



PROGRAMME BOOK

**WOMEN IN THE MUSEUM
RECLAIMING AND REFRAMING**

**5 MARCH 2024
RIJKS MUSEUM**

Cover image: Based on *Design for a frame for a portret or cameo, with four different corner solutions*. Jean Louis Prieur (II) (attributed to), ca. 1765 – ca. 1775. Purchased with the support of the Decorative Art Fund/ Rijksmuseum Fonds.

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM WOMEN IN THE MUSEUM RECLAIMING AND REFRAMING

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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RIJKS MUSEUM

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION AND START OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Tuesday 5 March

09.00 Museum opens, please show your registration e-mail at the main entrance.

09.00-09.25 Coffee and tea will be served in Foyer.

09.30 Programme starts in Auditorium.

17.00-18.00 Reception with drinks and finger food in the Foyer.

CLOAKROOM AND BAGS

All coats and bags can be stored in our cloak room. Handbags (max A4 size) may be brought into the Auditorium and museum.

Please bear in mind that suitcases and travel bags are not allowed inside the museum. To store luggage you can use the luggage depot at the Museum Square Lockerpoint. The lockerpoint is within a five minute walking distance of the Rijksmuseum.

BADGE

Please wear your badge at all times during the symposium. Your symposium badge gives you free admittance to the regular museum galleries during the conference day.

The galleries are open from 09:00 to 17:00.

LOCATION

All presentations are held in the Auditorium of the Rijksmuseum. The temperature inside is a constant 20 degrees Celsius. A scarf or jacket might ensure you stay more comfortable.

FOOD AND DRINK

Food and drinks are not allowed inside the Auditorium. Lunch (vegetarian and vegan), coffee and tea and refreshments will be served in the Foyer outside the Auditorium.

WIFI & HASHTAG

There is free WiFi available in the Rijksmuseum, called 'RUKS WiFi'. Please note that Eduroam can also be used.

RESTROOMS

The restrooms are located upstairs from the Auditorium.

NOTES

RECLAIMING AND REFRAMING

Welcome to the third edition of the annual symposium Women in the Museum. In this series of conferences, the Rijksmuseum hopes to stimulate discussion and ideas on how to implement a gendered perspective in art and history.

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.

PROGRAMME - 5 MARCH

09:00 - 09:30	Registration Coffee/ Tea
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	1st 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

Session 1. The Idea of the Great Artist

Moderator: **Josephine Fouw** (Curator paintings Rijksmuseum)

10.15 - 10.45	<p>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?</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Katrin Dyballa, curator of the exhibition <i>Ingenious Women. Women Artists and their Companions</i>, Bucerius Kunst Forum, Hamburg, autumn 2023.</p>
10.45 - 10.55	Discussion

10.55 - 11.20	Coffee/ Tea
11.20 - 12.45	Introduction on the Rijksmuseum's new object labels written from a female perspective by Jenny Reynaerts, followed by a visit to the galleries.
12.45 - 14.00	Lunch

Session 2. Reclaiming Heritage Spaces

Moderator: **Jenny Reynaerts** (Chair 'Women of the Rijksmuseum')

14.00 - 14.45	<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> <p>Kate Hill, Lincoln University, author of <i>Women and Museums, 1850–1914, Modernity and gendering of knowledge</i>, 2023.</p> <p>Elza Steinbock, Maastricht University & Hester Dibbits, Reinwardt Academy, project-leaders of <i>The Critical Visitor: Intersectional approaches for rethinking and retooling 'Accessibility and Inclusivity in Heritage Spaces'</i>.</p> <p>Charles Kang & Maria Holtrop: On the upcoming exhibition on masculinity/ femininity in the Rijksmuseum Summer 2024.</p>
14.45 - 14.55	Discussion

14.55 - 15.30	Coffee/ Tea
Session 3. Reframing Old Narratives	
Moderator: Laurien van der Werff (Researcher Print Cabinet Rijksmuseum)	
15.30 - 16.00	<p>To reframe (art)history the first step is to reevaluate existing historiography and look critically at the canon. Do we still believe in The Story of Art 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> <p>Melissa Sunjaya, artist, Jakarta, on her project <i>Colonial Wars</i> in Indonesia, new art based on material held in the collection of the Rijksmuseum.</p> <p>Lisa Small & Catherine Morris, curators of the exhibition <i>It's Pablomatic!</i>, Brooklyn Museum 2023.</p>
16.00 - 16.10	Discussion
16.10 - 16.30	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.
16.30 - 16.40	Discussion
16.40 - 17.00	Closing remarks by Jenny Reynaerts
17.00 - 18.00	Drinks
18:00 - 18:15	End of symposium day

NOTES

BIOGRAPHY & ABSTRACT

1ST KEYNOTE

JANINA RAMIREZ is Visiting Professor in Medieval Studies at the University of Lincoln and Research Fellow in History of Art at the University of Oxford. She has published extensively; most recently her 'Femina: A New History of the Middle Ages Through the Women Written Out of It' became a number 1 best-seller and to date has been translated into more than ten languages. Alongside her academic role, Janina also writes and presents documentaries. Her series include 'The Private Lives of Kings,' 'Raiders of the Lost Past' and 'Britain's Millennium of Monasteries'. She is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, Royal Society of the Arts, and a patron of charities and organisations that promote education, cultural diplomacy and inclusivity.



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IS 'ANONYMOUS' FEMALE?: PUTTING WOMEN BACK INTO ART HISTORY

It has been all too easy to assume women were absent from the great moments of the past. After all, History traditionally is concerned with the deeds and legacies of 'Great Men'. But women have been hidden in plain sight, and combining new technology with different approaches reveals their many extraordinary contributions in all areas, particularly in terms of artistic excellence. Approaching unique pieces like the Bayeux Tapestry in search of the women who made it will not just put the female artists to the fore, but can open up new ideas that challenge long established narratives. Instead of looking for 'masterpieces', we should start finding the many 'mistress-pieces' previously ignored or thought simply to be the work of 'anonymous'.

NOTES

BIOGRAPHY & ABSTRACT

THE IDEA OF THE GREAT ARTIST

ANDALEEB BADIEE BANTA

is a specialist in Renaissance and Baroque art of Europe. As Senior Curator and Department Head of Prints, Drawings & Photographs at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Banta curates a wide variety of exhibitions that highlight the Museum's collection of works on paper from the 15th to the 21st centuries. She is co-curator of *Making Her Mark: A History of Women Artists in Europe, 1400–1800*, co-organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Art Gallery of Ontario.



CELEBRATING THE UNEXCEPTIONAL ARTIST: MAKING HER MARK AT THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART.

For centuries, European women artists who achieved celebrated careers were deemed anomalous or exceptional, while those engaged in creative pursuits in collective settings, such as the convent, manufactory, or home, were dismissed as amateurs or their works excluded from the art historical canon. The enduring myth of individual--typically male--genius contributes to museums' continued disregard of women who could not or did not subscribe to gender-biased standards that qualified their work as serious artistic expression. Bringing together more than 200 examples of women's creative accomplishments in a variety of media, the exhibition *Making Her Mark: A History of Women Artists in Europe, 1400–1800*, co-organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Art Gallery of Ontario, aimed to correct these tenacious narratives by presenting a more inclusive assessment that highlights the polyphonic contributions of women makers—exceptional and unexceptional alike—working in early modern Europe.

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THE IDEA OF THE GREAT ARTIST

KATRIN DYBALLA has been a curator at the Bucerius Kunst Forum in Hamburg since 2020. She previously worked at various museums, such as the Alte Nationalgalerie and Gemäldegalerie in Berlin and the Städel Museum in Frankfurt, where she co-curated national and international exhibition projects. Her research focuses on Old German and Old Netherlandish art. She completed her doctorate with a monograph on the Nuremberg artist Georg Pencz and headed the DFG-funded catalog



“Early Netherlandish and French Painting in the Collection of the Gemäldegalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin”. Most recently, she curated the exhibition *Ingenious Frauen. Women Artists and their Companions* at the Bucerius Kunst Forum.

A NEW APPROACH. THE HAMBURG EXHIBITION: INGENIOUS WOMEN ARTISTS

The provocative title “Ingenious Women” was deliberately chosen for the Hamburg exhibition. But it is about far more than just showing excellent works by female artists from the 16th to the 18th century. Their careers are to be contextualized: For the first time, the artists’ family circumstances will be explored and made visible by juxtaposing their works with those of their fathers, brothers, husbands, and fellow painters. It becomes clear that women artists could become extraordinarily successful in any family constellation: they became court painters, teachers, entrepreneurs, but also publishers and they received the highest awards. The show makes it evident that women have a justified claim to a permanent place in the art–historical canon. The female artists represented in the exhibition are not put on show because they belong to the female gender. They are put on display because their works are ingenious, and their lives are worth telling.

NOTES

RECLAIMING HERITAGE SPACES

KATE HILL is Professor of History at the University of Lincoln, UK, where she teaches and researches museum history and British cultural history more generally. As well as *Women and Museums 1850–1914: Modernity and the Gendering of Knowledge* (2016), her publications include *Museums and Biographies* (2012), *Culture and Class in English Public Museums* (2005), and *Museums, Modernity and Conflict* (2021). She is co-editor of the *Museum History Journal*. She is currently leading the international research project, *Making Museum Professionals 1850-the present*.



‘FINE AND DELICATE’?: WOMEN IN MUSEUMS 1850-1914 - GENDERED OPPORTUNITIES, GENDERED RESTRICTIONS

To understand how museums are gendered, we need to understand the varied roles, spaces and practices that they make possible, and how these are policed and used. British museums in the late nineteenth century reveal how complex this might be. The museum’s own records reproduce a sense of what is important founded on typical male perspectives – of ‘great’ material culture, and ‘great’ museum careers in curating – whereas investigations of women’s often hidden or ignored actions show that across formal and informal employment, collecting and donating, and visiting, they reshaped the museum as an institution towards communication, outreach, and the validation of ‘ordinary’ objects. However, we should not forget that women’s development of new museum roles and practices came partly from their exclusion from existing pathways; men continued to dominate the most valued specialisms. Seeing this strictly as empowerment or oppression fails to capture the dual mechanisms of gender.

BIOGRAPHY

RECLAIMING HERITAGE SPACES

ELIZA STEINBOCK (they/them) is Associate Professor of Gender and Diversity Studies at Maastricht University. Driving their interdisciplinary research is the question of how local visual and material cultures can be marshalled to respond to global challenges of inclusion and exclusion mechanisms experienced by marginalised people, foremost identified as queer and trans. Eliza is project leader of “The Critical Visitor: Intersectional Approaches for Rethinking and Retooling Accessibility and Inclusivity in



Heritage Spaces” (NWO 2020–2025), and PI for the Dutch team in the European consortium grant “Perverse Collections: Building Europe’s Queer and Trans Archives” (JPI - Cultural Heritage 2023–2025).

HESTER DIBBITS (she/her) is head of the cultural heritage research group at the Reinwardt Academy of the Amsterdam University of the Arts. In her work Dibbits always seeks the connection between education, research and the working field. She uses a historical-ethnological perspective, with a special focus on the culture of everyday life. With her research group she investigates what knowledge, skills, and approaches are necessary for heritage professionals to successfully and ethically navigate heritage issues. Dibbits lectures and gives workshops nationally and internationally, often about emotion networking - a method providing insight into the complex interplay of interests, knowledge and emotions in heritage interactions. Hester is a project partner of “The Critical Visitor”.



ACKNOWLEDGING THE LABOUR OF HERITAGE-MAKING: ON LEGACIES OF GENDER-BASED INCLUSION ACTIVISM

In our talk we will draw from our recent double volume in English and Dutch of *The Critical Visitor: Changing Heritage Practices* (2023) that gathers together 17 contributions reflecting on heritage-making practices that aim at critically diversifying heritage organizations and institutions. In the course of our field lab meetings, many participants and fellow researchers rightly emphasized the importance of acknowledging those who sought to make change before us, and the labour of those activists who are currently working both in and outside of heritage spaces. In the neoliberal sanctification of everything new and innovative, these institutional legacies are often discarded as old hat, or even forgotten in the headlong rush to do something 'new.' What practices do we build on? Whose historical and contemporary activism is being drawn on for making institutional change? How can we acknowledge and compensate those who perform (unpaid) emotional labour, which curator Amal Alhaag described as 'dirty feminist work'? Attention to labour is a feminist issue, not least because emotional labour and pressing for change in institutional heritage spaces is often performed by women and others with marginalized subject positions. Would reclaiming these stories of feminist labour in heritage-making practices be of interest to the feminist (rather than female) visitor? With attention to objects and the practices that put them into play, we offer our reflections on involving visitors in producing criticality in heritage spaces.

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RECLAIMING HERITAGE SPACES

MARIA HOLTROP (she/her) is a Curator of History at the Rijksmuseum. Her research interests include gender, colonialism and slavery, 19th century, science and many more. She studied History, European Studies and Journalism at the universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht. She was one of the curators of the exhibitions Good Hope (2017), Slavery (2021) and Crawly Creatures (2021). Additionally she was responsible for the Rijksmuseum & Slavery project, 77 extra text labels indicating various connections between specific objects and slavery. She has been part of the women's workgroup since its start in 2021 and has been working on the exhibition Point of view (Summer 2024), a gendered take on the Rijksmuseum collection.



CHARLES KANG (he/him) is a Curator of Drawings at the Rijksmuseum, specializing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His research areas include the intersections between drawing, natural history and early ethnography, the role of drawing in ornament and three-dimensional object design, as well as the links between drawing practice and gender inequality in artistic training. Before joining the Rijksmuseum, Charles worked at institutions such as the Clark Art Institute (Williamstown), the Frick Collection (New York City) and the Max Planck Institute for Art History (Rome). He holds an M.A. from Williams College and a Ph.D. from Columbia University.



ABSTRACT

A GENDERED TAKE ON THE RIJKSMUSEUM COLLECTION

What does it mean to look at the collection of a museum from a gender perspective? In what ways does the perspective offer new understanding of familiar objects, and in what ways does it enliven underappreciated areas of the collection? Curators Maria Holtrop and Charles Kang will take you through their summer exhibition *Point of View*, in which they address these questions front and center. Alongside discussing how the project developed out of the Women of the Rijksmuseum working group, they will examine the challenges of exploring gender through a collection primarily of pre-twentieth-century objects, as well as of managing different expectations. Above all, they will show you how diverse and surprising a collection can be if you take a different look.

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BIOGRAPHY & ABSTRACT

REFRAMING OLD NARRATIVES

MELISSA SUNJAYA is an Indonesian visual artist based in Jakarta who draws inspiration from drawing, writing, and sewing. Her work employs illustration as a universal language to articulate complex themes, focusing on the frequently neglected stories of Southeast Asian women. This exploration leads to examining the material culture in wearable artefacts, which she perceives as a medium of art and a catalyst for social change. Her practice incorporates an autoethnographic approach and historical archives, offering insights into creating a more inclusive and representative visual narrative. She established Tulisan in 2010,



grassroots artisanal label of wearable serigraphs infused with storytelling.

REFRAMING THE UNREMEMBERED

‘Reframing the Unremembered’ presents Melissa Sunjaya’s practice-based research as an artist inspired by Dutch East Indies historiography and the transformation of Javanese women’s portrayals since the pre-colonial era (pre-1808). Her work subverts conventional narratives on Southeast Asian women by deconstructing overlooked stories and marginalized perspectives, such as the Yogyakarta sultanate’s elite female warriors and their involvement in the Java War (1825–1830). Melissa aims to create a more inclusive historical dialogue using local sources and colonial archives to frame her contemporary design projects. A key text here is Prince Diponegoro’s autobiographical chronicle, which gives a unique perspective on the Java War (1825-30). Based on this account, Melissa revisualized precolonial Java’s matriarchal culture. In a contemporary context, her latest handmade collection promotes discourse on perspectives shaped by colonial influence. Her work bridges art, history, sustainability, and equitable workplace practices through this approach while embracing diversity and reclaiming Indonesia’s unique cultural identity.

BIOGRAPHY

REFRAMING OLD NARRATIVES

LISA SMALL was appointed Senior Curator of European Art in 2017 after joining the Brooklyn Museum in 2011 as Curator of Exhibitions. At the museum, she has curated or co-curated the exhibitions *It's Pablo-matic: Picasso According to Hannah Gadsby* (2023); *Jacques-Louis David Meets Kehinde Wiley* (2020). She served as a coordinating curator for Brooklyn's presentations of *Frida Kahlo: Appearances Can Be Deceiving* (2019), *Georgia O'Keeffe: Living Modern* (2017). Small has also overseen numerous installations of the museum's European art collection, including most recently *Monet to Morisot: The Real and Imagined in European Art* (2022-23).



CATHERINE MORRIS (she/her) is the Senior Curator for the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum where, since 2009, she has curated and co-curated numerous exhibitions including *Lorraine O'Grady: Both/And; We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–1985; Judith Scott-Bound and Unbound; and Materializing Six Years: Lucy R. Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art*. She has worked on projects examining contemporary practices through historical precedents, including *It's Pablo-matic: Picasso According to Hannah Gadsby*



and the museum-wide Sackler Center ten-year anniversary project, *The Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism* at the Brooklyn Museum. Morris was a curatorial organizer for the Brooklyn Museum presentations of *Frida Kahlo: Appearances Can Be Deceiving; Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985; and Seductive Subversions: Women Pop Artists, 1958–1968*. Upcoming projects include *Elizabeth Catlett: A Revolutionary Artist and All That It Implies*, and *Nona Faustine: White Shoes*.

ABSTRACT

NOUS NE REGRETTONS RIEN: IT'S PABLO-MATIC AT THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

Brooklyn Museum senior curators Catherine Morris and Lisa Small examine the complex critical reception of the exhibition *It's Pablo-matic: Picasso According to Hannah Gadsby*. One of numerous exhibitions presented around the world in 2023 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Pablo Picasso's death, *It's Pablo-matic* stood out as the only project to examine the artist's complicated legacy through a critical, feminist lens. Employing an experimental methodological approach, Morris and Small, along with their collaborator, comedian Hannah Gadsby, sought to frame a conversation positioning the modern master within significant art historical priorities that have emerged in the fifty years since Picasso's death in 1973. Prime among these is the historical revisionism developed by feminist artists, art historians, and cultural producers. Received with significant criticism in the mainstream press, this presentation will discuss the nonetheless generative effects the exhibition had on critics and audiences world-wide.

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BIOGRAPHY & ABSTRACT

2ND KEYNOTE

ESTRELLA DE DIEGO is Art History Professor at the Universidad Complutense (Madrid) and a member of the Royal Academy of Arts (Madrid). She has been a Fulbright scholar at NYU, where she has held the Chair of Spanish Civilization at the KJCC. She has held Luis Angel Arango Internacional Chair (Banco de la República, Bogotá) and has been awarded with the Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Professorship (University of Iowa). She is a widely published author in both fiction and non-fiction and a prolific curator. Her research focuses on gender and postcolonial studies. She is a member of the Board of Trustees at the Prado Museum and a regular contributor to *El País*.



OCCUPATING MUSEUMS

In 1981 I decided to write my Ph.D. on 19th Century women painters in Madrid. I was very young then and had the feeling it was a kind of a moral obligation for me as an art historian, no matter how difficult my research could be -and it was- and how strange it seemed to my fellows and the rest of the staff at my department. No female professor would help me with my Ph.D. then -there were not so many at that time and they were perhaps reluctant to accompany me in this project. A male professor did: he was not quite sure about my idea but he trusted me somehow. Forty years later we sit here, at the Rijksmuseum, and we realize how narratives have been modulated and rewritten.

Taking the different contributions to this conference as a starting point, we will discuss how things have changed now that women are occupying museums. And classrooms and royal academies ...

