

ART HISTORY INSIGHTS

JULY 2020

The monthly newsletter that brings you selected articles of interest and opinion from the world of art history and visual culture. This issue looks at the history of botanical art.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY WOMEN ARTISTS

Amgueddfa Cymru, National Museum Wales has a fantastic collection of illustrations by little known or forgotten women artists from the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries. Historical neglect or dismissal of these remarkable women has often undermined their achievements and contributions to both science and art. Here are some of their stories and illustrations.

<https://museum.wales/articles/2007-06-16/A-passion-for-plants-botanical-illustration-by-women-artists/>

'THE GREATNESS OF THE UNIVERSE'

This is the title of the exhibition, curated by Shelia Barker, that was staged for the re-opening of Uffizi Galleries in May 2020. The exhibition is of work by Giovanna Garzoni, illustrator of scientific and geographical fantasy in the age of the Baroque. In 1620 Garzoni tried to secure a position at a Florentine court, she met important artist, such as Artemisia Gentileschi and Arcangela Paladini, and continued to travel around Europe painting a range of different subject, from devotional images, still life, portraits, botanical illustration and mythology. 'Her Florentine patrons were Grand Duke Ferdinando II de' Medici and

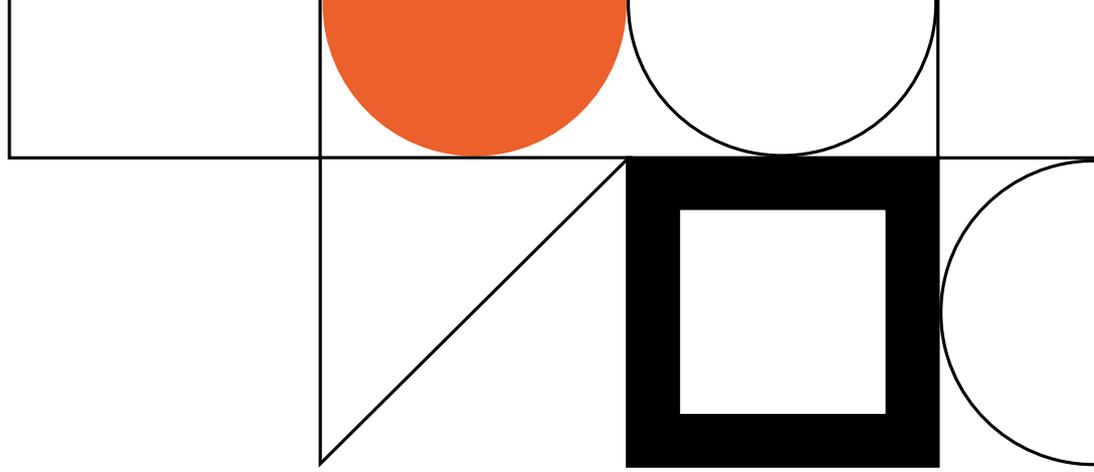
Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere, representing a family that had a longstanding interest in medicinal plants and cultivated a botanical garden'.

<https://hyperallergic.com/544545/the-art-of-giovanna-garzoni-pitti-palace/>

THE BOTANICAL MIND

During lockdown Camden Arts Centre in London released a brilliant online project and film called 'The Botanical Mind: Art, Mysticism and The Cosmic Tree'. It brings together digital commissions, podcasts, films, texts, images and audio in an expanding archive that will continue to be added to. 'Drawing on indigenous traditions from the Amazon rainforest; alternative perspectives on Western scientific rationalism; and new thinking around plant intelligence, philosophy and cultural theory, The Botanical Mind Online, investigates the significance of the plant kingdom to human life, consciousness and spirituality across cultures and through time'. Including works by a huge number of artists from Eileen Agar, Anni Albers, Kark Blossfeldt, Robert Fludd, Anna Haskel, Linder, Hilma af Klint and Anna Zemánková to name but just a few.

<https://www.botanicalmind.online>



VAN GOGH'S OLIVE TREES

Vincent van Gogh is one of the most mythologised figures in art history. In this short film by Heni Talks, art historian, and Chair of the Association for Art History, Frances Fowle talks about Van Gogh's relationship with nature and in particular the olive grove paintings, which she describes as a 'pure vision of the landscape'.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8linPk5PqI&feature=emb_rel_end&app=desktop

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

In the summer of 1699, 52 year old Maria Sibylla Merian took a cargo ship to South America, accompanied only by her 22 year old daughter. Merian was interested in just one thing, butterflies, but not just what they looked like, she studied their habitat, life cycle, and metamorphosis. As part of her research she produced beautiful illustrations of the plant life and butterflies that she found in Suriname at that time. These have been published in 'A Butterfly Journey: Maria Sibylla Merian: Artist and Scientist' by Boris Friedewald.

<https://hyperallergic.com/233040/a-17th-century-woman-artists-butterfly-journey/>

YOUR INSIGHTS

We promote a broad and inclusive art history, and look to engage with as wide an audience as possible. Please get in touch with articles you think may be of interest for our newsletter. We welcome all content suggestions.

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