

Women in the Museum. Shattered Ceilings (Amsterdam, 7 Mar 23)

Amsterdam, Mar 07, 2023

Josephina de Fouw

On the 7th of March 2023 the Rijksmuseum will host the annual symposium 'Women in the Museum – Shattered Ceilings' (live and online), as part of the research project Women of the Rijksmuseum.

This symposium is about current museum ambitions, role models, gender diversity and about quality. International museum professionals from The New-York Historical Society, the Nationalmuseum Stockholm, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the National Portrait Gallery London, among others, will share their experiences and expertise. After three sessions, there will be room for discussion and exchange of views.

Women in the Museum is a series of annual symposiums organised by the Rijksmuseum as part of the Women of the Rijksmuseum project. The 2022 symposium 'Best Practices' was mainly about many initiatives that embed the gendered narrative in the museum world.

This project is made possible in part by the Women of the Rijksmuseum Fund.

PROGRAMME

09.00 - 09.30: Registration, coffee and tea

09.30 - 09.35: Welcome by Hendrikje Crebolder, Director Development and Media, Rijksmuseum.

09.35 - 09.50: Introduction 'Shattered Ceilings', Dr. Jenny Reynaerts, senior curator Paintings and chair of Project Women of the Rijksmuseum. "Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?"

09.55 - 11.00: Session 1: Looking up: Role Models

Are there any role models to follow when trying to incorporate women's stories in the practice and presentation in museums? And on another note: which role models do museums present to our public? The heroine, the gamechanger? Or women whose daily actions define history in a less obvious way? And what about hidden or even forbidden role models?

Speakers:

- Margaret K. Hofer, Vice President and Museum Director of the New-York Historical Society. Black Dolls: Expressions of Creativity and Resistance
- Silvia Rottenberg, former director of the Dutch Institute in Buenos Aires. Female artists taking charge: South American bravura or example for all?

- Dr. Flavia Frigeri, Chanel curator of the collection at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Women, Women, Women: Reframing Narratives at the National Portrait Gallery

Discussion

11.05 - 11.35: Coffee and tea break

11.35 – 12.45: Session 2: Questions of Gender

Today, the awareness of gender fluidity is rising. Consequently, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of untold and unacknowledged history, and that (art) historiography is gendered. How to approach the diversity of gender in a world that most of the time was considered binary? How do we find and tell stories from the lhbtq+ community without stereotyping? What is the consequence of the frequent lack of definite sources about these, by historical necessity, invisible gender positions? And how to deal with possible resistance when opening gender narratives?

Speakers:

- Dr. Rosalind McKeever, curator of Paintings and Drawings, Victoria & Albertmuseum, London. "Can I ask what it is like to be a woman curating a menswear exhibition?"
- Dr. Fanny Wonu Veys, curator of Oceania, National Museum of World Cultures, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. What a Genderful World - Thinking through the making of an exhibition
- Sander Heithuis, Research Institute Women Inc., Amsterdam. Telling the untold story: towards gender equality in Dutch musea

Discussion

12.45 - 14.15: Lunch break / TOUR Print Cabinets

14.15 – 15.30: Session 3: The Elephant in the Room: Quality

The obvious criterium when acquiring new (art) objects in our museum is quality. Is quality a static or a fluid concept, subject to historical conjuncture? More than anything, quality has been denied to women's work. This has been seen as inevitable and a consequence of insufficient schooling, a lack of sparring partners and rivalry, and above all, a limited outlook on life.

What are the consequences of the use of this category as the foremost criterium for art? How do museums choose and present women's work: do they redefine quality and the historical context that goes with it, or do women have to fit into the so-called neutral, yet inherently male narrative?

Speakers:

- Carl-Johan Olsson, curator 19th-century Visual arts, National Museum Stockholm. Balancing Gender?
- Rein Wolfs, General Director Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Insights in the new collection presentation of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam
- Dr. Katrin Dyballa, curator of the Bucerius Kunst Forum, Hamburg. On the upcoming exhibition Ingenious Women: Women artists and their companions

Discussion

15.30 - 16.00: Coffee and tea break

16.00 - 17.00: Panel debate, chaired by Ilona van Tuinen, Head of the Print and Drawings Department, Rijksmuseum

17:00 -18.00 Drinks

F u r t h e r i n f o r m a t i o n :

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/whats-on/lectures-symposiums/women-in-the-museum>

Reference:

CONF: Women in the Museum. Shattered Ceilings (Amsterdam, 7 Mar 23). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 23, 2023 (accessed Jun 14, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38405>>.