

Session Celebrating Female Agency in the Arts (New York, 26–27 Jun 18)

New York, NY, Jun 26–27, 2018

Deadline: Jan 10, 2018

Laurel Peterson, Yale Center for British Art

"Public Agency in Private Spaces: Politics, Painting, and Patronage in the Long Eighteenth Century"

Christie's Education Symposium 2018: Celebrating Female Agency in the Arts

Scholars across disciplines have long probed the relationship between politics and art in the public sphere in the long eighteenth century—the tumultuous, seminal historical period that saw the rise of the Enlightenment, modern systems of representative democracy, and, eventually, the Industrial Revolution. Yet, to date, scholarship of this period has largely failed to notice female artists and patrons, despite their omnipresence in public shows and frequent initiation of substantial commissions. Similarly, political history has overlooked non-royal women, despite their strong influence as the wives, mothers, and sisters of politicians.

This interdisciplinary panel explores ways in which elite women wielded power through the active fusion of politics and art. Domestic and other private spaces often provided fertile ground for the cultivation of wide-ranging artistic production. In these spaces, women made decisions that both mirrored and diverged from the (often public) actions of their male contemporaries. They exercised their own, distinct agency to establish relationships with male and female artists and designers, to initiate commissions, and to oversee these projects, most of which were undeniably infused with cultural, social, national, and even international politics.

We seek papers that work to reveal women's central role as patrons and artists at this key moment in time, when the nature of politics itself was changing—and, with it, the production of art.

Contributors might consider a wide range of female patrons and artists, and the historical context of their activities. Topics might include: the ways in which female sitters fashioned political personae through portraiture; the commissioning of original artworks or the production of copies for domestic interiors; gendered dynamics of the art market; or elite women's growing engagement with methods of print artistry. We see this topic as a transnational story, and encourage approaches that upend prevailing narratives regarding individual works of art.

Organized by Laurel O. Peterson, Yale University and Paris Spies-Gans, Princeton University

Proposals for 20-minute papers, consisting of an abstract of 250-300 words and a brief bio of the

presenter, should be submitted by January 10, 2018, to laurel.peterson@yale.edu and spies@princeton.edu.

Reference:

CFP: Session Celebrating Female Agency in the Arts (New York, 26-27 Jun 18). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 15, 2017 (accessed Dec 28, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/16740>>.