



Nok Head, YUAG 2010.6.137



Chinese Slipper, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991.231a

Making Women Visible in the Art History Classroom and Beyond
Virtual Colloquium March 25th 10:00 am - 2:30 pm EST
Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC)
Women's HERstory Month
Zoom ID: 698 804 3747

10:00 - 10:10 am Welcome address

10:10 - 10:30 am "Turn Up the B-Side: Centering Underrepresentation in the Pre-Modern Art History Survey," Elizabeth Pugliano, University of Colorado, Denver

The art history classroom is always a place of push and pull, give and take. Efforts to diversify and globalize art history courses abound, yet they remain subject to curricular standards, student expectations, lingering notions of an essential canon and the practical limitations of time. Speaking to these challenges, this brief talk shares two strategies — "alternative Art History cards" and a weekly "Reflect-Respond-Discuss" process — that have subtly centered issues of representation and inclusion in the classroom. Together they have opened space within standing programmatic requirements for marginalized examples and excluded perspectives, helping make more visible art history's many, exceptional women.

10:35 - 10:55 am "Upending the Canonical Narrative Across Gender, Race, and Culture in Art History," Sooran Choi, BMCC – CUNY

In lieu of the landmark exhibition, *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and Atlantic, 1945-1965* (2016), Damian Lentini, the curator at Haus der Kunst, notes tracing the paths of artists and their works reveals

cross-cultural networks in a nuanced world of cross-fertilization. Organized in collaboration with global scholarship, *Postwar* was one example of a growing body of global study that aims to dismantle the center/periphery model and diversify Euro-American white male centrism in art history. Referencing various landmark cases, my paper discusses how to effectively incorporate previously underrepresented artists into standard art history courses that require the conventional genealogy of art history to be taught--by shifting the existing narrative on canonical artists, in a way that emphasizes multi-directional networking among artists of various racial, cultural and gender backgrounds.

11:00 - 11:20 am “Women’s Work: Dress, Craft, and the Re-Contextualization of the Parthenon Friezes,” Neville McFerrin, University of North Texas

The Parthenon is normatively presented as a monument to idealized masculinity and imperial ambition; even Athena becomes the object of the penetrative gaze, her agency receding behind the desire to interpret her body. This paper seeks to de-centralize rhetorics of imperial identity and Athenian masculinity in classroom discussions of the Parthenon’s visual program. Through close visual analysis and an integration of material culture, students are invited to consider not the forms of women’s bodies, but the activities that they undertake. Focusing upon depicted cloth, it highlights women as makers, rather than consumers and wearers, undermining dichotomies that present women as passive recipients of both masculine attention and masculine resources.

11:25 - 11:45 am “Women of Agency: Teaching Female Patronage in the Renaissance,” Trinity Martinez, Queens College – CUNY

This pedagogical presentation will explore methods for incorporating female-centered topics in survey and Renaissance elective courses. This approach to shedding light on the multifaceted roles of women during the Renaissance is one that does not completely detract from the traditional canon but, instead, diversifies and enriches the course content by highlighting the presence and achievements of women in the early modern period. Two case studies of female patronage will demonstrate how women, specifically Christine de Pizan (1364-c.1430) and Isabella d’Este (1474-1539), contributed to the production—and collection—of famous works in France and Italy.

12:00 - 12:30 pm LUNCH BREAK

12:35 - 12:55 pm “Artistry in Clay: Women’s Roles in Ancient Nigeria,” Kimberly Minor, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Ceramic figurative sculptures from Nok and Ife are among the most ancient of sculptural forms in West Africa with the earliest dating to 500 B.C. The Nok produced a wide assortment of terracotta sculptures representing both animal and human figures. Geometric patterns on the sculptures --angular eyes, arched eyebrows, asymmetrical hairstyles-- speaks to an art form that demanded careful planning. Scholarship tends to exclusively focus on the cultural function of the terracotta sculptures, despite a rich potential to explore the social and gendered dynamics of ancient ceramic production. By crediting the artistic contributions of women, scholars can provide greater insight into the social structure of ancient Nok culture.

1:00 - 1:20 pm “The Hidden Lives of Things: Teaching the Anonymous Women Artist of Premodern East Asia,” Carolyn Wargula, Williams College

Korean *bojagi* cloths and embroidered Chinese lotus shoes have long been relegated to the confines of folk art, considered unworthy of serious inquiry due to the anonymity of their female makers. And yet, these material objects help us recover the texture of premodern East Asian women’s everyday lives and show us how they depended on things to negotiate their relationships within dominant modes and ideologies. This short talk will present an assignment to help students think critically about issues of gender, agency, and representation that will ultimately problematize male-dominated art historical canons and elite perceptions of art.

1:25 - 1:45 pm “Women Artists as Activists: Art and Justice in the Classroom,” Caterina Pierre, Kingsborough Community College – CUNY

As students become more involved in activism for global justice, it is important that educators provide inspiring role models. Some of the most important activists of the past 50 years have been creative individuals and included among them are artists such as Lorraine O’Grady (racial justice), Agnes Denes (climate justice), and Yoko Ono (global peace movement/anti-gun violence). My brief discussion will focus on three artworks by these artists -- *Art is...* (1983) by O’Grady, *Wheatfield-A Confrontation* (1982) by Denes, and *Imagine Peace Tower* (2007) by Ono -- to be considered as entry points to discussing their works in an undergraduate setting.

1:50 - 2:10 pm “Re-thinking the master narrative: Women in the history classroom,” Nicole Lopez-Jantzen, BMCC – CUNY

Traditionally, undergraduate survey courses cover political, economic, religious and social history, areas in which women’s contributions have been underrepresented, especially in the modern period. This talk will discuss ways to make women’s contributions in these areas more visible but will also argue for a re-thinking of the history curriculum to de-center an organization based fundamentally on men’s experiences and what men have deemed important. While topics such as the history of sexuality and women’s history are often studied separately, this talk will discuss the importance of bringing them into history survey classrooms.

2:10 - 2:30 pm discussion and closing remarks

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