flower specimens that often cost more than the paintings.

- But flower painting has a long history before that...

## NOTES

- Flower paintings were particularly **popular in Antwerp** and Jan Brueghel the Elder and younger were leading artists in the genre.
- The so-called '**tulip mania**' took place in the mid-1630s and prices collapsed in 1637. A single bulb could **cost five times the cost of an average house** at the height of the mania.
- In the 1650s and 60s still-lives of fruit and vegetables became popular in Amsterdam by such artists as Van Beyeren and Willem Kalf and they often included expensive Chinese porcelain and Venetian glassware.
- "In these works and later flower pictures by De Heem, Willem van Aelst, Rachel Ruysch, and the highly influential Jan van Huysum, the emphasis upon aesthetic appeal and decorative function evident in almost all still-life painting is more conspicuous than ever before."
- **By 1700 it is hard to distinguish Dutch, Flemish, German and French still-lives.**
- Between 1780 and 1810 many French women artists achieved considerable commercial success even though they were barred from life drawing classes. "Three of the Académie's four female members—Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749–1803), Anne Vallayer-Coster (1744–1818), and Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842)—regularly exhibited at the biennial Salons." Their patrons were often royal women, in particular Queen Marie Antoinette and Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire, the powerful daughters of King Louis XV. Vallayer-Coster painted portraits and scenes from everyday life but was chiefly admired for her flower paintings.
- "Although many critics applauded their new prominence, others lamented the immodesty of women who would display their skills so publicly. Indeed, pamphleteers frequently conflated the exhibition of these women's paintings with the display of their bodies, and they were hounded by salacious rumours."

- During the French Revolution Vigée Le Brun and Vallayer-Coster fled the country and joined royal courts in England and Russia.
- One of the most successful flower painters was Rachel Ruysch. Her paintings commanded high prices—considerably higher than Rembrandt's and she became an international celebrity.
- **"In England the genre's principal exponent was Mary Moser,** the only woman apart from Angelica Kauffman to be elected as a founder member of the Royal Academy. Although she became one of the century's most celebrated British women artists, she is virtually unknown today. Ambitious and clever, she was 'so nearsighted, that her nose when she was painting was within an inch of the canvas'. Ignoring exotic imported species, she painted the sort of flowers that would be found in an English garden. Her most important work was a complex floral scheme for Frogmore House, Windsor, commissioned by Queen Charlotte, for which she was paid the princely sum of £900 (equivalent to about £55,000 today)." (Chapman, Caroline. *Eighteenth-Century Women Artists*, Unicorn Publishing Group. Kindle Edition)
- Frieze "Bow Down!", episode 6 Angelica Kauffman, Mary Moser. By Shahidha Bari and Jennifer Higgin editor of *frieze*. No access to male models. Kauffman paints herself, see NPG self-portrait wearing Grecian dress to show she, like them, is a master. Holding a portfolio. Hazel, lucid eyes. She also calls herself an allegory see *Design* painting a naked male torso, one of four ceiling paintings in the ceiling of the RA building. Sleeves rolled up to upper arm.



Fragment of a Tomb Painting with Seated Woman Holding a Lotus, Unknown, ca. 1539-1425 B.C.E., From the collection of: Brooklyn Museum

Fragment of a Tomb Painting with Seated Woman Holding a Lotus, Unknown, ca. 1539-1425 B.C.E., From the collection of: Brooklyn Museum

- Flower painting has always been a popular subject. The **earliest paintings of flowers are from Ancient Egypt** and the earliest flower was the **lotus**. The lotus was an important flower as the Egyptians believed that at the beginning **the world was covered in water** and from the water a **single lotus flower rose and opened to reveal the sun and/or the sun god Atum**. It was associated with healing and spiritual rebirth as it rises each day and opens and in the evening closes and sinks beneath the water.

## NOTES

The New Kingdom was 1550-1069 BC (Shaw, 2000) and included the 18th to 20th dynasties. With the end of the New Kingdom, Egypt lost much of the power, prestige and domination that she had enjoyed earlier.

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Frescoed Wall from the House of Livia, c. 1st century BCE, mural painting, National Museum Rome

- This is not a comprehensive analysis of flower painting through the ages. I am just picking out some key works to show that flowers have played an important role in many cultures.
- In **ancient Rome around 50BC to 50AD** the representation of the natural world was used to decorate the walls of their dining rooms. The flora and fauna were depicted in such detail that species can still be identified. These are the frescoes from the dining room of the house of **Livia Drusilla wife of the Emperor Augustus in Prima Porta**, a suburb 12km north of Rome.

## NOTES

- "An 1863 excavation of the house of Livia Drusilla (58 BCE–29 CE), wife of the Emperor Augustus, in the Roman suburb of Prima Porta uncovered a series of four magnificent frescoes decorating the walls of an underground triclinium, or dining room. These illusionistic wall paintings are filled with images of exotic birds and a variety of flowers, plants, and trees. The flora and fauna were, in fact, depicted in such great detail that scholars have been able to identify many of the species represented. " (<https://www.learner.org/series/art-through-time-a-global-view/the-natural-world/frescoed-wall-from-the-house-of-livia/> )



South Netherlandish, 'The Falcon's Bath', c. 1400–1415, 349.3 × 369.6 cm, Met Museum

South Netherlandish, 'The Falcon's Bath', c. 1400–1415, 349.3 × 369.6 cm, Met Museum

- Flowers were also found in medieval art including illuminated manuscripts and tapestries such as this one. These **millefleurs** (French, 'mill-a-fler', literally 'a thousand flowers') tapestries refer to the background of different small flowers and plants usually on a green background as if growing in grass.
- Millefleur tapestries are restricted to the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, from about **1400 to 1550**, but mainly about 1480–1520. The style had a **notable revival** by **Morris & Co. in 19th century** England, being used on original tapestry designs, as well as illustrations from his Kelmscott Press publications.

## NOTES

- "This **recently discovered tapestry** depicting courtly figures training a falcon is in remarkably good condition. At the center of the tapestry, four luxuriously dressed figures are gathered in front of a rose trellis and flowering turf bench. The lady and the gentleman in the foreground, attended by courtiers behind them, are encouraging the falcon to bathe in the basin of water between them. Four additional figures at the corners, set against a flowering, or millefleurs ground, are also busy training falcons." (Met)

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Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510), *La Primavera (Spring)*, 1482, tempera on panel, 203 x 314 cm, Uffizi

- This is primavera by Botticelli, "**one of the most written about, and most controversial paintings in the world**", and also "**one of the most popular paintings in Western art**".
- This pastoral scenery is an **elaborate celebration of Spring**. On the **far right is Zeyphrus**, the biting wind of March, who transformed the **nymph Chloris into Flora**, the goddess of Spring, who we see next to her. In the **middle is Venus with Cupid** above her and to the left of her the **Three Graces dancing**. On the **far left is Mercury** raising his messenger's staff towards some misty clouds.
- There are **500 identified plant species depicted** in the painting, with about 190 different flowers, of which at least 130 can be specifically identified. The overall appearance, and size, of the painting is similar to that of the millefleur ("thousand flower") Flemish tapestries that were popular decorations for palaces at the time.

## NOTES

- The controversy surrounds both its origin, its patron, its purpose and in particular its meaning. Some say it is an **allegory of fertility** and other a **celebration of love** and was **commissioned by Lorenzo de' Medici** as a **wedding gift** for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici.

The wedding was originally to be in May but was delayed to July because of the death of Lorenzo de'Medici's mother.

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Mary Moser, *Botanical studies of Variegated Tulips*, 1764-1800, watercolour, V&A

'The Language of Flowers', printed by Alfred Stiebel & Co around 1910

Van Gogh, *Sunflowers*, National Gallery

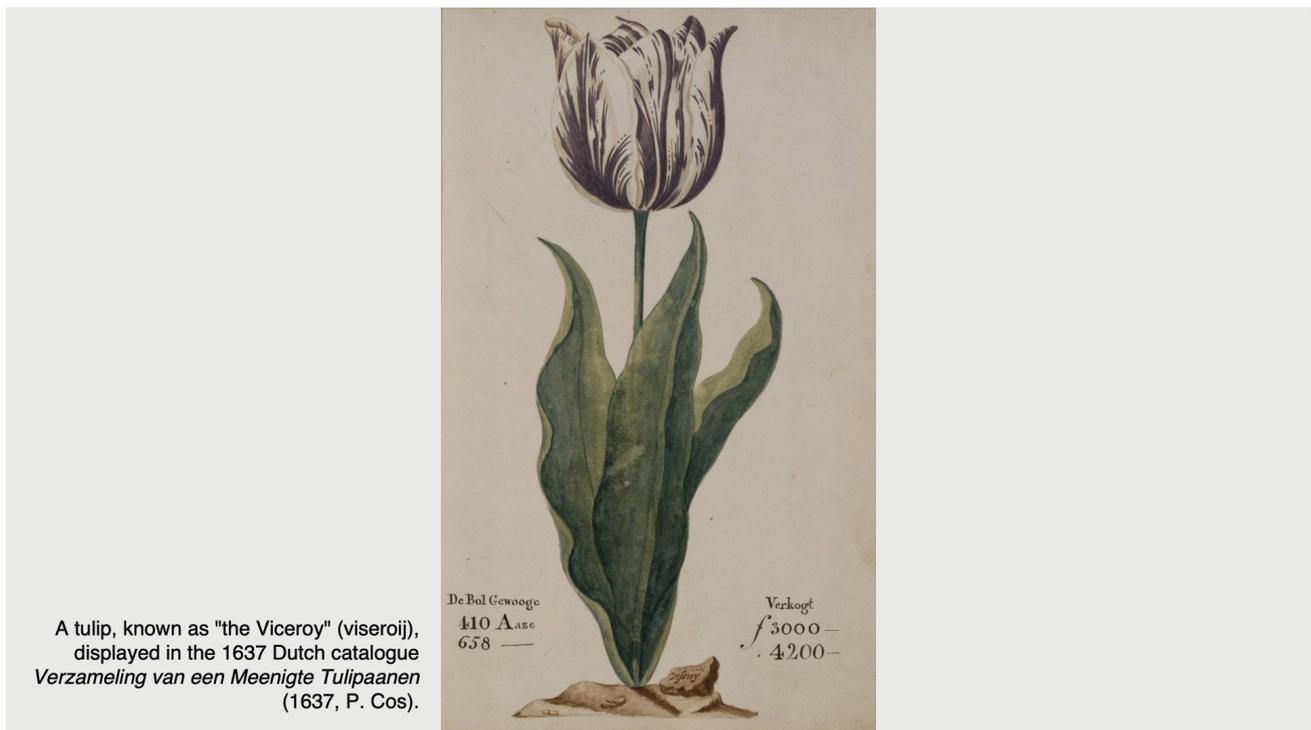
Claude Monet (1840–1926), *Le Jardin de l'artiste à Giverny* (The artist's garden at Giverny), 1900, 81.3 × 92.6 cm, Musée d'Orsay

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Oriental Poppies*, 1927, Weisman Art Museum

- I have **skipped over Dutch flower painting** which I will return to next but I first wanted to point out that flower painting has continued until the present day.
- There were also botanical illustrations and these are two botanical studies by Mary Moser of variegated tulips. She became a skilled and recognised botanist and illustrator of botanical specimens.
- This embossed postcard titled '**The Language of Flowers**' shows **18 different flowers** and their symbolic meaning. The postcard decodes 'The Language of Flowers', a Victorian idea where each variety of flower on a card conveyed a particular sentiment. It was printed by Alfred Stiebel & Co around 1910. **Complex messages could be sent** in the Victorian period based on the symbolic meanings found in books of flowers. Having looked at a number of Victorian books that gave the meaning of flowers I found there are two problems—each flower

had multiple meanings and each book gave slightly different meanings so if you were not careful you could be sending completely the wrong message.

- Possibly the most famous flower paintings **Van Gogh's *Sunflowers***, the Impressionists and flower gardens including this work by **Claude Monet** and into the twentieth century with this work by **Georgia O'Keefe**.
- But the flower paintings of Mary Moser follow on from the tradition of Dutch flower painting...



A tulip, known as "the Viceroy" (viseroij), displayed in the 1637 Dutch catalogue *Verzameling van een Meenigte Tulipaanen* ('Tulip Catalogue', 1637, P. Cos).

- **One hundred and fifty years before Mary Moser was painting flowers was the time of 'tulip mania'** when a single Viceroy tulip bulb was worth upwards of **five times the cost of an average house** at the time ([1] Thompson, 2007, p. 100).
- This illustration is from a bulb catalogue where a single bulb of the Viceroy was offered for sale for between 3,000 and 4,200 guilders (florins) depending on the weight ('gewooge'). A skilled craftsman at the time earned about 300 guilders a year.
- The Dutch tulip bulb market bubble was one of the most famous market bubbles and crashes of all time. It occurred in Holland during the early to mid-1600s when speculation drove the value of tulip bulbs to extremes. At the height of the bubble, **tulips sold for approximately 10,000 guilders**, equal to the value of a mansion on the Amsterdam Grand Canal. People **did not think tulip bulbs were worth that much** but they **saw people making a fortune buying and then selling bulbs a week later** as prices shot up. You didn't even need to have the cash as you could buy 'futures' for a fraction of the price, that is a promise to buy at an agreed price a future date. You bet on when that date arrived you could sell the bulb the same day and use the money to pay for the bulb.

- Tulips were introduced to Holland in 1593 with the bubble occurring primarily from **1634 to 1637**.
- Recent scholarship has questioned the extent of the tulipmania, suggesting it **may have been exaggerated as a parable of greed and excess**.<sup>[2]</sup><sup>[3]</sup>

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Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625),  
*Flowers in a Wooden Vessel*, 1606 -  
1607, oil on wood, 980 × 730 cm,  
Kunsthistorisches Museum



Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625), *Flowers in a Wooden Vessel*,  
1606 - 1607, oil on wood, 980 × 730 cm,

Kunsthistorisches Museum

- **Dutch flower painting were bought as an enduring substitutes for the real thing.** They were renowned for their **accuracy and life-like appearance** and as a reminder of the **wealth and global reach** of the Dutch Empire. They also had a **religious significance** as they glorified God's natural world and flowers reminded the viewer of the **transience of earthly existence**, in other words they were a form of **memento mori**, Latin for '**remember that you [have to] die**'.
- (CLICK) Many flower paintings are **full of insects**—flies, beetles, ladybirds, caterpillars, moths and butterflies and even lizards and mice. Sometimes the **blossoms are damaged** by the creatures. They **signified scientific wonder**, a curiosity about the natural world which was seen as **God's glorious creation**. In Holland, **Antonie van Leeuwenhoek's** ('Anthony van ler-when-hock') experiments with lenses and **microscopes opened up a new world** for scientific study and the representation of this tiny world expanded the view of God's work on Earth.
- In summary:
  1. Substitute for the real thing, **the record of a luxury object**
  2. Celebration of the **Dutch Empire** and trade

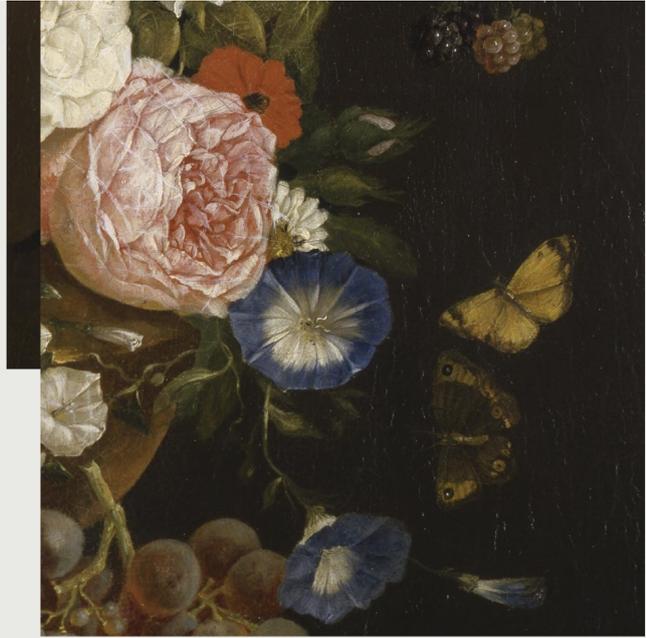
3. A scientific wonder as seen through **Antonie van Leeuwenhoek's** ('Anthony van Leeuwenhoek') experiments with lenses and **microscopes which opened up a new world**
4. **Masterpieces of illusion**, a demonstration of the skill of the artist through accurate, almost photographic representation
5. **Demonstration of taste and wealth** of the owner
6. Glorification of God's natural world and flowers as a '**moral signpost from God**'
7. **Memento mori**

## NOTES

- ***Dutch Flower Painting 1600-1720*** "At the time of the great tulip speculation of the 1630s in Holland, the most desirable tulip bulbs were auctioned for more money than the most expensive houses in Amsterdam. At the same time flower paintings which were remarkable for their apparent realism were produced all over Holland and purchased by Dutch families as enduring substitutes for the real thing. ... Paul Taylor begins by discussing Holland's '**tulipomania**' and its effect on the way people thought about floral still lifes. He then considers the **religious messages associated with the flower paintings, exploring how religious writers spoke of flowers as moral signposts from God and how some flower paintings were meant to remind viewers of the transience of earthly existence.** Flower paintings were not bought only as records of luxury objects or for moral edification, however. They were also enjoyed as works of art, as **masterpieces of illusion**, composition and colour harmony, so Taylor analyses the art-theoretical writings of the time in order to understand how artists and connoisseurs responded to flower pieces. He concludes by analysing the paintings themselves, tracing the development and refinement of the actual practice of flower painting." [1]

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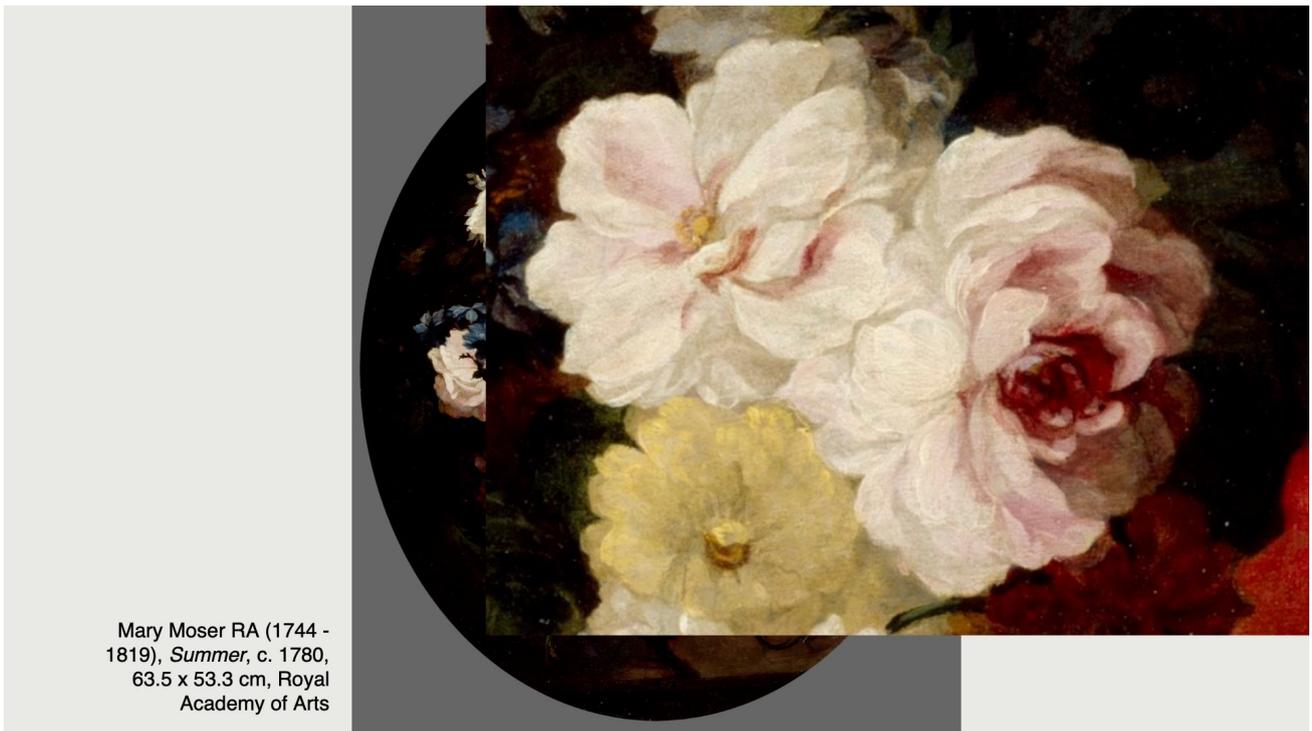
Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Vase of Flowers*, n.d., 72.1 × 53.6cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *Vase of Flowers*, n.d., 72.1 × 53.6cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

- Remember that it was **over 150 years later** that Mary Moser was painting flowers.
- "**Moser's flower paintings are less a celebration of the wonders of God's creation as a careful observation of nature.** Flowers were a favourite subject as far as consumers were concerned. London **printsellers sold countless decorative flower prints**, depicting them in baskets, vases, or tied in bouquets. Flower art was also used in pattern books providing **templates for ladies to copy for embroidery or for glass painting**. Drawings of flowers were also used for Japan work and were copied onto undecorated white china. By the latter part of the eighteenth century, drawing masters specialising in teaching this type of art were much in demand, and **many women who had given up flower painting on their marriage found it a useful means of financial support, but it was always uncredited.**"  
(<https://juliaherdman.com/2017/05/10/history-of-women-in-art-mary-moser-founding-member-of-londons-royal-academy/>)
- Moser's flower paintings are remarkable and she **became a skilled botanist** and a specialist in the seventeenth century tradition of botanical painting.

## NOTES

- Some insects were included for their symbolic value, such as the butterfly to represent the resurrection of the body at the Last Judgement and ants to symbolise industry and diligence. However, such associations can be over stated.
- Porcelain was also much included by Dutch painters as it was expensive and highly fashionable. From about 1620 Dutch merchants were importing over 100,000 pieces a year. From about 1640 trade from China was disrupted and manufacturers in Delft began to produce their own blue and white 'Chinese' designs.
- Another common item in Dutch paintings were exotic shells. The collecting of shells reached a similar pitch to that of tulips and 'shell lunatics' were mocked along with 'tulip manics'. There were a sign of the beauty of God's creation as well as signifying wealth.



Mary Moser RA (1744 - 1819), *Summer*, c. 1780, 63.5 x 53.3 cm, Royal Academy of Arts

Mary Moser RA (1744 - 1819), *Summer*, c. 1780, 63.5 x 53.3 cm, Royal Academy of Arts, donated by Mary Moser RA c. 1780

- This is *Summer*. The summer flowers are roses, at the heart of the composition, a poppy, slightly shaded to the right of centre, and a carnation, more shaded, at the top right.
- Dutch artists **hide their brushstrokes** to appear more realistic. This was known as *fijnschilder* ('fines-hilder') or fine painter. (CLICK) **Moser allows her brushstrokes to remain visible** and we can see how she developed a technique for creating the illusion of for example a petal with a single or a few brushstrokes over the base or ground colour.



Mary Moser RA (1744 - 1819), *Spring*, c. 1780, 63.5 x 53.3 cm, Royal Academy of Arts

Mary Moser RA (1744 - 1819), *Spring*, c. 1780, 63.5 x 53.3 cm, Royal Academy of Arts, donated by Mary Moser RA c. 1780

- Notice here the **highlight on the vase**. It consists of a few lines of light colour with no attempt to blend them together. However, we do not notice, as the brain constructs a reflection. Moser was creating the impression of a vase of flowers and the mind does the rest.
- "Moser's vase is all full of British **plants that flower in the spring**. Celebrated **17th-century Dutch artists** created vases of impossible luxury by gathering species from multiple continents and of **various blooming seasons in one painting**, but Moser chose to faithfully reflect a British springtime in a careful observation of nature."
- Enlargements of (CLICK) Tulips, (CLICK) Narcissi and (CLICK) Auricula (related to the primula)
- "The academic Shahidha Bari wrote of Moser's flower paintings: "There is a **melancholy to cut flowers...** They **bloom quickly and die continually**, their exuberant illusion of life rudely dispelled over the course of a week... That **moment of overripeness**, the **fulsome, florid, blowsy display that comes just before the decay...** **Mary Moser certainly knew it.**" In this painting, the wilting flowers in the background quietly hint at the decay soon to come."

## NOTES

- "Moser got her early artistic training from her father, the artist George Michael Moser. Opportunities for girls to attend art school were limited, so aspiring female artists were often taught at home by family members. Since women weren't allowed to study the human form by taking life drawing classes, it was difficult for them to make more highly regarded paintings that featured people. As a result, many women became highly skilled flower painters. That said, **Moser could also dash off an impressive portrait or mythological scene – but it was flowers she always returned to.**"



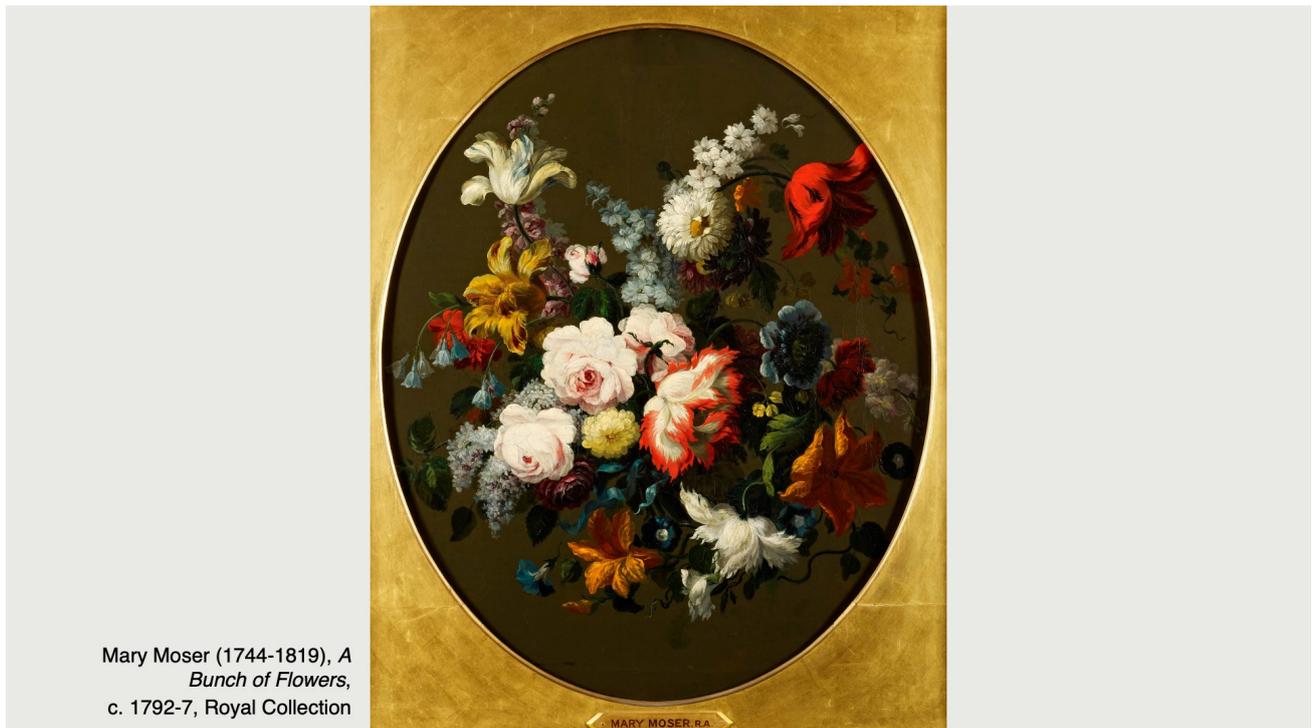
- **Frogmore House was bought for Queen Charlotte by George III in 1792.** It is in **33 acres** in Home Park adjoining Windsor Castle. It was a favourite escape for **Queen Victoria** and was chosen by **Prince Harry and Meghan Markle for their wedding reception.** It was named because of the many frogs found on the marshy property.
- By the way, it is usually open to the public for three days in spring and for pre-booked groups of 15 people in August but it is closed in 2021. Dates for 2022 have not yet been announced.
- **Queen Charlotte and Princess Elizabeth were clearly fond of Mary Moser,** and she was commissioned to **decorate an entire room at Frogmore** with flowers. It was afterwards called '**Miss Moser's Room**'.
- Due in part to her father's royal connections, Moser received several commissions from King George and Queen Charlotte. The most prestigious and famous of those commissions was a floral decorative scheme for the Frogmore House in the 1790s. The "**prestigious and lucrative commission**"—Moser was paid a **considerable £900**—made Moser "**the envy of her male colleagues.**" It was also one of her **last professional works,** as **she retired upon her marriage in 1793.**



- When Queen Charlotte was given Frogmore House she commissioned Moser to decorate the room and create the illusion of an '**arbour open to the skies**'. This room survives today.

## NOTES

- "Like Angelica Kauffman, Mary Moser worked on portraits and historical subjects, but she is best known for her flower paintings. Because of her skill in this area, she was **appointed drawing mistress to the Royal Princess Elizabeth**. She was also awarded several royal commissions. Notable among these was the decoration of a room in Frogmore House, the country retreat of King George III's wife, Queen Charlotte. Moser's room—which is included in guided tours of the estate today—depicts English flower arrangements, both on large canvases and painted walls."  
<https://artherstory.net/angelica-kauffman-and-mary-moser/>
- "In 1792 Queen Charlotte acquired Frogmore House in the immediate vicinity of Windsor Castle and commissioned **James Wyatt to extend it**. One room added as part of this scheme – **the South Pavilion** – was **entirely decorated with flower paintings by Mary Moser** (some on canvas and some painted directly upon the wall) at a cost of over £900. This canvas formed part of the 'Mary Moser Room' at Frogmore where it remains to this day. In addition to her other duties, Mary Moser taught the daughters of George III and Queen Charlotte to draw, probably also at Frogmore House." (Royal Collection, website)



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Bunch of Flowers*,  
c. 1792-7, Royal Collection

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Bunch of Flowers*, c. 1792-7, 85.5 × 78 cm, Royal Collection (RCIN 402460)

Painted for Queen Charlotte

- This canvas formed part of the 'Mary Moser Room' at Frogmore where it remains to this day. In addition to her other duties, **Mary Moser taught the daughters of George III and Queen Charlotte to draw, probably also at Frogmore House.**
- Not long after the completion of the Frogmore House commission, at the **age of almost 50, Moser married.** Like Angelica Kauffman, she **carried on painting after her marriage.** But unlike Kauffman, she **ceased to work professionally.** She did continue to exhibit as an honorary painter under her **married name, Mary Lloyd.**
- The year of her marriage there was a surprising personal episode...

Henry Fuseli (1741-1825, aged 84), *The Nightmare*, 1781, Detroit Institute of Arts



Henry Fuseli (1741-1825, aged 84), *The Nightmare*, 1781, Detroit Institute of Arts

- Early on she "**set her cap**" at Henry Fuseli and convinced herself the feelings were mutual "**but his heart, unfortunately, had already been deeply pierced by Angelica Kaufman.**"
- Fuseli was born in Zürich, Switzerland and his father was a portrait and landscape painter. However, Fuseli was intended for the Church and had an excellent classical education. In 1766 he became a travelling tutor and **returned to England in 1767 aged 26**. He heard rumour of a new society that would be endorsed by royalty and this inclined him to become an artist. He took his amateur drawings to Reynolds who was so full of praise that Fuseli started practicing drawing at every opportunity and soon with Reynolds further encouragement took up oil painting. His first oil painting was a history painting that was purchased by the Countess of Guilford.[3]
- In **1770 he made an art pilgrimage to Italy and returned to England in 1779** and **Mary was still unmarried**. He was inclined to fall in love with the next woman he met and he was annoyed at this time because his father in Zurich had refused to allow him to marry a young lady he was madly in love with. He did not relent regarding Mary although he married no one else for nine years. Mary was still comparatively young, only 35 or 36 and a jolly and agreeable woman. She did not compare with the "dreamy, half-angelic, adored

Kauffman". Mary had no objection to arguing if she did not agree with someone.

- In 1788 **Fuseli married** Sophia Rawlins, his ex-model and soon after became an Associate of the Royal Academy and in 1790 a full Academician.[1, p. 299]
- He produced no landscapes—"Damn Nature! she always puts me out" was his characteristic exclamation—and painted only two portraits.

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2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Fuseli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Fuseli)
3. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/38591/38591-0.txt>



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



Maria Cosway, *Self-portrait*, 1787

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)

- I am showing you this painting again to point out the **artist Richard Cosway** (1742-1821, RA 1770) bottom right. He is skewering the only female body in the room, a cast of a female torso. **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.**
- (CLICK) **Richard Cosway was married to Maria Cosway**, shown here, who was also an artist, but they separated.

## NOTES

- 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.
- 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. Her 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.



Richard Cosway (1742-1821), *Self-portrait*, date unknown, National Portrait Gallery



Richard Cosway (1742-1821), *Self-portrait*, c. 1770-1775, miniature on ivory, 5 × 4.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Richard Cosway (1742-1821), *Self-portrait*, c. 1770-1775, miniature on ivory, 5 × 4.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Richard Cosway (1742-1821), *Self-portrait*, date unknown, National Portrait Gallery

- Richard Cosway (1742-1821) was a leading English portrait painter of the Regency era, **noted for his miniatures**. He was born in Tiverton, Devon, and travelled to **London when he was 12** and **won a prize from the Society of Artists** the same year. He exhibited his first work when he was 20 and was **soon in demand**. He was one of the first associate members and was added by Zoffany to the right hand side of the group portrait on an extra strip of canvas. He painted the future King George IV in 1780 and was appointed Painter to the Prince of Wales in 1785—the only time this title was ever awarded. He was **'well known as a libertine and commonly described as resembling a monkey'** and in **later life spent time in various mental institutions**.
- **In October 1793, Mary Moser married Captain Hugh Lloyd**, a widower, in 1793 **and retired** but continued to exhibit as an amateur painter. Later that same year 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**.

- **Cosway made "lascivious statements" in his notebook about his sexual activities with Moser**, directly comparing Moser's skills in bed to those of his wife. Apparently, Moser was "more sexually responsive," even though she was 50 and Maria was only 33

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<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/16198/lot/103/> (Richard and Maria Cosway biography)



Richard Cosway (1742-1821), *Portrait of Mrs. Cosway*, before 1821, hand-coloured lithograph, 19 x 14 cm, Museo Nacional de San Carlos



Maria Cosway, *Georgiana as Cynthia from Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 1781-1782

Richard Cosway (1742-1821), *Portrait of Mrs. Cosway*, before 1821, hand-colored lithograph, 19 x 14 cm, Museo Nacional de San Carlos

Maria Cosway, *Georgiana as Cynthia from Spenser's Faerie Queene*, 1781-1782, Chatsworth House

- Cosway was separated from his wife Maria (Maria ('Mariah') Cosway, 1760-1838, born Hadfield) who was a gifted artist who **gave up her career on the command of her husband**. He did this 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**, the **American Founding Father** and **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.
- Maria Cosway was a composer, musician and authority on female education. The marriage was arranged and later it became a **marriage of convenience as she was 20 years younger**. The marriage was **eventually annulled** and in later life he suffered from mental disorders and had to be institutionalised.

## NOTES

- **Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire** (née Spencer, 1757-1806), was an English socialite, political organiser, style icon,

author, and activist. Beauty and leader of Whig society; first wife of 5th Duke of Devonshire.

- "In 1781 Italian-English artist Maria Cosway was commissioned by Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire to produce a portrait of the Duchess but depicted as Cynthia from the epic English poem 'The Faerie Queen' written by Edmund Spenser. The poem was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I and follows the knights and ladies of the Queen's court in a mythical faerie land to explore the meaning of virtue. Cynthia was the goddess of the moon and one of the heroes in the story." [1]

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<https://www.kingandmcgaw.com/prints/maria-hadfield-cosway/georgiana-as-cynthia-from-spenser-s-faerie-queene-1781-82-436586>



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers (1)*, 1792-97, 65.0 x 66.5 cm, Royal Collection



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers*, 1792-97, 66.3 x 65.6 cm, Royal Collection

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers (1)*, 1792-97, 65.0 x 66.5 cm, Royal Collection (RCIN 402467)

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers (2)*, 1792-97, 66.3 x 65.6 cm, Royal Collection (RCIN 402468)

In the Mary Moser Room, Frogmore House

- Her father **George Moser** had died at **Somerset House in 1783 aged 78**. He is buried in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. He was **deeply mourned** as he was a much loved figure. Reynolds called him the "**father of the present race of artists**". He described him as amiable, industrious and with a diligent attention to detail regarding everything that might advance art. When George Moser died Fuseli became Keeper.
- **In the 1790s after her marriage she was known as Mary Lloyd and she retired but continued exhibiting as an amateur until 1802**. She remained good friends with Richard Cosway and his wife Maria and left her twenty guineas in her will.



Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers*, 1792-97,  
65.8 x 65.8 cm, Royal Collection



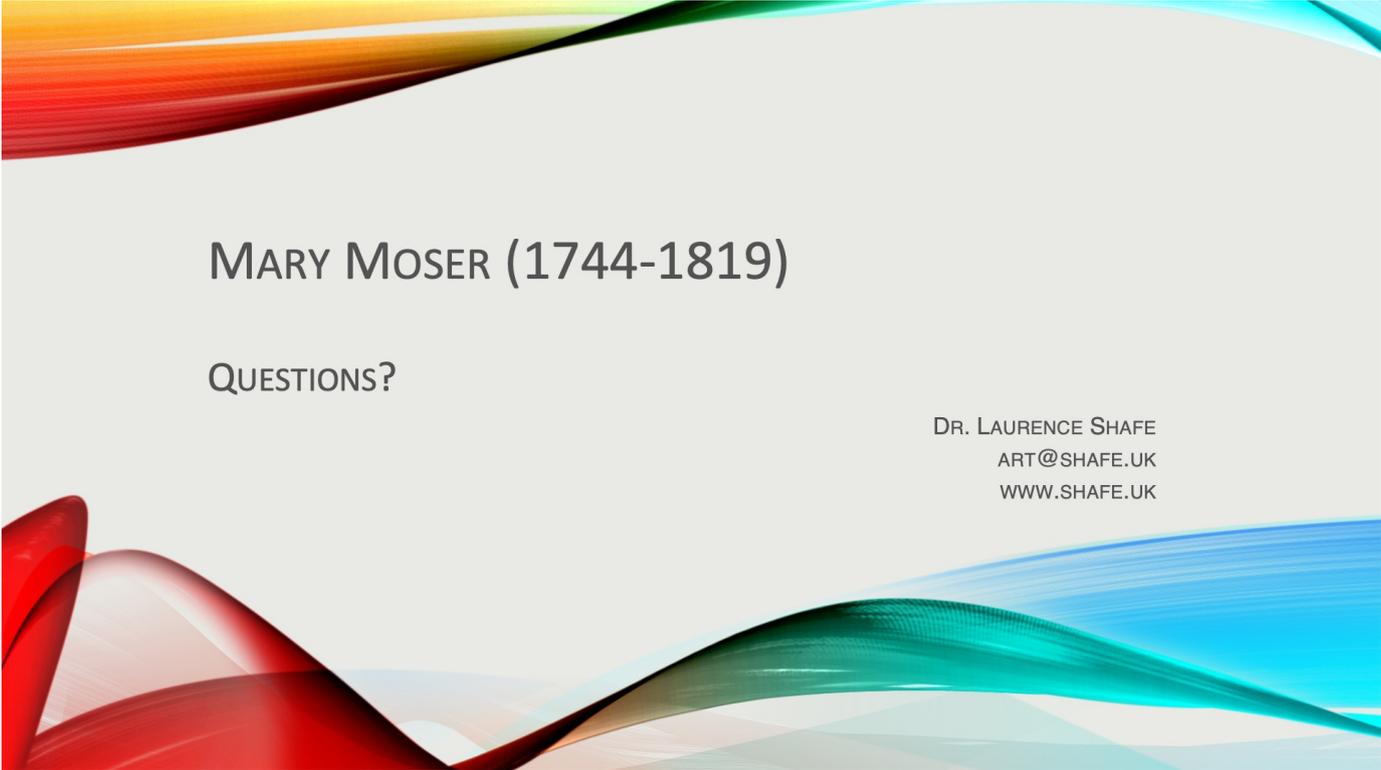
Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers*, 1792-97,  
64.7 x 64.1 cm, Royal Collection

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers* (3), 1792-97, 65.8 x 65.8 cm, Royal Collection (RCIN 402469)

Mary Moser (1744-1819), *A Vase of Flowers* (3), 1792-97, 64.7 x 64.1 cm, Royal Collection (RCIN 402470)

In the Mary Moser Room, Frogmore House

- Mary Moser, aged 75, died at 10:00 Sunday morning May 2, 1819 in the front second-floor room of No. 21, Upper Thornhaugh Street, Tottenham Court Road. She was **buried in Kensington Cemetery alongside her husband**. After her death no further women were elected full members of the Academy until Laura Knight in 1936, 117 years later. She is more famous than her father now.
- **Flower painting continued in England** in the nineteenth-century and botanical illustrations were an important way of recording plants. Other forms of still-life became popular such as the detailed rendition of birds' nests. **Later we think of Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh and into the twentieth century with Georgia O'Keefe.**



# MARY MOSER (1744-1819)

QUESTIONS?

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## NOTES

BIOGRAPHY MARY MOSER

A HISTORY OF BRITISH ART SOCIETIES

WOMEN PAINTERS BEFORE 1800

BRITISH WOMEN PAINTERS BEFORE 1800

ROYAL ACADEMY WOMEN PAINTERS

### **BIO:MOSER**

1744: born in England to George Michael Moser (1706-1783) who moved to England around 1726. He was a gold chaser and enameller, **George III's drawing master** and he designed the Great Seal of England. He later became First Keeper of the Royal Academy and was liked and trusted by everyone. He was Swiss and born at Schaffhausen.

1758, aged 14: Won her first Society of Arts medal and prize of five guineas and regularly exhibited flower paintings at the Society of Artists of Great Britain (founded 1754). The Society of Arts bestowed annual premiums on boys and girls under 16 for drawing. She was unusually short-sighted and painted with her eyes an inch from the canvas. Established reputation as a botanist. 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.

1768, aged 24: founded the Royal Academy with 35 other artists including her father and one other woman, Angelica Kauffman. Twenty-two of the founders were signatories of a petition to George III urging him to authorise the new royal guild and school of artists. It is likely that Kauffman and Moser were a major influence on George III's decision as he knew them well. Moser was described as somewhat precise but at times a most cheerful companion. She was also not

averse to "kicking up a row" if she disagreed with someone, very different from the 'angelic' Kauffman. She "set her cap" at Fuseli "but his heart, unfortunately, had already been deeply pierced by Angelica Kaufman." Fuseli married another woman in 1788. George Moser was elected Keeper on 100 guineas a year and apartments in Somerset House, a post he retained until his death when Miss Moser had to leave for 21 Denmark Street, Soho. Her father was a good teacher and taught the students drawing and anatomy. The only other flower painter in the Academy when it was founded was John Baker (?).

1769 Moser exhibited *A Flower Piece* at the first exhibition.

1770, aged 26: portrait by George Romney of Moser painting a still-life

1771-2: She exhibited her first figure subject *Hebe* in 1771. She was included in group portrait of Academicians as a portrait on the wall. Until 1779 she never failed to send at least one painting to the exhibition.

1790s 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.

1793, aged 49 she married Captain Hugh Lloyd, a widower, and almost immediately had an open affair with the miniaturist Richard Cosway. He left his wife and daughter and went on a six-month sketching tour of Europe. His wife, the well-known artist Maria Cosway, an Anglo-Italian artist was 20 years younger than Moser. Richard Cosway 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.

"Cosway was described as "well known as a libertine and commonly described as resembling a monkey." He was once more famous than Thomas Gainsborough and his portraits were all the fashion in Regency London. From 1785 he became First painter to the Prince of Wales. The film *Jefferson in Paris*, which dramatises Maria Cosway's own romance with the future American President Thomas

Jefferson portrays Richard Cosway as effeminate, but it seems he was anything but in bed. His diary entries for the time he spent with Mary Moser describe a hot and steamy affair"

(<https://juliaherdman.com/2017/05/10/history-of-women-in-art-mary-moser-founding-member-of-londons-royal-academy/>). In his later life spent time in various mental institutions

1790s after her marriage she was known as Mary Lloyd and she retired but continued exhibiting as an amateur until 1802. Maria devoted her time to her daughter who tragically died when she was six leaving Maria deeply depressed but she seems to have accepted the affair and had no recriminations. She remained good friends with Richard Cosway and his wife Maria and left her twenty guineas in her will.

1819, aged 75, died at 10:00 Sunday morning May 2, 1819 in the front second-floor room of No. 21, Upper Thornhaugh Street, Tottenham Court Road. She was buried in Kensington Cemetery alongside her husband. After her death no further women were elected full members of the Academy until Laura Knight in 1936, 117 years later. She is more famous than her father now.

## **A HISTORY OF BRITISH ART SOCIETIES**

- 1711: **Kneller Academy of Painting and Drawing** was the first British academy of art. It was founded in 1711 by Sir **Godfrey Kneller** in Queen Street. His influence on British art is shown in the work of Ramsay, Joseph Wright of Derby, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Hogarth, each of whom absorbed elements of his style. His range and industry is unparalleled, painting every monarch from Charles II to George I. His teaching at the Kneller Academy had a powerful impact on succeeding generations and he is Britain's most prolific portraitist. Sir **James Thornhill** succeeded him as governor in 1716 and set up his own school at his house in Covent Garden.
- 1732: **The Dilettante Society** was a society of noblemen and scholars who sponsored the study of ancient Greek and Roman art. Established about 1732. Walpole said the nominal qualification was having been to Italy and the real one was being drunk.
- 1734: **St Martin's Lane Academy** was set up in 1734 by William Hogarth (1697-1764) son-in-law and student of Sir James

Thornhill. It provided life models for use of its members.

- 1741: **The Foundling Hospital** became the first public display of art. It was founded 1741 by Captain Thomas Coram. It held exhibitions organised by the Dilettante Society.
- 1754: **Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce** was founded in 1754 by William Shipley who hoped it would make Great Britain a centre for intellectual advancements in the arts and sciences. It is now The Royal Society of Arts or RSA.
- 1761: **Society of Artists of Great Britain** was founded by Joshua Reynolds and provided a venue for the public exhibition of recent works. Their first exhibition was in April 1760 and over one thousand visitors per day attended. When the Royal Academy was founded it became the 'Free Society of Artists' (1761–1783) and it was dissolved in 1791.
- 1768: **The Royal Academy** was founded by William Chambers following an unseemly leadership dispute between two leading architects, Sir William Chambers and James Paine which split the Society. The Royal Academy was supported by Richard Wilson, Benjamin West and Paul Sandby and, after some hesitation, Joshua Reynolds agreed to join and he became the first President. It taught art, it held a Summer Exhibition and it appointed 40 Academicians.
- 1804: **The Society of Painters in Water-Colours** consisted of a group of watercolour artists who formed their own exhibiting society. They added 'in Oil' in 1812 and dropped it in 1820 and obtained a Royal charter in 1881.
- 1805: **British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom** (disbanded 1867) was a private 19th-century society in London formed to exhibit the works of living and dead artists; it was also known as the Pall Mall Picture Galleries or the British Gallery. Unlike the Royal Academy it admitted only connoisseurs, dominated by the nobility, rather than practicing artists to its membership.
- 1823: **Royal Society of British Artists** founded as the Society of British Artists. James Whistler became its President briefly in 1886.
- 1831: **The New Society of Painters in Water Colours**

competed with the Royal Watercolour Society (RWS), which had been founded in 1804. In 1863 there was a name change to the Institute of Painters in Water Colours. In 1883 it acquired its own premises at Piccadilly. In 1885 it added 'Royal' to its title by command of Queen Victoria. When the lease to the Piccadilly premises ran out in 1970, it moved to the Mall Galleries, near to Trafalgar Square.

- There were many private schools of art in the nineteenth century, perhaps the most famous being the one set up by the artist Henry Sass (1788-1844) and known as **Sass's Academy** (later **Cary's Academy**). It taught many artists, such as Millais, Frith and Lawrence. Although Sass was not a leading artist himself Wilkie said he could have taught a 'stone to draw'. Sass's Academy is notable for admitting women artists from 1832. The building is now 10 Bloomsbury Street.
- Colleges of art and technology, in fact all institutions of adult education except for universities, have their origin in local Institutions and **Mechanics' Institutes** of the early nineteenth century. As early as 1797 the **Brotherly Society in Birmingham** was providing free classes in drawing, geography and science for artisans. George Birkbeck, a professor in Glasgow was the first to organise lectures for industrial workers and when he moved to London he founded the **Mechanics' Institute there in 1823**. The drawing instruction was poor or non-existent but it was the only chance an artisan had to learn to draw before the **Schools of Design** were established. The first was established in **1837 in Somerset House** following a Government Select Committee enquiry which started in 1835. From the beginning there was a conflict between the aims of the Royal Academy and the aims of the Schools of Design. Unlike France, where everyone was taught to draw the human body in England this was reserved for gentlemen artists and members of the Schools of Design were relegated to designing ornamentation, a major loss to the overall quality of British art during the early nineteenth century.

## **WOMEN PAINTERS BEFORE 1800**

*The Dictionary of Women Artists* lists 600 women artists born before 1945

Sibylla von Bondorf (c.1440 to c.1525),

**Susannah Hornebolt** (1503-1554), taught by Flemish father, first known woman artist in England

**Levina Teerlinc** (née Bening, Flemish, 1510s-1576), father taught her, miniaturist to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I

Plautilla Nelli (Italian, 1524–1588)

Catharina van Hemessen (1528-1588)

Sofonisba Anguissola (Italian, 1535-1625)

Lavinia Fontana (Italian, 1552-1614)

Barbara Longhi (Italian, 1552–1638)

Artemisia Gentileschi (Italian, 1593-1653)

**Joan Carlile** (née Palmer, English, 1606-79), self-taught, first British-born woman professional portrait painter

Clara Peeters (Flemish, 1607-1621), still-life

Judith Leyster (Dutch, 1609-1660)

**Mary Beale** (née Cradock, English, 1633-1699), father was an amateur painter and may have taught her

Elisabetta Sirani (1638-1665)

**Susan Penelope Rosse** (née Gibson, English, 1652-1700), learnt from father, portrait miniatures

Luisa Roldán (Spanish, 1652–1706)

**Anne Killigrew** (English, 1660-1685), "A Grace for beauty, and a Muse for wit.", died smallpox aged 25

Rachel Ruysch (Dutch, 1664-1750)

Rosalba Carriera (1673-1757)

**Angelica Kauffman** (1741-1807), worked in England for 14 years

**Mary Moser** (English, 1744-1819), taught by father George Moser

Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749-1803)

Élizabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842)

Marie-Denise Villers (1774-1821)

## **BRITISH WOMEN PAINTERS BEFORE 1800**

Levina Teerlinc (1510/20-1576), daughter off Simon Bening, a

renowned illuminator, was a Flemish Renaissance miniaturist who served as a painter to the English court of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. In Henry VIII's court she was paid £40 a year, more than Hans Holbein had been paid. It is likely that she helped introduce the portrait miniature to England.

Joan Carlile (c. 1606-79, née Palmer) was one of the first women to practise painting professionally.

Mary Beale (1633-1699)

Susan Penelope Rosse (1652-1700), an English miniaturist who painted for the court of Charles II.

Anne Killigrew (1660-1685), a poet and portrait painter at the court of James II

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807)

Mary Moser (1744-1819)

## **ROYAL ACADEMY WOMEN PAINTERS**

Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), founder member 1768

Mary Moser (1744-1819), founder member 1768

Laura Herford (1831-1870), admitted to the School by mistake in 1860, by 1870 another 34 women had been admitted

1878 petition submitted to RA signed by 35 women asking for study from the figure (semi draped)

1893 after many petitions women were allowed to study the partially draped model, which by then was common across the country

Annie Swynnerton (1844-1933), in 1922 she was elected an Associate Academician

Laura Knight (1877-1970), in 1927 she was elected an Associate and in 1936 an Academician

In 1967 women Academician (four) were allowed to join the annual dinner