

# INSIGHT

## DECEMBER 2019

This monthly newsletter brings together articles of interest and opinions from the world of art history and visual culture. Here are 2019's most popular posts.

### **FORGOTTEN WOMEN | THE ARTISTS**

16 of the best books about famous female artists and their work - including books on women artists who really should be famous, and are only just rising through the art world ranks now. Blogpost and list by Ruth Millington.

<https://bit.ly/2E0KIWI>

### **WHY WERE THERE SO MANY GREAT WOMEN ARTISTS IN NORTHERN ITALY DURING THE RENAISSANCE?**

During the 1600s Bologna boomed with professional women artists, primarily painters. Of the 300 active painters in the city around 25 were women — more than in any other Italian city. <https://bit.ly/2sadfGi>

### **WHY HAS THE EXISTENCE OF BLACK TUDORS BEEN UNKNOWN, UNTOLD AND UNTAUGHT?**

"History isn't a solid set of facts...It's very much about what questions you ask of the past. If you ask different questions, you get different answers. People weren't asking questions about diversity. Now they are." An insightful article about historian Miranda Kaufmann's book. <https://bit.ly/2t2bnj7>

### **HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH A PROBLEM LIKE GAUGUIN?**

Curators are grappling with the issue more openly than ever in a major exhibition that acknowledges the French artist's sexually predatory behaviour in the South Pacific'. <https://bit.ly/2YEiF8r>

### **HOW SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES CONTAMINATED ART HISTORY**

In this fascinating article for ArtUK Lydia Figes presents a short history of how syphilis became a central theme and subject in European painting. <https://bit.ly/357aLqx>

### **POWERFUL WOMEN WHO SHAPED ART HISTORY**

This article for Artsy looks at how women have shaped the course of art history. 'While this list is by no means exhaustive, it highlights 16 extraordinary female patrons

spanning geographies and centuries who have changed the way we look at art'. <https://bit.ly/2Yych2J>

### **UNICORNS**

Unicorns; how they transformed from a feared mythical beast to a sacred symbol of purity, all thanks to a typo. 'The unicorn's inclusion in a text of such magnitude laid the foundation for an obsession with the creature that thrived in both literary and visual arts from the earliest dates of the Middle Ages and continues to the modern day'.

<https://bit.ly/2RK2Uv8>

### **DID REMBRANDT SEE WOMEN DIFFERENTLY – OR JUST LOOK MORE CLOSELY?**

'Art history is filled with such indignities masqueraded as high-minded porn. Sometimes it can be hard to face. Then again, it's the little things that count when you can't change the chauvinist past.' Susanna's narrative might be read through the lens of #MeToo or female rage, but in art, her predicament is almost always treated as/for voyeuristic pleasure. <https://bit.ly/2E6ogLr>

### **THE MYTH OF BRITAIN'S EMPIRE**

A brilliant article. "...the stark fact remains that most Britons know very little about the history of the empire itself, still less the way in which its long afterlife profoundly shapes both Britain and the wider world today".

<https://bit.ly/2RE1UsM>

### **THE BODY POLITIC**

Before 'Game of Thrones' or 'The Handmaids Tale' there was Botticelli. "In Botticelli's time, as in ours, the safety of women's bodies was often secondary to the order of state politics". <https://bit.ly/2LHj1pF>

### **WHY AND HOW SHOULD WE DECOLONISE MUSEUMS?**

Sumaya Kassim explains that museums are not neutral spaces, they often emerge from and continue to exhibit for a white audience, and with a privileged white gaze.

<https://bit.ly/2rfAhuU>