



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

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

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

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

separate classes.

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

#### <u>Note</u>

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



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

- Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser are shown on the right hand of the President Benjamin West
- Joshua Reynolds is dead but his portrait is top right
- Sir William Chambers is central seated but had died
- John Singleton Copley is standing facing Joseph Farrington
- William Hodges is far left facing Sir Thomas Lawrence and behind them are the three architect members
- One the far right are the three sculptor members and above them the Apollo Belvedere and Laocoön



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

#### Mary Moser

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

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



Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), *El juicio de Paris (Judgment of Paris)*, c. 1781, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelica\_Kauffman

# Angelica Kauffman

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

#### Judgement of Paris

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

"WHY ARE	THERE NC	GREAT WOMEN	ARTISTS?"
Lady Gordon	1775-1867	Kate Greenaway	1846-1901
Lady Wharncliffe	1776-1853	Elizabeth Butler	1846-1933
Lady Susan Elizabeth Percy	1782-1847	Helen Allingham	1848-1926
Mary Martha Pearson	1799-1871	Marie J. Naylor	1850-1950
Anna Atkins	1799-1871	Laura Alma-Tadema	1852-1909
Elizabeth Rigby	1809-1893	Evelyn de Morgan	1855-1919
Julia Emily Gordon	1810-1896	Kate Elizabeth Bunce	1856-1927
Iulia Margaret Cameron	1815-1879	Elizabeth Armstrong Forbes	1859-1912
Eleanor Vere Boyle	1825-1916	Henrietta Rae	1859-1928
Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal	1829-1862	Edith Hayllar	1860-1948
loanna Boyce	1831-1861	Dame Ethel Walker	1861-1951
Ann Mary Newton	1832-1866	Margaret MacDonald	1864-1933
Rebecca Solomon	1832-1886	Maud Earl	1864-1943
Edith Maud Rawdon-Hastings	1833-1874	Beatrice Bland	1864-1951
Emily Mary Osborn	1834-1893	Beatrix Potter	1866-1943
Georgina Macdonald	1840-1920	Lucy Kemp-Welch	1869-1958
Emma Sandys	1843-1877	Mabel Nicholson	1871-1918
Lucy Madox Brown	1843-1894	Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale	1871-1945
Marie Spartali Stillman	1844-1927	Madge Oliver	1874-1924
Annie Louise Swynnerton	1844-1933	Gwen John	1876-1939

#### <u>Feminist Approaches to Art History</u> Question: Why are there no great women artists?

Some of these arguments are taken from the article 'The Feminist Critique of Art History' by Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews.

- One of the earliest works was in 1971 by Linda Nochlin called 'Why Are There No Great Women Artists?'. Her argument was that art cannot be separated from our social situation and institutions. The concept of the artist genius is exclusively male and we tell stories of child prodigies who can draw at an early age and get into art college in the early teens, such as Turner, Millais and Picasso. But did girls at an early age see themselves in that role and could adults imagine them in that role. Nochlin asks a related question 'Why are they no great aristocratic artists?' with the possible exception of Toulouse-Lautrec whose deformity made him a special case.
- Nochlin and other art historians (see *Women Artists 1550-1950*) researched women artists through history that had been overlooked or ignored or belittled, and there are many.
- Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, in Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology, took fundamentally new directions from earlier surveys by rejecting evaluative criticism altogether. They turned to an analysis of women's historical and ideological position in relation to art, art production, and artistic ideology as a means to question the assumptions that underlie the traditional historical framework. They touched upon another of Nochlin's point 'to what extent our very consciousness of how things are in the world has been conditioned too often falsified by the way the most important questions are posed.' Pollock and Parker emphasized that 'the way the history of art has been studied and evaluated is not the exercise of neutral "objective" scholarship but an ideological practice.' They recognized that 'women's relation to artistic and social structures has been different to that of male artists'. In other words there are no great women artists

because we live in a society that does not accept that greatness can be associated with women and art.

- **Germaine Greer** in *The Obstacle Race* argued that we 'cannot make great artists out of egos that have been damaged, with wills that are defective, with libidos that have been driven out of reach and energy diverted into neurotic channels'.
- There were some important women artists working in England in the nineteenth century and many others working in France and America. Practically, it was very difficult for women artists to attend training as all the courses were for men. Some women artists were trained by their fathers and others were wealthy enough to pay for a private tutor. Even when trained it was not possible for a women to attend a life drawing class and so it was difficult to become proficient in history painting.

Angelica Kauffman		1807	Henrietta Ward		192
Mary Moser	1744	1819	Edith Maud Rawdon-Hastings		
Maria Bell	1755	1825	Isabelle de Steiger	1836	193
Ellen Sharples	1769	1849	Jane Bowkett	1837	189
adv Gordon		1867	Mary Ellen Edwards	1838	193
Lady Wharncliffe	1776	1853	Kate Perugini	1839	192
ady Susan Elizabeth Percy	1782	1847	Georgina Macdonald	1840	192
Mary Baker		1856	Florence Anne Claston	1840	187
Harriet Gouldsmith	1787	1863	Emma Sandys	1843	187
Mary Harrison	1788	1875	Lucy Madox Brown	1843	1.8%
Rolinda Sharples	1793	1838	Louise Jopling	1843	191
Margaret Sarah Carpenter		1872	Marie Spartali Stiliman	1844	192
Anne Brownell Jameson		1860	Annie Louise Swynnerton	1844	193
Inn Charlotte Bartholomew		1862	Anna Lea Merritt	1844	193
Mary Martha Pearson		1871	Kate Greenaway	1846	190
Anna Atkins		1871	Elizabeth Butler	1846	193
lizabeth Rigby	1809	1893	Kate Greenaway	1846	190
lulia Emily Gordon	1810	1896	Helen Allingham	1848	192
Lady Waterford	1811	1891	Eva Gonzales	1849	1883
anny Corbaux		1883	Marie J. Navlor	1850	195
Elizabeth Emma Sover	1813	1842	Laura Alma-Tadema	1852	1909
ulia Margaret Cameron	1815	1879	Rosa Corder	1853	1897
Annie Dixon		1901	Evelyn de Morgan	1855	1919
Rosa Booheur		1899	Kate Elizabeth Bunce	1856	192
Sophie Gengembre Anderson	1823	1903	Elizabeth Adela Forbes	1859	1913
Anna Mary Howitt	1824	1884	Henrietta Rae	1859	1922
Martha Darley Mutrie		1885	Edith Havflar	1860	1948
leanor Vere Boyle	1825	1916	Dame Ethel Walker	1861	1951
Barbara Bodichon	1827	1891	Margaret MacDonald	1864	1933
Emily Mary Osborn		1925	Maud Earl	1864	1943
Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal		1862	Beatrice Bland	1864	1951
lane Benham Hay	1829		Lucy Lee Robbins	1865	1943
Rosa Brett	1829	1882	Beatrix Potter	1866	1945
Marianne North		1884	Lucy Kemp-Welch	1869	1956
loanna Boyce		1861	Mabel Nicholson	1871	1918
Ann Mary Newton	1832	1866	Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale	1871	1943
Rebecca Solomon		1886	Madge Oliver	1874	1924
Louise Rayner	1832	1924	Gwen John	1876	1939

A longer list of 19<sup>th</sup>-century women artists.



Lady Gordon (1775-1867, née Julia Isabella Levina Bennet) Cottage at Wigmore, Kent 1803

## Problem of being a woman artist: stopped after her marriage

- Tate Britain: Lady Gordon is remembered as one of J. M. W. Turner's few known pupils (1797). It was Paul Oppé who first speculated, correctly, that she may also have taken lessons from Thomas Girtin. For this watercolour she has selected Girtin's favourite paper, a coarse laid cartridge of a warmish tint containing slight flecks which give a subtle variety to the surface. Girtin enjoyed a reputation for making sketches in the open air, a practice he seems to have instilled in his pupils, for this watercolour is described by Lady Gordon on the mount as a 'Sketch from Nature'. The mount also bears her initials, Julia Bennet. Two years later (1805) she married General Sir James Willoughby Gordon. Patrons of David Wilkie although they refused their daughters hand in marriage to Wilkie. The latter was Quartermaster General during the Peninsular Wars.
- Turner found it easier to show rather than tell and would make a drawing in front of his pupil and them leave it for him or her to imitate.

#### Not used:

Lady Wharncliffe (née Lady Caroline Mary Elizabeth Creighton) c.1776–1853, *title not known*, date not known, Tate Britain



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

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

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

## <u>Notes</u>

• William Taylor Copeland (1797-1868) was a businessman, Member of Parliament in Ireland and then Stoke-upon-Trent and in 1835 he was elected Lord Mayor of London (the third youngest). His father was a partner of Josiah Spode in the Stoke Potteries and William eventually bought out the Spode interest and became china and glass manufacturer to the Prince of Wales in 1866. He was director and Chairman of various railway companies.



Mary Martha Pearson (née Dutton, 1799-1871), *Mrs Otho Manners*, Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

- Another example of a portrait by Mary Pearson.
- It is difficult to trace Mrs Otho Manners but her husband may have owned land in Goadby Marwood in Leicestershire and lived at Goadsby Hall. Otho Augustus Manners was born in 1818 and lived until 1897 when he was 79.



Anna Atkins (née Children, 1799-1871), cyanotype photogram from *Photographs of British Algae*, 1843 Lady Elizabeth Eastlake (née Rigby, 1809-1893), portrait sketch, 1831, V&A

- Anna Atkins, her mother died in childbirth and she became close to her father, John George Children, a scientist who had a mineral and a python named after him. She received an unusually scientific education and became a botanist. She married John Pelly Atkins in 1825 and both he and her father were friends of William Henry Fox Talbot. She learned of photography and had a camera by 1841. She is said to be the first female photography although that may have been Constance Talbot, Fox Talbot's wife but no examples remain of either photographer. Sir John Herschel, a famous scientist, and friend invented the cyanotype process in 1842 and she used it to illustrate a book of algae, specifically seaweed. She made contact prints by placing the dried seaweed directly on the photographic paper. She is the first person to publish a book with photographic images as she was eight months ahead of William Fox Talbot's *Pencil of Nature*. Her book was privately published with handwritten text and Fox Talbot's was the first commercially published book illustrated with photographs.
- Elizabeth Eastlake, British author, art critic and art historian known for her role in the London art world. Her father was a physician and classical scholar. She was fond of drawing when young and continued studying art into her twenties. She travelled abroad including Germany, Switzerland, Russia and Estonia and wrote articles and a travel book. In 1842 her father died and she went to Edinburgh with her mother and met David Octavius Hill who took 20 early calotypes of her. She published on article on the 'new and mysterious art' of photography. When she was 40 she married Sir Charles Eastlake and joined his social life and continued to travel abroad. She wrote prolifically and wrote a book on Italian painters. She is remembered for a scathing review of *Jane Eyre* and her attacks on John Ruskin

assumed to be linked to her support for Effie Gray. She is considered to be a **pioneer of female journalism and a perceptive art historian and writer**.



Photograph of Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862, born Siddall), *c.* 1860 John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-2 Elizabeth Siddal, *Self-portrait*, 1854 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth\_Siddal

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

## **Elizabeth Siddal**

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

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

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



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

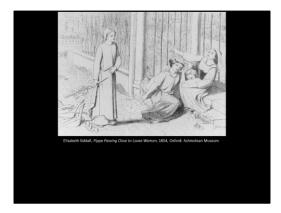
- Siddal **worked hard at drawing** and **attended an art school** in Sheffield. Her early drawings show some proficiency but her later watercolours are not first rank. However, John Ruskin praised her watercolours and wished to settle money on her in exchange for any work her health permitted.
- This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

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

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

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

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892), The Lady of Shalott, 1842 version, Part III She left the web, she left the loom, She made three paces thro' the room, She saw the water-lily bloom, She saw the helmet and the plume, She look'd down to Camelot. Out flew the web and floated wide; The mirror crack'd from side to side; "The curse is come upon me," cried The Lady of Shalott.



Elizabeth Siddall, *Pippa Passing Close to Loose Women*, 1854, Oxford: Ashmolean Museum

- Male artists encourage sympathy for the fallen woman and often present her as the victim. Male artists present prostitutes as suffering.
- This is an illustration of a scene from Robert Browning's poetic drama *Pippa Passes,* 1841.
- Siddal is not afraid of associating the **loose women** with **sexual feelings** and it is **bodily lust and moral weakness** that caused the women to **fall**. It is interesting that she modelled **Pippa's features** on her **own** when she was Rossetti's mistress.
- Siddal worked in in a **milliners shop** before being found by the Pre-Raphaelites and Pippa is a **silk-winder**.
- Siddal distances herself from the other PRB models such as the notorious Annie Miller. Miller refused Holman Hunt's offer to take her out of the slums in favour of frivolity but even in this case there is no evidence that she became 'gay' (i.e. a prostitute).
- Pippa is upright, orderly and pure. They are not separated by class and **poverty** is not offered as an **excuse** for prostitution. Pippa is presented as **destitute**. Siddal compares the innocent Pippa with the crude sexuality of the prostitutes.

Browning's poem contains the famous lines:

The year's at the spring, And day's at the morn; Morning's at seven; The hill-side's dew-pearled; The lark's on the wing; The snail's on the thorn; **God's in His heaven— All's right with the world!**  The relevant passage, is, I think,

Talk by the way, while PIPPA is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor Girls sitting on the steps.

•••

'He that seduced me when I was a girl Thus high - had eyes like yours, or hair like yours, ...



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

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

- Joanna Mary Boyce also known by her married name Joanna Mary Wells, English painter of portraits, genre pictures and occasional landscapes. Sister of pre-Raphaelite painter George Price Boyce. Died aged 29 during childbirth, described in her obituary as a 'genius'. *Elgiva* was her first painting to be exhibited at the RA. Ford Madox Brown described it as 'the best head in the room'. Elgiva was an Anglo-Saxon queen and compared to Rossetti female head and shoulders it is stark, quiet and serene.
- John Ruskin wrote about *Elgiva* in his 1855 'Academy Notes':

"The expression in this head is so subtle, and so tenderly wrought, that at first the picture might easily be passed as hard or cold; but it could only so be passed, as Elgiva herself might have been sometimes seen, -by a stranger- without penetration of her sorrow. As we watch the face for a little time, the slight arch of the lip seems to begin to quiver, and the eyes fill with ineffable sadness and a look of despair. The dignity of all the treatment---- the beautiful imagination of faint but pure color, place this picture, to my mind, among those of the very highest power and promise."

 Elgiva (924-944), also St. Elgiva, is regarded as queen and married Edward I although no document confirming this exists and the only document describes her as 'concubine'. She gave birth to two future kings (Eadwig and Edgar). Later she became a Benedictine nun. She redeemed condemned men, gave away previous garments to the poor and endured prolonged physical suffering. Is it 'ell-geeva' or does it rhyme with Godiva?



Joanna Mary Wells (née Boyce, 1831–1861), Gretchen, 1861, 73 x 43.7 cm, Tate

- Joanna Wells (née Boyce) established a reputation during the 1850s as a painter of portraits, genre and landscape. She also wrote art reviews for the *Saturday Review*. This painting may represent the innocent maiden from Goethe's tragic play *Faust* but could also be a portrait of a nursery maid in the employ of the Wells family. The painting was started shortly before the artist's death following the birth of her third child and is unfinished.
- D.G. Rossetti, who described Wells as 'a great artist sacrificed to bringing more kids into the world', judged the painting to be her greatest work.

## <u>References</u>

Tate website



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

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

• The *Art Journal* on Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless' 1857:

A poor girl has painted a picture, which she offers for sale to a dealer, who, from the speaking expression of his features, is disposed to depreciate the work. It is a wet, dismal day, and she has walked far to dispose of it; and now awaits in trembling the decision of a man who is to become rich by the labours of others.'

# **Emily Mary Osborn**

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

Artists.

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

# Society of Female Artists

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

## Reviews of Exhibitions of the Society of Female Artists: *The Illustrated London News*, 6 Jun 1857:

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

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

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



Emily Mary Osborn (1828-1925), *Presentiments* 87.6 x 114.3 cm, exhibited Royal Academy, 1859

Three fishers went sailing out into the West, Out into the West as the sun went down; Each thought on the woman who lov'd him the best; And the children stood watching them out of the town; For men must work, and women must weep, And there's little to earn, and many to keep, Though the harbour bar be moaning. Charles Kingsley

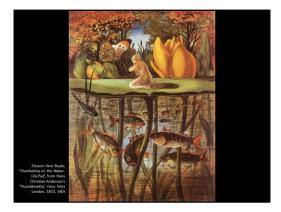
- The fisherman must go out, despite the storm, to feed his family. The title of the painting warns us that he is not coming back. This, in 1850s Britain, would have been a starkly realistic scene that would have been familiar to many. The poem that inspired it was Charles Kingsley's "The Three Fishers."
- The Kingsley poem is called 'Three Fishers' and was written in 1851. It was set to music shortly after by English composer John Hullah. 'For men must work and women must weep' became a catchphrase in the Victorian period.

## <u>Notes</u>

• According to the Victorian Web, "And the harbour bar be moaning," refers to, "the belief that it was a bad omen if the tide made a moaning sound as it receded over the sand bar that kept the harbour waters still."

## **References**

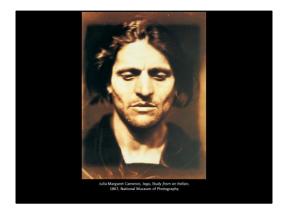
The Victorian Web website - www.victorianweb.org



Eleanor Vere Boyle, 'Thumbelina on the Water-Lily Pad', from Hans Christian Andersen's 'Thumbkinetta', *Fairy Tales* London, 1872, V&A

Problem of being a woman artist: not a 'suitable' occupation

- Eleanor Vere Boyle, 'Thumbelina on the Water-Lily Pad', from Hans Christian Andersen's 'Thumbkinetta', *Fairy Tales* London, 1872, V&A
- Eleanor Vere Boyle (1825–1916) was an English artist and the most important female illustrator of the 1860s. However, she married Richard Boyle in 1845, the younger son of the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Cork and he was later Queen Victoria's chaplain. His status in society prevented Eleanor Boyle from exhibiting or selling her artwork. In her books she used the initials EVB to hide her identity. Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875).



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

- One of the few examples of a woman artist representing individual male beauty (not a portrait or a scene that includes men, such as Elizabeth Butler)
- Identified by Colin Ford as Angelo Colarossi, studio assistant to the sculptor Alfred Gilbert whose son, also called Angelo, modelled for Anteros (the god of selfless love, son of Ares and Aphrodite, brother Eros, with plumed butterfly wings, symbolises the selfless philanthropic love of Salisbury for the poor) on the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain in Piccadilly Circus at the age of 15. Very recent research suggest it is his uncle Alessandro di Marco who modelled earlier in Rome for Leighton. His original trade was organ grinder. This is thought to be the only paid model Cameron every used. The National Museum of Photography (now the National Media Museum) Bradford, has the only known original print.

#### <u>Notes</u>

- Also see Eleanor Fortesque-Brickdale *The Idylls of the King* with a single medieval knight
- Also Florence Caxton, illustrator, 'The Dance Domestic-The Gyration Archaic Post-Prandial'



Marie Spartali Stillman (1844-1927), *Self-Portrait*, 1871, Delaware Art Museum Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *A Vision of Fiammetta*, 1878, collection of Andrew Lloyd Webber

Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879), Marie Spartali Stillman as *Mnemosyne*, the goddess of memory and mother of the nine Muses, c. 1866.

# Marie Spartali Stillman

- Marie Euphrosyne Spartali, later Stillman (1844–1927), was a British Pre-Raphaelite painter of Greek descent, arguably the greatest female artist of that movement.
- During a **sixty-year career** she produced over one hundred works, contributing regularly to exhibitions in Great Britain and the United States.
- It was in the house of the Greek businessman A.C. Ionides (1810–1890) at Tulse Hill, in south London, that Marie and her sister Christine (1846–1884) met Whistler and Swinburne for the first time. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909, English poet, playwright, novelist and critic) was so overcome that he said of Spartali: 'She is so beautiful that I want to sit down and cry'.
- Marie was an imposing figure, **around 6 foot 3 inches** (1.9 meters) tall and, in her later years, dressed in long flowing black garments with a lace hood, attracting much attention throughout her life.
- Spartali **studied under Ford Madox Brown** for several years from 1864, with his children Lucy, Catherine and Oliver. Rossetti, on hearing that she was to become a pupil to Madox Brown, wrote to him, 'I just hear Miss Spartali is to be your pupil. I hear too that she is one and the same with a marvellous beauty of whom I have heard much talk. So box her up and don't let fellows see her, as I mean to have first shy at her in the way of sitting.'
- *"Of all the women who elicited Gabriel's (Rossetti) admiration, Marie Spartali was probably the most gifted intellectually. Of an ancient and noble race, austere, virtuous and fearless, she was not lacking in a caustic wit and a sharp*

tongue." William Michael Rossetti speaking of Marie Spartali Stillman

- In 1871, against her parents' wishes, she married American journalist and painter William J. Stillman. She was his second wife, his first having committed suicide two years before. She continued working to supplement her husband's erratic income. The couple had posed for Rossetti in his famous Dante pictures, though it is not certain if that is how they first met. He first worked for the American Art Magazine, *The Crayon*. His later job was a foreign correspondent for *The Times*. His job as a foreign correspondent resulted in the couple dividing their time between London and Florence from 1878 to 1883, and then Rome from 1889 to 1896. She also travelled to America, and was the only Britain-based Pre-Raphaelite artist to work in the United States.
- She first sat for him in 1867. He wrote to Jane Morris, 'I find her head the most difficult I ever drew. It depends not so much on real form as on a subtle charm of life which one cannot recreate.'
- Rossetti used her as a model for *A Vision of Fiammetta, Dante's Dream* and *The Bower Meadow.* She was the most **intellectual** of his models. She also modelled for: Ford Madox Brown; Burne-Jones; Julia Margaret Cameron and Spencer Stanhope.
- She and her cousins Maria Zambaco and Aglaia Coronio were known collectively among friends as "the Three Graces", after the Charities of Greek mythology (Aglaia, 'Agg-la-eea', goddess of beauty, Euphrosyne, 'You-fro-zenee', goddess of joy, and Thalia, 'Thea-lee-a', goddess of good cheer), as all three were noted beauties of Greek heritage.
- Marie Spartali died in March 1927 in Ashburn Place in (South Kensington). Marie was cremated at Brookwood Cemetery, near Woking, Surrey, and is interred there with her husband. The grave is marked by a simple lawn headstone. She had three children.
- Her last will and testament contains a letter where Marie wrote, "It seems rather absurd to make a will when one has neither possessions nor money to leave". She left £155 and various personal items, including some mementos from her life as an artist. Her body of work is valued today at over \$690 million (is this correct? Her work has sold for \$10-100K and she produced 100 works so this is a maximum of \$10m).
- She spoke perfect English though her parents spoke Greek at home and French, German and Italian. She learned to sing under one of the greatest nineteenth century tenors, Manuel Garcia.
- She developed a lifelong friendship for G. F. Watts and Julia Margaret Cameron when visiting their family friends Toby and Sara Prinsep at Little Holland House.
- She was obsessed with Dante Gabriel Rossetti's painting but he was too busy to take her on as a pupil and recommended Luke Ionides who recommended Ford

Madox Brown.

- She fell in love with Lord Ranelagh but his reputation as a womanizer caused her father to call off the marriage. She married Stillman against her parents wishes as she felt pity for him. Lord Ranelagh was, for example, a friend of Annie Miller (Hunt's fiancé) and she married his cousin Captain Thompson in 1863.
- When she died in 1927 she was the last surviving link to the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

# **Charles Algernon Swinburne**

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



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

**Problem of being a woman artist:** a beautiful woman in a male-dominated world was considered to be a model not an artist. A woman artist had to be seen to be submissive and modest to be accepted.

- Spartali was **typically self-deprecating** about this and other paintings. She said, it was **'merely a study from a model' done for the 'pleasure of painting'**. It is likely this was a rhetorical device used by women painters to **appeal to the public by means of modesty** in order to avoid any accusation of arrogance.
- The woman at the window has half embroidered a figure of a blindfolded Eros and she is feeding a dove with a string on its foot attached to a letter. The letter has either just arrived from her lover or she is just about to send it. 'Love's messenger' refers to Eros or Cupid or sometimes a dove. The portrait is influenced by the early Italian Renaissance painter Botticelli and she had many contacts in the Roman art world where early Italian Renaissance artists would have been discussed.
- Spartali Stillman was displayed at the Royal Academy and the Dudley Gallery but it
  was the Grosvenor Gallery that opened in 1877 that gave her much more visibility.
  As she then lived abroad for her husbands health it was difficult for her to maintain
  public awareness. She did not contribute in 1878, perhaps because she was
  pregnant, but send two pictures in 1879 and continued to contribute through most
  of the 1880s including this painting. She returned to Britain in 1884 and completed
  this work but in 1886 her husband was appointed *The Times* correspondent in Italy
  and Greece and they left the country again. She reworked this painting while in
  Rome and before it was bought by Samuel Bancroft and taken to America.

## **References**

• See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie\_Spartali\_Stillman



Lady Elizabeth Southerden Butler (née Thompson, 1846-1933), Self-portrait, 1869, oil and pencil on card, National Portrait Gallery

#### Elizabeth Butler

- Wikipedia: Elizabeth Southerden Thompson, Lady Butler (1846–1933) was a British painter, one of the few female painters to achieve fame for history paintings, especially military battle scenes, at the end of that tradition. She was married to Lieutenant General Sir William Butler in 1877, and is still often referred to as Lady Butler. Some of her most famous military scenes come from the Napoleonic Wars, but she covered most major 19th-century wars and painted several works showing the First World War.
- She was born in Switzerland and received her art training in Italy and then South Kensington, London and she entered the Female School of Art where she met Millais and Ruskin. She initially concentrated on religious subjects and later switched to war paintings.
- She was very popular as she painted scenes of battle at a time when Victorian pride and nationalism for the growing British Empire was at its height. She said, 'I never painted for the glory of war, but to portray its pathos and heroism'.
- On her husbands retirement they moved to Ireland. Despite being one of the most famous and leading artists of her day she was never elected an academician. She was short-listed in 1879 but lost by two votes.

#### <u>Notes</u>

- The Government School of Design was founded in 1837 and in 1853 became the National Art Training School with the Female School of Art in a separate building. In 1896 it became the Royal College of Art. During the 19thC it was often referred to as the South Kensington Schools.
- Female School of Art. In 1866 students were allowed to draw the clothed figure for the first time. Also known as School of Design for Females/Female School of

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



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

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

#### Scotland Forever! (from Wikipedia)

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



Evelyn de Morgan (1855-1919, née Pickering), *Flora*, 1894, The De Morgan Foundation, Wandsworth See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evelyn\_de\_Morgan

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

### <u>Evelyn de Morgan</u>

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

### <u>Note</u>

 John Roddam Spencer Stanhope is an English artist associated with Edward Burne-Jones and George Frederic Watts and often regarded as a second-wave pre-Raphaelite. His work is also studied within the context of Aestheticism and British Symbolism. As a painter, Stanhope worked in oil, watercolour, fresco, and mixed media. His subject matter was mythological, allegorical, biblical, and contemporary. While a student at Oxford, he sought out Watts as a teacher and was Watts' assistant for some of his architectural paintings. Spencer-Stanhope travelled with Watts to Italy in 1853 and to Asia Minor in 1856–57. Upon his return, he was invited by Dante Gabriel Rossetti to participate in the Oxford murals project. Spencer-Stanhope's house Sandroyd (now called Benfleet Hall), near Cobham in Surrey, was commissioned from the architect Philip Webb. Finished by 1861 it was Webb's second house, the first was The Red House, designed for William Morris.

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



Evelyn De Morgan (1855–1919), *Cadmus and Harmonia*, 1877, De Morgan Foundation

- The classical writer Ovid wrote about an encounter between Cadmus and a serpent he managed to kill after it had killed one of his attendants. The serpent was sacred and he heard a curse that he would be turned into a serpent. His married Harmonia and their life was filled with disasters which he eventually put down to the serpent's curse. He wished he could be turned into a serpent to stop the disasters and Harmonia implored the gods to turn her into a serpent as well. De Morgan is showing the moment after Cadmus has been turned into a serpent and before Harmonia is also turned into one. There was an excerpt from Ovid included in the 1877 exhibition of the painting.
- De Morgan is showing her skill at the depiction of the nude and declaring herself to be a serious history painter. She uses oil paints rather than watercolours which were traditionally associated with women painters and she is demonstrating her deep classical understanding as she chose an obscure story. Although superficially following the male traditions for representing the female nude as a passive object De Morgan hints at a deeper spiritual message of female power. Ovid presents Cadmus as the tragic hero and Harmonia's role is secondary but De Morgan presents Harmonia as the central tragic figure. Following the tragic deaths of her two daughters and two grandchildren and the metamorphosis of her husband Harmonia asks the gods to change her form and we see her on the point of transformation. The snake is not a symbol of decadent sexuality but of rebirth as it sheds its skin to emerge as if reborn. Harmonia is thus a symbol of renewal.

### **References**

Elise Lawton Smith, Evelyn Pickering De Morgan and the Allegorical Body, pp. 65-66



Gwen John (1876-1939), *self-portrait*, 1902, Tate Britain See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwen\_John Augustus John (1878-1961), self-portrait, c. 1901, private collection

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

### <u>Gwen John</u>

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

complained in a letter to her brother about how difficult is was. Even the Slade imposed restrictions of women drawing from female models and so friends would draw each other but kept silent about the practice as 'the respectability of these middle-class women students would have been jeopardised if they had acknowledged at the time that they had worked from studies of their own bodies rather than those of anonymous working-class models'.

- When she lived in Paris she had to work as a model to survive. She posed nude for Auguste Rodin and for other artists, mostly women. In her dairies she wrote of many occasions when, working as a model, she felt harassed or abused by both men and women artists. For example, one woman artist was kissing a man all afternoon and then told her not to tell anyone if she wanted to keep her job as a model, treating her as a child and discussing her as if she was not there. As a model she would be kept waiting for hours, shouted at, ignored, given no breaks, and propositioned by male artists. She developed fierce attachments to both men and women that worried some people and she later became Rodin's lover.
- Gwen John's quiet art with its subtle colour relationships, stands in contrast to her brother's far more assertive work. She was once overshadowed by his work but critical opinion now tends to view her as the more talented. Augustus predicted this reversal, saying 'In 50 years' time I will be known as the brother of Gwen John.'



Gwen John (1876–1939), *Nude Girl,* 1909–10, 44.5 x 27.9 cm, Tate Gwen John (1876–1939), *Girl with Bare Shoulders*, 1909-10?, 43.4 x 26 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Tate website: 'The human body, a traditional theme in western art, was a tricky subject for women artists at the turn of the century because of questions of morality and decorum. By using a narrow colour range and minimal setting, and suppressing biographical details, John draws attention to the naked body. At the same time, the character of the model, Fenella Lovell, comes across powerfully. So the viewer experiences this painting, disconcertingly, as a portrait of a contemporary woman with no clothes on, who seems to be uncomfortable that we are looking at her. '
- Her friend wrote to her, "The little "Nude Girl" is quite exquisite in its subtle simplicity a gem of the first water rare in its conception, wonderfully choice in treatment felt I must write to you after seeing what depths you can feel'.
- We know from her letters that John disliked the model Fenella Lovell, she wrote, 'I shall be glad when it is finished, it is a great strain doing Fenella. It is a pretty little face but she is *dreadful*' and later 'I shall pay her what I owe her and never see her again'. The unblinking realism possibly enhanced by her dislike creates what Wyndham Lewis described as a feeling of a 'revulsion from her nakedness an Eve after the Fall'.
- Such honesty in painting the nude body is not found until it resurfaces with Stanley Spencer and Lucian Freud.

### **References**

- Tate website
- Museum of Modern Art website



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

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

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

- She painted the world of theatre and ballet and was a war artist during WWII. She was also interested in marginal groups, such as gypsies and circus performers.
- A woman artist painting a nude was very difficult during the nineteenth century as few art schools allowed women students to attend life classes. One of the first was the Slade towards the end of the century. It was one thing to paint a working class model another for a middle-class Slade woman student to pose naked. Women students painted themselves in the mirror and other women students but did not acknowledge this.
- Edward Poynter, first principal at the Slade, in his inaugural address in October 1871:

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



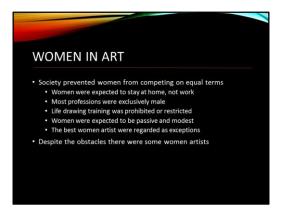
Laura Knight (1877-1970), *Ruby Loftus screwing a Breech-ring*, 1943, 86.3 x 101.9 cm, Imperial War Museum

- Miss Ruby Loftus had been brought to the attention of the War Artist's Advisory Committee as 'an outstanding factory worker'. Laura Knight was expected to paint a studio portrait but the Ministry of Supply requested that she be painted at work in the Royal Ordnance Factory in Newport.
- Making a 'Bofors Breech ring' was the most highly skilled job in the factory, normally requiring eight or nine years training. Loftus was aged 21 at the time of the painting and had no previous factory experience. Her ability to operate the machine presented a considerable publicity coup at the time and she was probably placed at this machine for this reason.
- Knight had been painting circus performers and ballet dancers; industrial machinery was a wholly new element in her work but her technical accuracy was praised in contemporary reports.
- The painting received enormous publicity and was reproduced in most of the daily newspapers. Laura Knight was the most outstandingly successful women artist of the inter-war years and she was the best-known and most honoured woman artist. She did not conform to gender expectations and campaigned actively and vocally to become the first female Royal Academician since the founding membership. She wrote, 'Can Women Succeed as Artists?' and identified inequality of opportunity between men and women as the basis for the latter's near exclusion from the centre of the British art world.
- It could be said that Knight, like Loftus, was proving herself in a traditionally male environment. However, the press and society at large identified Knight and Loftus not as beacons of gender equality but as outstanding exceptions whose achievements highlighted the limitations rather than the potential of other

women.

# **References**

- Imperial War Museum website
- Brian Foss, War Paint, Art, War, State and Identity in Britain, 1939-1945, 2007



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

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

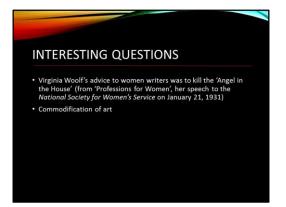
## Reviews of exhibitions of the Society of Female Artists: The Illustrated London News, 6 Jun 1857:

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

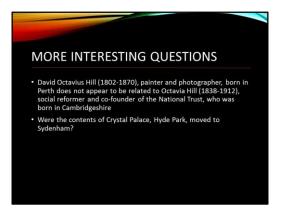
### The Art Journal, 1 May 1858:

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





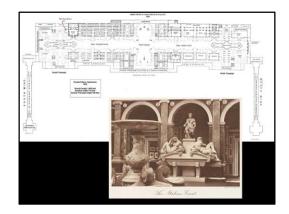
Commodification of art, i.e. turning the painting into an object to be bought and sold. In the eighteenth century a patron had a relationship with one or more artists. The patron commissioned want he wanted. In the nineteenth century with the rise of the middle class and the availability of exhibitions and dealers a market developed. The inexperienced middle class buyer needed reassurance which was buying from a known name, buy from an artist with good reviews and buying from an Academician. Women artists and controversial artists were not such a safe investment. A woman could not be an Academician and might stop painting if she married and so not build a reputation. The buyer wanted to avoid a poor purchase, such as a bad review, looking ignorant or the price dropping.



- In the 1881 census there were 76,275 people called Hill. It was the 26<sup>th</sup> most common name.
- The Crystal Palace was a cast-iron and plate-glass building originally erected in ٠ Hyde Park, London, to house the Great Exhibition of 1851. More than 14,000 exhibitors from around the world gathered in the Palace's 990,000 square feet (92,000 m2) of exhibition space to display examples of the latest technology developed in the Industrial Revolution. Between May and October it was visited by six million people. The building was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton and was 1,851 feet (564 m) long and 128 feet (39 m) high. The recent invention of cast plate glass in 1848 mean that large sheets of cheap but strong glass could be used. It was at the time the largest amount of glass ever seen in a building and astonished visitors with its clear walls and ceilings that did not require interior lights, thus a "Crystal Palace". The name Crystal Palace came from the playwright Douglas Jerrold. On 13 July 1850 he wrote in *Punch* about the forthcoming Great Exhibition of 1851, referring to a 'palace of very crystal'. After the exhibition, the building was rebuilt in an enlarged form on **Penge Common**, at the top of Penge Peak next to Sydenham Hill, an affluent south London suburb full of large villas. It stood there from 1854 until its destruction by fire in 1936.
- The building at Sydenham was much larger than that at Hyde Park and the construction overran in both time and money. The layout of the exhibits was very different. Hyde Park brought together the industrial output of many countries of the world. Sydenham was an educational and entertainment centre with works representing the countries and the great civilizations and historic periods. The gardens contained 33 dinosaurs designed by the sculptor and natural history artist Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins (1807-1894) in 1854. He was advised by Sir Richard Owen (1804-1892) who became superintendent of the natural history department of the British Museum in 1856. Thanks to his efforts the natural history collections of the British Museum were moved to a new building at South Kensington (now

the Natural History Museum) designed by Alfred Waterhouse and opened in 1881.

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	Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, 1 May – 15 October 1851	



"Night and Day", marble sculpture from the tomb of **Giuliano de' Medici by Michelangelo**, 1520–34. In the Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence. His uncle had an identical name and his tomb is also in the Medici Chapel. This Giuliano was the third son of Lorenzo the Magnificent. He reigned in Florence after the return of the Medici in 1512 but he died young (37) in 1516. 'Night and Day' and 'Dawn and Dusk' were not allegories supplied by Michelangelo but by Benedetto Varchi in 1549. The 'Dusk and Dawn' tomb is Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici again often mistaken for the tomb of Lorenzo the Magnificent, his more famous grandfather buried nearby.

### From international manufacturing exhibition to theme park

### Crystal Palace

- It was designed by Joseph Paxton in just 10 days.
- It incorporated 10 million feet of glass.
- It took only nine months to build and cost just £150,000.
- Crystal Palace (Hyde Park) opened **1 May 1851 and closed 15 October 1851** and Crystal Palace (Sydenham) took from 1852 to June 1854.
- Roughly 6 million visited, roughly a third of the UK population at the time.
- When it first opened the price was £3 for gentlemen and £2 for ladies but it later dropped to 1s.
- It had the world's first public toilets, initially for men only, later for women and they cost 1d, thus to 'spend a penny'.
- It made a profit of £186,000 used to found the V&A, Science Museum and Natural History Museum.
- Colonel Charles de Laet Waldo Sibthorpe MP called for it to be removed and described it as a '*transparent humbug and bauble*'.
- The opening of Crystal Palace in Sydenham was **delayed** as it was decided that all the male statues had to have their **private parts** removed or covered with a stone

fig leave.

- In 1851 it was a **world exhibition** and each country had an area for their goods. In 1854 it was a '**theme park**' with educational areas showing world art.
- Attendance was 2 million a year from 1854 to 1884.
- There was a concert room with **4,000 seats**. The Royal Festival Hall holds 2,788.
- It was called the '**Palace of the People**' and was the world's first theme park with different shows and exhibitions as well as the fixed exhibits.
- It was **closed on Sunday** so working people could only go in the evenings or Bank Holidays.
- The standard entry price was 1s but for special events as much as 1 guinea.
- Royalty loved the palace and Queen Victoria and prince Albert were regular visitors.
- Charlotte Bronte,

The grandeur does not consist in any one thing but in the unique assemblage of all things. Whatever human industry has created you find there... It seems as if only magic could have gathered this mass of wealth from all the ends of the earth.