

Symposium Women in the Museum: Reframing and Reclaiming

Date: March 5, 2024, 9.00-18.00h

location: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Reframing and Reclaiming

Currently the dominant narrative told in museums worldwide is being challenged by a multitude of views. Students of art and historical objects nowadays tend to be more interested in the signification of the object, rather than the making of it or its pure aesthetic qualities. Movements like *art for art sake* and *abstract modernism* stand for an elitist view on art and art history, excluding those who are not in the know or who have no reference to understand what they see.

(Art) history is being reframed by questions on social meaning and context. What is the meaning of the image, what or who is depicted and why so? What does an object tell us about the society in which it was created and how does this reflect on our own history?

These questions are about people: we want to know about ourselves and each other, and all the differences between us. And we'd like to embrace those differences, instead of wanting to force each other into one narrative.

As elsewhere, in museums and universities women have been educated to hide their own gendered perceptions and internalize a standardized (art)history, through upbringing, education, media and peer pressure. Reframing means challenging those accepted norms; reclaiming is recovering one's own look on the world.

PROGRAM

09.00 - 09.30	Registration
09.30 - 09.35	Welcome Hendrikje Crebolder, Director Development & Media, Rijksmuseum
09.35 - 09.45	Jenny Reynaerts, Chair 'Women of the Rijksmuseum': short introduction
09.45 - 10.05	1 st Keynote Janina Ramirez, Oxford University, author of a.o. <i>Femina, The history of the Middle Ages through the women who written out of it</i> , 2022.
10.05 - 10.15	Discussion
10.15 - 10.45	Session 1. The Idea of the Great Artist The historiography of art has long been a tale of big names, predominantly men. As it is now becoming more and more accepted that women largely impacted history and art, museums worldwide shed a light on women's contributions to art, the art world and in history. Which role does the idea of the great artist (still) play in this process of reassessing the gender balance? Is this concept an effective narrative to credit female artists and to reclaim their place in the canon or do we need other standards? What if the great artist is not so great after all? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Andaleeb Badiee Banta, curator of the exhibition <i>Making her Mark: A History of Women Artists in Europe, 1400-1800</i>, Baltimore Museum of Art, autumn 2023.- Katrin Dyballa, curator of the exhibition <i>Ingenious Women. Women Artists and their Companions</i>, Bucerius Kunst Forum, Hamburg, autumn 2023.
10.45 - 10.55	Discussion

10.55 - 11.20	Coffee/Tea
11.20 - 12.45	Visit (in small groups) to the galleries to debate the object labels rewritten from a female perspective.
12.45 - 14.00	Lunch
14.00 - 14.45	<p>Session 2 Reclaiming Heritage Spaces</p> <p>Though most museums consider the female visitor as a given, they do not especially address her interests and history. The same situation applies for many other groups. Fortunately, there is now an urgent awareness to confront this traditional status quo and diversify museum narratives. Is more conscientious gendering an answer? A critical analysis and adjustment of our gendered perspective can (re)create new stories, new role models and new use of the museum or heritage space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kate Hill, Lincoln University, author of <i>Women and Museums 1850-1914. Modernity and gendering of knowledge</i>, 2023. - Eliza Steinbock, Maastricht University & Hester Dibbits, Reinwardt Academy, project-leaders of 'The Critical Visitor: Intersectional approaches for rethinking and retooling Accessibility and Inclusivity in Heritage Spaces'. - Charles Kang/ Maria Holtrop: On the upcoming exhibition on masculinity/femininity in the Rijksmuseum, summer 2024.
14.45 - 14.55	Discussion
14.55 - 15.30	Coffee/Tea
15.30 - 16.00	<p>Session 3: Reframing Old Narratives</p> <p>To reframe (art)history the first step is to reevaluate existing historiography and look critically at the canon. Do we still believe in <i>The Story of Art</i> or canonized history? Are different perspectives possible and worthwhile? Challenging the established narratives and breaking them down opens our eyes to new horizons. But how should we approach this? And how can we achieve a more inclusive narrative without again excluding other groups? Does the concept of intersectionality help and if so, how?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Melissa Sunjaya, artist, Jakarta, on her project <i>Colonial Wars in Indonesia</i>, new art based on material held in the collection of the Rijksmuseum. - Lisa Small and Catherine Morris, curators of the exhibition <i>It's Pablomatic!</i>, Brooklyn Museum 2023.
16.00 - 16.10	Discussion
16.10 - 16.30	<p>2d Keynote: Estrella de Diego, University of Madrid, author of <i>Women and painting in 19th century Spain</i> (1987) <i>The sexed androgyne. Eternal ideals, new gender strategies</i> (1992), curator and columnist: Reflections on the day.</p>
16.30 - 16.40	Discussion
16.40 - 17.00	Closing remarks
17.00 - 18.00	Drinks