Women in Art and Music (New York/Washington, 18-20 Oct 23)

Juilliard, NYC/The National Gallery of Art, DC, Oct 18, 2023
Deadline: Dec 9, 2022

Elizabeth Weinfield

Women in Art and Music: An Early Modern Global Conference.

The Juilliard School, New York, and the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, are excited to announce a co-hosted global interdisciplinary symposium on women in art and music in the early modern period (ca. 1500–ca. 1800). Our goal is to think broadly about women as creators, as part of the cultural and global economy, and as experts in their chosen field of art. We suggest that visual art and musical performance were so tightly enmeshed at this time as to form their own language, particularly in women-centered spaces. We, therefore, seek a new way of addressing this shared space—not necessarily as an interdisciplinary zone where art and music always converge—but one in which modes of creation are shared in codependent and overlapping ways in the early modern period.

The National Gallery of Art's recent acquisition of the Bolognese painter Lavinia Fontana's portrait of 16th-century Bolognese singer and lute player, Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni (b. 1561)—the first painting by an early modern Italian woman artist to enter the museum's collection—is the impetus for this interdisciplinary conference. A prolific artist, Fontana depicts Garzoni in an exquisite and highly detailed portrait alongside her lute, displayed on the table next to a score which accurately represents music for a lute with soprano voice. We might imagine these notes emanating from her instrument in concert with her dulcet voice, garnering her the praise she received from her literary contemporaries and poets, as one asserted, "And the host of the Graces, and the whole array of Virtues, testify to this in singing her glories and honors."

On April 23, 1595, Lavinia Fontana's eleventh and last-born child was baptized in Bologna, and documents show that none other than Lucia Bonasoni Garzoni served as the child's godmother, linking the two women together personally, in addition to professionally. This picture tells the story of two women, one a painter and the other a musician, who were able to overcome obstacles in a patriarchal society to succeed in the artistic spheres of painting and music. This early modern synergy between a painter and a singer will be the springboard for exploring how women succeeded as artists and musicians in the early modern period on a global stage, whether independently or collaboratively.

Early modern scholarship has recently suggested that identity is a process, a fluid phenomenon rather than fixed formation, in which the interaction between groups (be they national, religious, social, gendered, or racial) is the crucial point of study. What happens when we apply this idea to

the realm of artistic identity? Some questions to consider: How does reading art and music as coexistent entities enhance our understanding of women in the early modern era? When women depicted or included other women in their art what were the societal ramifications? How did art and music-making offer women pathways for social advancement or even independence in the early modern period? How did issues of social class and race, in addition to gender, play into possible advances for women on the global stage in art and music?

We hope that the comingling of a museum and a conservatory will help to answer some of these questions in a lively and engaging symposium. Live music will be provided alongside papers at both institutions by the ensemble Sonnambula and musicians from Juilliard's Historical Performance program, to reveal how crucial musical performance is to the study of music and the sister arts in the early modern period. Musicians will be on-hand to play any music discussed in papers as needed; public performances will also occur on both days of the symposium.

We invite paper submissions from scholars across the humanities that engage with early modern women as artists and/or musicians from the disciplines of history, music history, historical performance, and art history, in addition to other relevant disciplines. Papers are encouraged that consider cross-cultural connections in how they address issues of artmaking and performance, in both secular and religious contexts in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and beyond. Proposals that include music or performance as part of the talk are welcome. A selection of papers will be published following the conference in an edited volume published by the Center and distributed by Yale University Press.

To submit a proposal, please send the following by email to the co-organizers of the conference:

Dr. Eve Straussman-Pflanzer, Curator and Head of Italian and Spanish Paintings, National Gallery of Art
e-straussman-pflanzer@nga.gov

Dr. Elizabeth Weinfield, Professor of Music History, The Juilliard School; Director, Sonnambula
eweinfield@juilliard.edu

-A paper title (15-word maximum)
-A paper abstract (250-word maximum)
-CV/resume with your full name, affiliation, title (or "Independent Scholar"), and e-mail address

Deadline: Friday, December 9, 2022

The symposium will take place at The Juilliard School, New York, NY on Wednesday, October 18, 2023 and at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC on Friday, October 20, 2023.

Reference:
CFP: Women in Art and Music (New York/Washington, 18-20 Oct 23). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 21, 2022 (accessed Nov 16, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/37737>.