

Les Femmes dans l'art

WOMEN : ART : WORK





Joan Semmel. Aura (2016)
Oil on canvas.

Welcome

Editor's Notes

Women are visibly gaining power worldwide, but what is their position in the art world? Females have long been working in galleries, putting together exhibitions, and creating amazing pieces of art, yet the famous names who seem to be taking all the credit have largely been dominated by the male population.

As a woman, it is easy to feel discouraged by the facts. An audit in 2017 found that only 28% of artists represented by major commercial galleries in London were women. The gender pay gap still exists, and we continue to fight for equal status in our workplaces. However, the industry has made strides in -

the right direction. ArtReview's 2018 Power 100 list of the "most influential people in the contemporary art world" was 40% women, an improvement on previous years.

Comic artist Yumi Sakugawa was quoted on this subject, "I am aware of the fact that in the bigger scheme of things in the art and literary worlds there are still a lot of gaps as far as diversity and representation goes. That is part of my personal inspiration to make art and tell stories and have more representation for women and people of colour."

So, for many, this continued disparity only serves as motivation to work harder and push harder to develop in our careers. For me, a woman working in the art world today needs to be full of drive, passion, creativity and constantly feel inspired. Our personal experiences often guide the path of our work experiences, and this couldn't be truer for those surrounded by art.

The interviews featured in this issue reflect on women's experiences in the art world, interviewing females who work in a diverse range of roles across the industries, from photography, to film, to curating and so on. This is an inclusive celebration of women in art, giving recognition to their hard work and dedication.

We also discuss feminist ideas, artists and groups who continue to raise awareness of issues surrounding women's representation in the art world, highlighting the continued room for growth. We include articles on the activists Pussy Riot, as well as top female artists to watch.

We hope you find this issue equal parts informative and interesting. We believe that there is room for all women to get the recognition they deserve in the art world.

"There are many great women artists. We shouldn't still be talking about why there are no great women artists. If there are no great, celebrated women artists, that's because the powers that be have not been celebrating them, not because they are not there." – Joan Semmel, American feminist painter, professor and writer.

Happy reading,

Molly Brown

We would like to dedicate this magazine to our Working in the Art World Professor, Aislinn White. Thank you for guiding us through this course and opening up our minds to new and exciting opportunities in the art world.

Best Regards,

**Working in The Art World Spring
2019 Class**

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Feminism in Art:

The Pussy Riots

Words By Carley Bucknell

In 2011, a feminist Punk-Rock group emerged in Russia and became internationally renowned public activists for feminism and LGBT rights. Since then, a collective of eleven women, aged between 20 and 33 have staged countless guerrilla performances in public, often developing them into music videos and sharing them online, impacting a wider audience with their message.

These videos, seen less as music and more as art, critic the Russian Orthodox Church and the nation's President, Vladimir Putin. The women fought to remove the barrier and power dominance of a group over another, whether political or social, for example men versus women.

The Pussy Riots became most famous for their 2012 performance in the Moscow Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, after which three members were imprisoned for up to two years. The group were about 40 seconds into their song, which was calling onto the Virgin Mary to bring an end to President Putin's power, before being bodily removed from the premises.

By staging this performance in the church, the collaborative challenged the church's and Putin's attitudes on LGBT and feminism because the preconceived ideas

on ethics, -norms of decorum, familial and sexual relations, including non traditional, had been founded on religion.

While having affiliation with feminism is not illegal in Russia and the three women were arrested for "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" at their trial the court responded to their questions by declaring that 'feminism' was a dirty word in the Cathedral's eyes. Pro-Kremlin groups responded to the trial with anti-feminist slogans; "Pussy should sit in a cell" and "The women's revolt won't be allowed". The trial became, not about how Pussy Riot spoke out against Putin, but their activism of feminism which had cracked boundaries into traditional gender relations.

Besides protesting, they have also played more conventional gigs, appearing on Glastonbury Park Stage in 2015 on a military truck. They also toured in 2018 and made their first appearance at a U.S. concert. Most of their songs are also easily available for download under the collected name 'Ubey seksista' ("Kill the sexist")



NADYA
PUSSY RIOT
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Sharon Walters

Interview by Chandani Sarna

Sharon Walters is a black British artist of Caribbean heritage. She studied Fine Art at Central St Martins University of the Arts and continued to achieving a Postgraduate teaching certificate in post-16 citizenship education from the Institute of Education, as well as a degree in Social Sciences from the University of West London. Her work includes an interest in race, identity and gender politics. She has had a great deal of experience in working in many different aspects of the art world.

Chandani Sarna: What has been your experience as a woman working in the art world?

Sharon Walters: I studied part-time at Central St Martins for 7 years and graduated 8 years ago. During that time, I had a number of roles including Community Artist and Education Consultant. I first worked in the arts 20 years when I contacted a local school to ask if they would be interested in me delivering art workshops. That was the beginning of experiencing the art world.

What drew you to working in the art world? Why was it something you were initially passionate to follow?

I have always wanted to be an artist, ever since childhood. I love creating, it helps to relax me and make sense of my feelings

What does creativity mean to you?

Creativity means having an outlet to experiment, a place to make the rules, where the goal is feel free and have space to breathe.

What is the most valuable thing you have learned during career?

I have learnt not to give up, to remain focussed and to keep my options open. I have been a freelancer on and off for many years and being flexible has been an important strength throughout my career.

Do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career, and why?

I took a few years out to have my children. This definitely had an impact on my career choices.

Could you explain your work with BEAT (Borough of Ealing Art Trail), and your inspiration a little bit?

Seeing Ourselves' explores identity, beauty standards and race through hand assembled collage. The pieces use magazines and photographs and are inspired by botanical, natural beauty and urban scenes and the beauty of natural afro hair. I initially started creating the work in response to the lack of women with natural afro hair in women's magazines. I later named the series 'Seeing Ourselves' and realised it related to a self-portraiture book by Frances Borzello. There are very few black women featured in the book and it enabled me to open up to the lack of black women portrayed in a variety of settings

How do you manage to find a balance between your career and an artist as well as being a mother of two?

When my children were younger, I found it more difficult to find time to be creative, they are now 11 and 6 years old. As they got older, I realised that unless I made time for art, I would never be able to do it. Just before I started the series I started waking early in the morning and making art before the rest of the family woke up. I have a very supportive husband so there is someone to help with the children. I have a very strict routine and I now work most evenings mostly once the kids have gone to bed. If the children are awake when I am working, they respect what I do and are also very supportive and give me the space I need.

What made you move from social science to art and design? How did you end up working in the museum world?

I studied Social Science over 20 years ago as I was keen to get a degree but couldn't get a grant to study for a foundation in Fine Art. The best thing about my Social Science degree was learning about feminism and gender studies and cultural studies. The themes are still prevalent in both my art practice and throughout my working career. A few years ago, I was freelancing for a community arts organisation, I was hired by a museum to deliver some community projects on behalf of the museum. When a role came up at the museum, they asked if I would consider applying. I applied and got the job

.What would you say the main differences are woiing with heritage and contemporary art?

I lead on community outreach projects for a museum. There are lots of opportunities to work with contemporary artists and so I do not see the two as separate entities.

What has been one of the most enjoyable tasks you have completed while working in the art world?

I really enjoy making the work and exhibiting it. Creating the work helps me to relax as I need to focus while using a craft knife to make the handmade collages.

What do you hope to look for in the future in your career/ art field?

I hope to continue creating art work, making commissions, having exhibitions, leading art workshops.



To conclude the interview Walters, gave some advice to young women who aspire to work in the art world in the future; "I would advise young women to go for different roles, get as much experience as possible and not to be afraid to try new experiences."

Clementine Butler-Gallie

Interview by Eva Van Den Oever

Clement started out as a sales-assistant for a small gallery in Dalston, London called Hang-up Gallery. In 2015, she moved to Berlin where she started working as freelance cultural manager in the realm of artist studios and exhibition organisation. She has co-founded the charity Hangar 1, organising creative workshops in the refugee camps at Tempelhof in Berlin. Nowadays her focus is mainly on curatorial practices with a special interest in the artist from the MENA region, exploring the artistic exchange between the middle east and the DDR.

Eva Van Den Oever: What drew you to working in the art world?

The romantic idea of hanging out in artist's studios and a pseudo- intellectual desire of talking about art over dinner... luckily the art world is not all so vapid

Why was it something you were initially passionate to follow?

Direct interactions with artists were always an initial enticing factor. I was always inspired by artist's stories: what led them down the creative road, had they had to rebel against their parents to get there, and what work had they very nearly burnt in fury? People create the artworks that create the 'art world', so I guess I wanted to start there.

How would you describe your current endeavour, East of Elsewhere?

East of Elsewhere began as a project space for emerging artists, started by myself and three friends. We were lucky enough to get reasonable rent for an old apartment which had a large living room, something I had never come close to in London. We also had a spare bedroom, which we turned into a live-in studio and hosted international artists for month-long residencies, concluding in an open studio event. We began to get invited to put on exhibitions elsewhere, including an old bank on The Brompton Road in London, and in an abandoned hospital in Turin. At the end of last year, we decided to regroup as a curatorial collective and focus on curatorial presentations outside of the space to venture beyond the confinements four white walls can bring.



Photo by
Riccardo
Cagnotto

What inspired you to start for yourself, and why in Berlin?

Berlin is a city of artists, which meant that many friends were creating something. The initial drive was being surrounded by these artists who were often lacking space or confidence to show their work. As I mentioned above, East of Elsewhere began out of our living room, and simply out of pairing this space with the work of friends that inspired us. At the time the low rents and artistic energy of Berlin were a perfect fit for this, but as we move forward with the concept of more site-specific and time-specific curations the location is not limited to Berlin.

Having worked in both London and Berlin, what are the differences between these respective art scenes?

London is more commercial, Berlin is more critical. Maybe this is because Berlin is characteristically poor, but a lack of financial expectations can lead to less pressure to create purely what sells. There are many more differences, yet I do think as Berlin is changing fast, the scenes are growing more similar rather than apart.

What has been your experience as a woman working in the art world?

There have been many moments where I've forgotten that gender is a real issue, and others when I've wanted to rail against all men. I long for an art world where gender discrimination doesn't have to be a feature, but unfortunately, it has featured in my own experience, and sure most others.

Do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career, and why?

I have definitely been in misogynistic working environments that have left me feeling undervalued and low in confidence. But the truth is, you do always have control, even if it does not feel like it at the time. It took me a while to learn this, but I eventually realised I do not have to tolerate that behaviour or environment. I believe it is one of a number of reasons I wanted to start my own projects, so I guess it has held me back in the past but hope that it can only empower me as I move forward.

What is the most difficult aspect of being a woman in the art world?

Young women's opinions are often ignored and overruled in the context of patriarchal work environments. It is so important to speak out in these situations, which has been made easier since the Me-Too movement, but understandable often a very difficult process.

What aspects of the art world do you think could be improved, in regard to women?

Of course there are many, but let's not forget LGBT, ethnic minorities, disabled, religious, and aged groups. Many issues regarding gender are better in places than other minority groups

-tion participation, grant distribution, job selection are just some broad example areas that need improvement. Some areas, such as grant distribution and some elements of job selection could be tackled with gender anonymous applications, however further recognition of the issues by people with power privilege is the ultimate route to improvement

What advice do you have for other young women pursuing roles in the art world?

There is a utopian vision for the art world, and society at large, where discriminatory factors do not exist; no gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age or disability bias. There is still a lot of work to be done to balance out the playing field. However as it stands today, and as a woman in the arts, if one can enter the working environment with the power of an equal-gendered world, yet with the observation of the need to further include in whatever action one can, then we are each somehow implementing the change that may one day rid us of the need to still talk about such issues.

“There is still a lot of work to be done to balance out the playing field”

What would your ideal future art world look like?

Oh the dream would be that all companies with offshore bank accounts are made to pay back all their tax evasion over the years into a huge cultural fund, all non-profit cultural spaces and artist's studios receive a rent-cap forever, royalties for artists when their work is sold on the secondary market, greater responsibility of institutions, galleries, curators, schools and biennales to ensure equal representation of all minority groups on their boards and in exhibitions, and maybe to contradict myself, the future art world doesn't have to be taken so seriously!

Maayke Schuitema

Interview by Eva Van Den Oever

Maayke Schuitema is a practicing artist, specialized in the use of the linoleum print technique, and is continuously captivated by the role of the female in this world. Her work is autobiographical and challenges the boundaries of what is accepted within art. Her work can be admired in the Rademakers gallery Amsterdam, Project 2.0 The Hague and Smith Davidson Miami.

Eva Van Den Oever: What has been your experience as a woman working in the art world?

Maayke Schuitema: In essence, I think it makes no difference being a woman in the art world. What naturally strikes me is that the majority of the gallery owners are men and the artists who connect to the galleries are still more men than women. So in the art world the same principle applies as in the “normal world” with regard to the male / female ratio

What drew you to working in the art world?

In class I was the best drawer but it has never been a conscious choice. But being part of a family of artists it was an easy choice to attend the art academy, it seemed a logical consequence of my love for drawing.

Why was it something you were initially passionate to follow?.

My passion for this profession slowly came to me (it took time to grow on me). I went to the art academy, like a child from a family of doctors often studies medicine. It was familiar territory for me, but the love for the profession and in particular the passion and intensity that I feel now has only been a part of me for the last 10 years.

What advice do you have for other young women pursuing roles in the art world?

Work hard! The art world is a beautiful inspirational world. It is a privilege to be able to surround yourself with people making, selling, collecting and writing about art. Art is a form of communication in which the artist expresses her/his feelings, thoughts, and observations in a fictional way,

so it keeps you sharp, critical and open-minded.

So if you like it and you feel this is your world, stay in it but make sure you find your own uniqueness, copy-cats don't survive in the Art World

What is the most valuable thing you have learned during your career?

Don't make concessions, work hard and don't be afraid of other people's opinions

Do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career, and why?.

I don't think it held me back, but I feel that things are moving and changing concerning the balance. I think the time is now for women to step forward. So maybe these next few years it will be a privilege to express The Women's Movement in arts.

What aspects of the art world do you think could be improved, in regard to women?

The art world is the same as the rest of the world; still not enough women in high places like museum directors and female artists with important exhibitions in big museums.

What characterizes your work?

My recent work is more direct than ever. It relates to black and white photography and affiche art; it propagates, communicates and encourages reflection. The women in definite black graphic lines enter, BAM, directly.

Why is the feminine form prominent in your art?

My work touches on my own life and is therefore readable as a biography. The artworks reflect the delicate balance between private and public; my role as a daughter of a bipolar mother, my own motherhood, my position as an artist, my capacity as a partner and my involvement in the women's movement.

The liaison between the expression of body postures, empathy and moods are important tendencies and visual elements in my work.

Is this feminine? Well for I am a woman I think it is.

As a self-proclaimed feminist artist, what do you consider to be a feminist?

According to me the image of the woman is -also given in by the #MeToo discussions in the past one and a half year- depicted as too fragile and too suppressed. In my works I call this into question with images where abuse of power and oppression are not called into play, quite the contrary they show the acceptance of the game; feeling the biological intensity of the conquest yet remaining in your power. It's healthy. Strong women and men can handle this. It is what Feminism is meant for; the conviction that your gender should constrict neither your choices and opportunities nor your sexuality. My feminist images are born from a healthy mind and a sexual body. Nothing is as human and pure as the naked body. And sex is as old as humanity itself; it is our 'raison d'être'.



In your latest work, your visuals have become more graphic, what has inspired this development in your work?

Hailing from a family of artists, I was told that artists are expected to be part of the avant-garde: 'Artists are obliged to take on subjects that challenge taboos and boundaries; to transgress common values. Art needs to throw people off balance, evolve, cause annoyance and be engaging.'

But this can be told and not yet arrive for a long time. It took me 20 years of my artistic life to come to this point. The point where I really felt 'This is what I'm about, This is what I want to tell' only came to me after a 2 year sabbatical.

“Art for centuries has had the purpose of stretching the boundaries of what is considered decent and honourable”

What is your perspective on current feminist movements such as the #MeToo movement and the body positivity movement?

In the slipstream of #MeToo and despite the emergence of the fourth feminist wave, the art world seems to lapse into a cramp. Art does not allow for censorship so let it be unbounded and scandalous. Museums should not remove anything off their walls because of some people taking offence. Eventually the public will decide what is acceptable. Art for centuries has had the purpose of stretching the boundaries of what is considered decent and honourable. I call out for every female artist in the world to paint, sculpt, film, photograph or use whatever form to depict the female, the nude in all her manifestations. A deluge of female nudes in art created by women themselves. Let this time cause a rupture in the course of our art history which sees more than 90% of the female nudes depicted by men. It is up to us, female artists, to shape this social issue and lead the way!



Sian Milliner

Interview by Carley Bucknell

Sian Milliner is one of two project managers for Open House, London. She graduated with a BA degree in History of Art from Kingston University, after which she worked briefly as a receptionist and volunteered with a conservationist at a local museum in Maidstone. Sian worked as the Museum Coordinator for Dorich House Museum for over three years before moving to Open City.

Open City is a charitable organisation, promoting people-centred cities, with a year-round programme of events and initiatives serving the public, the education sector and the construction industry.¹ Under the umbrella of Open City, Open House is an ‘architectural festival’ and project which runs one weekend a year and gives the public free access to over 800+ buildings, walks, talks and tour

Carley Bucknell: What drew you to working in the art world?

Sian Milliner: I volunteered at a museum and I just really loved it in there, it was just a really nice environment where everyone was really friendly and committed to doing things. I got to do things like packing and handling objects, when I was nineteen, and met a conservator who gave me advice about the future and she convinced me it was good idea. So, after about two months of doing that, I applied to go to University to do History of Art, when I was at University I sought out jobs in art galleries and museums so that I could carry on getting more experience. I have just always really enjoyed being in them, it wasn't a specific career path I was going down, I was doing that thing where if I liked something, why not find a job doing it. I still never knew what I wanted to do, it was more like I just knew the industry I wanted to be in and that was the heritage culture industry.

What exactly does your job as Project manager entail?

So, it is the management and coordination of every aspect of the project, so that is everything from budgets to marketing, distribution of materials, funding, sponsorship, getting participants to take part in the project and coordinating volunteers to help out during the weekend. It is kind of everything that goes into the project, is then coordinated and managed by me and my colleague.

How does working at Open House differ from your last role?

There's more people, that's the main difference. They are actually very similar in terms of actual job roles. In the museum I was essentially the manager, coordinating everything and it is very similar things that I coordinate as part of my project manager role but in Dorich, it was more to do with the collection and 1930s building management and security and all of those things, that I don't necessarily have in my current role. So, it is very similar in terms of the way the

jobs are actually structured, it's just that in Dorich, there were more parts that I would have to handle, including the collections management and handling the maintenance of the building, which thankfully, I don't have to deal with in my new office. I still co-ordinate the team of volunteers, budget, marketing, social marketing, so most of it is very similar but the environment is very different. Here, I am in an office of ten people whereas in Dorich, it was mainly me

What are the differences, do you think, that you have found, between working in a larger versus a smaller institution?

I actually found it a little bit more difficult because when you are in a smaller place, you kinda know that everything is your job. Whereas when you are in a bigger place, you can't get on with things straight away because you have to check 'oh am I supposed to be doing this, or are you doing it, or is this their job'. It's more of a compromising act in a bigger place, whereas in a smaller place, you kinda have more ownership over it and you can just sort of be like, well this is my house, I am the full time member of staff and I am just going to do it my way. In a bigger place, you actually have to check with other people first. So, it is very different and having worked for three years in a place where I was the only person, it was a big learning curve. But then being in a bigger organisation has other benefits, like having people to talk to, having people to share ideas with, to problem solve with. So there are benefits and I think I do prefer having other people around but it is very different and it is difficult to sit down and quietly get on with something when you have ten other people in the office. It's not a large organisation, if you went to somewhere like the V&A or the British Museum, I can only imagine what that would be like.

What is the most valuable thing you have learnt during your career?

I think, just to go with your gut, if you feel like something is not quite right, it probably isn't. Whether it's just that you're managing something on a project and you think 'hmm, i'm not so sure about that' or if it's at Dorich and two guys come in and you think they are trying to rob the place, things like that. Just trusting your instinct on different things because when you have been trained to work in those environments and experienced, you do actually know what you are do

ing, even if you don't think you do. You pick up a lot more than you think you have when those situations come up, so, yeah I think the most valuable thing that I have learnt is trusting my instincts.

What would you say the percentage is of women in your offices?

Everyone is a woman, except the director and we actually have more male volunteers than female volunteers, which is quite unusual for the sector. I haven't quite figured out why, I need to ask them what their motivations for volunteering are. Yeah, I wonder if it is the architectural aspect, some of them used to things like town planners, that was their careers. So, I think it is more the architectural interest but yes, we do have the industry standard of sort of 80% male and 20% women and we definitely don't do that. In terms of actual staff structure, the director is male and everyone else is female, which is actually very similar to all the other cultural institutions that I have worked in. It has always been a man right at the top and then everyone is female.

“I wouldn't want to be hired because of the fact that I am a woman”

Do you think it has an impact of the way the office runs?

I don't know, I sort of feel like it doesn't affect the way the company is run but in my experience, when it has been like that, when the hierarchy has fallen that way, it has been the men at the top who are more concerned about it, than the women. But maybe, that's because the women are at the bottom just getting on with their job and men are higher up with more thinking time, to think 'oh, maybe this isn't right'. I am feeling like a lot of people in the industry resent the fact that a lot of directors are male, which I completely understand but I am more of the opinion that I wouldn't want to be hired because of the fact that I am a woman. I would want to be hired because I was good at the job and not because they needed me to boost diversity ratings or something like that. I would rather it be based on my experience and whether they thought I was the best person for the job.

What has been your experience as a woman working in the art world? E.g. Do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career?

I don't think it has yet but I do worry the older people I get, people will look at my job applications and think 'oh she is probably going to get married and have a baby, so do I want to hire her if she is going to go on maternity leave'. I do worry that will happen eventually, I don't think it has yet. Especially when they ask you on those diversity forms, if you are married or have a dependent, even though it says they won't use it against you on any applications but, if you have never worked in HR, you don't know what will happen in those forms, but yeah, as of yet it hasn't happened.

What advice do you have for other young women perusing roles in the art world?

Just go for it, practice makes perfect for application forms and show you have taken the time to do things like volunteering, worked where you can. Everyone only wants a volunteer or an unpaid intern so it is really hard to get experience but anything you can get while you are at university and have the comfort of student loans, just go and do. Then learn to sell the skills that you have got because you will have all the experience that they are looking for, it's just a matter of explaining what you do and that might take a while to figure out how to say it. And actually, when you get a job and get in the industry, you realise it is not actually that different to how you imagined it would be but I would also say that there are plenty of other jobs in galleries and museums, that aren't just curators or researchers. You don't have to strive to be a curator, it's not the only job in the artworld. My main advice would be, when you are trying to figure out what you want to do, just go on arts-jobs and download job descriptions and figure out which ones sound good. If you find one that looks really amazing and you don't have everything you need in order to get that job, go about trying to get the experience you need, so that you can apply for it in a year's time. Just go for it, you don't need to let being a young woman in the arts industry put you off.

Thank you, do you have any other comments on about the artworld or about being a woman in the artworld.

I think, actually, the art sector has more women in it than people realise and I think because there are so many Charles Saatchi's and Nick Serota's of the world that people associate the art world with rich white men but actually the majority of the people that do all the hard work aren't middle-class white men and there is a lot more opportunities than people realise. Just because those are the people that have their name on the bottom of posters and get in the newspaper for this, that and the other, or have quotes about them in magazines, it doesn't mean that they are the only people who do all the work. And if you go to an art gallery and just wait to see who is walking around with a lanyard and staff card, the majority of people you find will be women. Because, I think women are more dedicated to work in the art sector because it is so competitive and you have to be really really motivated to do it. I think people need to stop worrying if there are opportunities for women and start worrying if there are opportunities in general.



'Dora Gordine, Youth Louis John, 1944-5, Kingston University, Dorich House Museum.

This bronze sculpture is Sian's favourite by the Estonian woman artist Dora Gordine. The sculpture is exhibited at the Dorich House Museum in Kingston, the studio home of Gordine and the museum which Sian worked in before Open City.

Mayotte

Magnus-Lewinska

Interview by Molly Brown

Mayotte is a photographer, that was born in France but lived in England for most of her adult life. She now commutes between the UK and France where she has established a multi-cultural arts centre. Her portraits have been exhibited at many venues including the National Portrait Gallery, the Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, the London Institute of Contemporary Art and the Bibliothèque National. Her photographs have also been reproduced internationally in the press and magazines, alongside many published books and collaborations with her photographer husband.

Clare Freestone, Associate Curator of Photographs at the National Portrait Gallery, London, said - "Mayotte's harmonious compositions, which demonstrate an understanding of light, composition and form, often contradict complex narratives. In constructing many of the photographs, furniture has been shifted, clothing suggested, emblems and symbols moved inside of the frame, so that everything we can see combines to give the portrait meaning."



Molly Brown: Firstly, could you tell me a little bit more about your background in photography?

Mayotte Magnus-Lewinska: I came to photography fairly late in life after practicing classical dance, guitar, choreography and painting. Each of these arts helped refine my powers of observation and interpretation. It took me a long time to forget the brush, the smell of the paint, the quiet of the studio. I eventually started photography in the 1970s and have continued since.

What drew you to working in the art world?

:In the 70s, I longed to concentrate on a proper career, and happened to meet Bruce Pinkart (an advertising photographer), who suggested I have a go at photography. It had never occurred to me. But I never looked back and later won prizes in the Ilford International competition. This is also the time when photography began to be sold at auction, to be collected seriously, when the Department of Film and Photography began at the National Portrait Gallery.

Why was photography something that you were passionate to follow?

I started my career photographing the nearest to me, my little daughter, younger sisters, eventually enlarging my interest to friends and occasional models. I want to discover the atmosphere of person. I rarely take close-ups but find a setting which reflects and explains in on image the subject's own story.

Out of all of your exhibitions, which have you found the most successful/enjoyed the most?

It is difficult to choose between exhibitions. My next one on Marcel Proust in Chartres (France) is exciting, and it was already shown in Toulouse in 2016. I also had, with my husband Yuri Lewinski, one called "Appointment" for the 100 years of Royal Warrant holders, for the launch of our book on the subject. I had it again in my home in France which is open to the public.

As a photographer working in both England and France, how do your professional experiences differ between the two countries?

I did not work in France very much, I am really a "British" photographer. I have mostly just had shows in France, so cannot necessarily comment on the difference.

What has been your experience as a woman working in the art world?

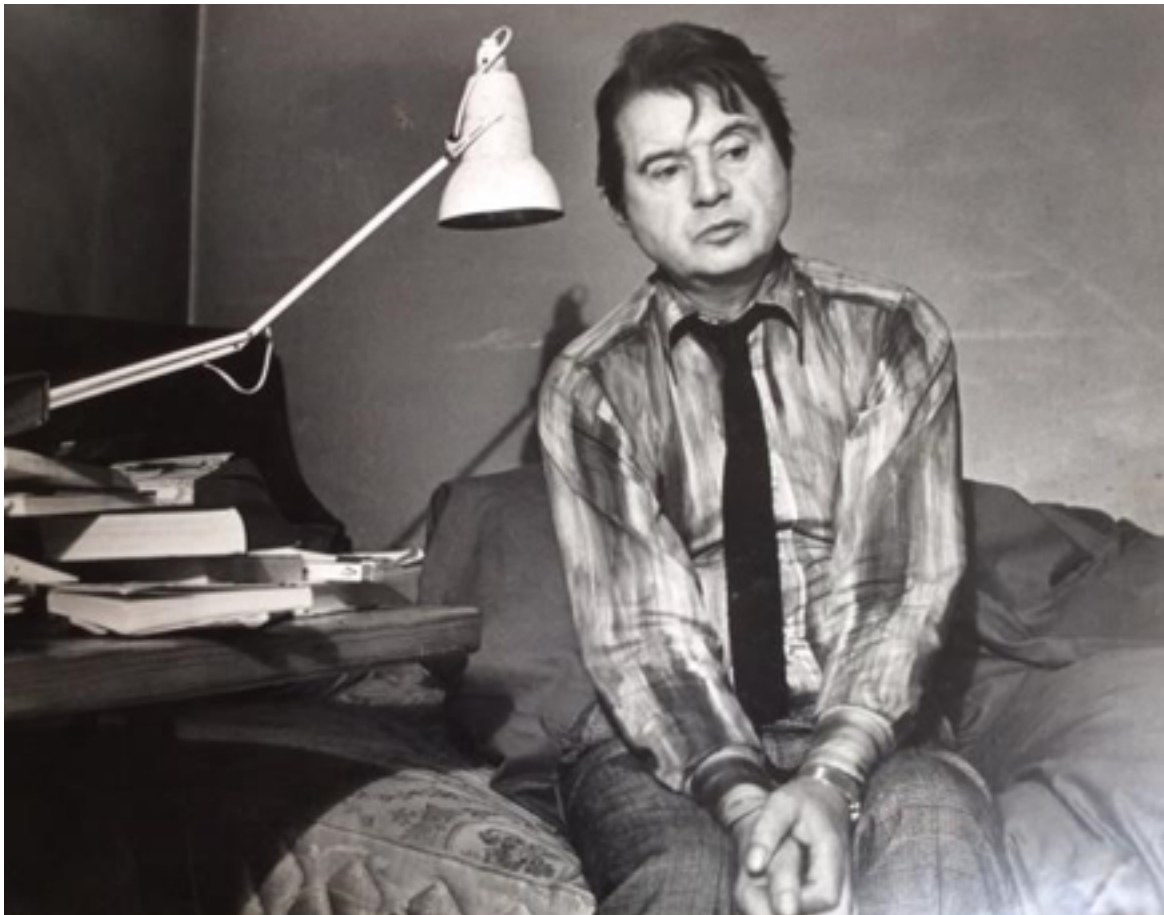
Being a woman was no problem, maybe because I am not very competitive or necessarily ambitious. Being French in England was almost an asset somehow. When my career in photography began, the National Portrait Gallery exhibited Mayotte Magnus: Photographs of Women. This was a decade that shaped the way photography is seen.

What advice do you have for other young women perusing roles in the art world?

I wish the best of luck to young women, as the modern world is tougher than it used to be. In my profession at least, everybody "takes" photos, so the sensitivity is not intense, and the eye gets tired. There is little awareness of the difference between a great picture and an informative one. They have to find their own unique way of seeing the world, their own vision.

What is the most valuable thing you have learned during your career?

Being a keen observer, noticing what others may not notice, empathy towards my fellow beings and continuous amazement about the infinite variety of situations and personalities.



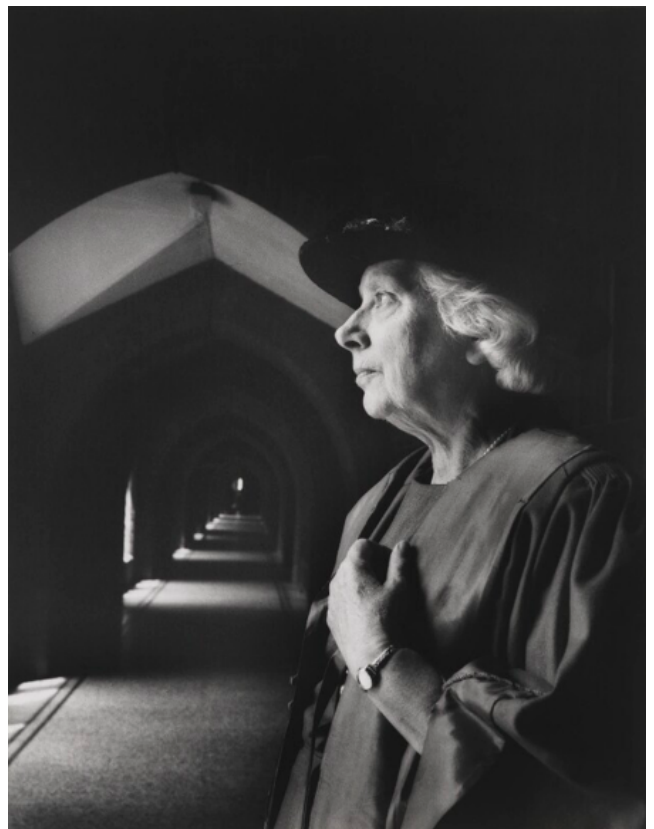
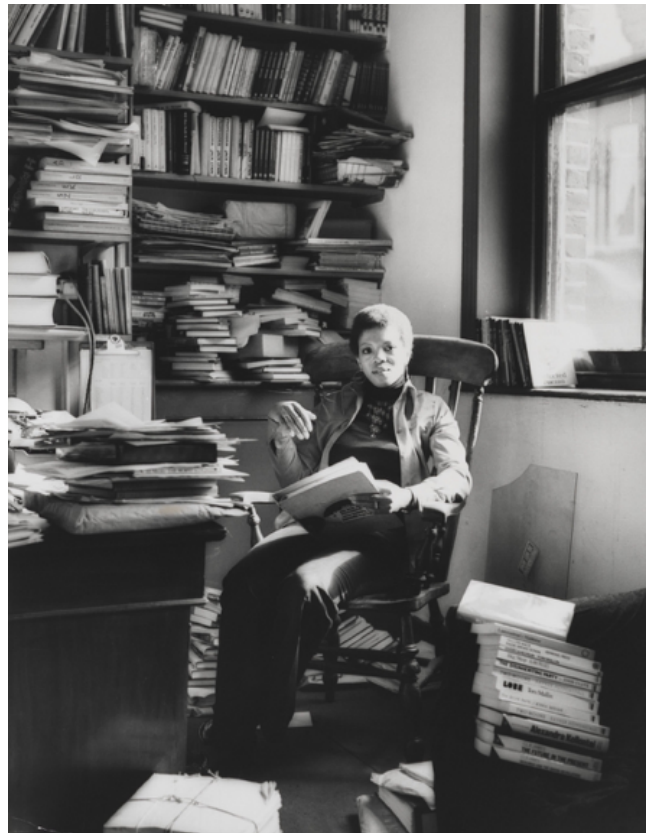
Do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career, and why?

Not at all. In 1977 I was commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery to photograph a hundred eminent British women. The exhibition lasted for two months and drew many visitors. For the 50th anniversary of the Women's vote, these portraits were shown in the Houses of Parliament. It has also been shown around the UK. At the Institute of Contemporary Art in London in the 1980s I also collaborated with four other women artists on the theme of men seen by women. This was called "Women images of Men". It could be seen as an asset to be a woman as it has given me these opportunities.

"I wish the best of luck to young women, as the modern world is tougher than it used to be"

What do you see for the future of the art world and your career?

It is difficult to foresee the future of the art world. It seems to me that the "contemporary art" is at a dead end and cannot find a new direction. As for me, being 84 years old but very busy and fit, I am grateful that the National Portrait Gallery gives me again the accolade, that I shall have a show in May in France, that my work is not forgotten. I am arranging my archives also, and I have a project that is not photographic, more painting and esoteric.



Nives Widauer

Interview by Molly Brown

Nives was born in 1965 in Basel, Switzerland. She began creating video installations, which was followed with various Art Awards, scholarships and exhibitions. During her career, her inspiration has grown into what is now her recent work, playing with the interface between analogue and digital. She has also expanded her talents to painting and sculpture in the last couple of years.

Her works have been shown in many places, including at Kunsthau Zurich, Museum Belvedere Vienna, Austrian Cultural Forum New York and SPSI Shanghai.



Molly Brown: Firstly, could you tell me a little bit more about your background, growing up in Basel and living in Vienna?

Nices Widauer: I was born in Switzerland and graduated from the Class for Audiovisual Arts at Schule für Gestaltung Basel. I now live in Vienna, having called it my home for about twenty years. I used to live in the police headquarters building but recently moved to this apartment that overlooks the Naschmarkt

How has working in various countries differed?

It's more about the people's character than the nationalities of different countries. I've been mainly treated in nice way everywhere I go. The food is best in Italy!

What has been your experience as a woman working in the art world?

It has been a complex one, but not negative. The main and only problem is that women artists are not earning as much as their male colleagues.

What drew you to working in the art world, particularly to working with film?

It was video actually. It was my special interest in new media that drew me to art. During my first exhibitions I was also creating video installations, live video sets, for various theatre and opera houses, and independent semi-documentary movies.

Why was it something you were initially passionate to follow?

I did not choose it – It chose me. It just happened

Out of all your projects you have completed, which has been your favourite and why?

There were so many projects I cannot really pick one. Each has been different, but I loved them all.

What future exhibitions or projects do you have to come?

At the moment, I have exhibitions to come at Kunsthaus Zürich and Centre Culturel Suisse Paris. I will be part of an expedition to the Arctic in August. I am also to prepare a project with the New York Philharmonics.

What advice do you have for other young women pursuing roles in the art world?

Stick to your dreams and be stubborn! Enjoy life! Dive into your cosmos.

“Dive into your cosmos”

What is the most valuable thing you have learned during your career?

Que sais-je? (Montaigne) – What do I know?

Do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career, and why?

It's hard to say. Most probably my career would have been very different being a male artist. I feel blessed that I have been able to make so many projects – so let's see what the future brings! I love being a woman.

Aindrea Emelife

Interview by Kate Vannorsdall

Aindrea Emelife is a 25-year-old art critic, independent curator, gallerist and presenter from London.

Starting at The Courtauld Institute of Art, where she completed a BA in History of Art, she has quickly gone on to become a ground-breaking new voice in an art world otherwise steeped in tradition. Having already presented art films for such prestigious institutions as The Royal Academy of Arts, The Hepworth Wakefield Museum, The Dairy Art Centre, The Courtauld Gallery, Waldemar Januszczak and ZCZ Productions, she is currently working on writing and presenting her first full length art documentary. Aindrea is set to become one of the leading on-screen voices for the art world now.

Vannorsdall: How would you describe your job?

Aindrea Emeline: I am a curator and a gallerist and writer. I have two spaces in London, one in Mayfair and one in Regents park and I showcase emerging artists. It's a cratering platform for me. I also consult for hotels such as Blake's Hotel in South Kensington, as well as the Nobu Hotel Shoreditch. Lastly, I run an artist residency with my friend who is an artist. I do a lot of different things basically. I'm an art polymath.

What drew you to pursue a career in the art world?

I was brought up in Kensington where I studied at Queen's College. I had an amazing Art History teacher who inspired me to study it at A-levels and ultimately motivated me to study at Courtauld Institute of Art where I received my Bachelor's degree in Art History. After my first year I landed an internship at the Royal Academy where I worked at their magazine and made a short film for them on Frieze London. My experience writing for them made me want to further pursue a career as an art critic. It all fell into place because I realized I loved art but I wasn't really into making it. This brought me to think about art and its relevance in the world



The Deccan Traps Opening. March 28th, 2019. Photo by David Ownes

I was drawn to how art seems to mirror and embrace the challenges that we face and that made me want to be a part of it, particularly in a career where I can champion new artists. What I do is quite a stray from what a traditional Art History degree teaches you, but I think having a stark contrast between looking at what's happened and sort of mirroring the methods and seeing what hasn't been done and using that to propel new ways of thinking through the new art has always excited me

Have you faced any challenges as a woman working in the art world?

Yes, definitely, especially as a young women people may not take you seriously. I have had people be surprised that I've gotten so far, not necessarily because I am a woman, but sometimes I feel like that might be part of it. I have also had people take the mick a bit because I'm young and female. That being said, there are also a lot of strengths when it comes to being a woman in the art world.

There is a lot of visibility. Being a woman in the art world is also very trendy right now, so I've been able to boost engagement in art amongst my following. Being a woman in the art world also puts a lot of emphasis on your achievements because it is traditionally a very male driven society. While there are some great female gallerists, the industry is still mainly driven by males. However, dynamics within the industry are changing and that has motivated me to be a part of it.

What advice do you have for other young women perusing roles in the art world?

Seek out someone who is doing something similar to what you want to do and ask them for advice. Most people, especially women, like to be a mentor of some sort because they understand how hard it can be to get your foot in the door of the art industry. Another thing that I can't emphasize enough – do internships early - they are extremely beneficial.

I think I concentrated more on work experience than my degree, not to say that you shouldn't focus on your degree, but make sure to also put some focus on outside experience because when you go out into the real world that experience matters a lot, arguably more. Lastly, network. You can learn something from everyone. You never know what a connection might lead to.

What led you to start Aindrea Contemporary?

I was doing it quite ad hoc anyway, quite casually. I was doing more writing before and then I just became excited by the idea of showing art and how an exhibition could be treated like a visual essay. I was doing that part time, which led me to want to focus full time on curating and seek out new artists. I was going to a lot of graduate shows and realized that there were so many artists I wanted to work with and show, so I decided to take the plunge and start Aindrea Contemporary. By having a company and a brand name it has allowed me to be very cohesive and make a name that is synonymous with great emerging art, which gives the artists I represent a kind of 'coolness' and accessibility by being somewhere that people know.

“Being a woman in the art world also puts a lot of emphasis on your achievements on your achievements because it is traditionally a very male driven society. While there are some great female gallerists, the industry is still mainly driven by males.”

What do you look for in emerging artists?

Innovation, which is hard because a lot has been done, but there are still new ways of doing things. For example, Oli Epp, who you've met, has very unique visual language – I have not seen figures like that ever. And I think there is still a scope for creating new things and thinking originally, even if it's just thinking of a past idea, but transforming it to make it more contemporary. Also, being experimental with medium because so much is moving forward in terms of technology, like augmented reality and AI and stuff like that. There are so many different opportunities and so using that to their advantage is really appealing to me as a curator. Basically, what I look for are artists that have strong visual language and innovation in their technique.



The Deccan Traps
Opening
March 28th, 2019.

Photo by
David Ownens

Who is your favorite female artist at the moment?

Jadé Fadojutimi— she is a young artist who graduated a couple of years ago. Her visual language is so strong and she does something in her large scale works that's so confident for someone her age. What strikes me most about her work is that it identifies with the maleness that has come to characterize Abstract Expressionism, which I find so interesting coming from a young woman. This is evident in the way that she attacks her work without worry or insecurity – she just goes for it – and she is completely unashamed of her methods. When you hear her talk about her art she is very focused and very direct. It does not make her appear vulnerable. She's not cocky. When looking at her work closely you see that every stroke holds purpose. I think her work is honest, confident and layered and creates an in-sync movement.

What is the process of curating a show? Where do you begin?

It changes every time. I begin with idea in my head. I then brainstorm with friends. Sometimes I get inspired by other shows that I've seen. For instance, recently I went to Kettle's yard in Cambridge, which was the home of Jim Ede during the 1950s-70s. It is curated in the same way that he kept his house. He would put paintings really low because he liked looking at them while sitting down. He did these funny installations where there would be a Miro

and then next to it would be a stone that he found on a beach. He was really interested in playing with the idea of value because if it's on a plinth you're probably like whoa what's that. Is that an important art work? I also consider past theories of curation inspiring and use them to come up with new and exciting concepts. I'm inspired by that in terms of how I curate, I look at how other things are done and at how I can be innovative in my own methods of showcasing art. I usually get ideas of curating by looking at specific art works and get inspired by museums, like the Fondazione Prada. I like thinking on big and small scales. Lastly, a lot of my inspiration comes from literature – my last show was based on the Lotus Eaters. Meanwhile, my up and coming one, The Deccan Traps, is very much based on sci-fi and a narrative. Another past show was based on an essay on colour theory, and a surrealist journal by Aime Cesaire. Academia is usually the starting point, then going from that and turning it into something way vaguer and more accessible is what I like to achieve in my shows.

What are your plans for the future?

I'd love to have a permanent space. I'd love to exhibit in a different country. I'd like to write a book about curating and emerging art. I have several upcoming shows: The Deccan Traps, Sisyphus in Retrograde, as well as some exciting collaborations with Nobu Hotel Shoreditch and Blake's Hotel in South Kensington.

Dr. Claire Wintle

Interview by Kamilla Pascua

Dr. Claire Wintle is a Course Leader and Senior Lecturer at the University of Brighton. She, along with her colleagues at the university and the Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton & Hove, have recently created a new MA – Curating Collections and Heritage. With quick succession through her academic career, Dr. Wintle shows how working in the art world doesn't necessarily mean going head on after university.

Kamilla Pascua: What has been your experience as woman working in the art world?

Dr. Wintle: When I was working in museums, before I came to academia, there were lots of women around and lots of opportunities for me. I did not notice the impact in terms of my gender. What happens is you get to this stage of your career, around the mid-career, and realize that career breaks can happen in the result of small children. The kind of opportunities to do things outside of your working day are limited because of your family responsibilities. That is when men are increasingly whizzing up their career, where there are some blocks to female progression. That is something I am beginning to see around me.

In terms of my career so far, what I have is some amazing, strong female role models in both worlds. My previous work in museums, I was managed by two extremely dynamic, strong women with both their own young families who managed their careers and lives with great aplomb. Also, kind allies are important to me. Where I currently work, there is a ton of female colleagues, and I have had a positive experience in being supportive and inspired.

It's shocking there's more female than male professors.

In this department, there is interest in fashion and dress that tend to draw in more female than male students. University of Brighton's head of school is male; however, my head of program and the deputy head of school are women. It's almost a problem! It turns out, we need more men in our department

From your experience, do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career, and why?

To be honest, I don't feel it has [held me back] to this stage. I have two young children, three and five, and had career breaks – maternity leave - to care for them. I think this responsibility to take a break fell to me as a woman. As for integrating myself back into the community - for example, I have been asked to be a trustee at a museum recently and I just don't have the time. But is that because I'm a woman or a parent? My husband wouldn't have the time either! I think I am lucky. Part of it is because of the strong women mentors and allies I have had.

Do you think your experience had led you to work as a lecturer and course leader?

Yes, I see myself as a mentor for my students. My students teach me a great amount. I have a group of students who are fairly representative of society more broadly, from all sorts of walk of life. They inspire me, but I hope to be sympathetic, supportive and help them. Guide them through the things that are going to be most enriching in terms of their academic development. Gender is something. So many of my students are women, it's almost not unusual. The vast majority are women so sometimes I feel sorry for the guys and feel the need to integrate them into the group. While I am a great champion for my female students, I don't feel I give them special treatment.

I noticed you studied American studies as an undergraduate. Do you think that pushed you off to focus on decolonization in your works?

It certainly had an impact. I spent a lot of time in my undergraduate level studying African American experiences of slavery. While doing my MA in Museum and Gallery Studies, I spent a lot of time looking at representation of world cultures, especially Asia, in UK mediums. I have become quite interested in postcolonial theory and decolonial practices in the museum setting for as long as I've been interested in museums, and that has been inspired by my American Studies degree.

How did you go from curatorial treatment to teaching, what is the transition?

I don't think there is a particularly sharp line between academic practice and museum practice. Many curators are scholars who contribute to knowledge through the research and exhibitions that they do. They write about their collections and contribute to scholarly information in that way.

After my studies, I went to work in museums for public programming and museum education. I worked in collections. Then an opportunity came up to work in Brighton Museums at the same time as studying for a PhD at the University of Sussex. It was such a wonderful opportunity to do both academia and collections care at the same time. Afterwards, I

was able to do both, through free-lance work and my work with the Museum Ethnographers Group, the subject specialist network for curators working with world cultures collections. Although I am formally in the education sector, I get to work closely with colleagues at the museum. I live through my students who do placement in the museum sectors!

Brushing up on your MA studies in Manchester, how do you think you and your team's teaching style differ from your experience during your studies?

Well, in Manchester, I had mainly female tutors too. Teaching wise, we did have seminars, but it was quite lecture heavy and I don't teach like that. I much prefer students' knowledge to develop through collaborative discussions. I am very interested in what my students have to say and sharpening their ideas through interaction rather than me telling them the 'correct information' in front of the class. I wonder if that's a gender thing. The didactic transmission of expert knowledge, does seem to be like a patriarchal way of teaching somehow. But my teaching style follows wider accepted pedagogic theory. The theory of learning does tend to, now, stress that social learning, building on prior knowledge, are the ways forward. And lectures are not really the best way to teach.



After meeting you at the masters evening, I am curious to hear how the MA is as it is halfway through?

It is a twelve-month program for full-time students. It is great I love it. It is a Huge amount of work, as it usually is for teaching something new. The students are demanding, but in a really good way. They are very representative, coming from different backgrounds, particularly in terms of their learning requirements. I have high hopes for this sector if people are coming with those kinds of life experiences and abilities. It's a pleasure to teach.

Were there any obstacles that will impact how you will alter the program in future years?

The museum sector and higher education have significant funding blocks. What I like to do is work closely with colleagues. Team work really makes me a better teacher and become more thoughtful. But the problem is colleagues in the museum and gallery sector don't always have the time to collaborate. They are overstretched. I do think that's a stumbling block.

Since it is your first year with the MA, what is thmost valuable thing you learned so far?

I am interested in collaborative practice. Historical collaborations between museum practitioners and designers are one of the things that I write about in my research. This year has been the most collaborative period in my teaching. I work closely with my colleague, Louise Purbrick, who leads the History of Design and Material Culture MA. It has been lovely working with her. I've also been working really closely with the Keeper for World Art at Brighton Museum, teaching together with her. I really cemented my understanding of collaborative work this year and that's been a real treat.

With all this accumulation of knowledge in curation and teaching, what advice do you give young women who are pursuing roles in the art world?

Make the most of your learning opportunities and see them beyond grades. You might think some things aren't relevant, or don't interest you, in your studies, but there is likely to be something significant in there somewhere. Say "yes" to everything and throw yourself into things while you've got the time as a younger person. Make the most of those opportunities. Volunteer! It's critical in the art world

“Make the most of your learning opportunities and see them beyond grades. You might think some things aren't relevant, or don't interest you, in your studies, but there is likely to be something significant in there somewhere”

Jess Farran

Interview by Rhiannon Alia Dexter-Deliz

Jess Farran is a photographer and Art Director currently based in New York. She was raised in Michigan and graduated from Savannah College of Art and Design. Her work has been included in publications such as i-D, Milk. xyz, and wonderland. Jess has also completed several exhibitions and received many awards including 2017 -PDN: The Look -First Place, Debut Fashion Photographer.

Rhiannon: What advice would you have given yourself at the beginning of your career?

Jess Farran: Don't try to shoot like anyone but yourself. I was literally trained to shoot like other photographers early on so I had to undo that way of seeing once I got older. Take all the technical advice you can but let your creative mind stay wild.

How has your work evolved over the course of your career, throughout your different experiences?

I've fully stopped caring what other people thought of my work, and it's truly set me free. I went through a really hard and depressing time a few years ago, and it allowed me to just make art and let go of anything that was irrelevant. Once you get over that hurdle you start making art for yourself and yourself only, and that's when I saw the biggest difference.

What was one of your favourite previous projects?

I really loved "The Sex Series". I started it my junior year of college and it was one of the most formative projects for me. It was a sort of self-self-prescribed art therapy, but then just snowballed into this really intimate and beautiful community of anonymous people that just felt comfortable embracing their idea of sex. That was also the first project where I didn't give a fuck what anyone thought.

What is the most valuable thing you have learned during your career?

You're the only one in charge of your own success. Don't make excuses because you didn't work hard enough; and most importantly: stay humble!!



@Jess_Farran

Is there anything you don't like about the art world?

I honestly don't like anything about the art world. It's very pretentious and extremely inclusive. A lot of famous artists are actually terrible artists, there's just a lot of hype around them. Obviously there are exceptions to that but it's still so annoying to see. I also hate the way social media has influenced art, people will literally ask their followers what type of art they want to see. I honestly don't get it, why would you ever ask someone else what type of art you should make? It also just enhances copy culture so no one can come up with an original idea.

What is your dream project?

It's a secret ;)

What has your experience been working as a woman in the art world?

It was okay at first but has gotten a lot better. Once you're a photographer and not an assistant it's easy to build your own team of talented and respectful people. When you're just starting out as an assistant it's honestly terrible. You always have to dress and act a certain way so the big bad white man doesn't think you're just the little baby girl on set.

What drew you to working in the art world? Why is it something you were passionate to follow?

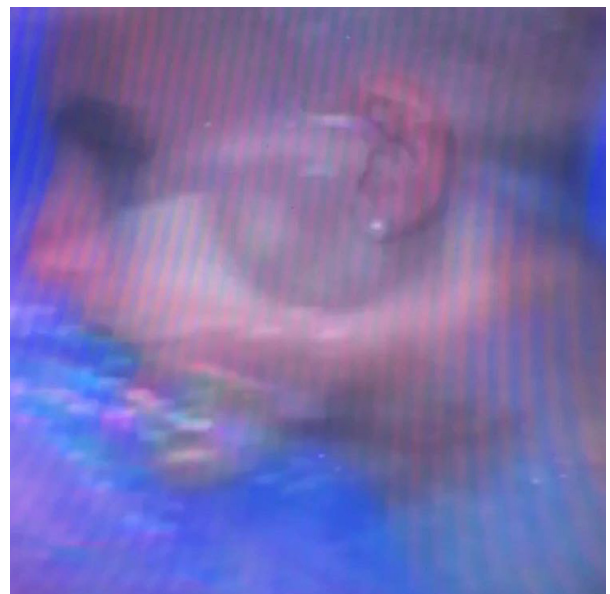
Nothing really, it's honestly just in my DNA. My third grade teacher asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up and I said "photographer" and that was that. I also remember my kindergarten art teacher being in awe that I guessed that it was actually a snail in Matisse's collage "The Snail". I actually feel very lucky that the only thing bringing me into the art world was art itself.

What advice do you have for other women pursuing roles in the art world?

Try to be a boss. Don't do anything for free unless it's emotionally worth it. Until you're able to support yourself making what you want to make, try to do as many projects as possible for as many different people, you will always learn something and you'll be so much better because of it. I've shot weddings, sport events, manufactured warehouses, surgery equipment, styled videos, done makeup, produced, casted, etc, etc, etc, and I've learned something from every single thing I've done even if it was terrible.

Do you think being a woman has helped or held back your career, and why?

I honestly can't say. I'm sure at times a little of both, but I know I've definitely had to prove myself as a woman so in the end I hope it's helped.



@Jess_Farran

Female Artists to watch in 2019

Words by Rose Evelyn

In the wake of movements such as #MeToo and in a landscape of progressive ideals, we are reminded of the power of women. For centuries, across cultures, women have been subject to certain roles or tasks delineated by patriarchal societies. But in 2019, the world seems more inclusive and supportive - not just of females in varied occupations. The artists below explore personal creativity in ways unbound by gender, age, ethnicity, or background. Their work does not discriminate or attack, but rather speaks for itself as substantial and unique. Presenting some of the many female artists you should know in 2019:

Ilana Harris-Babou

Harris-Babou, from New York, takes performance and video art as a reflection of American society. Her work explores modern day themes of obsession and culture in often sardonic ways. She was recently featured on Cultured Magazine's "30 Under 35" list.

Elle Pérez

Pérez is an artist from the Bronx who holds a BFA and MFA in Fine Arts and Photography from Yale. Their work explores the intimate levels to which one can become familiar with the human body, often across gender lines. They also helped found an international artist collective called Junte, which is based in Puerto Rico.



In Bloom 2018 / E lle Pérez

Elle Pérez

Von Hellermann was born in Germany, where she received her BFA before obtaining her MFA from Royal College of Art, London. Her paintings can be likened to dreams, with vivid pigments and whimsical movements. She has exhibited her work internationally and is currently based in London.



Aluvius 12 , 2016 Miguel Abreu Gallery / Raha Raissnia

Raha Raissnia

Raissnia, born in Iran but now living in New York, is greatly influenced by her childhood experiences with family. Through the mechanisms of drawing, photography, sound, and film, she creates a reconstructed cinematic experience.



Elephant in the Room 2 013 /
Sophie Von Hellermann



Two Big Shows for the Price of One - Limited Edition 13 of 25
Collage, 27.6 H x 39.4 W x 0 in
Fei Alexeli

Benedetta Pedrana

Interview by Matilde Tariello

Benedetta arrived at Sotheby's in March 2013 as an intern in the 19th century European paintings department. Before that, she interned at Bonhams and then and Phillips. These internships followed a Masters in Modern and Contemporary Art at Christie's education. Before that she graduated cum laude with a BA in Management of the arts at IULM. She then completed her MA in Economics and Management of the Arts.

Matilde Tariello: How did you get into this work?

Benedetta Pedrana: In August 2013, I entered the Floating Scheme – a sort of graduate scheme that allows you to rotate within different departments depending on their necessities. 6 months into that job, a vacancy came up as an administrator in the 19th century department. The person leaving that job was being promoted and liked me from my intern days so she offered me the job. The floating scheme had allowed me to acquire a rather good knowledge of the administration side which I had rather enjoyed so I decided to take the job. One year into this job, the then-head of the department left the company so everyone sort of went up one step and therefore a cataloguer job became available. Again, as I had also expressed interest in this side of the job, they asked if I wanted to apply and I did. That was when my career as a cataloguer started

What is your favourite part?

It is definitely the business side. It is always exciting to go in someone's home to see the artwork and pitch for it. There are so many aspects to take into consideration when pitching and I think that ultimately sellers go with whom they like best. Empathy is a really key part of the job.

What is your least favourite part, or most challenging?

Putting together the catalogue can be challenging. Deadlines are tough and short – we need to turn around a finished catalogue in 3 weeks. This means having everything shot, catalogued, researched, and the layout needs to be figured out. It can get quite stressful especially when works arrive in late.

What do you think the future industry will look like?

We are definitely going towards having more online sales. However, I do think this can work well for contemporary art and multiples (prints, jewellery, ceramics...) but I am still rather sceptical this will be the future for fine art. I still think most people like to see art in person before buying it, or via someone they trust outside Sotheby's. I also think that, if we don't try to educate young people to 19th century art and old masters, these areas will slowly start to lose their appeal. That is why we have been trying to work with

world-wide famous people such as Victoria Beckham to promote some of our sales. We will have to constantly find new hooks for younger generations

“This is a tough field and I believe women will always have more obstacles and difficulties to overcome, for ‘natural reasons’ (we have ovaries) or not.”

The Tate held an entire programme on questioning ‘What does it mean to be a woman in the art-world?’, how would you answer that?

I honestly don't think being a woman in the art world differs much from being a woman anywhere else. We face the same problems and challenges career wise. If anything, the art world is certainly used to women and to having some powerful women in charge. Having said that, as it is an industry that pays very little, women still have to face the usual problems, i.e. personal decisions as pregnancies are delayed as it takes many years before we can get decent salaries. The problem of the art world is that most people join this world knowing they cannot expect much and that careers will be slow, because there is plenty of demand and little space for everyone. This mentality

certainly does not encourage big employers such as auction houses to change the way they operate.

Do you think the art world is easy for women to work in? How did you find it when you started compared to now?

No, I don't think the art world is an easy place for women to work in but, as I said, I don't think it's too different from finance or other fields. However, I have never worked anywhere else but in the art world – so what do I know!

My experience as a woman has not changed in time. I have, like many others, been judged based on my age and on future life plans (yes – women get asked the question ‘do want to have children’) but I see this happening all over the world so I am not shocked anymore. I really am not a hard-core feminist nor someone who is appalled by some behaviours so I am afraid you just won't hear me cry for injustice.

This is a tough field and I believe women will always have more obstacles and difficulties to overcome, for ‘natural reasons’ (we have ovaries) or not. That should just make us tougher - although I am not saying that fighting for equal pay and gender equality is not as important.



Samira Addo

Interview by Chandani Sarna

Samira Addo is a self-taught portraiture artist; she has some education at the Art Academy and with Cass Art. She is currently working in a very unique style of painting that could be considered as contemporary realism utilise unusual colours and touches upon the subliminal aspects within the subject. Addo recently she won Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year 2018.

Chandani Sarna: What has been your experience as a woman working in the art world?

Samira Addo: It's quite a challenging experience to navigate, especially from not having studied in the field and being fairly new to this world

What drew you to working in the art world? Why was it something you were initially passionate to follow?

I have always been interested in arts and craft and took art up to A-Level. I then started a career in engineering but realised I still had a passion for art and painting. There was a transition from engineer to artist which was accelerated by winning Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year.

What is the most valuable thing you have learned during career

Follow what you think is right for you, rather than what may or may not be accepted by others.

Do you think being a woman has helped or held you back in your career, and why?

I'm actually not sure if it has had a huge impact on my career thus far, I'm fairly new to the art world.

I can say however that I've been made aware of the inequalities and underrepresentation of women in the art world, particularly during my experience being a part of 'not 30%' at The Other Art Fair, October 2018

What is your inspiration for your unique creativity style of painting?

How I paint is a result of how I feel most comfortable painting and of exploration and learning what I like and dislike. I found my initial inspiration from artists on Instagram producing work in the contemporary realism genre.

Do you think winning Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year 2018 has affected how people see your portraiture?

I can't say it has affected how people see my portraiture in terms of the visual aspect itself, but I do feel it has increased what people would regard as the value of my work

Did the being on the Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year develop your style of portraiture?

Yes, through practicing for the show I learned to evaluate what I like and dislike about my own work more, which lead to further development in future works

How did you respond personally and artistically to working under the pressure and in the competition?

Personally, I felt like I had nothing to lose so I just focussed on doing myself justice. There were some initial nerves as the situation is so different to how I'd work but I soon just became lost in working on my painting. Artistically, I was aware of the limited timeframe and had to make adjustments according to what I felt was necessary to do.



Obama Portrait, 2018. @Mimma_art

What has been one of the most enjoyable portraits you have completed as an artist?

The Obama portrait, as this was the first time I'd experimented with a bright background and everything fell into place organically.

What advice do you have for other young women perusing roles in the art world?

I would say just keep pursuing and practicing your craft even if there isn't a particular external purpose for it.

The Gucci Museum, Florence

Review by Matilde Tariello

“What is fascinating in Alessandro Michele’s work is his rewriting of time and nature, akin to a psychedelic trip that frees cognition and knowledge, and that finds the value of today exactly in archaeology.”

-Vogue, 2018

The Gucci museum is a must-see for all fashion addicted when in Florence. The brand Gucci has a long history and a strong brand identity, which has evolved throughout the years and is now flourishing under the vision of creative director Alessandro Michele. He has been designing for the brand since 2015, and he curated the museum and the new Gucci shop. Michele developed a museum-like shopping experience according to his idea that shopping is like visiting a museum as garments are considered pieces of art (Madsen, 2018). Florence is a pivotal element in the brand’s identity and history, as it was the native city of G. Gucci and it has always inspired the different artistic directors with its beauty, history, art and artisan culture

Michele’s vision for the museum, the shop and his collections in general, is inspired by libraries and shops of antiquities he visits in Florence, where, as he says, the most magical things can be discovered. Moreover, Florence encouraged his “Renaissance street-wear” for Gucci (Madsen, 2018).

The Gucci Garden Galleria is located in Palazzo della Mercanzia: a historical residence which dates back to 1337 in the heart of Florence. It has hosted the Gucci museum since 2011, and it has been reopened and refurbished last January with an entirely new approach and vision (Street, 2018). Gucci Garden exhibition opened last

January and was wholly conceived by Alessandro Michele. It is accompanied by the Gucci Garden shop, which sells limited edition items, the Gucci Osteria by Massimo Bottura (a three-Michelin-Star chef) and the Galleria on the first and second floor. The idea that the museum also has a restaurant and a shop on the ground floor aims to create a unique space where the visitor experience can be total (Gucci, 2018). Michele intended to make fashion more accessible to everyone; therefore, he designed small and cheaper pieces; such as pillowcases, boxes, cases which are inexpensive compared to other items particularly for the Gucci Garden Shop (Madsen, 2018). It works as a sort of souvenir shop we would find in any other museum just a little bit pricey but convenient for the Brand’s standards

The exhibition space is organised on two levels where different areas and aspects of the brand are presented to the audience. Each room explores different aspects of the brand. The first floor rooms are entitled Guccification, Paraphenalia, and Cosmorama. “Guccification” is something we see particularly nowadays with the constant and increasing iconic value given to the brand. This idea goes back to the iconic monogram which stands for the initials of the founder Guccio Gucci. The two GG became soon a hallmark in the 1970s-fashion industry and in the 1980s Gucci played a role in the pop culture..

The second room, called “Pharaphenalia”, aims to prove the stability of the brands identity. It presents designs from the 1960s on the right-hand side, and Tom Ford’s designs for the brand on the right. The third room of this floor is entirely consecrated to “Cosmorama” exhibiting a series of bags, suitcases, hat boxes, beauty cases and trunks which have determined the beginning of the brand. All those items define a jet-set lifestyle which is the core of Gucci’s clientele. The second floor of the Galleria is entitled “Garden Galleria”. It is a space where reality and fantasy, past and present, are combined. It draws upon Michele’s idea of the designer as an alchemist and the elements exhibited are all building up the brand’s history and mythology.



The last room of the exhibition is probably the most significant and interesting part of the museum. It is entitled “Ephemera”, and it is a sort of archive which contains clothes, objects, and accessories which showcase the brand’s evolution over the years. It also includes original material and working tools such as patents for models, workbooks, catalogues and magazines with editorial features and advertising pages. All those precious objects are exhibited in glass cases and grouped according to the year of belonging. The visitor can enjoy this historical journey accompanied by the rhythm of the fashion shows projected on the walls (Wall Label)

The Gucci Garden Galleria is not structured as the visitors are free to get lost, discover, dream and get inspired. However, this freedom can result in distractive and senseless for those who expect to visit a standard fashion exhibition where items are showcase chronologically or grouped by category. However, the mixture of past and present can be inspiring if we think that in fashion anything is set but part of evolution (Annamari and Clark, 2018) Primacy in the exhibition is given to represent how the new collections fully embody the Gucci tradition and how each item stands for evolution rather than drastic change and disruption with the past. Highly significant is the work done by A. Michele who is giving a new face to the Brand keeping it ahead of time.

“The Gucci Garden Galleria is not structured as the visitors are free to get lost, discover, dream and get inspired.”

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**And thank you to all the interviewees for their
time and participation:**

Samira Addo
Clementine Butler
Aindrea Emelife
Jess Farren
Mayotte Magnus
Sian Milliner
Benedetta Pedrana
Sharon Walters
Nives Widauer
Dr. Claire Wintle
Maayke Schuitema

A very special thank you to Martin Winter for
printing this magazine.



