NOW YOU SEE US
WOMEN ARTISTS IN BRITAIN 1520–1920

16 MAY – 13 OCTOBER 2024

LARGE PRINT GUIDE

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CONCOURSE

Concourse

CLOCKWISE FROM EXHIBITION ENTRANCE

NOW YOU SEE US
Women Artists in Britain 1520 – 1920

[Concourse Image]
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VISITOR INFORMATION

The exhibition features over 200 objects including paintings, sculpture, photographs and archive items.

Lighting levels in the gallery may vary.

Large print guides are available at various points in the exhibition.

Ear defenders, ear plugs, magnifying glasses, reading overlays, ramble tags and communication cards are available on the shelf below.

There is seating in some rooms and portable stools are available at the exhibition entrance.

The Changing Places facility can be accessed through the Clore Gallery. Please ask a colleague for directions.

Toilets are located outside the exhibition space on the ground floor.

[Credits]
NOW YOU SEE US
Women Artists in Britain 1520 – 1920

Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain 1520–1920 is in partnership with

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This exhibition has been made possible by the provision of insurance through the Government Indemnity Scheme. Tate would like to thank HM Government for providing Government Indemnity and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England for arranging the indemnity.

Curated by Tabitha Barber, Curator, British Art, 1550-1750; with Tim Batchelor, Assistant Curator, British Art, 1550-1750 and Amy Lim, exhibition researcher.

Photography section selected by Hope Kingsley, Curator, Education and Collections, Wilson Centre for Photography; **Being Modern** section selected with Alicia Foster, writer, curator and art historian.

The exhibition texts draw from the **Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain 1520-1920** exhibition book, edited by Tabitha Barber with contributions from Clare Barlow, Tim Batchelor, Amy Concannon, James Finch, Alicia Foster, Eliza Goodpasture, Melissa L. Gustin, Jenny Head, Alice Insley, Hope Kingsley, Amy Lim, Stephen Lloyd, Hannah Lyons, Jan Marsh, Emma Merkling, Patricia de Montfort, Katy Norris, Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Kate Retford, Catriona Seth

and Alison Thomas.

As the world's largest independent insurance brokerage firm, Lockton is committed to promoting greater cultural awareness and supporting all communities. That is why everyone at Lockton is delighted to support **Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain 1520–1920.**

This ground-breaking exhibition demonstrates how women overcame barriers to establish themselves in the art world, with female artists challenging what it meant to be a working woman and paving a new path for generations to come. We are honoured to champion art that aligns with our vision and shared values of independence, diversity and inclusion. At Lockton, we aim to cultivate an inclusive working environment where every Lockton associate, regardless of gender, can reach their full potential.

EJ Hentenaar – CEO of Lockton Europe

Portrait Graphics Outside of the Galleries

Left to right
Mary Beale, **Self-portrait** 1681 © Tate Photography,
Angelica Kauffman, **Self-Portrait** c.1770-5 © Ramsbury Manor Foundation,
Sarah Biffin, **Self-portrait** c.1821 © Karl Lundquist, photographer,
Elizabeth, Lady Butler, at work in her studio © Tate Photography,
Laura Knight, photographed by Bassano Ltd 1936 © NPG Images,
Edmonia Lewis, photographed by Henry Rocher c.1870 © National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,
Gwen John, **Self-Portrait** 1902 © Tate Photography,
Olive Edis, **Self-Portrait** 1918 © NPG Images,
Lucy Kemp-Welch at work in her studio © Tate Photography,
Artemisia Gentileschi **Self-portrait as the Allegory of Painting (La Pittura)** c.1638-9 Royal Collection Trust/ © His Majesty King Charles III 2024,
Louise Jopling, **Through the Looking Glass** 1875 © Richard Taylor Fine Art,
Mary Grace, **Self-Portrait** 1760s © Santa Barbara Museum of Art

ROOM 1

ROOM 1
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

NOW YOU SEE US: WOMEN ARTISTS IN BRITAIN 1520–1920

Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain 1520–1920 celebrates over 100 women who forged public careers as artists. The exhibition begins with the earliest recorded women artists working in Britain. It ends with women's place in society fundamentally changed by the First World War and the first women gaining the right to vote. Across these 400 years, women were a constant presence in the art world. **Now You See Us** explores these artists' careers and asks why so many have been erased from mainstream art histories.

Organised chronologically, the exhibition follows women who practised art as a livelihood rather than an accomplishment. The chosen works were often exhibited at public exhibitions, where these artists sold their art and made their reputations. Most of the women featured belonged to a social class that gave them the time and opportunity to develop their talents. Many were the daughters, sisters or wives of artists. Yet even these women

were regarded differently. **Now You See Us** charts their fight to be accepted as professional artists on equal terms with men.

Many of the exhibited works reflect prejudiced notions of the most appropriate art forms and subjects for women. Others challenge the commonly held belief that women were best suited to 'imitation', proving they have always been capable of creative invention. From painting epic battle scenes to campaigning for access to art academies, these women defied society's limited expectations of them and forged their own paths. Yet so many of their careers have been forgotten and artworks lost. Drawing on the artists' own writings, art criticism, and new and established research, this exhibition attempts to restore these women to their rightful place in art history. **Now You See Us** aims to ensure these artists are not only seen but remembered.

Please scan here to view the exhibition texts online

Please scan to hear stories of seven firsts by women artists

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
Invention

1778–1780
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X88511

This painting is one of four allegorical roundels representing the **Elements of Art** that Kauffman was commissioned to paint for the ceiling of the Royal Academy's Council Chamber. In this work, a figure representing 'Invention' looks upwards for inspiration. The Academy's first president, Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), claimed that a painter's gift for invention was their power of committing a mental picture onto canvas. At the time, this form of artistic 'genius' was considered the exclusive preserve of men. Women artists were regarded as 'imitators' incapable of complex creativity. Here, Kauffman presents invention as a woman.

In 1768, a group of artists signed a petition seeking royal permission to 'establish a society for promoting the Arts of Design'. These signatories would become the founding members of London's Royal Academy of Arts and the Royal Academy Schools. Of these 36 members, just two were women: Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser. It would be over 150 years before another woman was elected a member of the Academy.

ROOM 2

ROOM 2
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

WOMEN AT THE TUDOR COURTS

There are significant gaps in our knowledge of women's artistic lives in the sixteenth century. As is the case for many artists in this exhibition, their lives are poorly documented and often hidden behind those of their husbands and fathers. The problems this presents are evident in this room.

Susanna Horenbout (1503–1554) and Levina Teerlinc (c.1510s–1576) are among the earliest women in Britain to be named as artists. Their reputations are clearly recorded. In 1521, Horenbout's skill was admired by the German painter and printmaker Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), and in 1567, both artists were praised by the Italian historian Lodovico Guicciardini (1521–1589). Yet no works by Horenbout have been identified, and those attributed to Teerlinc are not certain.

Horenbout and Teerlinc were both daughters of Flemish manuscript illuminators and were likely trained in their family workshops. Both arrived in England to work at the court of

Henry VIII. But as women, they were not employed as artists. While Horenbout's brother Lucas Horenbout (1490–1544) was Henry VIII's painter, she served Anne of Cleves as one of her Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber. Teerlinc served Elizabeth I likewise. This does not mean that they did not paint – at court, their artistic talents would have been a distinguishing skill – but, as is a common feature of this exhibition, written histories have failed to record their activities.

Working in a different context – as a scribe and calligrapher – the works of Esther Inglis (1571–1624) can be identified. Inglis authored more than 60 manuscript books and included her name and self-portrait in many. Raised in Scotland, she may have learnt the art of calligraphy from her mother, Marie Presot (active 1569–1574).

[Case 1. Embedded]
Left to right

British School 16th century
Elizabeth I

c.1560–1565
Watercolour on vellum

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88773

Teerlinc was first recorded in England in 1546, when Henry VIII awarded her a large annual pension of £40. The payment was continued by subsequent monarchs until her death in 1576. She is recorded as a ‘paintrix’, although Elizabeth I employed her as one of her Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber. These two images of the Queen have both been attributed to her.

British School 16th century
Elizabeth I

c.1565
Watercolour on vellum

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88774

Attr. to Levina Teerlinc c.1510s–1576
An Elizabethan Maundy Ceremony

c.1560
Watercolour on vellum

Madresfield Estate, England
X88961

Teerlinc appears in documents recording the New Year gifts exchanged between Elizabeth I and her courtiers and household servants each year. Teerlinc's gifts to the Queen were painted images on card. Some were single portraits of the Queen, and others showed her among groups of courtiers. The similarity of this image to these recorded descriptions led to it being attributed to Teerlinc.

Attr. to Levina Teerlinc c.1510s–1576
Portrait of Katherine Grey, Countess of Hertford

c.1555–1560
Watercolour on vellum in a box of turned ivory

Victoria and Albert Museum
X88748

Not all the miniatures attributed to Teerlinc over the decades are still believed to be by the same hand. However, some share characteristics that indicate they are by the same artist. They include these miniatures of Elizabeth I, Katherine Grey, Countess of Hertford, and an unknown lady with her pet marmoset. Common traits include imprecise strokes, subjects with puffy eyes, and a bluish tone in the whites of eyes.

Attr. to Levina Teerlinc c.1510s–1576
Portrait of a Lady holding a Monkey

Watercolour and bodycolour

Victor Reynolds and Richard Chadwick
X90091

[Case 2. Embedded]
Left to right

Esther Inglis 1571–1624
Book of Psalms

1599
Ink on paper

The Governing Body of Christ Church Oxford
X90069

Note: book will be removed and replaced by a facsimile partway through the exhibition for conservation reasons.

Esther Inglis 1571–1624
Book of Psalms

1599
Ink on paper, facsimile

X90069

Inglis created more than 60 handwritten books as special gifts for distinguished individuals. This book was presented to Elizabeth I. It contains 17 different scripts in different sizes, demonstrating Inglis's calligraphic skill. Sometimes, the script has been manipulated to form a pattern on the page. Here, Inglis draws herself. Her self-portraits are the earliest known by a woman in Britain. Inglis's portrait mimics a printed plate.

Esther Inglis 1571–1624
Page from Book of Psalms

1599, printed 2024
Ink on paper, facsimile

Z89450

Esther Inglis 1571–1624
Page from Book of Psalms

1599, printed 2024
Ink on paper, facsimile

Z89451

Esther Inglis 1571–1624
Fifty Octonaires on the vanity and inconstancy of this world

1607
Ink and watercolour on paper

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88775

Note: the page will be turned partway through the exhibition for conservation reasons.

Inglis was the daughter of French Huguenot parents who settled in Edinburgh in the 1570s as religious refugees. Inglis's books of psalms and poetry express her humble piety. This work was made later in her life when she was living in London. She presented it as a New Year's gift to Henry, Prince of Wales, in 1607, perhaps in the hope of patronage.

Artemisia Gentileschi 1593–1652
Self-portrait as the Allegory of Painting (La Pittura)

c.1638–1639
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88776

Gentileschi claimed that 'all the … Princes' displayed her self-portrait in their galleries. In addition to this work, Charles I owned another self-portrait, which is now lost. Here, Gentileschi uses her own image to portray the allegorical figure of Pittura (also the Italian feminine noun for painting), who she depicts in a working apron before an easel absorbed in the act of creation.

Artemisia Gentileschi 1593–1652
Susanna and the Elders

c.1638–1640
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88777

Likely commissioned by Queen Henrietta Maria, this work was displayed in her Withdrawing Chamber in Whitehall Palace. The subject is an Old Testament narrative on virtue and faith. Susanna, bathing in privacy, is spied on by two elders who attempt to sexually assault her. When she resists them, the men accuse her of adultery. Susanna is arrested and about to be put to death until the men are questioned, and her innocence is revealed. Here, Gentileschi depicts Susanna as vulnerable and fearful, shielding her nakedness. She returned to the subject throughout her career.

[Wall Text]

ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI

Italian artist Artemisia Gentileschi arrived in London in c.1638–9 by invitation of Charles I. Like other European rulers, Charles I employed artists of international reputation to signal the cultural sophistication of his court. Gentileschi had prestigious patrons across Europe, including the Grand Duke of Tuscany and Philip IV of Spain. She was the first woman to be a member of the Academy of the Arts of Drawing in Florence, and in Rome, her house had been 'full of cardinals and princes'. Gentileschi's fame as an artist was augmented by her status as a woman.

In London, Gentileschi worked for Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria. Records suggest she produced seven works for the royal collection. These included self-portraits and large history paintings, with subject matter drawn from classical history, mythology, and the Bible. Only the two displayed here are still known. Gentileschi often placed women at the centre of her works, depicting narratives that celebrate their strength and virtue. **Susanna and the Elders** is an example of the kind of work for which Gentileschi was celebrated.

Gentileschi achieved in her lifetime what many women who

came after her had to fight to attain: she was a professional artist who ran her own studio, was a member of an art academy, worked from life models and was ranked as a serious artist alongside men. Despite this, Gentileschi's status has fluctuated over time, and the artist has faded in and out of art history.

Early accounts of Gentileschi's work focus on her personal life as much as her painting. Like many of the women artists who came after her, the details of her biography continue to dictate interpretations of her work.

ROOM 3

ROOM 3
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

THE FIRST PROFESSIONALS

In 1658, historian William Sanderson (c.1586–1676) published **Graphice. The use of the pen and pensil. Or, The most excellent art of painting.** The publication lists contemporary artists practising in England. He includes four women working in oil paint: 'Mrs Carlile' (Joan Carlile), 'Mrs Beale' (Mary Beale), 'Mrs Brooman' (probably Sarah Broman) and 'Mrs Weimes' (Anne Wemyss). Carlile and Beale are believed to be two of the earliest British women to have worked as professional artists. Very little is known about Broman or Wemyss beyond snatches of information in archives.

This short list highlights how unusual it was for British women to pursue art as a profession in the seventeenth century. Women had little agency over their own lives and were subject first to their fathers and then their husbands. Limited to the domestic sphere, they were not expected to conduct public lives. Many women painted privately with no thought of turning it into a career. While young men began as

apprentices or assistants in the studios of professionals, this route was not open to most women.

In the seventeenth century women writers, poets, playwrights and artists began to give voice to those questioning their secondary status and petitioning for women's rights. They argued that it was lack of education, not 'weak minds' that limited their opportunities. This fight for equality and access to education runs throughout the exhibition.

Mary Beale 1633–1699
Self-portrait

1681
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X89033

Beale painted her self-portrait throughout her life. Many of them were paired with portraits of her husband. This one, painted in 1681, is on the unusual support of bed ticking, traditionally used to cover mattresses and pillows; its distinctive weave can be clearly seen. It was made at a time when Beale and her husband Charles were experimenting with different canvases. Beale regarded her marriage and her working partnership with her husband as a 'friendship of equals'. From 1671, they ran their portrait business together, from their home in Pall Mall, London.

Mary Beale 1633–1699
Sketch of the Artist's Son, Bartholomew Beale, in Profile

c.1660
Oil paint on paper

Tate. Purchased 2010
T13245

Mary Beale 1633–1699
Sketch of the Artist's Son, Bartholomew Beale, Facing Left

c.1660
Oil paint on paper

Tate. Purchased 2010
T13246

In the late 1650s and early 1660s Beale and her family were living on Hind Court, off Fleet Street in London. She painted privately and had a painting room in her home. Her husband had a civil service position as Deputy Clerk of the Patents. Portrait sittings of family and friends were often social occasions, with conversation and dinner afterwards. It is in this period that Beale produced small oil sketches on paper

of family members, particularly her two young sons. Whether they relate to larger oil on canvas portraits is unclear.

Mary Beale 1633–1699
The Young Bacchus

c.1660–65
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by Moyse's Hall Museum, West Suffolk Council Heritage Service. Bequeathed by Richard Jeffree through Art Fund, 1993
X89089

In this painting, Beale pushes the boundaries of straightforward portraiture. Using her son Bartholomew as a model, she creates an image of a young Bacchus. The vine leaves, grapes and the bowl are the only instances in her work of closely observed still life painting. The leaves in the painting are bluer than intended, as the original yellow glaze (a pigment made by Beale's husband) has faded over time. A known oil-on-paper sketch of Bartholomew may have been made in conjunction with this work.

Mary Beale 1633–1699
Anne Sotheby

1676–1677
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Nicholas Themans Trust 2024
X90097

Beale's husband kept a daily record of her activities in the studio. Two of his over 30 notebooks and a few partial transcripts are still known. They record Beale's sitters, her painting stages, her painting materials and her prices. For her commissioned works, she borrowed poses from the portraits of the court artist Peter Lely (1618–1680). Anne Sotheby's pose is taken from his portrait of Lady Essex Finch. Beale charged £10 for paintings of this size. Her sons acted as studio assistants; her youngest, Charles, was paid to paint the drapery in this portrait.

Mary Beale 1633–1699
Jane Fox, Lady Leigh as a Shepherdess

c.1675
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by Moyse's Hall Museum, West Suffolk Council Heritage Service. Bequeathed by Richard Jeffree through Art Fund, 1993
X89093

Beale was frequently commissioned to make copies after portraits by the court artist Peter Lely (1618-1680). Lely was also a friend and she borrowed works from him to copy. She kept a stock of his poses on paper in her studio to use in portraits of her own sitters. She also experimented in reversing the poses using a mirror. This small work (her 'least size but one') borrows the pose from Lely's portrait of the Duchess of Portsmouth. It is painted on fine canvas and highly finished.

Mary Beale 1633–1699

Dorothy Sidney, Countess of Sunderland, after van Dyck

c.1675–80

Oil paint on paper

Lent by the Derby Collection

X89050

Beale was known for her small copies after works by Peter Lely (1618–1680) but, as this work demonstrates, she sometimes made copies after the Flemish artist Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). They were painted on her smallest-sized canvas, which she and her husband referred to as 'in little'. The fine-textured canvas she preferred for these works – sometimes as fine as a handkerchief – enabled a smooth finish. Beale spent as much time on these works as she did on her large-scale portraits, and she charged the same price for them as her larger works.

Mary Beale 1633–1699
Self-portrait as Artemisia

c.1675–1680
Oil paint on sacking

Lent by Moyse's Hall Museum, West Suffolk Council Heritage Service. Purchased with support from the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund.
X89094

Often called a self-portrait, it is unlikely that this work was intended as one. As in the image of a young Bacchus displayed nearby, Beale has created a subject picture. It shows Artemisia, the wife of Mausolus, after whom the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus (Turkey) was named. An urn of ashes is in the background. Beale made plaster casts of her own arms and hands to use as studio props. They have been used here to paint the subject's pose. Beale has also used a large expanse of ultramarine blue, an expensive pigment made by her husband.

Maria Verelst 1680–1744

Portrait of Anne Blackett, Mrs John Trenchard, later Mrs Thomas Gordon

c.1723
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90296

Verelst came from a Netherlandish family of artists. Her grandfather, father, uncles and siblings were all artists. Her father and uncles settled in London, and she presumably trained within the family. She appears to have had a successful business and a wide clientele, and many of her patrons were women. Her sitters are frequently depicted wearing blue velvet. In this work, the subject, Anne Blackett, also wears blue velvet, but her informal pose, seated on the ground in touch with nature, is more unusual. Verelst's works have a history of being attributed to other artists.

Anne Killigrew 1660–1685
Venus Attired by the Three Graces

c.1680
Oil paint on canvas

Courtsey of Falmouth Art Gallery
X89024

The rules of polite society meant that Killigrew's poetry was kept private during her life. It was only after her death that a volume of posthumous poetry was published. In it, the poet John Dryden (1631–1700) wrote an ode in praise of her, in which he describes her paintings showing 'lofty woods' and 'sacred shades' populated by nymphs and satyrs. His description is close to this work, one of only four known by her. Killigrew's work is unlike the portraiture of professional painters of the day, and we don't know how she learnt to paint.

Anne Killigrew 1660–1685
A Lady as Venus, Mourning Adonis

c.1682–5
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by Bendor and Ishbel Grosvenor
L04614

Killigrew died of smallpox at age 25 but left behind a body of work beyond the norm for a 'virtuous' amateur. Killigrew was from a family of royal officeholders and courtiers, and became one of Mary of Modena's (wife of the future James II) maids of honour. Her mythological paintings, set in Arcadia, are steeped in the culture of the court. Killigrew was also a poet, and her paintings and poems share themes of love and courtship. The subject of this work – the mythological story of Venus and Adonis – was also performed as a court theatrical, for which Killigrew may have co-written the libretto.

Joan Carlile 1606–1679

Portrait of an Unknown Lady, known as Elizabeth Murray, Countess of Dysart and Duchess of Lauderdale

1650s
Oil paint on canvas

The Bute Collection at Mount Stuart
X89497

Here, Carlile uses the same white satin dress seen in a nearby painting. The pose, with the sitter elegantly gathering a handful of fabric, is taken from works by Charles I's portrait painter, Flemish artist Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). The sitter is sometimes identified as Elizabeth Murray, Countess of Dysart and Duchess of Lauderdale. She was Carlile's near neighbour in Petersham, at Ham House. The broken columns in the background are often used to symbolise loss.

Joan Carlile 1606–1679

Portrait of an Unknown Lady

1650–5

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by Tate Patrons 2016

T14495

In 1653, Carlile moved from Petersham, southwest of London, to Covent Garden, the centre of the city's artistic community, to establish a commercial portrait business. Presumably, it was a decision driven by financial necessity. Of the portraits known by Carlile, many show women standing in the same white satin dress – clearly a successful formula that she repeated for several clients. Landscape backgrounds are also a consistent feature of her work. Where Carlile trained as an artist is unknown.

[Wall-mounted Case]

Joan Carlile 1606–1679
Charles I

c.1640s
Oil paint on panel

Private collection
X90018

Carlile painted while at the court of Charles I, but not in a professional capacity. She was known for her small copies after Italian Renaissance pictures in the Royal Collection. It is presumed that she continued to paint privately at Petersham. This is a small copy after a portrait of Charles I by William Dobson (1611–1646). Dobson's portrait was painted at the exiled royal court at Oxford; Carlile's copy expresses her royalist sympathies.

Joan Carlile 1606–1679

The Carlile Family with Sir Justinian Isham in Richmond Park

c.1649–1650
Oil paint on canvas

Lamport Hall Preservation Trust
X89025

Joan and her husband Lodowick Carlile were royal servants in the households of Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria. Lodowick was also the King's Keeper of Petersham Lodge in Richmond Park, in charge of the park's deer. The English Civil Wars (1642–51) and the interregnum period between the 1649 execution of Charles I and the 1660 Restoration of Charles II profoundly disrupted their lives. The Carliles ran Petersham Lodge as a boarding house for fellow displaced royalists. One of their guests was politician Justinian Isham. This picture, set in Richmond Park, depicts Isham in the group on the right and the Carliles on the left.

[Case 4]
Left to right

Susannah Penelope Rosse 1655–1700
An Unknown Woman

c.1690
Watercolour on vellum put down on a leaf from a table-book

Victoria and Albert Museum
X88751

As well as making small portrait copies, Rosse also made independent works. Some are portraits of relatives and neighbours in the area around her home on Henrietta Street in London's Covent Garden. This unfinished miniature demonstrates her technique, with bold hatching that would have been built up to a finer finish.

Susannah Penelope Rosse 1655–1700
Portrait of the Duchess of Portsmouth

Watercolour

Victor Reynolds and Richard Chadwick
X90092

Throughout her life, Rosse painted small miniature portraits of figures in elite circles, many of which were copies after works by other artists. Whether Rosse painted privately or produced her miniatures to be mounted in lockets and sold through her husband's jewellery business is debated.

Susannah Penelope Rosse 1655–1700
Portrait of the Duchess of Richmond

Watercolour on vellum

Victor Reynolds and Richard Chadwick
X90093

Rosse was the daughter of Charles II's miniature painter Richard Gibson (1615–1690). Her unfinished miniatures of Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond, and the Duke of Monmouth are copies after works by English miniature painter Samuel Cooper (1609–1672). Rosse had a reputation for her copies.

Susannah Penelope Rosse 1655–1700
Copy after Samuel Cooper's unfinished portrait of the Duke of Monmouth

Watercolour on paper

By kind permission of His Grace, the Duke of Buccleuch & Queensberry, KBE, KT and the Trustees of the Buccleuch Chattels Trust
X89974

Catherine da Costa 1679–1756
Portrait of the artist's son, Abraham

Watercolour on paper

Jewish Museum, London
X89122

Catherine da Costa 1679–1756

The Penitent Magdalene

1714

Bodycolour on paper

Djanogly Collection

X89125

Da Costa studied with the English miniature painter Bernard Lens III (1682–1740) for several years. She is said to have made copies of many paintings ‘of remarkable fame’ in England. Cabinet-sized miniatures after Italian Renaissance artists had status at the time. Da Costa also painted miniatures of her family and members of her Jewish community.

Anna Maria Carew active 1660s
Virgin and Child

c.1662, printed 2024
Watercolour heightened with gum on vellum, facsimile

Z89444

Records reveal that in 1662 Carew was appointed to the position of copyist of the King's pictures in miniature. The role came with a large annual pension of £200. Carew does not appear in records again. This signed miniature is a copy of a print by Flemish artist Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). It is the only work known by her.

ROOM 4

ROOM 4A
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

THE FIRST EXHIBITORS

The first public art exhibition in Britain took place in London in 1760, and art shows soon became an important part of the city's social calendar. Founded in 1768, the Royal Academy quickly emerged as a driving force in cultural life, with its Summer Exhibition attracting tens of thousands of visitors every year. Other venues, including the Society of Artists and the British Institution also hosted exhibitions.

Women artists played an active part in this competitive world. An estimated 900 women exhibited their work between 1760 and 1830. Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser were both founding members of the Royal Academy (although, as women, they weren't awarded full membership and were excluded from the Academy's council meetings and governance). Despite this precedent, it would take more than 150 years for the next woman to be elected to membership.

Kauffman is one of the few women artists of the eighteenth century whose profile has been sustained. Many others made names for themselves, but their careers are not well documented. Even Moser is less well known, perhaps because she painted flowers while Kauffman pursued the 'high genre' of history painting, depicting historical, mythological and biblical narratives.

Art critics of the time often criticised women for their 'weak' figurative work, yet they were denied access to life-drawing classes. Women artists also had to battle social expectations. Publishing a private or studio address in an exhibition catalogue was a signal of commercial practice, but painting for money was considered improper. Women artists of higher social rank were listed as 'honorary' exhibitors; some exhibited simply as 'a Lady', and after marriage, many switched their status from 'commercial' to 'amateur'.

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
Self-portrait

c.1770–1775
Oil paint on canvas

The Ramsbury Manor Foundation
X89027

Born in Switzerland, Kauffman trained and worked in Italy before arriving in London in 1766. Already admired, including among British tourists, she set up a painting studio in London's fashionable Golden Square, won the support of Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), President of the Royal Academy, and became a public figure. Kauffman promoted herself as an artist while cultivating the respectable image and lifestyle needed to attract and host an elite clientele. In this self-portrait, she includes her drawing implements and shows her hand pressed to her heart, indicating her emotional sensitivity.

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
Paris and Helen directing Cupid to inflame each other's hearts with love

Exhibited 1774
Oil paint on canvas

The Earl of Home
X71051

Kauffman was known for producing history paintings portraying classical and mythological narratives, which were regarded as the highest form of art. In doing so, she challenged ideas about what women should or could paint. She was also commercially minded. Exhibiting publicly provided a platform for recognition and critical success and she also forged partnerships with print publishers. This work was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1774 and was engraved in mezzotint by the leading printmaker Valentine Green (1739–1813). By collaborating with engravers and publishers, Kauffman capitalised on her popularity and expanded her audience.

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
Trenmor and Imbaca, from Ossian

Exhibited 1773
Oil paint on canvas

The Earl of Home
X71069

Kauffman was one of the first artists to depict scenes from British historical and literary sources. This painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773 and is based on The Poems of Ossian, narrated by an ancient Gaelic bard Ossian, published by Scottish poet James Macpherson (1736–1796). Here, Kauffman portrays a scene in which the character Imbaca, disguised as a soldier, shocks Trenmor by revealing herself to be a woman. In focusing on the actions of women, Kauffman's chosen subjects complemented her unique status as a woman history painter. As such she drew attention throughout her career, although some reviewers were critical of her androgynous depictions of men.

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
Colour

1778–1780
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X88512

Of the 36 founding members of the Royal Academy in 1768, Kauffman and Mary Moser were the only women, but although members, they were excluded from the Academy's governance. In 1778, Kauffman was commissioned to paint four ceiling paintings representing the Elements of Art for the Academy's Council Chamber. This painting is one of them. It shows a figure representing 'Colour' sweeping a rainbow across the sky. Despite the artist being unable to attend meetings in the room, Kauffman's paintings championed women's creativity. Kauffman was paid the same high fee for her work as the history painter Benjamin West (1738–1820).

[Above]

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
The Return of Telemachus

1775
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Derby Collection
X89051

[Below]

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
Andromache fainting at the unexpected sight of Aeneas on his arrival in Epirus

1775
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Derby Collection
X89052

Commissioned as overdoor paintings for Derby House in London, these two works were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1775. One is taken from an episode in Homer's **Odyssey**, in which Telemachus returns to his mother, Penelope, after searching for his wandering father, Odysseus. The other shows Andromache, a figure from Greek mythology known for her devotion to her husband, Hector, who was killed by Achilles during the Trojan War. The **London Chronicle** praised Kauffman's works, stating that, 'Though a woman', Kauffman was 'possessed of that bold and masculine spirit which aims at the grand and sublime'. Kauffman's paintings often foreground heroines and show narratives from a woman's perspective.

Mary Moser 1744–1819
Spring

c.1780
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X88513

Although Moser was one of only two founding women members of the Royal Academy, she has a less substantial profile than her fellow Academician Angelica Kauffman. Some suggested Moser was an RA because of her father (the Swiss artist and Royal Academician George Michael Moser, 1706–1783) and that her art was of less importance because of its floral subject matter. Unlike Kauffman, she was not encouraged to take on artistic genres deemed most suited to men. Critics praised her flower pieces but criticised her portraiture and narrative paintings. These are Moser's diploma works, which she presented to the Royal Academy.

Maria Cosway 1759–1838

Caroline, Princess of Wales, with her daughter Princess Charlotte

1801
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X88962

After Kauffman left London for Rome in 1781, Cosway became the most high-profile woman painter exhibiting at the Royal Academy. Trained as an artist in Florence, she came to London in 1779 to launch her career. She and her husband, the artist Richard Cosway (1742–1821), established themselves as a couple at Schomberg House on London's Pall Mall, where they hosted fashionable concerts that showcased Maria's musical talents. This work was commissioned in 1801 by Caroline, Princess of Wales (Caroline of Brunswick). In it, the princess and her daughter are patriotically depicted with a statue of Britannia and a crouching lion.

Mary Moser 1744–1819
Summer

c.1780
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X88514

Maria Spilsbury 1777–1823
The Ascent of the Innocents

Exhibited 1800
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, UK
X89102

Spilsbury came from an artistic family. Taught by her engraver father, Jonathan Spilsbury (1737–1812), she received further training from the portraitist William Beechey (1753–1839). In 1792, she began to show at the Royal Academy as an honorary exhibitor. In her third year of exhibiting, she advertised her address, signalling a growing professional confidence. Her success enabled her to support her family financially. This work was exhibited in 1800. The biblical subject focuses on a mother's grief after Herod's massacre of the infants in Bethlehem. Spilsbury's work became so fashionable that on private view days, it was claimed up to 20 carriages would queue outside her studio.

Maria Cosway 1759–1838
Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, as Cynthia

1781–1782
Oil paint on canvas

The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth
X88713

Here, Cosway shows Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, as the moon goddess Cynthia from the Elizabethan epic poem, The Faerie Queene, by Edmund Spenser (1552/3–1599). A spectacular success when exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1782, this was the work with which Cosway made her mark in London, with a critic at the Morning Chronicle declaring Cosway 'the first of female painters'. An unusual composition which combines portraiture and literature, it demonstrated Cosway's intellectual and inventive capacity.

Maria Cosway 1759–1838

A Persian lady worshipping the rising sun

1784

Oil paint on canvas

By courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, London

X88637

As well as portraits, Cosway exhibited history paintings. This work was shown at the Royal Academy in 1784. Although only a few of Cosway's history pictures can be located now, paintings such as this one were well known through reproductions made by leading engravers and print publishers. Cosway's success was hindered by her husband, who did not like her to paint professionally. She reflected later that had he permitted it, she would have 'made a better painter, but left to myself by degrees, instead of improving, I lost what I brought from Italy of my early studies.'

Margaret Sarah Carpenter 1793–1872
A Holy Family

1826
Oil paint on canvas

Parker Fine Art Auctions on behalf of a private collection
X90016

Carpenter began her career by copying paintings in Lord Radnor's collection at Longford Castle. She won medals at the Society of Arts and exhibited at the Royal Academy nearly every year from 1814–66. This ambitious work was exhibited at the British Institution in 1827. It translates into paint the celebrated marble roundel, The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John by Michelangelo (1475–1564). Purchased by prominent art patron George Beaumont (1753–1827) in 1822, it was the talk among artists. Carpenter was one of the few women artists of her generation to work on a large scale.

Margaret Sarah Carpenter 1793–1872
Portrait of Harriet, Countess Howe

Exhibited 1834
Oil paint on canvas

The Rt. Hon. The Earl Howe
X88519

Carpenter's talent for painting portraits was regularly compared to that of Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830), the Royal Academy's President. After Lawrence's death, her career reached new heights. She took on his clients and, year after year, was singled out in Royal Academy exhibition reviews as the best artist on show. Exhibited in 1834, this portrait of Harriet, Countess Howe, was described as 'a work of very great merit, particularly as regards the drapery, which is surpassed by nothing in the room'. Despite repeated calls for Carpenter to be made a Royal Academician, her nomination was declined twice.

[Plinth in the centre of the room]

Anne Seymour Damer 1748–1828
Two Sleeping Dogs

1782
Terracotta on marble

Lent by the Derby Collection
X89053

Damer is thought to be the only woman to work as a sculptor in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She was an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy, where she showed portrait busts in terracotta, marble and bronze from 1784–1818. Her pursuit of sculpture was deemed 'masculine', and gossip circulated that she did not carve her own work. As well as busts, Damer exhibited 'shock-dogs' (small dogs with a 'shock' of unruly curls). She exhibited a marble version of this terracotta work (owned by writer, and Damer's godfather, Horace Walpole) at the Academy in 1784.

Frances Reynolds 1729–1807
Elizabeth Montagu

1778
Oil paint on canvas

J. Barker
X90147

Reynolds was the sister of Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), President of the Royal Academy. As a woman, she was denied the same training and opportunities he had benefited from. She kept house for him in London and learnt to paint by making copies of his works. Reynolds was a member of the Bluestocking Circle, a group of women writers, artists and intellectuals who met at the house of the philanthropist Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800). Reynolds captures Montagu in thoughtful reflection, a look Reynolds described in her published work on aesthetics, **An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Taste**, as 'the beauty of old age'.

Anne Forbes 1745–1834

Margaret, Countess of Dumfries

1770s

Oil paint on canvas

Lent by Dumfries House, part of The King's Foundation

X89977

Scottish artist Forbes attempted to imitate Read, going to Rome before establishing herself in London. Though dedicated to her art, she was unsuccessful in England, largely because she turned to time-consuming oils she could not finish. She needed the assistance of a drapery painter but could not afford one. She was also alarmed by the fashion for portraiture at the time, with clients wanting to be shown 'flying in the Air'. She returned to Edinburgh and became a successful teacher. In 1788, she was appointed portrait painter to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Katherine Read 1723–1778
Sarah, Lady Pollington, later Countess of Mexborough

mid–1760s
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Savile Family
X89103

This portrait of Sarah, Lady Pollington, was most likely commissioned as part of a family display of pictures by different artists. Its full-length format is ambitious and demonstrates Read's capabilities. Working in 'crayons' (pastels) was a more expected medium for a woman artist.

Katherine Read 1723–1778
Self-portrait

before 1750
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90495

Not born into an artistic family, Scottish artist Read travelled to Paris and Rome to study painting. In Paris, she was taught by the French artist Maurice-Quentin de La Tour (1704–1788). In this youthful self-portrait, she mimics the pose used in La Tour's own self-portrait, demonstrating her admiration for her 'master' and signalling her ambition as an artist. Read was able to use her Jacobite networks to travel as an unmarried woman and to develop her clientele. She also visited Venice to meet the famous pastellist Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757).

Katherine Read 1723–1778
Lord Fortrose and Dr James Mackenzie

1752
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90172

While in Italy (from 1750–3), as well as copying works by Renaissance artists for 'improvement', Read painted British Grand Tourists. Kenneth Mackenzie, the future Lord Fortrose, and his tutor, Dr James Mackenzie, were fellow Scots, and the tight composition demonstrates their close bond. In letters written from Rome to her brother, Read details the limitations she experienced due to her 'unlucky sex'. She was denied access to picture collections, prevented from attending life drawing classes and unable even to work outdoors for reasons of propriety. She was determined nevertheless to 'top it with the best of them' as an artist.

Katherine Read 1723–1778
Willielma Campbell, Lady Glenorchy

1762
Oil paint on canvas

Dundee Art Galleries and Museums (The McManus). Purchased with support from the Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation) and the National Fund for Acquisitions
X89777

Returning from Rome, Read set up a studio in London and established a large, fashionable clientele. As a portraitist, she had an admired gift for capturing resemblances. Throughout the 1760s, Read was a regular exhibitor at the Society of Artists and was made an honorary member in 1769. She also showed work at the Free Society. Read's primary output became pastels, but she also exhibited oils. This portrait is of the Scottish aristocrat Willielma Campbell, Lady Glenorchy. It has as its pair a portrait of Lord Glenorchy by Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), emphasising Read's status as a celebrated artist of choice.

Mary Black c.1737–1814
Messenger Monsey

1764
Oil paint on canvas

Royal College of Physicians
X89026

This portrait of the physician Messenger Monsey (1694–1788) is Black's only known oil painting. Black likely hoped it was a step towards establishing herself as a professional artist, but the issue of payment caused friction. Black hoped to charge her client £25, half the amount charged by leading portraitist Joshua Reynolds, but after Monsey's complaint offered to drop it to a quarter. Monsey considered Black's expectation of a fee improper. He claimed it would damage her reputation if word got out, and even referred to her as a 'slut' in a letter to his cousin.

Mary Grace died c.1799
Self-portrait

1760s
Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Gift of Mrs. Lenore Adams
X89095

An established name in her day, this is Grace's only known work. She was a regular exhibitor at the Society of Artists in the 1760s. In 1769, she was elected an honorary member. In addition to portraits, she exhibited genre works and literary and classical subjects. These paintings are only known by their titles listed in exhibition catalogues. Here, Grace confidently shows herself as a practising artist with her palette in hand. In 1785, it was reproduced as an engraving with an inscription describing Grace as a 'Paintress'.

[Case 5]
Left to right

Mary Moser 1744–1819
Standing Female Nude

c.1760s, printed 2024
Graphite on paper, facsimile

Z89445

As women were excluded from life drawing classes, many took their own steps to improve their anatomical knowledge. They sketched from casts and statues and copied from other artists' drawings and anatomy books. These rare works show that some artists found ways around these restrictions, although little is known about how Moser and Stone accessed life models.

Angelica Kauffman 1741–1807
Life Study of a Male Figure

1771, printed 2024
Chalk on paper, facsimile

Z89449

Kauffman reputedly hired Charles Cranmer, a Royal Academy model, to sit for her at her house. To address concerns about propriety, her father was always present, and Cranmer exposed only his arms, shoulders and legs.

Sarah Stone 1762–1844
Study of a Male Figure

c.1772–1773
Chalk on paper

Karen Taylor Fine Art
X89159

ROOM 4B
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

‘JUST WHAT LADIES DO FOR AMUSEMENT’

In 1770, the Royal Academy banned ‘Needle-work, artificial Flowers, cut Paper, Shell-work, or any such baubles’ from its exhibitions. They also banned works that were copies. Other categories of art that the Academy considered ‘lower’, such as miniature painting, pastel and watercolour were also treated dismissively. Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), the Academy’s President, said that working in pastel was unworthy of real artists and was ‘just what ladies do when they paint for their own amusement’.

These ‘lower arts’ were ones that women practised the most. Small in scale and considered less technically challenging than oil painting, they demanded less equipment and could be pursued at home. They were taught to middle and upper-class girls and were the realm of women who pursued art as amateur accomplishment.

Despite this, these art forms offered opportunities for women to earn a living. Many turned miniature painting, needlework and pastel into lucrative professional careers, supplementing their income through tutoring. Their patrons were often women, and some boasted large, fashionable clienteles and even galleries which became tourist attractions.

Founded in 1754, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (the Society of Arts) offered cash prizes and medals in many categories, including the 'polite arts'. Awards were given for patterns for embroidery, copies of prints, drawings of statues and of 'beasts, birds, fruit or flowers', as well as landscapes. Some prizes were specifically intended for young women. The Society was a stepping stone to a career and many of the artists in this exhibition won medals. Yet most of the women recorded as submitting work for competition can no longer be identified beyond their names.

3 Embedded Cases
[Case 7A]
Left to right

Penelope Carwardine 1729–1804
Maria Gunning, later Countess of Coventry

c.1757
Watercolour on ivory, locket jewelled with garnets, emeralds and diamonds

The Wallace Collection, London
X89086

Carwardine supported her family through painting (1754 records list her as a professional artist). Her clients sat for portraits at her London home, and she exhibited at the Society of Artists from 1761–72. This portrait of the society figure Maria Gunning, Countess of Coventry, who was painted by many leading artists, attests to Carwardine's profile and reputation.

Mary Benwell born 1739
Unknown lady

c.1775
Watercolour on ivory

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
X88811

Benwell prolifically exhibited miniatures, pastels and oil portraits at the Society of Artists from 1761–74. She was made an honorary member of the Society in 1769. Records from 1791 show her exhibiting under her married name, Code (or Codd). Despite achieving popularity through engravings of her portraits, only a handful of her works survive today.

Mary Benwell born 1739
Mrs Bradney

1772
Watercolour on ivory

Victoria and Albert Museum
X88753

Diana Hill c.1760–1844
Portrait of Mary Catherine Denton

1786
Watercolour on ivory

Private collection c/o Mellors & Kirk Ltd
X89971

In the 1770s, Hill exhibited as Diana Dietz at the Society of Artists and the Royal Academy. Once married, her exhibiting status changed to 'honorary'. After her husband's death, she established a career in India. The miniaturist Ozias Humphry (1742–1810), also based in India, was fearful of the competition. He wrote that he would rather 'all the male painters in England' arrived in India than 'this single woman'.

Charlotte Jones 1768–1847
Mrs Martha Udney

c.1802
Watercolour on ivory

On loan from the Holburne Museum, Bath
X89166

Jones had her own professional studio in London, and exhibited 45 miniatures at the Royal Academy from 1801–23. In 1808, she was appointed miniature painter to Princess Charlotte of Wales, which gave Jones authority as an artist. Martha Udney, portrayed in this miniature, was the princess's sub-governess.

[Case 7B]
Left to right

Anne Mee 1765–1851
The Hon. Louisa Hope (d.1851)

c.1813
Watercolour on ivory

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88782

Mee's husband discouraged her from painting men (as it was considered improper), so she built a strong clientele of fashionable women. These miniatures are from her **Gallery of Beauties**, a set of 19 cabinet miniatures of prominent court figures. This was a major royal commission, and Mee capitalised on it commercially by producing engravings of the portraits.

Anne Mee 1765–1851
Lady Charles Bentinck *(1782–1813)*

1813
Watercolour on ivory

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88783

Anne Mee 1765–1851
Anne, Countess of Charlemont
(1780–1876)

1812–1814
Watercolour on ivory

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88780

Anne Mee 1765–1851
Louisa, Duchess of St Albans
(1777–1816)

c.1813
Watercolour on ivory

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88781

[Case 7C]
Left to right

Emma Eleonora Kendrick c.1788–1871
Mrs Vanhardt

1828
Watercolour on ivory

Victoria and Albert Museum. Alan Evans Bequest, given by the National Gallery
X88755

In 1808, Kendrick published a manual on how to paint miniatures. It took the form of a conversation between Kendrick, in the role of the teacher, and a pupil who wished to paint 'a portrait of Mamma'. The book highlights the differences between professional and amateur women artists. Kendrick exhibited at the Royal Academy and had both royal and society clients.

Sarah Biffin 1784–1850
Self-portrait

c.1821
Watercolour and bodycolour on ivory

Private collection
X89743

Biffin, whose baptism record notes that she was born 'without arms or legs', taught herself to sew, write and paint using her mouth and shoulder. She wrote that, as a child, 'I was continually practising every invention; till at length I could, with my mouth – thread a needle – tie a knot – do fancy work – cut out and make my own dresses'.

Early in her career, Biffin worked at county fairs, where crowds would pay to watch her paint, draw and sew. She later established herself as an independent artist, specialising in portrait miniatures, and often signed her work, 'painted by Miss Biffin Without Hands'.

Christina Robertson 1796–1854
Walter Montagu Douglas Scott,
5th Duke of Buccleuch

1832
Watercolour on ivory

By kind permission of His Grace, the Duke of Buccleuch & Queensberry, KBE, KT and the Trustees of the Buccleuch Chattels Trust
X89976

Born in Scotland, Robertson had an international career. She had a studio and exhibited at the Royal Academy before moving to Paris in the mid-1830s. Robertson later settled in St. Petersburg, Russia, working for the imperial family. She was made an Honorary Free Associate of the Imperial Academy of Arts (now the Russian Academy of Arts).

Christina Robertson 1796–1854

Clementina Elizabeth Drummond-Burrell and her sister Elizabeth

1819

Watercolour on ivory

The Trustees of the Grimsthorpe & Drummond Castle Trust Limited

X89973

Mary Knowles 1733–1807
Mary Knowles at her embroidery

1779
Needlework, silk and wool

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88779

In 1771, Queen Charlotte commissioned Knowles to create a 'needle painting' copy of an oil portrait of George III by the German artist Johan Zoffany (1733–1810). In this needlework self-portrait, Knowles shows herself at work on it. Her copy of Zoffany's portrait was praised as having 'all the Softness and Effect of Painting'. The Queen gave Knowles a gift of £800 for it, which allowed her husband to begin studying medicine. Determined not to be 'a mere smiling Wife', Knowles went on to achieve fame for her publications on women's rights, Quakerism, and the abolition of slavery.

Mary Linwood 1755–1845
Salvator Mundi, after Carlo Dolci

c.1798
Needlework, silk

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88778

Linwood combined ‘needle painting’ with canny entrepreneurship. Needlework was banned from the Royal Academy, so Linwood set up her own gallery in London’s Leicester Square, exhibiting needlework copies of famous paintings. The gallery became a must-see sensation, with tens of thousands of visitors paying the shilling entrance fee. Her most praised work was this one, after the Italian painter Carlo Dolci (1616–1686). In her will, Linwood left it to ‘the reigning monarch’.

Katherine Read 1723–1778
The Arundell Children with their Dog

Pastel on paper

Clifford Estate Chattels
X89878

Read had a considerable reputation for her pastel portraits. She had been taught in Paris by the French pastellist Maurice-Quentin de La Tour (1704–1788) and regarded him as her 'model'. In Venice, she had met the famed pastellist Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757). Some referred to Read as 'the English Rosalba'. Many of her patrons were women who commissioned portraits of themselves and their children, often shown with pets. Pastel was an ideal medium for catching a fleeting moment, and Read was praised for making her sitters seem 'alive'.

Katherine Read 1723–1778
Anna Vernon, Lady Berwick
(1744–1797) **and her son Thomas**
Noel-Hill, later 2nd Baron Berwick
of Attingham (1770–1832)

c.1770
Pastel on paper

National Trust Collections, Attingham Park (The Berwick Collection)
X88965

In this work, Anne Vernon, Lady Berwick, is shown holding her infant son, Thomas. Read's compositions sometimes recall or rework Italian Renaissance paintings. Here, the depiction of the bond between Lady Berwick and her son consciously echoes Madonna and Child paintings by Raphael (1483–1520). Around the time this pastel was made, Royal Academy critics described Read's work as full of 'grace' and 'truth' and Read herself as the country's best 'painter in crayons'.

Katherine Read 1723–1778
Lady Susan O'Brien

1764
Pastel on paper

Private collection
X89936

Although the President of the Royal Academy, Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) dismissed pastel as something ladies did for 'amusement', Read made a career out of it. The popularity of pastel as an amateur pursuit as well as a professional one meant that many of her clients had first-hand knowledge of it. She had a steady stream of fashionable clients, including Lady Susan Fox-Strangways, daughter of the Earl of Ilchester, shown here with her dog. Lady Susan used her sitting for this portrait as an opportunity to elope with the Irish actor William O'Brien.

Katherine Read 1723–1778
Miss Helena Beatson

1767
Pastel on paper

Katrin Bellinger Collection
X89981

Read taught her orphaned niece Helena Beatson (1762–1839) to work in pastels, and here, the artist captures the young child looking up from a drawing. Thought to be a child prodigy, Beatson was regarded as ‘an extraordinary genius’ and was exhibiting at the Society of Artists by the age of eight. This portrait is possibly the one Read exhibited there in 1767, which became known to a wider audience through a mezzotint engraving. Beatson later declined to follow her aunt into her profession as an artist, preferring to see her practice as a society talent.

Harriet Gouldsmith 1787–1863
In Hyde Park

Watercolour on paper

Private collection
X90006

Unlike her fellow landscape painters and friends William Mulready (1786–1863) and John Linnell (1792–1882), Gouldsmith found it hard to make a living from her art, although she exhibited widely to good reviews. In her 1839 publication, **A Voice from a Picture**, she recounts her hardship through the imagined voice of one of her landscape paintings, which describes being badly hung at exhibitions and cheaply sold at auction to pay rent. Gouldsmith once overheard her work being praised in an exhibition, only for the enthusiasm to wane when it was discovered the work was 'the production of a female'.

Matilda Lowry died 1855
Landscape with watermill

1805
Watercolour on paper

RSA London
X90009

Women artists competed for awards at the Society of Arts, but little is known about many of them beyond their names. They include Mary Ann Jones, who won a gold palette for her landscape watercolour in 1805, and Jane Steel, who won a silver medal in 1810. Matilda Lowry won a gold palette in 1804 and went on to have a long exhibiting career. She is depicted in a work nearby, sketching with a group of artist friends.

[Above]

Mary Ann Jones (life dates unknown)
Landscape from nature of Gorhambury, near St Albans, formerly the seat of Lord Bacon, Baron of Verulam

1805
Watercolour on paper

RSA London
X90010

[Below]

Maria Flaxman 1768–1833
John Varley, William Mulready and others sketching at a table

1803
Pencil on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum
X88752

The group of artists shown sketching together at a table in this work were all family and friends. The work's official title omits the women depicted but names the landscape artists John Varley (1778–1842) and William Mulready (1786–1863). The artist, Flaxman (whose empty place we see at the table), exhibited at the Royal Academy, as did Matilda Lowry, whose back is to the viewer. Both women won medals at the Society of Arts at the start of their careers.

[Above]

Jane Steele (life dates unknown)
Landscape of the houses called the Five Chimnies in Tothill Fields

1810
Watercolour on paper

RSA London
X90008

[Below]
[Wall-mounted Case 8]
Left to right

Silver Palette of the Society of Arts [reverse]
Silver Palette of the Society of Arts
Silver Isis Medal of the Society of Arts

c.1808

RSA London
Z89375, Z89374, Z89376

Founded in 1754, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (the Society of Arts), offered cash prizes and medals in many categories. For the ‘polite arts’, the gold and silver Isis medal and the gold and silver palette were among the awards that young girls, women and men competed for. Diana Hill, Emma Kendrick, Sarah Biffin, Mary Linwood and Matilda Lowry, whose work is shown nearby, are just a few of the many women in this exhibition who won medals.

ROOM 5

ROOM 5
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

FLOWERS

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, painting flowers was considered a suitably delicate pursuit for women. Imitating nature (rather than demonstrating creative or imaginative flair) was thought to be an appropriate outlet for women's artistic skills. Flowers were also at the heart of respectable hobbies like embroidery, botany and gardening. In the 1850s, the women's periodical the **Ladies' Treasury** called flower painting 'a ladylike and truly feminine accomplishment'. When Mary Moser exhibited **Cymon and Iphigenia** (based on a poem by John Dryden, 1631–1700) at the Royal Academy in 1789, a reviewer urged her to stick to flowers. She painted flowers 'transcendently', he noted, and should do 'nothing else'.

Many women were employed as professional illustrators, recording plant species for horticulturists and botanical publishers. Some conducted hybrid careers, working as illustrators and drawing tutors while exhibiting flower paintings for a wider market. In the Victorian era, critics

applauded several women artists as leaders of the genre. Yet the idea that flower painting, especially in watercolour, was an exclusively amateur pastime has damaged the legacies of many accomplished artists who successfully worked within this genre.

Mary Moser 1744–1819
Flowers in a vase

1759
Watercolour on paper

RSA London
X90011

Moser showed this painting in 1759 at the Society of Arts when she was just 15. She won five guineas for it, the first premium in its class, and a silver medal for 'Extraordinary Merit'. Moser proudly inscribed the work, 'Class 63 first Premium'. It was shown in London's first-ever public exhibition of contemporary British art, held in the Society's Great Room in 1760. Moser produced flower paintings in oil and watercolour and created many variations of the composition on display here – a vase filled with numerous blooms.

Mary Moser 1744–1819

Flowers in a vase, which stands on a ledge

1768

Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

X88815

From the same series as the work nearby, this watercolour represents Sagittarius. The vase is filled with a cascade of late flowering plants: asters, chrysanthemums and rare pale nerines, captured in the cold light of winter. In addition to her professional profile as a Royal Academician, Moser acted as a royal tutor. She was part of Queen Charlotte's circle and taught the princesses botany, embroidery and flower painting. She worked alongside other artists, including Meen and Delany, whose work is also displayed in this room.

Mary Moser 1744–1819

Flowers in a vase, which stands on a ledge

1765

Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

X88814

This is one of a series of watercolours in which Moser represents the signs of the zodiac through flowers. In each work, the vases are decorated with an astrological symbol and filled with flowers associated with the sign's months. This watercolour represents Aries, with a vibrant selection of spring flowers. In 1824, the series was displayed in the drawing room of Mary, Countess of Lonsdale. It was perhaps intended to emulate Queen Charlotte's 'Mary Moser Room' at Frogmore House, which was entirely decorated with Moser's floral works.

Mary Delany 1700–1788
Crinum Asiaticum

1780
Ink, bodycolour and watercolour on paper

The British Museum 1897,0505.250. Bequeathed by Augusta Hall, Baroness Llanover in 1897
X89744

Delany's collages are scientifically accurate records of both native and newly imported plants. Delany inscribed each work with the plant's Latin and common names. She also noted the date and place of each creation and which of her friends and acquaintances had provided the specimen. This collage was made in 1780 at Delany's London home on St James's Place from a plant provided by the gardener James Lee. Lee's nursery in Hammersmith cultivated plants gathered from around the world. Naturalist Joseph Banks (1743–1820) said Delany's works were the only botanical images from which he could identify plant species with certainty.

Mary Delany 1700–1788
Rubus Odoratus

1772–1782
Ink, bodycolour and watercolour on paper

The British Museum 1897,0505.753. Bequeathed by Augusta Hall, Baroness Llanover in 1897
X88823

Delany was not a professional artist. However, she pursued art with a seriousness of purpose, working in a range of artistic and decorative mediums. She was in her early seventies when she turned to botanical collage, which stemmed from the Dutch art known as knipkunst or schaarkunst. Over the course of a decade, Delany created nearly one thousand botanically accurate collages of plants made from intricately cut pieces of coloured paper. In this collage, Delany shows a flowering raspberry, which was introduced to Britain from North America in 1770.

Diana Hill c.1760–1844

Flowers in a vase which stands on a ledge

1773

Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

X90019

Hill worked across a wide range of mediums. Although she later pursued a career as a portrait miniaturist (one of her works is on display in the previous room), she also painted watercolour flower pieces. In 1774 and 1775, exhibiting as Diana Dietz, she won silver palettes at the Society of Arts for flower paintings. She exhibited both miniatures and flower paintings at the Society of Artists and the Royal Academy. Hill's father was a jeweller. In 1775 she also showed a mourning bracelet, with an image of three daughters at their father's tomb, made out of human hair.

Margaret Meen 1751–1834
A group of flowers in a jar and a bird's nest

c.1792
Watercolour on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by E. M. Bussche, Esq.
X88757

Between 1775 and 1785, Meen exhibited a number of flower compositions at the Royal Academy. She also pursued scientific botanical illustration, recording the plants in the Royal gardens at Kew (now the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew). Meen worked as a private tutor for Queen Charlotte and her daughters. Queen Charlotte's diary entry for 8 December 1789 notes, 'I drew with Miss Mean from 10 till one'. In 1792, Princess Elizabeth made a copy of this work, which survives in the Royal Collection.

Clara Maria Pope c.1767–1838

Composition of Flowers, in the Vase Presented to Edmund Kean

1818

Watercolour on paper

Nottingham City Museums & Galleries

X88963

This work was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1818. The dense arrangement of flowers likely attracted extra attention as Pope included a silver vase that the Drury Lane Theatre committee had presented to the actor Edmund Kean (1787–1833) in 1816. Kean's role as Sir Giles Overreach in Philip Massinger's **A New Way to Pay Old Debts** had been a popular success. He received this presentation vase in appreciation of his 'matchless power' on the stage. Pope's work combines ornamental composition with meticulous observation of individual flowers.

Augusta Innes Withers 1792–1877
An auricula in a pot with a wicker cache-pot

c.1830
Watercolour with gum arabic

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
X88816

In 1830, Withers was appointed Flower Painter in Ordinary to Queen Adelaide. This work celebrates her appointment. The watercolour shows an auricula in a pot, with an orange-tip butterfly hovering above and a painted lady butterfly settled on one of its leaves. Next to the plant is a letter stamped with the mark of the Twopenny Post Receiving House on St James's Street. This was where royal correspondence from St James's Palace would have been sent. Perhaps it is the very letter containing Withers's appointment.

Augusta Innes Withers 1792–1877
Vase of flowers with a Robin and Garden Tiger Moth

1821–1841
Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88786

Withers was a specialist botanical illustrator and flower painter. She was sought after by publishers because of the high quality of her work. To make a commercial living, and to support her family following her husband's illness, she diversified her output. Over several decades she exhibited compositions such as this one, at the Royal Academy, the Society of Lady Artists and other venues. Her botanical specimens appear in vases, against landscape backdrops and with birds or butterflies. 'Mrs Withers' was consistently well-reviewed by critics.

Clara Maria Pope c.1767–1838
Peony

1822
Bodycolour on card

The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London
X88900

Clara Maria Pope c.1767–1838
Peony

1821
Bodycolour on card

The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London
X88899

Pope appears in museum records under many names: Clara Leigh, Clara Wheatley (her first husband was the artist Francis Wheatley, 1747–1801), Clara Maria Pope (she married actor Alexander Pope in 1807) and Mrs Alexander Pope. Her changes of name have obscured her career as an artist. She exhibited watercolour landscapes and portraits, miniatures and genre works, but above all, Pope was an artist of flowers. She worked for the leading botanical publisher Samuel Curtis (1779–1860). The scientifically accurate peonies depicted here are 2 of 11 designs. They may have been intended as plates for a work that was never published.

Augusta Innes Withers 1792–1877
The Canon Hall Muscat Grape

1825
Watercolour on paper

RHS Lindley Collections
X89910*

Withers was employed by the Horticultural Society to make official 'portraits' of varieties of fruit growing in their orchards. The quality of Withers's work meant her high fees were not questioned. Here, she paints sunlight glowing through grapes and the translucency of the skin of gooseberries in great detail. Withers drew and hand-coloured engraved illustrations in the Horticultural Society's **Transactions** and made illustrations of fruit for John Lindley's **Pomological Magazine** in 1828 (Lindley was Secretary of the Society). Withers was also regarded as one of the best teachers of botanical illustration.

Augusta Innes Withers 1792–1877
Crompton's Sheba Queen [Gooseberries]

1825
Watercolour on paper

RHS Lindley Collections
X89909*

* These works will be replaced by the following two similar works partway through the exhibition for conservation reasons:

Augusta Innes Withers 1792–1877
Buerre d'Arenberg, Gloux Morceau, Duchesse d'Angouleme [Pear]

1825
Watercolour on paper

RHS Lindley Collections
X89911

Augusta Innes Withers 1792–1877
Chassilas Musque [Grape],
or 'Chasselas Muscat'

1825
Watercolour on paper

RHS Lindley Collections
X89912

Augusta Innes Withers 1792–1877
Encyclia cordigera (Epidendrum macrochilum var. roseum)

1837–43
Watercolour, bodycolour and graphite on board

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
X88817

Withers's skill as a botanical artist was in demand for many publication projects. The most prestigious was arguably **The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala** (1837–43), a guide to the orchids of Central America by horticulturist James Bateman (1811–1897). Orchids had become extremely popular across Britain, and there was interest in finding, collecting and displaying new varieties. Bateman's book was a luxurious production, and Withers was the principal illustrator. This is the original watercolour for the engraved plate XVIII in the book, showing the Broad-Lipped Epidendrum.

Sarah Anne Drake 1803–1857
Oncidium leucochilum

1837–43
Watercolour on paper

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
X88818

Drake contributed 16 of the 40 plates for James Bateman's **The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala** (1837–43). This is the original watercolour for the engraved plate I of the book, showing the White-Lipped Oncidium. Drake was introduced to botanical illustration through the botanist John Lindley (1799–1865) (she had been at school in Norfolk with Lindley's sister). She later lived with the Lindleys, performing various roles, including governess, and was encouraged to study botanical illustration. Drake went on to produce over a thousand illustrations for the horticultural magazine **Edwards's Botanical Register**, which Lindley edited.

Rosa Brett 1829–1882

Thistles

1860

Oil paint on canvas

Private Collection

X04819

From 1858–62, Brett signed her works and submitted them for exhibition under the pseudonym ‘Rosarius’. A reviewer of the 1861 Royal Academy Exhibition described this picture – a detailed study of wild thistles – as having been ‘painted by Rosarius, whoever he may be’. The intriguing name led to speculation. Brett’s brother, the artist John Brett (1831–1902), asked her to reconsider her secrecy, noting that his fellow artists were enquiring who ‘Rosarius’ was. They did not suspect that the artist might be a woman. By hiding her gender, Brett hoped to avoid discrimination.

Martha Darley Mutrie 1824–1885
Wild Flowers at the Corner of a Cornfield

c.1855–60
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Nicholas Themans Trust 2022
T15992

The art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) praised the work of both Mutrie sisters. However, in his review of their work shown at the Royal Academy in 1855, he wished they would paint more realistic compositions. He suggested: 'Some banks of flowers in wild country, just as they grow'. Other critics began to echo Ruskin. Mutrie's wildflowers on the verge of a cornfield seen here seem to be her response to this criticism.

Annie Feray Mutrie 1826–1893
Flower Study with a Butterfly

1869
Oil paint on panel

Lent by the Russell–Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth
X90297

Mutrie, together with her sister Martha Mutrie (1824–1885), was one of the leading flower painters of the Victorian era. Trained in Manchester, the sisters lived together in London from 1854. They exhibited almost annually at the Royal Academy and the Society of Female Artists, and at venues in Birmingham and Manchester. They received praise for their work. In 1861, a critic said that all other flower painters should 'give way' to them. Many of their paintings showed cut conservatory flowers artfully arranged in outdoor settings.

Helen Cordelia Angell 1847–1884
Hedge-Sparrow's Nest
and Hawthorn

c.1874–84
Watercolour on paper

National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery. Bequeathed by Reverend E. C. Dewick 1958
X89972

Helen Cordelia Angell 1847–1884
Wheat and Convolvulus

c.1865–74
Watercolour on paper

Chris Beetles Gallery, St James's, London
X90084

Angell painted flowers, birds and fruit in watercolour, exhibiting widely at the Royal Academy, and London's Grosvenor Gallery and Dudley Gallery. In 1875 and 1879, Angell became a member of the two professional watercolour societies at a time when membership of women artists was still severely restricted. In 1879, Angell was appointed Flower Painter in Ordinary to Queen Victoria. Known for her skill and accuracy, the artist's work was compared to that of William Henry Hunt (1790–1864), nicknamed 'Bird's Nest' Hunt, who was considered the leading artist of the genre. Hunt himself regarded Angell as his 'only successor'.

[Case 9]
Left to right

Mary Gartside c.1755–1819
An Essay on Light and Shade

1805
Print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum
Z88759

Mary Gartside c.1755–1819
An Essay on a New Theory of Colours

1808
Print on paper, with hand-colouring in watercolour

Victoria and Albert Museum
Z88760

Gartside exhibited at the Royal Academy and other venues, and taught women to paint in watercolour. She was also the first woman in Britain to publish a scientific theory of colour. She modestly disguised her learning by presenting her theory as a guide to flower painting for her students.

[Case 10]
Left to right

Margaret Meen 1751–1834
Passiflora maliformis

1789
Watercolour on vellum

RHS Lindley Collections
X89913*

Margaret Meen 1751–1834
Rubus fruticosus

1787
Watercolour on vellum

RHS Lindley Collections
X90081*

As well as exhibiting at the Royal Academy and other venues, Meen was a botanical illustrator. She also taught botanical illustration to her amateur pupils. She was employed to record plants growing at Kew, and started a periodical,

Exotic Plants from the Royal Gardens at Kew, 1790. She used scientific literature to accurately name her species.

*These works will be replaced by the following two similar works partway through the exhibition for conservation reasons:

Margaret Meen 1751–1834
Clematis purpurea

1789
Watercolour on vellum

RHS Lindley Collections
X90082

Margaret Meen 1751–1834
Quercus cerris

1789
Watercolour on vellum

RHS Lindley Collections
X90083

ROOM 6

ROOM 6
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

VICTORIAN SPECTACLE

Grand exhibitions were a defining part of the Victorian art world. The Royal Academy, the leading art institution since 1768, was still Britain's most prestigious exhibition venue, but was later criticised for its traditional conservatism. New venues, such as London's Grosvenor Gallery, which opened in 1877, became rival spaces, and exhibitions in Liverpool and Manchester offered fresh opportunities for exhibiting artists. The Victorian era was also the age of World Fairs. Major exhibitions were held in London and Paris, and in 1893, the World's Exposition in Chicago was visited by over 25 million people.

This room explores the successes of women artists on this public stage. Many of the works on display were shown in these exhibitions. They won international medals, praise from art critics and public recognition. Yet women tackling 'male' subjects, such as battle scenes, caused surprise. Opinion was also divided on women painting the nude: some thought it immoral, others brave.

Exhibitions gave women a public platform to build substantial reputations, and some became popular names. Despite this, membership of the Royal Academy, which was a mark of professional recognition, remained out of reach. As a result, women had no automatic exhibiting rights and were reliant on committees of men selecting their works for exhibition. Without institutional support, they had to navigate the commercial art market on their own.

Women artists' campaigns for access to the Academy joined calls for greater equality in society. From the 1850s, women petitioned for equal rights to education and work, as well as women's suffrage. These causes are reflected in the works in this room.

Sarah Setchell 1803–1894
The Momentous Question

Exhibited 1842
Watercolour on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Bequeathed by Mr Henry Vaughan
X88758

Setchell wanted to specialise in history painting, but her father convinced her to focus on sentimental subjects that were considered more appropriate for women artists. **The Momentous Question** is based on an episode from **Smugglers and Poachers** (1819), a poem by George Crabbe (1754–1832). Setchell depicts a moment of intense emotion – when a woman asks her sweetheart, a convicted poacher, if he wants her to save his life by marrying his enemy, his brother. The work was popularised through prints, and the catalogue of the 1857 **Manchester Art Treasures** exhibition declared that 'few drawings exhibited in our time have produced such an effect on the public.'

Emily Osborn 1828–1925
Nameless and Friendless.
"The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty" (Proverbs: 10:15)

1857
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate Members, the Millwood Legacy and a private donor 2009
T12936

Osborn exhibited widely and was supported by wealthy patrons. She was also part of the 'rights of woman' debate, campaigning for more public roles for women. **Nameless and Friendless**, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1857, dramatises the difficulties faced by women artists. Osborn shows a young woman offering a painting to a sceptical dealer. With no reputation ('Nameless') and no connections ('Friendless'), she has little chance of a sale. Behind her, two leering men emphasise the impression of her isolation and vulnerability.

Florence Claxton 1838–1920
'Woman's Work': A Medley

1861
Oil paint on canvas

Martin Beisly Fine Art, London
X89106

In the 1850s, Claxton became part of the UK's first organised movement for women's rights. **Woman's Work** satirises women's opportunities for professional employment. At its centre a group of women fawn at the feet of a man seated below a statue of the Golden Calf – a false idol. Confined by

a surrounding wall, doors to professions such as medicine are shut to the women. Only the artist Rosa Bonheur has managed to scale the wall's heights. The painting was exhibited at London's National Institution for Fine Arts in 1861 and received mixed reviews. Some praised its comic strength but others described it as 'vulgar'.

Rosa Bonheur 1822–1899
Sheep in the Highlands

1857
Oil paint on canvas

The Wallace Collection, London
X89085

Bonheur was a French artist who gained celebrity status in Britain for her paintings of animals. She was so commercially and critically successful that she became a model for succeeding generations of women artists. Bonheur formed a commercial partnership with Anglo-Belgian art dealer Ernest Gambart (1814–1902). In 1856 he arranged for Bonheur's painting **The Horse Fair** to tour Britain's galleries. He also arranged for Bonheur to travel to the Scottish Highlands on a publicity and sketching tour and increased her sales through

engravings and solo exhibitions. Bonheur's paintings and prints of Highland cattle and sheep were popular with British patrons.

[Plinth]

Mary Thornycroft 1809–1895
Princess Helena (1846–1923)
as 'Peace'

1856
Marble

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88788

Thornycroft is best known for her royal commissions. This portrayal of 10-year-old Princess Helena as 'Peace' was a Christmas gift from Prince Albert to Queen Victoria. The sculpture was illustrated in the **Art Journal** in 1861. The reviewer remarked that if the official position of Sculptor to the Queen existed, Mrs Thornycroft would hold that title. Thornycroft was from a family of sculptors. While she is best known for her portrayals of royal women and children, her contributions to the sculptures produced in the family workshop are now being explored.

Emily Osborn 1828–1925
For the Last Time

Exhibited 1864
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90078

Osborn often painted the struggles of modern working women, depicting scenes of hardship and distress. In **For the Last Time**, two sisters in mourning dress pause at a closed door. They are presumably about to bid a final farewell to a dead relative. Such sentimental scenes appealed to a Victorian audience, who prized emotion in art and literature. Grief, love and pity were considered appropriate subjects for women artists and were believed to encourage moral reflection in the viewer. This work, exhibited at the height of Osborn's success, was praised for its 'wholesome lesson'.

Henrietta Ward 1832–1924
The Princes in the Tower

1864
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by Touchstones Rochdale Art Gallery, Your Trust
X88907

During her 60-year career, Ward exhibited both in Britain and the US. Ward's work won medals and praise from critics in Britain, who considered her the leading woman artist of her time. Ward specialised in emotionally charged moments from historical narratives. **The Princes in the Tower** depicts a sentimental scene from the popular book **Lives of the Queens of England** (1840–8) by Agnes Strickland (1796–1974). Ward was praised for her ability to paint emotions and attention to historical detail. The painting's triumph at the 1864 Royal Academy exhibition led to calls for the election of women as Academicians, although Ward's 1872 nomination was unsuccessful.

Elizabeth Butler 1846–1933
Calling the Roll after an Engagement, Crimea (known as **The Roll Call**)

1874
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by His Majesty The King
X88787

Butler specialised in battle paintings, challenging society's expectations of women artists. The exhibition of **The Roll Call** at the Royal Academy in 1874 was one of the greatest art sensations of the nineteenth century. It was praised by Academicians and hung 'on the line' (the most prestigious, eye-level position). The painting proved so popular with the public that a policeman had to be stationed nearby to protect the adjacent paintings. Queen Victoria summoned the work to Buckingham Palace for a private viewing, and the copyright sold for the enormous sum of £1,200.

Louise Jopling 1843–1933
Through the Looking-Glass

1875
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Nicholas Themans Trust and Tate Patrons 2024
T16213

Jopling was one of the most successful and best-known women artists of the late nineteenth century. She exhibited regularly and, from the 1880s, ran her own art school for women. Jopling hosted receptions and established connections with many artists and art dealers. She carefully planned the exhibition of her work by choosing venues appropriate to each painting's scale and ambition. Jopling sent this self-portrait to the Society of Lady Artists in 1875. In the same year, **A Modern Cinderella**, hanging nearby, was shown at the Royal Academy. Both works were purchased by the dealer Agnew: this work for £26, but **Cinderella** for £262.

Louise Jopling 1843–1933
A Modern Cinderella

1875
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X89108

A Modern Cinderella shows a model removing her fine clothes at the end of a painting session. A glimpse of Jopling's easel can be seen in the mirror's reflection. In 1875, Jopling exhibited this work at the Royal Academy. There, the model's naked shoulder was cause for criticism. Although one reviewer thought it was 'quite harmless', a picture dealer's wife reportedly said that 'she could never hang such a thing in her house'. Jopling also showed the painting at the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where she had also trained.

Henrietta Rae 1859–1928
A Bacchante

1885
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X89908

In 1885, Rae caused great controversy at the Royal Academy, exhibiting paintings of nude subjects – **A Bacchante**, shown here, and the now lost **Ariadne Deserted by Theseus** (an engraving of the work is in a nearby display case). 'A British Matron' sent a letter to the **Times** condemning the works for their immodesty. The writer was shocked that women artists could 'shame their sex', and contribute to 'the degradation of our galleries' walls'. The press received several letters both in support and against this position. The 'matron's' identity was later revealed to be the conservative Academician Mr J.C. Horsley (1817–1903), who was supported by the Church Purity Society.

Anna Lea Merritt 1844–1930
Love Locked Out

1890
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest 1890
N01578

Merritt was a US artist who worked in Britain for most of her life. **Love Locked Out** depicts Cupid, the Roman god of desire, pressed against the door of a tomb. Merrit painted this work as a memorial to her husband, who had died only two months after their marriage. Merritt had previously been criticised in the press for painting nude women. **Love Locked Out** received positive reviews. It became the first painting by a woman to enter Tate's collection through the Chantrey Bequest.

Annie Louisa Swynnerton 1844–1933
Mater Triumphalis

1892
Oil paint on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay
X88921

Swynnerton campaigned for women's suffrage, access to professional training, and equal opportunities. She rebelled against the belief that 'women could not paint'. Exhibited at the New Gallery in 1892, **Mater Triumphalis** was regarded as a bold work. It brought Swynnerton international recognition, winning a medal at the 1893 World Exposition in Chicago. Despite this, Swynnerton received mixed reviews from British critics. They were impressed by the artist's skill and the painting's 'quivering life' but found the 'frank realism' of the woman's naked body disconcerting.

Henrietta Rae 1859–1928
Psyche Before the Throne of Venus

1894
Oil paint on canvas

Lent from a private collection, courtesy of Martin Beisly Fine Art
L04613

Rae was determined not to be pigeonholed as a 'woman artist'. She painted classical nude compositions despite the belief that they were not a suitable subject for women artists. Against these odds, **Psyche Before the Throne of Venus** was a success at the 1894 Royal Academy Exhibition, and Rae received praise from critics as well as members of the Academy. The periodical **The Englishwoman's Review** described the painting as 'the most ambitious and successful woman's work yet exhibited – one which could not have been executed a few years ago, when we had not the opportunity of studying from the life'.

Evelyn De Morgan 1850–1919
The Martyr (Nazuraea)

1880
Oil paint on canvas

South London Gallery collection, managed by Southwark Council's heritage team
X89742

De Morgan was an ambitious painter who cultivated a network of patrons and art-world connections. She chose to paint biblical, literary and classical subjects in oils, genres that were considered the highest form of art. At age 21, De Morgan was one of the few women invited to exhibit at London's Grosvenor Gallery exhibition of 1877. The Gallery championed aestheticism, a new art movement that celebrated beauty for its own sake. With its focus on beauty and technique, **Nauzarea** is an example of this style.

Laura Alma-Tadema 1852–1909
Always Welcome

1887
Oil paint on canvas

Lent by the Russell–Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth
X90298

Alma-Tadema specialised in domestic subjects, often painting children in seventeenth-century Dutch interiors, inspired by her studio-homes. **Always Welcome** was exhibited at London's Grosvenor Gallery in 1887. Alma-Tadema also exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy. She was one of only two British women artists to exhibit at the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where she won a silver medal. Despite her success, she was consistently referred to as 'the wife' of artist Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836–1912). Her stepdaughter Anna (1867–1943), who was also an artist, campaigned for women's right to vote. Yet Alma-Tadema signed the 1889 'Appeal Against Women's Suffrage'.

Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale
1872–1945
The Deceitfulness of Riches

1901
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90280

Fortescue-Brickdale was part of the Neo-Pre-Raphaelites, a group of artists who created painting, design and illustration inspired by the medieval period. In 1901, Fortescue-Brickdale exhibited **The Deceitfulness of Riches** at the Royal Academy. A concurrent solo exhibition of 45 of her watercolours was on show at London's Dowdeswell Galleries. Together, they caused a sensation, with the artist gaining widespread admiration and her work attracting huge crowds. 'Rarely, if ever, has a woman painter made a great reputation as quickly and thoroughly as Miss Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale', claimed the journal the **Artist**. The exhibition secured Fortescue-Brickdale's associate membership of the prestigious Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour.

Marie Spartali Stillman 1844–1927
The Rose from Armida's Garden

1894
Watercolour on paper

Private collection
X90075

Stillman worked as both an artist and an artist's model. She regularly exhibited her work at prestigious galleries in Britain and Europe. However, at the outset of her career, she was not supported by her father or husband, who felt her sales undermined their masculine dignity. She often painted works inspired by Italian Renaissance poets. **The Rose from Armida's Garden** shows Armida, an enchantress from the epic poem **Jerusalem Delivered** (1581) by Torquato Tasso (1544-1595). The work was exhibited at the New Gallery and in Liverpool in 1894.

Marianne Stokes 1855–1927
The Passing Train

1890
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90086

The expansion of rail networks in the late nineteenth century allowed artists to seek inspiration away from cities and towns. After training in Europe, Stokes joined the artists' community in St Ives, Cornwall. In **The Passing Train**, exhibited at London's Grafton Gallery in 1893, Stokes combines rural naturalism with an emphasis on colour and form which speaks to aestheticism, a new art movement that celebrated beauty for its own sake. The steam on the work's right-hand side points to the nearby presence of a steam locomotive – a symbol of modernity that made artistic communities such as the one in St Ives possible.

Lucy Kemp-Welch 1869–1958
Colt Hunting in the New Forest

1897
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest 1897
N01649

Kemp-Welch had a thriving career as an artist and was also the first woman principal of a mixed-gender art school, the Bushey School of Painting. **Colt Hunting in the New Forest** is the painting that established Kemp-Welch's reputation as a painter of horses. It was hung 'on the line' (the most prestigious, eye-level position) at the 1897 Royal Academy Exhibition. Critics described it as 'surprisingly excellent' for a young woman. They praised the work's 'clever' composition and the artist's grasp of horses' anatomy. Inevitably, it invited comparisons with French animal painter Rosa Bonheur, whose work is also on display in this room.

Elizabeth Forbes 1859–1912
The Edge of the Woods

1894
Oil paint on canvas

Wolverhampton Art Gallery
X89932

Along with fellow artist Marianne Stokes, whose work hangs nearby, Forbes spent time at the rural artists' community in Pont-Aven, Brittany. There, Forbes learned to paint outdoors. She continued to practise this mode of painting in the artists' community at Newlyn, Cornwall. The Newlyn artists' emphasis on naturalism ran counter to the prevailing academic style. Forbes painted **At the Edge of the Woods** soon after she built her own mobile studio, which allowed her to paint landscapes from direct observation, even during winter. This work was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1894.

Elizabeth Forbes 1859–1912
School is Out

1889
Oil paint on canvas

Penlee House Gallery & Museum
X89107

Forbes was a leading member of the artists' community at Newlyn, Cornwall, from 1885 to her death in 1912. The Newlyn artists painted the remote Cornish fishing communities, capturing their traditional way of life in oils and large-scale watercolours. Forbes was a prolific exhibitor at the Royal Academy, foregrounding the Newlyn group on the art world's biggest stage. **School is Out** was exhibited there in 1889. Its pastel palette and soft, natural light are characteristic of the Newlyn School. The individuality of the children, however, speaks to Forbes' personal style.

Rebecca Solomon 1832–1886
Sherry, Sir?

c.1858–1862
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90012

Solomon often painted scenes of domestic life and interiors, which were considered more suitable subjects for women artists than history painting. Solomon's domestic scenes include subtle commentary on social hierarchies. **Sherry, Sir?** depicts a maid with a silver tray. It reprises a well-known painting of the same title, painted by William Powell Frith (1819–1909) in 1851, but unlike Frith's painting, Solomon draws attention to domestic labour and the hierarchies of a middle-class home. Solomon was the sister of artists Abraham Solomon (1823–1862) and Simeon Solomon (1840–1905).

Rebecca Solomon 1832–1886
A Young Teacher

1861
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased by Tate and the Museum of the Home, with funds provided by the Nicholas Themans Trust, Art Fund, the Abbott Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund 2023
X87254

Solomon is believed to be the first Jewish woman to become a professional artist in England. Her works often focus on inequality and prejudice. This painting, which depicts a professional carer and two children in a middle-class home, is a complex reflection on gender, race, religion and education in mid-nineteenth-century London. The work's central figure is portrayed by the Jamaican-born artist's model and domestic worker Fanny Eaton (1835–1924). Solomon was active in social reform movements. She was one of 38 artists who petitioned the Royal Academy of Arts to open its schools to women.

Joanna Mary Wells 1831–1861
Thou Bird of God

1861
Oil paint on cardboard

Private collection
X89907

Wells's style was inspired by the meticulous realism of the Pre-Raphaelites. In her short career, she regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy and was praised for the gravity and fine colouring of her work. Art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) described Wells as belonging to 'the very first rank of painters'. In July 1861, Wells died from complications during childbirth. **Thou Bird of God** was exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year. It depicts a protective guardian angel at a child's tomb, based on a poem by Robert Browning (1812–1889).

[3 Plinths]
Left to right

Susan Durant 1827–1873
Harriet Beecher Stowe

1853
Plaster

The Castle Howard Collection
X89111

Durant was an early exhibitor at the Society of Female Artists. Her portrait busts and subject reliefs were shown at the Royal Academy and the international exhibitions in London and Paris. In 1857, Durant was introduced to Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896) through mutual friends. Beecher Stowe was an American writer, abolitionist and advocate for women's suffrage. Durant portrays her with sensitivity, without over-idealisation. The original marble bust was exhibited at the Royal Academy and London's 1862 International Exhibition. The work on display here is a contemporary copy in plaster. The bust was praised by the **Illustrated London News** as 'a work of the highest excellence'.

Edmonia Lewis 1844–1907
Bust of Christ

1870
Marble

The Bute Collection at Mount Stuart
X89112

Like many artists, Lewis is thought to have carefully chosen the information she shared about her biography in order to win art world support. Born in New York state, her father was African American and her mother was Mississauga, part of the Ojibwe Nation Indigenous peoples of North America. Lewis studied at one of the first schools in the US to accept women and Black students. She noted: 'Some praise me because I am a coloured girl, and I don't want that kind of praise.' In 1865, Lewis relocated to Rome from the US to continue her career. As a Catholic, Lewis established relationships with patrons of the same faith. She sculpted this bust for John Crichton-Stuart, 3rd Marquess of Bute. Lewis's last years were spent in London, where she died.

Harriet Hosmer 1830–1908
Puck on a Toadstool

1850s
Marble

Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage
X89113

Hosmer was one of the leading artists of nineteenth-century neoclassical sculpture. She studied anatomy at a medical college in St. Louis, Missouri. Hosmer then moved to Rome to train under Welsh sculptor John Gibson (1790–1866). There, she became a key figure in the community of US 'Lady Artists in Rome', which included Edmonia Lewis. Hosmer was known among British campaigners for women's rights. She made visits to London, where she regularly exhibited. **Puck** was Hosmer's first international success. She sold at least 12 (possibly more than 30) versions of this work. Hosmer reported that 'he has already brought me his weight in silver'.

[Plinth]

Henrietta Montalba 1848–1893
Venetian Boy Catching a Crab

c.1892–1893
Bronze

Victoria and Albert Museum
X88759

Montalba, who trained in London and Venice, came from a family of prominent artists. Her sisters Clara (1840–1929), Ellen (1842–1930) and Hilda (1845–1919) were all painters. Montalba focused on sculpture in bronze, terracotta and marble. The artist's life-sized **Venetian Boy Catching a Crab** was exhibited at the Royal Academy and in Chicago in 1893, the year of her death. The **Art Journal** wrote about Montalba's work in the context of the 'vexed question' of women in art. Rather than lacking skill and imagination, Montalba's sculpture proved the opposite, it argued. Montalba herself had gained 'little short of universal recognition'.

[Case 16]
Left to right

Lady Butler in her studio

Facsimile

Z89461

General Assembly voting record for the election of Two Associates in June 1879, Royal Academy of Arts election book

1879, printed 2024
Facsimile

Z89458, Z89459, Z89460

In 1879, Elizabeth Butler's reputation led to her nomination as an Associate of the Royal Academy. The elections were to fill two vacancies, and Butler led the first round both times. The all-male Academicians transferred their votes to the other candidates, George Boughton and Hubert von Herkomer, to keep her out.

Besides Elizabeth Butler, several other women artists were unsuccessfully nominated for Associate Membership of the Royal Academy, including Martha Mutrie, Annie Mutrie and Henrietta Ward. It was not until 1922 that Annie Swynnerton was elected Associate, and in 1936, Laura Knight became the first woman to be elected an Academician.

[At the front]

‘La Cigale’ by Henrietta Rae, in her biography by Arthur Fish, ‘Henrietta Rae (Mrs. Ernest Normand)’, 1905

1905
Book, print on paper

Private collection
Z89456

[Towards the back]

Frontispiece, Woman’s Work section, Victorian Era exhibition, Earl’s Court 1897

1897, printed 2024
Facsimile

Tate
Z89452

Henrietta Rae in her house with her painting ‘A Bacchante’ in the background, from ‘The Sketch’, 1903

1903, printed 2024
Facsimile

Tate
Z89455

‘Ariadne’ by Henrietta Rae, from ‘The Graphic’, 1893

1893
Print on paper

Private collection
Z89457

Rae's legacy has been hindered by the disappearance of some of her most important works. **Ariadne Deserted by Theseus** was at the centre of the 1885 'nudes controversy'. **La Cigale** was a prize-winning work. They are only known now by engravings and photographs that accompanied articles about Rae in the popular press.

Rae was an art world celebrity. She was the first woman to sit on the Hanging Committee of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, and curated the Women's Art section of the 1897 Victorian Era exhibition. The latter stimulated a debate about the exhibition of women's work in a segregated section.

ROOM 7

ROOM 7
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

WATERCOLOUR

Watercolour was considered one of the 'polite arts' best suited to women. However, there were few opportunities to practice professionally. The principal watercolour societies – the Old (founded in 1804) and the rival New (founded in 1807 and reconstituted in 1831) – restricted the membership of women. Membership of the Old was limited to six women (in practice, usually four), while the New admitted around ten.

In both societies, women were confined to the category of 'Lady Members' until the end of the nineteenth century. They had no say in governance and were denied access to the financial premiums awarded to full members. Since the annual exhibitions of both societies were closed to non-members, most women had limited opportunities to exhibit their work.

Against these odds, many women watercolourists achieved significant commercial and critical success. They enjoyed solo shows and developed commercial relationships with

dealers, taking control of their careers.

In 1857, a group of women founded the Society of Female Artists (later, the Society of Lady Artists in c.1869, then the Society of Women Artists in 1899) to promote the work of women artists in Britain.

Clara Montalba 1842–1929
Salute

1908
Watercolour on paper

Royal Watercolour Society
X89978

Montalba was born in England to a Swedish father. She studied in France under the painter and watercolourist Eugène Isabey (1803–1886). In France, she was also inspired by impressionism. After moving to Venice with her family, she became known for her watercolours of the city. She exhibited these works widely, including at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Montalba was a member of watercolour societies in London, Brussels, The Hague and Paris. **Salute** was shown at the Salon de la Société de la Peinture a l'Eau, Paris, in 1908.

Clara Montalba 1842–1929
Port of London

c.1875–85
Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

Private collection c/o Chris Beetles Gallery, St James's, London
X90504

Montalba was the eldest of four sisters, who were all successful artists. She specialised in watercolour paintings depicting Venice, architecture and shipping scenes, of which **Port of London** is an example. Montalba's talent was recognised early in her career, and she was elected an Associate Member of the Old (Royal) Watercolour Society in 1874. She was awarded full membership in 1892 and was only the second woman, after Helen Allingham, to achieve this. Art critics often praised the consistent quality of her work, as well as its 'spirit and rich, harmonious colouring'.

Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon
1827–1891
View from my window:
Maentwrog, Snowdonia, Wales

1850s
Watercolour on paper

Private collection
X90079

Bodichon was an early activist for women's rights. She is remembered for campaigning for women's work and access to education, but in her lifetime, she was equally known for her watercolour painting. Bodichon first exhibited her works at the Royal Academy in 1850. She showed two Welsh landscapes, including one at Maentwrog. She likely painted **View from my window** on the same visit to Snowdonia. Bodichon exhibited her work in Britain and abroad for over three decades. She showed at the Royal Academy, the Society of Female Artists and the Dudley Gallery in London, as well as galleries in Liverpool, Birmingham and the USA.

Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon
1827–1891
Château Gaillard on the Seine

1870
Watercolour on paper

The Mistress and Fellows, Girton College, Cambridge
X90080

Château Gaillard on the Seine shows Richard the Lionheart's castle in Normandy, France. At more than a metre long, it is one of Bodichon's most ambitious paintings. It was exhibited at the Liverpool Art Exhibition and the Dudley Gallery in London in 1871. From 1865, the Dudley Gallery's annual watercolour exhibition was one of the few places women watercolourists could show and sell their work.

Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon
1827–1891
Roman Aqueduct Near Cherchel, Ancient Julia Caesarea

1883
Watercolour on paper

The Mistress and Fellows, Girton College, Cambridge
X89029

Bodichon divided her time between her career as an artist and her campaigning work for women's rights. She spent summers in England, where she co-founded the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women in 1859. Her winters were spent with her husband painting landscapes in Algeria. Eugène Bodichon was a French doctor who had established himself in the country while it was under French colonial rule. Bodichon was one of the few nineteenth-century women artists to have solo exhibitions. She exhibited the watercolours she painted in Algeria at London's French Gallery in 1859 and 1861. This work was exhibited in 1861 and received positive reviews.

Helen Allingham 1848–1946
The Young Customers

1875
Watercolour on paper

Private collection
X89934

The Young Customers is the work that made Allingham's reputation. The artist's preferred medium was watercolour, but she started her career as an illustrator for the **Graphic** newspaper out of financial necessity. **The Young Customers** is the watercolour version of one of her illustrations. In 1875, it secured her election as an Associate Member of the Old (Royal) Watercolour Society. As a member, Allingham could participate in the Society's prestigious annual exhibitions. With her husband's financial backing, she went on to have a successful career as a watercolourist.

Helen Allingham 1848–1946
Feeding the Fowls, Pinner

c.1889–90
Watercolour on paper

Royal Watercolour Society
X90087

In 1890, Allingham's critical and commercial success was publicly recognised. She became the first woman member of the Royal Watercolour Society. She presented **Feeding the Fowls, Pinner** as her diploma work. Allingham worked during an era of rapid urbanisation across England. Her success was partly due to the rural sentimentality of her work. Many of her buyers had moved to London and were nostalgic for the countryside they had left behind. Allingham's watercolours offered an idealised version of country life, omitting any of the hardships of rural living.

Helen Allingham 1848–1946
Washing Day at Sandhills, Witley

c.1881-89
Watercolour on paper

Private collection
X90416

In 1881, Allingham moved with her family to Sandhills, near Witley in Surrey. Here, she began to paint a series of country cottages. Within a few years, the subject was associated with Allingham's name. She held her first dedicated exhibition, **Surrey Cottages**, at London's Fine Art Society in April 1886. All 66 watercolours sold. This success led to a second exhibition later in the year, titled **In the Country**. The show was once again a sell-out. The artist held five more solo exhibitions with the gallery. According to Allingham, she sold over a thousand watercolours during her career.

Helen Allingham 1848–1946
Roses in Gertrude Jekyll's Garden, Surrey

c.1900–01
Watercolour on paper

Private collection c/o Chris Beetles Gallery, St James's, London
X90014

Allingham produced garden paintings, a genre that did not really exist before the mid-nineteenth century. **Roses in Gertrude Jekyll's Garden** shows the gardens of Munstead Wood, the British horticulturist and garden designer Gertrude Jekyll's (1843–1932) home. Allingham captures the garden's dense vegetation and the tangle of flowers, evoking a rural nostalgia that typifies her work. The work was exhibited at the Fine Art Society in 1901. Jekyll was Allingham's friend and neighbour in Surrey. She wrote several gardening books and articles for **Country Life** magazine. Munstead Wood became widely known and is now a National Trust property.

Rose Barton 1856–1929
A Promenade in the Park, Kensington

1893
Watercolour on paper

Chris Beetles Gallery, St James's, London
X89982

Barton painted **A Promenade in the Park, Kensington** in 1893. It was a pivotal moment in her career. In 1893, she was elected an Associate Member of the Royal Watercolour Society and held her first solo exhibition at the Japanese Gallery on Bond Street. A second solo exhibition, titled **London**, was held at Clifford's Gallery, Haymarket, in 1898. Both shows were enthusiastically received by the public and critics alike. The **Daily Telegraph** commended Barton's 'unfailing sense of beauty'.

Rose Barton 1856–1929
Charing Cross Bridge

1894
Watercolour on paper

Chris Beetles Gallery, St James's, London
X89996

Rose Barton was one of the leading watercolour artists of the late nineteenth century. Born in Ireland, she studied fine arts in Brussels. Her watercolours of London are impressionistic in style. Barton was a member of the Royal Watercolour Society and Watercolour Society of Ireland. She exhibited widely in Britain and also in Ireland, where she was counted among the leaders of the art world. **Charing Cross Bridge** was shown at London's Dudley Gallery in 1894 and Dublin's Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts in 1896.

[Wall Text Quote]

Letter to the Daily News

SIR, – In some of the notices which the newspapers have given of the newly-formed Society of Female Artists, it has been asked 'Why the ladies should seek to sequestrate themselves from the rougher sex?'

Sir, the old [Watercolour] Societies profess to include female artists. But their practice is to exclude all but a very small number … , and even these are debarred the usual privileges of membership, being excluded from all share in the profits or in the administration of the affairs of the Society.

No available mode of presenting to public attention the water-colour works of women exists, beyond the narrow limit of four members in one Water Colour [Society] and about ten in the other.

But in the short space of a few weeks, one hundred and forty female artists, painters in oil as well as watercolour, have stepped forward with 300 works … which have found favour in the eyes of judicious and impartial critics.

In ‘setting up for themselves’ as it is jocularly termed, the ladies have simply followed the example of the ‘lords of the creation’ who confine the advantages of their respective institutions to their own sex, although nominally professing to allow a participation to women.

If the new Society were to propose to admit a small number of men painters, to exhibit only, without sharing either in the profits of the exhibition or in the privileges of administration, I wonder how many male candidates would offer themselves for election?

AN AMATEUR OF SIXTY

‘An Amateur of Sixty’ (probably Harriet Grote) to the editor of the **Daily News** concerning the foundation of the Society of Female Artists (extracts)
Daily News, 18 June 1857

ROOM 8

ROOM 8
CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

PHOTOGRAPHY

The announcement of photography in 1839 marked a major shift in the art world. In its first decades, photography was a laborious practice that required an understanding of chemistry and optics, as well as expensive equipment. It needed more money, specialist instruction and time than most other art forms. For women who had access to these privileges, the medium provided new opportunities.

From its foundation in 1853, the Photographic Society of London welcomed women members. However, they rarely attended meetings, which were scheduled in the evenings when women required a chaperone to leave the house. The atmosphere of the meetings was described as a ‘men’s club’ and it wasn’t until 1898 that the Society belatedly banned smoking ‘in respect of ladies’ attendance’. Meetings often included papers on new techniques and equipment, providing significant benefits to those who were able to join.

Women participated in London's first public photographic exhibitions at the Royal Society of Arts in 1852–3 and at the Photographic Society in 1854. The Amateur Photographic Association, established in 1861, also welcomed women from its outset. In the 1890s and early 1900s, London's Photographic Salon became a key venue. Founded by the Linked Ring Brotherhood, who promoted photography as a fine art, Salon exhibitors included women from across Europe and the US. A photograph of British photographer Carine Cadby in silhouette, examining one of her glass plate negatives, featured on the cover of the 1896 Salon catalogue. Despite this, women were not elected as members of the Linked Ring until 1900. By 1909, they numbered just 8 among 63 men.

Carine Cadby inspecting a glass plate negative, from the cover of the catalogue for the 5th Exhibition of the Photographic Salon 1897 © V&A Images

Caroline Emily Nevill 1829–1887
St Mary's Abbey, West Malling, Kent

c.1854–1856
Photograph, albumen print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography
X89890

This picturesque study of an old abbey near Nevill's Kent home with painted-in clouds was included in the 1855 Photographic Exchange Club Album. Nevill and her sisters Henrietta Augusta (1830–1912) and Isabel (1831–1915) were among the first women to exhibit photographs in London; Augusta and Isabel at the Royal Society of Arts in 1852, and all three as 'The Ladies Nevill' at the Photographic Society in 1854. They never joined the Society, but Caroline and Augusta were among the 20 founding members of the Photographic Exchange Club in 1855.

[Case 18 mounted on the wall]

Frances Elizabeth Jocelyn 1820–1880
Broadlands
Plate 37 in the **Clara** album

c.1859
Photograph, albumen print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography
X89891

Jocelyn's photograph of Broadlands strikingly frames the central figures between dark trees and the diagonal sweep of the house. Broadlands was the Hampshire home of the artist's stepfather, Lord Palmerston. Jocelyn presented several images of the home at London's International Exhibition in 1862, earning an honourable mention 'for artistic effect in landscape photography'. Jocelyn was a widow when she took up photography in 1858. She was elected to the Photographic Society in 1859 and joined the Amateur Photographic Association in 1861. The 1861 Census listed her 'Profession or Occupation' as 'Photographer'.

Julia Margaret Cameron 1815–1879
The Return After Three Days
[Mary Kellaway, Mary Hiller,
Freddie Gould, Mary Ryan]

1865
Photograph, albumen print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography, courtesy of Gregg Wilson
X89893

Cameron was given a camera in 1863; within a year, she was elected to the Photographic Societies of London and Scotland. In 1865, this photograph was exhibited at the French Gallery in London. Cameron employs differential focus, a technique in which the photographer carefully selects which areas are in sharp focus and which are out of focus. She described the technique as producing 'a roundness and fullness' to the forms. The photograph features Mary Hillier, Cameron's parlour maid, favourite model, and photographic assistant. Mary Kellaway and Mary Ryan were also maids at Cameron's Isle of Wight home, and Freddie Gould was a local child.

Julia Margaret Cameron 1815–1879
Mountain Nymph, Sweet Liberty [Annie Keene]

1866
Photograph, albumen print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography, courtesy of Gregg Wilson
X89894

Annie Keene (1842/3–1901) was an artist's model at the Royal Academy Schools. Cameron showed Keene's portrait at the 1866 Hampshire and Isle of Wight Loan Exhibition, and it was for sale at her 1868 exhibition at London's German Gallery. In this photograph, Cameron's shallow depth-of-field gives a bold effect. Her friend, the scientist and photographic innovator John Herschel (1792–1871), praised the portrait as 'a most astonishing piece of high relief – She is absolutely alive and thrusting out her head from the paper into the air'.

Julia Margaret Cameron 1815–1879
Hypatia [Marie Spartali]

1868
Photograph, albumen print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography
X85282

In 1868, Cameron made 18 photographic studies of Marie Spartali, whose family's country house was a few miles from Cameron's home on the Isle of Wight. Some of the photographs were costume studies, such as this portrayal of Hypatia, a Greek mathematician who became head of Alexandria's Neoplatonist academy but was martyred by a Christian mob. Cameron's use of soft focus and a muted tonal range was often criticised as eccentric. But Marie's father was so taken with Cameron's portraits of her that in 1868, he paid 20 guineas for 40 prints.

Clementina Hawarden 1822–1865
Isabella Grace, 5 Princes Gardens

1862
2 Photographs, albumen print on paper mounted to disbound album pages

Victoria and Albert Museum
X88761, X88762

Hawarden began taking photographs in the late 1850s. She was elected to the Photographic Society in 1863 and showed at its annual exhibitions in 1863 and 1864. This study of Hawarden's daughter balances strong shadows with a dark silhouette in a large mirror, which doubles the portrait. The image resembles Louise Jopling's painting **A Modern Cinderella** (1875), though this photograph was made 14 years earlier.

Clementina Hawarden 1822–1865
Clementina Maude, 5 Princes Gardens

c.1861–1862
Photograph, albumen print on paper mounted to disbound album page

Victoria and Albert Museum
X88760

Hawarden photographed her daughters in her South Kensington home, using mirrors to reflect the strong sunlight from tall first-floor windows and create shimmering light effects. Hawarden's bright, sharply focused images reflect the photographic aesthetics of the period. An 1863 review praised 'a mastery of light and shade peculiarly her own'. Hawarden used her own formula for sensitising and developing collodion glass plate negatives, which, as she explained, 'secures this wonderful depth of definition'.

Clementina Hawarden 1822–1865
Isabella Grace, 5 Princes Gardens

c.1862
Photograph, albumen print on paper mounted
to disbound album page

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by Lady Clementina
Tottenham
X61080

Hawarden's innovative compositions won her a silver medal at the Photographic Society in 1864. She died of pneumonia before she could receive the award. Five of her photographs appeared posthumously in Dublin's 1865 International Exhibition, where her composition was again praised. The British photographic press favourably compared her 'mechanical skill and artistic taste' with Julia Margaret Cameron, who also showed at Dublin.

Olive Edis 1876–1955

Portrait study of Edis's sisters, Katharine Legat and Emmeline McKendrick

c.1912, printed 2024
Facsimile of photograph, Autochrome glass plate

X89901

In 1905, Edis and her sister Katharine established a portrait studio in Norfolk. They later opened a second in London. In 1912, Edis incorporated autochrome portraits into her studio business and patented her own viewer. In 1913, she exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society, winning a medal for her autochrome, **Portrait Study**. Autochromes required an exposure of about 30 seconds indoors, which explains the dim blur in Edis's portrait of her sisters. Edis was elected a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society in 1914. She was commissioned as an Official War Artist in 1918; a photograph from that time is displayed in the final room of the exhibition.

Kate Smith 1861–1953
A Beautiful Weed

c.1910, printed 2024
Facsimile of photograph, Autochrome glass plate

Z89464

Smith first exhibited at the Photographic Salon and the Royal Photographic Society in 1903. She frequently showed images of children and animals and was elected to the Society in 1908. This autochrome is typical of her later work, which featured women friends as nude or partially veiled woodland spirits. Between 1907 and 1914, Smith published costume studies in the **Daily Mirror**, the **Sketch**, and the **Bystander**. Her titles often referenced classical tropes, and her subjects were typically described as ‘pretty’.

Attr. to Sarah Angelina Acland
1849–1930
Untitled [Woman picking flowers – Margaret Hope?]

c.1909, printed 2024
Facsimile of photograph, Autochrome or Omnicolore glass plate

Wilson Centre for Photography
X89900

In 1894, Acland became the first woman member of the newly founded Oxford Camera Club; she served as a Vice-President for 26 years. In 1899, she was elected to the Royal Photographic Society, where she exhibited colour transparencies and early innovations in tri-colour printing. That work, and her much-praised lantern slide lectures on colour photography, earned her a Fellowship in 1905. She was also a Fellow of the Society of Arts and the Royal Meteorological Society. This transparency is believed to be one of many photographs Acland took of her goddaughter Margaret Hope.

Agnes Warburg 1872–1953
Peonies

1912, printed 2024
Facsimile of photograph, tri-colour carbo print on paper

X89899

Warburg was an innovator in colour photography, experimenting with nine different processes between 1890 and 1949. In 1918, she invented a new technique. Most colour photographers used commercial labs, but Warburg made her own prints, including this subtle pigment photograph. Warburg exhibited at the Linked Ring's Photographic Salon and the Royal Photographic Society. She hosted Society meetings and presented lectures at her home on Porchester Terrace in London. In 1911, she helped found London's Halcyon Club for professional women. Warburg's work was included among 84 photographs shown in their 1914 exhibition.

Emma Barton 1872–1938
The Soul of the Rose [Dorothy Barton]

1910
Photograph, carbon print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. The Royal Photographic Society Collection at the V&A, acquired with the generous assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X61104

Barton featured members of her family in her portraits and tableaux. Her daughter Dorothy was **The Soul of the Rose**, celebrated at the Royal Photographic Society in 1910 and the London Salon of Photography in 1911. The **Penrose Pictorial Annual** praised the 'perfection' of its composition, which 'constitutes a landmark … in the field of modern picture-making'. Barton was a member of the Birmingham Photographic Society and the Royal Photographic Society. She exhibited frequently with both associations and at the Linked Ring's Photographic Salon, and her work was widely published.

Minna Keene 1861–1943

Decorative Study No. 1: Pomegranates [Violet Keene 1893–1987]

c.1910, printed 2016
Facsimile of photograph, carbon print on paper

X61136

Keene's portrait of her daughter in the dappled light of their Cape Town garden was awarded 'Picture of the Year' at the 1911 London Salon of Photography. It was shown at the Lyceum Club for Women Artists and Writers in 1910 and the Royal Photographic Society in 1913. German-born Keene settled in England in 1880. In 1903, she was elected to the Royal Photographic Society and moved to Cape Town, where she set up a portrait studio. While in London from 1907 to 1909, she exhibited portraits of working-class South African women at the Linked Ring's Photographic Salons and the Lyceum Club. She also photographed suffrage protests.

Anne Brigman 1869–1950
The Soul of the Blasted Pine

1906
Photograph, gelatin silver bromide print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography
X89896

In the early 1900s, Brigman produced a series of nude self-portraits in the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California. Exploring emancipation and paganism, they were inspired by her suffrage work and refusal of social constraints and conventional religion. Brigman was a California photographer and poet. She exhibited at the Linked Ring's Photographic Salon in 1905, 1908 and 1909, and was elected to the Ring in 1909. In 1907, this photograph gained the highest medal at the Birmingham Photographic Society.

Gertrude Käsebier 1869–1933
Zaïda Ben-Yusuf

c.1900
Photograph, platinum print on paper

The Michael G. and C. Jane Wilson 2007 Trust
X89897

Käsebier's relaxed portrait of Zaïda Ben-Yusuf was probably made at the photographer's New York studio. From 1897, she and Ben-Yusuf each operated Fifth Avenue premises in the 'Ladies' Mile' shopping district. The district's clientele sat for Käsebier's portraits and Ben-Yusuf's fashion photographs. Some of their peers denigrated their professional careers, but both women depended on their commercial income. Käsebier and Ben-Yusuf showed together at the Linked Ring's Photographic Salon in 1899 and 1902 and in Paris in 1900 and 1901.

Zaïda Ben-Yusuf 1869–1933
The Odor of Pomegranates
Published in a 1901 edition
of **The Photographic Times**

1899, printed 2024
Facsimile of photomechanical print, photogravure on paper

Tate
X61769

Ben-Yusuf was born in London. She emigrated to New York in 1895, becoming a milliner and a photographer. She visited London in 1896 when she exhibited at the Linked Ring's Photographic Salon; she showed in four further Salons. **The Odor of Pomegranates** was praised as 'forceful' and 'sensuous'. It was shown at Paris's Exposition Universelle and the Royal Photographic Society in 1900 and again in Paris in 1901. In 1909, Ben-Yusuf resettled in London; by 1911, she had a Chelsea photography studio. She later lived in Paris, returning to New York in 1914.

Emily Pitchford 1878–1956
Untitled [Monument in fog, Nelson's Column]

c.1900
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

The Michael G. and C. Jane Wilson 2007 Trust
X89904

This photograph is believed to have been made in c.1900 while Pitchford was studying photography in London. It typifies a turn-of-the-century aesthetic in its soft focus and shadowy tonal range. In 1902, Pitchford returned home to California, where she ran studios in the San Francisco Bay Area with other women photographers. In 1906, she set up her own Berkeley premises. Pitchford exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society in 1906, 1908 and 1909.

[Above case]

Eveleen Myers 1856–1937
Rebecca [Rebekah at the Well] Published in **Sun Artists**

April 1891
Photomechanical print, photogravure print
on paper

Private collection
X89898

Myers' first photographs, taken in 1887, were of her children. Later, she produced a large body of professional portraiture, photographing political and cultural notables in a studio at her parents' Whitehall house. Her sister Dorothy Tennant (1855–1926) also had a painting studio there. Myers showed her work at private galleries, and her images were widely published in the illustrated press. She was never a member of the Photographic Society nor an exhibitor at the Society's exhibitions. English poet and literary critic John Addington Symonds (1840–1893) praised this costume study for its 'masterly skill' in lighting and drapery like 'some marble of the Attic age'.

[Below]
[Case 19 wall-mounted]
Left to right

Carine Cadby 1856–1967
Flowers and Photography
Published in **The Kodak News**

June 1987
Photomechanical print, half-tone reproduction
on paper

Private collection
X62025

Carine Cadby 1856–1967
Catalogue of the Fourth Exhibition of the Photographic Salon 1896, Dudley Gallery, Piccadilly

1896, printed 2024
Facsimile of a photomechanical print, rotogravure on paper

Z89018

ROOM 9

ROOM 9
ANTI -CLOCKWISE FROM THE DOOR

[Wall Text]

ART SCHOOL

Women were excluded from enrolment at the Royal Academy Schools, Britain's principal art academy, until 1860. Laura Herford (1831–1870) was the first woman admitted. She had submitted her work for consideration using only her initials and was assumed to be a man. Once women gained entry, they were determined to achieve equal access to training.

Women were barred from the Academy's life-drawing classes until 1893. Their exclusion from this vital component of art education was justified on many grounds. Chiefly, it was to 'protect' women's supposed modesty, but also because they were considered amateurs who lacked the intellectual capacity to practice art at the highest level. Women students marshalled critical support for their cause and submitted petitions. Life drawing was considered essential to the training of men pursuing careers as artists. Why, they argued, was it not also essential for women?

The Female School of Art, founded in 1842, provided another route into art education. Like several regional schools, such as that in Manchester, it encouraged women into vocational careers in design. Women also had access to private academies, including Sass's and Leigh's (later Heatherleys) in London, which prepared students for admission to the Royal Academy Schools. And some women artists, such as Louise Jopling, established their own art schools.

In 1871, the founding of the Slade School of Fine Art at University College London signalled a fundamental change of attitudes. From the outset, the Slade offered women an education on equal terms with men. Studying from life models was a central focus of teaching and by the turn of the century, women students outnumbered men by three to one. Access to life drawing had been regarded as the last barrier to equal opportunity. Now they could study from life, some critics argued it was up to women to prove they could be successful artists.

Life Class at the Female School of Art, 1868

Image on the far right wall: Slade School of Fine Art, class photograph 1905

Minnie Jane Hardman 1862–1952
Portrait head of a bearded man

1881
Charcoal and graphite on paper

University of Reading Art Collection
X89116

Hardman began her art education at London's Islington School of Art. At the age of 18, she was already a talented draughtswoman. A label fixed to this detailed charcoal study shows that it won a Third Grade prize. The same year, Hardman's tutor, artist Henry Thomas Bosdet (1856–1934), recommended her to the prestigious Royal Academy Schools. After a multi-stage application process and three-month probation, Hardman was formally enrolled in March 1883. Hardman was one of only 12 women accepted that year.

Minnie Jane Hardman 1862–1952
Study of the Wrestlers

c.1883
Charcoal and graphite on paper

University of Reading Art Collection
X89119

During Hardman's first year at the Royal Academy Schools, she principally drew plaster casts of antique sculptures. For this study of the sculpture **The Wrestlers**, Hardman chose a cast that artist John Flaxman (1755–1826), the Royal Academy's First Professor of Sculpture, had praised as 'the greatest muscular display in violent action'. The Academy's rigid curriculum of drawing from casts and life models prepared students to execute the dynamic, multi-figure compositions that were required of history painting. The Academy considered history painting the highest genre of art and the exclusive preserve of men.

Minnie Jane Hardman 1862–1952
Study of a bust of Hermes

1883–1889
Charcoal and graphite on paper

University of Reading Art Collection
X89117

Hardman made this drawing while studying in the Antique School of the Royal Academy, where students began the seven-year curriculum. It is a drawing of a nineteenth-century plaster cast of a bust attributed to the ancient Greek sculptor Praxiteles (395–330 BCE). After completing the Antique School, men would continue their training at the Life School, drawing from 'undraped' models. Excluded on grounds of modesty, Hardman instead spent five years in the Ladies Painting School. There, she drew fully dressed models, often women. In 1883, Hardman signed a petition calling for women to be permitted to study partially draped figures.

Louise Jopling 1843–1933
A Portrait Sketch

c.1885
Oil paint on canvas

The Maas Gallery, London
X89030

In 1885, Jopling founded an art school for women. It began as a series of demonstration classes at the artist's London studio. The school curriculum drew heavily on Jopling's training in Paris in the 1860s, with an emphasis on direct study from naked life models. Rather than beginning their training by copying from plaster casts and antique statues, which was deemed socially acceptable for women students, they drew from life from the start. Jopling encouraged vigorous life-size drawings. This boldly signed work is one of Jopling's freely painted portrait sketches that she would complete in a single sitting.

Louise Jopling demonstrating to her students © Tate

[Wall Graphic Quote]

Letter from Anna Mary Howitt to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon

Did I tell you I went one night to hear Leslie [the artist C R Leslie] lecture at the Royal Academy. Oh! How terribly did I long to be a man so as to paint there. When I saw in the first room all the students' easels standing about – lots of canvasses and easels against the walls … a perfect atmosphere of inspiration, and then passed on into the second room hung around with the Academicians' inaugural pictures, one seemed stepping into a freer, larger, and more earnest artistic world – a world, alas! which one's **woman**hood debars one from enjoying – Oh, I felt quite angry at being a woman, it seemed to me **such a mistake**, but Eliza Fox … said, 'nay, rather be angry with men for not admitting women to the enjoyments of this world, and instead of lamenting that **we** are women let us earnestly strive after a nobler state of things, let us strive to be among those women who shall first open the Academy's doors to their fellow aspirants – that would be a noble mission, would it not?

Transcript of a letter from the artist Anna Mary Howitt (1824-1884) to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827–1891), c.1848-52 Cambridge University Library, Add.MS 7621

Emily Osborn 1828–1925
Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon

c.1884
Oil paint on canvas

The Mistress and Fellows, Girton College, Cambridge
X89028

Here, Osborn paints Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon before an easel with a box of watercolours. Bodichon was an artist and a lifelong activist for women's employment opportunities. She is credited with organising the 1859 petition requesting the Royal Academy admit women to its Schools. Osborn signed the petition along with other artists, including Florence Claxton, Martha Darley Mutrie, Rebecca Solomon, Mary Thornycroft and Henrietta Ward. Their work is also on display in the exhibition. In 1869, Bodichon co-founded Girton College, Cambridge, Britain's first residential higher education institution for women.

Ida Knox born 1896
Male Figure Seated

1918
Oil paint on canvas

UCL Art Museum, University College London
X89650

With this study of a semi-draped male figure, Knox won joint first prize for figure painting at the Slade School of Fine Art in 1918. Knox painted it in a mixed class, studying the model alongside both men and women. At its foundation in 1871, the Slade was the only public art school in Britain to admit women on equal terms as men, providing the same access to training. The Slade's curriculum placed importance on 'constant study from the life model'. There were more women students than men at the Slade. Many of them, like Knox, won prestigious annual prizes.

Elinor Proby Adams 1885–1945
Female Seated Figure

1906
Oil paint on canvas

UCL Art Museum, University College London
X89647

Adams studied at the Slade School of Fine Art from 1903–8. She won a scholarship and joint first prize in the prestigious Summer Composition Competition, as well as prizes for head and figure painting. **Female seated figure** was awarded joint second prize in figure painting in 1906. Adams went on to exhibit at the Royal Academy, New English Art Club and multiple other venues but struggled to establish a successful commercial career. She had to turn to book illustration, lecturing and journalism to make a living. Very few of her works are known today.

Slade students reviewing their work

Laura Knight 1877–1970
Portrait Study, Girl's Profile

1896
Charcoal on paper

Nottingham City Museums & Galleries
X88964

Knight was one of the leading British women artists of the twentieth century. She began her studies at Nottingham School of Art at age 14, with the goal of training as an art teacher. The standard of the regional art schools varied across the country. Nottingham had good tutors and kept up with contemporary trends. Knight won prizes each year of her five-year studies, both at the school and in the annual national art school competitions. This portrait study demonstrates her ability to convey physical form and likeness while capturing the model's character.

[Case 20]
Left to right

Petition of female students

1878
Ink on paper

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
Z77101

From 1860, women gained admission to the Royal Academy Schools but were excluded from its life drawing classes. Women students repeatedly petitioned to be allowed to study the semi-draped figure. This 1878 letter pleaded that without it, 'we cannot hope to rise above mediocrity'. Their request was rejected.

Petition of female students

1883
Ink on paper

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
Z77102

This petition to the Royal Academy stresses the economic necessity of women being allowed to attend life drawing classes. The women signatories explained, 'Almost all of us rely on the profession we have chosen as our future means of livelihood'. Signed by 64 students and 26 prominent artists, the petition was rejected by the General Assembly, which was comprised exclusively of men.

ROOM 10

ROOM 10
ANTI-CLOCKWISE FROM ROOM ENTRANCE

[Wall Text]

BEING MODERN

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw rapid change for women, with their rights, roles and opportunities evolving at an unprecedented pace. The First World War signalled a decisive change for women's place in society and in 1918, after decades of campaigning, some women finally gained the right to vote.

At the same time, the art world was also changing. New art groups and exhibiting societies rejected tradition and promoted modernist aesthetics. Instead of figurative realism, they privileged form, colour and experimentation. Many saw modernism as an opportunity for greater artistic freedom. However, despite growing liberalism in art and society, women artists still faced challenges. The New English Art Club became a rival exhibiting venue to the Royal Academy but was slow to admit women. The Camden Town Group labelled itself 'progressive' but openly excluded women.

While modernism is often presented as the dominant movement of the early twentieth century, it doesn't account for all artistic production of the period. Membership of the Royal Academy, an exhibiting venue many now regarded as too traditional, remained a symbolic goal for many women. When Annie Swynnerton was elected an Associate Member in 1922, Laura Knight said she had broken down the 'barriers of prejudice'. In 1936, Knight was elected a Royal Academician, becoming the first woman to achieve full membership since the eighteenth century.

The artworks in the final room of the exhibition explore this complex period. Their variety reveals women forging their own paths and pursuing professional careers with purpose and confidence. While many chose not to challenge traditional artistic values, they pushed the boundaries of what was expected of them, paving the way for generations of women artists who came after them.

Ethel Walker 1861–1951
The Garden

c.1899
Oil paint on canvas

Bradford District Museums and Galleries, CBMDC
X89816

Walker's early exhibited works feature dynamic, broken brushwork and a light palette often associated with impressionism. **The Garden**, full of sunlight, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1899. In 1900, she was made a member of the New English Art Club for works of this type. From 1912, her practice shifted (as seen in other works in this room). Throughout her life, Walker was an advocate for women artists. One of the few of her generation to achieve significant professional recognition in her lifetime, she had to wait until 1940 to be elected an Associate Member of the Royal Academy.

Laura Knight 1877–1970
The Bathing Pool

1912
Watercolour on paper

Lent by John Noott
X89906

In 1907, Knight and her husband, the painter Harold Knight (1874–1961), moved to Cornwall. The scenery, company and working conditions nurtured her productivity. Knight began painting outdoors in the open air, and her sunlit scenes of leisure, sun-bathing and sea-bathing are free from academic convention. This watercolour has similarities to a large canvas she exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1911. As an ambitious work showing women at ease with their bodies, it challenged conservative expectations of women's art.

Laura Knight 1877–1970
A Dark Pool

c.1917
Oil paint on canvas

Laing Art Gallery, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. Bequest from Sir Angus Watson 1961
X89817

Laura Knight 1877–1970
My Lady of the Rocks

1917–18
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90281

Laura Knight 1877–1970
At the Edge of the Cliff

c.1917
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90294

Knight's reputation grew through the regular exhibition of her works, both nationally and internationally. These paintings depicting women on Cornish clifftops were exhibited with others at London's Leicester Galleries in 1918. Painted with vivid colour, Knight's women are shown both in brilliant sunshine and on an overcast day. In modern dress, often alone, they appear self-sufficient. Yet, the atmosphere is less carefree and more contemplative than her earlier works, perhaps reflecting the impact of the First World War.

Clare Atwood 1866–1962
The Terrace outside
the Priest's House

1919
Oil paint on canvas

National Trust Collections, Smallhythe Place (The Ellen Terry Collection)
X88966

Atwood, who went by both 'Clare' and 'Tony', enjoyed a public life working for prestigious institutions and a queer private life. The artist openly identified as a lesbian, and from 1916, lived in a ménage à trois with the actor, theatre director, producer and designer Edith (Edy) Craig (1869–1947) and writer and playwright Christabel 'Chris' Marshall (1871–1960). Their friends referred to them as 'Edy and the boys'. Here, Atwood shows the three partners at their home, the Priest's House, Kent. The easy sociability of the scene expresses the happy domesticity of their arrangement.

Clare Atwood 1866–1962
Olympia in War Time:
Royal Army Clothing Depot

1918
Oil paint on canvas

IWM (Imperial War Museums)
X88909

Atwood studied at the Slade under Henry Tonks (1862–1937) and Frederick Brown (1851–1941). The artist exhibited at the New English Art Club (NEAC) from 1893 but was not made a member until 1912. Many ex-Slade women artists experienced this delay in recognition. Atwood also exhibited at the Royal Academy and built a reputation for depictions of interiors and scenes of industrial public spaces. **Olympia in War Time** features many of the hallmarks of Atwood's style. Framed by the barrel roof, the interior is spacious and airy. The people in the foreground give a sense of bustling purpose.

Anna Airy 1882–1964

Shop for Machining 15-inch Shells: Singer Manufacturing Company, Clydebank, Glasgow

1918

Oil paint on canvas

IWM (Imperial War Museums)

X88908

In 1918, Airy received a commission from the Imperial War Museum, thereby becoming Britain's first official woman war artist. Her 1.7 by 1.8-metre canvases depict munitions production and war-related heavy industry. She later recalled the hot and dangerous conditions in which she worked. A former Slade student, Airy enjoyed a high public profile, won through exhibition and good reviews at the Royal Academy. In 1915, an art critic hailed her as 'the most accomplished artist of her sex'. Airy was aware, however, of the prejudice women artists still faced. Galleries and buyers, she said, felt 'safer with a man'.

Anna Airy 1882–1964
Study for 'The L Press: Forging the Jacket of an 18-inch Gun, Armstrong-Whitworth Works, Openshaw'

1918
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X89933

Sylvia Gosse 1881–1968
The Nurse

before 1920
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90162

Gosse's fascination with working women makes her art distinct. The model for this work is likely to be her sister Tessa, who served with the Scottish Women's Hospitals at the front in the First World War and was decorated for her work. Although Gosse's painting style was similar to that of Walter Sickert (1860–1942), contemporary critics also noted her individuality. In 1919, the **Times** commented that 'it would be easy to label Miss Gosse pupil of Walter Sickert' but that she was 'much more than that'.

Sylvia Gosse 1881–1968
The Printer

c.1915
Oil paint on canvas

On loan from Museum and Art Swindon
X89123

Gosse came from a well-connected artistic family. Her aunt was the artist Laura Alma-Tadema, her father the poet and literary critic Edmund Gosse (1849–1928) and her mother, Ellen Gosse (1850–1929), had trained in the studio of Ford Madox Brown (1821–1893). Sylvia Gosse trained at the St John's Wood School of Art and the Royal Academy but was taught printmaking by Walter Sickert (1860–1942). She became co-principal of his art school, Rowlandson House in Hampstead. The names 'Sickert and Gosse' were above the door. Here, she shows a woman labouring at a printing press. [Case 23, wall-mounted]

Una Dugdale Duval 1879–1975
Love and Honour but <u>Not</u> Obey

1912

Lent by Alicia Foster
Z89446

Ethel Wright c.1855–1939
The Music Room,
Portrait of Una Dugdale

c.1912
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X89032

This portrait of suffragette and women's rights activist Una Dugdale Duval (1879–1975) was exhibited at the Stafford Gallery in October 1912. Its flat areas of colour and bold outlines represent a stylistic shift for Wright, who had exhibited at the Royal Academy since the 1880s. Wright shows Duval as cultured and sophisticated, dressed in green, a suffrage colour. Wright made the work the same year Duval made national news for her refusal to promise to obey her husband during their marriage vows. In 1913, Duval published a pamphlet, **Love and Honour but <u>Not</u> Obey**.

Ethel Walker 1861–1951
The Thames at Chelsea

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90614

This painting shows the view from Walker's home and studio on Cheyne Walk, across the Thames to Battersea. A group of swans in the foreground contrast the industrial buildings and smoking chimneys on the other side of the river. As well as her highly symbolic 'decorations', depicting classical figures in idyllic landscapes, Walker produced portraits, flower pieces and seascapes.

Ethel Walker 1861–1951
Decoration:
The Excursion of Nausicaa

1920
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased 1924
N03885

From 1912, Walker's focus shifted to what she called her 'decorations'. Increasingly interested in different philosophies and religions, she returned to the Slade to undertake a course in fresco painting to help her translate her thoughts into art. She moved to a more symbolist aesthetic on a large scale. Here, Walker's scene is based on Book VI from the ancient Greek epic poem, Homer's **Odyssey**. While washing clothes with her attendants, Nausicaa encounters a shipwrecked Odysseus. Walker transports this episode to a peaceful utopia comprised almost exclusively of women. Walker often placed women at the centre of her works, celebrating their bodies and sexuality.

Ethel Walker 1861–1951
The Blue Vase

before 1931
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90613

As well her studio in London, Walker had a cottage and studio in Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire. This work was painted there. Walker exhibited her flower paintings at the New English Art Club and the Royal Academy. She also sold works with London dealers such as the Redfern Gallery (where she had her first solo show) and the Lefevre Gallery. Walker's success was matched by her confidence. She wrote to John Rothenstein, Director of Tate Gallery 1938-64, to suggest he buy more of her paintings. She claimed, 'every purchase of my work strengthens and enriches the sum of good pictures at the Tate Gallery'.

Nina Hamnett 1890–1956
Der Sturm

c.1913
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, London
X90161

Nina Hamnett 1890–1956
Still Life with a Blue Jug

1917
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90160

Welsh artist Hamnett exhibited in London and Paris. In her still life paintings, she focused on the humble and the everyday. Her simple groupings of plain, ordinary objects challenged what constituted significant subject matter. Hamnett also signalled her artistic alliances through her object choices, such as the avant-garde German art and literary journal Der Sturm.

Dolores Courtney 1887–1975
Still Life

c.1916
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X68924

Born in Russia, trained in Paris and married to an American, Courtney settled in London around 1914. She worked at the Omega Workshops alongside Nina Hamnett. The Workshops, based in Bloomsbury's Fitzroy Square, gave young artists much-needed employment as designers. This strongly coloured still life was exhibited in the **The New Movement in Art** exhibition organised by Roger Fry (1866–1934) in 1917. Fry was a previous owner of this work.

Vanessa Bell 1879–1961

Still Life on Corner of a Mantelpiece

1914

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased 1969

T01133

In 1913, Bell left the Friday Club for the short-lived exhibiting society, the Grafton Group. It included artists who were experimenting with post-impressionism. She was also a founding member of the Omega Workshops. Based in Bloomsbury's Fitzroy Square, the Workshops aimed to remove the false divisions between fine and decorative arts. The mantelpiece in this painting was in Bell's house at 46 Gordon Square in London. The objects on it include handmade paper flowers from the Omega Workshops. Bell's use of an unconventional low viewpoint, fractured, abstracted forms and bright colours show her exploring different techniques associated with twentieth-century art movements.

Vanessa Bell 1879–1961
Still Life of Dahlias, Chrysanthemums and Begonias

1912
Oil paint on board

Private collection
X90013

In 1905, Bell founded the Friday Club, offering young artists the opportunity to connect and exhibit. It led to the formation of the Bloomsbury Group, a collective of writers, artists and intellectuals based in London. Artist and critic Roger Fry (1866–1934), a central figure of the group, invited Bell to exhibit at his landmark **Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition** at the Grafton Galleries in 1912. This work was painted around the same time. It was a period of experimentation for Bell. Dahlias, chrysanthemums and begonias are all given a geometric simplicity that reflects Bell's semi-abstract style at the time.

Anna Hope Hudson 1869–1957
Hubby – The Violin Solo

c.1913
Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X90362

US-born Hudson met her partner Ethel Sands while studying painting in Paris. Hudson began her career in the city, exhibiting at the Salon d'Automne, and she and Sands divided their time between France and England. In 1907, artist Walter Sickert (1860–1942) invited Hudson and Sands to join the Fitzroy Street Group of artists in London, and they became active members. They were also founding members of the London Group in 1913. Hudson had a genuine friendship with Sickert. Here, the figure playing the violin is Sickert's regular model, Hubby.

Ethel Sands 1873–1962
Tea with Sickert

c.1911–12
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Bequeathed by Colonel Christopher Sands 2000, accessioned 2001
T07808

Sands's house was one of the social centres for modern art in London. Here, she hosts the artist Walter Sickert (1860–1942). Seen from an unusually high vantage point, Sickert lounges in a chair, smoking. Tea is set for three. The other figure is Sands's partner, the US-born artist Nan Hudson (1869–1957). Despite their friendship with Sickert, as women, Sands and Hudson were excluded from the Camden Town Group of artists, in which Sickert was a pivotal figure. This picture was exhibited at London's Carfax Gallery in 1912, where a reviewer found it 'daring'.

Gwen John 1876–1939
Chloë Boughton-Leigh

1904–8
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased 1925
N04088

John settled in Paris in 1904 but sent her work back to the New English Art Club (NEAC) in London for exhibition. She continued to do so for the next eight years until the support of a wealthy patron made it unnecessary. This portrait of her friend Chloë Boughton-Leigh (1868–1947) was probably painted in John's attic flat in Paris. Its soft colouring and intimacy won praise when it was exhibited at the NEAC in 1908. It was described as 'one of the greatest achievements in the exhibition' because of its sincerity.

Gwen John 1876–1939
Self-portrait

1902
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased 1942
N05366

John exhibited this self-portrait at the New English Art Club (NEAC) in 1900. It was her debut as an exhibitor. The NEAC had been founded as a forward-thinking artists' group, created out of dissatisfaction with the art establishment, exemplified by the conservative Royal Academy. Tutors from the Slade, where John had trained, were on the NEAC committee. Despite its progressive stance, in 1900 John was one of only 16 women exhibitors among 75 men. John's choice to show a self-portrait was perhaps a deliberate assertion of her presence.

[Case 22]
Left to right

Olive Mudie-Cooke 1890–1925
Camp Entanglements between Flers and Beaulencourt

c.1917
Watercolour on paper

IWM (Imperial War Museums)
X88967

A former student of St John's Wood Art School and Goldsmiths College, during the war Mudie-Cooke served as a volunteer nurse and ambulance driver on the Western Front and in Italy. She recorded the devastated landscapes and battlefields of the war in chalk and watercolour.

Olive Mudie-Cooke 1890–1925
Etaples Hospital Siding: A VAD convoy unloading an ambulance train at night

c.1917
Watercolour and chalk on paper

IWM (Imperial War Museums)
X88968

Olive Mudie-Cooke 1890–1925
Etaples: British Military Cemetery

c.1918
Lithograph on paper

IWM (Imperial War Museums)
X88969

Olive Edis 1876–1955
War

1919
Photograph, carbon print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography
X89903

Edis was Britain's first woman war photographer. She was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum to photograph the activities of servicewomen on duty in France and Flanders. This bleak, blasted landscape captures the impact of the First World War.

[Case 21]
Left to right

Helen Saunders 1885–1963
Island of Laputa in Blast, No.2: War Number

July 1915

Tate Library and Archive
Z02943

Helen Saunders 1885–1963
Study for 'Vorticist Composition in Black and White'

c.1915
Graphite and ink on paper

Tate. Presented by Brigid Peppin 2018
T15090

Saunders was a member of the 1912–15 vorticist movement. Vorticism aimed to express the dynamism of the modern world through hard-edged imagery derived from machinery and industrial environments. This angular, geometric design appeared in finished form in the vorticist magazine, **Blast**.

Helen Saunders 1885–1963
Portrait of a Woman

c.1913–1914
Graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate. Presented by Brigid Peppin 2018
T15088

Saunders exhibited this head study at the Whitechapel Art Gallery's 1914 exhibition **Twentieth Century Art: A Review of Modern Movements**. It was included in a small section representing artists who had 'abandoned representation almost entirely'.